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KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN COUNTRY PROGRAMME 2003 - 2007

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

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The Kingdom of Bahrain

Independent External Evaluators:

Geraldine Gibbons
Geraldine.gibbons@yahoo.com

Dr. Saeed Hussain Assistant Professor Arabian Gulf University
syamani@agu.edu.bh

Dr. Najat S. Al-Hamdan Assistant Professor Arabian Gulf University
Najatsa@agu.edu.bh

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1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This draft Evaluation Report would not have been possible without the open and informed contributions from the UNDP Bahrain Country Office and the project partners from the Government of Bahrain Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Ministry of Finance; the Government Organisation on Youth and Sport; the Ministry of Education; the Parliament; the Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Environmental Affairs (Environmental Affairs Committee) and the Awal Women's Society. Their generous time and valuable suggestions are most sincerely appreciated.

The UNDP management and staff provided full logistical and administrative support to enable the evaluation team to meet with a wide range of national and international partners and participants during the eight work days in Bahrain. All participants were willing to express their opinions about the project and their ideas for the future in an honest and impartial manner.

Finally, I wish to express my team's appreciation for the open access to information and generous use of their time provided by all the persons with whom we consulted and whose names and positions appear in Annex 1.

2. LIST OF ACRONYMS USED

CCA	Country Common Assessment
CP	Country Programme for Bahrain 2003 - 2007
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
GOYS	Government Organisation for Youth and Sport
MoEdu	Ministry of Education
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NES	National Environmental Strategy
NEAP	National Environmental Action Plan
NYS	National Youth Strategy
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The UNDP Bahrain and its project implementing partners are in the process of rolling out the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) for 2012 – 2016. The aim of this evaluation is to review and evaluate the efficiency and success of the previous Country Programme (CP) cycle which was for the period 2003 to 2007. This evaluation is to provide lessons learnt and to make recommendations to improve modalities and management approaches to feed into implementation of the ongoing CPAP 2008 – 2011 as well as future programmes.

The CP 2003 – 2007 has made a considerable contribution to the building of capacity within the Kingdom of Bahrain. It has been delivered in a timely manner and in line with the objectives set out in the results and resources framework in relation to Governance, Poverty Reduction and Environment. In this regard the relevance and effectiveness of the CP 2003 -2007 was significant.

The CP 2003 -2007 was designed to promote and implement sustainable human development strategies and programmes, based on national priorities, in line with the Kingdom of Bahrain reform agenda and in consultation with the Government, NGOs, donors and other UN agencies.

The CP 2003 – 2007 was informed by, and designed on, the basis of the UN Common Country Assessment¹ (CCA) which was produced on 2002. The UN Country Team identified five major national development areas for analysis in the CCA which included Economy and Employment; Governance and Human Rights; Gender and Women's Rights as well as Social Development and Environment. Three of these key development challenges guided the formulation of the CP 2003 -2007 namely Governance, Environment and Poverty.

The CP 2003 - 2007 was also guided and directed by Bahrain's Commitments under the National Action Charter (the principles of Economic Freedom; Diversification of Economic Activities and National Income Sources and Support to Labour and Training). It was also informed by Bahrain's Commitment to the UN Millennium Summit "We resolve to develop strong partnership with the private sector and with civil society organisations in pursuit of development and poverty eradication" and "We resolve to develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work". Bahrain also expressed its commitment to ensure environmental sustainability and to ".integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resource."

The scope of the CP 2003 - 2007 covered three portfolios. The Governance portfolio was the largest and comprised nineteen projects with a total budget of US\$ 7,347,204 of which the Bahrain government contributed US\$ 7,004,704. The Environment portfolio comprised three projects with a total budget of US\$ 659,042 and to which the Bahrain government contributed US\$ 635,042. The Poverty portfolio comprised one project to assess social development programmes at a cost of US\$ 162,107.

This Evaluation covered 20% of the projects in the CP 2003 – 2007 portfolio. The projects were selected to ensure a balanced spread between the main thematic areas of the Governance, Environment and Poverty portfolios which were priority for the CP 2003

¹ Kingdom of Bahrain UN Common Country Assessment Manana 2002

– 2007. The selection of projects also took into account the different national project partners involved in the delivery of the projects and also the mixed results and difference performance levels of various projects. This selection process enabled a representative sample of results to be derived on which to draw the lessons learnt.

The selected projects comprised: National Youth Strategy and Enhancing the Quality of Education which are considered by UNDP and the Government of Bahrain as strategically important issues. These evaluations were undertaken in considerable depth and form the Case Studies in Annex 5 and Annex 6. In addition, short evaluations were conducted on the National Environment Strategy and Action Plan; the Strengthening the Institution of the Shura Council and the Council of Representatives in Bahrain and the Micro Start project.

The process by which the CP 2003 – 2007 was developed, discussed and agreed upon is excellent and the processes by which particular projects were developed and launched to deliver on the CP is also extremely good.

What is less impressive is oversight of the projects as they are being implemented. Bahrain is a net contributor country (approximately US\$ 7 million from 2003 to 2007). As such it receives no UNDP core programme funding. Implementation of the projects and their monitoring and evaluation to ensure that objectives, outputs and activities are delivered in accordance with the contractual requirements are the prime responsibility of the Government or other Implementing Agency.

The sample of projects that were evaluated revealed the need for more rigorous time bound project planning, more professional project management during implementation and the timely completion of periodic progress reports to an acceptable standard format by the implementing agency and regular monitoring by the UN Country office.

Although the sample of projects that were evaluated represented only 20% of the CP 2003 -2007 the impact of the CP in relation to the sample could have been higher. However since these sample projects were implemented a number of years ago the Evaluation Team were advised that improved procedures to improve the above shortcomings are now in place.

The five projects that were evaluated were all extremely important to the strategic priorities of the Government of Bahrain and largely funded by them. The evaluation revealed the following:

National Youth Strategy and Action Plan for Implementation

This project was designed to develop a National Youth Strategy, the first in the Arab Region, as well as a number of Action Plans to implement the Youth Strategy. It was well developed and very well managed using a collaborative consultative holistic approach to integrate youth and those dealing with youth issues in the national development process. Thus far, it was excellent and a pioneer in consultative bottom up strategic development. It was extremely relevant to Bahrain and the implementation process was extremely efficient. It had the potential considerable success in making a tangible impact on the development of young people. A detailed Case Study Evaluation of the Youth project is attached as Annex 5.

However, the implementing partner GOYS showed little interest in the development of the project, apparently since the focus was on Youth rather than on Sport and there was little interest on the part of GOYS in implementation of the Action Plans. As a result the effectiveness and impact of the project was not significant. The Youth Strategy was

endorsed by His Royal Highness the King but the action plans to deliver on the strategy were never implemented to any significant extent. The result was that this project ultimately represented a wasted opportunity to give young people in Bahrain a valuable opportunity to develop their full potential.

Despite this lack of interest on the part of GOYS, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and a number of other organisations have seized the initiatives developed under the project to integrate and implement some of the action plans relevant to their sector and within their own financial means. In so doing, these organisations are to be commended.

2. *Enhancing the Quality of Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain*

This project was to be implemented by the Ministry of Education (MoEdu). The objective was to enhance the quality and relevance of education in Bahrain and to improve the MoEdu capacity in policy and strategic formulation and to improve organisational efficiency. The project employed many consultants and many research papers were written as part of the process of assessing the quality of education.

The project drew attention to the strong and weak points and these many reports may provide valuable reference material. However, what the project failed to do was to present the ways and means for the MoEdu to improve and enhance the quality of education that they provide. There is no evidence that the many detailed assessments that were undertaken and the training provided to some staff have led to discernable improvement in the quality of education in Bahrain.

The objectives to strengthen skills in policy and strategic formulation and the know-how needed to improve organisational efficiency within MoEdu received comparatively less attention than did the research papers on the quality of education. As a result of this project there is scant evidence that the MoEdu is indeed better equipped to respond to the educational challenges facing the Kingdom of Bahrain. The implementation process was insufficiently effective or efficient and no tangible or measurable impact was evident to the Evaluation Team.

Strengthen the Institutions of the Shura Council and the Council of Representatives in Bahrain.

This project aimed to develop the institutional framework and capacity of the Shura Council and the Council of Representatives and to build the capacities of the Members, senior officials and the supporting staff. This was a very successful project. It was for the right institution, at the right time and very well implemented by like minded professionals. It was justifiably extended twice.

The project was extremely relevant to the needs of the Government, efficiently organised and delivered by the UNDP consultants and the staff of the Shura Council and Council of Representatives. It resulted in effective and sustainable impact.

National Environmental Strategy and Action Plan (NES and NEAP) for the Kingdom of Bahrain

This project was to prepare a National Environmental Strategy and a National Environmental Action Plan. These documents were prepared by international and national experts and finally approved by the Council of Representatives in October 2006. In this regard the project had high levels of relevance and efficiency. The main weakness was the endless turnover of senior staff in the Environmental Agency. This

resulted in the strategy constantly changing to meet the needs of new senior staff in the Environmental Agency. The Environmental Action Plan was not implemented as a comprehensive package of measures but some of the proposals were possibly taken into account and one of the action plans was partially implemented. As such performance in relation to effective success and impact was only moderate.

A new UNDP project is under development to build up the capacity of the newly created Environmental Commission which has replaced the Environmental Agency; to update the strategy and to begin operational implementation. The Commission were clear in their requirement for a more practical project to be developed rather than more reports and they emphasised the need for more national experts to be involved in the project.

Micro Start Project

This initially very small project was extremely successful in introducing micro credit to Bahrain by creating a sustainable credit delivery and management capacity in two national welfare societies (NGO's). From this firm foundation, the range and impact of microfinance has expanded and the annual turnover which has grown from 1 million to 3 million Bahraini Dinar. This project is having a measurable impact on the unemployment situation and social assistance programmes to alleviate poverty and particularly in relation to women and youth.

Conclusion

It is be concluded that the sample of projects implemented during the CP 2003 – 2007 and which had a total budget of US\$ 8 million produced mixed results. Factors which contributed to success were primarily the clarity of the project design and the detail of the logical framework; the interest on the part of the relevant Bahrain government organisation in the project; the government's commitment to implement the recommendations; the quality of the national and international consultants and the oversight and monitoring provided by the UNDP Country Office.

As important as it was to evaluate the design and delivery of the CP 2003 – 2007, it was equally important to evaluate the role and contribution of the UNDP Country Office and the Government of Bahrain in this process. The evaluation mission also had the objective to understand the sustainability of programme results including ownership of the project implementing partners; the level of satisfaction of programme stakeholders and beneficiaries with the results and whether UNDP was effectively positioned and partnered to achieve maximum impact.

This evaluation was conducted some years after the end of the CP 2003 – 2007. This has allowed time for reflection on the extent of achievement of the above associated objectives. In relation to this it is concluded that:

Whilst in general the CP 2003 – 2007, as illustrated above, was in line with Bahrain's country priorities and goals at that time, success in a particular project within the programme relied on projects being developed in response to the specific targeted needs of the national implementing partners. In cases where project implementation was driven and directed by national partners then ownership and sustainability of results was largely assured. Equally in such cases, then the level of relevance, effectiveness, and satisfaction with results was also assured. In the sample of projects evaluated this was not always the case and the result was overall sub average performance.

The most important lesson from this is for UNDP to respond to demand from the Government of Bahrain and to design programmes that are based on specific and well

supported national needs and priorities whilst being within the overall framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Although this process must also take into account other international strategic priorities to the UNDP family and recognising that while these are important they should not drive the programme design since they may not always be specifically relevant or appropriate to the current situation in Bahrain.

Of the sample of projects evaluated there were two clear examples where the level of satisfaction of the programme stakeholders with the results of the projects were very high. These were the Parliament and Micro Credit projects. Both projects were small scale and high impact with results clearly replicable and sustainable. This is not to say that the other projects in the sample were not as successful but rather that there was insufficient evidence available during the evaluation to comment favourably on stakeholder satisfaction. For example whilst the Youth project was extremely well integrated into the CP 2003 – 2007 the implementation of the Youth Strategy and Implementation Action Plan was extremely limited. This comment applies equally to the Environment Strategy and Implementation Action Plan which although both strategies were extremely appropriate for the Government of Bahrain they never came to fruition to any significant extent.

The most important lesson from this is for the Government of Bahrain to examine very carefully the national commitment to prioritise future projects for UNDP support and to provide an appropriate institutional agency with responsibility for delivery of results. This also needs much closer oversight on the part of both parties to ensure that the project objectives and results are actually delivered as contracted in time, to the required technical standards and where appropriate implemented by the designated Government Implementing Agency.

The effectiveness and relevance of implementation strategies and implementation mechanisms could be improved. The implementation of project deliverables was never clearly and specifically defined and largely left to chance. The Youth and Education projects were classic examples of this. The Evaluation Team were advised by the Country Office that in both projects “implementation goes beyond the scope of both Youth and Education projects”. The Evaluation Team consider that a key lesson learnt for future programming is for all parties is to tighten their control over projects during every stage of implementation and where necessary to steer them to produce the tangible sustainable results that were expected when the projects were designed and funds to execute them were committed by the Government of Bahrain and the UNDP.

Another key lessons learnt for all parties is to design the next CP based on small scale specific projects that address tangible needs for the Government of Bahrain; to select the appropriate national institutions that really need the project and are committed to delivering the results; and to overseeing and managing the project implementation. Unless this happens, too many well designed projects which are of national importance may drift and fail to deliver as expected. Much closer oversight by the Government of Bahrain is needed to achieve this success.

The Youth and the Environment projects of the CP 2003 – 2007 both produced good quality and highly relevant strategic proposals as well as action plans for the implementation of these proposals. Despite this they were never implemented to any great degree and remain largely on paper. Irrespective, new projects for strategic development proposals in both Youth and Environment are planned for the upcoming CP. The value of these projects to make a tangible impact for Bahrain has to be questioned unless the root causes of earlier non implementation of the first generation projects are first resolved.

UNDP has a strong competitive advantage over other donors to support the capacity needs of the Government of Bahrain during implementation of a CP. UNDP is held in very high regard by the Government of Bahrain as an international organisation which is fully committed to development for all countries in accordance with national priorities and the Millennium Development Goals. Based on the evidence received the evaluation team recognises this and which is to the credit of the current UNDP Country Office.

Although more regular formal dialogue with the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is now the norm through the tripartite partnership between the MoF; the MoFA and UNDP as well as annual joint project evaluations this alone will not enhance the design of future CP's and the delivery of existing ones. Notwithstanding the personalities involved on all sides it is very important that regular reviews are conducted to assess the lessons learnt and to feed these into joint work on the future strategy options and remedial actions needed as the CPAP 2008 – 2011 and beyond is rolled out.

4. THE EVALUATION METHODOLOGICAL PROCESS

The purpose of this evaluation report is to provide an independent external evaluation of the Bahrain Country Programme for 2003 to 2007. It was commissioned by the UNDP Country Office Bahrain to provide a balanced assessment of the performance of the Country Programme and to draw on lessons learnt for the future development of the UNDP programmes in Bahrain.

The evaluation methodology has comprised extensive research and study of documentation in order to understand the programmes progress towards achieving its mission, objectives, activities and achievements. Particular attention was paid to the two highest performing projects namely enhancing the quality of education and the development of a national youth strategy.

Following this desk research, a number of ministries and individuals were selected for in depth discussions. A detailed consultation and interview meeting schedule was then drawn up with the UNDP Evaluation Task Manager and supported by key areas of discussion as appropriate.

An indicative Activity Schedule/Work Plan for the mission was then developed and updated as the mission proceeded. It is attached in Annex 4:

This report represents the first draft evaluation report and it has been accompanied by two specialised evaluation reports/case studies drafted by the national consultants. One report was on Enhancing the Quality of Education project and one on the Developing a National Youth Strategy and Action plan.

Following submission of this first draft report the UNDP Evaluation Task Manager and the evaluation team will now exchange opinions, add information and clarify matters where necessary. Upon receipt of feedback on the draft the evaluation team will provide a final evaluation report on the Country Programme 2003 - 2007.

The following broad questions have been extracted from the evaluation mission Terms of Reference as particularly relevant:

- To what extent the CP and the two projects have been relevant, appropriate and strategic to national goals and the UNDP mandate?
- To what extent the actual management mechanisms (including coordination, planning, implementation, reporting, monitoring and communication) are in accordance with the stipulated CP management design?
- Where operational strategies (including planning, execution modalities and arrangements for the implementation of the programme) adequate to achieve timely and effective programme implementation?
- Has the programme design responded/taken into consideration to specific country needs and conditions?
- Where monitoring, evaluation and internal control and accountability systems adequate to enable UNDP and its partners to demonstrate programme results?
- To what extent the outputs and outcome(s) of the CP and the two projects have led to benefits beyond the life of the programme(s)/project(s)?
- Are programme components and approaches replicable by national implementing partners upon ending UNDP programmes?
- Did the programme design include strategies to ensure sustainability?

- To what extent the projects have supported the Government of Bahrain to improve the quality of lives of Bahraini citizens? ²

² TOR for the Evaluation of the UNDP Country Programme 2003 – 2007 Kingdom of Bahrain

5. BACKGROUND TO THE COUNTRY PROGRAMME 2003 – 2007

The CP 2003 – 2007 was developed on the basis of lessons learnt during a review of an earlier CP. This earlier review proposed that the CP 2003 – 2007 be:

- more focused and less ambitious;
- that funding be on a programme rather than a project by project basis;
- that coordination between partners be improved;
- that a cost recovery scheme be implemented;
- that the country office capacity be enhanced to become a knowledge base office.

These lessons learnt from the earlier CP were mainly taken on board and integrated into the design of the CP 2003 – 2007. Programming was more tightly concentrated into the three main portfolios of Governance, Environment and Poverty. Funding was also allocated to the portfolios in response to national and UNDP strategic priorities. The result was 19 projects under the Governance portfolio with a budget of US\$ 7,347,204; 3 projects in the Environment portfolio with a budget of US\$ 659,041 and 1 project in the Poverty portfolio with a budget of US\$ 162,107.

The cost recovery scheme was previously loosely defined with tranches of funds released by the MoF on request from UNDP rather than with the production of evidence based verifiable progress reports to justify past expenditure and future work programmes. These weaknesses appear to have been taken in board by both parties. The format for quarterly progress reports has been refined and improved in accordance with the Government's requirements. Project objectives and corresponding outputs are clearly spelt out. Against each output the progress made is defined together with the expected completion date. The progress report requires that issues and follow up actions are recorded and that the next quarterly work plan be attached. The joint signatures of both the Government Implementing Agency and the UNDP Country Office are also required. In addition a semi formal joint UNDP/Government of Bahrain end-of-project assessment is now undertaken.

The need for improved coordination with partners primarily relates to relations with the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since they have national level responsibility for agreeing to the projects and for the financing of the country programme. Of the total CP 2003 – 2007 budget of US\$ 8,424,277, the Government of Bahrain contributes US\$ 7,801,852. Interviews with ministry officials indicated that in recent years the coordination with the UNDP country office has improved considerably. Improved relations were due to the establishment of formal mechanisms for consultation with the formation of the tripartite committee between the MoFA; the MoF and UNDP and also an improvement in informal relations as a result of changes in key personnel on all sides.

The capacity of the country office to become a knowledge-based office was difficult to assess since the situation in the office at the time of this recommendation arising from the previous CP review was not known. It was very evident that the staff of the current Country Office was hard working and very committed professionals who went out of their way to help the evaluation team.

What was also clear was that the responsibility for the same projects changes from one officer to another during the course of the project life cycle. This lack of continuity and

the chaotic filing and limited availability of previous project information both manual and electronic brings into question the ability of the Country Office to be a knowledge base. This is regrettable since it makes the tasks of the staff far more difficult when they cannot draw on the rich resources of past projects to learn lessons for the future.

The staff appeared to be more focussed on programme design and the planning of new projects rather than on task management and monitoring of existing projects. Given that the role of this Country Office is somewhat unusual in that Bahrain is a net contributor the responsibility for task management and monitoring may be more appropriately placed with the appropriate ministry. Irrespective it should be given more attention and adequate financial provision for this important function should be incorporated into the project budget.

In conclusion, this evaluation was undertaken in October 2010 whilst some of the above weaknesses were revealed in a review of the CP 1997 – 2002. It is important to note that although some eight years had elapsed between the two reviews the evaluation of projects from the CP 2003 – 2007 revealed little evident of any significant improvements in the above areas. That said the elapsed time made it extremely difficult for the evaluation team to collect comprehensive historical data on the projects and to always meet the most informed people who had been actively involved during project implementation.

6 EVALUATION COMPONENTS

6.1 Bahrain National Youth Strategy

This project was extremely successful in so far as it went. A detailed Evaluation Case Study is available in Annex 5.

The project document was signed in August 2003 between UNDP and the Deputy President of GOYS with one year duration. The objective was to develop a National Youth Strategy which was to be implemented through an Action Plan and which would focus on capacity building for youth related projects in different national institutions. The strategy would address priority youth issues such as education, health, employment, culture, ICT, social security, environment, sports and leisure time.

The intended outputs contained in Section 2 of the Project Document, Project Results and Resources Framework was mainly achieved. These included: the establishment of thematic groups for the identification of challenges; an interactive web site constructed; a Youth strategy prepared and submitted to the highest authority; a plan of action showing projects, joint responsibilities; and budget estimations; the formation of a follow up unit. What did not appear to happen was the formation of an evaluation unit to follow up on implementation of the action plan and any planned implementation.

With a total budget of US\$ 353,000 the Youth project had the potential to be a high impact and comparatively low budget project. It was fully in line with very specific Bahraini needs and conditions at that time. The programme design included a set of specific, realistic and achievable strategies/activities in the Action plan in order to ensure sustainability and to support the Government of Bahrain to improve the quality of life for Bahraini citizens.

The quality of professional input into this project was excellent as was the standard of reporting. Much less impressive was the interest on the part of GOYS who were ultimately responsible for ownership and implementation of this project. For a number of reasons including the focus of GOYS primarily on sport there was effectively no demonstrable interest in implementing the resultant youth related projects and a valuable opportunity to support Bahraini youth was lost. The legal context governing the in-principle agreement between UNDP and GOYS in which the activities were to be implemented was not finally delivered on.³

In recognition of the strategic importance of youth and the achievements of this project the UNDP commissioned a Full Review of the National Youth Strategy in October 2009.⁴ Section B records the reasons for the failure of the Youth Strategy to achieve implementation status and in particular pages 4 and 5 which draw attention to "Should the UNDP and the Government of Bahrain decide to offer further support to Bahraini youth it is essential that a number of critical realities be understood, accepted and minimised if success is to be achieved with any future youth strategy."

³ Bahrain National Youth Strategy approved signed Project Document between UNDP and GOYS dated 4 August 2003.

⁴ National Youth Strategy Full Project Review by Peter Kenyon former Project Manager October 2009 Peterkenyon7@bigpond.com

6.2 Enhancing the Quality of Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain

This project was designed as a result of a lengthy series of assessment and evaluation missions conducted by UNESCO. The project was for one year during 2004 and the budget was US\$ 508,820.

The objective was to improve the Ministry of Education (MoEdu) quality and relevance of education and its capacity in policy and strategic formulation and to increase its organisational efficiency. It was hoped that the results of the project would assist the MoEdu to create the necessary structure and strengthen the know how in order to improve the MoEdu performance in enhancing the quality of education.

The evaluation of this project was severely hindered by the lack of historical information on this project, totally inadequate progress reports and the non availability of people who had been actively involved in the project.

What was in evidence albeit towards the end of the evaluation mission was a number of weighty academic reports written by different consultants. The extent to which these reports had moved the MoEdu forward in responding to the challenges facing the Kingdom of Bahrain and in particular in enhancing the quality of education is questionable.

More detail on this project is contained in Annex 6 Case Study Evaluation of the project entitled 'Enhancing the Quality of Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain'.

The project became effectively a comprehensive *assessment* of education and lost sight of its objective to develop specific relevant measures to *enhance* the MoEdu ability to improve the quality and relevance of teaching as well as the MoEdu ability to develop policy, strategy and organisational reform. For example the intended outputs mandated in the Project Results and Resources Framework⁵ required an enhancement of capacity to achieve the desired quality of education and the development of internal and external organisational structure conducive to achieving the desired organisational quality established. A series of intermittent short term consultancies produced papers on the relevant topics resulted in an uncoordinated set of general directions/directives. In essence it was a general blueprint for the future but little appears to have changed within the MoEdu.

6.3 Strengthen the Institution of the Shura Council and the Council of Representatives in Bahrain.

This project commenced in 2004 with a duration of two years⁶. The budget was US\$ 200,000 with the Government of Bahrain contribution amounting to US\$ 150,000. The main objectives were to support the newly created Shura Council and the Council of Representatives in: building its institutional capacity; enhancing the role of the parliamentarians; and strengthening the relations of the Shura Council and the Council of Representatives with the civil society of Bahrain and with other parliaments.

The focus of the project was on two main areas: developing the institutional framework and capacity of the Shura Council and the Council of Representatives and building the capacities of Members, senior officials and supporting staff.

⁵ Project Document Project Number BAH/04/001 Enhancing the Quality of Education

⁶ Project Document: 'Strengthening the Institution of the Shura Council and the Council of Representatives in Bahrain' March 2009.

The project was fully in line with the UNDP overall strategy to strengthen democratic governance and it took full advantage of the UNDP International Centres of Excellence for the purpose of learning, research and the development of new ideas and good practice. This provided a rich network of resources that was able to take into account the difference in mandate, functions and specific priorities of each of the parliamentary councils.

A key factor in the success of this project was the careful project planning which provided a detailed result framework with specific activities linked into logical output targets all with definitive time periods and budgets. This was further reinforced by Annual Output Targets which stipulated most precisely the Activity Description; the Inputs Description; the specifically costed Budget for each module; the specific Monthly Timeframe and the quantifiable verifiable outputs/deliverables. This level of detail is essential to keeping projects on track if they are also overseen by effective internal monitoring. This methodological approach should characterise all current and planned UNDP projects.

The development of an institutional framework for both parliamentary institutions enabled the organisational structure and functions; parliamentary policies and work procedures to be revised, amended and approved. In addition the human resources and financial planning processes were reviewed and assessed strategically as were the research and information technology services.

Capacity building within the Shura Council and the Council of Representatives was achieved by a series of workshops to assist the Parliament to develop their capacity on substantive issues such as decision making processes, procedures, budget, exercising oversight and accountability. This capacity building was supplemented by the development and implementation of action plans to assist professional and supporting staff in searching and using information; understanding procedures; and supporting Members of Parliament and Committees.

The specific verifiable deliverables were: Five Thematic Workshops conducted and completed; Three Mission Reports completed and distributed to all stakeholders; Four Parliamentary Handbooks produced, translated and widely disseminated; Two Organisational Charts and One Paper/Study.

This was an exceptionally successful and very relevant project that was right for its time. So much so that a follow on project was designed and delivered between 2006 and 2008. It was entitled 'Supporting Political Reforms in Partnership with Both Houses of Parliament in the Kingdom of Bahrain'. This follow on project continued to position UNDP as a rightful partner by providing an opportunity to continue to build the Parliament on solid democratic foundations and principles. It was unreservedly assessed by the Government of Bahrain as being as equally successful as the first project. It was a good example of a justifiable follow on project.

As a result there was further extended project support to the Parliament for the period 2009 to 2011 using the same implementation methodology but with different topics.

6.4 National Environmental Strategy and Action Plan (NES and NEAP) for the Kingdom of Bahrain

This project was designed in 2002 with an estimated duration of 18 months and a total project budget of US\$ 529,970. The objective was to assist the Environmental Affairs Department within the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Environmental Affairs using a

participatory approach to prepare a National Environmental Strategy (NES) and a National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) in order to implement the strategy. The aim was to enable Government institutions to undertake the challenging task of planning and managing for sustainable development. This was largely achieved and to a good standard.

However, NEAP is only as good as the structures put in place to implement it and implementation did not take place.⁷ The sectors in Bahrain are organised according to professional disciplines but environmental problems can only be solved through interdisciplinary approaches and the Environmental Affairs Department was not strong in this regard.

Under this project the first NEAP was developed with the involvement of all stakeholders through a national steering committee. The main activities were the creation of sectoral working groups and the establishment of a project steering committee.

However, the project progress report records the delays and disruptions caused by inter alia: instability and change in leadership of the project by the Environmental Affairs; delays in nominating specialists to the sector working groups and their lack of clarity in their sector specialisation and delays in finalising the financial arrangements. In October 2006 the National Environmental Strategy developed in the original project was finally and officially endorsed approximately two years later.

The Evaluation team understand that a second phase of this project commenced in January 2005 despite non implementation of the earlier Environmental Action Plan. A progress report for the period 2005 to 2007 was submitted in February 2008 and a final closing report on this project was produced a month later in March 2008. The final closing report on the second extension phase of the project records the production of a National Desertification Strategy and Action plan. It also concludes that "Given the lengthy time spent on the preparation of the strategy and the most strategic actions for different conventions, it is time to close down the project and plan for different applicable programme with specialised focuses."

During the Evaluation mission the Evaluation Team were then advised that a third Environmental Protection programme is at the design stage. This third environmental project is intended to: build up the Government capacity to implement the National Economic Vision 2020 to 2030 in relation to the environment; to validate the initial and the subsequently revised national Environment Strategy and to make operational the strategy and associated action plans that were developed earlier. Perhaps most significantly, the Environmental Agency appears to have migrated into an Environment Commission and it is planned that this Environment Commission will be the focus of significant capacity building in the future project. If this is indeed correct then it may be considered to be hopeful at best for future development on environmental protection of the fragile ecology of the islands.⁸

6.5 The Micro Start Project

There was very little information available to the Evaluation Team in respect of this project other than the Evaluation Report on the Micro Start project and this was dated 5 November 2002 some five years after the project began.

⁷ Project document BAH/01/004 National Environmental Strategy and Action plan for the Kingdom of Bahrain'

⁸ Project Progress Report 2003 -2004 NES and NEAP September 2004

The Micro Start⁹ project was initiated in 1997 with a budget of US\$1.5 million to deliver on its main objective to: enhance the access of low income micro entrepreneurs, particularly women, to financial services in order to expand their business, increase their income and augment employment.

This primary objective was to be achieved through building the capacity of two or three participating local organisations to provide microfinance services to economically active clients on an operationally sustainable basis and secondly in contributing to building up knowledge on the impact of microfinance on the clients and the capacity of other organisations wishing to provide direct microfinance services. The number of micro finance clients involved in the project comprised approximately 20% of the estimated number of Bahraini unemployed at that time.

The other secondary objectives were to build capacity through a local institutional support provider to provide baseline studies and follow up impact studies by universities and research centres were not considered particularly relevant at that time and did not take place.

The Micro Start project started as a low cost, high risk project but resulted in a highly relevant, extremely well organised and very successful project which had a high impact and good indicators for sustainable replication. The project was replicated many times subsequently in order to expand the number of participants and to make a tangible impact on reducing unemployment. It continues to be as relevant and successful as it was in its first phase. Recent extensions to this project have specifically targeted women and unemployed youth and adopted a more growth orientated employment generation approach to the micro enterprises.

The micro finance activities are financially sustainable since the administrative costs which are levied are greater than the costs of staging and administering the programme. During the project period, the project has succeeded in reaching out to 3,500 of those classified as economically active poor with over 5,000 small loans. Of these over 99% of all funds borrowed were either fully repaid or meeting the repayment schedule. The participating NGO's have progressed from a charitable mentality to a business/banking orientation using computerised financial and programme management systems and controls.

⁹ Micro Start Project BAH/97/003 Evaluation Report November 2002

7. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CONSULTATIONS

7.1 National Youth Strategy

- There was good support from the UNDP Country Office
- There was a very good link between the Government of Bahrain Vision 2030 and the National Youth Strategy.
- There was excellent bottom up participation in the development of the National Youth Strategy from the youth, community groups, NGO's and private public partnerships.
- This grass roots approach led to issues being addressed which were most important to youth and to the development of specific projects such as a Youth Parliament; Shops run by youths and the selling of 'green' products.
- The main failings were the lack of an effective implementing mechanism in the form of a higher level government body to oversee implementation by different ministries; the lack of authority to set and to include the needed budgetary provision for implementation in the budgets of the appropriate ministries and the lack of support from GOYS whose emphasis was primarily on sport. *It is recommended that a more effective Implementing Agency be considered for any future projects.*
- The UNDP Country Office needs to be more proactive in requiring a higher level Government of Bahrain political decision to support implementation of the Youth Strategy. *It is recommended that this issue be discussed and resolved between the UNDP Country Office and the Government of Bahrain since this issue is key to successful implementation of the development of the younger generation of Bahrain.*
- The Government of Bahrain must be willing to commit to a dedicated and appropriately placed authoritative national counterpart to work with the international consultants.
- GOYS never appointed a dedicated person to drive implementation of the Action Plan or created a unit to implement the strategy. There was a lack of priority and a lack of capacity within the organisation. *It is recommended that a national 'champion' be carefully selected to drive through implementation of current and future implementation Youth Strategy action plans.*
- Despite these shortfalls it is commendable that two of the individual projects contained within the Action Plan were implemented in the Ministries of Health and Social Development using their own budget resources.

7.2 Enhancing the Quality of Education

- The project made a general theoretical contribution to the Economic Vision 2030 for Bahrain specifically in relation to providing a detailed analysis of education and training that was relevant to the economy.
- The project was good in assessing the current situation regarding education in Bahrain and in identifying the strong and the weak points.
- What was lacking was an analysis of why the weaknesses existed and what the causes of the weaknesses were.
- Many seminars were held to discuss 'quality' but a simple and clear definition of 'quality' of education that was relevant to Bahrain was never defined.
- There is no evidence of any change within the MoEdu in relation to policy development, strategic formulation or organisational development

- There was no evidence of solutions to improve the weaknesses and to improve/enhance capacity. Weaknesses were detailed but no tools for improvements were provided. *It is recommended that any future projects in education focus clearly and specifically of solutions that are tangible, actionable and measurable and which do not simply reiterate the earlier extensive academic research.*
- There was no evidence of any detailed examination of the *effectiveness of education* at each level and no clear definition as to how to enhance the quality of education. *It is recommended that any future projects deliver measurable results as to action orientated change.*
- The project failed to impact/improve on the standard of education in the Kingdom of Bahrain as was expected when the project was designed. *It is recommended that serious and systematic supervision and remedial action be initiated by the UNDP Country Office and the Ministry of Education working together to ensure the project delivers on verifiable improvements in the quality of education.*
- Training workshops provided under the project were stated to be insufficient and provided no significant advantage since in service training was already a feature of regular training within the MoEdu, There was no clear criteria for selecting teachers for the training workshops and workshops were in the English language as well as a lack of translation for non English speakers. *It is recommended that the value added by training and a more careful selection of participants, course material as well as selected trainees and trainers be improved in the future.*
- National participants were expected to continue with their professional duties and to be wholly engaged in the project at the same time.
- There was no plan of action at the end of the project as to how the MoEdu could go forward to enhance/improve the quality of education. The ways and means for the MoEdu to do things in a better way were not made clear. *It is recommended that such recommendations form a part of the contractual requirements in the future and that both the Country Office and the Ministry of Education are accountable for oversight and supervision of the contractors' measurable results.*
- No substantial work was done by the consultants on organisational restructuring. Each organisational unit in MoEdu continues to work in isolation and there is no evidence as to what specific educational units did to improve strategic planning and policy making. *It is recommended that both the Country Office and the Ministry of Education are accountable for oversight and supervision of the contractor's measurable results.*
- The network of directives/directions suggested possible best practise but the ways and the means and the costs to do so were never defined.

7.3 Strengthening the Institution of the Shura Council and the Council of Representatives in Bahrain.

- The implementation protocol mainly comprised seminars, courses and study tours.
- Visits were made to other parliaments in the Arab World, Europe and Australia and this helped understanding of alternative models and their relative applicability a great deal.
- The UNDP consultants were mainly experienced political consultants, parliamentarians, or parliamentary staff from other regional or international parliaments. This was a major strength in the project. It involved like minded professionals with the same areas of interest and expertise working together across national and international borders.
- The project was considered by parliamentarians to be extremely successful.

- The skills of the consultants were relevant and appropriate.
- The project added value and provided relevant professional contacts for the exchange of ideas, best practice and information.
- As a result of this success UNDP and the Government of Bahrain supported a third Parliamentary support project which has been approved for the period 2009 to 2011. The implementation modality which has worked so well in the past is continued but with new and different topics including strategic planning.
- An important feature was that the UNDP provided a timely, well placed and professional service to the Kingdom of Bahrain in relation to this project. The UNDP consultants provided did not interfere in the internal affairs of the Government of Bahrain. This was very important.
- There was also a statement that the UNDP Country Office do a very good job and are greatly respected in Bahrain but the pressure of their work leads one to conclude that they may be understaffed in relation to the volume of work that they can be expected to deliver.

7.4 National Environmental Strategy and Action Plan for the Kingdom of Bahrain

- There was a low level of capacity and commitment within the Environmental Agency.
- The sector working groups were unclear as to what to do. The vision and therefore the strategy kept changing as new people in senior positions were appointed and appeared to have their own personal and professional agenda.
- The Strategy and Action Plan for implementation took a long time to be amended and endorsed before it was finally delivered. It then took a long time before it was eventually approved by the Cabinet.
- The Action plan for implementation was never developed or budgeted to any great degree and as a result very few proposals went on to implementation. The Action Plan for Implementation is now being discussed in relation to a possible third project.

It is recommended that before any additional support is provided in a new phase that the budget issue including the thorny issue of remuneration to project working group members be resolved before a final agreement on further support and a clear commitment to implementation by the Environmental Commission.

- It was also very clearly stated that the UNDP Country Office is greatly respected in the Kingdom of Bahrain and adds status and professionalism with its presence in Bahrain and the contribution that it makes in the Kingdom.

It is recommended that in the future more projects of a practical nature which focus on tangible deliverables that really make a measurable difference to improving the environment in the Kingdom of Bahrain are developed and implemented rather than yet another round of international and national consultant's reports.

7.5 The Micro Start Project

- The following comments derive from the Report of Stakeholders on the role of UNDP in the Kingdom of Bahrain 2007.¹⁰ These were largely verified during the evaluation mission.

¹⁰ A Report of Stakeholders Perspectives on the role of UNDP in the Kingdom of Bahrain 2007

- 75% of the participants in the Micro Start programme were able to get out of the poverty cycle
 - No specific person at UNDP was assigned to the project. Programme analysts/officers changed frequently.
 - There was a shortage of computers for administering the project
 - There was only limited training provided. The markets have moved on in the past ten years and more up to date and refresher training is urgently needed. This relates specifically to marketing expertise.
 - The available capital for financing needs to grow to now provide seed capital for medium sized enterprises.
 - More support from the UNDP and the Ministry of Finance is needed for the above issues.
- The project was extremely successful and was driven by the then Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Later on the Ministry of Social Development was created. The project has since been followed on by a series of Micro Finance projects funded by the Government of Bahrain.
 - Management and technical support is provided by the Egyptian Alexandria Businessmen's Society for a monthly fee. They provide an update/upgrade to the computer operating systems in respect of finance, loan tracking and auditing; a hotline for problems and more general follow up with micro businesses to see how they are doing financially.

8 LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Project Related:

- The selection of projects needs to be improved. *It is recommended that projects which failed earlier should not be replicated or extended. The focus for new projects should be with seriously committed Government and other Implementing partners and deliver practical tangible results that the partners find of relevance and of value.*
- National strategies are an important tool for the development of the Kingdom's strategic priorities but many strategies remain only on paper and have limited impact. *It is recommended that the mechanisms for the financing of implementation are defined and approved.*
- Small scale specific projects that address real needs and are implemented by appropriate, interested and enthusiastic national professionals have a higher rate of success. *It is recommended that future country programming give priority to small scale specific projects.*
- Oversight and monitoring of projects is essential to demonstrate the successful delivery of results or in some cases the failure to achieve project objectives. *It is recommended that mechanisms to achieve improved oversight and monitoring are established and implemented in a formal and regular manner.*
- Quarterly project reports should not be optional and the standard format has now been developed. *It is recommended that the timely, accurate and complete completion of these reports in a detailed professional manner is a precondition of any further release of project funds.*
- *It is recommended that the translation of reports should be mandatory and the anticipated costs included in the project budget.*

8.2 Staffing:

- The selection of international partners and consultants to partner the national institutions is critical to success. Professional partnerships that bring relevant regional experience to the project will succeed more than general theoretical knowledge that is not locally applicable. *It is recommended that such professional partnerships are the hallmark of all future projects.*
- Signed agreements and the release of funds will have limited impact on national capacity building unless there is the interest, availability and willing contribution from national staff. *It is recommended that the Government and other Implementing partners be prepared to do more to commit the human resources that are needed to make a project successful.*
- Although the Country Office staffing situation was outside the scope of this evaluation *it is recommended that a periodic review of staff member portfolios and workloads is undertaken to provide more continuity and sustainability of project management for the same projects and portfolios.*
- Country Office staff appears to focus more on the development of new projects at the expense of closer oversight and monitoring of existing projects. This is counterproductive since the ultimate measure of national development lies only in the successful implementation of positive priority reforms and capacity building inherent in successful projects that will achieve the objectives of the Government's Economic Vision 2030.

8.3 Country Office:

- The Country Office is held in extremely high regard throughout the Kingdom. However justifiable criticisms are levied at the lack of any efficient or effective mechanisms for storing data and from learning from past successes and failures. This is tied in with the lack of continuity of project officers for specific projects throughout their life cycle. The result is that there is only limited institutional memory within the different portfolios; lessons are not learnt from the past and earlier weaknesses repeat themselves. *It is recommended that, to the extent possible, project portfolios are retained by dedicated staff members throughout the lifetime of the project.*
- There is a need for clarification between the Country Office and the Government to discuss and agree on a model of what responsibilities and accountabilities rest with a Country Office and those which are more appropriately placed with the MoFA and the MoF in relation to each stage of the project life cycle. This has emerged from both project partners as a key area of misunderstanding and *it is recommended that for each project there is a clearly defined protocol governing precise responsibilities and accountabilities at each stage of the project cycle.*

8.4 Project Partners:

- The Government of Bahrain have been most generous in their interest and financial commitment to making the UNDP projects a success in the Kingdom. In this they are to be commended. *However, it is recommended that closer scrutiny of serious and sustained commitment to implementation, or lack of it, on the part of the different implementing ministries and agencies is in place in order to avoid sub optimal results in the future. This can be best achieved through a system of formal periodic project monitoring and evaluation of a project and the implementation of recommendations made a precondition for the release of further funds. The costs of the monitoring programme should be built into the project budget before the project document is signed.*

Manama

The Kingdom of Bahrain

January 2011

Independent Evaluators:

Mrs Geraldine Gibbons International Development Consultant specialising in Public Administration in the Middle East.

Dr Saeed Husain Al Yamani National Consultant and Assistant Professor Arabian Gulf University Bahrain

Dr Najat S. Al-Hamdan National Consultant and Assistant Professor Arabian Gulf University Bahrain

ANNEX 1

LIST OF PERSONS CONSULTED

Name	Designation
Mr. Ahmed Mahdi Al Haddad	Assistant Undersecretary for Political Affairs and International Cooperation Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Mr. Sami Mohammed Humaid	Director of Foreign Economic Relations Ministry of Finance
Mr. Sayed Aqa	Resident Coordinator of the United Nations Bahrain
Mr. Firas F. Gharaibeh	Deputy Resident Representative UNDP Bahrain
Mrs. Afnan M. Saeed	Programme Associate UNDP Bahrain
Mr. Ali Salman Saleh	Programme Analyst UNDP Bahrain
Mrs. Jehan Al Murbati	Programme Analyst UNDP Bahrain
Mr. Saeed Abdalla al-Khuzi	National Heritage Adviser Bahrain Delegation to the World Heritage Committee.
Mr. Ahmed Al Haiyki	Employment Theme Director of Inspection Ministry of Labour
Ms. Salwa Aljaber	Office Manager Awal Women's Society
Mrs. Zahwa Al Kuwari	Director of Environmental Assessment and Planning, Public Commission for the Protection of Marine Resources, Environment and Wildlife.
Mr. Ali Al-Jassim	Director General of Research and Informatics in the Parliament
Mr. Peter Kenyon	Project Manager UNDP Youth Project
Mr. Kamel Al Nabulsi	Assistant Project Manager UNDP Youth Project
Dr. Latif Ali Almannai	Head of Educational and Research and Development in the Ministry of Education
Mrs. Badriya Hamdan	Head of Literacy Section, Directorate of Primary Education, Ministry of Education,
Mrs. Hajar Khairallah	Teacher in a participating elementary school

ANNEX 2

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbreviated reference format:

A Report on the Stakeholders Perspective in the Kingdom of Bahrain June 2007 by Dr. Mohammed Al-Rumaidh, Abdulnabi Alekri and Dr. Ebrahim Al-Rumani

The Bahraini National Youth Strategy 2005 - 2007 Final report

The Bahraini National Youth Strategy Full Review Project October 2009

The Millennium Development Goals for the Kingdom of Bahrain 2004-2007.

Common Country Framework (CCF)

Common Country Assessment (CCA) Manama Bahrain 2002

Comprehensive Evaluation of the Project for Enhancement of the Education Quality in the Kingdom of Bahrain Final Report 2005

Country Programme for Bahrain 2003 – 2007

Country Programme Outline (CPO) 2002

Economic Vision for Bahrain 2030

National Contributor country Report – Bahrain Centre for Studies and Research

NES and NEAP Progress Report 2003 -2004 September 2004

NES and NEAP Progress Report 2005 -2007 February 2008

Project Document Development of a National Youth Strategy and Action Plan Project Number BAH/03/004 2003

Terms of Reference for the Country Programme 2003 - 2007 Evaluation (ToR)

UNDP Guidelines for Outcome Evaluators

UNEG Ethical standards for evaluation

UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation

UNDP Evaluation Report standards

ANNEX 3

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE EVALUATION

Terms of Reference for Evaluation of Country Programme 2003 – 2007 Kingdom of Bahrain

Team Leader (International Consultant)

1. Background:

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been operating in the Kingdom of Bahrain since 1971 to promote and implement sustainable human development strategies and programmes based on national priorities in line with the Kingdom's reform agenda. To guide the national programme, the UNDP formulates the Country Cooperation Framework (CCF)/Country Programme Document covering four years period in consultation with Government, NGOs, donors and other UN agencies.

Currently, the UNDP Bahrain and its project implementing partners are rolling out the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) for 2008 – 2011. For improved and effective implementation of the strategies and mechanisms for the CPAP 2008 – 2011, it is important to review and evaluate the efficiency and success of the previous programme cycle (2003-2007). This evaluation will provide lessons learned and make recommendations to improve programme modalities and management approaches.

Additionally, two of the major projects including 1) Enhancing Quality of Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain and 2) Development of National Youth Strategy and Action Plan from the CP 2003 – 2007 will be evaluated. The findings from these two projects will serve as case studies in the CP evaluation. These two projects are considered by the UNDP and the Government of Bahrain as strategically important issues and vital areas of UNDP intervention during the previous programme cycle.

Country Programme (CP)

The CP for 2003-2007 was developed on the basis of the review findings from the previous Country Programme cycle that revealed: i) the CCF should be more focused and less ambitious in light of the funding arrangements, ii) funding should be discussed on a programme basis rather than on a project by project basis; iii) more coordination among partners should take place; iv) a cost recovery scheme should be implemented; and v) enhance the country office capacity in order to become a knowledge-base office.

Based on the review findings, the country cooperation framework for 2003-2007 focused on two distinct programme areas: (a) *governance* – to support social and political reforms by developing national capacities and by initiating policy dialogue that facilitates the democratic development by, inter alia, empowering women to overcome constraints that prevent them from realizing their potential; and (b) *sustainable development*, focusing on social development and sustainable livelihood as well as human resources development and environmental sustainability.

Under this CP, many national strategies including Education, Social Development, Youth Development, Environment, and HIV/AIDS were formulated. Key national institutions including the Parliament, Bahrain Institute for Political Development, the Supreme Council for Women, Civil Aviation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister's Court, were provided with technical and capacity development support to better undertake their respective roles and responsibilities.

A number major programmes were initiated during 2003-2007 including the political empowerment of women, provision of support in globalization and trade, national results based planning and evaluation, addressing blood and hereditary diseases and protection of historical building and sites.

To improve the quality of education a strategic planning exercise was carried out that measured the quality of curricula and teaching methodologies, including teacher training. A detailed overview on UNDP support in education sector is provided in Textbox 1. During the exercise important negotiating positions for the World Trade Organization (WTO) rounds were formulated and an export strategy was developed so as to strengthen private sector development. Based on the prioritization of free trade agreements and WTO demands, strategic studies on trade services and facilitation and non-agricultural market access were carried out that also covered free trade agreement aspects.

The recent national report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women described women's voting rights, protection against economic or political discrimination and equal access in public affairs. An action plan for the political empowerment of women was developed and implemented. Intensive professional training and capacity building programmes were organized for a group of 21 women candidates in political campaign management techniques, communication and outreach skills, and political debates. In addition, several workshops, lectures and publications on the role of women in society and in Islam were organized to educate the public on the importance of women at all decision-making levels. Training workshops for journalists were conducted to ensure effective media coverage of efforts to establish quality roles for women. In compliance with article 4 of the Convention, women candidates were supported with in-kind contributions during their election campaigns.

A national social strategy was developed with stakeholders to transform charity-based social programmes into development-oriented ones. A national environment strategy was formulated to highlight a sustainable development approach to environmental concerns. The strategy focuses on water and coastal management, where Bahrain faces a critical situation. Planners developed an urban plan for Tubli Bay as a model for coastal management.

A national youth strategy and action plan, the first in the Arab region, was jointly prepared with strong participation of youth. The opinions of youth were obtained through the Youth Voice Campaign, which included 10,000 young interviewees. The youth strategy addresses the issues of young men as well as young women. A brief overview of UNDP project on youth is provided in Text box 2.

Training workshops were carried out aimed at strengthening the knowledge of members of parliament and supporting staff in the legislative, oversight, accountability and representative functions of Parliament, as well as at developing strategic plans. Studies on HIV/AIDS knowledge, attitudes and behaviour in high-risk groups – youth, antenatal clinics and injecting drug users – were conducted and translated into Arabic. Based on their findings, a national strategic plan to raise awareness of the disease was developed, followed by a comprehensive media campaign that communicated relevant messages to the population. A survey to preserve heritage buildings was carried out and an economic regeneration scheme was developed.

In July 2006 UNDP prepared a concept paper with the aim of strengthening and expanding its development partnership with the Government. It analyzed the situation, addressed procedural issues that could strengthen the partnership, proposed ways to

solidify efficient sustainable development, and identified challenges and ways to address them.

The total budget allocated for the CP 2003 – 2007 was US\$ 11 million.

TEXTBOX 1: Enhancing Quality of Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain

In Bahrain, the Ministry of Education (MoEdu) has been managing and supervising both public and private since 1929. Over the years, the Kingdom of Bahrain has made significant advancements in this area. The country boasts a literacy rate of 92% among men and 84% among women. It is also worth noting that, in recent years, Bahrain has consistently outranked many Arab countries in the UNDP Human Development Index.

As a continuous measure to strengthen the education system, the MoEdu with support from UNDP Bahrain approached UNESCO to conduct needs assessment and then carry out an evaluation mission to assess the educational system in Bahrain in mid-2001. The mission report emphasized on the need to evaluate the quality of the education, policy making and strategic planning process and the organizational efficiency of the MoEdu. Keeping the recommendations by the UNESCO mission in view, the MoEdu with support both technical and financial from UNDP initiated a one-year project on "Enhancing Quality of Education" in 2004. The project aimed at assisting the MoEdu to: a) Evaluate and Improve quality of education at primary and secondary levels; b) strengthen its policy-making and strategic planning process; and c) increase its organizational efficiency.

The project got completed in July 2005 and a final evaluation was conducted to gauge the project achievements made in the project span. However, there is further need to analyze the progress made in comparison with the results of needs assessment conducted in 2001. Additionally, there is a need to document best practices, lessons learned, sustainability approaches adapted & implemented, and scaling-up/replicability mechanism.

The total budget allocated for the project was US\$ 508, 820.

TEXTBOX 2: Development to National Youth Strategy and Action Plan

According to the 2001 census, youth population ranging from the age of 15-24 makes up to 16.9% of the total population (20.37% of the Bahrainis and 11.05% of the non-Bahrainis living in the Kingdom). The total population of youth, male and female, included in that age group is 109,670 out of the total number of population, which was 650,000¹¹. According to empirical findings, the major challenges faced by Bahraini youth include lack of negotiation skills, life skills, health services, unemployment and opportunity to participate in decision making. Few studies¹² carried out in the Gulf region indicate that the increasing youth population face variety of challenges resulting from media exposure, globalization, change in family function, and economic hardship. However, no documented studies have ever tackled the youth issues from a strategic point of view in the Kingdom.

As a result, officials as well as the general public of the Kingdom sense the essentiality of putting together a strategy that serves the needs of a rather important

¹¹ As per census 2001

¹² These studies were conducted prior to the implementation of the project

and big proportion of the population. With the support of UNDP, the Government initiated a project in 2003 to draft a National Youth Strategy and Action Plan to holistically integrate youth and those dealing with youth issues in national development processes. The project aimed to enhance youth participation and involvement in decision-making and improved provisions and services in relation to education, employment, sports and health.

The project was completed in the year 2004 and a National Youth Strategy was formulated. However, the strategy was not implemented as planned.

The total budget allocated for the project was US\$ 363, 590.

2. Objectives of the Evaluation:

The key objectives of the evaluation are:

- To assist the Government of Bahrain, UNDP and other project implementing partners to understand:
 - ✓ the efficiency, effectiveness, relevance and impact of the 2003-2007 Programme
 - ✓ the sustainability of programme results including ownership of the project implementing partners
 - ✓ the level of satisfaction of programme stakeholders and beneficiaries with the results, and (*effectiveness and relevance can also be captured here*)
 - ✓ whether UNDP was effectively positioned and partnered to achieve maximum impact
- To assess the contribution of the programme to achieve the country priorities and goals
- To help programme stakeholders to assess the extent to which the CP has effectively integrated gender equality, young people and human rights in the programme
- To distil lessons learned based on programmatic and operational strengths and weaknesses for the future programming
- To assess the effectiveness and relevance of implementation strategies and coordination mechanisms
- To assess UNDP's comparative advantage in addressing the support and capacity needs of implementing partners during the course of CP implementation
- To highlight the anticipated and unanticipated outcomes of the programme both positively and negatively impacting the lives of the target groups
- To provide recommendations on the future implementation and strategy options for effective and efficient delivery of UNDP commitments as per the CPAP.

Additionally, the evaluation will do an in depth analysis of two keys projects with the following specific objectives:

Enhancing Quality of Education Project:

- To assess the overall contribution of the UNDP project in reforming the education sector in Bahrain including education policy setting and strategic planning processes
- To document lessons learned and good practices (both positive and negative) resulting from the project intervention that could further contribute to policy development and future scaling-up of the education projects

National Youth Strategy Development Project:

- To assess the contributing factors including participatory processes and broad stakeholder engagement that led to the formulation of the National Youth Strategy
- To highlight the factors that hindered the implementation of the National Youth Strategy
- To document the impact of the project (positive/ negative, intended/ unintended) on the lives of Bahraini youth

3. *Scope of the evaluation:*

The evaluation will be conducted primarily as summative evaluation though with a clear recommendations on the strategy options for the implementation of UNDP CPAP 2008-2011. The evaluation will assess the contributions of UNDP towards development results stipulated in the CP, which is expected to strengthen the formulation and implementation of the next CPAP and associated UNDP projects. The evaluation will cover the entire programme period and will focus on assessing the strategies, implementation mechanisms and programmatic results based on management, programme coordination, design of the CP and communication and cooperation between the stakeholders. The evaluation will highlight strengths, weaknesses/gaps, good practices and provide forward looking recommendations. Additionally, the two selected projects for evaluation – Education project and National Youth Strategy project - will serve as case studies in the overall CP evaluation. These two projects are the best examples of successful projects with the CP 2003 – 2007 and are critical and central theme of Government of Bahrain’s work towards development.

The education project evaluation will look at the resulting impact of UNDP contributions using the final project evaluation (2005) as a base. This evaluation will focus on exploring the impact and scaling up of the project results since its completion. The National Youth Strategy Development project will evaluate the participatory processes that led to the formulation of the National Youth Strategy and the impeding factors that hampered the implementation of the National Youth Strategy and recommendations on how to address any gaps during the current programme cycle.

The evaluation will be conducted in a participatory manner involving and soliciting views, feedback and opinions of stakeholders including implementing partners (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Ministry of Health, General Organization for Youth and Sports), civil society organizations (Parliament, Supreme Council for Women, Bahrain Institute for Political Development, Bahrain Institute for Public Administration), programme/ project beneficiaries including women and youth NGOs and relevant UN agencies.

4. *Key evaluation guiding questions:*

The following broad questions need to be addressed in the evaluation:

- To what extent the CP and the two projects have been relevant, appropriate and strategic to national goals and the UNDP mandate?
- To what extent the actual management mechanisms (including coordination, planning, implementation, reporting, monitoring and communication) are in accordance with the stipulated CP management design?
- Were operational strategies (including planning, execution modalities and arrangements for the implementation of the programme) adequate to achieve timely and effective programme implementation?

- Has the programme design responded/taken into consideration to specific country needs and conditions?
- Were monitoring, evaluation and internal control and accountability systems adequate to enable UNDP and its partners to demonstrate programme results?
- How effective and efficient have been the programme options in terms of achieving outcomes?
- To what extent the outputs and outcome(s) of the CP and the two projects have led to benefits beyond the life of the programme(s)/project(s)?
- Are programme components and approaches replicable by national implementing partners upon ending UNDP programmes?
- Did the programme design include strategies to ensure sustainability?
- To what extent the projects have supported the Government of Bahrain to improve the quality of lives of Bahraini citizens?

5. **Methodology:**

The evaluation will be undertaken in close consultation with the government throughout the process to ensure the principles of national ownership, transparency and mutual accountabilities are followed. The relevant national partners will be consulted at all levels of the process including the development of the evaluation TOR, setting evaluation methodology, identification of external consultants following the UNDP recruitment procedures and the overall management of the evaluation process.

In general, the evaluation team will adopt an integrated approach involving a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis tools to capture both the tangible and quantifiable impacts as well as to understand the factors and processes contributing to those changes in the lives of beneficiary groups. The evaluation will comprise of the following key stages/ processes:

1. Desk review: the evaluation team will review all available material related to the programme, such as Project progress reports, project evaluation reports, projects' documents, relevant national and international surveys, knowledge produced, attitudes and practices surveys as well as policy and legal documents.
2. Finalisation of evaluation methodology and work plan: In consultation with the relevant UNDP Evaluation Task Manager and relevant national partners (as required), the Evaluation Team will finalize the appropriate methodology to address the underlying objectives of this evaluation. The methodology will entail a participatory process for data collection, generating an evidence base to substantiate all findings while ensuring that the data collection methods and data analysis is of high quality, triangulated and verifiable; and that stakeholders are involved in data collection processes and debriefed on regular basis to address any unforeseen challenges requiring support or clarification
3. Field visits: the evaluation team will conduct field visits supported by UNDP to collect data using a mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches such as structured surveys, structured and semi-structured interviews and observation techniques. The team, in consultation with UNDP, will identify key stakeholders to be consulted with during the evaluation so that their engagement and involvement in the evaluation process can be arranged in a timely manner. Key stakeholders include officials from government departments, civil society representatives, UNDP staff, and beneficiary groups.
 - Debriefing session: the evaluation team will debrief the relevant stakeholders including the Evaluation Steering Group, key officials from partner organizations, civil society organizations, and UNDP management about the initial findings including key observations and recommendations based on verifiable facts and figures.

6. *Expected products:*

The **Team Leader** will be responsible for consolidating the final evaluation report in English following the UNDP Guidelines on Evaluation Report. The first draft will be presented to and discussed with the UNDP prior to the completing the evaluation mission in Bahrain. The final Evaluation Report will be send to UNDP at the latest, one week after the end of the mission.

The evaluation team is required to follow the following guidelines and standards developed by UNDP Evaluation Office:

- UNDP Guidelines for Outcome Evaluators
- UNEG Ethical standards for evaluation
- UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation
- UNDP Evaluation Report standards

These resources are available on <http://erc.undp.org>. The Evaluation team will be provided with these guidelines prior to starting their assignment with UNDP.

7. *Proposed evaluation schedule:*

Activity	Timeframe	Place	Responsible Party
Desk review	5 days	Consultants place of residence	Evaluation team
Evaluation design, methodology and detailed work plan	2 days	Consultants place of residence	Evaluation team in collaboration with UNDP
Field visits, interviews, consultations	5 days	Bahrain	Evaluation team with the logistical support from UNDP
Preparation of draft evaluation report for debriefing	2 days	Bahrain	Evaluation team
Debriefing with UNDP and Partners/ key stakeholders	1 day	Bahrain	Evaluation team
Finalization of evaluation report	5 days	Consultants place of residence	Evaluation team
Evaluation Dissemination			UNDP
Management response			UNDP
Posting of evaluation TOR, summary and report on ERC			UNDP
Half day sessions to share and discuss the evaluation findings with		Bahrain	Programme staff...

implementing partners relevant ministries	and line		
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8. **Management arrangement:**

UNDP will manage the evaluation process, provide backstopping support and ensure the coordination and liaison with concerned agencies. The UNDP will work with the Evaluation Team providing overall guidance and quality assurance.

UNDP will support the evaluation team in terms of providing all the reading materials, introductory letter to the Ministries in the Government of Bahrain, logistical support for conducting the consultation meeting & field visits and brief orientation to facilitate & initiate the evaluation process.

UNDP will ensure that the evaluation is on agreed schedule; follows UNDP evaluations standard and all the stakeholders are informed & involved in the evaluation process. UNDP will also ensure that there is a management response to the evaluation in place and measures & plans to take these responses forward.

Steering Committee

The overall quality of the evaluation will be reviewed by Evaluation Steering Committee. This committee will include members from the Government of Bahrain, UNDP and other civil society organisations. The Committee will be chaired by UNDP. This committee will help to ensure that the opportunities presented by the evaluation add value to UNDP Bahrain's future programming and based on the principles of greater accountability, transparency, national ownership, and better results management.

Evaluation Team

An international and national team of consultants (one international and two national consultants) selected by UNDP Bahrain will be engaged to undertake the evaluation. UNDP Bahrain to work with the Team in facilitating the evaluation mission while providing overall guidance and quality assurance to the evaluation.

Team Leader (International Consultant)

The international consultant will function as the Facilitator (hence **Team Leader**) for the mission. He/she will be responsible for the entire work of the mission and to deliver the expected outputs of the mission (high quality UNDP format Project Evaluation Report agreeable to the UNDP standards and requirements). The **Team Leader** is responsible and accountable for the evaluation plan, development of methodology and production of the outputs.

Specifically, the international consultant - **Team Leader**, will perform the following functions:

- (a) Assist UNDP Bahrain Country Office in the selection of the two national members of the evaluation team
- (b) guide the evaluation team
- (c) elaborate the research methodology of the evaluation
- (d) lead and conduct the evaluation mission in cooperation with the government, public and private sector in national and local levels

- (e) provide references to international best practices
- (f) formulate and submit to UNDP Bahrain a comprehensive UNDP format Programme Evaluation Report agreeable to the UNDP standards and requirements

Qualifications and experience of international consultant Team Leader:

Requirements

- Masters or Ph.D. degree in social sciences related to international development, i.e. economics, political economy of development, international relations, public and business administration or equivalent
- Extensive (at least 10-year) experience and proven track record with social and economic development field, policy advice, development, formulation and implementation in these areas, preferably at national level, including field experience, strategic planning and evaluation;
- Experience in conducting Programme Level evaluations
- Ability to manage teams
- Strong inter-personal and presentation skills
- Experience in the Arab region
- Proficiency in English (knowledge of Arabic would be an asset).

Desirable

- Experience in programme/project creation and management for emerging countries, including cost assessments and sustainability issues
- Prior experience with UNDP in programme/project implementation and M&E.

Two National Consultants (for reference of the Team Leader)

The national consultants will function as team members for the evaluation mission.

Each of the national consultants will be responsible for the delivering the expected outputs of the mission in addition to high quality UNDP format Project Evaluation Report agreeable to the UNDP standards and requirements. Under the supervision of the **Team Leader**, the national consultants will assist and support the production of the outputs. Depending on the division of labour with the **Team Leader**, the national consultants might be required to undertake the evaluation of the Education and Youth projects (one consultant to carry out an evaluation of one of the projects).

Specifically, the national consultants will perform the following functions:

- (a) contribute to the elaboration of the research methodology for the evaluation
- (b) conduct the evaluation mission with the **Team Leader** in cooperation with the government, public and private sector in national and local levels
- (c) responsible for conducting site visits and field data collection
- (d) support the **Team Leader** in formulating the Evaluation Report
- (e) Assist in translation, logistical organisation for meetings in Bahrain (travel, meetings, etc) and collection of documentation

Qualifications and experience of national consultants:

Requirements

- Masters degree in social sciences related to international development, i.e. economics, social development, education
- Extensive (at least 5 year) experience and proven track record with local social and economic development field, policy advice, development formulation and implementation in education and/or youth areas preferably at national level, including field experience, strategic planning and evaluation
- Experience in conducting Project Level evaluations
- Strong inter-personal and presentation skills
- Proficiency in English and Arabic.

Desirable

- Experience in project creation and management in Bahrain, including cost assessments and sustainability issues
- Experience in working with Government entities and/or Civil Society organizations
- Prior experience with programme/project implementation and M&E.

ANNEX 4

ACTIVITY SCHEDULE

Activity	Timeframe	Place	Responsible Party
Desk review	5 days	Consultants place of residence	Evaluation team
Evaluation design, methodology and detailed work plan	2 days	Consultants place of residence	Evaluation team in collaboration with UNDP
Field visits, interviews, consultations	5 days	Bahrain	Evaluation team with the logistical support from UNDP
Preparation of draft evaluation report for debriefing	2 days	Bahrain	Evaluation team
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Finalization of evaluation report	5 days	Consultants place of residence	Evaluation team
Evaluation Dissemination			UNDP
Management response			UNDP
Posting of evaluation TOR, summary and report on ERC			UNDP
Half day sessions to share and discuss the evaluation findings with implementing partners and relevant line ministries		Bahrain	Programme staff...

ANNEX 5

CASE STUDY ON THE EVALUATION OF THE YOUTH PROJECT

United Nations Development Program UNDP Country Program in Bahrain

The National Youth Strategy and Action Plan
2003-2007

October 2010

Dr. Saeed Husain Al Yamani
National Consultant

1. Acknowledgements:

This evaluation report was only possible due to the efforts and support of a number of people at the UNDP in Bahrain who provided me with all the relevant documents and information that are related to the Bahraini National Youth Strategy, as well as assisting and facilitating the field visits and consultation meeting with many individuals who were involved directly with the above mentioned strategy.

2. Introduction:

Since 1971, and through consecutive program cycles, the UNDP in Bahrain has carried out a number of projects in various aspects, aiming at promoting and implementing sustainable human development strategies and programs, which were based on national priorities, in line with the Kingdom of Bahrain reform agenda and in collaboration with various ministries and agencies.

Despite the fact that the Kingdom of Bahrain is considered as a net contributor country, following a joint effort between the UNDP, the government of Bahrain, civil societies, and national consultants¹³, five major national development areas have been identified for analysis in the Common Country Assessment (CCA), i.e., Economy and Employment; Governance and Human Rights; Gender and Women's Rights; Social Development, and Environment. In addition, the CCA highlighted the development challenges facing Bahrain and had proposed areas of potential cooperation between the government, UNDP, and other development partners, which have been taken into consideration in the Country Program Outline (CPO), 2002¹⁴.

According to the 2001 census in Bahrain, youth population ranging from the age of 15-24 makes up to 16.9% of the total population (20.37% of the Bahrainis and 11.05% of the non-Bahrainis living in the Kingdom). The total population of youth, male, and female, included in that age group is 109, 670 out of the total number of population, which was 650,000.

¹³ Kingdom of Bahrain, United Nations. Common Country Assessment (CCA). Manama 2002.

¹⁴ Country Program Outline (CPO), 2002.

Furthermore, it has been stated^{15,16}, that the Bahraini youth often experience difficulties negotiating their life options, and their major problems, according to some scientific observations, range from health, employment, and lack of participation, to fulfilling their spare time with leisure activities... the youth population is increasing and that they are more than any other time, faced with a variety of challenges resulted from media exposure, globalization, change in family function and economic hardship. It also stated that no documented studies have ever tackled the youth issues from a strategic point of view in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Hence, the General Organization for Youth and Sports, in concurrence with the Ministry of Finance in the Kingdom of Bahrain and with the collaboration and partnership of the UNDP in the Kingdom of Bahrain, initiated a project in 2003 to draft a National Youth Strategy and Action Plan to holistically integrate youth and those dealing with youth issues in national development processes.

3. The National Youth Strategy and Action Plan:

The (NYS) represents an inclusive and holistic vision and framework for the development of young men and women in Bahrain. It specifies a set of values and guiding principles, and it provides a national declaration and commitment of the priorities and practical support that the Government of Bahrain, with the support of civil society institutions and private sector intend to give to help facilitate the advancement of Bahraini young people, so they can realize their full potential and capabilities, become responsible citizens and contribute positively to the community and national life of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The formulation process for the Bahrain national youth strategy and action plan was jointly prepared (GOYS & UNDP), with strong participation of youth, and based on a number of important principles and incorporated extensive consultation and study activities.¹⁷

Goals of the National Youth Strategy

Goals are broad and qualitative statements setting out the outcomes which the National Youth Strategy hopes to achieve. Building upon the vision statement, the goals of the Bahrain National Youth Strategy strive to –

- Develop in Bahraini young women and men an awareness of, respect for and active commitment to the principles and values contained within the Koran, National Action Charter and the Constitution, concomitant with a deep sense of national identity and belonging.
- Create a greater understanding in Bahraini society of the needs, interests, issues, opinions, ideas, potentials and aspirations of its young people.
- Identify priority areas for youth policy and program intervention.
- Give recognition and visibility to the contributions and unique assets of young Bahrainis.
- Highlight, instigate and promote actions which enable the active participation and leadership of young people in the Bahraini community and national life.
- Create an integrated, holistic, coordinated and operational framework in response to the youth challenges opportunities in Bahrain.

¹⁵ Youth Strategy in the Kingdom of Bahrain

¹⁶ Terms of Reference for the Evaluation of Country Program 2003 – 2007, Kingdom of Bahrain.

¹⁷ The Bahraini National Youth Strategy, 2005 and 2007.

- Foster new thinking and creative options for dealing with issues confronting young people in Bahrain.
- Encourage new and effective mechanisms to build collaboration and coordination between all youth development stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, the private sector and young people.

The project aimed to enhance young participation and involvement in decision making and improved provisions and services in relation to education and training, employment, health, social security, participation and human rights, culture, sports and leisure time, globalization, the environment, and ICT.

The project was completed in the year 2005 and a National Youth Strategy was formulated and submitted to the highest levels of the His Royal Highness Sh. Salman Bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince. However, the strategy was not implemented as planned.

4. The Evaluation Process:

The evaluation process took place from 17 to 24 October 2010, with the following specific objectives.¹⁸

- To assess the contributing factors including participatory processes and broad stakeholder engagement that led to the formulation of the NYS,
- To Highlight the factors that hindered the implementation of the NYS, and...
- To document the impact of the project (positive/ negative/ intended/ unintended) on the lives of Bahraini youth.

The overall objectives of the evaluation mission, alongside the key evaluation guiding questions are listed in the Term of Reference. (Annex 3).

The evaluation process was based on the review of the relevant documents and the major issues for addressing the evaluation of the NYS, as well as conducting objective and transparent interviews with various types of stakeholders, namely UNDP officials, government officials and (NYS) theme conveners.

For the time being, the evaluator has not yet designed focus group discussions, and due to the time allocated, no (NGO) or ministries' projects and activities were reviewed in order to identify the impact of the (NYS).

It is very important to mention that due to the fact that (NYS) was not implemented as planned, the evaluation will not take into consideration to a large extent the achievement of the objectives for each theme of the (NYS).

5. The Evaluation Results:

Following an analytical review of the relevant documents and interviewing a number of key individuals who participated in the formulation of the (NYS), a number of key results have been revealed:

1. It seems that there is no specific reason or theme preventing the implementation of the (NYS). The overall opinions of the individuals interviewed were the lack of National Advisory Committee.
2. Lack of full-time Bahraini Project Manager. The Project Manager was a Non-Arabic speaking expatriate, who was involved on a part-time basis.
3. Lack of essential support from senior GOYS officials.
4. Lack of connection between the (NYS) projects and other related UNDP projects.

¹⁸ Term of Reference for the Evaluation.

5. Lack of collaboration between Government and Non Government Institutions towards the achievement and implementation of the (NYS).
6. Several National Consultants lacked the skills and professional attitude required for the task.

Lesson Learned:

1. The participation of various and diverse institutions (government, non government, youth societies, private sectors...) in the kingdom of Bahrain have proven to be an excellent and unique example in the formulation of the (NYS).
2. The implementation of the (NYS) has not been achieved, mainly due to the lack of a proper body to be in charge of the whole project. This is contradictory to the agreement signed between GOYS and UNDP, which states in item 4.1 (page 5):

“Establishing a committee representing ministries, NGOs, Universities and the private sector to meet and decide on the projects and activities needed.”

3. Although, the (NYS) has not been implemented, indicators have revealed that there are a large number of projects and activities that have been implemented (directly or indirectly), in various institutions such as The Economic Development Board, and ministries i.e. Health, Education, and Labour.
4. Most if not all the decisions are taken at the ministry level, and unless been instructed by a higher authority, other parties have a role in the decision making and in some case no role at all.

6. Strengths:

1. The (NYS) was built upon the strong endorsement given by both the National Action Charter and the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain to young men and women.
2. The (NYS), is:
 - Comprehensive, which incorporates realistic priority youth issues, such as education, health and the environment.
 - Innovative, in the way it has been established and formulated. The project is a joint venture of the collaboration between the UNDP and government and non-government institutes, with strong participation of youth (approx.16, 000).
 - Dynamic, progressive, and challenging, due to the nature of the critical issues it is targeting and the strategic objectives and priority interventions which can be modified during the whole process of the implementation of the (NYS).
3. The contribution of all partners, young people, government and non-government organization is considered one of the most important objectives of the (NYS) project.
4. There was a noticeably strong spirit amongst the youth participants in particular, during the whole period of the formulation of the (NYS). However, a high level of frustration has been encountered due to the suspension of the (NYS).

7. Future Challenges:

1. Formulation of National Advisory Committee is very critical in order to implement and achieve the necessary holistic and interdisciplinary approach of the (NYS). The (NYS) project is a joint collaboration between the Government of Bahrain

rather than a specific ministry, and the UNDP. In order for such a committee to be very effective it may be better placed under a very high institution such as the Economic Developmental Board.

2. Development of a National Youth Plan based on the strategic objectives and priority interventions of the (NYS).
3. Enhancing the collaboration between the Government and Non Government Institutions towards the achievement and implementation of the (NYS).
4. Appointing a scholar from the Government who should have sufficient status, in order to enhance and achieve cooperation from the ministries involved in the youth thematic of the (NYS).
5. Rules and responsibilities need to be specified in advance for government officials and top management personals.
6. If the formulation of National Advisory Committee cannot be achieved for whatever reason, the concern partners should seek an alternative approach, such as formulating a number of projects that deal separately with the relevant ministry, but at the same time contributing towards the (NYS) as a whole.
7. In order to secure the implementation of the (NYS), one needs to build sustainable sources of funding.
8. In order to evaluate the success of the objectives and outcomes of the (NYS), one needs to measure the benefits achieved by the stakeholders, i.e., the progress in the field of youth.

8. Conclusion:

As stated by His Royal Highness Sh. Salman Bin Hamad Al Khalifa, "the National Youth Strategy is a distinct achievement that the Kingdom's national charter and constitution encourage and consider as a corrective project. The strategy is a result of a tremendous effort done through the collaboration between different organization, national and international experts and young people from different backgrounds, religions and gender."

"As the strategy plays an important role in developing our future, the Kingdom of Bahrain assures its full support of the strategy goals and principles and emphasizes that all government organizations and societies should follow the strategy principles."

"The achievement of this strategy reflects youth future and presents a good account of our culture. However, our challenge is being able to benefit from this strategy relying on our potential and preparing the facilities and appropriate atmosphere to achieve the strategy objectives."

The (NYS) is an excellent example of a successful strategic partnership between the UNDP and the Government of Bahrain, despite the fact that it was not implemented as a whole unit.

However, as stated earlier, youth has various challenges, and neither GOYS nor the Government of Bahrain have a future or an existing strategy in the field of youth.

Therefore, it is very critical to resolve all the obstacles facing the implementation of the (NYS), especially if we take into account the recognition of His Highness the Crown Prince to the important role of the (NYS) in the development of Bahrain.

9. Recommendations:

1. The connection and collaboration between related UNDP projects and agencies needs to be reinforced, especially in the formulation and implementation of similar sector projects.

2. The process and recruitment of consultants need to follow an adequate norms and procedures and to take into consideration not only the knowledge and skills required, but also the positive attitude towards the topic under investigation.
3. Continuous evaluation and feedback is needed in order to modify the Action Plan accordingly.
4. Future support to stakeholders should be considered in light of the implementation of the (NYS) proposed activities.
5. Attention should be paid towards the effects of the current economic crisis on the future projects and programs.

Dr. Saeed Husain Al Yamani National Consultant
October 2010

ANNEX 6

CASE STUDY EVALUATION ON ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN.

Introduction to the Project:

The Kingdom of Bahrain undertook a major project to reform and upgrade the quality of education, covering all primary, intermediate and secondary schools run by the Government of Bahrain.

This project has been developed as a result of needs assessment and evaluation missions conducted by UNDP/UNESCO with a view to improve the Ministry of Education (MoEdu) quality and relevance and its capacity in policy and strategic formulation and organisational reform. Thus the main components of the project are assisting the MoEdu to:

- a. Evaluate and improve quality of education at primary and secondary schools.
- b. Strengthen its policy-making and strategic planning.
- c. Increase its organizational efficiency.

The results of the project would assist the MoEdu in creating the necessary structure and strengthening its know-how and skills in order to improve the performance of its policy-setting and strategic planning functions that will respond to the changes facing the kingdom.

The project, the first of its kind undertaken by the Government of Bahrain in over two decades, represent a critical commitment by the Government given the impact that education has on the lives of people and the social fabric of the country. The project duration was one year 2004. The total cost of the project is US\$508.820 of which the government of Bahrain contributed US\$494.000.

The MoEdu runs and administers the governmental educational institutions and supervises private education. The Ministry's main responsibility is to insure education for all, improve its quality and standard to meet the learner's needs. Also to meet the national social and economic development requirements, the rapid-changing labour market needs, and challenges and expectations of the outside world.

As part of the Government the MoEdu is concerned with developing the human resources. Therefore, the MoEdu is concerned with modernization of educational institutions in the country providing all material and moral requirements. The ministry has been involved in improving the continuous educational development, activating the role of schools, strengthening society's confidence in education, linking it with the labour and production sectors, and making education more relevant to the Bahraini Society.

The Kingdom of Bahrain has made notable advances in fulfilling its first major responsibility of providing free education for all school age children throughout the country. Almost all school age children (ages 6-18) are in school. In 2002 net enrolments in primary education (grade 1-6) was 99.98 percent for both males and females (99.7 males, 99.9 females). Net enrolment in the second level of education (intermediate grades 7-9) was 99.5 percent (99.5 males, 99.6 females). Secondary education (grades 10-12) net enrolment is 99.4 percent (99.2 males, 99.5 females).

Repetition and drop-out figures together are less than one percent. At the secondary level, the drop -out rate is slightly higher.

According to the UNESCO mission report, the education quality in Bahrain is generally good. Facilities are in good shape, textbooks and learning materials are free and available to all students, most teachers are well qualified, and student/teacher ratios (about 30/1) are reasonable.

Project strategy:

The main aim of the project was to improve the standard of education to its highest level in order to face the different national and international challenges and the local market demands. A participatory approach, based on distributing roles and responsibilities among key players of the educational process in the kingdom of Bahrain, was used to establish a team-work mechanism. International experts worked with technical teams composed of staff of the MoEdu and other local experts. The teams reviewed issues and questions related to quality education and policy planning with the ministry. The teams developed and reviewed data collection instruments, helped in analyzing the data, conducted brainstorming sessions involving concerned authorities and partners, and proposed short and long term actions or general directions.

The main issues which were expected to be addressed in this project were:

Quality of Education:

The current status of education was assessed. This was done by assessing the extent to which each level of education (primary, intermediate, secondary, and non-formal) matched and satisfied the definitions of quality of education. This was done in order to lead to a better understanding of the constraints to delivering quality education at each level. A detailed examination was done for the effectiveness of teaching methodologies used at each level of education, especially in math and science, teacher training (both pre-service and in-service), Student evaluation/assessment systems, curriculum and program with an emphasis on the curriculum load and time available for learning, the credit system at the secondary level, and standards set for private education. The views of teachers and school administrators on the appropriate modes of school/ community participation were included and assessed.

Policy and planning:

Enhancing the policy and planning at the MoEdu included assessing the implications of socio-economic changes and globalization upon the educational system of Bahrain. Research policy and capacity were examined, which lead to institutionalizing arrangements necessary to improve the strategic planning capacity at MoEdu. There was an examination of extent to which current monitoring and evaluation systems serve planning and management needs and how they can be strengthened.

Organizational Efficiency:

The effectiveness of mechanisms for coordination and communication between various units were assessed, and the best practices in this field were introduced. Suggestions for improving the means of coordination and communication between the MoEdu and the schools were given. This was achieved through examining the existing plans for decentralization of authority to schools, their feasibility (political, social and financial), and needs for improvement, and through examining staff career development systems and their effectiveness and needs for improvement.

Relevance to the Millennium Development Goals and the Economic Vision 2030

This project is compatible with and takes into consideration the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) for the Kingdom of Bahrain 2004-2007. The second development goal

was to achieve universal primary education. The project takes into consideration the main millennium development goal of creating an advanced society based on the principles of freedom, equality, and security, which provides its people with the right to a safe and tranquil life, present and future. One example of the quantitative achievement to be made is in reaching full equality in educational opportunities until the secondary stage by 2005 and in all levels of education until 2015. Also one of the considerations was the ratio of females to males in various stages of education.

Arising from these millennium goals the government arrived at their Economic Vision 2030 for Bahrain. In relation to education it is a first-rate education system that enables all Bahrainis to fulfil their ambitions. Because education is essential for making this vision a reality, there is a need to develop an education system that provides every citizen with educational opportunities appropriate to their individual needs, aspirations and abilities. Education and training need to be relevant to the requirements of Bahrain and its economy, delivered to the highest possible quality standards, and accessible based on ability and merit.

To do this there is a need to develop a clear strategy for raising standards and performance in the schools and vocational institutions. This will be done through:

- Focusing on developing teachers, by improving their recruitment and training, enhancing the management of their performance, improving their image in society, and increasing the attractiveness of careers in teaching.
- Provide quality training to people in advanced skills required for global competitiveness and attract new industries to Bahrain.
- Set standards for Quality across the education sector, regularly review the performance of the educational and training institutions and compare them with those of the competitors.

Potential measures of success in these areas will be improvement of educational institutions in independent quality reviews and national examinations, scores in international tests of school performance.

The Country Programme Outline for the Kingdom of Bahrain 2003-2007 as it pertains to education focuses on social development and sustainable livelihood, and human resources development. The strategies include:

- Articulating a social development strategy that is based on the concept of empowering individuals through providing them with training and financial credit to fit the market and generate income.
- Generating and analyzing relevant data on education, health, housing and population to be used for the future social and labour strategies.
- On human resource development, UNDP will continue supporting national authorities in their efforts to realign education and training systems to meet market requirements of skills.

Main activities to be undertaken under the project.

The quality of education needed identified in scientific measures.

- Review the definition of quality of education, and assess how each level of education satisfies this definition.
- Identify the constraints to delivering quality education at each level.
- Review the effectiveness of teaching methodologies used at each level.

- Assess the acceptability of introducing time for extra activities during the school day.
- Assess the view of parents, teachers and school administrators on the appropriate modes of school/community participation to improve the quality of education.
- Examine any special difficulties faced by boys' schools.

Capacities required for achieving the desired quality of education enhanced.

- Assess capacity for conducting high quality strategic planning.
- Organizing field teams and forming Evaluation Coordination Group.
- Review departmental programs.
- Identify areas of common vision.
- Review recent socio-economic changes and globalization impact on education.
- Organize a workshop to review a common vision and refine departmental programmes accordingly.
- Review EMIS mandate and the current functioning.
- Identify improved mechanism for better serving the EMIS.

Internal and external organizational structure conducive to achieving the desired educational quality established

- Assess the effectiveness of current mechanisms for coordination and communication.
- Review the existing plans for decentralization of authority to schools.
- Review effectiveness of staff career development system.
- Assess the efficiency and appropriateness of costing and budgeting mechanisms.

Main results:

It is stated in the Comprehensive Evaluation Project of the Education Quality in the Kingdom of Bahrain final report, that the Project achieved all of its goals. The strong points in the various components in the educational system were identified as were the weak points, from which a network of directives/recommendations were formulated and which related to the overall policy of managing the educational system. Another group of recommendations were also formulated regarding the sectors included in the evaluation project.

It is also stated that the project achieved other goals as well, perhaps the most important of which is building national capacity through the participation of the working teams, each in its own field of specialization and through the various stages which the project underwent. They gained expertise in formulating research problems, developing the tools, selecting the samples, processing and analyzing data and participating in various ways in the writing of sector reports under the supervision of international experts. The members of the national teams were also trained in cooperative team work. It can also be said that they represent the nucleus at the Ministry of Education which is capable of reaching a Bahraini definition of quality. This is also true for evaluating the management of the education system and setting the general guidelines for education in a way that would promote the strategic role of the Ministry of Education.

The results of the assessment studies pointed to **a number of strong points in the educational system**, including for example, the following:

- The availability of a strong institutional foundation represented in the network of schools.
- A clear distribution of responsibilities.
- The existence of a complete system of rules and regulations.
- All schools implement the curriculum accurately.
- School institutions exercise decentralization.
- Presence of a network of curricula that is periodically reviewed.

- Usage of relatively modern teaching methods.
- School desire to open up to civil society institutions.
- Learners benefiting from enrolment in literacy and adult education.

The studies also pointed to a number of weak points, including:

- Lack of a developmental plan for education.
- Absence of any comprehensive perspective for quality administration in the educational system.
- Weakness in communication and coordination.
- The need for a strategic plan in the field of training.
- Weakness in congruency between the curricula, students' levels and the needs of the community.
- Weakness in professional experience among employees in the central directorates.
- Difficulty in obtaining data regarding expenditures.
- The relationship of schools with the labour market is nonexistent in approximately two-thirds of these institutions.
- Lack of qualified persons to tend to the gifted and those with special needs.
- The authorities granted to schools to establish partnerships with civil society are insufficient.
- Curricula for adult education no longer fulfil the needs of the learners.

The general report offers a group of general directions and practical measures to improve the quality of education in the fields included in the evaluation project. These directives were distributed into two groups: The first group revolved around the overall policy of managing the educational system whilst the second included topics related to improving the quality of curricula, assessment, teaching methods, training, adult education and education costs and funding.

The main results achieved were stated in the progress report to be:

- International consultants have designed the evaluation instruments with the cooperation of the local teams and participated in the workshops held for the local teams and the concerned employees at the MOEDU and schools, and trained the concerned teams on the implementation of the evaluation instruments.
- A seminar on the "Definition of Quality of Education" was held. Participants in this seminar included MOEDU senior staff and specialists, school administrative and teaching staff, students and parents.

The third mission of the international consultants evaluated the following:

- Lifelong Learning.
- Costs and Budgeting.
- Coordination, Communication and Information.
- Teaching Methods and Training of Teachers/Administrators.
- Decentralization and Community Participation.

The international consultants reviewed with the local team leaders and coordinators the results of the studies carried out and agreed on the reports contents and formats. The following reports were presented to the international coordinator:

- Report on the Evaluation of Continuous Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain.
- Report on Educational Costs and Budgeting in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

- Report on the Evaluation of Curricula Measurement and Evaluation, Management and Evaluation in the Kingdom of Bahrain.
- Report on Community Participation and Decentralization in the Kingdom of Bahrain's schools.
- Report on the Evaluation of Teaching Methodologies and training of Teachers and School Administrators in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

According to the progress report, the activities of the work plan have been achieved and the project has achieved its objectives. But there is no verifiable evidence that this was the case and that there was any impact on enhancing the quality of education. There are still there are actions needed to be taken to implement the proposed directives mentioned in the final and thematic reports but these were not defined as a result of the project.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

In general the project has achieved many good reports. The project report pointed to a number of strong and weak points in the educational system. The project also helped in building and developing national capacity through participation of the national working teams who worked with the international consultants.

What is not at all clear is what the result of these general directions was? For example, a seminar was conducted to define the concept of quality in education, but there is no evidence that there is actually a clear written definition of this concept which was a logical result of this seminar. *It is to be recommended that future seminars produce specific recommendations for Bahrain rather than simply directional concepts.*

There was also an assessment of the efficiency of the curricula, teaching methods, the student evaluation system and teacher training all from the perspective of school principals, teachers, students, ministry administrators and parents. Because of the lack of training and qualification on part of some of the personnel in schools and in the MoEdu the project suggestions were not taken on board.

The in-service training workshops given in English by the international experts were not provided for all the teachers, and some of the teachers had difficulty understanding English. Beside that there was no precise analysis of causes of problems or weak points which is a necessary precondition to the development of solutions to enhance the quality of education. *It is recommended that future training is conducted in the appropriate language and if necessary with the use of skilled translators.*

Overall, it cannot be said that the project has improved the state of education in Bahrain. There was no follow up after the end of the project. There is no evidence of a detailed examination of the effectiveness of teaching methodologies used at each level of education.

The consultants trained the teachers, but it is not clear on what basis they chose topics for these workshops. There is still a lack of qualified professionals to tend to those with special needs. *It is recommended that the selection of teachers and the topics for training be more appropriate to ensure a greater more sustainable impact as a result.*

In the final report it is stated that learners are benefiting from enrolling in literacy and adult education. At the same time it is stated that curricula for adult education no longer fulfil needs of the learners. It is not clear what exactly needs to be done regarding this

issue, and it is obvious from the current state of current affairs that nothing has been done.

The project report mentioned several assessments, but it did not specify for example how evaluation systems serve planning and management needs and how they can be strengthened. The effectiveness of mechanisms for coordination and communication between various units in the MoEdu was weak and remains so. Although this was clearly stated but there are no recommendations on how to tackle this important issue. Also there is no evidence of what specific institutional arrangements are necessary to improve the strategic planning capacity of the MoEdu. *It is strongly recommended that any further support to educational reform be clearly and specifically defined and monitored beyond academic theory and focus instead on action based recommendations that will produce tangible results to help the Kingdom of Bahrain improve the quality of education.*

In order to get full benefits of the project, the personnel in the education system have to be trained to match the tasks that need to be done. No training and development plan was formulated. This includes specifying standards for trainees and training workshops. Training and evaluation should be continuous, and the working teams should be able to work full time in order for the development and enhancement of education to become continuous. *It is recommended that objective and professional training needs assessment be conducted and feed into the content and design of the training workshops.*

As a result of the project there was a good assessment and evaluation of the educational system in Bahrain, but little was accomplished as far as enhancing the quality of the educational system in Bahrain is concerned. The project stopped at assessment. In order to take another step further and for the project to have sustainable results it is important to involve Bahraini experts in the field of education from national universities. Most importantly it should have involved directors and high officials from the MoEdu because they are the people who primarily have the capacity, capability and national level authority to do the follow up implementation.

It is also important for UNDP to work with these consultants and national officials on developing an achievable agreed work plan from the very beginning of the project that ties in to the defined contractual deliverables and which specifies what, when, and who is responsible of establishing the tasks that need to be done, and how they are going to be implemented. *It is recommended that the Country Office and the Ministry of Education work more closely together to quality control the progress of implementation and the production of deliverables as the project proceeds.*

These conclusions and recommendations were arrived at after detailed examination of the available documentation and from interviews with people from the MoEdu who participated in the project. It is disappointing that a more representative sample of project participants were not available to be interviewed.

Dr. Najat S. Al-Hamdan
National Consultant and Assistant Professor Arabian Gulf University
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