



**Standing Committee
for Economic and Commercial Cooperation
of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC)**

Proceedings of the 11th Meeting of the COMCEC Poverty Alleviation Working Group

“Quality of Education in the OIC Member Countries”



COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE

May 2018



**Standing Committee
for Economic and Commercial Cooperation
of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC)**

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE 11TH MEETING OF THE COMCEC POVERTY
ALLEVIATION WORKING GROUP**

ON

“Quality of Education in the OIC Member Countries”

(April 5th 2018, Ankara, Turkey)

**COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE
May 2018**

For further information please contact:

Mr. Mehmet Akif Alanbay
Expert

COMCEC Coordination Office
Necatibey Caddesi No: 110/A
06100 Yücetepe
Ankara/TURKEY
Phone : 90 312 294 57 10
Fax : 90 312 294 57 77
web : www.comcec.org
e-mail : comcec@comcec.org
malanbay@comcec.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
1. Opening Session.....	2
2. COMCEC Poverty Outlook	2
3. Quality of Education in the OIC Member Countries	4
3.1. Overview of Education Quality in the World and OIC	4
3.2. Quality of Education in the Case OIC Member Countries	6
4. Policy Discussion Session	8
5. COMCEC Project Funding.....	8
6. Member State Presentations.....	9
6.1. Algeria.....	10
6.2. Malaysia	10
6.3. Oman	11
6.4. Turkey.....	12
7. Perspective of International Institutions and NGOs.....	13
7.1. UNICEF Turkey	13
7.2. Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE).....	14
7.3. Turkish Education Association (TED)	16
8. Closing Remarks	18
ANNEXES.....	19
Annex 1: Agenda of the Meeting	19
Annex 2: Programme of the Meeting.....	20
Annex 3: The Policy Recommendations.....	22
Annex 4: List of Participants	25

Introduction

The 11th Meeting of the COMCEC Poverty Alleviation Working Group was held on 5 April 2018 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of “Quality of Education in the OIC Member Countries”.

The Meeting was attended by the representatives of 15 Member States namely, Algeria, Egypt, Gabon, the Gambia, Indonesia, Iraq, Kuwait, Malaysia, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Senegal and Turkey. Representatives of SESRIC, Turkish Education Association (TED), Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) and UNICEF Ankara Office have also attended the Meeting.¹

The Meeting began with a recitation from Holy Quran. Afterwards, Mr. Burak KARAGÖL, Director at COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO), and Mr. Zahir Mohd IDRIS, Assistant Director for Educational Planning and Research Division, Ministry of Education of Malaysia and the Chairman of the Meeting, made their opening remarks. Afterwards, the representative of the CCO made a presentation on “COMCEC Poverty Outlook”. The presentation on the COMCEC Poverty Outlook, informed the participants of the state of poverty and human development in the world and in the OIC Member Countries.

The Meeting continued with the presentation of the research report titled “Quality of Education in the OIC Member Countries” which was conducted specifically for the 11th Meeting to enrich the discussions.

The afternoon session began with a policy debate session. The policy recommendations on improving the education quality in the member countries were discussed by the participants. The Room Document, which was prepared by the CCO in light of the findings of the aforementioned research report as well as the answers of the Member Countries to the policy questions, was considered.

Following the moderation session, representatives of Iran, Malaysia, Turkey and Uganda shared the experiences in education quality in their respective countries.

Finally, the participants listened to the representatives of Turkish Education Association (TED), Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) and UNICEF Ankara Office to learn about their experiences in improvement of education quality.

¹ The list of participants is attached as Annex 4.



1. Opening Session

In line with the tradition of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the COMCEC, the Meeting started with the recitation from the Holy Quran. Afterwards, Mr. Burak KARAGÖL, Director at the COMCEC Coordination Office welcomed all participants. Thereafter, Mr. KARAGÖL briefly mentioned about the COMCEC and its activities. He also explained the details of the programme of the Meeting.

Afterwards, Mr. Zahir Mohd IDRIS, Assistant Director for Educational Planning and Research Division, Ministry of Education of Malaysia, as the chairman of the Meeting, welcomed all the participants to the 11th Meeting of the Poverty Alleviation Working Group. After introducing himself, Mr. IDRIS invited Mr. Bilgehan ÖZBAYLANLI, expert from the COMCEC Coordination Office, to make his presentation on Poverty Outlook in the OIC Member Countries.

2. COMCEC Poverty Outlook

Mr. Bilgehan ÖZBAYLANLI, Expert from the COMCEC Coordination Office has presented the key findings of the COMCEC Poverty Outlook.

In his presentation, Mr. ÖZBAYLANLI explained the state of poverty in the world and in the OIC Member Countries by emphasizing key indicators on monetary and non-monetary poverty and gave insight on human development in the OIC.

Mr. ÖZBAYLANLI stated that the most frequently used methods are to define poverty in monetary terms US\$1.90 a day poverty line of the World Bank, or the value of a minimum calorie requirement. Poverty headcount ratio at \$1.90 a day is the percentage of the population living on less than \$1.90 a day at 2011 international prices.

Then, he briefly informed the participants about the indexes used in the Outlook. The Human Development Index (HDI), produced by UNDP since 1990, measures the achievements in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and have a decent standard of living. The HDI is a composite index obtained from life expectancy at birth, mean and expected years of schooling and GNI. He added that the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) is also a composite index obtained from health, education, and standard of living indicators. MPI was also generated by UNDP in 2010 and it reflects the multidimensional nature of poverty. Furthermore, the Global Hunger Index (GHI) is designed to measure and track hunger globally and by country as well as by region and calculated each year by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). The GHI highlights successes and failures in hunger reduction and provides insights into the drivers of hunger.

Mr. ÖZBAYLANLI continued his presentation with poverty situation in the world. The last three decades witnessed a significant global poverty reduction. The global poverty headcount ratio fell to 10.7% in 2013 from 35% in 1990. Similarly, the number of poor has decreased by around 1 billion people to 767 million in 2011 from 1.8 billion in 1990. Regarding income groups, while this ratio was 57 percent for upper-middle income countries, 51 percent for lower-middle income countries and 65 percent for low-income countries in 1981, these ratios fell to 5 percent, 19 percent and 47 percent for these income groups respectively in 2013.

With regards to non-monetary poverty indicators, he first touched upon the HDI. 46 out of 51 “very high human development” countries are high-income countries, and the “high human development” category is dominated by upper-middle-income countries. Similarly, “medium human development” category is dominated by lower-middle income countries. In the “low human development category”, all of the countries are from low income and lower middle-income groups. Mr. ÖZBAYLANLI expressed that for most of the cases the income level of a country is in parallel with its human development category.

Regarding Multidimensional Poverty Index, he stated that the index was calculated for 101 countries in Human Development Report 2015. Almost 1.5 billion people in these countries -about 29 percent of their population- live in multidimensional poverty.

Since 2000, significant progress has been made in the fight against hunger. The 2000 Global Hunger Index (GHI) score was 30 for the developing world, while the 2016 GHI score was 21.6. Despite the lower hunger level reflected by the 2016 global GHI score, the number of hungry people in the world remains unacceptably high. According to projections from the FAO, about 815 million people worldwide are estimated to be chronically undernourished; 51.7 million children suffer from wasting, 154.8 million children are stunted. Furthermore, about 3.1 million children per year die due to malnutrition.

Mr. ÖZBAYLANLI continued his presentation with the state of poverty in the OIC. He pointed out that the OIC represents a highly diverse group in terms of GDP per capita, which varies from less than thousand dollars to 127.5 thousand dollars (i.e. Niger and Qatar).

Like in the case of GDP per capita, the poverty headcount ratio varies remarkably among the OIC Member Countries. According to estimates, there are around 277.4 million poor people in the OIC region. In terms of monetary poverty, there is no poor in the high-income countries. The poverty rate is generally low in the upper-middle income countries. Lower-Middle income countries display a highly dispersed picture and poverty headcount ratio ranges from 0.11% in Palestine to 67% in Nigeria. Not surprisingly, the poverty headcount ratios of the low-income countries are very high ranging from a quarter to three fifths of the population.

As to the multidimensional poverty, Mr. ÖZBAYLANLI stated that according to Human Development Report (HDR) 2016, around 473 million people are multidimensionally poor in the OIC. Among the OIC Member Countries, for which multidimensional poverty headcount ratio is calculated, this ratio is highest in Niger and lowest in Kazakhstan.

He continued his presentation with the GHI values of the Member Countries which range between zero and 44.3. None of the OIC member countries experience an extremely alarming hunger situation and 3 countries are in an alarming situation while 21 countries are in a serious situation of which Chad is the most severe one. On the other hand, 9 member countries are in moderate hunger situation and 13 countries are in low hunger situation.

Furthermore, Mr. ÖZBAYLANLI expressed that the world human development index (HDI) average has increased from 0.597 to 0.717 between 1990 and 2016. For the same period, the OIC average rose from 0.505 to 0.621 and remained significantly below the OECD and world average. OIC’s HDI values are only higher than those of LDCs. On the other hand, the gap between the OIC

and developing countries has enlarged in the last 25 years. In 1990, it was only 0.014 points whereas it has risen to 0.047 points in 2016 implying a more rapid progress in developing countries. He added that, according to his estimation, given the current growth rate, it will take approximately another 25 years for the OIC to reach the current level of the world average.

Finally, Mr. ÖZBAYLANLI enumerated some of the findings of the poverty in the OIC region. He stated that monetary poverty is significant in the member countries; however, non-monetary poverty is a bigger problem. Nearly a quarter of the population in the OIC member countries live under multidimensional poverty. He added that progress in the human development varies significantly among the member countries. There is an improvement over time; however, a faster progress is needed.

3. Quality of Education in the OIC Member Countries

3.1. Overview of Education Quality in the World and OIC

Dr. M Niaz ASADULLAH, Professor of Development Economics at University of Malaya, as the principal author of the report, presented the findings of the research study titled “Quality of Education in the OIC Member Countries”. His presentation focused on the state of and trends in quality education in the world and in the OIC, overall situation of access to quality education, the determinants of learning outcomes as well as policies and strategies implemented around the world to improve education quality.

He started out with a brief discussion on the importance of education for socio-economic development. Drawing upon findings of the Global Education Commission report, he highlighted the economic case for investment in education. He clarified that significant progress has been achieved in expanding access to education during the MDGs era. However the MDGs ignored the most fundamental of aspect of schooling i.e. what children learn in the classroom. He drew attention to the emerging evidence on the lack of learning among children enrolled in school. This evidence has been interpreted by many as “global education crisis”. He clarified that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have shifted the focus of education policy from access to quality at the national and international level. The post-2015 SDGs framework includes clear targets focusing on “learning for all”.

After explaining the study background and the larger policy context, Dr. ASADULLAH described the conceptual framework of the report. He explained that quality education is defined in terms of high intake, high retention and full learning experience. The report however is primarily focused on learning outcomes with specific reference to fundamental quality - literacy/numeracy rates and test scores for math, reading and science in international assessments. As per the conceptual framework, learning outcomes or student achievement is shaped by a confluence of demand and supply-side factors which the report models following the educational production function approach. On the demand-side, individual factors include gender and pre-school education while family factors include parental schooling, income, immigration status, and location. Supply-side factors are school-specific (e.g. trained teachers and adequate classrooms) as well as system-wide

(e.g. accountability). Many of these also affect learning indirectly by determining enrolment and school completion or time spent in school.

Dr. ASADULLAH then described the overall methodology of the report and the econometric models used in case studies. He explained that for the main part of the report (i.e. an overview of education in the world and in the OIC), he conducted a desk review and used publicly available databases of the World Bank, OECD and UNESCO. For the case studies, the research team made use of a desk review, in-depth stakeholder interviews and microdata analysis using OECD's PISA data on Malaysia and Jordan. For Nigeria and Pakistan, data for detailed statistical analysis came from country-specific surveys of student performance in school. Dr. ASADULLAH explained the microdata analysis methodologies implemented for the case studies. Afterwards, he presented key statistics on trends in education quality in the OIC Member Countries.

He pointed out that many OIC Member Countries do well in terms of literacy rate and allocate sufficient amount of resources for educational development. However, there is an income-gap in educational development at the country level within the OIC. Upper-middle and high income OIC Member Countries have low inequality in access to education and better infrastructure such as more trained teachers and favourable student-teacher ratio in school. On the other hand, the vast majority of low-income OIC member states suffers from high inequality in school enrolment, lack trained teachers and suffer from high youth literacy rates. These countries also don't participate in international assessments on learning outcomes. Dr. ASADULLAH therefore focused on economically well-off OIC member countries on which participate in PISA, PIRLS and TIMSS so that progress in education quality in terms of learning outcomes can be assessed.

Dr. ASADULLAH explained that the overall level of learning is low in participating OIC Member Countries in PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS assessments. As a group, the OIC is behind others including the High-performing Asian Economies (HPAEs) in mathematics, reading and science. Dr. ASADULLAH's analysis of the long-term trends shows that the gaps between OIC and non-OIC countries remain significant over time. In PISA there is an upward trend while the opposite is true in case of TIMSS. Another area of concern highlighted was the sizable wealth gap in learning outcomes and the low share of resilience students in participating OIC Member Countries. He then discussed his findings of the multivariate analysis of the determinants of student performance in PISA 2012. In the OIC Member Countries, a significant male disadvantage was noted. Pre-primary school attendance was found to be positively associated with secondary school performance. Family-specific significant factors include household wealth and parental pressure on schools while school-specific factors include private ownership of the school and the availability of computers.

Dr. ASADULLAH continued his presentation by reviewing the existing regional policies/initiatives to improve education quality across the OIC member countries and the global evidence on what works to improve learning outcomes in school. He discussed emerging evidence of flat "learning profile" (i.e. weak relationship between schooling and learning) on low income OIC Member Countries that remain absent from international assessment of student achievement. It was pointed out that OIC Member Countries were poorly presented in existing systematic reviews of high quality evidence on programs to improve education quality. Existing reviews of the evidence

suggest that there's no 'silver bullets' to ensure high-quality education for all. Most schemes improve either school enrolment or learning outcomes; very few improved both. Child-specific interventions that are particularly promising include merit-based scholarships and school meals. Household-specific interventions such as abolishing school fees and providing cash transfers don't improve learning outcomes. School and teacher-specific schemes that show positive impact on learning outcomes include structured pedagogy programmes (customised curricula, new instructional approaches for teachers and educational materials for students). Extended school day and remedial education programmes, public-private partnerships are also promising for improving school participation.

Lastly, Dr. ASADULLAH pointed out that there is no OIC-wide forum on education quality. Coordinated efforts to improve learning outcomes in the OIC member countries are absent.

3.2. Quality of Education in the Case OIC Member Countries

In the second part of his presentation, Dr. M Niaz ASADULLAH presented the findings on case studies regarding four countries namely Nigeria, Pakistan, Jordan, and Malaysia.

He started by explaining how the selection criteria for case countries. For country selection, the researchers took into account representation of different OIC regions, representation of different income groups across OIC and availability of detailed student-level learning achievement data. They also gave priority to countries that have the dual challenge of poor access and unsatisfactory quality of education. He informed the participants that they conducted a desk review, in-depth interviews with a wide range of stakeholders and microdata analysis to prepare the case studies.

Dr. ASADULLAH started with the Nigeria case. In Nigeria, the education system is decentralized; there are various types of schools – a large number of non-state schools (both secular and Islamic-faith based) are in operation. Notable educational schemes include the Girl-child Education Programme (GEP), girls 'education enrolment campaign, targeted CCTs and School Feeding and Health Programme. According to Nigeria Education Data Survey (NEDS) statistics, enrolment rate is particularly low at the secondary level. Poverty remains a key barrier to school participation. Stakeholder interviews underlined country-specific challenges such as lack of funding and facilities, the lack of good and motivated teachers and weak school leadership as some of the key barriers to quality education. Stakeholders also emphasised the need to improve teaching and learning materials, greater provision for scholarships for poor children, increase in teacher salary and better ICT provisions in rural schools.

Next, Dr. ASADULLAH continued with the Pakistan case study. In Pakistan, there are as many as 303,000 institutions catering to 47 million children. A large number of fee-charging private schools operate alongside state-run schools. The government has already launched Vision 2025 and implemented Provincial Education Sector Plans (ESPs) to improve education quality. The government actively collaborates with civil society organizations (CSOs) and development partners. A number of Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) schemes are also in place. Notable programs to improve education quality and access include Strengthening Teacher Education in Pakistan (STEP), National Testing Service (NTS) and a range of conditional and unconditional cash

transfers such as the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) and Female School Stipend Programmes.

In Jordan, Dr. ASADULLAH explained that access to education is broad-based and universal. Most of the teachers are trained and official literacy rate is very high. In terms of basic competencies, performance of children in early grade reading assessment is also satisfactory. However Jordan faces serious challenge in delivering quality education in secondary grades. Performance of 8th graders in TIMSS Mathematics test between 1999 and 2015 show a declining trend while performance of 15 years old in PISA shows no significant improvement. The performance of boys is particularly unsatisfactory. There are also sizable wealth disparities in learning outcomes. Country specific challenges highlighted include high failure rate in public secondary school exit exam (Tawjihi). Stakeholders interviewed identified effective school leadership, lack of teacher motivation, lack of good/qualified teachers and pressure of external evaluation as barriers to quality education. Dr. ASADULLAH concluded by highlighting some of the notable policy initiatives to improve education quality in Jordan such as “Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy Program” (ErfKE I & II), Queen Rania Foundation (QRF) and Queen Rania Teachers Academy (QRTA), Jordan Education Initiative (JEI) for ICT and PPP models and Early Grade Reading and Math Project (RAMP).

In Malaysia, school enrolment is high across all levels in terms of learning achievement; Malaysia also had an impressive start in TIMSS 1999. While the country’s performance declined in later rounds, it has improved in 2015. This is also consistent with performance in PISA 2015. Malaysia’s overall performance is still far below OECD and other high performing Asian economies. He also pointed out sizable wealth gap in learning outcomes. Stakeholders interviewed highlighted a number of barriers to quality education such as lack of effective school leadership and motivated teachers, lack of qualified teachers. More scholarship targeting children from poor families, better ICT facilities for rural schools and additional funding for under-performing rural schools were some of the steps that stakeholders identified to overcome the barriers. He finished by explaining the notable programmes in Malaysia which have contributed to Malaysia’s improved performance in international assessments. These included the District Transformation Programme (DTP) to narrow the gap R-U achievement gap, dual language proficiency (DLP) scheme, “Higher Order Thinking Skills” (HOTS) scheme, the “literacy and numeracy” (LINUS) programme focusing on mastering literacy and numeracy skills in early phase of primary education and “Performance & delivery unit” (PADU), a laboratory model for policy innovation.

After Dr. ASADULLAH delivered the key findings for the case countries, he provided the general recommendations of the report. He made a number of recommendations to improve education quality and achieve progressive universalism in the OIC member countries such as early-life investment in foundational cognitive skills, develop inclusive school education models, better targeting based in terms of poverty, gender and region, ensuring accountability in the education sector and re-orient curricula and teacher training programs by focusing more on core competencies and higher-order skills.

Questions and Comments:

Comment: Representative of Pakistan made comments on the report and noted that the efforts of the Government of Pakistan in education should also be sufficiently reflected to the report.

Answer: Dr. ASADULLAH mentioned that the comments would be reflected to the report and the relevant parts would be revised accordingly.

4. Policy Discussion Session

The session was moderated by Mr. Nadim MAKHALFA, General Director at Ministry of Education of Palestine.

At the beginning of the session, Mr. Selçuk KOÇ, Director at the COMCEC Coordination Office, made a brief presentation on the responses of the member countries to the policy questions on the education quality which were sent to the Poverty Alleviation Working Group focal points as well as the participants by the CCO. He also presented the policy recommendations provided in the room document.

After the presentation, Mr. MAKHALFA gave the floor to all delegations asking their opinions and comments for each policy recommendation. The participants shared their comments on the policy recommendations given in the room document. Based on the intensive deliberations, the participants have highlighted the following policy recommendations:²

- Increasing both the quantity and quality of teachers, particularly who teach in schools serving to disadvantaged and poorest through improving wage rates, pedagogical interventions, performance incentives, training and curricula reforms
- Increasing teaching and learning effectiveness through adoption and widespread use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) based new models
- Promoting better early-childhood learning opportunities through accessible and affordable pre-primary schooling
- Ensuring progressive universalism for closing the rich-poor gap in learning outcomes
- Enhancing and reinforcing accountability through parental engagement and involving parents in the monitoring of their children's education and intensifying the parent-teacher interaction to improve education delivery

5. COMCEC Project Funding

Mr. Burak KARAGÖL, Director at COMCEC Coordination Office delivered a presentation on utilizing the COMCEC Project Funding (CPF) for the poverty-related projects of the member countries as well as the OIC institutions.

At the beginning, Mr. KARAGÖL informed the participants about the essentials of the CPF by emphasizing that the CPF is one of the two main instruments of the COMCEC Strategy. He also indicated the relationship between Working Groups and CPF.

² The Room Document is attached as Annex 3.

Thereafter, he explained the purpose and function of the CPF that are:

- supporting the implementation of policy recommendations produced by the Working Group Meetings and adopted by the COMCEC Ministerial Sessions,
- enhancing multilateral cooperation and solidarity among the OIC Member Countries
- providing joint solutions for common problems
- increasing institutional and human capacity
- strengthening operational skills on international projects

Then, he stated that the projects can be activity based such as trainings, workshops, conferences, and seminars or research projects such as research studies and field visits related to research.

Afterwards, Mr. KARAGÖL expressed that the project topics should be in line with principles, strategic objectives and output areas of the COMCEC Strategy. He added that policy recommendations adopted by the COMCEC Ministerial Sessions and Sectoral Themes published on the COMCEC website should also be considered while submitting project proposals. Furthermore, he enumerated the supported topics in poverty alleviation area such as social safety nets, forced migration, malnutrition, free and universal health coverage, employability, education of disadvantaged children, vocational education.

He touched upon main characteristics of designing project proposals. He emphasized that the proposal should bring together at least three member countries. These countries should be member of the Poverty Alleviation Working Group and the proposals should be in conformity with the Project Submission Guidelines.

Lastly, Mr. KARAGÖL presented the projects funded in the past three years as well as the ongoing projects that are implemented in 2018. He expressed that 44 projects were funded in 2014- 2017 and 10 of them are in poverty alleviation area. Also, he stated that 2 projects in poverty alleviation area out of 19 projects are being implemented in 2018.

The project owner countries in 2018 are the Gambia (entrepreneurship) and Indonesia (social protection). The project owner countries in 2017 are Albania (social housing), the Gambia (women entrepreneurship), Indonesia (e-commerce for poor) and Suriname (childcare).

Mr. KARAGÖL continued his presentation with the timeline for the project submission and mentioned about the procedure to be pursued. Mr. KARAGÖL lastly described how to submit project proposals and presented relevant parts on the COMCEC website.

6. Member State Presentations

In this section, the representatives of Algeria, Malaysia, Oman and Turkey made presentations to inform the participants about policies and programs conducted in their respective countries for improving education quality.

6.1. Algeria

Mr. Mustaqha MEDJAHDI, Director at Ministry of National Education of Algeria made a summary of the experiences of Algeria in improving the quality of education.

At the outset Mr. MEDJAHDI gave information about the overall situation regarding education in Algeria. He stated that the compulsory education is starting at the age of 6 until 16 and there are more than 9 million students in all cycles of education. He also indicated that there are 26.751 schools and 462.945 Algerian teachers. In addition, he pointed out that the second largest budget allocation is made to education..

Mr. MEDJAHDI mentioned that more infrastructure investment is planned to meet growing demand in school facilities. He also highlighted that there are also considerable efforts with regards to improving school environment and against violence in schools.

Afterwards, Mr. MEDJAHDI briefly informed the participants about some of the assistance efforts. He pointed out that textbooks are distributed freely to 4 million students. Moreover, school transportation in remote and distant areas and school health as well as free supplies for needy students are also provided.

Mr. MEDJAHDI lastly touched upon the support services provided for the disabled and handicapped children. He briefly informed the participants that there are psycho-educational centres for children with motor disabilities and also for mentally handicapped children. There are also specific schools for children with hearing impairments and visual Impairment.

6.2. Malaysia

Ms. Umo Hanik IDRUS, Education Expert at Ministry of Education of Malaysia (MoE), made a presentation on education in Malaysia. Ms. IDRUS underlined that Malaysia aims to achieve developed nation status by the year 2020 through Government Transformation Programme, Economic Transformation Programme and Eleventh Malaysia Plan 2016-2020: Monitoring Growth of People. She stated that Malaysia is also committed to the Global Agenda Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) specifically SDG 4 Education 2030: Quality Education.

Ms. IDRUS expressed that the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia and the Ministry of Education Malaysia govern all national education-related matters from preschool to higher education. The Ministries aim to provide all Malaysian citizens with equal access to quality education that forms highly-skilled, knowledgeable, and united Malaysians.

Ms. IDRUS briefed the participants that the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (Preschool to Post-secondary Education) prepared by the Ministry of Education evaluates the performance of current Malaysia's education system with considerations of historical starting points against international benchmarks. The Blueprint also offers a vision of the education system and student aspirations that Malaysia both needs and deserves as well as suggests 11 strategic and operational shifts that would be required to achieve that vision.

Ms. IDRUS expressed that in order to properly address the needs of all Malaysians and to prepare the nation to perform at an international level, it is important to first envision what a highly-successful education system must accomplish, particularly in the Malaysian context. She continued that these aspirations comprise two aspects: education system as a whole and individual students. This vision and these aspirations will set the stage for the transformation of Malaysia's education system.

In the last part of her presentation, Ms. IDRUS touched upon the five outcomes that the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 aspires for the Malaysian education system: access, quality, equity, unity, and efficiency. She underlined that these outcomes are in line with the aspirations articulated by participants during the National Dialogue, and are comparable to outcomes set by other high-performing education systems. She highlighted that action across all five areas is important, and no initiative in one area should reduce the progress in another.

6.3. Oman

Ms. Suad AL FORI, Director at Ministry of Education of Oman made a presentation on the experiences of Oman with respect to the development of the school education system.

In the beginning of her presentation Ms. AL FORI stated that Oman has witnessed rapid developments since the 1970s. From that point onward, the Ministry of Education, with the full support of the Government, has succeeded in making dramatic changes in education. Then, she demonstrated some comparative data and figures to show the extent of the achievements took place in education since 1970s. She also highlighted that attention of the Ministry of Education in recent years has shifted away from concerns about access (since 97 % of basic school-age Omanis are enrolled in schooling) towards attempts to qualitatively improve the education system.

Ms. AL FORI continued her presentation by explaining in detail the phases of school education development in Oman since 1970. In this respect, she touched upon the findings of some international educational evaluation studies concerning the education quality in Oman. She stated that the findings indicated, in general, that student learning achievement in Oman did not meet expected levels across all grades and subjects, particular in mathematics. Taking into account the findings and recommendations of national and international educational evaluation studies, the transformational reforms has taken place in education that target students, teachers, schools, and the system in general.

After mentioning the transformational reforms in detail, Ms. AL FORI lastly outlined some latest educational projects and developments under the following areas;

- The Specialised Centre for Professional Training of Teachers,
- Data Management,
- Performance Indicators System (Educational Indicators),
- School Performance Evaluation Project (in process),
- Assessment and Examination Center (in process).

6.4. Turkey

Ms. Nihal GÖZÜYAŞLI, as the representative of Ministry of National Education (MoNE) of Turkey, delivered a presentation on the efforts of MoNE to improve the quality of education and gave some examples. Ms. GÖZÜYAŞLI opened her remarks by pointing out that The Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirmed, in 1948, that elementary education was to be made freely and compulsorily available for all children in all nations. However, nothing much was stated about the quality of education. She stated that 12 year education is compulsory and free in Turkey and with %98 schooling rate at the primary education level, Turkey had been working on to get %100 schooling rate regardless of the region, social status or the age groups. In the first half of her presentation Ms. GÖZÜYAŞLI gave information about the teacher-student ratio, which is 17 at pre-school, 17 at primary, at 17 lower-secondary, and 18 at secondary, and 13 vocational schools. She continued with classroom-students ratio which is 20 at primary, 24 at lower- secondary, 18 at secondary and 15 at vocational schools. She added that the Ministry has been working to decrease the aforementioned numbers for contributing to the quality of education. She expressed that the Ministry updated its curriculum/ education programmes in 2017 and, the course books are distributed by the Ministry free of charge to every student enrolled in schools regardless of being private or public. She also stated that “Conditional Education Aid Programme” have been implemented in co-operation with Ministry of Family and Social Policies via which the families are given financial support for sending their children to schools. In addition, she explained that the Ministry has been providing transportation services for the students within the scope of mandatory education residing in villages or smaller settlement units. She depicted that the MoNE has Quality Standards for Pre-School and Primary and the schools having the facilities below the Quality standards are promoted to improve their conditions.

Afterwards, Ms. GÖZÜYAŞLI stated that the interventions implemented by MoNE are as follows;

Remedial Education Programme (REP): The Programme aims to improve quality of education in primary schools by instructional programs designed for students who have been identified as having deficiencies in reading, writing, and/or math and typically provide individualized basic skills instruction in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics.

Inclusive Early Childhood Project for Children with Disabilities: The project aims to increase access of children with disabilities (ages 3-to-7) to early childhood education and grade 1, via the provision of quality inclusive education via quality inclusive early childhood education materials and teacher modules. During the Project, educational support materials, child activity book sets, story book sets, educational assessment tools are to be developed. Also, Recommendation Document would be presented to the Board of Higher Education, the unit responsible for designing the education program of higher education institutions including the teaching faculties.

FATİH Project: The Project is designed to provide every student with the best education, the highest quality educational content and equal opportunities. This project also aims to store any kind of information formed in student’s educational process in a single identity system and create an infrastructure where analysis can be conducted with a data pool. This project is a transition

from a system where students are evaluated with only exams to a new system which will evaluate students by;

- Identifying the lacking aspects of the students according to the exam results,
- Analysing these visually,
- Identifying fields of interest outside the course subjects,
- Discovering the special skills,
- Understanding the best way a student learns in the easiest way,
- Identifying the subjects to which a student is disposed.

Educational Informatics Network - EBA: The purpose of the platform is to enable the integration of technology into education by using information technology tools and supporting efficient use of material. EBA has been created to offer suitable, reliable and right content and is still being developed. The Platform aims to enable the integration of technology into education by using information technology tools and supporting efficient use of material. EBA has been created to offer suitable, reliable and right content and is still being developed along with moving from teacher-centred education to student-centred education. Furthermore, the parents will be able to monitor and follow the quality of education provided to their children on EBA thereby contributing to the improvement and quality of education.

Improving the Quality of Vocational and Technical Education Project (METEK-2): The project aims to increase the quality of vocational and technical education, update the curriculum, teacher and principal education and education media, make VET an attractive choice, increase the cooperation between social partners, schools and private sector.

In addition to the interventions, Ms. GÖZÜYAŞLI concluded her presentation by further expressing that investing in teachers constituted one of the core elements of the path to quality education. So, the Ministry has Strategy Document for Teachers which aims to provide employment of high qualified, well trained and professionally qualified individuals as teachers in addition to provide the continuity of personal and professional development of teachers and to improve the perception of the teaching profession and to strengthen the status of the profession.

7. Perspective of International Institutions and NGOs

7.1. UNICEF Turkey

Dr. Mehmet BULDU, Quality Inclusive Education Unit Manager at UNICEF Ankara Office, presented “UNICEF’s Approach to Quality Inclusive Education” during the Meeting.

Dr. BULDU firstly informed the participants about the fact that on 1 January 2016, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - adopted by world leaders in September 2015 at an historic UN Summit - officially came into force. Over the next fifteen years, with those new goals that universally apply to all, countries would mobilize efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one was left behind. Dr. BULDU also pointed out that the SDGs are unique in that they called for action by all countries, poor, rich and middle-income to promote prosperity while

protecting the planet. They recognized that ending poverty has to go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection.

Dr. BULDU stated that SDG4 is Quality Education and the UNICEF vision of realizing the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged, and its accountability for results are articulated through 25 results areas and five Goal Areas that would contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals. Dr. BULDU stated that those result areas in general indicate that education is a key to achieving many other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and people of all ages are able to benefit from quality education they could break away from the cycle of poverty. Education, besides helping to reduce inequality and to move towards gender equality, also empowers people everywhere to live more healthy and sustainable lives.

Dr. BULDU also mentioned about the Strategic Plan 2018-2021 Results Architecture. The Strategic Plan describes the results to be achieved by UNICEF by 2021 in the context of the 2030 Agenda (the WHAT). It also describes the groups of children who will be reached in diverse contexts (the WHO); the change strategies necessary for the achievement of results (the HOW); and the internal factors that support the change strategies and the achievement of results (the ENABLERS). Dr. BULDU pointed out that distributing resources equally does not provide everyone with equal opportunities and resources required to be allocated according to needs. In reality, the children in the greatest need often received the least resources. Dr. BULDU said that the results framework reflected the UNICEF commitment to realize the rights of all children, everywhere, and to achieve the vision of the 2030 Agenda, a world where no child was left behind. Equity considerations are captured in the impact, outcome and output statements of the results framework where baselines, milestones and targets involved tracking of progress at disaggregated levels – by sex, age, disability, location (rural/urban, region), where possible, involving 100 percent of the indicators. Finally, he pointed out that in addition to presenting equity dimensions through disaggregated data, output-level indicators also included specific results on the reach of UNICEF-supported programmes, especially those focusing on the most disadvantaged children.

7.2. Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE)

Mr. K M Enamul HOQUE, Deputy Director of Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) has shared some insights on the 'Efforts of CAMPE for Improving Education Quality in Bangladesh, particularly on the state of quality education and experience of civil society.

Mr. HOQUE introduced CAMPE as the national education coalition in Bangladesh that was established in 1990. It works closely with the government of Bangladesh and development partners as well as other relevant stakeholders to influence the policy and practice change discourse in favour of poor and marginalized for ensuring Right to Education. Over the years CAMPE has grown into a well-known, credible coalition of more than 900 education NGOs, dozens of teacher groups/associations, researchers, education rights campaigners and individuals sharing similar vision and mission.

Mr. HOQUE shared how CAMPE defines quality of education by using an input-process-output framework to assess the quality. According to him major initiatives in Bangladesh education system are focused on fundamental quality. Among fundamental qualities, memorization and rote learning are still dominant. There are some initiatives focused on communication, analytical and critical thinking skills. It is observed that literacy rate among 15 to 24 years population are significantly higher comparing to adult literacy. However, Bangladesh has not participated in any international test for math, reading and science like TIMSS, PIRLS, PISA, EGRA and EGMA.

He mentioned that although CAMPE works with a range of interventions but right to education, quality with equity, financing education and addressing the out of school children factors get high priority. Some other key interventions include conducting research in education sector, raising awareness and building capacity of the constituency members. CAMPE follows a set of core strategies namely NIDI which stands for Networking, Informing, Developing and Influencing.

The Education Watch is one of the flagship programmes of CAMPE that investigates both access and quality with equity issues in education in Bangladesh since 1998 which is followed by awareness raising and series of advocacy initiatives. In 2000, the Education Watch study looked into the learner's achievements in terms of attaining terminal competencies agreed by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board. It was observed that mean number of competencies achieved by the students had increased over time – from 16.1% in 2000 to 20.1% in 2014. The test was conducted based on 27 cognitive competencies which can be tested through paper pencil based test. There were variations among the types of schools, and by location and sex and socio-economic background of the families.

Mr. HOQUE also informed that CAMPE is highly involved in policy formulation and status review process in the education sector. It has representatives in about 32 committees, taskforce, and technical team formed by the government. The CEO of CAMPE is one of the advisory committee members to the Minister of Education. It works closely with the education sector planning and review process. Every year, during the Joint Annual Review Mission of Primary Education sector, besides government, CAMPE as civil society has a dedicated slot to share the Civil Society perspectives which demonstrates a shared responsibility and accountability as well.

He also mentioned that CAMPE has significant contribution in formulation of National Education Policy 2010 and the draft Education Act which is under process of finalization. In addition, it has contributed in formulation of National Skills Development Policy and NFE act among others. CAMPE facilitates consultative process and awareness raising campaigns to raise stakeholder's voice to make the system more transparent and accountable.

At the end of his presentation, Mr. HOQUE made some recommendations. He stated that proper implementation of international agreements like Paris Declaration for Harmonization/Busan agreement for partnership is key to overcome most of the challenges. Besides enhancing capacity to face new challenges, continuity of aid to CSO/NGOs, increasing collaboration with strategic initiatives including the OIC, considering support to NGO and CSOs from the development budget support are critical.

7.3. Turkish Education Association (TED)

Dr. Fatma ATAMAN, Coordinator of Foreign Languages at Turkish Education Association delivered a presentation on the studies of Turkish Education Association to improve education quality. In her presentation, she briefly informed the participants about Turkish Education Association, TED Schools, TED University, TED Dormitories and TED Representative Offices. She explained that TED had been founded in 1928 with the order of Atatürk to provide better educational opportunities primarily for Turkish children in need of financial support, open schools with intensive high-quality English language education and open dormitories. She added that as a long established non-governmental organization other aims were creating scientific platforms to increase educational standards, increasing awareness about the educational issues and proposing solutions and contributing to the Turkish Education Policy.

Regarding the mission of TED, Dr. ATAMAN mentioned about the three different scholarships TED offers for providing better educational opportunities. First one is “Education Support Scholarship” which is up to public school students who need financial support. This scholarship is given since TED was founded. The second one is “Full Support Scholarship” in which academically successful, financially less privileged public-school students are supported. Physically-challenged students are also included. The scholarship covers educational material and clothing expenses, as well as pocket money. Third one is “Full Education Scholarship” which is most comprehensive and expensive nationwide scholarship. Students join the scholarship program in the lower secondary school and pursue their education at TED School until high school graduation. All education, transportation, food, school supplies and clothing expenses are provided, and psycho-social development of students are tracked. Moreover, she added other unique scholarship opportunities that TED offers. For instance, 186 children whose fathers died in Mining Explosion in Soma district are provided scholarship and successful children from less privileged parts of the country attend TED Schools with dormitory facilities.

Afterwards, Dr. ATAMAN continued with the teacher training programs for both teachers in TED Schools and all teachers in Turkey as a way of improving education quality. After a formal recruitment procedure, a teacher in TED School takes an orientation program containing general trainings to know the TED, values and educational philosophy of the organization to create a common organizational culture. Also, the program contains some department-specific trainings. For foreign teachers, some trainings are designed to ease their lives in Turkey. For continuing education, TED offers an online training platform, e-TED, for its teachers and parents. 3307 education staff and 31.988 parents take trainings during the academic year. These online trainings can be categorized into four groups; the trainings for school administration, specific departments, all teachers and TED parents. The trainings for school administration contain online trainings about managerial skills which 800 principals, vice principals and department heads involve every month. For specific departments such as English language department, online trainings are produced collaborating with academicians, content experts and consultants based on the needs of the departments. To have a common approach in education, there are some online trainings for all teachers such as “Cyberbullying”, “Success and happiness” and “Cyberbullying”. Also, TED parents are involved in online trainings as a stakeholder in education. She also

explained face-to-face trainings as well as online training programs. These trainings are up to vice principals, specific departments in all TED Schools such as psychological counsellors and specific departments in some TED Schools based on their region. Another one is TED's Best Practices Conference in which teachers share their best practices with other teachers. TED Schools also share the responsibility with TED to improve education quality in Turkey. They organize in-service training programs for both their own teachers and the teachers within the province they are in.

Next, Dr. ATAMAN informed the participants about TEDMEM founded in 2012 to help create high quality education policies. TEDMEM functions like a bridge between decision makers, administrators, teachers, non-governmental organizations, academicians and other stakeholders. They carry out research, events and publications. One of the well-known forums in Turkey is the international education forum that TEDMEM organizes. These forums are the platforms where important issues in education are discussed with a wide-range of participants. Also, TEDMEM Podium is an organization in which guest speakers are invited to develop future-oriented vision based on knowledge.

In addition to training programs for teachers and TEDMEM's studies, Dr. ATAMAN further mentioned about the projects that TED has carried out in collaboration with national and international institutions. One of them is TYLE Project which is up to 120 grade-5 public school students. They took 360 hours of English classes at TED Schools in 2015 and 2017. Another one is ACCESS Social Responsibility Project which started in 2009. Every year 240 grade-9 public school students participate, and 2500 students have been participated in 360 hours of English classes so far. Success is Everywhere Project which aims at supporting quality of education, academic success and offering events focusing on sports, art and culture in less privileged regions started in 2015-2016 academic year in 8 public schools in Adana and Ankara. The project involves face-to-face and online trainings for school administrators, teachers and parents. She also added a project that would start in May 2018, namely Only Teachers Assure the Future of Education Project which aims at supporting female teachers appointed to teach in villages in their early career.

Dr. ATAMAN concluded that as first and unique civil society in education in Turkey, Turkish Education Association has been working for the improvement of education quality since 1928.

Questions and Comments:

Question: How does the TED work in collaboration with the Ministry of Education? Is there any programme implemented by TED which overlaps with those implemented by the Ministry of Education?

Answer: Dr. ATAMAN replied that TED closely cooperates with the Ministry of Education and submits the programmes to the Ministry for adoption. Once TED gets permission from the relevant council of the Ministry, the programme is implemented. Therefore, there is no duplication between the programmes carried out by TED and the Ministry of Education.



8. Closing Remarks

The Meeting ended with closing remarks of Mr. Zahir Mohd IDRIS, Chairman of the Meeting and Mr. Burak KARAGÖL, Director at the COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO).

Mr. IDRIS thanked all the member country representatives as well as participants from SESRIC, Turkish Education Association (TED), Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) and UNICEF Ankara Office for their active participation and valuable contributions.

Mr. KARAGÖL also thanked all delegates for their attendance and valuable contributions. He expressed that the main outcome of the meeting is the Room Document which includes a number of policy recommendations for the member countries. He stated that these recommendations will be submitted to the 34th COMCEC Ministerial Meeting as an output of the 11th Meeting of the Poverty Alleviation Working Group.

Furthermore, Mr. KARAGÖL informed the participants that the 12th Meeting of the COMCEC Poverty Alleviation Working Group will be held on October 4th, 2018 in Ankara with the theme of "Skills Development in the OIC Member Countries: Vocational Education". He stated that as per the usual practice a research report is being prepared on the theme of the Meeting and will be shared with the focal points in advance of the meeting.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Agenda of the Meeting



AGENDA OF THE 11TH MEETING OF THE COMCEC POVERTY ALLEVIATION WORKING GROUP

April 5th, 2018 Ankara, Turkey

“Quality of Education in the OIC Member Countries”

Opening Remarks

1. COMCEC Poverty Outlook
2. Overview of Education Quality in the World
3. State of Education Quality in the OIC
4. Policy Debate Session on Improving Education Quality in the OIC Member Countries
5. Utilizing the COMCEC Project Funding
6. Member State Presentations
7. Perspectives of International Institutions and NGOs

Closing Remarks

.....
.....



Annex 2: Programme of the Meeting



PROGRAMME OF THE 11TH MEETING OF THE COMCEC POVERTY ALLEVIATION WORKING GROUP (April 5th, 2018, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Ankara, Turkey)

“Quality of Education in the OIC Member Countries”

- 08.30-09.00 **Registration**
- 09.00-09.05 **Recitation from Holy Qur’an**
- 09.05-09.15 **Opening Remarks**
- 09.15-09.35 Outlook of Poverty in the OIC Member Countries
*Mr. Bilgehan ÖZBAYLANLI, Expert
COMCEC Coordination Office*
- 09.35-09.45 Discussion
- 09.45-10.25 Overview of Education Quality in the World and OIC
*Dr. M. Niaz ASADULLAH
University of Malaya*
- 10.25-10.55 Discussion
- 10.55-11.10 **Coffee Break**
- 11.10-11.50 Education Quality in the selected OIC Countries and Policy Recommendations
*Dr. M. Niaz ASADULLAH
University of Malaya*
- 11.50-12.30 Discussion
- 12.30-14.00 **Lunch**

Policy Options for Improving Education Quality

There will be a moderation session under this agenda item. Participants are expected to deliberate on the policy options/advices for improving education quality in the OIC Member Countries. At the beginning of the session, the CCO will make a short presentation on the responses of the Member Countries to the policy questions as well as the Room Document.

14.00-14.15 Responses of the Member Countries to the Policy Questions on the Policy Framework for Improving Education Quality in the OIC Member Countries

*Mr. Selçuk KOÇ, Director
COMCEC Coordination Office*

14.15-15.30 Discussion

Utilizing the COMCEC Project Funding

15.30-15.45 Presentation: "Utilizing the COMCEC Project Funding"

*Mr. Burak KARAGÖL, Director
COMCEC Coordination Office*

15.45-16.00 Discussion

16.00-16.15 **Coffee Break**

16.15-17.15 **Member Country Presentations**

Sharing Experiences and Good Practices in Improving Education Quality
Discussion

Perspectives of International Institutions / NGOs

17.15-17.25 Presentation: "UNICEF's Approach to Quality Inclusive Education"

*Dr. Mehmet Buldu, Quality Inclusive Education Unit Manager
UNICEF Turkey*

17.25-17.35 Presentation: "Efforts of CAMPE for Improving Education Quality in Bangladesh"

*Mr. Enamul HOQUE, Deputy Director
Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), Bangladesh*

17.35-17.45 Presentation: "Efforts of Turkish Education Association to Improve the Quality of Education"

*Dr. Fatma ATAMAN, Foreign Languages Coordinator
Turkish Education Association (TED), Turkey*

17.45-17.55 Discussion

17.55-18.00 **Closing Remarks and Family Photo**

Annex 3: The Policy Recommendations

ROOM DOCUMENT FOR THE MODERATION SESSION OF THE 11TH MEETING OF THE COMCEC POVERTY ALLEVIATION WORKING GROUP

A policy debate session was held during the 11th Meeting of the Poverty Alleviation Working Group and the Working Group came up with some concrete policy recommendations for improving the education quality in the OIC Member Countries and approximating policies among the Member Countries in this important issue. The policy recommendations presented below have been identified in light of the main findings of the research report titled “Quality of Education in the OIC Member Countries” and the responses of the Member Countries to the policy questionnaire which was sent by the COMCEC Coordination Office.

Policy Advice 1: Increasing both the quantity and quality of teachers, particularly who teach in schools serving to disadvantaged and poorest through improving wage rates, pedagogical interventions, performance incentives, training and curricula reforms.

Rationale:

Teachers are the most significant influencer of educational outcomes. However, they are in short supply in many OIC member countries. Efforts should be intensified to make teaching an employment of choice. Income levels are critical for attracting best candidates into the teaching profession. This partly explains why in high performing countries such as Singapore and South Korea, many top graduate students aspire to enter the teaching profession. However, teacher wage rates are very low in many OIC member countries. As indicated in SDG target-4, increasing the supply of qualified teachers must be a priority for the OIC countries.

On the other hand, evidence indicates that the level of competencies and knowledge among teachers remain low in the OIC member countries, particularly in schools serving the most excluded and poorest. Teachers lack the ability to transfer their own knowledge effectively to the students. Available options to improve teacher quality include contract-based appointment or the introduction of performance incentives. Pedagogical interventions that align teaching to student learning levels are also effective at improving student performance. Moreover, curricula reforms and teacher training should focus on the student’s understanding of the subjects and promote analysis instead of rewarding memorization.

Policy Advice 2: Increasing teaching and learning effectiveness through adoption and widespread use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) based new models.

Rationale:

In all assessments, the OIC as a group showed a declining trend in education quality, measured in terms of student achievement in math, science and reading. The use of ICT based teaching and learning models remain a popular choice to aid teachers and students to overcome such shortcomings. Jordan and Malaysia are two examples to OIC member countries which have launched new projects to improve the quality of education by investing in ICT infrastructure in education sector.

While the use of ICT-based teaching and learning models are popular and have some promising features, their success is not always guaranteed. Content design of ICT-based learning platforms is one of the important dimensions of this type of initiatives. Moreover, new ICT-based models should be tried in small-scales and only be scaled up following an evaluation of their impact on learning outcomes. Experiences of the OIC members who have made investments in this area can offer some guide to other members. Examples include distribution of low-cost tablet-PCs, establishing central online school monitoring and reporting systems.

Policy Advice 3: Promoting better early-childhood learning opportunities through accessible and affordable pre-primary schooling

Rationale:

Income poverty and poor health are system-wide problems that also limit early-life learning opportunities. The level of malnutrition is very high in some of the OIC member states; physical illness is a major cause of student absenteeism from school. Therefore, investments in child health and enhancing access to quality pre-primary schooling can go a long way for removing inequalities in learning opportunities at later stages of school education. The importance of early development is already recognized in the SDGs target 4.2 i.e. “ensuring that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education by 2030”.

Country-specific analysis of learning outcomes of Jordan, Malaysia and Nigeria confirm the importance of pre-primary schooling for later success in primary and secondary grades. According to one estimate, providing children with 3 years of Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) would increase the average secondary and tertiary educational attainment by 0.7 years. However, coverage of ECED differs throughout the OIC members. In many countries, participation rate in pre-primary education is low. In many instances, reliance on private providers limits access of the children from economically poor families or creates inequality in access to quality pre-primary education.

Policy Advice 4: Ensuring progressive universalism for closing the rich-poor gap in learning outcomes

Rationale:

Despite the reductions in poverty and increases in schooling rates in some OIC member countries, the gap between educational outcomes of students from rich and poor families persists. This socio-economic gap in learning is observed across the OIC region. The wealth gap is larger for the students studying at mainstream government schools in rural areas where the school quality is especially poor.

Findings in the context of all four case study countries of the research report indicate that income level of the family is strongly associated with student performance. Ensuring progressive universalism – allocating more resources to those who need it most – will require identifying children with learning deficits and effective mechanism to target them in the classroom and community. Only a few examples such as Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) in South Asia and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) schools in Jordan are observed to achieve success in providing quality education to students from economically disadvantaged families. More examples shall be identified across the OIC Region so that effective

pro-poor education models can be made wide-spread. Madrassahs³ may play an important role in pro-poor education, however, some set of reforms and regulations might be needed to improve the prospects of religious seminaries across the OIC Region.

Policy Advice 5: Enhancing and reinforcing accountability through parental engagement and involving parents in the monitoring of their children's education and intensifying the parent-teacher interaction to improve education delivery

Rationale:

The delivery of equitable quality education is a shared responsibility whereby different stakeholders work together and depend on each other. The lack of accountability is a system-wide challenge and key reason for the poor returns to public spending in education in the OIC member countries. Teacher truancy is a significant challenge in OIC countries. According to one survey including OIC countries, on average nearly 20 percent of teaching time is lost every year due to factors resulting in teachers being away from school.

Evidence indicates a positive association between student performance in PISA and parental engagement. Student achievement is low where school authorities report only a minority of parents applying pressure on academic standards or the pressure being "largely absent". Parents need to be kept up-to-date with what their children are studying and how they are progressing. This can enable parents to follow-up the progress by regularly consulting the teachers. Moreover, increasing the frequency of parent-teacher interaction can enable the school to provide parents with clear information on how to effectively contribute to their children's learning. In addition, schools can provide useful information to parents through a variety of communication methods such as home visits, publishing newsletters, and parent's handbooks.

Instruments to Realize the Policy Advices:

COMCEC Poverty Alleviation Working Group: In its subsequent meetings, the Working Group may elaborate on the above-mentioned policy areas in a more detailed manner.

COMCEC Project Funding: Under the COMCEC Project Funding, the COMCEC Coordination Office issues calls for project proposals each year. With the COMCEC Project Funding, the member countries participating in the Working Groups can submit multilateral cooperation projects to be financed through grants by the COMCEC Coordination Office. For realizing above-mentioned policy recommendations, the member countries can utilize the COMCEC Project Funding facility. These projects may include organization of seminars, training programs, study visits, exchange of experts, workshops and preparation of analytical studies, needs assessments and training materials/documents, etc.

³ While in Arabic, the word Madrasa refers to any type of educational institution (religious as well as non-religious), this refers to a specific model of education in some countries where the focus is on Islamic or Qur'anic education.

Annex 4: List of Participants

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS 11TH MEETING OF THE POVERTY ALLEVIATION WORKING GROUP 5 APRIL 2018, Ankara

A. MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE OIC

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

- Ms. SALIMA OUBOUSSAD
Sub Director, Ministry of National Solidarity, Family, and Woman Condition
- Mr. MUSTAQHA MEDJAHDI
Director, Ministry of National Education

ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

- Ms. AMANY FAHMY
Deputy Assistant Minister, ministry of foreign affairs
- Mr. AMR SELIM
Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Egypt in Ankara

REPUBLIC OF GABON

- Mr. MASSALA MANDONGAULT
First Counsellor, Embassy of Gabon in Ankara

REPUBLIC OF GAMBIA

- Ms. MARIAMA SAINE
Senior Economist, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs

REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

- Mr. FAHMI ARIS INNAYAH
Counsellor, Embassy of Indonesia in Ankara

REPUBLIC OF IRAQ

- Ms. KAWTHER AL OBAIDI
Deputy Director General, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
- Mr. THARWAT SALMAN
Commercial Attache, Embassy of Iraq in Ankara

THE STATE OF KUWAIT

- Mr. NABEEL AL-MEZYAD
Director of Inter. Economic Cooperation Dept., Ministry of Finance
- Mr. SALEM ALBATHER
Economic Researcher, Ministry of Finance



MALAYSIA

- Mr. ZAHIR MOHD IDRIS
Assistant Director for Educational Planning and Research Division, Ministry of Education of Malaysia
- Ms. UMO HANIK IDRUS
Education Expert, Ministry of Education of Malaysia

KINGDOM OF MOROCCO

- Ms. NOUZHA SAHEL
Counsellor, Embassy of Morocco in Ankara

SULTANATE OF OMAN

- Ms. MAYA AL HAJRI
Financial Analyst, Supreme Council for Planning –The General Secretariat
- Ms. SUAD AL FORI
Director, Ministry of Education

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN

- Mr. UMER SIDDIQUE
First Secretary, Embassy of Pakistan in Ankara

THE STATE OF PALESTINE

- Mr. NADIM MAKHALFA
General Director, Ministry of Education
- Mr. KHALED ABUKHATTAB
Director, Ministry of Social Affairs
- Ms. RANA ABUSIBAA
Counsellor, Embassy of Palestine in Ankara

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

- Mr. SAMI ALDAMIGH
General Manager, Ministry of Labour and Social Development

REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL

- Ms. AMINATA KANE
Head of Office of Bilateral Affairs, Ministry of Trade

REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

- Mr. MUSTAFA HİLMİ ÇOLAKOĞLU
Deputy Undersecretary, Ministry of Education
- Ms. AYŞE ÇELİKTEN
Head of Department, Minister of Family and Social Policy

- Ms. NİHAL GÖZÜYAŞLI
Teacher, Ministry of National Education
- Ms. AYŞENUR BÜLBÜL
Teacher, General Directorate of Lifelong Learning, Ministry of Education
- Ms. OLGA ŞANLI GERGER
Education Expert, General Directorate of EU and External Relations, Ministry of Education
- Ms. AYŞE GÜNAY GÖKBEN
Expert, Ministry of Education
- Ms. BAŞAK KARAKAYA
Interpreter, Minister of Family and Social Policy
- Ms. GÜLNUR AK KÜÇÜKÇAYIR
Teacher, General Directorate of EU and External Relations, Ministry of Education

B. THE OIC SUBSIDIARY ORGANS

STATISTICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING CENTER FOR ISLAMIC COUNTRIES (SESRIC)

- Mr. MAZHAR HUSSAIN
Researcher
- Ms. FATIMA ZAHRA KAMAL
Technical Cooperation Specialist

ECO Educational Institute

- Dr. MEHMET AKİF KİREÇÇİ
President of the ECO Educational Institute

C. INVITED INSTITUTIONS

CAMPAIGN FOR POPULAR EDUCATION (CAMPE)

- Mr. ENAMUL HOQUE
Deputy Director

UNICEF Ankara Office

- Dr. MEHMET BULDU
Quality Inclusive Education Unit Manager

CONSULTANT

- Dr. M. NIAZ ASADULLAH
Professor of Development Economics, University of Malaya



D. COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE

- Mr. SELÇUK KOÇ
Director
- Mr. BURAK KARAGÖL
Director
- Mr. MEHMET ASLAN
Director
- Mr. BİLGEHAN ÖZBAYLANLI
Expert
- Mr. SERVET ORÇUN ERPIŞ
Expert
- Mr. MEHMET AKİF ALANBAY
Expert
- Mr. MUSTAFA ADİL SAYAR
Expert
- Mr. HASAN YENİGÜL
Expert