

The Literacy Hub for the Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA)  
End User and Steering Committee Conference  
October 27 and 28, 2008  
Marrakech, Morocco

DRAFT OF MINUTES

Annex: (A) list of the participants

October 27 (Monday).

1. The meeting was opened with a welcome by Mohammad Sarwar Hussaini, Ministry of Education, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan as well as by El Habib Nadir, Director of Literacy, Department of Literacy and Non Formal Education - Ministry of Education – Morocco. This was followed by an introduction to the purpose and history of the BMENA Literacy Hub by Elizabeth Sturtevant, International Editor of the Literacy Hub. Also, an overview of accomplishments of the first meeting in Qatar was provided by Shafiq Qarizada, Senior Advisor to the Education Minister, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.
2. In the second hour of the meeting, a guided demonstration of the function of the on-line database was provided by-Elizabeth Sturtevant, International Editor. This included an overview of the following items: document searches, links, educational opportunities, calendar, and other resources.
3. Aminullah Adel, regional editor then provided an overview of the features of the Arabic side of the Literacy Hub as well as goals for future development.
4. Aminullah Adel provided an overview of Six Year Action Plan as established in the Doha meeting in July (three phases: establishment; coordination; evaluation). There was discussion of the appropriateness of the term “coordination” for phase II and other terms were suggested.
5. Shafiq Qarizada then led a discussion of important topics related to the future of the Literacy Hub, including
  - Who will assist the development of the Hub from each country? Suggestions included that each country make an action plan for the development of the literacy hub. Also, that countries work on their country pages; that they train people in own countries how to use the hub; that they select a person to develop materials or do translation; organize workshops in the country; and connect use of the Hub to university training.
  - Who will support the work of the Literacy Hub in terms of funding and other involvement? Most participants felt that steering committee members should be responsible for involving others from their countries. Also that it was important to coordinate with other international agencies in each country both to gain their expertise on literacy programs, to seek their advice on possible funding sources, and to gain documents related to literacy from their organizations (such as UNESCO).
  - Who will support the work of the editor by seeking reviewers and documents for the Hub? Again, it was noted that the Steering Committee should work on this in individual countries and communicate to the Editor. *The Editor makes decisions about*

*which documents to post, after consultation with the Editorial Review Board.* It would be very helpful if translators could be found to translate abstracts of documents currently on the Hub into Arabic, and also to translate documents posted in the future in Arabic into English (abstracts only – not translation of entire documents except in rare circumstances). It was noted that while journals in English are often translated to Arabic, the reverse does not happen frequently. This could be a role of the Literacy Hub if translators were available.

- Other aspects of the morning discussion:
  1. Steering committee members agreed that they should go back to their countries and talk to others about the importance of the Literacy Hub and the resources (intellectual, financial, and organizational) that might be available to support the Hub. They agreed to a 12 month timeline for this work, with reporting at the next Steering Committee meeting (time and place to be decided.)
  2. Steering committee members should also seek reviewers for the review board and send names to Editor Aminullah Adel at [editor@literacyhub.org](mailto:editor@literacyhub.org). Aminullah Adel agreed to send to everyone a reviewer application and job description that they could share with others. It was emphasized that this was a voluntary position. In the past two years over 100 English language reviewers and a few reviewers with different languages had volunteered many hours to the review board. About 25 of these reviewers have volunteered to remain on the Literacy Hub review board, but many more from the BMENA countries were needed.

October 28 (Tuesday)

- 1) Elizabeth Sturtevant, International Editor, provided an overview of the review process used during the past two years. She showed an example of a document sent to her as editor, examples of two reviews of the document, and an example of the summary she wrote from the review. It was noted that only the summary and the document would be posted on the Literacy Hub (not the individual reviews). Names of the reviewers are kept confidential so that only the Editor knows what the opinion of each reviewer was towards a particular document. This serves to enable reviewers to provide their opinion openly with the editor. The editor is responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of the reviews.
- 2) Editorial Review Board Member Samia Elbassiouny from the Emirate College for Advanced Education, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates provided an overview of the role of the reviewer, based on her experience as a review board members for the past two years.
- 3) Safiq Qarizada and Aminullah Adel led a discussion on immediate concerns as well as the future of the Literacy Hub, as follows:
  - The Editor (Aminullah Adel) will need to focus on immediate concerns related to the transition of the Literacy Hub in the next few months (addition of Arabic speaking reviewers to the review board, implementing a process for obtaining documents from each county, supporting the development of the country web pages, sending new documents for reviews, and technical issues related to maintaining the web page.).
  - Future concerns the Editor will need to address include adding additional languages to the Literacy Hub, asking individuals to write new documents for the Hub related to literacy issues in the BMENA region, and assisting in planning the next meeting of the Steering Committee and possible seminars for users of the Literacy Hub.

4) Future Issues of the Literacy Hub were discussed, Including the following:

a) Funding for future meetings. Three options were discussed:

- Funding by one country for the meeting
- Each country funding its own representatives
- Finding a new donor.

Discussion included that:

- There are both individual as well as meeting expenses that have to be paid. (For example, rooms for participants as well as meeting rooms.)
- If countries have to pay for their own participants, some countries might not participate due to lack of funds or differing priorities.
- Mr. Sakil Malik, International Reading Association, noted that hosting the meeting costs \$50,000-\$60,000. He also noted that using all three options might be possible (not to eliminate any possibility). It is also possible for a country to give a donation to a Literacy Hub general fund that could be established.
- Another possibility is to send a letter could go to the G8 nations to request a contribution for the next phase. The U.S. has been the only funder to date. The Steering Committee could send a letter discussing the 6 year plan and what should be funded.

b) Communication

- There was concern about past communication; it was noted that if you do not receive email and minutes, please contact the editor, Aminullah Adel, editor@literacyhub.org.
- Please contact Aminullah Adel about any inaccuracies in the list of participants. He needs to maintain an accurate list of Steering Committee members from each country.
- Minutes will be sent in English and Arabic. If you cannot download the documents, please let Aminullah know.
- Need to create a place on the website for all documentation, including the minutes.
- Minutes will be sent to the Minister of Education and cc. to the Steering Committee member. Please contact Aminullah if you would like something different. We will first share a draft of the minutes with the Steering Committee members.

c) Agreements

- It was agreed that countries will think about hosting a meeting and discuss it with their ministries and inform the Afghanistan members if they can host a meeting.
- Contributions – representatives will discuss this with others in their own countries, including their Ministry of Education, possible private donors, organizations, and so forth.

d) Role of the steering committee

Two groups formed to discuss this role. The recommendations were that the Steering Committee could form a bridge between the government and the donors, and play a coordination role among stakeholders. Members should also advertise the Hub and take part in all conferences and meetings. In addition, they should send documents that could be of

interest to the Hub to the Editor and assist in recruiting review board members. In addition, the Steering Committee member will be responsible for finding individuals to work on their country's home page.

- e) Final comments from members: All steering committee members thanked the organizers of the meeting as well as the Moroccan Ministry of Education for sponsoring the meeting. The Moroccan representatives thanked everyone for attending the meeting and noted that the Literacy Hub should build on what is already being done and should consider languages that will reach additional people, such as French and Farsi. The representatives from Oman noted that they would like minutes as quickly as possible due to a meeting of the G8 in their country on November 2.

Mohammad Sarwar Hussaini, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan made closing remarks thanking everybody who participated, as well as the representatives of Morocco, Afghanistan, and the International Reading Association for organizing and leading the meeting.

Draft prepared by Dr. Elizabeth Sturtevant, International Editor.

Country	Full name	Position
USA	Sakil Mohammad Malik	Project Manager
	Elizabeth G. Sturtevant	International Editor for Literacy Hub
Mauritania	Khadija al-Sheikh	Director of programming of statistics and cooperation
Pakistan	Muhammad Akram	Joint Educational Adviser
	Sajjad Haider	Research Officer (Literacy)
Jordan	Abdallah Sahou AL Naser	Head Division of Informal Education
Kuwait	Owaid Atiq Al Saedi	Observer, Adult Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education
Morocco	El Habib Nadir	Director of Literacy Department
	Mrs. Kaoutar Sussi Ahmadi	Chief of Planning and Mapping Department
	Ms Fatima Yacine	Chief of Curricula Department
Oman	Dr. Salim Rashid Sulaiman Al-Sakiti	Educational Researcher in the Office of the Minister Of Education
	Dr.Rashid Mohammed Salim Al-hajri	Educational Researcher
Qatar	Ali Yousef AlMahmoud	Director of Adult Education
	Mohammed Hamid Mohammed Al Shammari	Researcher of literacy exams
Afghanistan	Shafiq Ahmad Qarizada	Senior Adviser to Minister of Education
	Mohammad Sarwar Hussaini	Deputy Education Minister (Literacy)
	Aminullah Adel	Regional Editor
UAE	Samia Elbassiouny	Reviewer of the Literacy Hub