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Exploring decentralisation for improving
education administration
in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

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Abstract

Decentralisation features in most education reforms around the world. However, the rebuilding and development of education in the Kurdistan region of Iraq has yet to include movements towards increased school autonomy. With international development partners' agendas and local interest in increasing the autonomy of local level authorities and schools, it is an opportune time for education stakeholders to participate in change plans.

This study gathered the perspectives of a sample of school principals, education academics and education officers in the Kurdistan region of Iraq through a questionnaire designed around four elements of decentralisation in education. Reflective interpretation using a phenomenological approach identified shared themes and synthesised them to reveal the essence of the shared experience of the participants in terms of the current school administration structure.

Some of the central shared themes found were the call for closer connection between decision-makers and school needs, concerns about accountability, and a bid for equality. Unique findings showed some innovative ideas, a belief in the power of local networks to ensure accountability, and also that there is a need to develop confidence and a belief in the possibility of improvement in education.

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