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Ministry of Education and Higher Education

Education Development Project (EDP)

World Bank Loan No. 7010-LE

**ORGANISATIONAL RESTRUCTURING AND STAFF
DEVELOPMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND
HIGHER EDUCATION**

RFP No SS62

**Information and Communication Plan for the Ministry
of Education and Higher Education in Lebanon**

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Background Information

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) of the Lebanese Republic has received a loan from the World Bank for the implementation of an Education Development Project (EDP). This project, as stated in the Terms of Reference, has been developed to support the reform of the education system and to reinforce the quality of education within public schools. The EDP is composed of three main components:

- Ministry’s Policy, planning and information management ;
- School leadership, pedagogical capacity and assessment of academic achievement; and
- Buildings and equipment.

Building on MEHE’s previously prepared Organizational Development studies and Structures, and endorsed National Education Strategy, the EDP supports the reform process through the “Technical Assistance for the Restructuring and Monitoring of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education – Organizational Restructuring and Staff Development” Project component. The Action Plan of the abovementioned component states that an Information and Communication Plan aiming at improving the communication in MEHE should be drafted and should include:

- the recommended communication patterns for the MEHE;
- the best practices of organizational information and communication advised for the MEHE;
- the implications of the recommended information and communication on the new proposed organizational structure;
- the reorganization of the internal information and communication efforts in order to optimize their results;
- the information and communication activities that should be conducted to inform the Ministry staff about the new organizational structure;
- The strategic information and communication guidelines for MEHE in its transitional phase (between the current structure and the new organizational structure);
- The main concepts of the awareness culture that should be spread in this transitional phase.

Until now, all information and communication efforts in the MEHE have been of limited and inadequate influence. In fact, the MEHE currently faces:

- Lack of an information and communication policy;
- A communication problem related to decision-making mechanisms.

This paper presents proposals to tackle the two information and communication problems mentioned above through the “Technical Assistance for the Restructuring and Monitoring of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education – Organizational Restructuring and Staff Development” Project component. It also provides at the end of the proposals **a timeframe and a budget to implement the Information and Communication Plan in the Ministry.**

Section One - Proposals to Tackle the Problem Related to the Lack of Information & Communication Policy in the MEHE

1- The need to activate the system of information and communication in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education

1.1) Lack of an effective information and communicate system at the ministry

Most Lebanese citizens do not have a high regard for the role the MEHE plays in their lives or in the lives of their children. The Education sector is facing many problems. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education also suffers of weakness constantly highlighted by the media every time it spots the growing problems of the educational sector. Citizens are thus not properly informed about all the MEHE activities, which weakens the credibility deserved by the achievements of the Minister, the Ministry officials, the staff and the experts.

The significance and efficiency of the MEHE need to be increased (and this is what the EDP is contributing to), and, in parallel, the image and profile of the MEHE need to be promoted. There is still no clear communication policy in the MEHE for the time being. Neither are there any communication personnel in the Regional Services. The ongoing communication activities are limited to the following:

- Publications and data issued by the ECRD.
- Contacts with the media: the Minister has a press advisor (*conseiller de presse*) reporting directly to him. The main MEHE news and communication are restricted to the Minister news.

The future communicators' job in the MEHE is indeed a many-faceted one, and this job is detailed in this communication plan. The actual phase of Organizational Restructuring and Staff Development of the MEHE is the most suitable moment to conceive and implement this Communication Plan.

1.2) Mission Statement

This plan is intended as a framework for the communication activities and visibility related to the MEHE. The objectives of our communication are:

- To maximize the effectiveness of the communication function in the new organizational structure of the MEHE;
- To modify attitudes in central and regional administration units by increasing motivation for change towards the new MEHE organizational structure;
- To improve the image of the MEHE and promote its achievements;
- And, ultimately, to increase communication between the Ministry of Education and Higher Education on one hand, and civil society and citizens on the other hand.

1.3) Defining the Target Groups of the MEHE's Information & Communication Plan

The Communication Plan of the MEHE will be directed towards the following targets:

- MEHE employees working in Beirut and in the Regional Services in the “Mohafazat”.
- Citizens directly concerned by the services of the MEHE, i.e. the students, the teachers, the students parents, etc.
- Civil society institutions and municipalities.
- Actual or potential donors are also a target of this communication plan. Opportunities to promote the MEHE modernization efforts to an international audience should be seized.

2- Basic guidelines for a strategic communication plan for the MEHE in its transitional phase (from the current structure towards the new one)

Poor communication will be one of the most inhibiting forces to the successful performance of the MEHE after its restructuring. The MEHE cannot succeed in implementing the new proposed organizational structure unless it follows the guidelines of a specific and clear communication strategy.

These guidelines suggest the creation of a new media identity for the MEHE in line with its reorganization, the development of Key Messages for the MEHE Communication Plan, and the enhancement of internal and external communication by specifying communication activities that should be conducted to inform the Ministry staff about the new organizational structure; they also suggest the recommendation of communication patterns for MEHE during the reorganization process and the definition of new communication activities targeting the citizens.

2.1) Creating a New Identity for the MEHE:

In modern countries, the ministries are progressively relying on image-management strategies. When the MEHE stakeholders start thinking about the creation of a new identity, it will mean they are starting to manage the MEHE image.

Communication experts and MEHE communicators will be required to engage in the following activities:

- To propose a new corporate image that fundamentally explains the MEHE’s new main mission.
- To produce logos and consistent explanatory headings supporting the new mission of the Ministry.
- To produce models, symbols and such requirements (Artworks) that are compatible with the new identity, to be used by the Ministry staff in dealing with the parties supporting it internally and externally.
- To create a house style for the MEHE that defines the design approach for use of all future promotional material, and to produce a document of main house-style guidelines that explains the design approach.
- To produce special stationery for the MEHE reflecting the new corporate identity of the Ministry (letters, letterheads, notepads, compliments slips, etc.)

2.2) Developing Key Messages for the MEHE Communication and Information Plan

The question we need to ask is: What is the EDP trying to do?

It seeks to improve the quality of life through education.

If we think about the kind of key messages we want to publish and support, we can identify the following legend for the MEHE future promotional material:

**The Ministry of Education and Higher Education:
Improving Quality of Life through Education**

Or:

**The Ministry of Education and Higher Education:
Human Capital, a National Investment**

In order to change attitudes and create the right atmosphere for modernization, we need to convey our main message in a powerful, meaningful way. Our message is a “call for action”. It is also an encouragement for partnership.

We can thus also propose the following legend for the MEHE future promotional material:

**The Ministry of Education and Higher Education:
Let us invest in Brains.**

2.3) Internal information and communication, i.e. specifically designed for MEHE employees

2.3.1) Specifying information and communication activities that should be conducted to inform the Ministry staff about the new organizational structure

Internal Information and Communication are the ones specifically designed for MEHE employees. The goal of this communication is to make the MEHE employees feel more like insiders and to foster goodwill between employees and management. According to the findings of our Technical Assistance, the local media is often alerted about a major event in the MEHE, and the MEHE staff knows from the local and national media about this event. It is important to note that employees should never know about a corporate event other than from the corporation itself. This is why we have specified the following activities to inform the Ministry staff about the new organizational structure:

- To organize a series of key-notes seminars during which the communicators will:
 - inform employees about the new structure and the internal changes that will accompany it;
 - explain to the employees the participatory approach and the ownership process that have been used to evolve a new structure ;
 - explain to employees the benefits of the new structure; and more precisely present and explain to them the comparative analysis document between the proposed structure and the current one, with a list of advantages of the proposed structure including all changes in unit functions;
 - explain to employees any implications the new structure has about staff promotions ;
 - increase employees' understanding of what is expected from them in order to become more productive, quality oriented and entrepreneurial to meet the standards of the new organizational structure ;
 - Give employees a clear idea about how the MEHE has planned to tackle the new challenges required by the new structure, in order to ease their minds. It is necessary to overcome resistance to change. The workshops should last until the resistance barriers are removed.
- To produce flyers representing the chart of the new organizational structure and to distribute them among employees;
- To produce posters representing the chart of the new organizational structure and distribute them to all the MEHE offices;
- To produce an employee-oriented publication containing all information described above.

2.3.2) Recommending communication patterns for MEHE during the reorganization process¹

Information and Communication may be transmitted in a number of directions within the MEHE: down or up the chain of command, horizontally to peers within (or outside) the organizational unit.

2.3.2.1) Replacing the current managerial style in giving directives with a broader understanding of downward communication

A big problem that most of the large organizations have, according to communication scholars, appears to be organizations where top managers isolate themselves physically and psychologically from other employees at the peril of effective communication. The MEHE may encounter this problem, since the new proposed structure, even if it evolved through the ownership process, has been discussed and approved at the top decision level of the Ministry.

The MEHE currently lacks the grass-roots-level Information and Communication and it lacks information exchange and involvement of the staff of the lower categories. The current managerial style in the MEHE is mostly limited to giving directives to subordinates.

In the section above, we have proposed information and communication activities to inform employees about the new proposed structure. However, downward communication to inform about the new structure should not be limited to ministerial memoranda transmitting directives. While a ministerial memorandum may be sufficient for routine communication, a change as important as the MEHE reorganization is more effectively dealt with through face-to-face discussion and direct interaction during meetings.

2.3.2.2) Introducing upward communication in the MEHE

The communication activities mentioned above are restricted to downward communication. As communication patterns for MEHE, we do recommend the usage of downward communication, but also of upward communication. Effective communication with employees (which is the basis for any internal communication effort) must start with the way managers interact with other employees on a day-to-day basis. Such interaction is an integral part of management and should be thought of not as an additional burden, but as a natural interaction with peers. General Directors should encourage upward as well as downward communication.

By giving employees the respect they deserve and listening and interacting with them frequently, directors have the basis for an effective internal information and communication program. Upward communication will facilitate the dynamics of exchange between the different groups and structures of the MEHE.

¹ Communication patterns are also called by some communication scholars communication flow or communication direction.

Effective upward information and communication can occur through meetings at the level of large groups of the MEHE. In order to ensure ease in dealing with staff, the officials in the Ministry should make an effort to organize expanded regular meetings with various staff groups; such meetings should be frequently held and viewed as an opportunity for staff to express their views and ask questions in an open forum.

The goal of upward communication is to give the employees the opportunity to present their views, to provide feedback about the implementation process of the organizational structure, to express their questions, their aspirations and the difficulties they are encountering.

Downward communication will permit to inform the MEHE employees about all the changes related to the new organizational structure; upward communication will permit not only to inform them, but also to make them feel they are part of the decision. Allowing the two-way street in communication will improve the state of mind of the MEHE staff as well as their attitude towards the new organizational structure.

The usage of downward communication and upward communication in the MEHE will help construct a collective identity towards the Ministry and develop a feeling of belonging. This feeling of belonging is particularly important in the MEHE reorganization phase: it is indeed useless to provide training for MEHE staff if they are ready to leave the MEHE and be transferred to other ministries. By limiting turnover and staff transfers to other ministries, the benefits and cost-effectiveness of training will be much higher.

2.3.2.3) Enlarging the scope of horizontal communication in the MEHE

Horizontal communication, also known as lateral or across-lines communication occurs between people on the same organizational level of authority. Horizontal communication is mostly used for task coordination, problem solving, and information sharing and conflict resolution.

According to Decree 111 dated 12/6/1959 on the organization of the Lebanese public administrations:

- The Directors and Heads of Services within the same Ministry “can exchange ordinary communication” (أن يتبادلوا المخابرات العادية).
- The Heads of Departments and Heads of Sections within the same Ministry “can exchange ordinary communication” (أن يتبادلوا المخابرات العادية).
- The Directors and Heads of Services in different Ministries “can exchange communication” (أن يتبادلوا المخابرات).

This is for communication by telephone. Written correspondence follows the following form:

- The Heads of Departments communicate directly with other Heads of Departments within the same Service. To communicate with Heads of Departments from other Services, they pass through their respective Heads of Services – and sometimes they take the liberty to communicate directly with them.
- The Heads of Services communicate directly with other Heads of Services within the same General Directorate. To communicate with Heads of Services from other General Directorates, they pass through their respective General Directors.

Horizontal communication exists in Lebanese ministries and is practiced among the staff of the same category and within the limits mentioned above.

The MEHE has a need for a larger amount of horizontal communication. Across-lines communication is often necessary for lower employees near the bottom of the chains of command. It would be a tremendous waste of time, energy and resources to always require the lower employees to send their communications upwards through much higher employees and then to transmit the message on down through other employees. Allowing lower employees to cut across organization lines and communicate directly among themselves saves steps and allows them to get the information much quicker and more accurately. Even if vertical communication in one of the General Directorates of the MEHE is effective, horizontal communication would still facilitate coordination and save time.

Naturally, there are some problems which could occur if horizontal communication was adopted immediately throughout the MEHE: the MEHE staff is simply not culturally ready for such innovation. The authority structure, which is so rigid in the Lebanese context, would be abolished and too many messages would flow in all directions without screening or filtering. Consequently, a compromise between the rigidity of zero horizontal communication and the anarchy of total horizontal communication should be made progressively by the Directors of the MEHE. Horizontal communication in the MEHE should be allowed, within reason:

- First, horizontal communication should only be allowed if it takes place progressively, in order to avoid any dysfunctional conflicts ;
- Second, if its objective is to expedite action and not to short-circuit the vertical hierarchy ;
- Third, if it takes place with the knowledge and support of the Directors.

2.4) External communication, i.e. communication aiming to establish a citizen-oriented administration

Creating and maintaining positive relationships with the MEHE public is mainly done through external people-oriented communication and information. A citizen-oriented administration may be established through the following activities:

2.4.1) Producing MEHE promotional material

- Produce a corporate brochure about the MEHE according to the new organizational structure. The brochure will also emphasize MEHE projects and achievements.
- Produce a leaflet for citizens about the MEHE, according to the new organizational structure. The leaflet will also emphasize services delivered to citizens by the MEHE.
- Produce an electronic, animated presentation about the MEHE. Organize visits to civil society institutions and to different regions to present the new organizational structure (by using this electronic presentation) in order to enhance the opportunity for partnerships in this structure.
- Produce easy-transported exhibition display material and tools for use at MEHE workshops, seminars and events.
- Produce signage and livery (site signs, vehicle livery, window stickers and transfers, to be used in central and regional government offices).

- Produce a communication and information kit about the MEHE (that will include most of the promotional material already produced).
- Produce PowerPoint templates specifically designed for the MEHE, so that all program presentations made by MEHE staff for the Public be produced consistently.
- Produce a quarterly newsletter to regularly promote the new MEHE activities and make visible the initiatives and success of its working teams. Establish partnership with donors to co-produce this newsletter.
- Produce concrete recommendations in order to improve the visibility of the MEHE offices, which should be a model image for modernization to schoolteachers, school staff and citizens.

2.4.2) Defining a Media Policy:

- Construct a database of the media interested in the education sector.
- Construct partnerships with selected media. Negotiate with media to designate coordinators in each media responsible for the education coverage to raise the awareness of the Lebanese media concerning the education sector.
- Prepare a media-pack (dossier de presse) about the new MEHE organizational structure (including the new Strategic Human Resources Management System, the new awareness culture, the new Strategic Quality Management System, etc.) to be distributed among journalists. Organize formal and informal meetings to inform them about the MEHE reform evolution.
- Produce press supplements about the MEHE achievements (including the progressive implementation of the new organizational structure).
- Establish partnerships with television and radio stations about education project topics; to define the concept and type of these audio-visual productions. The objective of this activity is to maintain the newly created image of the MEHE.
- Ensure media coverage for the workshop/press conference that endorses the launching of the new MEHE organizational structure.

2.4.3) Supervising publications:

- Prepare and agree on editorial concept for all MEHE publications (i.e. the approach, specifications, topics...).
- Supervise all MEHE publications in order to guarantee their attractiveness, objectivity and harmony with the new MEHE reporting style, as well as their adaptation to the House Style.
- Define a list of citizen-oriented publications to be distributed by the Information Office.
- Establish a photo bank for the MEHE to be used in all its publications.
- Produce a booklet, a magazine or any other kind of publication related to the achievements realized under different components of the PEG project (General Education project), the EDP and future plans, and some accomplished studies. Establish a well-defined mailing list in order to ensure wide dissemination.

2.4.4) Utilizing existing corporate media:

- Develop and support the MEHE website, based on models of content that facilitate solutions management.

- Include additional material related to the EDP achievements. Select some qualitative EDP reports and make them available online through the MEHE website. Make selected produced information (digital versions of leaflets and brochures) available on the MEHE website.
- Update information on the EDP located on the site of the World Bank and provide graphic demonstration.
- Identify and follow-up management reports and newsletters and press releases (of the non-governmental organizations, trade unions and European Union projects ...) to help promote the new organizational structure of the MEHE (including the new strategic Human Resources Management System, new culture awareness , the new Strategic Quality Management System, etc.).

2.5) Determining the means and tools of information and communication

The **Information and Communication means and tools** that have been identified through the activities proposed in our plan are the following:

- pamphlets, booklets and flyers for distribution,
- website,
- stationery (copybooks, letterheads, envelopes with the Ministry's headers, business cards, greeting cards, seals...),
- templates for electronic presentations (PowerPoint),
- posters and exhibition display material,
- publication about EDP achievements,
- specialized publications by subject (as defined in the information and communication plan),
- television and radio programs,
- means and tools of information and communication kit, notebooks / calendars and postcards,
- quarterly newsletter,
- press supplements,
- workshops and training visibility packages,
- bags of supplies and materials for the workshops and training highlighting the image of the Ministry and its work².

2.6) Communication Languages

Ideally, the languages that should be used in communication, information and awareness activities (including the production of promotional material) are Arabic, French and English. This is because for the goal of attracting partnerships, as stated previously, the achievements of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education must be promoted globally.

² This package should be prepared for each major workshop or seminar (including promotional materials, the main topic, files, notebooks and stamps of the seminar / workshop title, choose the means of media coverage it can muster, the records of workshops ...)

Section Two - Proposals to Address the Information and Communication Problem Related to Decision-Making

The Terms of Reference of the “Technical Assistance for the Restructuring and Monitoring of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education – Organizational Restructuring and Staff Development” Project component indicates a communication and Information problem related to decision-making.

Since decision-making is heavily focused at the upper levels of the organizational pyramid, communication and information mechanisms and relations between MEHE and the Regional Services are blurred and hampered because of unclear or outmoded procedures. The project's Terms of Reference emphasize the necessity to tackle the Communication and Information problem in MEHE and the Communication and Information system at all levels of the hierarchy and with the Regional Services. The "Technical Assistance for the Restructuring and Monitoring of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education – Organizational Restructuring and Staff Development" Project component thus tried to tackle the problem mainly through:

1. Simplification of procedures
2. Changes in the organizational structure in order to improve information and communication within the Ministry of Education and Higher Education
3. Reorganization efforts on internal information and communication in accordance with the new structure to enable them to achieve the best results
4. Best recommended applications of organizational information and communication to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education

1 - Simplification of procedures

The proposals related to the simplification of procedures will be elaborated while developing a Strategic Quality Management System. Within the process of rewriting procedures, careful insight will be conducted in order to optimize efficiency, especially when procedures aim to service internal and external clients.³

³ Quality management experts will work on a handbook / manual that contains maps of the Educational Center for Research and Development, the Common Administrative Directorate and all General Directorates (prepared in coordination with operational maps experts).

2 - Proposed changes to the organizational structure that would improve information and communication within the Ministry of Education and Higher Education

One of the causes of weakness of the current organizational structure of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education is that it does not attach importance to the organization of the Department of Information and Communication, while the core of administrative communication is the foundation on which the new organizational structure must establish and build upon.

A new information and communication dimension has been incorporated in the evolved organizational structure of the MEHE. It will have a positive impact on the organizational structure through:

- The adoption of organizational principles based on de-concentration and delegation of powers;
- The creation of new units (directorates, departments, units, etc) that will strengthen the information and communication function.

2.1) The adoption of organizational principle based on de-concentration and delegation of powers

2.1.1) De-concentration

The new draft Law and regulatory decrees presenting the new MEHE organizational structure will adopt a **higher degree of de-concentration**, and precisely:

- the centralized policies, plans, standards and supervision;
- the de-concentration of the implementation and management processes (operational management).

This also implies:

- Expanding the authorities of the Regional Services and enhancing their role in operational management.

2.1.2) Relationship with the Regional Services

The new draft law of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education will strengthen information and communication between the central educational management and the Regional Services. The new organizational structure will work particularly on strengthening the role of General Director in the direction, orientation and supervision of the heads of the Regional Services, and this new information and communication mechanism will be applied in coordination with the Directorates of public and private education in the central administration.

2.1.3) Partnership with civil society

The new organizational decrees of the Ministry will enhance information, communication and coordination with the institutions of civil society by allowing these institutions to participate in decision-making, through the identification of decisions that the MEHE must involve them in.

2.2) The creation of new structures that will strengthen the information and communication function

2.2.1) The establishment of the National Education Council

The draft evolved structural noted the establishment of a National Education Council chaired by the Minister and composed of twelve members, representing the public sector and twelve other members of the private sector, according to the principle of broad participation of sectors involved in the formulation of educational policies and orientations and to promote social ownership of such policies.

2.2.2.) The establishment of the Council of Forecasting and Coordination

The Council aims at strengthening communication and coordination at the highest levels of management. This Council will determine the strategic orientations of the education system from the Minister of Education and Higher Education and senior officials of the Ministry. It will effectively work on proposing new methods to improve communication and coordination with representatives of civil society and implement them through the National Education Council.

2.2.3) The establishment of the Directorate of Forecasting and Coordination

The Directorate provides daily easy-to-use information on educational conditions, coordinates plans, ensures their integration, and aims to provide strategic management for information on education, public relations, internal and external cooperation.

2.2.4) The establishment of the Bureau of Information and IT

This office is expected to facilitate access to and exchange of information in the various units of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, in the Regional Services and between these Services and support the decision-making. This should involve in particular the following:

Establishment of a unit of educational information in the Directorate of Forecasting and Coordination Services (directly linked to the Minister), where all scattered information among the components of the Ministry is collected. The function of this unit is strategic management of educational information.

2.2.5) The establishment of the Bureau of Information and Communication

The Bureau is entrusted with the implementation of the information and communication plan of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, and is entrusted with the task of overseeing the activities of information and communication and implementation of the media policy of the Ministry (abovementioned).

2.2.6) The establishment of a reception for citizens

The task of this office is to receive the citizens, provide information and answer their questions and guide them if necessary to the course reference.

3- The reorganization of the internal information and communication efforts in line with the new structure in order to achieve better results

3.1) Establishing a new work mechanism:

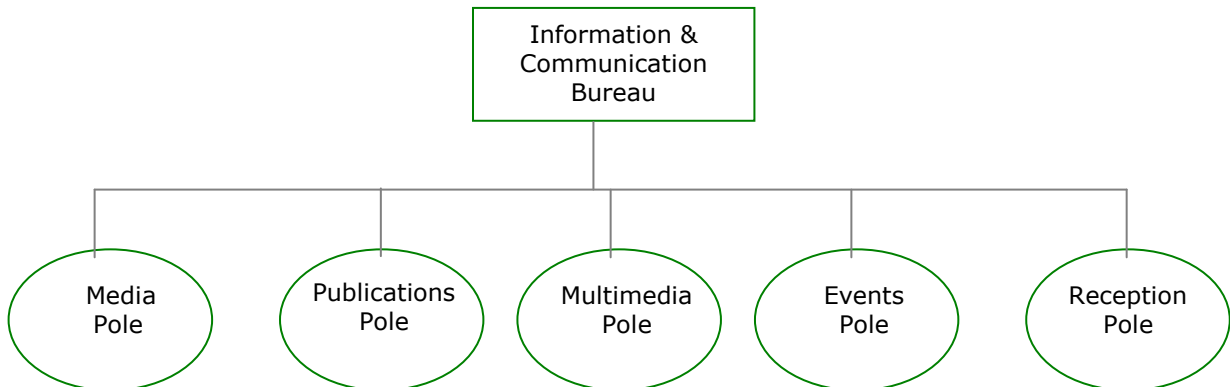
A new work mechanism should be established in order to optimize the results of internal efforts related to information and communication.

This work mechanism consists of:

- Forming an information and communication team: preferably an international expert and another local one will lead and supervise the work on information and communication at least during the first year, since providing the Information and Communication Bureau with appropriate staff, i.e. a team that is skilled at producing promotional materials, is crucial and vital to the success of information and communication In the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, otherwise, the Ministry will not reach its objectives in this area.

The Information and Communication Bureau consists of staff responsible of:

- The media pole (press advisor)
- The publications pole (interpreter, graphic designer, proof-reader/editor, etc.);
- The multimedia communication pole (webmaster, content manager, etc.);
- The events and activities related to the Ministry pole (Communication Officer, Logistics Officer);
- The reception of citizens (through the receptionists of the information office).



- Organizing regular meetings between all persons involved in communication to be sure that communication activities are in line with the MEHE communication plan.
- Identifying a local design supplier for information and communication means: once the main creative material outlined above is completed under the supervision of experts, the production of all future marketing support can be managed internally. The role of the design experts appointed to handle formative design work will become progressively less critical.
- Establishing a list of printing establishments that can be useful producing MEHE publications and promotional material.
- Contracting information and communication personnel for the Regional Services. In line with the previous circulars issued by the Office of the Prime Minister about downsizing the Ministries and Public administrations during their reorganization, the new proposed structure will intentionally omit to propose the creation of information and communication bureaus in the Regional Services. Contracting information and communication personnel for the Regional Services could be an alternative. It will give a higher visibility to the educational problems and achievements in the regions and will thus have a positive impact on the coordination with the civil society institutions located outside Beirut.
- The Publications division in the information and communication bureau will also be responsible of providing the information bureau with all required promotional material listed above in the section related to citizen-oriented publications. The Publication division in the communication bureau will also be responsible of coordinating its work with the information office to produce new promotional material according to the feedback received from the citizens.

3.2) Specifying management modalities and forms

The Information and Communication Bureau

The communication team should report to the head of the Information and Communication Bureau who reports to the Director of Forecasting and Coordination Services.

The press advisor should report administratively to the Director of Forecasting and Coordination Services and technically to the Minister of the MEHE since he should stay on a daily contact with the Minister. He/she should coordinate his/her work with the Head of the Information and Communication Bureau.

The information and communication experts will only be mobilized during the launch of this communication plan and for specific tasks, must report technically to the Minister of Education and

Higher Education in order to brief him about the implementation of the information and communication plan and to ensure the highest degree of political support for the implementation.

The Information Office

The creation of an information office is crucial for the establishment of a citizen-oriented administration. Provided that it is staffed by receptionists who are well trained to receive citizens and who report to the Head of the Information and Communication Bureau.

The Task Force

Since the EDP closing date is 31 December 2008, the organizational management experts have suggested the creation of a Unit to support the implementation of the new organizational structure, reporting to the Council of Forecasting and Coordination. It may be staffed with a Task Force, or an *ad hoc* team, i.e. a short-term team gathered only to deal with this specific issue.

This unit should be also staffed with cadres mandated to launch the information and communication plan until the Information and Communication Bureau is created. These staff should report to the head of the support unit.

4- The best practices of organizational information and communication advised for the MEHE

Establishing good information and communication practices is important for the MEHE effectiveness. It is well-known that information and communication are the basic tools available to management for accomplishing strategic goals.

We will not propose the last revolutionary trends in organizational information and communication (self-managed teams, replacing the formal chain of command in organizational networks by the wheel model, etc.). We will rather propose realistic practices that best fit the MEHE environment.

4.1) Alternating models and forms of collective decision-making

Collective decision-making in the MEHE, like all traditional models of collective decision-making, is based on individual decision-making. However, sometimes, decisions are best made by consensus.

The “Technical Assistance for the Restructuring and Monitoring of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education – Organizational Restructuring and Staff Development” Project component succeeded in introducing, through the participatory decision-making approach and the ownership process, the consensual model of collective decision-making. To ensure ownership by the stakeholders for the new evolved structure of MEHE, many rounds of meetings were held with the stakeholders where the principles and guidelines on which to evolve the new structure (on the basis of the National Education Strategy, the Audit Report and the Technical Assistance findings) were discussed. In these meetings, as specified in the project component Action Plan, all the issues were decided upon as a team, assisted by the organizational management experts who acted as moderators. The comments of the mentioned stakeholders were incorporated in order to ensure their ownership of the product and

to reach a maximum degree of consensus. Some meetings were also held with the Minister of MEHE, who is the ultimate decision-maker, to receive his final decisive guidelines. Consensus is a valuable goal, especially in the MEHE that often witnesses changes of Ministers and of employees of first category, because consensus can create unified support for the group's final decision.

If collective decision-making is time-consuming and costly, these costs will be more than offset by the increased morale, improved quality of the decisions, and improved flow of information that will result from the systems when subordinates' expertise is made available. When the evolved MEHE organizational structure will be implemented, it will constitute a concrete example of a participatory decision-making approach. The Information and Communication team will have to issue a leaflet explaining the process in order to encourage the MEHE managers to use the participatory decision-making approach again in the future.

4.2) Removing barriers to effective information and communication

According to information and communication scholars, a number of barriers can retard or distort effective information and communication. One of the most important of these barriers is information overload at the level of the General Directors and some employees of second and third category.

The fact that most administrative employees have a limited capacity to maintain adequate data and to process operational data, leads to the conclusion that the General Directors and some second and third category staff in the MEHE are dealing with information beyond their operational processing ability; they suffer from overloading: there are telephone calls, letters, faxes and e-mails, etc..

- **De-concentration and delegation of powers**

One of the solutions designed to remove barriers for effective information and communication is the adoption of de-concentration. Another solution is to delegate authority. But we must first understand de-concentration and delegation of power as cultural concepts⁴ in order for them to later become gradually part of the practices of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

- **Restricting the overloading flow of information in the MEHE :**

There is also the third solution which is to restrict the overload of information. Indeed, the higher level decision makers, and the first and second category staff in particular, depend on the flood of unlimited information coming from their secretariats. But when an absolute free flow of information occurs through the chain of command, which is usual in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the senior officials in the Ministry quickly drown under overloading frequent confusing information. Some letters and information must be scrutinized and filtered and others should be summarized. However, most of the secretariats in the Ministry need to be trained on professional work in a regulatory framework to improve their performance and give them added value. This is the way for them to gain a sense of priorities and to become able to appropriately check and review the information they receive. Using a group of professional heads of offices and training current staff serving in the Ministry will help alleviate the overload of information, through the selection of information received from the IT and Information Bureau in the Directorate of Forecasting and Coordination Services.

⁴ Review section on main concepts of a culture of awareness should be disseminated

4.3) MEHE self-renewal

The degree to which the MEHE can control how it adapts and changes will depend on its capacity of self-renewal. Organizations and institutions made up of people and machines, need to replace these parts as they grow old, unable to perform, or unwilling to adapt with new changes. This is especially the case of the MEHE. There are ways in which the MEHE can renew itself, in line with the new proposed organizational structure, by:

- Implementing this information and communication plan and creating a New Identity for the MEHE;
- Staffing the reorganized MEHE by recruiting fresh, new trained people;
- Bringing in new technologies.

This requires to taken into consideration the potential deficit in the self-renewal of the Ministry if, as is the case of some ministries in Lebanon, it implements the new organizational structure without using new human body and applying the information and communication plan or relying on modern technologies.

In addition, it is well-known that continuous specialized learning and training are also an important part of organizations' self-renewal. Some of the MEHE staff have received some training through some projects (like the EDP), but a training plan ensuring permanent specialized training should be elaborated.

4.4) Expanding the MEHE computer-aided communication

Information Technology opens up a wide variety of information and communication options to organizational members and is regarded as a major variable that influences organizational information and communication.

It is expected that computer-aided communication will help decentralize communication in the MEHE. Thus, encouraging the usage of Information technology will enhance information and communication as well as decentralization.

The term "Information Technology" refers to all computerized systems and to advanced telecommunication systems both wired and wireless.

Relevant computerized systems include those used to manage databases containing budget, purchase orders, or inventory information, to provide information through electronic mail and conferencing, and to coordinate work processes.

Advanced telecommunication systems include voice mail systems, fax technology, proprietary telephone systems (e.g. PBX systems), teleconferencing and videoconferencing.

All of these systems will enable the MEHE to operate more rapidly. The speed, thoroughness and reliability of IT in gathering and transmitting information has the potential to enable human links in the communication system to focus more on quality thinking, reasoning, and service related to the job for which they are best suited.

Information Technology will alter the ways in which the MEHE informs and communicates, and this will result in positive changes. A new needs assessment should be conducted to determine the Information and Communication Technologies status in the MEHE. Roughly speaking, the MEHE needs the following:

- **Automation**

Automation includes all of the formal and informal electronic systems primarily concerned with communication of information to and from persons both inside and outside the Ministry.

The final report of the organizational audit conducted at the MEHE states explicitly that about 50 % of the tasks still need automation. Automation in the MEHE is being progressively covered. However, there are still important offices and functions that have not been automated: for example the office of the General Director (“Diwan”).

Citizens requests and petitions, as well as the courier from the Regional Services, are still registered by hand.

The need for the automation of mail in the Ministry directorates and new directorates and Regional Services, its audit and electronic follow-up is urgent; this requires a system of file management and circulation of information which becomes effective when the Lebanese law recognizes the electronic signature.

- **Electronic mail**

E-mail is the use of networked computers to allow users to send, receive, store and forward messages in electronic formats. E-mail eliminates the repeated telephone calls to try to reach someone, enabling parties to have messages waiting for each other and to reply rapidly. E-mail has not become until now part of the MEHE practices.

- **Desktop publishing / preparing publications using computer**

Desktop publishing is the use of computers to prepare output that is very close in quality to that produced by typesetters and publishing houses. The MEHE may use desktop publishing to prepare documents for publication, presentations or public relations purposes. Desktop publishing will especially be useful for the MEHE Communication Bureau to issue future promotional material.

- **Organizational Information Systems**

- ***Documents and workflow management system***

The document management system is related to the establishment of a main central document management system that will enable the MEHE to start the digitalization phase of its information and data assets.

Through the “Technical Assistance for the Restructuring and Monitoring of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education – Organizational Restructuring and Staff Development” Project component, a solution to work overload will be defined to manage the work procedures of MEHE. This definition will include the specification of the main functionalities of this solution, the Directorates/Services concerned by this application, according to the new structure and the global infrastructure recommended for this type of application.

Workflow and document management system are essential to accelerate the courier in the MEHE as well as to easily track it.

- ***Educational Management Information System***

The Educational Management Information System, known as the EMIS, refers to information as a whole, in all its forms and circuits that can serve to the management of education. The EMIS, which has been supported by UNESCO and the World Bank, is expected to be launched and implemented in the MEHE in the near future.

- ***Decision Support System***

The Decision Support System refers to an information-producing system aimed at a particular problem that a manager must solve and decisions the manager must make. It is

designed to help Directors and other staff members to make special types of local decisions. It helps them structure problems, gather data to understand and analyze the problem and make decisions about the best course of action. It is not available in the MEHE, but it can be of real support in order to act as a complementary system for the EMIS.

- **Accounting Information System**

The Accounting Information System refers to the budget allocated for the MEHE.

Even if the MEHE has started automation and use of few information systems, it is still evident that there should be more focus on communication technology. Like most of the Lebanese ministries, the MEHE is also understaffed in ICT cadres. This problem should be seriously resolved during the implementation of the new organizational structure.

4.5) Using Information to support decision-making

We have mentioned that new information units will be created through the evolving MEHE organizational structure. Creation of these units does not guarantee sharing of information. There should be a deep conviction to make this information available to the decision-makers whenever needed. It is urgent to use information and data to support the decision-making process (including policy elaboration, educational plans and implementing plans). It is through Information and Communication that employees obtain information, make sense of the situation they encounter and decide how to act.

4.6) Ensuring sustainability of information and communication in the MEHE

It is never sufficient to make an awareness campaign or to conduct punctual information and communication activities; information and communication have to be continuously managed. We should ensure sustainability in the MEHE communication.

Once the main creative material outlined above is completed under the supervision of communication experts, the production of all future marketing support can be managed internally by a permanent qualified team. The role of experts appointed to handle formative design work will become progressively less critical. It is through proper training that the information and communication team will be able to ensure sustainability in the MEHE information and Communication. Thus information and communication experts will have to:

- Prepare a training program for all the existing information and communication personnel in the MEHE (communication bureau, information office, etc.) in order to present to them the MEHE information and communication plan.
- Prepare a training program for all the existing information and communication personnel in the MEHE (communication bureau, information office, etc.) in order to enhance their information and communication capacity, containing the following topics:
 - General introduction on information and communication
 - Assignment about identity
 - Writing the mission-statement
 - Defining the target groups and the tools
 - Final production of the information and communication strategy for the MEHE

This program is particularly important in order to find new partners to the MEHE through promotional materials whose targets will change constantly.

- Provide 'on-the-spot' training to the existing information and communication personnel of the MEHE about issuing newsletters, assisting in infomercials production, issuing publications, etc.

Conclusion: The main concepts of the awareness culture that should be spread in this transitional phase (between the old structure and the evolved structure)

This last part attempts to approach the complexity of evolving and implementing a new organizational structure from a cultural approach. Are the MEHE employees from all categories culturally ready to implement the new organizational structure?

In order to guarantee the success of the reorganization process of the MEHE, there are some awareness culture concepts that should be spread. Mainly, these concepts are:

1) De-concentration and delegation of power

The final report of the organizational audit conducted at the MEHE states explicitly that about 30 % of the tasks need de-concentration. « De-concentration » is the term referring to:

- “The transfer of administrative responsibility for specified functions to lower levels within the central government bureaucracy⁵

⁵ Ferguson & Chandrasekharan

Or

- “One of administrative decentralization which redistributes decision-making authority and financial and management responsibility among levels of the central government”⁶

While delegation of powers is the assignment of authority to a subordinate in the administrative hierarchy to carry out specific duties or/and to make specific decisions.

Suggested information and communication activities related to the concepts of de-concentration and delegation of powers:

De-concentration and delegation of powers are two concepts based on power-sharing. It is not advisable that managers accumulate their powers. Change in MEHE starts when the senior managers are convinced with the importance and benefits of de-concentration and delegation of powers. The team assigned to implement the information and communication plan will thus have **to conduct workshops for the top-level managers in the MEHE** in order to take the following actions:

- granting subordinates more autonomy,
- allowing subordinates to determine how to accomplish their assigned tasks,
- expecting subordinates to make the decisions that influence them most,
- supervising the performance of subordinates with flexibility.

Furthermore, decisions would be made by the workers who are most concerned with them and by most experts in their daily activities. Formal information and communication would cross fewer levels, thus reducing the potential of distortion. Organizational efficiency will be increased. During these workshops, information and communication teams have to make presentations and benchmarks highlighting the benefits of various concrete case studies of power-sharing strategies implemented in public ministries in advanced countries.⁷

2) Sharing information:

A new management style should be adopted, based on informing, communicating and sharing. The final report of the organizational audit conducted at the MEHE states explicitly that information sharing and consultation between the MEHE and its beneficiaries is nearly absent. This current situation should change to ensure the effectiveness of the EMIS and the recommended approach regarding the use of information to support decision-making. Understating and adopting the concept of sharing by those who have access to information in the MEHE would ensure the success of EMIS and decision-making mechanisms in the Ministry.

Suggested information and communication activities related to the concept of sharing information:

It will be useful to draft an Information and Communication Technology guide by information and communication specialists that clarifies the benefits of sharing information.

How to implement the concept of sharing? A number of communication requirements must be met:

- First, information (about policies, procedures, reward regulations, and the optimal means of performing each subordinate’s assigned tasks) must flow from supervisors to subordinates.
- Second, a number of different kinds of information must flow from subordinates to the decision-makers at the top of the MEHE: information about the extent to which orders have

⁶ Gregersen & Al

⁷ A definition package should be prepared for each workshop (including promotional material, the leading theme, box files and note-pads with the title of the seminar/workshop, a selection of the media to mobilize, proceedings of the workshop...).

been carried out and tasks have been completed and information about problems that have developed or are likely to develop in the future.

- In addition, each employee has his own areas of expertise and thus can provide unique insights into the challenges faced by the MEHE. Top-managers have to be convinced that if that expertise is not made available to them, their decision-making will suffer.

3) Partnership

According to our Technical Assistance findings, some international donors acted as partners to the MEHE to finance specific activities. The MEHE has constructed schools financed by Arab funds, the European Union and the World Bank, and produced publications co-financed by the Bureau of Linguistic and Educational Cooperation in the French Embassy. It also launched the reform of the educational sector through projects co-financed by the UNESCO and the World Bank, etc.

However, these initiatives come often from the donors themselves. Therefore, we suggest that the Ministry staff take the initiative to establish genuine partnerships.

Suggested information and communication activities related to the concept of partnership:

The mere conviction of the importance of partnership is not enough. The main step is to take the initiative to establish genuine partnerships. Therefore it is not sufficient to be convinced of the importance of partnership; taking the initiative of making real partnerships is a key step.

- The MEHE stakeholders should hold meetings with donors to convince them to invest in educational reform projects.
- MEHE stakeholders should recruit experts to formulate concrete terms of reference for future projects and to use convincing communication in order to obtain funding for their projects.
- MEHE stakeholders should also promote selected pilot partnership projects between schools and municipalities, and schools and civil society. These projects already exist, and the MEHE information and communication team must promote them in order to spread them.
- The production of infomercials about these pilot projects of partnerships between schools and municipalities and their broadcasting through televisions is strongly recommended in order to reach a wide public. This means the MEHE Information and communication team should not only construct partnerships with municipalities and civil society, but also with television stations in order to broadcast these infomercials for free. Partnerships between some Lebanese ministries and televisions stations have already been made for broadcasting infomercials of public interest, and the experience has been considered quite successful.
- Another manner to identify partners is to produce a digital, animated presentation about the MEHE new organizational structure, schools, culture, etc. and to organize visits to civil society institutions and to different regions to present this digital presentation in order to enhance opportunity for partnerships.

4) Adopt a bill of ethics in organizational decision-making

Through the “Technical Assistance for the Restructuring and Monitoring of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education – Organizational Restructuring and Staff Development” Project component, the organizational management experts are not proposing a new organizational structure simply to add departments and to remove others. They are doing so to increase the MEHE effectiveness and

efficiency through managerial, infomercial and communicational recommendations especially tailored for the MEHE.

However, the implementation of the new organizational structure will not succeed unless the two implementation processes of the strategic human resources management and employment process coincide in the Ministry in accordance with the new organizational structure with professional and objectivity standards. The implementation of the performance appraisal system, for example, requires a certain bill of ethics followed by the directors who are assessing the performance.

The proposed information and communication activities related to the concept of ethics:

Instilling ethical concepts in the minds may be one of the most difficult things. It is axiomatic that the officials and staff of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education have true faith that we are performing a genuine educational reform in order to successfully transfer this image and this conviction abroad.

The ideal solution would be to prepare a manual of conduct for the MEHE personnel and a charter for the citizens that emphasize the main concepts of the culture of ethics that should be circulated. These publications promote the goal of staff understanding of ethics and culture that must accompany the new organizational structure of the Ministry. It is also recommended to organize training courses for the Ministry staff, followed by an assessment of these courses in order to ensure that these concepts have been absorbed.

5) Progressive creation of a modern organizational culture

Information and Communication scholars believe that like individuals, organizations have personalities. They call this personality an organizational culture – a relatively stable picture of the organization that is shared by its members.

In addition to the concepts mentioned above, other concepts may be identified to form the future MEHE organizational culture. Information and Communication scholars listed some qualities they have identified as being a part of organizational culture in modern organizations: specialized tasks, rigid structures, and top-down information flow, employees’ identification with their occupations, individual limited jobs, no continuous training and top-down management. They compared these qualities with other qualities identified as being a part of organizational culture in post-modern organizations: diffusion of tasks, flexible structures, and information collected and valued from all sources, employees identification with the company, overlapping teams, constant retraining and self-managing teams. We can conclude from these qualities through the sets of specifications that the Ministry of Education and Higher Education belongs largely to the first category of institutions. (Information is not shared; structure is not only rigid but also inadequate, lack of specialization, etc.).

Given the challenges and obstacles of Lebanese administration, the establishment of modern institutional culture could take several years. The organizational structure of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education may be the right opportunity to begin creating a new institutional culture. It may be ideal, at a later stage, to establish a committee in order to elaborate a written document embracing the concepts of this new culture.

Timeframe allocated for the MEHE’s Information and Communication Plan

The “Technical Assistance for the Restructuring and Monitoring of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education – Organizational Restructuring and Staff Development” Project component has developed some recommendations concerning information and communication, namely:

- identifying target groups for the MEHE information and communication plan
- developing key messages for this plan
- applying the concrete proposed changes to the organizational structure so as to improve information and communication in the MEHE.

We have classified all other information and communication activities and recommendations as priorities undertaken by the restructuring of the MEHE and divided them into four phases:

- **First Phase:** Immediate Actions. This is the actual transitional phase (between the current structure and the new organizational structure).
- **Second Phase:** Actions that should take place after sending the organizational draft law to the Parliament.
- **Third Phase:** Actions that should take place after approving the organizational draft law by the Parliament.
- **Fourth Phase:** Permanent Actions (during and after the implementation of the new organizational structure).

Activities	First Phase	Second Phase	Third Phase	Fourth Phase
Creating a New Identity for the Ministry of Education and Higher Education	X			
Conducting information and communication activities to inform the Ministry staff about the new organizational structure (Downward information and communication)	X			
Information and Communication activities identified as upward communication			X	
Communication activities identified as horizontal communication				X
Producing MEHE Promotional Material		X		
Defining a Media Policy			X	X
Supervising Publications			X	X
Utilizing Existing Corporate Media			X	X
Reorganizing the internal information and communication efforts in line with the new structure in order to optimize their results	X	X	X	X
Inculcating the best practices of organizational information and communication advised for the MEHE			X	X
Training on the main concepts of the awareness culture that should be spread in this transitional phase and producing promotional material about them.			X	X

Budget of the MEHE Information and Communication Plan

Given the limited budget that can be provided by the Lebanese Government, financing this communication plan will need funding from partners and international donors. Some international donors have already funded communication activities in some ministries in Lebanon through specific projects.

Still, potential partners and donors have to be identified by the MEHE stakeholders. Funds from international donors will be needed in particular for quantitatively issuing some costly publications (thousands of attractive leaflets for citizens for example...) as well as for mobilizing international and local communication experts.

A wide variety of promotional material and communication tools has been presented in this communication plan. We present hereafter an indicative budget, but a detailed budget can be provided upon request depending on the final selected promotional material.

1) Human Resources:

A) International Short-term Experts: 120 man/days

B) National short-term experts: 300 man/days

C) Information and Communication staff: the salaries of the permanent information and communication staff will be determined by the laws in force.

2) Financial Support

Breakdown of the budget according to information and communication tools and groups of activities	
Website	5 000 \$
Quarterly newsletter (per year)	20 000 \$
Brochures, leaflets and flyers	20 000 \$
Stationery (Letterheads, stamps, Business Cards, greeting cards)	5 000 \$
Information and Communication kit, calendars and postcards	10 000 \$
PowerPoint templates and digital presentations	2 000 \$
Posters and exhibition display material	3 000 \$
Workshops and training visibility packages (promotional material, leading theme, selection of the media to mobilize, proceedings of workshops...)	10 000 \$
Infomercials about partnerships with civil society	20 000 \$
Publication about the PEG and EDP achievements	5 000 \$
Total	100 000 \$