

## **UNESCO and Iraqi Ministry of Education launch educational TV channel** **News**

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A measure taken to strengthen an endangered educational system, the \$6.5 million project, financed by the European Union as part of their overall support for the Sector in Iraq, is being implemented by UNESCO in cooperation with the Iraqi Ministry of Education. The channel will broadcast 24 hours a day (on NILESAT at 10775 Hz) educational episodes based on the Iraqi school curricula. The project is designed particularly for primary and secondary school students both within and outside of Iraq. It is mainly a response to security risks that result in a high rate of absenteeism and the closing of schools.

The new television channel allows teachers and pupils to follow the school curriculum through distance learning tools. With messages promoting values such as peace and tolerance included in the programming, it will also contribute to the peace-building and reconciliation process in the country.

"It is crucial, especially in these difficult circumstances, to support everyone's right to education, and to use innovative methods to reach all students. Education plays an essential role in building peace and reconstruction," said the Director-General of UNESCO, Koïchiro Matsuura. "IRAQI EDU is a promising contribution; it opens new learning opportunities for vulnerable young people. In addition, it can inspire initiatives in other countries and regions that are in conflict or post-conflict situations."

UNESCO's participation focuses on building the capacities of programming staff and ministry participants, as well as equipping the ministry's focal satellite unit. By developing and regularly airing educational programming, the project supports the action of Education for All (EFA) and other development initiatives for Iraq. The project will be highly instrumental in supplementing the on-going efforts of the Ministry of Education towards meeting the challenges outlined in its revised National Development Strategy (NDS) and the UN Assistance Strategy for Iraq (2008-2010).

The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General for Iraq (SRSG), Staffan de Mistura, applauded the initiative and said that UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) stands ready to aid UNESCO and the Iraqi Education Minister in this important and worthy endeavour.