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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION



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Regional Center For
Quality & Excellence in
Education
المركز الإقليمي للجودة
والتميز في التعليم

The Regional Workshop on

"Accreditation of Teacher Preparation Programs in the Arab Countries"

(Concept Note)

Attended by specialized thinkers and experts from
national, regional and international entities

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Thursday
2023/02/09

Saudi Time
10:00 am - 02:00 pm

UAE Time
11:00 am - 03:00 pm

Introduction:

Based on RCQE vision “to be the reliable regional reference for education quality and excellence” and mission “to provide innovative services for improving education quality and excellence across the Arab countries, and introducing a leading impact through innovative systems, standards and measures, and sustainable regional and international relations”, and based on RCQE endeavors to disseminate knowledge and best educational practices, support and prepare high-quality research on issues of education quality and excellence to meet the needs of Arab countries, as well as supporting the achievement of SDG4 targets and indicators 2030 in the Arab countries, the current study on “Accreditation of Teacher Preparation Programs in the Arab Countries” has been conducted under the supervision of RCQE.

This concept note summarizes the study, annexes, and national reports thereof (nearly six hundred pages in total). It is a large study, which analyzed regional and international experiences in the accreditation of teacher preparation programs, with the aim of identifying the gaps in relevant practices in several Arab countries in light of global experiences, so as to reach a guiding framework for designing teacher preparation programs accreditation systems in the Arab countries.

The need for this study emerged in response to recent reports which indicated that teacher preparation programs worldwide face many issues and challenges in most of educational institutions at all levels (Cochran-Smith, 2001; European Union, 2007; OECD, 2014). Recent research indicates that there are three types of challenges facing many developing countries in supporting teacher development: first, weakness in the specialized knowledge content, the pedagogical knowledge, and classroom skills; second, the low quality of pre-service and in-service teacher training, inadequate standards and certification and accreditation procedures; and third, the lack of ongoing support for teachers on the part of schools and districts (GPE, 2019, p10). Research in the Arab countries also revealed similar results, which highlighted major challenges facing teacher preparation. For example, traditional teacher training programs, and weak field training (practicum) component (Arab Education Observatory, 2014, and UNESCO, 2013). This resulted in poor professional, cultural, and academic preparation (Kanaan, 2009), added to that lack of equipment (Radwan and Al Deghidi, 2016), and adherence to traditional teaching. It was also found that quality assurance and accreditation systems are weak (UNDP-RBAD, 2006). Further, the most important issue is that there is an absence of a clear vision that defines educational choices and guides the process of teacher preparation (Sukaria, 2009).

The research treatment of the problem of the current study required analyzing and identifying the problem in three dimensions, which were reflected in three research questions that defined the parameters of the study's progress and methodology, as follows:

1. What are the best international experiences of accreditation for teacher preparation programs?
2. What are the current practices of accreditation of teacher preparation programs in Arab countries?
3. What is the proposed framework for designing quality assurance and accreditation systems for teacher preparation programs in the Arab countries?

The study aimed at identifying the current practices of the accreditation of teacher preparation programs in a number of Arab countries, identifying the gaps in those practices in light of the best international experiences, and finally developing a guiding framework for Arab countries to strengthen teacher preparation policies and the accreditation of teacher preparation programs in light of the best international experiences and practices.

The importance of this study stems from the following:

1. It sheds light on contemporary trends and developments in the field of quality assurance and accreditation of teacher preparation programs, which would help teacher preparation institutions in the Arab countries address challenges and keep pace with contemporary developments, thus contributing to controlling the outputs of teacher preparation programs on the assumption that this would lead to the improvement of the outcomes of the general education.

2. It identifies deficiencies in the current systems for the accreditation of teacher preparation programs in the Arab countries, which may help accreditation bodies re-design the systems to ensure the quality of teacher preparation programs.
3. It provides a framework for designing teacher education program accreditation systems, which is hoped that officials of accreditation bodies in the Arab countries would benefit from in re-designing teacher education accreditation systems.
4. It concludes scientific and evidence-based findings in light of modern global experiences - that can draw the attention of Arab researchers to the importance of quality assurance and accreditation of teacher preparation programs, to further study this area in order to contribute to its development and global access.

The study used a comparative analytical descriptive methodology, applied in two phases: In the first phase, a desk review of research and reports related to the accreditation of teacher preparation programs was carried out in a number of countries around the world, including the United States, England (in the UK), Singapore, Finland, Australia, Ontario (in Canada), India, and Brazil. Also, a number of quality assurance and accreditation frameworks for higher education institutions around the world were analyzed. In the second phase, a field study was conducted to describe the current practices of teacher preparation program accreditation in a number of Arab countries, including the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Sultanate of Oman, the Lebanese Republic, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Kingdom of Morocco, and the Republic of Yemen. Finally, these results were analyzed to come up with a proposed framework for designing quality assurance and accreditation systems for teacher preparation programs in the Arab countries.

The findings indicated that there is a variety of quality assurance and accreditation systems in the developed countries, either connected to governmental accreditation bodies (as in England) or semi-governmental accreditation bodies (as in Finland and Ontario) or independent accreditation bodies (as in America). The findings also showed that the developed countries are keen to set solid standards related to the teaching profession, which form a common framework that guides teacher preparation programs and form the basis for teaching licensing. Accreditation criteria were also found to differ according to the nature of the accreditation system. Further, the findings revealed that there is a set of trends/tensions among these systems, most notably: the nature of the accreditation body (governmental/independent), the accreditation approach (compliance/continuous improvement), accreditation standards (institutional/professional), duration of the accreditation (long/short), and costs of accreditation (fee/free).

The results of analyzing Arab countries experiences showed that the accreditation brought many benefits to teacher preparation programs, the most important of which are: the development of clear visions, assessment of learning outcomes, reformulation of field experience programs, transition from passive to active learning, encouragement of teamwork, and provision of sustainable professional development for faculty members. This resulted in improving the reputation of the accredited teacher preparation programs. On the other hand, it is found that there is a set of trends/tensions that prevail among the accreditation systems of teacher preparation programs in the Arab countries, including the identity of accreditation body (national/international), type of accreditation (institutional/ professional), and depth of the self-evaluation process (real/artificial), nature of the teacher preparation process (traditional/modern), credibility of the accreditation process (passing a test/long-term benefit), and nature of institutional culture (classical tradition/ culture of evidence).

In conclusion, a framework has been developed for designing accreditation systems for teacher preparation programs in the Arab countries, which is based on a "fitness-for-purpose" approach. The framework is based on a set of design principles that allows each Arab country to design its own framework according to its local context and conditions. The framework includes three main areas: governance of the quality assurance and accreditation system, accreditation standards, and quality assurance and accreditation process. The three areas cover seventeen elements of quality assurance and accreditation systems for teacher preparation programs.

Within this context, a regional workshop will be held in cooperation with the Ministry of Education in the United Arab Emirates under the patronage of His Excellency Minister Dr. Ahmed Belhouel Al Falasi to review the

outcomes of the study project and discuss its recommendations. The findings of this project may enable decision makers select what suits their countries based on each country circumstances that affect educational policy decisions. The Arab countries can make good use of the outcomes and recommendations of this project. Particularly, the Arab countries have now comparative and developmental frameworks that have been studied extensively and scientifically, whose results can be relied on in developing policies and systems for preparing pre-service teachers in faculties of education, and in accrediting their teacher preparation programs according to the best current global experiences and practices, as well as providing solutions to the challenges they face. This opens new horizons to learn about different methods, that might be innovative and applicable. The ultimate goal is to help the Arab countries review their local accreditation systems in line with the changes of the twenty-first century.

Objectives

1. Promote discussions and cooperation at the Arab region level on standards and mechanisms of academic accreditation of education faculty programs in the Arab countries.
2. Review the outcomes of the study conducted by RCQE on “The status of the Accreditation of Teacher Preparation Programs in the Arab Countries” in light of the global experiences and setting guidelines for the benefit of faculties of education in Arab countries to enhance teacher preparation policies in accordance with the best international experiences.
3. Support the endeavors of education systems in the Arab countries to achieve the indicators of SDG4.
4. Review a proposed framework for designing systems for quality assurance and accreditation for teacher preparation programs in the Arab countries.

Topics:

1. Review the outcomes of the study in the domains related to the policies and systems of the accreditation of teacher preparation programs.
2. Highlight the leading international practices and trends in international comparison in accreditation of teacher preparation programs and their reflection on educational reform trends.
3. Presenting the proposed framework for designing quality assurance and accreditation systems for teacher preparation programs in the Arab countries.

Participants:

The workshop will be attended by several experts, researchers, decision makers, academics, teachers, school directors, representatives of ministries of education and quality concerned officials. The attendees will also include representatives of national, regional and international organizations and institutions

Workshop Strategy:

The workshop will be held for one day to review the outcomes of the study on “Policies and systems of curriculum development in general education in the Arab countries”. participants will have the chance to communicate and share best practices. The participation is open for specialists and interested persons in education quality and excellence.

Workshop Language:

The language of the workshop will be Arabic. Simultaneous interpretation into English will be provided via ZOOM.

Organizer:

UNESCO Regional Center for Quality and Excellence in Education in cooperation with the Ministry of Education in the United Arab Emirates.

Invited Organizations:

1. UNESCO Regional Centers and Offices.
2. Regional and international organizations.
3. Ministries of Education in the Arab countries.
4. National commissions for Education, Culture and Science.
5. Education evaluation bodies in the Arab countries.
6. Experts, specialists and interested persons.

Expected outcomes:

The main expected outcomes of this workshop are as follows:

1. Shared perceptions on the status of policies and systems of the accreditation of teacher preparation programs in the targeted Arab countries.
2. Defining and expanding the understanding of the best practices (regional and international) in the field of policies and systems of the accreditation of teacher preparation programs in a number of the developed countries.
3. Recommendations to educational decision makers for developing policies and systems for accreditation of teacher preparation programs in Arab countries in the light of international best practices.

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