UNESCO, UNESCWA and Iraq's Ministry of Education endorse ICDL for Ministry Teachers & Staff

Six Ministry's ICT Development Centres to offer ICDL training and testing to hundreds of ministry teachers & staff

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As part of Iraq Development Project, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Iraq Office recently signed a contract with ICDL GCC Foundation, the governing body and certification authority of the International Computer Driving License (ICDL) program in the Gulf States, to implement the ICDL digital literacy global standard in the Iraqi educational system under the umbrella of the existing national project called 'ICT in Education for Iraq'.

Dr. Qasem Al Newashi and Jamil Ezzo while signing the contract

The ICDL program implementation is a collaborative effort between UNESCO Iraq Office in Amman, UNESCWA, Iraq Ministry of Education (MOE) and ICDL GCC Foundation, with the aim to provide ICDL certification to hundreds of MOE teachers and administrative staff. The ICDL endorsement by the Iraqi MOE follows a recent announcement by the Iraqi Ministry of Communication, Science and Technology of its endorsement of ICDL across all ministries employees.

The official delegation led by Project Manager Dr. Qasem Alnewashi from UNESCO Iraq Office and included Programme Assistant Ms. Carmen Issa from UNESCO Iraq Office and Mr. Marc Khayat ICT Specialist from UNESCWA, had travelled to Dubai on a 4 day visit to witness the successful implementations of the ICDL program in the United Arab Emirates and to discuss the details of the signed contract with the ICDL GCC Foundation and to prepare for the nationwide rollout of ICDL in Iraq. The delegation also discussed with ICDL senior officials the strategies and support plans to be adopted by the related partners and the Iraq MOE to ensure the success of the ICDL program implementation which aims to significantly boost Iraq's campaign to develop its human capital.

"ICT in Education for Iraq" is a project currently implemented by both UNESCO and UNESCWA, and is designed to build sustainable capacity in Iraqi MOE for the continuing quality improvement of teaching and learning, focusing on the use of ICT. In order to improve the ICT literacy and skills of the MOE staff, teachers, and students, the institutional capacity of the MOE will be enhanced through this project to design, develop, and distribute a variety of e-Learning resources, and accompanying programs of teacher professional development to implement such resources. It will also strengthen the capacity of Iraqi educational system to use digital tools effectively for teaching and learning through the establishment of 6 ICT Development Centres, 2 in Baghdad and the rest in four different governorates in Iraq (Erbil, Neinawa, Basra, and Najaf) to train school teachers and other educators.

The ICDL program implementation, as part of UNESCO and UNESCWA "ICT in Education for Iraq" project will support the Iraqi MOE efforts to use Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to improve educational outcomes and to prepare Iraqi young people to compete in a global economy.

 The ICDL program implementation in Iraq MOE relies on ICDL GCC Foundation's expertise in supporting primary and secondary school teachers to integrate ICT in education and improve learning outcomes. ICDL GCC Foundation will provide the necessary tools, capacity building training programs in order to establish the first governmental ICDL accredited Centers in Iraq.

"Iraq, like many other nations, faces many challenges in installing and integrating ICT into the learning process in schools. Improving education quality to Iraqi students is a primary focus for UNESCO Iraq Office to be able to bring Iraq into the 21st Century and strengthen its human capital.

With computer skills being identified as a critical proficiency for so many jobs, we have identified ICDL as the ideal solution due to its high reputation for quality and integrity," said Dr. Qasem Alnewashi, Project Manager and Education Specialist from UNESCO Iraq Office.

The direct beneficiary of this project is the Iraqi Ministry of Education. The implementation will start immediately with the preparation of 20 ICT trainers to become certified ICDL trainers ready to operate ICDL Approved Training and Testing Centres. Following this intensive preparation, ICDL GCC Foundation will accredit the above mentioned 6 MOE ICT Development Centres to offer ICDL training and testing to at least 780 candidates.

Jamil Ezzo, Director General of ICDL GCC Foundation, commented: "Digital literacy is critical to Iraq's socioeconomic development. Implementing the ICDL program will offer excellent opportunities to improving education and government employee performance. We commend UNESCO, UNESCWA and Iraq Ministry of Education for jumpstarting ICT in education and for their ongoing commitment to supporting such initiative. ICDL GCC Foundation in turn will continue supporting the country's initiatives towards strengthening the foundation of its IT literacy program."

The ICDL GCC Foundation, which has been established to manage the implementation of the ICDL program in the Gulf region, has collaborated with governments, UNESCO and other international institutions to enhance efforts in spreading digital literacy and to developing a digitally proficient society.

A vendor-neutral, non-commercial certification, the ICDL program has been designed as a benchmark to empower candidates with basic IT skills and boost their confidence to use a computer. ICDL is the world's largest computer skills certification with the most global and regional endorsements. ICDL is provided in 146 countries in 46 languages all based on a globally unified standard. In the Gulf States, ICDL GCC Foundation operates the ICDL program in all six GCC States and Iraq with nearly 500,000 enrolments through 1800 accredited centres consisting of schools, universities, commercial centres and government organizations.