

Sub-Regional Report

**On the Progress Made Toward Achieving the
Targets of Sustainable Development Goal 4**

In the Member States of the Arab Bureau of
Education for the Gulf States

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SDG 4: Quality Education

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Executive Summary

Education is a cornerstone for achieving comprehensive and sustainable development. Ensuring inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all is one of the key objectives of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, represented by Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). In this context, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries have placed the highest importance on developing their educational systems, recognizing education as a fundamental entry point for enhancing human capital, achieving knowledge-based economic growth, and addressing future challenges. The GCC countries were among the first to make explicit commitments at the 2022 Transforming Education Summit and have actively worked to implement them. They also contributed to shaping the key outcomes of the 2024 Fortaleza Education Meeting in Brazil.

The GCC countries have undergone substantial transformations in their education strategies, adopting structural and legislative reforms that include the development of education policies, modernization of curricula, support for early childhood education, expansion of access to basic, secondary, and higher education, enhancement of technical and vocational education, promotion of inclusive education for persons with disabilities, and ensuring gender equality — all in full alignment with the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda.

This second edition of the report presents a rich collection of initiatives adopted by the GCC countries in their pursuit of SDG 4 – Education 2030. These include the establishment of national quality assurance centers, the integration of digital education and holistic curricula, active participation in international assessments such as PISA, TIMSS, and PIRLS, improvements in literacy rates and success across education levels, and the incorporation of sustainable development, citizenship, and tolerance concepts into education systems.

The report also provides detailed quantitative indicators that illustrate improvements in learning outcomes, enrollment rates across all levels of education, and increased investment in education as a strategic priority. Through the analysis of successful policies and practices, the report highlights the shared Gulf vision for achieving high-quality, equitable, and sustainable education that meets the demands of the 21st century.

Thanks to their dedicated efforts and sincere commitment to the spirit and objectives of sustainable development, GCC countries have made significant progress in various areas, most notably: improving education quality, investing in modern technologies to support the learning process, increasing enrollment rates, and reducing dropout rates. In several GCC countries, the gross admission rate to secondary education has exceeded 99%, while drop-

out rates have fallen below 3% due to the implementation of school retention programs and the expansion of compulsory and free education. Participation in organized preschool education has risen above 70%, reflecting growing attention to early education and its significant impact on later learning outcomes.

The GCC countries have also achieved a gender parity index close to 1.0 across most education levels. Supportive policies have been adopted to increase girls' enrollment in higher education, especially in science and technology disciplines, and to enhance their participation in research and academia. In some countries, female students now represent over 50% of total higher education enrollment.

The GCC has outperformed many advanced countries in integrating technology into education by introducing e-learning, expanding the use of digital tools, and providing comprehensive infrastructure—ensuring 100% of schools are connected to the internet and equipped with computers. Artificial intelligence and digital analytics are also being utilized to improve curricula in alignment with student needs.

Student performance has shown notable improvement in international assessments such as PISA, PIRLS, and TIMSS. Digital education initiatives have been launched alongside teacher training programs and curriculum development aligned with international best practices, contributing to greater efficiency and quality in the learning process. Ongoing investment in teacher capacity development includes continuous training and the establishment of specialized academies to prepare and qualify educators according to the highest international standards, leading to a 100% rate of trained and qualified teachers.

Sustainability in education has received special attention, with pioneering initiatives such as “Green Education” and “Green Schools” aiming to embed sustainable development concepts into curricula, implement environmentally friendly school building standards, and raise environmental awareness among students through curriculum-based and practical projects.

In the area of technical and vocational education, GCC countries are actively working to expand program offerings by aligning them with labor market needs, providing incentives and training opportunities for youth, and fostering partnerships with both the public and private sectors. Enrollment in these programs has risen to over 5%, with ambitious plans to further increase participation.

Thanks to these integrated efforts, the GCC has become a successful regional model for educational development. However, there remains an ongoing need to strengthen innovation and ensure sustainability to achieve globally competitive education and address the existing challenges, which this report will examine in detail.

Partners' Statement

We are pleased to express our pride in the tangible progress achieved by the member states of the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States in their pursuit of the targets set under Sustainable Development Goal 4, which fundamentally aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030.”

The GCC countries have demonstrated unwavering commitment and an effective response to the outcomes of the Transforming Education Summit by adopting ambitious national strategies and multisectoral plans focused on the integration and sustainable development of their educational systems. These efforts have resulted in significant achievements, particularly in improving the quality of education, advancing gender equality, and expanding the use of modern technologies.

The progress made across most areas—of which we are truly proud—can be seen in the gross admission rate to secondary education exceeding 99%, and a notable reduction in dropout rates to less than 3%, thanks to school retention efforts and the expansion of compulsory education. Participation in preschool education has also surpassed 70%, reflecting growing awareness of the importance of early childhood education.

These accomplishments would not have been possible without the close collaboration among education leaders, continued coordination, and the unwavering support of decision-makers and local communities. Their collective efforts have contributed to creating equitable and motivating learning environments that provide every child with a fair opportunity to realize their full potential.

It should be noted that the Republic of Yemen is not covered in this report, due to the current circumstances and challenges related to the availability and reliability of education data. Addressing these challenges requires urgent and tailored measures to ensure the accuracy of information and fairness in measurement.

In belief in the importance of supporting Yemen educationally and academically, and in recognition of the circumstances it is going through, we intend to work on preparing an independent and detailed report concerned with documenting the reality of education in the Republic of Yemen, taking into account the specificity of the local context and developmental challenges, once the necessary data becomes available and the technical requirements are completed in coordination with the relevant authorities in the Republic.

In conclusion, we extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to Mr. Badr bin Suleiman Al-Harthy, the editor of the report, as well as to the team from the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States, the Regional Center for Educational Planning (RCEP) in Sharjah, the

national SDG4 coordinators in the GCC countries and Yemen, and the review panel, for their dedicated efforts in producing this exceptional work. We reaffirm our commitment—at the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States, the UNESCO Regional Office for the Gulf States and Yemen in Doha, and the Regional Center for Educational Planning in Sharjah—to continue supporting the member states and strengthening coordination among them to accelerate progress and achieve the desired goals.

We pray for continued success and guidance.

On behalf of the partners

Director General

Of the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States (ABEGS)

Dr. Mohammed bin Saud bin Abdulaziz Al-Muqbil

Introduction

This report - prepared by the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States in collaboration with the UNESCO Regional Office in Doha and the Regional Center for Educational Planning (RCEP) in Sharjah - constitutes the second in a series of reports tracking the progress made in achieving the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. It follows the first report published by the Arab Bureau of Education in 2020.

The current report is issued in implementation of the resolution of Their Excellencies the Ministers of Education of the GCC countries and as part of the continued efforts of regional partners and the Arab Joint Support Team for SDG 4 to monitor the progress toward the goal's targets and indicators. It highlights the efforts and achievements of GCC countries, the integration of SDG 4 into national education plans, strategies, and priorities—along with other intersecting sectors—and the challenges encountered, and strategies adopted to address them. GCC countries have taken ownership of the national implementation process, established national committees and worked groups to follow up on the realization of SDG 4.

The participation of GCC countries in drafting the Fortaleza Declaration on Education 2024, and the progress achieved in implementing its provisions, reflect their deep commitment to advancing education and ensuring inclusive, high-quality systems aligned with global transformations and future visions of the region. The report emphasizes themes such as digital transformation, equitable and inclusive education, increased education spending, investment efficiency, continuous professional development for teachers, teacher involvement in decision-making, and empowering youth by engaging them in educational processes—particularly in shaping public policies and enabling them to choose educational pathways that align with their aspirations. This participatory approach aims to help youth achieve their career goals while integrating their perspectives into setting educational priorities and strengthening inclusion and governance.

GCC countries continue to foster an integrated learning environment that meets current needs and anticipates future demands, while maintaining effective partnerships to ensure the sustainability of their efforts. They aim to provide educational content that supports communities in achieving sustainable development goals, building resilience in the face of challenges to educational systems, advancing “green education,” and addressing climate change through education. The report also highlights efforts to equip learners with the skills and knowledge needed to become agents of positive change within their societies.

United Arab Emirates

Education is one of the fundamental pillars of the UAE Centennial 2071 strategy, which aims to instill strong moral values and a positive mindset within the education system to achieve high levels of professionalism and excellence across educational institutions. The strategy emphasizes the integration of advanced technologies and the strengthening of science education in vital fields such as space, engineering, innovation, medical, and health sciences.

The UAE actively encourages students to benefit from the experiences of advanced countries and has developed mechanisms to nurture individual talents from the early years of schooling. It also seeks to transform schools and universities into hubs of entrepreneurship and innovation, positioning the UAE's educational institutions as global research centers—thus enhancing the country's standing on the international stage in education and scientific research.

Restructuring the Education Sector

In pursuit of these goals, the UAE has undertaken a comprehensive restructuring of its education sector. This new framework brings together several key entities working collaboratively to strengthen education and human development, including:

- The National Center for Education Quality, which leads efforts to monitor and improve the quality of educational outcomes across both public and private education sectors.
- The General Secretariat of the Council for Education, Human Development, and Society, which oversees the implementation of the restructuring and supports the Council in fulfilling its mandates.
- The Ministry of Education, following its merger with the Emirates Schools Establishment and the Federal Agency for Early Education, now assumes responsibility for developing frameworks, policies, and strategies for all stages of early and general education.

Additionally, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research was established to expand the scope of higher education and strengthen its linkage to the labor market. This enhances the competitiveness of educational institutions and supports research and innovation efforts. The overarching objective of this new structure is to promote comprehensive governance and align the education sector with national goals in human and social development.

This transformation aims to improve collaboration among all stakeholders within the educational ecosystem, ensuring effective implementation of strategic plans and reinforcing the connection between education and society. Ultimately, it contributes to continuous

improvement in quality and performance assessment across the education system.

Furthermore, the restructuring seeks to build a sustainable educational model that supports individuals from their earliest learning stages and throughout their lifelong educational and professional journeys. It aims to unify visions between education, human development, and society, enabling effective collaboration across sectors to achieve shared priorities, while attracting, developing, and empowering talent to drive educational and human development forward.

The new structure also emphasizes aligning higher education with human development goals, highlighting the importance of creating job opportunities that match graduates' passions and aspirations, and offering continued support for their professional and personal success. A gradual adoption of advanced tools and mechanisms—such as artificial intelligence—is underway to modernize the education system and adapt it to current and future demands.

In affirming the right to education, Federal Decree-Law No. 39 mandates compulsory education for Emirati citizens from the primary stage through the end of school education. For resident expatriates, the requirement applies from the beginning to the end of primary education. The government fully funds education for its citizens at all public schools and educational institutions to ensure equal opportunities for all children. Moreover, the Child Rights Law (Wadeema's Law) reaffirms every child's right to education.

As part of its Vision 2030 and to raise societal awareness of the importance of science and mathematics education in building a knowledge-based economy, the UAE's participation in international assessments is a critical component of its development journey. These engagements reflect the nation's commitment to improving education in line with the highest global standards.

The UAE is determined to strengthen its position as a global educational hub—an integral part of its broader vision to establish a knowledge-driven economy. Participation in international assessments plays a key role in this effort, enabling the country to evaluate its education system against global benchmarks, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and formulate strategic plans for continuous development.

Beyond measuring students' academic performance, international assessments also evaluate essential 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity. The UAE fully recognizes the importance of these skills and strives to embed them into its curricula, while creating learning environments that foster their development. This commitment is clearly reflected in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), which emphasizes students' ability to apply knowledge to real-life situations—demonstrating the country's vision to prepare a generation capable of meeting future challenges.

Quality of Education

The United Arab Emirates has achieved remarkable progress in the quality of education, reflecting the efficiency and effectiveness of the country’s educational system. This progress is clearly demonstrated by the continuous improvement in student performance across various subjects in the UAE’s most recent participation in international assessments. These accomplishments are the result of the concerted efforts of the Ministry of Education and educational institutions, positively impacting the country’s standing in international reports and indicators and strengthening its reputation as a leading educational hub in the region.

Various international assessments have confirmed the UAE’s distinguished educational status. The UAE maintained its position as the top-ranking Arab country in mathematics in the 2022 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). Additionally, the country ranked first among Arab states in both the fourth and eighth grades in science and mathematics in the 2023 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). The results also revealed significant progress that exceeded the global average. Furthermore, students in the UAE showed consistent improvement in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) compared to the previous cycle, indicating a steady advancement in reading proficiency.

PISA Study Results

Table 1: Average Student Performance in Science at the End of Lower Secondary Education

Gender / Year	2015	2018	2022
Males	422	430	428
Females	429	439	435
Total	427	435	431

Source: Ministry of Education, United Arab Emirates

Table 2: Average Student Performance in Reading at the End of Lower Secondary Education

Gender / Year	2015	2018	2022
Males	419	420	424
Females	445	447	441
Total	437	434	432

Source: Ministry of Education, United Arab Emirates

Table 3: Average Student Performance in Reading at the End of Lower Secondary Education

Gender / Year	2015	2018	2022
Males	408	403	396
Females	459	460	440
Total	434	432	417

Source: Ministry of Education, United Arab Emirates

Table 4: Average Student Performance in Reading - Grade 4 (PIRLS)

Gender / Year	2011	2016	2021
Males	425	436	468
Females	452	465	497
Total	439	450	483

Source: Ministry of Education, United Arab Emirates

Table 5: Average Student Performance in Mathematics – Grade 4 (TIMSS)

Gender / Year	2011	2015	2019	2023
Males	430	450	486	505
Females	438	453	477	491
Total	434	452	481	498

Source: Ministry of Education, United Arab Emirates

Table 6: Average Student Performance in Mathematics – Grade 8 (TIMSS)

Gender / Year	2011	2015	2019	2023
Males	447	459	471	495
Females	464	471	476	482
Total	456	465	473	488

Source: Ministry of Education, United Arab Emirates

Table 7: Average Student Performance in Science – Grade 4

Gender / Year	2011	2015	2019	2023
Males	419	444	471	496
Females	437	459	475	494
Total	428	451	473	495

Source: Ministry of Education, United Arab Emirates

Table 8: Average Student Performance in Science – Grade 8

Gender / Year	2011	2015	2019	2023
Males	452	461	461	484
Females	477	492	486	489
Total	465	477	473	486

Source: Ministry of Education, United Arab Emirates

The United Arab Emirates has also achieved notable results in the 2022 PISA study, particularly in the areas of creative thinking and financial literacy, reflecting the significant progress made by the UAE’s education system in preparing students for future demands. The country ranked first among Arab nations in both domains.

In addition, the Ministry of Education implements the Emirates Standardized Test (EM-SAT), a series of national electronic standardized assessments in Arabic, English, mathematics, and science, developed based on national benchmarks. These tests evaluate core skills and knowledge outcomes, and EMSAT comprises three main categories:

- **Baseline Tests:** These assess students’ readiness to learn upon entering Grade 1 after completing kindergarten. They provide policymakers with accurate data on students’ starting points in developing skills and knowledge.
- **Advantage Tests:** These track students’ skill and knowledge acquisition throughout general education in Arabic, English, mathematics, and science. They offer decision-makers insights into how well students across all schools are meeting internationally aligned expectations for different age groups. These assessments cover Grades 4, 6, 8, and 10.
- **Achieve Tests:** These university admission tests measure students’ proficiency in Arabic, English, mathematics, and science upon completing general education and prior to entering higher education institutions. The results provide valuable data to guide decision-making related to university admissions.

Ajyal Schools

The Ministry of Education implements the Ajyal Schools model to offer additional educational options within public schools for the first cycle (primary level). The model was launched in the 2022/2023 academic year as a first phase in ten schools, with eight more schools added in the 2023/2024 academic year. Three private educational institutions are responsible for operating and managing these schools under the supervision of the Ministry. Through this model, eligible Grade 4 students are granted the opportunity to enrol in either the Elite or Advanced tracks, upon passing an entrance examination.

Supporting for Schooling Across All Levels and Early Childhood Education

The UAE continues to update and strengthen its programs, policies, and legislation aimed at promoting enrollment across all levels of education and ensuring student retention. Among the key legislative and policy measures in this regard are: Federal Law No. 3 of 2016 concerning the Child Rights Law; Ministerial Resolution No. 101 of 2015 regarding the Executive Regulations of the Federal Law on Scholarships and Educational Assistance within the country; Ministerial Resolution No. 647 of 2020 on the Policy of Inclusive Education in public and private schools; the Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning and Experience; and the Student Behavior Management Regulations in public education institutions.

Rahhal Program

The Rahhal Program was developed by the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) in collaboration with the Dubai Future Foundation as one of the initiatives that promote flexible learning. The program enables educational institutions and service providers to offer a wide range of learning experiences designed to broaden students' knowledge and perspectives within a flexible schedule and across diverse environments.

As part of the efforts led by the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) under the Dubai Social Agenda 33, the Authority implements the Dubai Distinguished Students Program, a joint initiative between the public and private sectors aimed at providing high-quality and equitable educational opportunities for outstanding Emirati students.

Reaffirming the importance of education as a pillar of peace, tolerance, prosperity, and sustainable development—and to ensure equitable access to learning opportunities—the UAE established Tolerance Schools, which cater to low-income resident students from Grade 1 to Grade 12. These schools began operating in 2020, and by 2023, a total of 5,000 students from low-income families had benefited from three cohorts of Tolerance Schools.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for developing policies, strategies, legislation, regulations, and programs related to the educational needs of early childhood, covering the period from birth through Grade 4, including nurseries and kindergartens. (Source: The Official Portal of the UAE Government)

The Ministry also sets standards and regulations, issues licenses, and enforces oversight over both public and private nurseries in coordination with relevant local authorities. Moreover, it works closely with parents and the broader community to strengthen their role in supporting early childhood development.

Young Entrepreneurs Competition

This comprehensive annual competition is one of the flagship contests held during the National Festival of Science, Technology, and Innovation. It aims to promote the concepts of entrepreneurship and innovation, and to instill a spirit of initiative among students at an early age.

The competition simplifies entrepreneurial and commercial concepts for children, equipping them with essential entrepreneurial skills by providing them with the opportunity to experience entrepreneurship within a competitive environment. It focuses on teaching children financial literacy, customer interaction, sales techniques, and the concept of saving. The competition is targeted at kindergarten and early primary students, from Grade 1 to Grade 4.

The state provides free preschool education in public educational institutions; however, it is not mandatory. This is in accordance with Ministerial Resolution No. 644 of 2022 concerning the Early Childhood Care and Education Policy. The policy contributes to achieving a more comprehensive early childhood development strategy, encompassing child and maternal healthcare, nutrition, family support and social cohesion, as well as child protection, safety, and security.

The Early Childhood Care and Education Policy aims to establish mechanisms to ensure all children develop across various domains—developmental, psychological, social, personal, linguistic, cognitive, and physical—while preserving identity, values, and digital literacy skills. It also seeks to provide accessible, high-quality care and education services for all children, supported by a qualified and experienced workforce. Furthermore, it promotes the development of a national early childhood curriculum framework that integrates developmental areas with shared values, and implements effective governance systems, legislation, and procedures aligned with national requirements and international best practices, underpinned by genuine and practical partnerships with parents and stakeholders.

In 2022, the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) in Dubai developed a policy for licensing early childhood centers (ages 0–6). The policy aims to achieve several objectives, including promoting the Arabic language and national identity among Emirati children; providing a range of care and learning services; continuously improving the quality of services; encouraging investment in the sector; and raising family and community awareness. To support this, KHDA issued a comprehensive guide outlining the requirements and procedures for establishing or expanding early childhood centers, along with the development of an integrated quality assurance framework for such institutions.

Technical, Vocational and Higher Education

In line with its commitment to promoting equitable access to education and training in the technical and vocational fields, as well as higher education, the United Arab Emir-

ates has established clear national policies, legislation, and strategies governing these sectors at the federal level. Federal Decree Law No. 48 of 2021 regulates the licensing of higher education institutions, the accreditation of their academic programs, and the strengthening of governance frameworks among federal and local stakeholders. The National Strategy for Higher Education 2030 ensures that students are equipped with technical and scientific skills that support the development of a knowledge-based economy and enable their effective participation in entrepreneurship and the labor market in alignment with national priorities.

Under the new structural framework of the education sector, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research oversees the operation of the higher education system, which includes approximately 78 institutions. The UAE aims to accelerate growth through investment in human capital and advanced technologies, enhancing its global competitiveness, fostering innovation, and supporting a knowledge-based economy. Efforts are underway to classify higher education institutions, develop institutional and academic licensing systems, accredit programs, enhance the quality and competitiveness of academic offerings, raise admission standards, and support gender equality in access to higher education.

Among the priority initiatives is the Dubai Project to Attract the World's Top Universities, which aims to position the UAE as a global hub for higher education. Another notable effort is the integration of 65,000 young Emiratis into the workforce, reflecting the state's drive to align education outcomes with national development goals.

University Preparation Program (Intilaqah)

Intilaqah is a guidance-oriented initiative designed to prepare a generation of students committed to enrolling in the most prestigious national and international universities across various disciplines aligned with labour market needs and priority industries, in accordance with the UAE's national strategy. The program aims to provide academic counselling tailored to students' interests and professional aptitudes, along with the necessary support to secure university admissions.

This initiative contributes to the achievement of the third strategic objective: "Guiding, supporting, and empowering students to foster positive citizenship values and meet the requirements of individual well-being."

Several entities in the country oversee the technical education and vocational training system, including:

- Abu Dhabi Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (ACTVET), which is responsible for developing the policies and standards that effectively regulate the operations of vocational and technical educational institutions within the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. The Centre's vision is to position vocational education as the

first choice for citizens rather than an alternative option. Key outcomes have been identified to achieve strategic priorities and goals aimed at promoting lifelong learning and creating job opportunities for graduates.

ACTVET supervises several institutions, including Applied Technology High Schools (ATS), Abu Dhabi Vocational Education and Training Institute (ADVETI), Abu Dhabi Polytechnic (AD Polytechnic), and Fatima College of Health Sciences (FCHS).

- The Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA), which is responsible for regulating the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) sector and ensuring the quality of professional and technical qualifications in the Emirate of Dubai.
- Sharjah Private Education Authority (SPEA), which supervises educational and training institutions in the Emirate of Sharjah that offer nationally accredited vocational programs approved by the National Qualifications Center (NQC).

All stakeholders involved in this type of education have worked on issuing policies and developing guidelines, the most notable of which include:

the Short-Term Learning Units Policy, the Apprenticeship Policy, the Transition Between Education Pathways Policy and its accompanying guideline, the Vocational Program Recognition Guide, the Recognition of Prior Learning and Experience Policy and Procedures, and the Vocational Qualifications Development Guide.

The country also has an educational and cultural exchange program with numerous countries around the world. This includes sending Emirati students to pursue higher education abroad, as well as attracting a significant number of international students to study within the UAE.

Students from all over the world may apply to participate in one of the student exchange programs available in the United Arab Emirates, which provide opportunities to experience diverse cultural and educational settings.

Applied Stream and Specialized Academies Project

The Applied Stream and Specialized Academies were established in 2017 as a foundational pillar of vocational education within public schools. This initiative offers a wide range of specialized fields, such as Applied Entrepreneurship, Health Sciences, Engineering Maintenance, and Applied Travel and Tourism, among others—each designed in alignment with labor market demands.

Graduates of this stream receive a Level 4 Certificate from the National Qualifications Center, in addition to the General Secondary Education Certificate.

The program targets male and female students from grades 9 to 12 who wish to pursue the vocational education pathway.

Dubai alone is home to more than 55 local and international higher education institutions. International universities actively attract students from around the world through academ-

ic programs tailored to meet both local and global labor market needs. In the 2023/2024 academic year, a 25% increase was recorded in the number of international students enrolled in universities under the supervision of the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) in Dubai.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

The UAE is committed to strengthening focus on both employability skills and ICT competencies. In 2023, the country achieved a score of 96.4 on the ICT Development Index, as reported by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), significantly surpassing the global average of 72.8.

Table 9: Percentage of Youth and Adults with ICT Skills, by Type of Skill

#	Skill	Gender	2019	2020	2021	2022
1	Sending emails with attachments	Males	92.20	97.90	98.90	100
		Females	83.30	79.0	94.60	100
		Average	90	92.6	97.7	100
2	Using copy-and-paste tools to duplicate or move information within a document	Males	92.00	100	100	100
		Females	87.30	100	100	100
		Average	90.80	100	100	100
3	Connecting and installing new devices	Males	68.00	90.0	90.90	91.80
		Females	75.90	62.4	78	78.90
		Average	70.00	82.3	87.4	88.30
4	Using a basic arithmetic formula in a spreadsheet	Males	80.50	85	85.90	87.60
		Females	62.30	64.8	80.4	82.10
		Average	76.00	79.40	84.40	86.10
5	Writing computer programs using a specialized programming language	Males	16.50	18.2	21.8	22.90
		Females	22.20	15.3	23.9	25.10
		Average	17.90	17.40	22.40	23.50
6	Creating digital presentations using presentation software	Males	32.50	54.6	57.6	60.40
		Females	61.90	43.5	53.5	56.40
		Average	39.70	51.50	56.5	59.30
7	Searching for, downloading, installing, and configuring software	Males	60.50	69.0	69.7	72.40
		Females	42.10	48.9	65.3	68.20
		Average	56.00	63.5	68.5	71.20
8	Transferring files between a computer and other devices	Males	37.00	67.60	71.30	74.00
		Females	33.10	51.10	59.20	62.10
		Average	36.00	63.00	68.00	70.70

Source: Ministry of Education, United Arab Emirates

Gender Equality and Persons with Disabilities

Girls in the United Arab Emirates enjoy the same constitutional rights as boys. Gender equality is a fundamental pillar of the right to education and equal opportunity, underpinned by policies, legislation, and regulations that safeguard this right. All available statistics and data reflect the achievement of gender equality and balance across all levels of education in the country.

The UAE's educational policies and systems are responsive to the diversity of learners and their needs. With nearly 200 nationalities residing in the country, the government provides free public education while also allowing communities to establish their own schools—whether private or international—based on accredited curricula, as regulated by Federal Decree-Law No. 18 of 2020 concerning private education, amended by Federal Decree-Law No. 10 of 2023.

Mashagel Centers for Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment

“Mashagel” are workshops designed to employ persons of determination within a semi-competitive work environment. The initiative aims to provide them with opportunities to integrate into the workplace alongside their peers and to fully develop their social and behavioural skills possible, ultimately enabling them to launch their own entrepreneurial ventures. The program places particular emphasis on individuals with intellectual disabilities, especially females.

The country's policies in this regard provide strong support for all segments of society, ensuring access to quality education for all—particularly for persons with disabilities—by developing and implementing focused and inclusive strategies, as well as enforceable legislation. These include Federal Law No. 29 of 2006 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Federal Law No. 3 of 2016 on the Rights of the Child (Wadeema Law) and its Executive Regulation, and Federal Decree-Law No. 39 of 2022 concerning compulsory education.

In line with the UAE's firm belief that every child has the right to education, federal laws mandate compulsory education across all stages up to the age of eighteen. These laws also require the provision of appropriate educational tools and resources tailored to the needs of persons of determination to ensure their active role in the country's development. *Source: “The Official Portal of the UAE Government – 2025/01/07”*

Article 12 of the Federal Law concerning the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states: “The State shall guarantee persons of determination equal opportunities for education at all educational and academic institutions, vocational training, adult education, and continuing education—either within mainstream classrooms or in specialized settings—by providing curricula in sign language, Braille, or any other appropriate methods, as required.”

One of the key pillars of the National Policy for Empowering Persons of Determination is inclusive education. The policy focuses on developing an educational system and spe-

cialized programs for persons of determination across general, vocational, and higher education. It also emphasizes the importance of training specialized teachers for various types of disabilities and educational levels and encourages universities and institutes to offer relevant sub-specializations in the field.

Within the Ministry of Education, a dedicated department for persons of determination works to promote and protect their educational rights, ensuring equal learning opportunities as provided to other students. The department also deploys specialized instructors in behavioral skills and offers a wide range of support services, tools, and assistive technologies free of charge for students with disabilities in public schools.

The Ministry has also launched several skills-based training programs that include clear guidelines on interacting with individuals with visual and hearing impairments, as well as comprehensive programs for talent identification. Additionally, the Ministry established follow-up support centers to monitor and evaluate the progress of children with disabilities before and after their integration into schools.

A variety of assistive devices and educational tools are provided for special education classrooms, including desktop magnifiers, BrailleNote devices, talking clock cubes, standard and classic Perkins Brailers, sensory development kits for students with visual impairments, talking picture albums, communication and language development devices, interactive Arabic language skills kits with audio-visual features, and FM systems.

Lifelong Learning

Literacy is an integral component of the right to education, and ensuring access to it for both children and adults is a responsibility borne by governments. The UAE is committed to enabling all individuals - without exception - to attain appropriate and recognized levels of competence in functional skills such as reading, writing, and numeracy. This commitment is supported by a range of national policies, legislations, and strategies, most notably the Compulsory Education Law No. 39 of 2022 and the Integrated Continuing Education Classification Regulations for 2019–2020.

The Ministry of Education supervises continuing education centers, which operate under the following categories:

- Adult Education Centers (evening sessions)
- Adult Education Centers for females only (morning sessions)
- Educational Care Centers (for students temporarily suspended from school due to disciplinary cases)

The Ministry also administers the Integrated Continuing Education System (Literacy Track), a program designed to provide learning opportunities for individuals who were unable to complete their education due to exceeding the age of school enrollment or having dropped out. This program includes a variety of educational pathways, tailored

to different groups based on specific conditions and levels, with the aim of empowering participants to resume their education, enroll in higher education institutions, or access better employment opportunities.

Table 10: Youth Literacy Rate (Ages 15-24)

Literacy Rate (Ages 15-24)	Sex / Year	2021	2022	2023
	Male	99	99	99
	Female	97	98	97
	Total	98	98	98

Source: Ministry of Education, United Arab Emirates

Table 11: Adult Literacy Rate (Ages 15+)

Literacy Rate (Ages 15+)	Sex / Year	2021	2022	2023
	Male	99	99	99
	Female	97	98	97
	Total	98	98	98

Source: Ministry of Education, United Arab Emirates

The Ministry of Education is also implementing the initiative “Yes to Digital Literacy” under the slogan “We All Learn.” This initiative aims to eradicate both digital and educational illiteracy by the year 2030. It seeks to ensure that all youth and a significant proportion of adults possess proficiency in reading, writing, and numeracy, while also providing adult education programs and promoting the digital skills required in the modern era. In any case, illiteracy is not considered a major societal challenge in the United Arab Emirates, as figures indicate that the literacy rate exceeds 98%, with illiteracy levels not exceeding 2%.

Education for Sustainable Development and Tolerance

Education authorities in the United Arab Emirates are committed to ensuring that education is relevant and focuses on both cognitive and non-cognitive aspects, emphasizing the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and values needed by citizens and residents to lead productive lives, make informed decisions, and address challenges—through the promotion of education for sustainable development, citizenship, peace, and human rights.

As part of its efforts to develop policies and programs that enhance education for sustainable development and global citizenship, the Ministry of Education has succeeded in raising awareness on climate action. This positive change has extended to the individual level, where awareness, educational, and development programs have played a key role in shaping environmental consciousness across society and highlighting the critical role of education in addressing the impacts of climate change.

Efforts were focused on several key areas to integrate climate-related issues into the education system, including the development of environmentally responsive curricula and learning materials, the training of teachers and educational leaders, and the establishment of eco-friendly schools that serve as catalysts for building sustainable green communities. Pursuant to Ministerial Resolution No. 278 of 2023, the National Committee for Green Education was established, followed by Ministerial Resolution No. 279 forming the Executive Committee for Green Education. These committees worked to unify national efforts and launch initiatives under the “Greening Education Partnership” framework, centered on four main pillars: Green Curricula, Green Schools, Green Capabilities, and Green Communities. Between 2022 and 2024, the United Arab Emirates launched a series of initiatives related to green education, through programs and partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders at both local and international levels, including numerous UN organizations, civil society groups, and non-profit institutions. The Ministry of Education, in cooperation with UNICEF, implemented the “Green Capabilities” initiative to equip children and youth with climate literacy and environmentally conscious skills. As part of this initiative, a number of school principals and teachers received training on educational solutions to climate challenges, in addition to the provision of open educational resources for educators both within the UAE and abroad.

As part of its ongoing efforts, the Ministry aims to have 50% of the country’s schools designated as eco-friendly green schools by the year 2030.

The Ministry is also working in support of the strategic plan of the Ministry of Tolerance through the adoption of the Moral Education Curriculum—a dynamic and interactive program designed to develop students’ skills and enhance their understanding of universal principles and values that reflect shared human experiences. Moreover, efforts are underway to update all curricula, especially those related to the humanities and languages, with the goal of cultivating a generation that embraces tolerance, is capable of peaceful coexistence, and contributes to building bridges of compassion and peace while instilling a deep national awareness of tolerance as a noble human virtue and a high moral value

UN Indicators Simulation Program

This program is organized for students from both public and private schools across various emirates of the country. The Ministry has collaborated with several leading universities in the UAE to train and prepare the participating students and teachers. The program provides students with educational, and training materials designed to enhance their knowledge and skills related to the fundamentals and objectives of the conference.

The conference sheds light on key global issues and the challenges they present—issues that require effective solutions. It also focuses on Sustainable Development Goals related to education, health, poverty, and climate change. Through this initiative, students gain valuable insights and perspectives on international affairs and global challenges.

Teachers and educational leaders are equipped with knowledge and skills related to education for sustainable development, citizenship, and human rights through professional development programs. These training programs are closely aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and cover key themes such as student protection, inclusion of persons of determination, quality of life, moral education, diversity, and sustainability.

The Ministry of Education also works to raise awareness and teach preventive health skills, particularly regarding HIV/AIDS, across all schools in the country. The curriculum includes content focused on prevention and awareness of HIV.

In addition, the Ministry supports students, teachers, and school leaders by ensuring an inclusive and optimal learning environment for all, providing adequate facilities, technology, internet access, and essential services for the public and persons of determination alike. The Ministry of Community Development has issued the UAE Universal Design Code to ensure that all institutions provide safe and accessible educational environments. Educational institutions are not permitted to operate unless they comply with the approved conditions and standards, including medical, engineering, health, environmental, and planning requirements established by the relevant authorities.

All educational institutions are required to provide the necessary tools and resources to carry out their educational mission, including specialized equipment and furnishings for students of determination. The enforcement of safety and accessibility standards in educational facilities is ensured through regular inspection visits, based on the health, safety, and environmental regulations adopted by the Ministry of Education.

Wellbeing First: A Guiding Framework

The Wellbeing First framework serves as an essential reference for school leadership, educational governing boards, and parents. It is a pioneering initiative at the international level, aimed at developing and enhancing wellbeing in Dubai's private schools. The framework outlines the key structures and standards required to assess, monitor, and improve levels of wellbeing in each school. It fosters a shared understanding of wellbeing among parents, teachers, and students, leading to improved student health and academic outcomes, as well as enhanced staff wellbeing and performance.

Modern school complexes have also been established and launched across various emirates, catering to all educational stages and built according to high-quality standards. These complexes aim to motivate students to learn and to meet their needs in a manner appropriate to each educational level. Such efforts have contributed to increased community satisfaction with the learning environment, positively impacting both student and staff wellbeing and leading to improved academic achievement.

The UAE Code for an Inclusive Environment sets infrastructure standards that ensure the provision of ramps in all facilities, elevators in school buildings with more than one floor, accessible restrooms for persons of determination of both genders, designated buses

for transporting students with disabilities, and access to technology and internet for all students. It also requires the provision of specialized classrooms, resource rooms, and inclusive support rooms offering tailored services for students of determination by trained professionals. Some educational institutions have begun adopting clean energy sources, such as solar energy, to meet their operational power needs. Moreover, the Dubai 2032 Wellbeing Strategy has been approved as a roadmap for expanding the implementation of leading and innovative initiatives focused on individuals, communities, and the city, with a strong emphasis on the responsible use of clean energy across various sectors.

Table 12: Percentage of Schools Equipped with Electricity, Internet, Computers, Drinking Water, and Sanitation Facilities

Electricity	Internet	Computers	Drinking Water	Handwashing Facilities	Non-Shared Sanitation Facilities
100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Ministry of Education, United Arab Emirates

All national laws, policies, and strategies in the UAE support the protection of students, teachers, and staff, ensuring a safe and violence-free learning environment. This is reinforced by Federal Law No. 3 of 2016 on child rights, Ministerial Resolution No. 659 of 2020 on child protection in educational institutions, Ministerial Resolution No. 645 on the anti-bullying policy for public and private schools, and Cabinet Decision No. 3/3 of 2022 regarding the National Child Protection Policy in educational institutions.

The child protection system in the UAE focuses on safeguarding students from abuse through continuous institutional monitoring by various partner centers. All reports are handled based on their level of severity. The system also aims to train personnel, evaluate procedures, and enhance them to ensure the implementation of protective measures in schools.

This effort contributes to the strategic goal of the Ministry of Education: to “develop and design proactive, integrated educational services and promote well-being and quality of life.” More than 100 specialists have been trained at the national level, and over 38,000 beneficiaries—including students, parents, and staff—have received training.

There is also a dedicated anti-bullying framework in place through the National Anti-Bullying Program, which was launched in 2018 and continues to focus on raising awareness and providing training to effectively and proactively address bullying incidents.

The program has conducted awareness campaigns and workshops benefiting more than 2,365,070 individuals, including students, parents, and staff between 2019 and 2024. It has also provided training for over 3,201 school social workers and principals, in addition to certifying 28 trainers specialized in bullying prevention, and producing 16 educational videos.

Government Spending on Education and External Scholarships

The United Arab Emirates allocates generous funding to education. In 2021, government expenditure on education amounted to 3.90% of GDP, while spending on education represented 14.76% of total government expenditure for the same year.

The UAE is also one of the world's leading donors in the field of education, supporting initiatives through several non-profit institutions, such as Dubai Cares. The foundation works to improve access to quality education for children and youth in developing countries by designing, supporting, and scaling up integrated and sustainable educational programs. To date, Dubai Cares has successfully launched education programs benefiting over 21 million individuals across 60 developing countries.

Additionally, the Abu Dhabi Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (ACTVET), through Fatima College of Health Sciences, has extended support to nursing students at Jimma University in Ethiopia by providing laptops, transportation, and essential laboratory equipment for the nursing department, as well as sharing teaching expertise.

Scholarships are also offered to outstanding students worldwide via a dedicated digital platform for non-citizen students, which provides access to scholarship and financial aid opportunities.

According to the UAE Foreign Aid Report, which highlights the country's contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals, the UAE provided a total of USD 896.2 million in foreign aid between 2018 and 2022.

Human Resources and Teacher Training

In 2016, the Education and Human Resources Council was established to develop a unified national vision for education across the UAE, define and monitor learning outcome targets for all educational stages, and approve the overarching framework for education-related policies, strategies, legislation, and systems. The Council is also responsible for ensuring that educational outcomes align with current and future labor market needs.

One of the Council's key initiatives is the National Employment Strategy 2031, which aims to equip the national workforce with the skills required by the labor market through lifelong learning programs, future skills training, and the promotion of cultural knowledge and diversity.

In 2021, the Emirati Human Resources Development Council in Dubai was established as a central body representing all stakeholders involved in developing Emirati human capital in the private sector. The Council is responsible for ensuring the presence of an attractive and supportive environment that encourages the recruitment of Emirati talent, and for aligning educational outcomes with labor market demands in line with the priority sectors outlined in Dubai's Strategy 33.

In addition, the Abu Dhabi Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (ACTVET) has developed a strategic plan to enhance the skills of both youth and adults—including technical and vocational competencies—in response to the evolving needs of the labor market. The Centre also launches high-impact local and international initiatives to raise awareness about the importance of this educational pathway and increase the enrollment of Emirati students in technical and vocational education programs. These programs offer a wide range of learning opportunities that are fully aligned with market demands, thereby improving graduates’ employment prospects.

Apprenticeship Program

The Apprenticeship Program is a vocational learning system that combines on-the-job training with classroom-based education, enabling individuals to acquire recognized professional qualifications for employment or further studies.

The program targets key economic sectors such as engineering, automotive technology, retail, tourism, healthcare, technical laboratory analysis, and logistics support services.

Teachers in the United Arab Emirates benefit from a comprehensive process of pre-service and in-service training and development. In this context, the Ministry of Education has been implementing the Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) Project since 2020, reflecting its commitment to enhancing the professional competencies of teachers and educational leaders.

The project aims to promote continuous professional development through training workshops and interactive activities aligned with the latest educational trends. These efforts empower teachers to improve their teaching practices and exchange knowledge and expertise within a collaborative learning environment. The project also contributes directly to realizing the concept of the “school as a learning organization” and strengthens a culture of collective learning and self-development among teachers—underscoring the importance of professional growth as a core pillar of the Ministry’s strategy.

In the academic year 2023–2024, the number of beneficiaries of this initiative reached approximately 23,777 teachers.

Table 13: Number of Beneficiaries of the Professional Learning Communities Project

Academic Year	Number of Targeted Beneficiaries
2019-2020	23,121
2020-2021	30,1000
2023-2024	23,777

Source: Ministry of Education, United Arab Emirates

It is worth noting that the percentage of qualified teachers in the United Arab Emirates has reached 100% according to international standards, and the student-to-teacher ratio is excellent compared to that of advanced countries.

Table 14: Percentage of Qualified Teachers Based on National Standards

Level / Academic Year	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Pre-primary	100%	100%	100%
Primary	100%	100%	100%
Lower Secondary	100%	100%	100%
Upper Secondary	100%	100%	100%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: Ministry of Education, United Arab Emirates

Table 15: Student-to-Qualified Teacher Ratio (Number of Students per Qualified Teacher) by Educational Level

Level / Academic Year	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Pre-primary	21.28	20.80	14.26
Primary	16.41	16.08	14.83
Lower Secondary	11.35	11.86	9.20
Upper Secondary	8.17	6.48	8.51

Source: Ministry of Education, United Arab Emirates

Table 16: Percentage of Teachers Who Received In-Service Training During the Past Twelve Months

Primary Education

Gender / Year	2020/2021	2022/2023
Male	90.92	91.81
Female	95.40	94.88
Total	94.19	94.46

Lower Secondary Education

Gender / Year	2020/2021	2022/2023
Male	98.35	95.04
Female	98.50	96.73
Total	98.44	96.11

Source: Ministry of Education, United Arab Emirates

Kingdom of Bahrain

The Kingdom of Bahrain adopts a sustainability-driven approach across all sectors, particularly in education. The country possesses all the necessary components to steadily advance educational transformation in line with the rapidly evolving global landscape, supported by an enabling policy environment and unwavering political will committed to modernization and development.

Law No. 27 of 2005 stipulates that “education shall be compulsory and free of charge at the primary stages, from the age of six until the age of fifteen.” Education is a right guaranteed by the Kingdom to all citizens and remains free through the end of secondary education.

The philosophy of education in Bahrain is rooted in the principles and values of Islam, human and cultural interaction, and the Kingdom’s Arab identity. It also draws upon the cultural and social framework of the Bahraini people, reflecting their rich heritage and the provisions of the Constitution. This educational vision seeks to promote the well-being of citizens, strengthen their character, instill pride in their faith, values, homeland, and Arab identity, and contribute to the development, prosperity, and advancement of society.

Quality of Education

In alignment with the Bahrain Economic Vision 2030, which emphasizes that “Bahrainis should receive the highest possible quality of education to continually acquire the skills needed to achieve their aspirations,” the Kingdom is committed to enhancing the quality of education and continually reimagining and assessing its educational system.

To this end, Bahrain regularly participates in international assessments that measure competencies in mathematics and science. The Kingdom has recorded notable progress across successive cycles and has attained leading rankings on several indicators compared to other countries in the region.

Table 17: Results of the (TIMSS) 2019 and 2023 Assessment in Mathematics and Science (Grade 4 and Grade 8)

2019			2023		
Grade/ Subject	Mathematics	Mathematics	Grade/ Subject	Mathematics	Mathematics
Grade 4	points 480	points 493	Grade 4	points 462	points 475
Grade 8	points 481	points 486	Grade 8	points 426	points 452

Source: Ministry of Education, Kingdom of Bahrain

The Kingdom of Bahrain has made progress in its second participation in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS 2021) for Grade 4, achieving a score of 458

points, compared to 446 points in the 2016 cycle.

To provide reliable data on students' performance, their schools, and the extent to which educational targets are met, the Kingdom administers national assessments to evaluate learning outcomes. These assessments cover Arabic language, mathematics, science, and English language for Grade 9, and Arabic language, English language, and mathematical skills for Grade 12.

All these efforts align with the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Education (2023–2026), which includes initiatives aimed at improving service levels and enhancing educational performance to close skill gaps and promote efficiency.

As a result of policies and programs that support enrollment at all educational levels, the overall admission rate into the final grade of lower secondary education has reached 99.21%, while the rate of out-of-school youth in upper secondary education stands at 2.48%, and the percentage of over-age students in primary education is 0.62%.

Table 18: Net Intake Rate for the Academic Year 2021/2022

Net Intake Rate in the Final Grade of Primary Education		Net Intake Rate in Lower Secondary Education	
Males	92.49	Males	100.04
Females	93.42	Females	98.35
Total	92.49	Total	99.21

Source: Ministry of Education, Kingdom of Bahrain

Table 19: Out-of-School Rate – 2021/2022

Primary Education		Lower Secondary Education		Upper Secondary Education	
Males	8.38	Males	3.26	Males	1.60
Females	7.76	Females	3.07	Females	3.36
Total	8.08	Total	3.16	Total	2.48

Source: Ministry of Education, Kingdom of Bahrain

Table 20: Percentage of Over-Age Children – 2021/2022

Primary Education		Lower Secondary Education	
Males	0.71	Males	1.63
Females	0.53	Females	1.43
Total	0.62	Total	1.03

Source: Ministry of Education, Kingdom of Bahrain

To enhance the educational system and improve the quality of education, the Kingdom of Bahrain is currently implementing the third phase of the School Performance Improvement Program (Hulool), which was launched in January 2019 as an extension of strategic options to support education development policies. This phase continues the National

Initiative for the Development of Education and the Labor Market within the framework of Bahrain Economic Vision 2030 and its alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals. The scope of the project includes the introduction of technical and vocational programs in secondary schools to promote equal opportunities and improve school performance—particularly in academic achievement and personal development. It also aims to enhance decision-making skills among school leaders using quality cards, school performance indicators, and the excellence pathway.

Among the most notable outcomes of the Hulool project are the increased number of schools rated as “satisfactory” and above during the first half of the 2022/2023 academic year, and the rise in mastery levels in core subjects among students in public schools. These improvements were based on evaluation meetings and assessment checkpoints at the end of the first semester of 2022/2023, as well as comparisons between the results of the first and second assessments.

Early Childhood Education

The Kingdom of Bahrain recognizes the importance of early childhood care and education and is committed to developing programs in this area through the establishment of a dedicated department within the organizational structure of the Ministry of Education — the Department of Licensing and Monitoring of Early Education. This department is responsible for supervising and overseeing early education institutions operated by the private sector, in accordance with established policies and strategic frameworks aimed at expanding and increasing enrollment in pre-primary education.

One of the key initiatives is the development of a regulatory framework for independent early education institutions. This framework serves as a foundation for providing essential information, guidelines, and procedures required by the owners of early education institutions to complete the necessary steps. It outlines the requirements, the submission process for care and education plans, core legislative and regulatory conditions, required documentation, and curriculum guidelines that help institutions implement effective tools to achieve the objectives of their care and education programs.

As part of the Ministry of Education’s Strategic Plan 2023–2026, and in line with efforts to enhance the quality of outcomes at this developmental stage, the Ministry developed a national early childhood education curriculum for children aged 3 to 5 years. This curriculum aligns with both national priorities and international trends.

As a result of these efforts, the participation rate in organized learning (one year before entry into primary school) reached 71.16% in the academic year 2018/2019. Additionally, the gross enrollment rate in pre-primary education was 31.05% in the year 2019/2020.

The Ministry continues to establish standards and frameworks for measuring the performance quality of early education institutions and carries out objective reviews to evaluate

the performance of all educational institutions to enhance the quality of services provided through regular visits. These measures also aim to improve quality and competitiveness within the early childhood education sector. Furthermore, the Ministry is committed to providing the necessary instructional programs for the professional development of early childhood educators, in cooperation with relevant partners in the Kingdom.

Higher and Technical Education

The Kingdom of Bahrain seeks to uphold the principle of equal opportunity in accessing vocational and higher education for all, without exception, to provide students with the best opportunities to realize their potential. The operational plan of the Higher Education Council includes encouraging higher education institutions to introduce local academic programs aligned with labor market needs, as well as cooperating with reputable international higher education institutions to offer rare specializations not currently available at local institutions.

Stakeholders in this sector continue to review and update policies and regulations related to post-secondary education to enhance the efficiency of higher education institutions. The gross enrollment rate in higher education reached 77.24% in 2022.

Table 21: Gross Enrollment Rate in Higher Education

Gender / Academic Year	2020/2021	2021/2022
Males	55.04	62.47
Females	88.56	92.79
Total	70.76	77.24

Source: Ministry of Education, Kingdom of Bahrain

Bahrain places a strong emphasis on investment in higher education. A promotional plan has been developed for the higher education sector in coordination with relevant government entities. This plan includes several measures to be implemented at the local, regional, and international levels, aimed at encouraging investment, attracting prestigious international universities to establish branches in the country, drawing international students to study at local higher education institutions, organizing global exhibitions, and building regional and international partnerships in the field of higher education.

With Bahrain’s accession to the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education, the Kingdom supports policies and regulations that promote academic mobility at all levels of the educational process (students, faculty members, and academic programs). It also encourages higher education institutions in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries to engage in exchange programs through their international cooperation units, in coordination with the relevant authorities in the GCC ministries of higher education.

Table 22: Number of International (Non-Bahraini) Students in Public Education Institutions (2023/2024)

	Government Institutions	Regional Institutions	Private Institutions	Total
Males	509	341	1809	2659
Females	811	771	1623	3205
Total	1320	1112	3432	5864

Source: Ministry of Education, Kingdom of Bahrain

In order to open new horizons for students and prepare them for the labor market, the Kingdom is working on developing the educational structure of technical and vocational education by restructuring the track at the organizational level, updating the curriculum in the two main tracks - industrial and commercial - to become the engineering track and the administrative and technological track, and developing the specialized subjects through introducing new ones, merging, or retaining some of the required specializations. In addition, the study plan is being updated in alignment with the requirements of national examinations.

Specialists monitor the alignment of higher and vocational education outputs with labor market demands by preparing an annual report to provide data that can support decision-making regarding the introduction of programs and their connection to the labor market. Furthermore, potential solutions are studied to align academic programs with labor market requirements, and training courses are provided for graduates of higher education institutions. The participation rate in technical and vocational education programs among those aged 15 to 24 years stands at 5.13%.

Table 23: Participation Rate in Technical and Vocational Education Programs in 2021

Males	8.49
Females	1.44
Total	5.13

Source: Ministry of Education, Kingdom of Bahrain

In line with its commitment to developing flexible skills and competencies necessary for individuals to live and work in a safer, more sustainable, and integrated world—driven by knowledge, technology, and modern tools amid rapid changes in the labor market—the Kingdom is working within the framework of the Government Program 2023–2026 to enhance the performance of higher education and training, promote scientific research, develop curricula, and continue advancing the quality and performance of educational and training institutions and their staff. This aims to improve the performance of education and training, align outcomes with labor market needs, encourage scientific research and inno-

vation, and link research and innovation to the country’s economic and industrial needs, thereby guiding education and training institutions to develop the programs they offer.

The Field Training Unit in higher education institutions provides training opportunities for enrolled students—whether in government or private institutions—who have successfully completed at least 60% of their academic coursework.

Technology and Innovations

The Kingdom of Bahrain ranks highly across several global indicators related to technology and innovation. In the first edition of the Future of Growth Report 2024, issued by the World Economic Forum, Bahrain scored above the global average in talent availability—recording 66 points in the Talent Availability Index and 67 points in the Digital and Technological Talent Index (out of a maximum of 100 points).

Table 24: Percentage of Youth and Adults with ICT Skills, by Gender and Type of Skill

#	Skill	Gender	2019	2020	2021
1	Sending emails with attachments	Males	86.01	78.95	78.95
		Females	30.63	87.43	87.43
		Average	66.54	81.84	81.99
2	Using copy-and-paste tools to duplicate or move information within a document	Males	55.25	63.26	63.26
		Females	62.65	77.23	77.23
		Average	57.85	68.03	68.28
3	Connecting and installing new devices	Males	27.00	42.81	42.81
		Females	69.67	41.89	41.89
		Average	42	42.50	42.48
4	Using a basic arithmetic formula in a spreadsheet	Males	26.46	44.74	44.74
		Females	53.60	48.98	48.77
		Average	36	46.18	46.18
5	Writing computer programs using a specialized programming language	Males	18.21	14.68	.N. A
		Females	17.87	21.99	.N. A
		Average	18.09	17.17	.N. A
6	Creating digital presentations using presentation software	Males	25.02	33.20	33.20
		Females	56.24	48.31	48.31
		Average	36.00	38.36	38.36
7	Searching for, downloading, installing, and configuring software	Males	36.14	61.94	61.94
		Females	86.93	70.90	70.90
		Average	54.00	65.00	65.16
8	Transferring files between a computer and other devices	Males	42.24	51.11	51.11
		Females	87.06	62.50	62.50
		Average	58.00	55.00	55.20

Source: Ministry of Education, Kingdom of Bahrain

The Kingdom of Bahrain is steadily advancing toward digital economy leadership in the Middle East by launching a range of key projects and strategies that focus particularly on

strengthening the information and communications technology (ICT) sector, establishing supportive regulatory frameworks, developing advanced infrastructure, and supporting national talent with skills and competencies.

Table 25: Educational Attainment Rates Among Youth/Adults by Gender and Educational Level

Year	2020			2022		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Illiterate	-	-	-	-	-	-
Literate (Completed some primary (grades	99.11	95.73	98.01	94.92	95.49	95.13
Primary	95.80	87.37	93.05	93.33	84.47	90.04
Lower secondary	83.08	79.90	82.05	84.02	81.37	83.03
Upper secondary	69.48	67.19	68.74	63.55	72.72	66.95
Diploma	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bachelor's	21.73	26.66	23.33	26.26	35.73	29.78
(Postgraduate (Master's	2.08	1.97	2.04	6.14	5.30	5.83
(Postgraduate (Doctorate	0.29	0.22	0.26	0.60	0.61	0.60

Source: Ministry of Education, Kingdom of Bahrain

Gender Equality and Persons with Disabilities

In adherence to the principle of the right to education based on equality - whether through equal opportunities between genders or ensuring access for vulnerable groups and persons with disabilities -the Kingdom of Bahrain, through its inclusive and equitable education policies and legislation, strives to provide education for all segments of society, as stipulated in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain. Article 5 of the Education Law affirms the provision of educational opportunities for every individual to develop their abilities and skills in order to realize their potential and contribute to the development of their life and society. Public expenditure on education accounted for 7.57% of total government spending in 2021.

Table 26: Gender Parity Index (GPI) in Education Enrollment Indicators – 2021

Gross enrollment in primary education	Gross enrollment in lower secondary education	Gross enrollment in upper secondary education	Adjusted net enrollment in primary education	Adjusted net enrollment in lower secondary education	Adjusted net enrollment in upper secondary education
1.01	1	0,92	1.01	1	0.98

Source: Ministry of Education, Kingdom of Bahrain

The Kingdom of Bahrain opens its schools to all residents, regardless of nationality. Furthermore, laws and regulations allow for the establishment of private and international schools and the provision of education in multiple languages, in accordance with the guidelines and regulations issued by the Ministry of Education.

Table 27: Percentage of Primary Students Whose Mother Tongue Is the Language of Instruction

Gender / Academic Year	2020/2021
Males	69.24
Females	68.15
Total	68.69

Source: Ministry of Education, Kingdom of Bahrain

The policies and legislation respond to all aspects of learner diversity and their needs. The Kingdom attaches great importance to the education of persons with determination, through the policy of diagnosing, admitting, integrating, and transferring students with special educational needs in public schools; the policy of diagnosing, admitting, and integrating students with learning difficulties in public schools; the assessment policy for students with special educational needs; and the policy for identifying and recognizing gifted students, as well as the enrichment and guidance programs provided to them in the primary and lower secondary levels in public schools.

The Ministry of Education implements a number of educational programs for students with different categories of special educational needs, including: the integration program for students with autism spectrum disorder; the integration program for students with mild intellectual disabilities and Down syndrome; the learning difficulties program; the speech and language program; the gifted and talented program; and the integration program for visually impaired students. Several educational projects support these policies, such as the Marginal Intelligence Project, the Educational Technology Employment Project, and the Agricultural Project (Seed of Giving).

Advanced educational programs are also provided for students with autism spectrum disorder, including the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) program, the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), the TEACCH program, and the Portage Early Childhood Education Program, all aimed at developing students' communication, life, and academic skills and preparing them for inclusion in regular classrooms.

These students are taught by highly qualified male and female teachers who hold a higher diploma in education or a bachelor's degree in psychology/special education, with specialized rehabilitative curricula provided for them.

As part of the ongoing commitment to providing an appropriate educational environment for persons of determination in public schools, the project to adapt public schools for

their needs continues. This includes preparing and equipping facilities to accommodate various types of disabilities that can be integrated. Classrooms are divided into multiple learning corners, all walls are padded, and they are furnished with suitable furniture and technological devices to ensure the provision of high-quality education. Buildings are adapted to ensure easy access to all facilities, including elevators with voice-activated buttons positioned at accessible heights, dedicated and adapted restrooms, and ramps to ensure safe and easy access.

Literacy and Adult Education

The policies adopted by the Kingdom of Bahrain have led to significant achievements in literacy over the years. For many years, Bahrain has recorded a high literacy rate thanks to the effectiveness of its programs, the tracking and outreach to illiterate individuals, encouraging them to pursue education, and the support of laws and regulations, such as Article 9 of Law No. 27 of 2005 on Education, which states: “Literacy and adult education are a national responsibility aimed at raising the cultural, social, and professional levels of citizens. The Ministry shall implement the necessary plans to eradicate illiteracy.”

The most recent initiative in this regard was the Education Survey conducted between August and December 2023, aimed at compiling accurate and comprehensive data on the population’s literacy levels, as well as their highest level of educational attainment. The literacy rate in the Kingdom of Bahrain for the age group 15–24 reached 99.20%, while the literacy rate for individuals aged 15 and above was 97.8%.

Sustainable Development

Education contributes to promoting sustainable lifestyles, enhancing social justice, fostering tolerance, establishing a culture of safety, and promoting human rights. Concepts and topics related to sustainable development, global citizenship, human rights, gender equality, health, and climate change are addressed through national policies and plans that have been adopted and implemented by all governmental and official entities. These include the National Human Rights Plan, the National Plan to Promote National Belonging and Strengthen the Values of Citizenship, the Bahraini Plan for the Advancement of Women (to achieve gender equality), the National Environmental Strategy (to overcome the challenges of climate change), and the Biodiversity Steering Committee.

From this comprehensive perspective, concepts of human rights, global citizenship, gender equality, and climate change are integrated into educational policies and within the educational field. The subject of Citizenship and Human Rights Education is considered a core subject in the educational system, covering all levels and stages, and is included in public education, private education, and technical and vocational education. This ensures that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to support sustainable development and adopt sustainable lifestyles.

Human rights and citizenship culture are instilled within the curriculum by promoting concepts and issues related to human rights, including principles such as gender equality, global citizenship, the achievement of world peace, the rejection of violence, and awareness of national laws, as well as international conventions and treaties. This is in addition to the mainstreaming of the Citizenship-Promoting School project series across all educational stages, through both curricular and extracurricular activities. The project has adopted themes such as cybersecurity, peace, tolerance, diversity and acceptance of others, democracy, and moderation, in addition to the integration of these principles into all subjects across the curriculum.

Sustainable development and its underlying principles - such as climate change, human development, and health—have also been promoted through various subjects and lessons within the school curriculum, as well as through curricular and extracurricular activities. Special emphasis has been placed on topics related to sustainable production and consumption, resource management, conservation of natural resources, environmental citizenship, food security, recycling, global warming, safety and health awareness, rights, mental and physical health, and the risks associated with technology and electronic games.

Educational programs are also implemented to promote sustainable development, such as the “Together for the Future” program, which focuses on developing communication, collaboration, and problem-solving skills. It is delivered through workshops, group projects, and other interactive activities. Another example is the “Bahrain Speaks” program, which aims to promote a culture of human rights among youth through lectures, seminars, and various awareness campaigns.

The “Human Rights Activities Package” project

It is a national initiative launched in 2022 in conjunction with the parliamentary election cycle. The project aims to reinforce Bahrain’s deep-rooted experience in democracy, freedom of expression, the establishment of rights, and the promotion of diversity and equality in society—most notably through the electoral process, which reflects Bahrain’s bright image in the field of human rights, including political participation and the advancement of Bahraini women.

The initiative introduced a set of activities and games designed to enrich and value freedom of opinion, emphasizing its importance and role in serving the public interest. It highlights Bahrain’s achievements in reviving parliamentary life. A subsequent package was launched focusing on Bahraini women, showcasing their progress in various fields and addressing challenges such as gender stereotypes and inequality. Additional packages were prepared on the importance of family stability in society, and on environmental education, addressing major global issues such as climate change.

Table 28: Extent of Mainstreaming Citizenship Education and Sustainable Development Topics (UNESCO Analysis, 2020)

Domain	Value	The value ranges from 0 to 1 (the closer the value is to 1, the higher the degree of mainstreaming, integration, and teaching of citizenship, environmental, (and sustainable development topics
National Education Policies	1.00	
Curriculum	0.94	
Teacher Preparation	1.00	
Student Assessment	1.00	

Training programs are provided to teachers in the areas of sustainable development and global citizenship, such as the “Active Teacher” program, the “Human Rights and Citizenship Education” program, and others. According to statistics from the Ministry of Education, more than 1,000 male and female teachers received training in this field during the 2022/2023 academic year.

All schools in Bahrain offer life skills education programs on HIV/AIDS, with 100% coverage, as part of various initiatives such as the Health Education Program, which includes information about the virus, modes of transmission, and prevention methods; school club programs; the “My Health, My Responsibility” program in collaboration with UNICEF, which aims to raise students’ awareness of various health issues; and the “Health Friends” program, which trains students to become health ambassadors in their schools and communities.

Providing an Equitable and Safe School Environment

The Kingdom of Bahrain places significant emphasis on strategic planning. The government approved a comprehensive 10-year construction plan (2020–2023) for the Ministry of Education to build schools across various governorates and digitally connect them through a modern infrastructure that aligns with the evolving demands of the 21st century (*Bahrain Voluntary National Review on Sustainable Development 2023*).

All essential services are available in schools across the Kingdom, and students benefit from a safe, equitable, and inclusive learning environment that meets the needs of all groups. School buildings are equipped to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities, surveillance cameras, and fire prevention systems in coordination with the General Directorate of Civil Defense, as well as digital infrastructure, indoor and outdoor playgrounds, and fully equipped laboratories and science rooms.

Table 29: Percentage of Schools Equipped with Electricity, Internet, Computers, Drinking Water, and Sanitation Facilities

Electricity	Internet	Computers	Drinking Water	Handwashing Facilities	Non-Shared Sanitation Facilities
100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Ministry of Education, Kingdom of Bahrain

All policies and programs support the protection of students in schools from bullying and school violence through the provision of numerous guidelines and protection programs for both students and the awareness of parents and teaching staff. Among the most prominent programs offered is the “Inspiring Figures Program”, which targeted 44 social guidance specialists in 44 schools and benefited 1,332 male and female students. The program helped students acquire life skills that enable them to manage, protect, and develop themselves, reinforce values, and communicate effectively with peers. Another notable initiative is the “Together Program”, designed for social guidance specialists, which targeted 445 schools and 3,540 male and female students. This program focused on the principle of tolerance in addressing student issues and on developing life skills to nurture a generation that is aware of the dangers of addiction and drugs, as well as recognizing the risks of violence and bullying.

Human Resources

As part of enhancing teachers’ capacities in light of the evolving trends in professional development, all teachers in the Kingdom of Bahrain are well-qualified according to international standards across all levels of general education, with a qualification rate of 100%. The student-to-qualified teacher ratio stood at 13.47 in the 2021/2022 academic year. Comprehensive professional development for teachers is achieved through practical experience, notably through the Education Reform Project which established the Bahrain Teachers College in 2008 to serve as the central hub for all teacher preparation and qualification programs. Among the key programs offered are:

- The Induction Day Program for new teachers.
- The Postgraduate Diploma in Education at the Bahrain Teachers College.
- The Professional Development Certificate - “Apprenticeship Programs for Advancement in the Educational Career Path.”
- The Higher Diploma in Special Education.
- The Higher Diploma in Teacher Leadership.
- The Higher Diploma in School Leadership

.The UNESCO Regional Center for Information and Communication Technology is responsible for building the capacities of individuals, teachers, and specialists in the field of ICT by offering a wide range of training programs for teachers.

State of Kuwait

The State of Kuwait adopted a strategic and comprehensive approach at the onset of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), integrating all 17 SDGs and their respective targets into the country's Vision 2035 (*Second Voluntary National Review of the State of Kuwait, 2023*). Kuwait considers education a fundamental human right - akin to water and air - providing it free of charge at all educational levels. The country emphasizes ensuring equal opportunities for all to access the type of education that suits their competencies and aspirations.

Kuwait has improved its ranking in the Human Development Index (HDI), moving from 64th out of 189 countries in 2019 to 50th out of 191 countries in 2022.

Kuwait is considered one of the first Arab countries to establish policies and legislation for compulsory education for both genders at the primary and intermediate levels (ages 5–15), through the issuance of the Compulsory Education Law No. 11 of 1963. Education is provided free of charge at all levels, from pre-primary education to higher education. Article (40) of the Kuwaiti Constitution guarantees the right to education for all without discrimination based on gender, ensuring equality between males and females at all educational levels.

Quality and Compulsory Education

The Ministry of Education in the State of Kuwait regularly updates and develops school curricula to ensure their quality and alignment with international standards and the rapidly evolving global context. It also participates in a number of international assessments to measure educational outcomes, such as the TIMSS in science and mathematics for Grades 4 and 8, the PISA assessment, and the PIRLS assessment for reading skills in Grade 4.

Table 30: Results of the International Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)

2019			2023		
Grade	Mathematics	Science	Grade	Mathematics	Science
Grade 4	383	392	Grade 4	382	373
Grade 8	403	444	Grade 8	399	420

Source: Ministry of Education, State of Kuwait

Despite the fluctuation in Kuwait's performance in the TIMSS assessments, the country ranks among the top in terms of the availability of discipline and safety in schools, according to the global TIMSS study.

In a research study examining the reasons behind Kuwait's low TIMSS results in 2024,

from the perspective of mathematics teachers and supervisors (Al-Mutairi, Tahani, 2024), family-related factors ranked first, followed by student-related factors, then curriculum-related reasons, educational environment factors, and finally teacher-related factors. This highlights the need to raise awareness among families and the wider community about the importance of such international assessments and to encourage students to adequately prepare for them.

Through providing equal educational opportunities for both boys and girls, Kuwait has achieved high enrollment rates across various levels of education (primary, intermediate, and secondary). Moreover, the retention policies adopted by the Ministry of Education have proven to be highly effective, with a completion rate of 99.4% in the final grade of primary education for the academic year 2022/2023, 96.1% in the final grade of lower secondary education (Grade 10), and 92.1% in the final grade of upper secondary education (Grade 12).

Table 31: Completion Rate in the Final Grades of Educational Levels (2022/2023)

Gender	Grade 5	Grade 10	Grade 12
Males	99.4	93.4	86.4
Females	99.4	98.5	97.0
Total	99.4	96.1	92.1

Source: Ministry of Education, State of Kuwait

The Ministry of Education in the State of Kuwait works to provide social and psychological support and guidance services to students and their families. To this end, it launched the “IstaShir” electronic platform, which aims to receive and address social and psychological cases involving students and parents, and to offer educational and family counseling by specialists from the Department of Social and Psychological Services at the Ministry of Education. The initiative seeks to create a motivating educational environment in Kuwait’s schools that helps overcome issues that may lead to school dropouts and ensures the provision of necessary support—whether educational, social, or psychological.

Table 32: Percentage of Out-of-School Children by Educational Level (2022/2023)

Gender	(Primary Stage (Grade 5	Intermediate Stage (Lower (Secondary - Grade 10	Secondary Stage
Males	12.6	6.2	11.3
Females	11.6	6.2	10.6
Total	12.2	6.2	11.0

Source: Ministry of Education, State of Kuwait

The internal efficiency of the educational system in the State of Kuwait has contributed to maintaining balanced rates of over-age children across the different educational stages, in line with quality standards. The percentage of students exceeding the official school age reaches 0.94% in the primary stage and 2.8% in the intermediate stage.

Table 33: Percentage of Children Exceeding the Official School Age, 2022/2023

Gender	Primary Stage	Intermediate Stage (Lower Secondary - Grade 10)
Males	1,03	3,2
Females	0,84	2,4
Total	0,94	2,8

Source: Ministry of Education, State of Kuwait

Early Childhood Education

The State of Kuwait is among the first Arab countries to place significant emphasis on early childhood and pre-primary education, by establishing policies, laws, and regulations governing this sector. It has also implemented comprehensive programs, services, and infrastructure in collaboration with various sectors such as health and social development, including services for children with disabilities.

Law No. 21 of 2015 on the Rights of the Child guarantees the right of preschool-aged children to receive quality and free education in a safe environment, as does the Education Law. Recognizing the importance of this stage in children's development and growth, the competent authorities have established public kindergartens across various regions of Kuwait. Children aged 4 to 6 years are admitted, with a six-month exception above or below the age limit to allow enrollment. In the academic year 2022/2023, the number of public kindergartens reached 202, accommodating approximately 41,763 children of both sexes. The gross enrollment rate in early childhood education reached 59.9% in 2022/2023.

Table 34: Gross Enrollment Rate in Early Childhood Education (Kindergarten - Apparent Enrollment Rate)

Gender/ Academic Year	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Males	48,5	56,2	59,6
Females	49,2	57	60,2
Total	48,8	56,6	59,5

Source: Ministry of Education, State of Kuwait

The kindergarten curricula are continuously developed, reviewed, and evaluated to ensure alignment with the developmental characteristics of children at this age, under the supervision of the Educational Research and Curricula Sector in cooperation with the General Education Sector, represented by the General Technical Supervision for the Kindergarten Stage. Guideline manuals are prepared to assist teachers in implementing the curricula effectively.

The kindergarten curricula include a variety of educational and pedagogical activities that contribute to the development of the child's personality, such as linguistic activities, sensory and motor activities, social and emotional activities, cognitive activities, and creative activities. Emphasis is placed on ensuring a safe and healthy learning environment, equipped

with all necessary resources, spacious areas for play and physical activities, appropriate educational games, and a library containing books and stories suitable for children.

“Grow and Learn” Initiative

The Grow and Learn initiative is an ambitious national program aimed at developing and enhancing the quality of early childhood education. It represents a significant step toward building the future generation and contributing to the development of Kuwaiti society through a partnership between the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, the Ministry of Health, as well as several universities, educational institutions, the private sector, and civil society organizations.

The initiative includes several core components: curriculum development, teacher training, educational environment, community partnership, and awareness.

Higher and Technical Education

The State of Kuwait plays a leading and fundamental role in providing higher education in the Gulf region, primarily through Kuwait University, which was established in 1966 as the first public university in the country.

Currently, the Council of Public Universities oversees institutions including Sabah Al-Salem University City and Abdullah Al-Salem University, with a total of 19 colleges and 200 academic programs across various disciplines. According to the latest statistics, Kuwait University hosts approximately 40,000 students. In addition, Kuwait has six private universities and eight private colleges offering a wide range of academic programs. The gross enrollment ratio in higher education reached approximately 18.6% in the academic year 2022/2023.

Table 35: Percentage of Students Above the Official School Age, 2020–2023

	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Males	14.1	11.2	14.2
Females	37.8	22.5	24.1
Total	24.6	16.5	18.6

*Source: Ministry of Education, State of Kuwait. * Excluding data from private universities and military colleges.*

The higher education, technical, and vocational system in Kuwait seeks to achieve the highest standards of quality in all areas related to education, scientific research, administrative services, and community engagement. It encourages innovation in an environment that fosters creativity, excellence, and sustainability, while expanding the scope of academic programs—including professional and technical programs—to meet the diverse needs of the labor market.

The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), established in 1982, plays a vital role in providing education and vocational training for Kuwaiti youth and preparing them for the labor market through advanced curricula and training programs

aligned with market needs. These include programs in health fields such as nursing, health sciences, pharmacy, and physical therapy; technical fields such as engineering, information and communication technology, and electronics; administrative and commercial fields such as business administration, accounting, marketing, and e-commerce; and vocational fields such as industry, construction, electricity, and mechanics. According to the latest statistics issued by the Authority, the number of enrolled students is approximately 20,000 (male and female).

Table 36: Participation Rate in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Programs (Ages 15–24), by Gender

	2020	2021	2022
Males	7.72	8.34	6.3
Females	3.37	3.47	2.62
Total	5.78	6.05	4.66

Source: Ministry of Education, State of Kuwait

The State of Kuwait places great importance on cultural and educational exchange programs with a number of countries around the world and on enhancing international cooperation across various fields. A significant number of Kuwaiti students are enrolled in universities abroad, while Kuwait also hosts a number of international students in its higher education institutions, such as Kuwait University, the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), and its various colleges and institutes, in addition to private universities.

In line with Kuwait’s Vision 2035, which encompasses all sectors - including the development of the education and training system, and the graduation of qualified national cadres capable of competing in the global labor market and achieving sustainable development across all fields - the Civil Service Commission coordinates with various education and training institutions to identify labor market needs for specialized cadres, in response to the rapidly changing employment landscape.

“Kuwait Innovates” Initiative

“Kuwait Innovates” is a national and ambitious initiative aimed at supporting innovation and entrepreneurship among youth, creating an enabling environment, and empowering young people to transform their ideas into real projects that contribute to the development of the national economy and link youth to the labour market. The initiative includes several key components, such as training and qualification programs, events and conferences, support for start-up projects, strategic partnerships with the private sector, and awareness and media campaigns. Many government entities participate in this initiative, including the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, Kuwait University, the private sector, and civil society organizations.

As part of the work on the National Youth Strategy, emphasis has been placed on encouraging young people to enroll in vocational and technical education and training, as well as supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, with the aim of providing employment opportunities for youth across various situations.

The State of Kuwait, represented by the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, the body responsible for vocational and technical education—conducts regular evaluations to better align this type of education with the evolving world of work, improve its quality, and introduce new pathways based on continuous assessments. These efforts are in line with both global trends and national priorities under Kuwait’s Vision and labor market needs.

Efforts also continue to equip both youth and adults with essential skills and ICT competencies to meet market demands. Numerous initiatives target youth and adults, including those by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, and the private sector. Among the most notable is the “We Belong” initiative, which aims to develop the skills of young Kuwaitis and prepare them for the labor market in both technical and administrative fields, while also expanding the economic participation base of youth and adults.

Table 37: Educational Attainment Rates of Youth/Adults by Gender and Educational Level

Year	2020			2021			2022		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Illiterate	0.5	5.3	3.1	0.6	6.2	3.8	0.7	5.9	3.8
Literate	1.1	0.2	1.6	1.4	2.5	2.0	1.5	2.5	2.1
Primary	11.1	6.2	8.5	14.7	7.5	10.6	17.0	7.4	11.2
Intermediate	26.0	16.8	21.1	37.9	21.6	28.6	46.4	23.0	26.5
Secondary	22.8	18.4	20.4	33.6	24.4	28.4	40.9	26.0	31.9
Diploma	18.8	19.4	19.1	25.9	23.4	24.5	30.2	23.6	26.2
Bachelor’s	18.5	29.3	24.3	32.1	40.3	36.8	39.1	42.0	40.8
Postgraduate	1.5	0.7	1.1	3.6	1.4	2.4	4.4	1.5	2.7

Source: Public Authority for Civil Information, State of Kuwait. *Data pertains to Kuwaiti nationals only.

Gender Equality and Persons with Disabilities

All legislation and laws in the State of Kuwait respond to the diversity of learners and students according to their individual needs, within a framework that guarantees the right to education based on equality. Article 40 of the Kuwaiti Constitution stipulates equality for all without discrimination based on gender and affirms the right to education. The country has enacted a law on the rights of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life, including education, as well as an education law that guarantees equal educational opportunities for both genders and prohibits discrimination based on gender, poverty, or disability. These efforts are further supported by Kuwait’s accession to several international

conventions promoting gender equality, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

The country ensures full gender equality in education across all stages, with females surpassing males in enrollment in higher education, as well as in academic achievement at the various educational levels.

The Ministry of Education collaborates with the Public Authority for the Affairs of Persons with Disabilities in overseeing educational institutions that provide services to persons of determination, working to develop curricula and educational programs tailored to their needs, while offering both financial and moral support to these individuals and their families, and helping them access the necessary educational and rehabilitation services. The State also provides dedicated schools for persons of determination, delivering specialized education and services suited to their needs and abilities. These schools are staffed with qualified personnel specialized in working with students with disabilities, and offer a safe and supportive learning environment.

In addition, students with disabilities have been integrated into public schools, with the necessary support provided to help them succeed academically. Many entities contribute to initiatives and projects supporting the education of persons of determination, including civil society organizations, the private sector, and individual initiatives providing donations and support to educational institutions serving this group.

Kuwait's policies and regulations also allow for the establishment of private schools for expatriate communities residing in the country, with the option for the educational institution or private school to choose the language of instruction. The same applies to various international schools wishing to open branches in Kuwait, in accordance with the laws and regulations set by the Ministry of Education, thereby enabling all students to learn in comfortable, safe, and inclusive environments.

Spending on Education and External Scholarships

Kuwait is among the countries that spend generously on education, dedicating all available resources to ensure its provision at a high quality for everyone without exception — from pre-primary education to higher education. In 2023, spending on education accounted for 9.5% of total government expenditure, while the average public spending per student in 2022 reached 4,995 Kuwaiti dinars.

In addition, Kuwait is a donor country, providing assistance to nations in need through official international organizations. For example, at the Paris Education Summit in November 2021, Kuwait pledged US\$30 million to support education in various regions in need.

As part of strengthening relations and cooperation with friendly and sister countries, Kuwait offers a large number of scholarships to students from across the world to study

at Kuwait University and at the colleges and institutes affiliated with the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, particularly for students from countries with which Kuwait has cultural exchange agreements. A number of international students also study at private universities and colleges within the country.

Literacy and Adult Education

As part of Kuwait’s ongoing efforts to eradicate illiteracy among its citizens and provide education for adults who missed out on formal schooling, the adult literacy rate reached 98.77% in 2022, while literacy among youth aged 15–25 stood at 99.46% for the same year. These figures reflect the strong commitment of the relevant authorities to adult literacy and education, which are regulated by Decree-Law No. 4 of 1981. This law provides the legal framework for adult literacy programs, obligating the State to offer educational opportunities to adults who were unable to complete their studies in formal schooling.

The law also specifies the target groups for literacy programs and the requirements for enrollment. In line with this framework, the Ministry of Education has established numerous adult education centers across Kuwait. These centers deliver a variety of educational programs, including literacy courses, Arabic language instruction, Qur’an education, computer skills training, and other essential skills. In addition, national literacy campaigns are conducted to raise public awareness about the importance of education and encourage adults to join such programs. Partnerships with the private sector and civil society organizations further enhance coordination and integration of these efforts.

Table 38: Literacy Rates among Youth and Adults

Literacy Rate (Ages 15–25)		2020	2021	2022
	Males	97.4	97.4	98.57
	Females	98.6	98.7	99.3
	Total	97.9	98	98.77
Literacy Rate (Ages 15+)		2020	2021	2022
	Males	99.2	99.2	99.5
	Females	99	99.1	99.4
	Total	99.1	99.2	99.4

Source: Ministry of Education, State of Kuwait

Sustainable Development and School Health

Kuwait Vision 2035 is a comprehensive document that outlines the country’s vision for sustainable development across various fields, including education. It emphasizes the development of a high-quality education system capable of preparing generations to face contemporary challenges, and underscores the importance of integrating concepts of sustainable development and citizenship into curricula, as well as training teachers in this field.

The State of Kuwait exerts significant efforts to promote education for sustainable development and citizenship education by integrating them into curricula, training teachers, and implementing numerous initiatives and projects aimed at preparing generations capable of addressing modern-day challenges and contributing to sustainable development. Science curricula at all educational stages include concepts related to environmental preservation, rational use of resources, renewable energy, climate change, pollution, and recycling. Social studies curricula focus on issues of citizenship such as human rights, peace, justice, and appreciation of cultural diversity. Islamic education curricula emphasize teachings on environmental preservation, peaceful coexistence with others, and community service.

The Ministry of Education also implements training courses for teachers on the concepts of sustainable development and citizenship, and on how to integrate these concepts into teaching, in addition to holding workshops for teachers to discuss various issues related to sustainable development.

Kuwait's national curriculum outlines the objectives and concepts that students should acquire at different educational stages, including topics related to sustainable development and citizenship, along with assessment documents that contain standards for evaluating learning in these areas.

Sustainable Development Ambassadors Project

A national initiative aimed at training students in intermediate and secondary education to become ambassadors for sustainable development within their communities. The project seeks to raise students' awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), develop leadership and teamwork skills, encourage community engagement, and prepare young Kuwaiti leaders equipped with the awareness, knowledge, and skills necessary to lead sustainable development efforts in the future. This is achieved through training workshops, scientific projects, participation in events and conferences, and outreach activities. The project is implemented in partnership between the Ministry of Education, the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, and civil society organizations.

The Ministry of Education seeks to build healthy learning communities that are aware of risks and challenges, particularly those facing young people. To this end, school health units equipped with qualified nurses have been provided in all schools, along with regular check-up programs, vaccination programs, early detection of diseases, and health education on various topics such as proper nutrition, personal hygiene, and disease prevention. Services also include counseling and mental health support, as well as awareness programs on Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV/AIDS) in all schools across the country. These efforts are delivered through educational programs, lectures, seminars, modern media awareness campaigns, and school curricula that include educational content on health, as well as physical and mental well-being.

“We Protect It” Environmental Schools Qualification Initiative

This initiative is implemented in cooperation with several entities, including the Ministry of Education, the Environment Public Authority, the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, and environmental associations. It aims to transform schools into environmentally friendly institutions by applying sustainability principles, using renewable energy, reducing water consumption, and promoting recycling. Its main goals are to enhance students’ environmental awareness, achieve sustainable development in schools, implement the international standards of the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) to obtain international accreditation, and create a healthy, clean school environment that ensures student safety and provides a stimulating learning atmosphere.

Providing an Equitable and Safe School Environment

Educational facilities in Kuwait receive significant attention from the stakeholders in the education system, whether from the Ministry of Education or the Public Authority for Housing Welfare. These facilities are designed and constructed to high-quality specifications to accommodate all students, whether without disabilities or with disabilities, taking into account safety and security factors such as the provision of emergency exits, fire extinguishing systems, and safe playgrounds. Qualified security personnel are also assigned to schools to maintain safety and order and respond to any emergencies.

These facilities ensure equal learning opportunities for all, regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, or abilities, while providing specialized educational services for students with disabilities, integrating them into public schools, and offering the necessary support. Schools also offer a variety of extracurricular activities - including sports, cultural, and artistic programs - aimed at developing students’ skills and abilities.

The new generation of schools in Kuwait is environmentally conscious, with all newly built schools designed sustainably, incorporating renewable energy sources such as solar power to generate electricity and reduce reliance on fossil fuels. Recycling practices are also applied in new schools to minimize waste and protect the environment.

Such safe and equitable learning environments help reduce cases of bullying and violence in schools, support strong academic performance, and foster a deep sense of safety for students, their families, and the wider community.

Table 39: Percentage of Schools Equipped with Electricity, Internet, Computers, Drinking Water, and Sanitation Facilities

Electricity	Internet	Computers	Drinking Water	Handwashing Facilities	Non-Shared Sanitation Facilities
100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Ministry of Education, State of Kuwait

The Government of Kuwait has launched the “Schools of the Future 2030” project, which aims to develop the education system and integrate modern technology into all schools

by the year 2030. The project holds significant importance due to its anticipated impact on improving educational outcomes, enhancing students' skills, and preparing them to keep pace with rapid technological advancements. The project includes several key components: technological infrastructure, digital curricula, modern teaching methods, electronic assessment, professional development for teachers, and partnerships with the private sector.

Human Resources

Teachers represent one of the main pillars for achieving sustainable development by receiving the necessary training, qualification, and capacity enhancement—both materially and morally—through incentives, professional development, and all forms of essential support within a fully integrated education system, given their expected contributions to improving learning outcomes. Kuwait places great importance on teachers, recognizing their role in advancing education and achieving sustainable development. To this end, it has enacted numerous laws and regulations to protect teachers' rights, ensure a safe and supportive working environment, and improve working conditions by providing modern school buildings, advanced facilities, and reducing administrative burdens. The State also values and honors teachers through annual award ceremonies and the allocation of recognition prizes.

The relevant authorities are committed to training and qualifying teachers by offering continuous professional development programs throughout the year, aimed at enhancing their skills, expanding their capabilities, and familiarizing them with the latest developments in the field of teaching. Specialized courses and qualification programs are also offered in collaboration with a number of universities and educational institutions specializing in teacher training. The percentage of qualified teachers in Kuwait reached 100% in the 2022/2023 academic year. The Ministry of Education works to meet the staffing needs of schools equitably, ensuring that no school suffers from a shortage of teachers. In the 2022/2023 academic year, the student-to-teacher ratio stood at 4.75, reflecting the State's commitment to providing an adequate and appropriate number of teachers in all schools across Kuwait.

Table 40: Number of Students per Qualified Teacher by Educational Level

Level / Academic Year	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Pre-primary	5.73	6.11	5.6
Primary	6	6	4.6
Intermediate	5.3	5.7	4.6
Secondary	3.6	5.7	4.6
Total	5.6	5.8	4.75

Source: Ministry of Education, State of Kuwait

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia holds significant importance, both due to the country's deep cultural and historical heritage and within the framework of Saudi Vision 2030, which aims to comprehensively enhance and develop the education system.

Since its establishment, the Kingdom has focused on building a strong educational system grounded in the promotion and reinforcement of human and Islamic values that contribute to shaping national personalities capable of meeting challenges and contributing to the development of society. These educational foundations position Saudi youth as a central driving force in achieving Vision 2030.

All policies and legislation in the Kingdom emphasize the principles of free and compulsory education. Among these is Article 13 of the Basic Law of Governance, which states: "Education aims to instill the Islamic creed in the hearts of the younger generation, provide them with knowledge and skills, and prepare them to be productive members in building their society, who love their homeland and take pride in their history." Furthermore, Article 10 of the Basic Law affirms the "dignity of the individual and the provision of suitable opportunities to develop his abilities in a way that contributes to the nation's renaissance."

Saudi Arabia has undertaken comprehensive, long-term educational reforms aimed at improving the quality of education and enhancing the ability of future generations to adapt to global challenges.

Among the most prominent of these reforms is the establishment of the National Curriculum Center, responsible for designing and developing a comprehensive curriculum framework from early childhood education through pre-university levels. This initiative introduces modern curricula aligned with global advancements and the anticipated needs of the future labor market.

Reforms have also prioritized integrating subjects that foster critical thinking, innovation, and problem-solving skills, in addition to strengthening national values. Teacher training programs have been expanded, focusing on the use of digital technologies, enhancing teachers' ability to motivate students, and fostering effective engagement.

Furthermore, the school environment has been improved through upgraded educational infrastructure, the construction of new schools, and the adoption of measures to enhance decision-making autonomy. Schools are empowered as fully integrated educational units to manage both instructional and administrative processes, moving away from traditional oversight methods.

The reforms also promote decentralization in operational and executive planning, shifting authority from the Ministry's central offices to regional education administrations and

ultimately to individual schools. Accountability in implementation is placed on the organizational units linked to the education administration, and subsequently on the administration itself, rather than on supervisory units within the Ministry. (Saudi Voluntary National Review on Sustainable Development, 2023)

Quality of Education

The Kingdom seeks to evaluate its education system through participation in several international assessments and studies, such as the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), and the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). These assessments provide a substantial amount of information and data that help policymakers make informed decisions to further develop and transform the education sector.

Table 41: Mathematics – TIMSS

Year/ Grade	2019	2024
Grade 4	398	420
Grade 8	394	397

Table 42: Science – TIMSS

Year/ Grade	2019	2024
Grade 4	402	428
Grade 8	431	419

Table 43: PIRLS

Grade/ Year	2016	2020
Grade 4	430	449

Table 44: PISA

Grade/ Year	2016	2020
Mathematics	373	390
Science	399	383
Reading	386	366

The results of the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) showed a marked improvement in the performance of male and female students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 2024. Specifically, fourth-grade students improved by 22 points in mathematics and 26 points in science compared to the previous cycle.

Administering achievement tests to students is part of the strategies adopted by the Kingdom to enhance the quality of education, ensure alignment with its sustainable development aspirations, and measure the effectiveness of the educational process. One

such assessment is the “Nafes” test, developed under the initiative of the Education and Training Evaluation Commission in Saudi Arabia. This national assessment aims to measure students’ academic achievement levels, based on approved reference frameworks aligned with national curriculum standards. It contributes to providing comprehensive and accurate evaluations, supporting evidence-based decision-making to improve the quality of education, learning, and school performance.

General Aptitude Test (GAT)

This test measures the verbal and quantitative abilities related to learning processes—such as analytical, deductive, and inferential reasoning—among high school graduates from all tracks who wish to enroll in higher education institutions.

Achievement Test

This test measures students’ academic attainment in scientific specializations within the fields of natural and applied sciences, as well as in theoretical specializations within the humanities.

Postgraduate General Aptitude Test (PGAT)

A standardized assessment for all university graduates, designed to help institutions offering postgraduate programs select candidates with the highest intellectual capabilities to meet the academic demands of such programs.

The “Maharati” (My Skills) Test is another tool for assessing the effectiveness of the educational process. It aims to measure the skills acquired by all students in the primary and intermediate stages in the core subjects—My Language (Arabic), Science, Mathematics, and English—in order to strengthen their knowledge and skills, thereby improving learning outcomes.

For those seeking admission to higher education institutions, tailored tests appropriate to their educational stage are organized. These aim to enhance examinees’ self-learning skills and provide an objective benchmark for admission into post-secondary programs across various educational institutions. They also serve as an important tool for guiding students toward the academic or vocational path best suited to their abilities and interests, helping them make informed decisions about their future educational and career trajectories.

Equity and Equal Opportunities

In line with Article 30 of the Basic Law of Governance, which states: “The State shall provide public education and commit to combating illiteracy”, and in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals’ principle of leaving no one behind while ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all, the Ministry of Education has introduced regulatory procedures to admit students to

public schools closest to their place of residence, by verifying their data electronically in coordination with other government entities.

The overall net enrollment rate in the final grade of primary education reached 120.12% in 2022, compared to 96.21% in 2020. Similarly, the overall net enrollment rate in the final grade of lower secondary education reached 116.07% in 2022, reflecting the effectiveness of the educational policies adopted to guarantee access to education.

In 2022, the Ministry of Education launched the Secondary Education Pathways System, a significant step toward tailoring education to meet the diverse needs of students. This system allows students to choose educational tracks that align with their personal interests and future career aspirations, creating a balance between individual ambitions and labor market demands. It enhances students' prospects for success and better prepares them for their professional futures.

Furthermore, this system represents an important step toward improving the quality of education and adapting it to the requirements of the modern era. It emphasizes specialization, academic excellence, inclusivity, equality in educational and employment opportunities, strengthening social justice, reducing economic and cultural disparities among different segments of society, and improving the overall quality of life.

Table 45: Overall Net Enrollment Rate in the Final Grade of Primary Education

Gender/ Year	2020	2021	2022
Males	96.92	96.83	119.9
Females	95.47	96.08	120.35
Total	96.21	96.46	120.12

Source: *data.uis.unesco.org*

Table 46: Overall Net Enrollment Rate in Lower Secondary Education

Gender/ Year	2020	2021	2022
Males	97.83	100.1	116.2
Females	100.02	101.73	115.93
Total	98.91	100.9	116.07

Source: *data.uis.unesco.org*

Under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is committed to enhancing the abilities of gifted students by providing specialized learning environments that support their development across a range of fields, including science, technology, literature, performance arts, visual arts, culture, sports, innovation, entrepreneurship, and scientific research. There are currently 29 schools dedicated to gifted education, offering learning approaches tailored to the needs of these students, including two specialized schools focusing on sports and technology, with plans for further expansion across various types of schools.

Efforts also include the establishment of gifted classes within public schools throughout the Kingdom, ensuring access to educational services for as many gifted students as possible. In addition, Gifted Education Centers within local education departments offer a variety of enrichment programs that enhance students' skills and encourage research and innovation. The Kingdom has also adopted an acceleration program for gifted students in Grades 4 and 7, benefiting 825 male and female students.

The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the King Abdulaziz and His Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity (Mawhiba) and the Education and Training Evaluation Commission, oversees a national program for identifying gifted students. This program, held annually, allows students to register for an aptitude test to assess cognitive abilities. In 2024, more than 100,000 students registered for the test - the highest number to date - reflecting growing societal awareness of the importance of supporting gifted students. Since its inception in 2011, more than 215,000 gifted students have successfully passed the test.

In alignment with the Human Capability Development Program under Saudi Vision 2030, which aims to prepare globally competitive citizens, the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with various partners, organizes a number of national competitions to identify talented students in specialized fields. Those who qualify undergo targeted training programs to further develop their skills, ultimately preparing them for participation in international competitions.

The Ministry of Education has also been proactive in supporting education for sustainable development and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. It has joined UNESCO's Global Network of Learning Cities through five Saudi learning cities: Jubail Industrial City (2020), Yanbu (2022), and Al-Ahsa, Madinah, and King Abdullah Economic City (2024). These cities contribute to improving the quality of learning, developing individuals' capabilities, and enhancing quality of life for all residents.

Early Childhood Education

The Saudi government's focus on early childhood education remains an integral part of its comprehensive vision to ensure that children grow up in a healthy and educational environment that supports their development and prepares them for the future. As part of these efforts, and within its latest organizational restructuring, the Ministry of Education established a dedicated Agency for Early Childhood. This agency aims to improve learning outcomes by developing the educational system for children in the early years (from one month old to Grade 3), in addition to formulating the necessary policies and regulations to govern nurseries, kindergartens, and early primary grades, and monitoring their performance according to approved indicators.

The roles in nurturing and educating early childhood in the Kingdom are shared among

several entities. The Ministry of Education works to enhance learning outcomes by improving education in the early years, while the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development is responsible for caring for children, improving their living conditions, and providing essential services to help them reach their full potential and achieve healthy growth (Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development website). The Family Affairs Council also plays a key role in strengthening the family's position and role in society, fostering a strong and cohesive family that cares for its children and upholds religious, moral, and cultural values (Family Affairs Council Regulation, 1437H).

Furthermore, there is close coordination with domestic sectors and collaboration with international organizations concerned with children's issues, with the aim of improving learning outcomes in line with best educational practices and enhancing the quality of services provided to children in their early developmental stages.

The policy of partnering with the private sector has played a significant role in expanding the establishment of private schools, international schools, and community schools, leading to substantial growth and higher enrollment rates in pre-primary education. This collaboration has created diverse educational opportunities that cater to the needs of a wide range of students from different social and cultural backgrounds.

Such expansion is expected to improve access to basic education for children and support the goal of increasing pre-primary enrollment rates to 90% by 2030, with current enrollment in kindergartens reaching 34.6% in 2023.

The Early Childhood Agency is working to enhance the quality of the educational process through integration and collaboration with the Education and Training Evaluation Commission in implementing the school evaluation, classification, and accreditation program. This program ensures and improves school performance by providing reliable data, conducting analysis, and preparing reports on performance levels and general education outcomes. It is aligned with the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030 and the Human Capability Development Program to prepare globally competitive citizens.

In its efforts to develop early childhood education, the Agency has designed several programs and projects that contribute to achieving Target 4.2 of Sustainable Development Goal 4. Among the most important of these initiatives are:

- Improving the infrastructure for kindergarten education to enhance universal access and ensure equal opportunities for all children to receive education.
- Establishing developmental learning standards for nursery and kindergarten stages.
- Implementing technology-based educational options to ensure that every child in the Kingdom has access to education under all circumstances, including emergencies.
- Launching the national curriculum for kindergartens and nurseries for children from birth to six years of age—a child-centered, inquiry-based curriculum.

Table 47: Adjusted Net Enrollment Rate (One Year Before Primary Education)

Gender/ Year	2020	2021	2022
Males	53.8	33.8	42.6
Females	56.1	37.5	49.1
Total	54.9	35.6	45.8

Source: *data.uis.unesco.org*

Higher and Technical Education

Several government entities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia oversee higher, technical, and vocational education. The most prominent among these are:

- **Ministry of Education:** The primary authority responsible for both public and private higher education in the Kingdom. Through its Private Education Agency, it supervises private higher education and grants licenses to private universities.
- **Universities Affairs Council:** A government body established under the new Universities Law on October 19, 2019. It handles decisions and procedures related to public and private universities and works to develop higher education in the Kingdom in line with the needs of the local and international labor market.
- **Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC):** Established in 1980, this is the body responsible for organizing and developing technical and vocational education in the Kingdom. It offers training and technical programs across various specialties to supply the Saudi labor market with qualified human capital. To achieve this, TVTC undertakes a number of tasks, including: formulating, reviewing, and updating general training policies and plans; qualifying and developing technical and vocational trainers; designing and delivering training programs; licensing and supervising private sector training, along with setting its technical standards; forming strategic partnerships with training institutions in both the public and private sectors to manage and operate training units; conducting research and studies in the training field; producing and developing training tools and technologies; and operating technical and vocational incubators.

Through these bodies and institutions, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia seeks to enhance and develop higher, technical, and vocational education to meet societal needs and achieve sustainable development.

Table 48: Gross Enrollment Ratio in Higher Education by Gender

Gender/ Year	2020	2021	2022
Males	69.4	72.4	69.5
Females	81.1	76.7	78.5
Total	74.8	74.4	73.8

Source: *data.uis.unesco.org*

Saudi Arabia has 29 public universities, 38 private colleges and universities, and 299 technical colleges and institutes. The Kingdom ranked first globally in the percentage of students enrolled in post-secondary non-tertiary vocational and technical programs, according to the Global Knowledge Index 2022.

Saudi Arabia also attracts a significant number of international students. Higher education institutions offer multiple academic stages and diverse programs, enabling learners, researchers, and trainees to obtain internationally recognized degrees through either long-term or short-term study visas. These can be granted via full scholarships, partial scholarships, or self-funded study.

The universities in Saudi Arabia are characterized by remarkable cultural diversity, hosting students and faculty from over 170 countries. This reflects the Kingdom’s substantial efforts to attract talented and distinguished individuals from around the world, thereby enriching the learning environment both culturally and intellectually.

International male and female students are admitted to all Saudi universities according to the available specializations. The allocated quota in most universities is 5%, except for the Islamic University, where scholarship students constitute 85% of total enrollment. Applications for study in Saudi Arabia can be submitted through the “Study in Saudi Arabia” online portal.

Vocational and technical training pathways in the Kingdom are also diverse. They include vocational secondary schools and technical institutes targeting graduates of intermediate school. These institutions provide specialized technical training programs aligned with labor market needs and have the same number of academic terms and years as general secondary schools, ensuring alignment of technical institutes as a parallel pathway within secondary education.

Table 49: Participation Rate in Technical and Vocational Education Programs (Ages 15–24)

Gender/ Year	2020	2021
Males	6.5	8.7
Females	1.9	2.3
Total	4.4	5.8

Source: data.uis.unesco.org

The initiatives launched by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia form an essential part of its comprehensive strategy to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 4, which focuses on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all. These initiatives are not only aimed at improving the quality of education but also at enhancing individuals’ ability to adapt to the evolving labor market and strengthening the Kingdom’s position in the global economy.

- Human Capability Development Program: One of the main pillars of these efforts, this program seeks to develop human skills and improve competitiveness at both

the local and international levels. It also contributes to preparing individuals to work in a knowledge-based economy that requires advanced skills across various fields.

- **Human Resources Development Fund (HRDF):** This fund provides financial support to companies and institutions to develop their employees' skills through specialized training programs, thereby improving individual productivity and contributing to meeting labor market needs. On another front, the King Salman Center for Education for Employment enhances opportunities for Saudi youth to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to transition smoothly into the labor market, helping to bridge the gap between education and the private sector's needs.

Through this diversity and focus on developing human capital, these initiatives reaffirm the Kingdom's commitment, under Vision 2030, to investing in education and training as key tools for achieving sustainable development and economic growth. (Saudi Voluntary National Review on Sustainable Development, 2023).

Relevant authorities in the Kingdom - such as the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, the General Authority for Statistics, the General Organization for Social Insurance, and several other entities - are continuously working to assess and analyze employment rates in the labor market based on official statistical data. This assessment includes analyzing the effectiveness of training programs, particularly those related to vocational and technical training, to ensure that these programs align with the changing needs of the labor market. The analysis also aims to improve public spending efficiency, reduce the financial costs associated with delivering ineffective training programs, and focus resources on initiatives that meet actual needs and contribute to enhancing productivity and work quality.

Misk Professional Preparation Program

The Misk Professional Preparation Program, one of the largest initiatives offered by the Mohammed bin Salman Foundation (Misk), provides a unique and interactive learning experience that simulates real-world scenarios. The 2024 edition of the program was designed to offer a comprehensive preparatory journey, helping young people get ready to enter the labor market. It also hosts numerous prominent speakers to support youth in developing the professional skills needed to compete in today's job market.

Technologies and Information Technology

In the area of information and communication technology (ICT) skills, the Saudi government has placed significant emphasis on developing digital technical competencies and enhancing individuals' proficiency in this field by launching a national curriculum plan. This plan focuses on training new generations to use technology effectively and equipping them with essential knowledge in areas such as programming, networking, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and data analysis.

These initiatives form part of a long-term vision aimed at developing human capital amid the rapid global digital transformation. According to a 2021 survey conducted by the General Authority for Statistics to measure the percentage of youth and adults possessing ICT skills by type of skill, the results showed significant progress in the use of these technologies among both youth and adults.

Table 50: Youth and Adults (Aged 15–74) with ICT Skills, by Type of Skill and Gender

Skill	Gender	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Using copy-and-paste tools to duplicate or move data, information, and content in digital environments (e.g., within a document, image, or video)	Males	72.50%	72.10%	71.70%	89.80%	100%	100%
	Females	70%	69.60%	62.40%	90.80%	100%	100%
	Total	71.50%	71.10%	67.90%	90.20%	100%	100%
Sending messages (such as email, messaging services, or SMS) with file attachments (such as documents, images, or videos)	Males	74.30%	75.10%	73.90%	88.90%	95.80%	97.80%
	Females	63.90%	63.20%	59%	89.60%	95.30%	99.10%
	Total	70%	70.20%	67.80%	89.20%	95.60%	98.30%

Source: Sustainable Development Goals Progress Report – General Authority for Statistics.

Equality and Non-Discrimination

Article 10 of the Basic Law of Governance in Saudi Arabia affirms the State’s commitment to caring for all its citizens and providing appropriate conditions for developing their talents and abilities. Article 26 stipulates that “The State shall protect human rights in accordance with Islamic Sharia”, which reinforces the concepts of justice, equality, and non-discrimination on any basis, including disability.

The Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, issued under Royal Decree No. M/27 dated 11/2/1445 AH, states in Article 8 that “Persons with disabilities have the right to access supportive educational and training services at all stages, in educational and training environments that ensure the maximum possible level of academic, professional, technical, and social progress, without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunities.”

Furthermore, Articles 55 and 56 of the General Education Policy emphasize providing care for students with special needs and those who are academically behind, working to remove the causes of delay, and implementing special or temporary programs based on their needs. Article 188 of the same policy states that the State is responsible—within its capabilities—for educating persons with mental or physical disabilities, and for providing them with specialized curricula and various training courses.

Additionally, Article 15 of the Education Policy focuses on linking education at all stages to the State’s general development plan, which aims to achieve strong partnerships between men and women.

Under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, Saudi Arabia is working to strengthen the role of women in society, develop their scientific and practical skills across a wide range of fields, and integrate them effectively into the comprehensive development process. Providing women with academic and training opportunities not only enhances their standing in society but also reflects the country's commitment to equal opportunities and the elimination of gender disparities. These efforts are part of a strategic vision aimed at ensuring that women become a key driver in shaping the nation's economic and social future, in line with the global transformations taking place across various sectors.

Academic scholarship programs, for example, serve as a cornerstone in equipping women with the knowledge and expertise needed to compete at the highest academic and professional levels.

At the same time, prioritizing literacy and education for girls and women of all ages ensures that they can keep pace with the demands of an evolving labor market and adapt to changes in technical and administrative fields. These efforts have yielded tangible progress in empowering women in various academic and administrative roles. In a historic milestone, women have assumed senior leadership positions within the education sector, including the roles of Deputy Minister and Director General. In 2022, the Ministry of Education appointed its first female spokesperson for general education.

- In 2022, the number of female students enrolled in general education reached 3,516,089, compared to 3,684,431 male students.
- In 2022, the number of female students enrolled in higher education totaled 790,136, compared to 781,886 male students.
- By 2024, the number of technical colleges for women had reached 41.
- The Women's Leadership Training and Mentorship Initiative has contributed to training and mentoring 506 female employees, divided into two categories:
 - Leaders: those holding senior leadership positions in top management.
 - Managers: those serving as department heads or division managers in middle management positions.

Additionally, the proportion of indexed scientific publications by female researchers increased by 91%, and citation rates for their academic papers rose by 52%, particularly in the fields of health and medical sciences, engineering and technology, and computer science.

While the state ensures that every child of school age - regardless of location - has access to education, it has also guaranteed educational opportunities and the optimal utilization of available learning options for students with disabilities. Notably, Goal 3 of the Human Capability Development Program includes the indicator: "Percentage of students

with disabilities enrolled in educational institutions”, which aims to enhance and improve educational opportunities for underserved groups or those facing special challenges in accessing quality and sustainable education.

The program includes two key initiatives to integrate persons with disabilities into educational institutions:

- **Inclusive Learning Journey** in general education for children with disabilities.
- **Policy to Ensure Access to Education** for students with disabilities.

Both the Special Education Organizational Guide and the Special Education Procedural Guide include a set of principles and standards designed to meet the needs of students with disabilities in the educational process, taking into account the characteristics of each disability and ensuring learning in the least restrictive environments. They also provide a variety of educational models suited to their needs, in addition to a Distance Learning Strategies Guide for students with disabilities.

Furthermore, they empower school principals to take on leadership roles that make students with disabilities more engaged and responsive to their schools. A Guide and Standards for Universal Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities in educational environments and facilities has also been developed and disseminated. This guide aims to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access - on par with their peers - to educational, environmental, and technological domains.

The Educational Voucher Project for Students with Disabilities

It is a national initiative designed to provide educational services, support services, and on-campus housing for students with disabilities. The project incentivizes the private and non-profit sectors to expand their investments in educational and rehabilitative services, offering diverse and integrated provisions. Its primary goal is to enhance the quality of services delivered to students with disabilities.

The number of students with disabilities enrolled in education has increased from 78,200 to 99,026 students, both Saudi and non-Saudi, spanning from early intervention programs in kindergarten to secondary/rehabilitation levels, across various educational settings - including full inclusion in general education classrooms, partial inclusion in attached classrooms within general education schools, and specialized centers and institutes.

Students with disabilities enrolled in full inclusion classrooms in general education schools account for 68% of the total number of students with disabilities.

The Ministry of Education also provides support services for students with disabilities through its affiliated centers across different regions and governorates. In addition, it offers educational services for students in oncology centers and hospitals, alongside

comprehensive support services at the Prince Sultan Center for Support Services in Riyadh, and the Himmah Centers in Al-Khobar and Al-Qassim. These centers provide a supportive environment and integrated rehabilitative and health services delivered by specialized professional staff.

The Ministry of Education has signed memorandums of understanding and cooperation with the non-profit sector to provide services for students with disabilities. These agreements help strengthen efforts to deliver high-quality, specialized services for people with disabilities, thereby improving their educational and social quality of life.

For example, the Abdullatif Al-Fozan Autism Center in the Eastern Province serves as a distinguished model in this regard. Its role goes beyond providing support to children with Autism Spectrum Disorder; it also includes training and preparing their families to better address their children's needs.

Similarly, Taibah Special Education City represents a significant step toward developing well-equipped learning environments tailored to the needs of students with disabilities. It features modern facilities and specialized resources that offer educational opportunities suited to all needs, helping students enhance their ability to learn and grow.

In technical and vocational training, admission is available for persons with disabilities in fields compatible with their type of disability. In 2023, a total of 762 trainees with disabilities were enrolled.

To further support access to higher education, the Universities Affairs Council issued a resolution in January 2024 exempting eight categories of persons with disabilities from the National Center for Assessment's admission tests for universities. Saudi universities also provide various accommodations and services, such as adapted learning environments with organized classrooms and suitable seating, alternative spaces free from distractions, modified methods of delivering information, and adapted assessments that allow students with disabilities to be evaluated through methods appropriate to their abilities.

Government Spending and External Scholarships

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is one of the leading nations in supporting education both domestically and internationally. In 2024, the Kingdom allocated nearly 195 billion Saudi riyals to the education budget, underscoring its commitment to developing the education sector and enhancing the capabilities of Saudi youth. Moreover, the Kingdom is a donor country that provides educational and humanitarian assistance to nations in need. Through humanitarian and charitable institutions, it funds relief and educational programs in many countries, offering children and youth in conflict-affected and impoverished regions access to learning opportunities. By December 31, 2023, the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center had implemented 130 projects in the education sector

abroad, with a total cost exceeding USD 231 million. In addition, the Kingdom contributed USD 38 million to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Fund, while the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation participates in volunteer and charitable training activities, including initiatives in the Zaatari Camp in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Literacy and Adult Education

Lifelong learning has become a key pillar for personal and professional growth at all stages of life. Education is no longer limited to younger age groups or traditional schooling but extends to adults and seniors who may not have had the opportunity to complete their education earlier. The General Directorate for Continuing Education serves as a cornerstone in enabling this group to continue their education, providing access to updated learning content tailored to their needs and interests. Among its initiatives is the *Learning Neighborhood Center* program, designed to empower individuals through educational, vocational, life, and awareness skills training. A dedicated educational channel has also been launched for continuing education students, enabling them to follow lessons via live broadcasts or continuous replays throughout the day. Additionally, summer literacy campaigns—held for two months in areas where establishing regular classrooms is difficult—aim to teach citizens in cities, villages, and remote areas, working to eradicate illiteracy in these communities. The Directorate also oversees the Society Without Illiteracy program, which targets basic literacy. This well-defined action plan has contributed to reducing the illiteracy rate to 3.7% in 2020, reflecting significant progress in this field.

Ain Educational Channels and Ain Enrichment Platform

The Ministry of Education has launched 23 free educational satellite channels covering all educational stages, distributed as follows: 19 channels for general education students, 1 channel for continuing education students, and 3 channels for students with disabilities. These channels record lessons for all academic subjects. In addition, the Ministry established Ain Enrichment, a secure and free online portal that supports digital empowerment in education and provides reliable electronic services for all students and teachers.

Table 51: Youth/Adult Literacy Rate, 2020

years 15-24	2020	years and above 15	2020
Males	99.55	Males	98.62
Females	99.45	Females	96.05
Total	99.50	Total	97.59

Source: *data.uis.unesco.org*

Sustainable Development

The Ministry of Education plays a vital role in building human capital by providing a learning environment that encourages lifelong learning and enhances opportunities for continuous education. The Ministry also focuses on achieving fairness and gender equality, thereby fostering balance across various educational and professional fields. In addition, it strives to ensure sustainability in the consumption of natural resources through educational programs aimed at raising environmental awareness and promoting sustainable practices in resource use—ensuring that resources remain available for future generations while maintaining a healthy and safe environment.

The National Curriculum Center works on developing an educational framework that includes learning outcomes based on national and specialized curriculum standards. These outcomes cover knowledge, skills, and values, including environmental education values. The center also conducts regular curriculum development and review, evaluating them against a set of standards that promote education for sustainable development and global citizenship, emphasize human rights, gender equality, health, climate change awareness, and the principles of citizenship.

Furthermore, the center has authored and adopted new secondary-level curricula to improve educational quality and strengthen students' skills in various fields—most notably the “Sustainable Development” course, considered one of the key transformative education tools. This standalone course focuses on teaching the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Student guidance also serves as an effective tool for spreading environmental awareness and promoting sustainability-related practices by helping students understand environmental issues, encouraging sustainable behaviors, and engaging their energies in volunteer programs linked to environmental services, awareness, and education. It also involves training students in environmental leadership, fostering personal and social responsibility, leveraging artificial intelligence for environmental guidance, raising family awareness on the importance of environmental protection, and encouraging parents to participate in environmental activities with their children.

Human Resource Development and School Health

The National Institute for Educational Professional Development continues to implement numerous projects and programs aimed at enhancing the professional skills of education staff. It also ensures the quality and compliance of training packages with established standards—particularly those addressing sustainable development, global citizenship, blended and online learning systems, and training in assessment and evaluation tools—before they are delivered. Among these are joint programs with the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States, such as the Citizenship Education Curriculum Teaching

Program based on project-based learning strategies, which aims to reinforce national and social values through interactive learning and practical projects connected to real community contexts, alongside the Summer Educational Professional Development Program.

In addition, the Education and Training Evaluation Commission conducts standardized assessment tests for teachers to measure their attainment of general and subject-specific pedagogical standards.

As part of efforts to raise awareness and develop students' life skills regarding HIV/AIDS, Article 7 of the Law on the Prevention of Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)—issued under Royal Decree No. M/41—stipulates that “health, education, social, and media authorities shall take the necessary measures to raise public awareness of AIDS, clarify the rights of those infected, and establish regulations for these procedures.”

The Ministry of Education's initiatives are an integral part of national efforts to strengthen health education, participating in the HIV health awareness committee and contributing to the development of the strategic plan for combating the disease. This coordination among relevant institutions plays a significant role in reducing social stigma, increasing awareness, and enhancing prevention and treatment efforts.

100% of schools in the Kingdom provide awareness to students on topics related to the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV/AIDS)

Providing an Equitable and Safe Learning Environments

The Ministry of Education continuously strives to provide a safe, fully equipped learning environment that meets safety standards, through collaboration with Tatweer Company, which plays a pivotal role in improving and developing school infrastructure. This collaboration includes taking multiple steps and measures to ensure the safety of students at all educational stages. Among these efforts are the provision of security guards to protect schools and their facilities, as well as equipping school buildings with safety systems such as alarm systems, emergency exits, and firefighting equipment to ensure a prompt response in emergencies.

In addition, specialists at the Ministry of Education, in cooperation with Tatweer, focus on raising students' awareness of traffic safety requirements around school premises by organizing awareness and educational programs aimed at ensuring a safe environment during students' arrival and departure.

All these initiatives contribute to creating a safe learning environment where students can focus on their academic achievement and skills development in an atmosphere of safety and comfort.

Tatweer Buildings Company

Tatweer Buildings Company is wholly owned by the Public Investment Fund of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and serves as the implementing arm for the Ministry of Education's projects. The company works to enhance and develop the infrastructure of educational buildings for the benefit of the Ministry of Education and contributes to improving the efficiency of educational facilities in line with the latest standards and best practices. Its work is carried out through four main tracks: Implementation of building projects, maintenance and cleaning, renovation and rehabilitation, furnishing and consultancy services.

Table 52: Percentage of Schools Equipped with Electricity, Internet, Computers, Drinking Water, and Sanitation Facilities (2022)

Electricity	Internet	Computers	Drinking Water	Handwashing Facilities	Non-Shared Sanitation Facilities
100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: *data.uis.unesco.org*

The Ministry of Education aims to foster a school environment grounded in positive values and order by implementing the new Student Conduct Regulations for public education schools. These regulations focus on instilling targeted values among students and teachers by defining a set of behaviors that must be adhered to. The regulations promote positive behaviors through guiding mechanisms that clarify how these behaviors should be applied, contributing to improved discipline and seriousness among students. They also aim to strengthen values of mutual respect, adherence to school rules, and active participation in educational activities.

Study in Saudi Arabia Initiative

The initiative aims to design and launch a student visa to promote the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as an attractive destination for international students and academics at both the regional and global levels. This is achieved by developing an approved system and models for the student visa, and launching the dedicated online service to introduce the Kingdom.

Among the tools adopted by the Ministry in implementing these rules is the Code of Conduct and Citizenship guide, titled *With Morals We Rise* (Biakhlaqi Nasmo), which serves as a regulatory framework outlining how to address students' behavior and situations in a positive educational manner.

Among the programs approved to reduce bullying is the Rifq program, a preventive and therapeutic initiative aimed at reducing all forms of school violence throughout the aca-

ademic year across all educational stages for both male and female students. In addition, several training packages have been implemented, such as the Skills for Early Detection and Intervention in Cases of Children at Risk of Abuse and Neglect package, targeting all primary school teachers and principals, guidance and counseling supervisors, and early grades supervisors; and the National Anti-Bullying Program package, which aims to train guidance supervisors and school counselors on skills to deal with bullying cases in schools.

The Saudi educational system also offers opportunities for all international students, researchers, and trainees to enroll in its universities through educational programs and other initiatives, such as pre-diploma programs, research visit programs, student exchange programs, and training programs. Additionally, educational grants are provided for those wishing to learn Arabic, with dedicated seats allocated for teaching Arabic to non-native speakers.

Human Resources

The establishment of the National Institute for Educational Professional Development for holders of educational positions in 2019 marked a significant milestone in governing and regulating professional development activities. In 2024, a new framework was issued for the Institute, designating it as the primary authority responsible for preparing, qualifying, and developing teachers, as well as identifying and fostering educational leadership. The Institute is currently working on launching its strategy, which outlines the professional development journey for teachers—from their initial preparation in colleges of education to their ongoing development after entering the teaching profession—through the creation of professional development pathways based on the Teacher Competency Framework aligned with Saudi Vision 2030.

The Ministry of Education strives to develop teachers through all possible means, including a wide range of domestic and international training programs. Key initiatives in teacher development include:

- Teacher secondment programs for overseas assignments, postgraduate studies, and domestic university placements; and the Khebrat program, a specialized initiative that targets the professional practices of educational leaders, supervisors, and teachers through direct immersion in advanced schools excelling in educational performance and professional practices.
- Istihdaf Program, which aims to qualify a select group of educational staff by sponsoring them to pursue master's degrees at leading international universities in fields such as school leadership, research sciences, special education, early childhood education, and school counseling.

Furthermore, the Ministry and the National Institute for Educational Professional Development work to train teachers on new curricula and modern teaching methods, preparing them to work effectively with all categories of students. They also implement mentorship programs that connect experienced teachers with newcomers to facilitate knowledge transfer, guidance, and best practices for building and enhancing teaching competencies. Notably, the percentage of qualified teachers in Saudi Arabia, according to national and international standards, has reached 100%.

Education Leaders Academy

An academy operating under the umbrella of the Mohammed bin Salman Foundation (Misk) and Riyadh Schools, dedicated to contributing to the excellence of the educational system by empowering Saudi teachers to become influential and innovative leaders in teaching and learning.

Sultanate of Oman

Within the institutional framework for national efforts to monitor the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Ministry of Education restructured the National Team responsible for following up on the implementation of SDG 4 (Quality Education) under Ministerial Decision No. 175/2021. This team represents various education-related entities, civil society organizations, youth, and research institutions, and was reformed following the changes in the State's administrative apparatus at the end of 2020. The team's main mandate is to fulfill its mission by implementing the objectives and targets of SDG 4, strengthening the integration of these targets into national strategies and five-year plans, developing suitable projects and programs, allocating the necessary budgets to achieve the desired outcomes, establishing effective monitoring, follow-up, and evaluation mechanisms, and publishing relevant reports.

In line with the strategic direction of education set out in Oman Vision 2040—to provide inclusive education, lifelong learning, and scientific research that lead to a knowledge-based society and competitive national capacities—and based on the philosophy of education in the Sultanate of Oman, which draws on strong and well-established foundations as pillars for building generations and preparing them for the future, as well as core principles for the general educational goals pursued by the educational system, the Sultanate of Oman is working, in harmony with the global SDG agenda in general and SDG 4 in particular, to guarantee this right for all without exception. This effort is supported by national laws and legislation aligned with international orientations. Greater attention is now given to scientific research, innovation, creativity in education, gifted education, and e-learning, in line with the educational priorities outlined in Oman Vision 2040.

The Basic Law of the State (the Constitution) guarantees the right to education and its provision to all without discrimination. All legislation and policies in the Sultanate of Oman affirm this right, ensuring access to free, full, and compulsory education up to Grade 10, as well as the principle of equal opportunities for all. Article 42 of the School Education Law, issued by Royal Decree No. 31/2023, affirms that students have equal rights to receive educational services and prohibits discrimination based on gender, origin, language, religion, sect, place of residence, social status, or any other reason. Article 14 stipulates the provision of free education in public schools, while Article 24 makes basic education from Grade 1 to Grade 10 compulsory for all children.

The educational system works to provide learning opportunities to everyone living in Oman, directing efforts toward improving the quality of education and strengthening the infrastructure to ensure outcomes that align with the aspirations of Oman Vision 2040. Indicators reflect the successes achieved by the education sector in the Sultanate and the attention given to its quality, while ensuring the allocation of the necessary budgets and

financial resources. In 2022, spending on education amounted to 4.2% of GDP and 15% of government expenditure. The Sultanate ranked ninth globally in terms of government spending per student on education and second in the share of science and engineering graduates among total graduates, according to the Global Innovation Index 2023.

Expanding Education and Improving Its Quality

To meet quality requirements, enhance the standard of education and learning, and equip students with essential skills such as reading, writing, and numeracy to achieve strong learning outcomes, the Ministry of Education has continued its participation in international studies that assess reading, writing, numeracy, and the quality of education (PIRLS and TIMSS). This reflects the Ministry's commitment to applying internationally credible assessment standards. Students in the Sultanate of Oman have maintained progress in their performance in the PIRLS international reading literacy study for Grade 4, scoring 429 points in 2021 compared to 418 points in the 2016 cycle.

Table 53: Overall Performance Rate of Grade 4 Students in the Sultanate of Oman – PIRLS Study

Cycle	Sultanate's Overall Average
PIRLS 2011	391
PIRLS 2016	418
PIRLS 2021	429

Source: Ministry of Education, Sultanate of Oman

In the TIMSS 2019 international study for mathematics in Grades 4 and 8, students showed progress compared to the 2015 cycle. Grade 4 students scored 431 points in mathematics, compared to 425 points in 2015, while in science for Grade 4, they scored 435 points compared to 431 points in 2015.

Table 54: Overall Performance of Omani Students in the TIMSS International Study

Study Cycle	TIMSS 2011				TIMSS 2015				TIMSS 2019			
	Mathematics		Science		Mathematics		Science		Mathematics		Science	
Grade	Gr. 4	Gr. 8	Gr. 4	Gr. 8	Gr. 4	Gr. 8	Gr. 4	Gr. 8	Gr. 4	Gr. 8	Gr. 4	Gr. 8
Overall Performance	385	366	377	420	425	403	431	455	431	411	435	457

Source: Ministry of Education, Sultanate of Oman

Following the pilot phase in the 2021/2022 academic year, and in order to enhance the measurement of learning outcomes, the Ministry of Education is implementing national assessments for Grade 4 in reading, writing, and English language, and for Grades 7 and 10 in Arabic

language, English language, science, and mathematics in the 2022/2023 academic year. Education authorities in the Sultanate of Oman seek to establish a balanced educational environment in both quantitative and qualitative terms, with a strong emphasis on quality in delivering educational services.

According to the latest statistics, the gross enrollment rate in the final grade of primary education is 100.5%, and the gross enrollment rate in the final grade of lower secondary education is 100.7%.

Table 56: Gross Enrollment Rate in the Final Grade of Lower Secondary Education – Grade 10

Gender/ Year	2020	2021	2022
Males	101.30%	101.30%	101.30%
Females	100.10%	100.10%	100.10%
Total	100.70%	100.70%	100.70%

Source: Ministry of Education, Sultanate of Oman

As a result of adopting policies and programs to enhance students' progress through the stages of school education, the percentage of out-of-school children of primary school age (Grades 1–4) reached 1.6%, while their percentage in the first stage of secondary education (Grades 5–10) was 3.4% in 2022.

Table 57: Percentage of Out-of-School Children in Primary Education (Grades 1–4)

Gender/ Year	2020	2021	2022
Males	1.8	1.8	1.7
Females	1.5	1.5	1.5
Total	1.6	1.6	1.6

Source: Ministry of Education, Sultanate of Oman

Table 58: Percentage of Out-of-School Children in Lower Secondary Education (Grades 5–10)

Gender/ Year	2020	2021	2022
Males	3.9	3.9	3.7
Females	3.1	3.1	3.1
Total	3.5	3.5	3.4

Source: Ministry of Education, Sultanate of Oman

The decrease in the percentage of overage children compared to the appropriate age for their grade level in basic education (Grades 1–10) indicates the effectiveness of the policies, programs, legislation, and regulations that ensure all students are enrolled in education. In 2022, this percentage stood at 0.02% in the first cycle of basic education (Grades 1–4) and 1.50% in the second cycle of basic education (Grades 5–10).

Table 59: Percentage of overage children compared to their grade level in primary education (Grades 1–4)

Gender/ Year	2020	2021	2022
Males	0.1%	0.02%	0.02%
Females	0.04%	0.01%	0.02%
Total	0.06%	0.01%	0.02%

Source: Ministry of Education, Sultanate of Oman

Table 60: Percentage of overage children compared to their grade level in lower secondary education (Grades 5–10)

Gender/ Year	2020	2021	2022
Males	0.08%	2.52%	2.04%
Females	0.05%	1.13%	0.95%
Total	0.07%	1.83%	1.50%

Source: Ministry of Education, Sultanate of Oman

Early Childhood Education

Recognizing the importance of the early childhood stage in shaping a child’s personality and overall development, and the long-term impact that development programs have on the growth of the child and the future of coming generations, the Sultanate of Oman has, through its five-year development plans, implemented programs, projects, and activities to meet the needs of this age group, viewing them as rights that must be fulfilled jointly by the state and the family.

The Ministry of Social Development, in cooperation with other entities, has played a key role in child upbringing in addition to its core role in protecting and developing the family. All policies and legislation give significant attention to early childhood development across the various sectors connected to this vital group of society, including social, health, educational, and cultural aspects. This reflects the country’s belief in the importance of investing in this segment, which will become one of the essential pillars of the nation’s future, bringing both social and economic returns to the state.

To this end, legislation, regulations, plans, and policies have been issued to enhance the quality of services in this field, most notably the Child Law (Royal Decree No. 22/2014), the Education Law (Royal Decree No. 31/2023), the Social Work Strategy (2016–2025), and the National Childhood Strategy for the same period (2016–2025).

The Ministry of Social Development oversees nurseries, which are social and educational institutions that provide care services for children from three months to three and a half years old. In 2023, there were a total of 354 nurseries serving 8,267 children, compared to 139 nurseries in 2015. Their operations are regulated by the Executive Regulations of

the Child Law, issued under Ministerial Decision No. 125/2019, which includes a number of chapters and requirements governing the functioning of these institutions.

These nurseries are classified into three types:

- **Private Nursery:** Owned or operated by individuals or private sector institutions and companies.
- **Community Nursery:** Owned or operated by resident expatriate communities in the Sultanate of Oman to care for their own children or the children of other non-Omani communities.
- **International Nursery:** Accredited and recognized by an international educational center or institution and applying an international curriculum.

National Standards Guide for Nurseries

The National Standards Guide for Nurseries and Their Classification in the Sultanate of Oman aims to guide stakeholders, administrators, and specialists working in nurseries on the standards that must be ensured in these institutions. It also provides a framework for classifying nurseries according to quality standards.

The guide will contribute to improving the conditions of existing nurseries and establishing quality foundations for institutions that will be established in the future, with the goal of fostering promising developmental outcomes that support families and society in raising children properly.

As part of the project’s implementation, specialists from the Ministry and representatives from nurseries are trained on the guide to familiarize them with its standards and indicators, in preparation for the application, follow-up, and evaluation phase.

Table 61: Number of Nurseries and Children

Years	Nurseries	Children
2022	332	7537
2023	354	8267

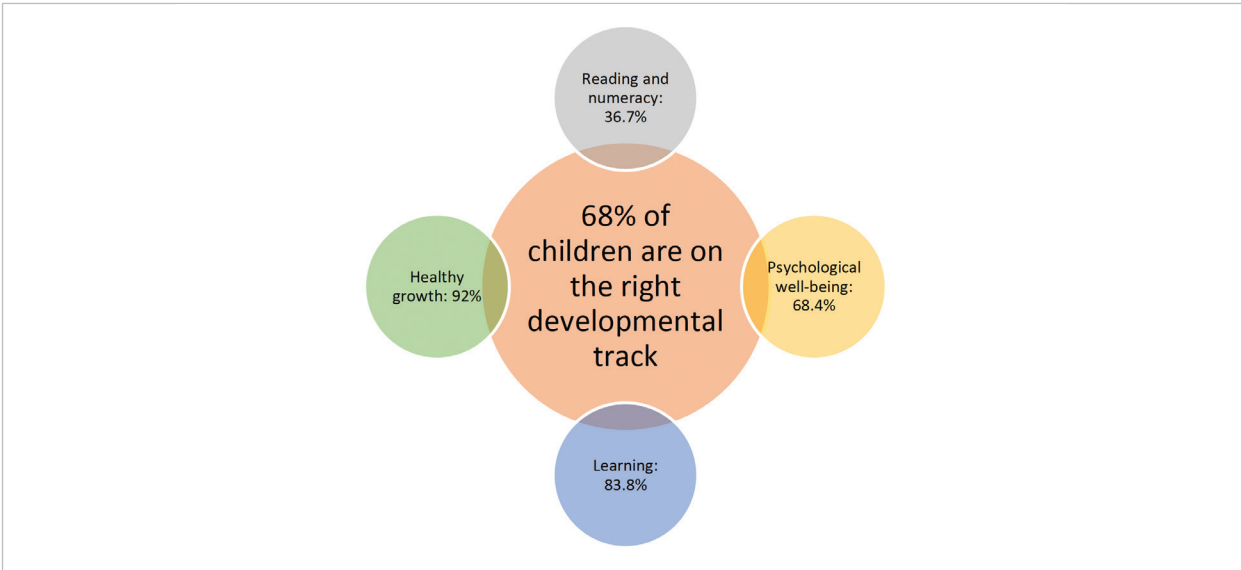
Source: Ministry of Social Development, Sultanate of Oman

The private sector is responsible for providing pre-primary education under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Education, with “Educational Corner” kindergartens spread across all governorates of the country, in addition to preparatory classes offered by the Ministry of Education in remote areas where no schools are nearby. There are 113 such preparatory classes, serving approximately 2,682 boys and girls. The gross enrollment rate in pre-primary education reached 57%, while the participation rate in organized learning (one year before enrollment in primary education) stood at 89.5% in the 2022/2023 academic year.

The Ministry of Education is currently working to expand early childhood education services, following the issuance of Ministerial Decision No. 20/2023 to form a main committee and subcommittees for this purpose, and to develop a phased plan for expansion, in line with Goal No. 93 of the Tenth Five-Year Plan.

Efforts are integrated among various entities concerned with childhood in the Sultanate of Oman in the areas of nutrition and school health, through cooperation between the Ministry of Health, represented by the Department of School and University Health, and the Ministry of Education, represented by the Department of Guidance and Awareness. Both work side by side to provide a healthy environment and appropriate nutrition for children in schools.

Child health records indicate that the incidence rate of protein-energy malnutrition was 1.2 per 1,000 children under five years old during 2019, and no deaths related to malnutrition have been recorded in the last five years, according to the 2022 Annual Health Report. Data from the 2014 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey show that 83.3% of children under five in the Sultanate of Oman live in a positive and stimulating home environment for learning.



Higher and Vocational Education

The Ministry of Higher Education, Research, and Innovation oversees the higher education and vocational education system in general, sets joint policies across related sectors, works to support diversity in various fields of knowledge, and develops academic programs in line with the requirements of sustainable development and scientific advancement.

In order to provide an educational, training, and research environment that fosters creativity, innovation, knowledge production, and entrepreneurship, the number of higher education institutions in Oman reached 70 academic institutions, including 41 public and

29 private institutions, geographically distributed across the different governorates and wilayats, according to statistics for the 2021/2022 academic year.

The government provides free higher education for students enrolled in public institutions, and the country’s educational policies ensure that all students—male and female—who meet admission requirements from the General Education Diploma or its equivalent have equal opportunities to compete for higher education placement. According to statistics for the 2021/2022 academic year, the gross enrollment rate in higher education reached 47.6%.

Table 62: Gross Enrollment Rate in Higher Education

Year	Gross Enrollment Rate
2018	46%
2022	47.6%

Source: Ministry of Higher Education, Research, and Innovation, Sultanate of Oman

Under cultural exchange and in line with efforts to enhance regional and international cooperation and partnerships in developing knowledge in higher education, a number of students are sent abroad to study. In the academic year 2021/2022, the number of scholarship recipients reached approximately 606 students, of whom about 42% were female. A portion of these scholarships was allocated to students of determination (those with physical, visual, hearing, and intellectual disabilities), in addition to their admission to local higher education institutions.

The Sultanate of Oman also attracts international students annually to study in its higher education institutions, with around 3,454 students enrolled in the academic year 2021/2022. The relevant authorities work to empower and qualify social security beneficiaries to develop their skills and capabilities for self-reliance, providing them with approximately 675 scholarships in the academic year 2023/2024 to study at private local universities and colleges for undergraduate education if they did not meet the admission requirements of public higher education institutions.

The vocational and technical training sector constitutes an integrated system that works to produce high-quality technical and vocational graduates who meet the needs of the economic sectors. The Ministry of Education has initiated the implementation of the vocational and technical education project in post-basic education according to best international practices, starting gradually in a number of schools. The approved study plan takes into account the development of curricula in line with the requirements of higher education institutions and labor market needs, offering students the flexibility to choose courses that match their interests and aspirations.

The Technical and Vocational Education Track in Post-Basic Education

A two-year program aimed at enhancing students' knowledge and developing their practical skills in vocational and technical specializations according to their interests and preferences. The study program consists of core and specialized subjects designed to prepare students for the labor market and enable them to pursue higher education. This definition is based on international practices that classify Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as one of the recognized educational pathways. The track includes a variety of specializations across different fields aligned with labor market needs.

Both the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, and Innovation and the University of Technology and Applied Sciences oversee technical and vocational education at the diploma and bachelor's levels. There are seven vocational colleges and eight branches of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences, offering more than 57 programs in fields such as engineering, business studies, health and beauty care, agricultural technologies, marine navigation, fishing and marine engineering, accounting, customer service, logistics, information technology, applied sciences and pharmacy, fashion design, and photography.

Technical and vocational education in Oman grants various qualifications, ranging from training course certificates - such as professional competency (semi-skilled, skilled, and professional) - to the professional diploma after the foundation program, the advanced diploma (three years), and the bachelor's degree after the foundation program.

In promoting the principle of cultural diversity, Oman offers a cultural and scientific cooperation program with friendly and brotherly countries by providing a number of scholarships for their students to study in higher education institutions in the Sultanate. In the 2023/2024 academic year, 97 scholarships were granted, benefiting students from 25 friendly and brotherly countries. Additionally, there are approximately 3,454 international students enrolled in Omani higher education institutions.

Technology and Information Technologies

As part of the extensive efforts to develop technical skills and competencies necessary for business practice and operations, and in line with policies for the use of information and communication technology (ICT), the third cycle of the ICT Access and Usage Survey in Oman (2021) reported several positive results. The survey indicated that 94% of households in Oman have internet access. The most common digital skill was sending messages, reported by 97% of respondents, followed by using the copy-and-paste function (87%), and applying basic mathematical formulas or equations in a spreadsheet application, such as Excel (65%).

Table 63: Percentage of Youth and Adults with ICT Skills by Type of Skill

Year	2019					2020					2021				
	Males 18+	Females 18+	Omanis 18+	Expatriates 18+	Total	Males 18+	Females 18+	Omanis 18+	Expatriates 18+	Total	Males 18+	Females 18+	Omanis 18+	Expatriates 18+	Total
Writing a computer program using a specialized programming language	21	17	18	24	20%	7.3	9.7	8.9	7.4	8	12	11	10	15	12
Creating electronic presentations using presentation software	45	57	51	48	50%	21.1	29.8	29.8	19	24	29	42	34	30	33
Searching for, downloading, installing, or configuring software	52	51	49	56	51%	64.6	72.2	71.2	63.6	67	54	60	58	50	56
Connecting and installing new devices	58	60	55	67	59%	30.5	33.4	37.2	27	31	32	33	32	32	32
Using basic arithmetic formulas	63	54	52	72	59%	25.6	25.3	28	23.6	25	46	67	66	64	65
Transferring files between a computer and other devices	70	68	70	66	69%	47.6	53.1	52.6	46.6	49	46	52	50	43	48
Performing simple tasks such as watching videos or clicking on icons	73	80	78	72	76%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sending emails with file attachments	78	77	73	87	78%	91	95.8	94.5	90.9	92	97	99	98	94	97
Using copy-and-paste tools	80	81	79	84	81%	83	87	89.9	80.2	84	86	91	90	80	87
Copying or moving a file or folder	84	81	82	82	82%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other activities	10	10	10	9	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Implementing security measures for devices or electronic accounts	-	-	-	-	-	54.2	63.5	59.5	55.1	57	54	57	58	47	55
Changing privacy settings on your device or accounts in various applications	-	-	-	-	-	49	60.1	59.2	47	52.3	46	54	54	36	48

Source: National Centre for Statistics and Information, Sultanate of Oman

The authorities concerned with education are working diligently to provide a solid infrastructure for internet connectivity. The latest statistics for 2021–2022 indicate that approximately 100% of schools in the Sultanate of Oman have internet access for educational purposes, and 100% have computers available for educational use.

Gender Equality and Persons with Disabilities

Through the School Education Law, the Ministry of Education ensures the provision of a safe and attractive school environment, the acquisition by students of the knowledge, skills, and competencies specified at each educational stage, access to appropriate healthcare, provision of free and safe school transportation from home to school and back, and the necessary services to promote mental, physical, and social health, as well as vocational guidance and counseling services for students.

Article 51 of the Child Law stipulates that “a child with a disability shall enjoy all the rights granted under the provisions of the law without discrimination on the basis of disability”. Article 52 of the same law states that “the State shall guarantee the care and rehabilitation of a child with a disability in accordance with the provisions of the Law on the Care and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities, and the State and the guardian shall work to enable the child with a disability to enjoy all care and rehabilitation services available to persons with disabilities”.

According to the latest statistics issued by the Ministry of Education for the academic year 2022/2023, the number of students with disabilities receiving educational services reached 2,380 male and female students, whether in inclusion classrooms in public schools or in special education schools for various types of disabilities. The Ministry of Education also sends several students with disabilities each year to study abroad.

Recent indicators point to the achievement of gender equality in education in the Sultanate of Oman, and where slight differences exist, they are due to the demographic structure being in favor of males. The Gender Parity Index (GPI) for the gross enrollment rate in basic education grades (1–4) was 0.99, the GPI for retention in basic education was 1.0, and the GPI for transition from basic education to post-basic education was 1.1.

Table 64: Gender Parity Index

Academic Year	2020	2021	2022
Gross Enrollment Rate in Pre-primary	1.02	1.00	1.01
Gross Enrollment Rate in Grade 1	0.998	0.998	0.998
Adjusted Net Enrollment Rate in Grade 1	1.003	1.003	1.002
(Gross Enrollment Rate in Grades (1–4	0.998	0.998	0.998
(Gross Enrollment Rate in Grades (5–10	0.998	0.998	0.997
(Gross Enrollment Rate in Grades (11–12	0.994	0.994	0.993
(Adjusted Net Enrollment Rate in Grades (1–4	1.00	1.00	1.00
(Adjusted Net Enrollment Rate in Grades (5–10	1.01	1.01	1.01
(Adjusted Net Enrollment Rate in Grades (11–12	1.03	1.03	1.03
Gender Ratio in Government Education	0.974	0.976	0.980
Transition Rate from Basic Education to Post-basic Education	1.01	1.03	0.99

Source: Ministry of Education, Sultanate of Oman

Spending on Education

Despite the economic challenges faced in recent years, the state continues to allocate the necessary financial resources to the education sector to help improve the quality of education. Spending on education accounted for 4.2% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 14.2% of total government expenditure.

Table 65: Student Cost by Type of Education and Grade Level – in Omani Rial

Type of Education	Cost per Student in Various Stages of Public Education	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Basic Education (Grades 1–10)	First Cycle	1,805	1,655	1,784	1,611
	Second Cycle	1,793	1,671	1,730	1,585
Post-Basic Education ((Grades 11–12	Grades 11–12	2,599	2,436	2,652	2,308
Special Education	Grades 1–4	8,991	7,358	11,184	9,531
	Grades 5–10	9,479	7,338	7,556	7,416

Source: Ministry of Education, Sultanate of Oman

Combating Illiteracy and Adult Education

The Sultanate of Oman is committed to ensuring that all youth and a significant proportion of adults, both men and women, possess literacy and numeracy skills, in accordance with Article 13 of the Cultural Principles in the Basic Statute of the State (the Constitution), which stipulates that “the State shall provide general education and work to combat illiteracy.”

Building on the extensive efforts exerted by the Ministry of Education to reduce illiteracy, the literacy rate in Oman reached 97.46% for the age group 15 years and above, and 99.46% for the age group 15–44 years, according to 2023 data.

Table 66: Literacy Rate (Ages 15–44)

Gender/ Year	2020	2021	2022	2023
Males	99.4	99.4	99.4	99.54
Females	99.2	99.3	99.3	99.3
Total	99.3	99.3	99.3	99.46

Source: Ministry of Education, Sultanate of Oman

Table 67. Literacy Rate (Ages 15 and above)

Gender/ Year	2020	2021	2022	2023
Males	96	96.3	96.6	98.63
Females	92.2	92.7	93.2	95.23
Total	94.1	94.5	94.9	97.46

Source: Ministry of Education, Sultanate of Oman

Sustainable Development and School Health

The Sultanate of Oman upholds the view that Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is one of the core components of lifelong learning. All educational institutions, at every stage, work to support competencies related to sustainability through teaching topics such as climate change, sustainable consumption patterns, citizenship, tolerance, values, human rights, and respect for cultural diversity within school curricula. These efforts are coupled with the provision of an interactive teaching and learning environment that is learner-centered, aimed at producing graduates who are fully aware of these concepts.

As a result of these initiatives, three Omani cities—Muscat, Nizwa, and Sur—joined the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities in 2024.

National laws, policies, and documents support the orientation towards promoting education for sustainable development and citizenship. The “Philosophy of Education in the

Sultanate of Oman” document serves as the primary reference for all educational policies, incorporating a set of 16 principles from which the general educational objectives are derived. These include the principle of education on human rights and responsibilities, the principle of education for sustainable development, the principle of education for peace and understanding, the principle of lifelong learning, and the principle of identity and citizenship.

Accession of Muscat, Nizwa, and Sur to the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities

The Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC) is an international network coordinated by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning since 2012, aimed at supporting policies and improving lifelong learning practices in cities worldwide. It does so by fostering policy dialogue and peer learning among member cities, building connections and strengthening partnerships, providing capacity development, and developing tools to encourage and recognize progress in building learning cities.

On February 14, 2024, UNESCO announced the inclusion of three Omani cities—Muscat, Nizwa, and Sur—into the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities. This was part of a plan by the Ministry of Education, in partnership with the Ministry of Interior, to promote Omani cities on the global stage, leveraging their rich tourism and cultural assets, raising awareness of education for sustainable development within local communities, and improving Oman’s ranking in international indicators, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

These cities are committed to mobilizing resources across all sectors to enhance inclusive learning for all, from basic education to higher education. They actively promote learning within families and local communities, facilitate learning for and in the workplace, expand the use of modern learning technologies, and foster quality and excellence in education. They also work to cultivate a culture of lifelong learning, thereby enhancing individual capabilities, social cohesion, economic and cultural prosperity, and sustainable development.

All these efforts align with Oman’s broader initiatives to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in harmony with Oman Vision 2040.

The Sultanate of Oman is among the active countries in conserving and protecting its natural resources. Environmental education units are incorporated into a number of textbooks across different educational stages, addressing issues such as climate change, sustainable consumption and production, economic growth, life skills, and enhancing students’ awareness of how to access information on matters related to sustainable development and other critical topics.

The Ministry of Education works to strengthen capacity building in the five thematic areas of the Global Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Framework 2023, and to train teachers through programs implemented by the Specialized Institute for Vocational Training of Teachers. In 2023, a specialized workshop entitled “Education for Sustainable Development Laboratories” was held for all ESD stakeholders from government agencies, the private sector, civil society, and youth institutions.

The Sultanate of Oman has joined the Global Network on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD-Net), established by UNESCO in 2022. This has prompted stakeholders to develop and implement a national initiative to accelerate progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through Goal 4, and to formulate a country initiative to achieve the goals through education. Oman has also joined the Partnership for Green Education initiative, one of the outcomes of the Transforming Education Summit held in New York in 2022, aimed at developing curricula, assessment methods, infrastructure, and a green school culture, as well as enhancing awareness and participation in addressing environmental challenges.

The GLOBE Environmental Program

This is a global educational program with a strong focus on science and environmental education. It connects school students at all educational stages, teachers, the international scientific community, and the research community in collective efforts to study global environmental issues and learn more about both local and global environments. This is achieved through conducting precise scientific environmental measurements and preparing studies and research using modern technology, by entering measurement data into an account created for each school on the program's official website. This opens channels of communication between Omani students and their peers worldwide.

The program is dedicated to equipping future professionals in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) with the scientific knowledge necessary to benefit the Earth. In addition, it aims to raise students' awareness of issues affecting the global environment, contribute to increasing awareness of Earth sciences, support progress in students' achievement in science, mathematics, and geography, and foster international cooperation in conducting observations for the benefit of environmental programs.

Oman's participation in the GLOBE Program came under a Memorandum of Understanding on environmental cooperation signed on December 8, 2009, between the Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Education, and the United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). As of this year, 50 schools in Oman are implementing the program.

It is worth noting that the Sultanate of Oman was ahead of many countries in implementing the Green Schools Project in 2022/2023. This pioneering project in Oman focuses on raising awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals within the school environment. The project began in 12 schools across two governorates and expanded to include 53 schools in the 2023/2024 academic year. It has strengthened the relationship between the education sector, the private sector, and civil society in providing support.

The Green Schools Project

This is one of the initiatives that contributes to achieving the goals of Education for Sustainable Development. It aims to educate students and the local community and raise their awareness about environmental issues, the circular economy, and sustainability. The project also helps nurture students to make informed decisions on matters related to the environment.

It guides students and teachers to focus on the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainable development, and to work through the school to address community issues and challenges in these three dimensions of development, with the participation of the local community, including parents, students, civil society organizations, and the private sector.

The Ministry of Education seeks to encourage schools to participate actively in the project's implementation and application by adopting programs, projects, and initiatives across the three dimensions of sustainable development.

The relevant education authorities work on integrating the concepts of sustainable development and citizenship into school curricula through a number of policy documents, such as the General Concepts in Curricula document, which is linked to the integration of environmental education, human rights and child rights concepts, and natural disaster awareness into the curricula.

Table 68: Extent of Mainstreaming Citizenship and Sustainable Development Topics in the Education System

Year	Area	Value	
2020	Curricula	0.729	Range (0–1) – The closer the value is to 1, the greater the mainstreaming, integration, and teaching of citizenship, environmental, and sustainable development topics
	National Education Policies	0.813	
	Student Assessment	0.833	
	Teacher Training	0.850	

Source: Ministry of Education, Sultanate of Oman

Amid social, economic, political, and environmental challenges, the education system in the Sultanate of Oman is keen to promote sustainable lifestyles, with a focus on the cognitive dimension, and to equip students and citizens with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for leading healthy and productive lives. The Ministry of Education, represented by the Career Guidance and Student Counseling Center, undertakes significant efforts in schools, providing various life skills training related to HIV/AIDS awareness, implementing peer education programs, and producing the “My Positive Personality” booklets. As a result, HIV/AIDS awareness coverage in schools has reached 100%.

Creating a Safe Learning Environments and Competent Human Resources

Safe, inclusive, and equitable learning environments are essential for achieving effective learning and improving efficiency and effectiveness. All stakeholders in the Sultanate of Oman work to provide an educational environment in which all elements are integrated, and all standards related to administration, teachers, students, curricula, the local community, and parents are met, ensuring that students feel neither fear nor anxiety, while fostering their learning and growth and removing all barriers that prevent equal access to educational opportunities for all without exception.

Electricity is available in 100% of schools, and 100% of schools provide internet access for educational purposes. The ratio of computers used for educational purposes per student has reached 10.1 in public schools. Basic sanitation facilities for both genders, as well as handwashing facilities and safe, uncontaminated drinking water, are available in all schools. In addition, safe and free transportation is provided to all students without exception.

Table 69: Percentage of Schools Equipped with Electricity, Internet, Computers, Drinking Water, and Sanitation Facilities

Electricity	Internet	Computers	Drinking Water	Handwashing Facilities	Non-Shared Sanitation Facilities
100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Ministry of Education, Sultanate of Oman

The Ministry of Education works to establish policies and strategies to protect learners and all education personnel, and to address certain behaviors related to violence and bullying by implementing procedural plans to reduce bullying, offering continuous training programs for school social workers and psychologists, and conducting lectures and training sessions on early intervention against bullying, in cooperation with various entities such as the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs. To monitor students’ behavioral discipline, academic performance, and attendance, the Ministry of Education has issued the Student Affairs Regulations for Schools.

Teachers are a key element in achieving the goals of SDG 4, and the relevant authorities in the Sultanate of Oman work to enhance teachers’ capabilities, ensure their professional qualifications, and provide the necessary support—recognizing their vital role in improving learning outcomes—by equipping them with the required technological skills, media literacy, critical thinking abilities, and modern teaching methods to ensure a positive impact and strengthen their leadership in the field.

In line with efforts to increase and supply the education sector with teachers, the Ministry of Education appointed more than 5,600 teachers in the academic year 2023/2024. The

student-to-qualified-teacher ratio reached 12.6, and the percentage of qualified teachers in Oman according to international standards reached 100%. Among them, 85.7% hold a bachelor's degree, 9.1% hold a higher diploma, 2.2% hold a master's degree, and 2.7% hold a diploma. In 2023, the Specialized Institute for Professional Training of Teachers implemented 27 central programs targeting 1,266 trainees, and 109 decentralized programs targeting 5,351 trainees.

Oman is taking significant steps to fulfill its commitments, including:

- Taking appropriate policy-level measures to follow up on the outcomes of the Transforming Education Summit and increasing funding to achieve this transformation.
- Continuing its commitment to the Greening Education Initiative by increasing the number of green schools to 50% of schools in Oman, thereby transitioning toward green digital economies, in cooperation with the private sector, the community, and youth associations and organizations.
- Completing the necessary steps and procedures to professionalize the teaching profession through the National Framework for the Teaching Profession.
- Advancing digital transformation in education and increasing the percentage of digitized educational services.
- Strengthening the implementation of the action plan for using artificial intelligence applications in education.
- Raising students' performance levels in international studies.
- Enhancing monitoring and evaluation processes for SDG 4 and the Transforming Education indicators.

State of Qatar

The development and transformation of education is one of the top priorities of the State of Qatar, which seeks to transform its economy into a knowledge-based economy that ensures the sustainable prosperity of current and future generations (“Education Sector Report in the State of Qatar – Qatar Development Bank”).

In its Strategic Plans for the Education Sector (2024–2030), the Ministry of Education and Higher Education aims to contribute to achieving Qatar’s national development goals by defining strategic initiatives that will transform education into an integrated system capable of delivering national achievements and aspirations. This is to be achieved by preparing a society that can adapt to developments, acquire knowledge, and engage in lifelong learning, as well as by providing the necessary support to ensure learners’ readiness with 21st-century skills as effective leaders and pioneers in meeting the national labor market needs and competitiveness requirements - ultimately ensuring high-quality education for all students.

To guarantee equitable, high-quality learning that leads to effective educational outcomes, the State has established policies and legislation ensuring free education at all levels, and compulsory education from the beginning of primary school until the end of preparatory school or until the age of eighteen—whichever comes first—under Article 49 of the Permanent Constitution of the State of Qatar issued in 2004. The Article stipulates that “Education is the right of every citizen, and the State shall strive to achieve compulsory and free public education in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations of the State.” Article 25 of the same document affirms that “Education is a fundamental pillar of the advancement of society, guaranteed and sponsored by the State, which strives to disseminate and generalize it.”

Quality and Universalization of Education

To reinforce the principle of the right to education and ensure its quality, the State continuously evaluates the education system. One of the key tools in this process is participation in international studies and assessments such as TIMSS, PIRLS, and the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA).

Table 70: TIMSS - Mathematics

Grade/ Year	2015	2019	2023
Grade 4	439	449	464
Grade 8	437	443	451

Table 71: TIMSS - Science

Grade/ Year	2015	2019	2023
Grade 4	436	449	472
Grade 8	457	475	481

Table 72: PISA

Subject	2018	2022
Mathematics	414	414
Science	419	432
Reading	407	419

Table 73: PIRLS

Grade / Year	2016	2021
Grade 4	442	485

Next Generation Curriculum

The project aims to improve learning outcomes at all stages of general education. It includes a comprehensive framework for 21st-century student competencies, a curriculum modernization framework and related standards, with a focus on students' character, competencies, skills, and values required for all age groups and for both genders. In addition, it encompasses a comprehensive competency framework that specifies the minimum required competencies for each grade level, followed by the enhancement of targeted and flexible learning pathways.

Government policies define and regulate the procedures for enrollment in education from nursery to secondary level. These policies comprise a set of guidelines and procedures governing the admission and registration of students in the educational systems provided by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. They establish the criteria and requirements for admission to each program and cover the application and registration process. Furthermore, a number of projects—such as the Enrollment Platform and the Virtual School Project—have been implemented to achieve the goals of enrollment and equal opportunities, aiming to facilitate equitable and inclusive access to both public and private educational institutions for all students, including persons of determination and gifted students.

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Table 74: Gross Intake Ratio in the Last Grade of Primary Education

Gender/ Year	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Males	91,8	93,8	93,1
Females	90,5	95,5	93,3
Total	91,2	94,6	93,2

Source: Labor Force Sample Survey

Table 75: Gross Intake Ratio in the Last Grade of Lower Secondary Education (Grade 9)

Gender/ Year	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Males	87.5	95.5	90.2
Females	89.8	94.5	94.0
Total	88.6	95.0	92.0

Source: Labor Force Sample Survey

Table 76: Completion Rate in the Last Grade of Primary Education (Grade 6)

Gender/ Year	2020	2021	2022
Males	98.9	97.6	98.9
Females	98.3	94.0	94.6
Total	98.6	98.6	96.8

Source: Labor Force Sample Survey

Table 77: Completion Rate in the Last Grade of Lower Secondary Education (Grade 9)

Gender/ Year	2020	2021	2022
Males	96.7	98.8	99.4
Females	98.9	99.1	99.0
Total	97.8	98.9	99.2

Source: Labor Force Sample Survey

Table 78: Completion Rate in the Last Grade of Upper Secondary Education (Grade 12)

Gender/ Year	2020	2021	2022
Males	89.8	91.4	98.4
Females	98.5	97.1	93.1
Total	91.9	93.8	96.4

Source: Labor Force Sample Survey

The admission policies and procedures in the State aim to ensure that all children and students are enrolled in quality educational systems, enabling them to achieve academic success and become capable of contributing to community development. This can be monitored through the Education Admission Platform Project, which seeks to increase enrollment rates in the available educational systems and provide equitable, high-quality educational opportunities for all categories of children and students in the State of Qatar, while reducing the phenomenon of school dropout.

Table 79: Percentage of Children Not Enrolled in Primary Education

Gender/ Year	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Males	12.6	8.4	7.4
Females	12.2	6.8	6.1
Total	12.4	7.6	6.8

Source: Ministry of Education and Higher Education, State of Qatar

Table 80: Percentage of Students Not Enrolled in Lower Secondary Education (Preparatory Stage)

Gender/ Year	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Males	12.6	5.8	7.9
Females	12	4.4	6.4
Total	12.3	5.1	7.2

Source: Ministry of Education and Higher Education, State of Qatar

Table 81: Percentage of Students Not Enrolled in Upper Secondary Education (Secondary Stage)

Gender/ Year	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Males	19.6	15.1	20.9
Females	20.3	9.9	16.5
Total	19.9	12.6	18.8

Source: Ministry of Education and Higher Education, State of Qatar

Table 82: Percentage of Over-Age Children (Primary Level)

Gender/ Year	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Males	0.98	0.97	1.0
Females	0.57	0.66	0.7
Total	0.78	0.82	0.9

Source: Ministry of Education and Higher Education, State of Qatar

Table 83: Percentage of Over-Age Children (Lower Secondary Level)

Gender/ Year	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Males	4.32	4.15	4.0
Females	1.96	2.25	2.2
Total	3.17	3.22	3.1

Source: Ministry of Education and Higher Education, State of Qatar

Early Childhood Education

The Third National Development Strategy places significant emphasis on the early childhood stage, focusing on expanding enrollment opportunities and providing high-quality educational services for students in this age group by increasing the capacity of nurseries and early education programs. The Education Sector Strategy also underscores the importance of the biological revolution and the critical first 1,000 days of a child's life in developing cognitive and critical thinking skills. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education pays close attention to ensuring access to diverse, high-quality educational opportunities for all students across all levels and categories, while placing particular emphasis on safeguarding their physical and psychological well-being and offering options for a healthy lifestyle.

Table 84: Gross Enrollment Ratio in Early Childhood Education

Gender/ Year	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Males	44.3	46.9	49.4
Females	43.9	47.5	50.2
Total	44.1	47.2	49.8

Source: Ministry of Education and Higher Education, State of Qatar

Table 85: Participation Rate in Organized Learning (One Year Before Primary Entry)

Gender/ Year	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Males	8.73	8.75	79.3
Females	9.72	5.77	81.2
Total	4.73	6.76	80.2

Source: Ministry of Education and Higher Education, State of Qatar

As part of intensifying efforts to advance early childhood services, all entities concerned with this age group, whether directly or indirectly, are working in coordination. Regarding the integrated educational care for early childhood, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education develops strategies and processes for early education stages, from kindergarten through grades one to three, monitors the implementation of policies for this educational stage, formulates plans and programs, provides the necessary requirements, and oversees the development of national curricula. It also offers guidance and technical support, ensures the necessary conditions for appointing teaching and administrative staff for early education stages, establishes appropriate standards for assessing and evaluating nurseries in all matters related to the quality of performance in both academic and administrative aspects, and monitors implementation.

The Ministry of Public Health provides school health services, which are a set of services that help children achieve better health, education, culture, and social and physical development by maintaining the highest quality standards of service. Accordingly, the school health program primarily targets children enrolled in schools, aiming to create optimal conditions for learning by providing nurses to work in school health clinics, in addition to delivering preventive health services and clinical school health services.

Table 86: Percentage of Children Under Age Five on Track in Terms of Development in the Areas of Health, Learning, and Psychosocial Well-being, by Gender (2012)

Percentage of children aged 24–59 months who are on track in the areas of health, learning, and (social-emotional development – Qatar (2023		
Category	Early Childhood Development Index 2030	Number of Children (Aged (24–59 months
Total	84.5	1,871
Gender		
Male	82.6	949
Female	86.5	922
Nationality		
Qatari	86.7	273
Non-Qatari	84.2	1598
(Age (in months		
24-35	79.6	590
36-47	88.5	627
48-59	85.2	654
Enrollment in Early Childhood Education Program		
Enrolled	87.1	1,080
Not Enrolled	81.1	790
Mother’s Educational Level		
Pre-primary or no education	(*)	6
Primary	68.5	59
Preparatory	75.0	87
Secondary or higher	85.6	1,720
Functional Difficulties		
Has difficulty	(63.5)	29
Has no difficulty	84.9	1,842
<p>Early Childhood Development Index – TC.53, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), SDG * Indicator 4.2.1</p> <p>Children aged two years are excluded, as enrollment data in early childhood education is collected only for ages 3–4 years</p> <p>.Fewer than 25 cases – unweighted (*)</p> <p>.cases – unweighted 49–25 ()</p>		

Source: Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2023 Results – Published: December 2024

Planning and Statistics Authority, Qatar Sustainable Development Goals Snapshot Report 2022

Other entities also fulfill their responsibilities toward this group. Among the most notable efforts by the Ministry of Culture directed toward children is the establishment of the State Award for Children’s Literature, which aims to encourage writers, authors, and creative individuals to produce high-quality works in the fields of children’s literature and arts that would develop children’s literary and cultural abilities, foster their literary awareness, and enrich both Qatari and Arab libraries.

Qatar National Library provides a dedicated children’s library containing more than 100,000 books, in addition to e-books, educational and interactive games, and other programs and activities to meet their needs and develop their interests, talents, and skills. The library also offers resources and references for parents, caregivers, and teachers to provide them with information to support children’s growth and well-being.

Higher and Vocational Education

Within the policy framework, the State continually seeks to review and assess national legislation, including laws that guarantee equal opportunities for access to technical, vocational, and higher education. Efforts are directed toward aligning educational outputs with labor market demands, in line with national priorities, to meet both current and future workforce needs.

Relevant authorities are working to expand the scope of high-quality and relevant academic programs in higher education and to enhance the alignment of skills and qualifications with labor market supply and demand.

The State is also exploring mechanisms to encourage both Qatari and non-Qatari students of both genders to enroll in technical and vocational education programs, as well as to promote higher education enrollment among males, in accordance with national priorities and labor market needs.

The gross enrollment rate in higher education reached 37.6% in the academic year 2022/2023.

Table 87: Gross Enrollment Ratio in Higher Education

Gender/ Year	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Males	1. 14	5 .16	19.4
Females	2. 68	3 .77	72.2
Total	3. 31	1. 35	38.2

Source: Ministry of Education and Higher Education, State of Qatar

Sunrise Initiative (Emerging Buds)

A national initiative that fulfills the goals of enrollment, equal opportunities, and quality in early childhood and pre-primary education. It aims to encourage enrollment and to qualify and train stakeholders—such as leaders, principals, and specialists in this stage—to ensure the provision of the necessary care and development for children. A set of projects has been identified to achieve this initiative, including raising awareness among prospective parents about the importance of early education from educational, pedagogical, and health perspectives. This initiative has been accompanied by the expansion of the capacity of nurseries and daycare centers through cooperation with and incentivization of the private sector.

As for technical and vocational education pathways, they extend for two years in Grades 11 and 12, while some span three years from Grade 10 to Grade 12. They cover a wide range of tracks and specializations, such as mechanics, welding, and electricity; precision machinery and electronics; industrial operations; laboratory technologies; safety and security; information technology; business administration; banking sciences; biomedical sciences; artificial intelligence; investment; auditing; statistics; and all engineering disciplines.

The scholarship policy aims to increase the number and proportion of individuals obtaining diplomas, bachelor's degrees, and postgraduate qualifications in various specializations, in order to improve education indicators related to the knowledge economy. *(Source: Ministry of Education and Higher Education website, 12/12/2024)*

This policy also focuses on four key principles: quality, excellence, and commitment, while ensuring alignment between the pillars of the National Vision and the strategic objectives of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education—namely, economic growth, equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion, and talent development.

These principles are reflected in the capacity of the target group for this policy, as well as in the pathways and opportunities available to them. The number of students sponsored for study abroad has reached 4,000.

The State is also working on designing and implementing the Technical Education and Vocational Training Governance Initiative, which aims to establish and execute a governance model for this type of education as part of the governance of the future workforce. This involves defining a clear concept of technical education and vocational training governance, studying gaps, requirements, and opportunities for all groups, determining responsibilities to enhance governance, and reviewing quality assurance and accreditation processes for technical and vocational education—covering curricula and learning resources.

In light of technological advancements and the need to develop the knowledge and skills required for work and life, the State has implemented a number of projects and programs, including:

- Curriculum Framework and Standards Review Project, with a focus on the competencies, skills, and values required.
- Learning Resources and Methods Adaptation Project, aimed at aligning resources and teaching methods with updated curricula, and leveraging digital capabilities to enhance students' ability to absorb and apply new knowledge and skills that meet the demands of the modern era and sustainable development, as well as foundational and future skills that contribute to securing suitable employment in the future.
- After the Bell Initiative, which provides after-school programs focusing on core competencies and skills, and organizes training camps to build knowledge in specific subject areas related to financial literacy, science, technology, and engineering.

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education is making significant efforts to enhance the role of artificial intelligence in the educational process. These efforts include providing training programs for teachers and school leaders on the use of AI applications in education, raising awareness about AI ethics and the challenges of its use, and working to develop and update students' core AI-related skills by integrating them into the curricula—such as the principles of artificial intelligence and algorithms, as well as the programming and design of robots.

Implementation of a cooperation initiative with the Cisco Global Academy was carried out in its pilot phase in ten secondary schools for boys and girls between February and July 2024. The initiative aimed to provide the necessary technical training for students in the technology track in Grades 11 and 12, in addition to training computer science teachers and IT coordinators (71 male and female teachers) in the fields of cybersecurity, computer networks, programming, information science, and operating systems. The content of these fields was aligned with the curricula and instructional units.

The Ministry, in cooperation with UNESCO, conducted a survey study comparing the artificial intelligence standards in Qatar's computing and information technology curricula with the United Nations standards outlined in UNESCO's Artificial Intelligence Standards (12k) document. The study included estimating the relative weight associated with each standard, preparing a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the AI curriculum, and assessing its alignment with the Beijing Agreement (2019) and the organization's 2022 standards document. In addition, information security was incorporated into the domains and standards of computing and information technology, alongside professional development for teachers—delivered through the Training and Educational Development Center—covering information security, network security, and application security.

Table 88: Percentage of Adults (25–74) with ICT Skills, by Type of Skill

No.	Type of Skill	Gender	2019	2020	2021
1	Sending emails with attachments	Male	54.0	53.1	53.5
		Female	62.0	64.2	63.3
		Average (Total)	58.0	58.7	58.2
2	Using copy-and-paste tools to duplicate or move information within a document	Male	40.0	41.8	53.1
		Female	49.0	52.0	49.9
		Average (Total)	44.0	47.0	51.6
3	Connecting and installing new devices	Male	32.0	33.9	32.9
		Female	40.0	42.9	37.8
		Average (Total)	36.0	38.5	35.2
4	Using a basic formula in a spreadsheet	Male	30.0	27.8	29.0
		Female	20.0	18.9	20.1
		Average (Total)	25.0	23.2	24.8
5	Writing computer programs using a specialized programming language	Male	7.0	6.8	...
		Female	4.0	3.0	...
		Average (Total)	5.0	4.9	...
6	Creating electronic presentations using presentation software	Male	21.0	19.2	19.1
		Female	24.0	23.1	21.1
		Average (Total)	22.0	21.2	20.1
7	Searching for, downloading, installing, and configuring software	Male	41.0	41.9	41.3
		Female	34.0	32.5	28.4
		Average (Total)	37.0	37.1	35.1
8	Transferring files between a computer and other devices	Male	36.0	33.1	32.1
		Female	36.0	25.3	25.5
		Average (Total)	32.0	29.1	28.9

Source: Sustainable Development Goals Report, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology

In the area of achieving the quality pillar, ensuring the quality of education and research, and aligning the student mix with future needs to promote sustainable social, human, and environmental development, this requires the establishment of a national workforce planning mechanism with a clear governance model across all entities, supported by enhanced data analysis capabilities. This will be accomplished through a set of sub-projects aimed at enhancing the capabilities of the national workforce holding academic and professional qualifications, based on the needs of both the public and private sectors.

Table 89: Educational Attainment Rates for Youth/Adults by Age Group, Economic Activity Level, Educational Level, and Program Orientation

Year	2020			2021			2022		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Illiterate	0.8	0.6	0.8	0.9	0.5	0.8	0.8	0.5	0.7
Literate	9.2	5.6	8.4	9.3	5.0	8.4	8.9	6.0	8.3
Primary	20.3	9.0	18.0	19.9	8.4	17.3	19.2	8.0	16.5
Preparatory	26.3	15.6	24.1	26.7	17.2	24.6	26.2	15.6	23.7
Secondary	16.7	28.4	19.1	16.6	27.8	19.1	16.7	24.3	18.5
(Diploma (below university	2.6	3.1	2.7	2.5	3.4	2.7	4.4	3.6	4.2
University and above	24.1	37.7	26.9	24.1	37.7	27.1	23.8	42.0	28.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Labor Force Survey

Gender Equality and Persons of Disabilities

Based on the recognition that education is a public good, all policies and legislation are geared towards ensuring inclusion, equality, equity, and well-being for all students. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education has been committed to achieving gender equality in the development process, as well as equal educational opportunities for all, at every stage of education. This is evident from the indicators that reflect the high level of equality between males and females.

Table 90: Gender Parity Index

Academic Year	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Gross Enrollment in Pre-Primary Education	0.99	1.01	1.03
Gross Enrollment in Grade 1	1.02	1.01	1.03
Gross Enrollment in Primary Education	1.00	1.01	1.01
Gross Enrollment in Preparatory Education	0.99	1.00	0.99
Gross Enrollment in Secondary Education	1.00	1.06	1.01
Net Enrollment in Primary Education	1.01	1.02	1.01
Net Enrollment in Preparatory Education	1.02	1.02	1.01
Net Enrollment in Secondary Education	1.03	1.10	1.04
Gender Parity Rate in Government Education	Males: 28.7 Females: 32.5	Males: 30.1 Females: 34.4	Males: 30.6 Females: 34.9

Source: Ministry of Education and Higher Education, State of Qatar.

* The parity index was calculated for the net enrollment in the three stages. The gender parity rate in government education is presented regardless of stage (from kindergarten to secondary education). The gross enrollment rate in Grade 1 was calculated for the 6-year-old age group.

The State places great emphasis on protecting persons of determination. For example, the provisions of Law No. 2 of 2004 included several key areas, most notably those related to education. In addition, Amiri Decree No. 29 of 2008 ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Department of Special Education and Inclusive Education at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education is the competent authority responsible for monitoring the care, education, and full inclusion of students with disabilities. The Department has issued the Inclusive Education Policy and developed the general framework for granting students with disabilities access to the mainstream curriculum.

The national strategy aims to integrate persons with disabilities into all educational stages at a rate of 25% annually until 2026, in addition to increasing the number of specialized schools by 3% in the coming years. In this context, 86 public inclusive schools have been made available, covering all educational stages, where students learn alongside their peers. In addition, there are intensive specialized schools in the field of special education for students requiring additional support, including those with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities and autism spectrum disorder, totaling eight schools to ensure their successful integration later into inclusive schools, as well as boys' and girls' auditory education schools.

There are also specialized schools (private and those affiliated with Qatar Foundation), the Shafallah Center for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities and Autism, and the Al Noor Center for the Blind, both affiliated with the Qatar Social Work Foundation, in addition to a number of private educational centers providing services for students with disabilities. Furthermore, technical and vocational pathways have been introduced at the secondary education stage for students with disabilities.

Most recently, the Warf Academy for Students with Severe and Multiple Disabilities was inaugurated in partnership with Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, with support from the Ministry of Public Health.

Literacy and Adult Education

The literacy and adult education programs and policies adopted by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education have shown notable results, both among youth and adults, with the literacy rate among adults aged 15 and above reaching **99.3%** according to 2022 data. The Ministry has made efforts to incorporate information and communication technology into literacy programs, providing practical computer training for first, second, and third-level classes in evening adult education centers. The training covers basic computer skills, including how to operate a computer, navigate its essential functions, and register in schools.

Table 91: Youth Literacy Rate (Ages 15–24)

Gender/ Year	2020	2021	2022
Males	99.8	99.1	99.0
Females	100.0	100	100
Total	99.8	99.4	99.4

Source: Labor Force Sample Survey

Table 92: Adult Literacy Rate (Ages 15 and Above)

Gender/ Year	2020	2021	2022
Males	99.2	99.1	99.2
Females	99.4	99.5	99.5
Total	99.2	99.2	99.3

Source: Labor Force Sample Survey

The Ministry is currently organizing literacy efforts through the General Framework for Adult Education. Curricula for the first and second levels of adult education have been developed, and a third level has been introduced. The first level, for example, focuses on the essential skills that must be acquired at this stage—namely reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Sustainable Development

One of the key principles underpinning the transformation of learning in the State of Qatar is the promotion of responsibility and the cultivation of community awareness toward contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), safeguarding the safety and sustainability of environmental balance, and shaping learners’ behaviors and personalities to enhance citizens’ global competitiveness and instill values in them.

The General Framework of the National Curriculum in the State of Qatar consists of core components: values, goals, principles, competencies, academic subjects, and cross-cutting issues, all designed to serve the Qatar National Vision. The framework is built upon the following main objectives:

1. Lifelong successful learning.
2. Moral, personal, and social growth.
3. Active and responsible citizenship.
4. Commitment to sustainable development.

Topics related to education for sustainable development, global citizenship, human rights, gender equality, health, and climate change are integrated into the curricula in a holistic manner, in accordance with the General Framework of the National Curriculum. The philosophy and orientations of this framework emphasize the importance of fostering a culture of coexistence, tolerance, and dialogue, combating hatred, rejecting violence

and extremism, and enhancing the capacity to learn to live together in a peaceful and constructive way.

The extent to which students acquire knowledge and skills related to sustainable development and citizenship is assessed through the inclusion of these topics in student assessments and examinations—specifically in Arabic language subjects across all stages, Social Studies at the basic education level, and Geography and History at the secondary level. This is carried out using various strategies, such as observation, communication, paper-and-pencil tests (short quizzes), and final assessments.

It is worth noting that the Social Studies curriculum contains a fixed and approved section on citizenship that is included across different stages of education. Additionally, students participate in international assessments (TIMSS, PIRLS, PISA). The Educational Training and Development Center also provides training for teachers—both male and female—on textbooks and curricula related to teaching topics on sustainable development and citizenship.

Green School Award

Supervised by the Saad Group in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, this award was launched in 2023 as a national competition among schools. It aims to instill the principle of sustainability in the form of an educational curriculum focused on preserving and protecting environmental resources, while fostering a generation that is aware, capable, and ready to face challenges in building a sustainable future.

Table 93: Extent of Mainstreaming Citizenship Education and Sustainable Development Topics in the Education System

Year	Domain	Value	The value ranges from 0 to 1, where a higher value indicates greater mainstreaming, inclusion, and teaching of citizenship, environment, and sustainable development topics
2020	Curriculum	1	
2020	National Educational policies	1	
2020	Student Assessment	1	
2020	Teacher Training	1	

Source: Planning and Statistics Authority, *Brief Report on Sustainable Development Goals 2022 in the State of Qatar*.

Qatar announced its official accession to the *Greening Education Partnership* initiative, which was launched following the Transforming Education Summit in New York in 2022. The country has worked on forging partnerships to prepare all learners to acquire the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary to address climate change, promote sustainable development, and develop the competencies required for the transition to a green economy.

In this context, Qatar announced the launch of the STEAMathon Qatar competition in 2024, aimed at fostering innovative thinking and the practical design of sustainable solu-

tions to environmental and climate challenges facing both Qatar and the world. The competition is based on the integrated STEAM methodology, which combines science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics.

The iEARN-Qatar program has also been rolled out to schools. Supervised by Education Above All Foundation in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the Qatar National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, the program aims to provide training services for teachers to enable students in Qatar to implement projects that contribute to the health and well-being of the community. This is achieved by integrating project-based learning into teaching practices and giving students the opportunity to carry out projects designed to make a meaningful contribution to community health and well-being, in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals, thereby fostering knowledge, life skills, and values that help students grow into productive and active citizens.

All schools provide 100% coverage of awareness programs and life skills education related to HIV/AIDS, accompanied by both curricular and extracurricular educational activities.

Providing an Equitable and Safe Learning Environments

To ensure a safe, equitable, and inclusive learning environment that accommodates all differences, public school buildings have been designed according to the latest engineering designs and international standards. These designs meet the diverse needs of all students, regardless of their abilities and requirements. Measures include the construction of ramps to facilitate access for persons with mobility impairments, accessible restrooms, and elevators for their use.

In addition, various services are provided for students with disabilities in both public schools and specialized schools. These services include transportation, supportive educational and therapeutic services, resource rooms, and sensory stimulation rooms.

In its efforts to protect students, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education has prepared the Student Life Protection Policy Draft 2024. This policy is based on a set of guiding principles aimed at providing a comprehensive framework covering all aspects of protecting students' lives from kindergarten to Grade 12. It ensures that every student is given the best possible opportunities to develop their skills, refine their knowledge, and achieve personal growth in line with their capabilities.

The policy emphasizes best practices that address the ethical, psychological, health, social, and physical aspects of the educational environment, while also raising awareness among the school community, parents, and students about the roles, duties, and responsibilities that contribute to students' well-being. It aims to protect students from all forms of abuse and foster an institutional culture that upholds the highest ethical standards in the educational setting.

In parallel, school buildings have been developed to align with sustainability standards by following Qatar’s GSAS (Global Sustainability Assessment System) criteria. Eight schools have so far achieved a 3-star GSAS rating based on several indicators, including sustainable design, energy efficiency, water management, indoor air quality, waste recycling, community sustainability, and continuous evaluation and improvement.

Additionally, 14 school buildings currently under construction are designed to obtain a GSAS 3-star rating. Efforts are underway to upgrade most school facilities to become environmentally friendly, through measures such as switching to LED lighting, using solar energy to power certain lighting systems and other applications, and installing water-saving faucets — all of which have had a positive impact on energy consumption.

Draft Student Well-being Policy

Aims to provide an integrated policy covering all aspects related to the student’s quality of life from kindergarten to grade 12, transform schools into beacons of knowledge, ensure safe and high-quality academic experiences for all students, and achieve constructive and purposeful community partnerships that enhance the aspects of students’ quality of life inside and outside public schools and kindergartens. This includes several areas such as mental and physical health, social culture, cultural activities, and activities to promote Islamic values and national identity.

Table 94: Percentage of Schools Equipped with Electricity, Internet, Computers, Drinking Water, and Sanitation Facilities

Electricity	Internet	Computers	Drinking Water	Handwashing Facilities	Non-Shared Sanitation Facilities
100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Ministry of Education and Higher Education, State of Qatar.

External Educational Scholarships

The State of Qatar is among the donor countries worldwide, offering a number of educational scholarships and assistance to many developing countries and those most in need. The table below shows the volume of relief aid flows for the provision of scholarships.

Table 95: Volume of Official Development Assistance Flows for Scholarships by Sector and Type of Study

Unit	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Qatari Riyal	876,017,384	673,422,295	730,441,407	248,075,934	369,035,096
US Dollar	240,664,116	185,006,125	200,670,716	68,152,729	101,383,268

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Reference: Planning and Statistics Authority, Sustainable Development Goals Brief Report 2022 in the State of Qatar.

The Smart Scholarship Project offered by the Government of the State of Qatar is considered one of the most important initiatives for attracting students in priority specializations for both the private and public sectors. Its main objective is to reorganize scholarships and study grants, directing them toward the most critical fields. This is achieved through several key steps, starting with identifying and ranking priority fields and specializations according to sector needs, and linking them to scholarship programs offered by leading educational institutions. It also includes establishing policies to follow up on targeted non-Qatari beneficiaries, and coordinating with relevant authorities to reduce potential difficulties they may face.

In addition, there is the Qatar Scholarship Program (Al Fakhoora Program), which aims to empower marginalized youth, refugees, and displaced persons by providing opportunities for higher education. Since its inception, Al Fakhoora has committed to offering 10,000 scholarships to enhance young people’s capabilities and prepare them to become productive individuals contributing to their communities.

”The Strategic Program “Study in Qatar

This program is linked to the launch of a media plan aimed at attracting non-Qataris to enroll in higher, technical, and vocational education, alongside the launch of the “Study in Qatar” platform. The objective is to attract international students to study at national and private universities in Qatar, with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education ensuring and leading the process in the right direction. The program will also involve signing agreements with various institutions to adopt unified and aligned mechanisms regarding tuition fees for non-Qataris, in line with and supporting the objectives of sustainable development.

Al Fakhoora’s efforts include partnerships with UN agencies and prestigious educational institutions in the Middle East and around the world, in countries such as Palestine, Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, and Qatar, as well as in France, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. Over the past years, the Al Fakhoora program has contributed to improving access to higher education for marginalized groups, refugees, and displaced persons. This has led to increased education rates in the target communities, empowering students and graduates of the program to acquire the life skills and knowledge necessary to excel in their academic and professional fields, and enhancing their chances of obtaining good jobs—thus helping improve the living conditions of beneficiaries, supporting the economic stability of communities, and strengthening relations between countries through learning, thereby contributing to building bridges of understanding and cooperation between different cultures.

As part of the Al Fakhoora project, the “Qatar Scholarship Program in Arabic” is implemented with Bard College, where the Education Above All Foundation has contributed

to increasing the number of qualified teachers in the West Bank, Palestine, through a strategic partnership with Bard College in New York and Al-Quds University in Palestine. The program has offered Palestinian- and American-accredited master’s scholarships to 250 male and female teachers in West Bank schools.

Human Resources

As part of the leadership’s commitment in the State of Qatar to advancing the teaching profession and attracting Qataris to this career, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education has launched numerous strategic training and incentive programs for teachers through the Training and Educational Development Center. These are built on identifying annual training needs as follows:

- **First: Qualification** – A program aimed at preparing school leader candidates to assume the role by equipping them with professional competencies related to their job responsibilities, ensuring their proper preparation and honing their skills to create a highly professional school community and a positive school climate.
- **Second: Empowerment** – Targeting new teachers from within or outside the country, to train and enable them to carry out their educational responsibilities in the educational field.
- **Third: Specialization** – Comprising a number of programs designed and implemented either for specific specializations, certain roles, or specialized schools with unique needs and requirements.
- **Fourth: Licensing** – Programs built on the national professional standards for teachers and school leaders, required to obtain professional licenses at various levels for career advancement purposes.
- **Fifth: Choice** – A track designed to provide optional programs that offer the opportunity to meet the individual needs of teachers and school leaders.

Table 96: Percentage of Teachers Qualified According to National Standards

Academic Year	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Stage			
Pre-Primary	100%	100%	100%
Primary	100%	100%	100%
Preparatory	100%	100%	100%
Secondary	100%	100%	100%

Source: Ministry of Education and Higher Education, State of Qatar

This is in addition to the “Successful Start” program, which aims to prepare new teachers through a variety of learning resources and guidance sessions during their first academic year. The Training and Development Center has also launched the (Khebrat) program, whose philosophy is to equip teachers in government schools with experiences and teaching practices that benefit from diverse and varied educational approaches, by sending a number of teachers to advanced countries in the field of education to engage in fellowships and live-in experiences in schools in those countries. The aim of this program is to develop the leadership skills and creative teaching methods of government school teachers, enabling them to perform their duties efficiently and effectively.

Table 97: Average Number of Students per Teacher by Educational Level

Academic Year	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Stage			
Pre-Primary	13.12	13.97	15,7
Primary	12.54	12.67	12.4
Preparatory	13.64	14.25	13.29
Secondary	11.51	11.20	11.82

Source: Ministry of Education and Higher Education, State of Qatar

Conclusion

Towards Sustainable, Participatory, and Data-Driven Education

The education systems in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries represent a key pillar for achieving comprehensive and sustainable development. They gain even greater importance in light of accelerating global changes—whether in terms of digital transformation, food and energy security challenges, or the requirements of green and digital economies. In this context, education emerges not only as a tool for individual empowerment, but as a sovereign and strategic matter upon which nations are built and through which they compete.

The GCC countries have made great strides in educational reform through ambitious national plans, significant investments, and institutional and pedagogical development programs. These efforts have resulted in improved educational indicators, a noticeable rise in enrollment rates, advancements in infrastructure and digital readiness, and the emergence of prestigious universities and research institutions.

In recent years, the GCC has achieved qualitative leaps in education indicators, clearly highlighted by national data and regional and international reports—whether in enrollment rates, results in international assessments such as TIMSS, PIRLS, and PISA, or in the expansion of inclusive education, digital learning, and early childhood education.

However, sustaining this development momentum requires moving beyond individual achievements towards building a GCC-wide reference model for education—one that capitalizes on regional integration, leverages the comparative advantages of each country, and strengthens the effectiveness of public policies in light of rapidly evolving regional and global challenges.

This report affirms, with evidence, the tangible progress achieved by all GCC countries and their deep, ongoing commitment to ensuring inclusive and quality education, in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals.

The GCC countries have adopted integrated new strategies that align with the objectives of Goal 4 and the key outcomes of the 2022 Transforming Education Summit (TES) as part of their national development models. They have invested generously in education, restructuring the educational landscape by revisiting sector governance and distributing responsibilities among government actors to ensure greater coherence and effectiveness, as well as establishing coordination and monitoring bodies to achieve genuine and sustainable reform.

As a result, they have achieved highly positive and commendable outcomes—often surpassing those of some developed countries—particularly in areas such as quality of education, performance in international assessments, levels of public spending, and the

provision of high-standard infrastructure and safe learning environments. These achievements confirm the upward trajectory of educational reform in the Gulf, which is based on cumulative progress, gradual development, and scaling up of successful initiatives.

Nevertheless, the next phase requires a qualitative shift in the regional approach, focusing on enhancing synergy among countries and unifying efforts to address recurring challenges, such as misalignment between education and labor market needs, disparities in statistical capacities, limited investment in educational research, and the absence of unified regional benchmarks for education quality. Global transformations—including digitalization, artificial intelligence, and climate change—also compel the GCC to redesign their educational policies within an integrated regional vision based on evidence-driven planning, effective governance, and multi-sectoral collaboration, with the aim of building a resilient, equitable, and inclusive education system capable of meeting future demands and strengthening the region’s competitiveness.

From Opportunities to Initiatives – Turning Potential into Integrated Projects

The GCC countries possess a set of unique opportunities that provide fertile ground for launching joint regional educational initiatives capable of advancing educational systems and achieving higher levels of integration and coordination among member states. The most notable of these opportunities include:

- Convergence in national educational policies and priorities, as GCC states share development visions that place education at the core of achieving sustainable development and building human capital. This facilitates the alignment of strategies and the formulation of regional programs with shared goals.
- Advanced digital and technological infrastructure, including high-speed internet networks, e-learning platforms, and the widespread provision of smart devices in schools. This enables the implementation of joint initiatives in digital education, the unification of educational data systems, and the comprehensive digital transformation of the sector.
- Flexible financial and investment capacity, stemming from relative economic stability and the allocation of significant proportions of national budgets to education in most GCC countries. This allows for the funding of large-scale regional educational projects without overreliance on external aid.
- Availability of qualified national talent and advanced educational expertise, including specialists in educational planning, quality assurance, artificial intelligence in education, and curriculum development. This makes it possible to form multi-disciplinary GCC working teams capable of effectively designing and implementing initiatives.
- Clear political will to support educational reform, as reflected in official statements, dedicated budgets, and the establishment of institutional entities for educational development, alongside openness to regional and international cooperation—en-

hancing the prospects of adopting high-level joint educational projects.

- A wealth of qualified national educators, educational experts, and policymakers capable of leading joint educational transformation, along with successful national experiences that can be transformed into transferable “regional reference models.”
- Strong financial resources, robust political support, and high-level government commitment to public education funding, generous spending on national initiatives, and readiness from the highest political levels to engage in international initiatives and expand regional cooperation.
- A supportive institutional environment for joint regional work, through the presence of active regional bodies such as the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States, the Regional Center for Educational Planning, and the UNESCO Office for the Gulf States and Yemen, which provide a suitable structure for coordination and management of joint projects. These entities maintain productive collaborative relationships with international organizations, offering a supportive environment for technical assistance and benchmarking.

Based on these considerations, translating these opportunities into concrete programs requires moving from theory to execution, and from national action to joint planning. In this context, we propose launching a package of integrated GCC initiatives that could form the foundation for a pioneering Gulf educational model, as follows:

1. GCC Educational Data and Analytical Platform

Aims to build a unified regional database for SDG 4 indicators and develop interactive analytical tools to support evidence-based planning, through an institutional partnership between ministries of education and partner institutions across the GCC.

2. “Empowered Gulf Teacher” Program

Seeks to unify teacher accreditation and qualification standards, implement joint digital training programs, enable the exchange of educational expertise among member states, and adopt clear career pathways for professional advancement and retention of exceptional educators.

3. Unified GCC Qualifications Framework for Technical and Vocational Education

Enhances the alignment of educational outcomes with the regional labor market by harmonizing reference frameworks for technical and vocational qualifications and adopting joint programs in collaboration with the private sector.

4. “Gulf Digital School” Project

Focuses on creating a GCC-wide digital education platform offering unified content in core subjects, supporting self-learning, emergency education, digital teacher training, and the exchange of open educational resources.

5. “Generations of the Gulf for Sustainability and Citizenship” Initiative

Aims to promote education for sustainable development, tolerance, and citizenship by integrating joint environmental and human rights modules, organizing a “GCC Student Parliament,” and preparing young ambassadors to represent the Gulf at international forums.

6. GCC Educational Leadership Program

Develops school leadership capacities through reciprocal field visits, joint training in planning tools, and the creation of a “Regional Guide for Effective Educational Leadership” tailored to Gulf contexts.

7. GCC Center for Curriculum Development and Future Skills Integration

Dedicated to developing shared curriculum reference frameworks, embedding 21st-century skills, enriching values-based educational content, and building flexible tools to update curricula in line with global changes.

While these integrated initiatives provide a solid foundation for practical cooperation, achieving sustainable impact also requires a broader review of educational policies through comprehensive strategic recommendations that enhance the effectiveness of educational systems and support the path toward achieving SDG 4.

The GCC countries’ response to international calls—particularly those from the 2022 Transforming Education Summit and the 2024 Fortaleza Declaration—represents a strategic opportunity to rethink education systems through a new vision grounded in accurate data, evidence-based planning, smart resource allocation, and the alignment of educational policies with other economic and social sectors, within integrated, multisectoral national strategies.

One of the keys to success lies in building a participatory education ecosystem that engages government entities, educational institutions, the private sector, civil society, parents, and young people themselves, under a clear vision based on complementarity of roles and responsibilities. The private sector’s contribution must go beyond sponsorship to include investment and initiative, while the role of civil society should extend beyond oversight to mobilization, advocacy, and accountability. Teachers, meanwhile, must be at the heart of renewal and empowerment.

Accordingly, improving education systems in the GCC requires:

- Redefining educational goals to align with global transformations and future skills.
- Continuing to establish new governance systems based on accountability, role clarity, periodic evaluation, and reform.
- Sustaining investment in and expanding access to early childhood education, im-

proving its quality as one of the most critical keys to educational excellence.

- Adopting inclusive policies that ensure equity and equal opportunities for all learners, including persons of determination.
- Strengthening technical and vocational education and linking it to industrial and production transformations to enhance its role as a driver of development.
- Advancing the greening of education, engaging youth in decision-making, and actively participating in international initiatives that support these aims.
- Maintaining strong financial support for the sector and mobilizing additional resources, recognizing that investment in education is an investment in the future, while improving spending efficiency through data, indicators, and results-based, evidence-informed planning.
- Strengthening coordination among GCC states and establishing innovative mechanisms for collective leadership of reforms and the achievement of SDG 4, while capitalizing on successful national experiences. This includes establishing a unified regional learning assessment and measurement system, based on international assessments and validated by UNESCO, adapted to the region's context, enabling more accurate monitoring of education levels and more effective system responses.
- Enhancing integrated systems for assessing education quality, ensuring effective policy implementation, aligning national plans with international standards, and securing sustainable monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
- Completing the digital transformation by further digitizing educational services and ensuring the efficient use of modern technologies in teaching.
- Placing greater emphasis on investing in teachers as the cornerstone of every successful reform, professionalizing teaching, and empowering teachers through continuous training programs, enhanced training systems, incentive policies to attract outstanding educators, and clear career development pathways that ensure their retention in the sector.
- Supporting educational research and pedagogical innovation and working to close the gap between the skills acquired by graduates and the rapidly changing needs of the labor market, through continuous curriculum development to make it more flexible and responsive to global changes, embedding 21st-century skills, and ensuring greater involvement of businesses and the private sector in the educational process.

Finally, it must be emphasized that education in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries is not a developmental luxury, but rather a necessity and a strategic investment in the future—one that shapes generations capable of creativity, competitiveness, coexistence, and contributing to building a fairer and more sustainable world.

Over the past decades, Gulf national experiences have demonstrated that political will -

when backed by a forward-looking vision and high-quality investment in education - can bring about a genuine qualitative shift in the structure of the education system. The GCC countries have witnessed notable improvements in education quality, expanded coverage, innovative tools, and a growing societal awareness of its role as a central driver of development. Comprehensive national frameworks have become pioneering models in leveraging education to build a future founded on innovation, technology, and investment in people.

Nevertheless, addressing the rapidly evolving challenges facing the education sector—from the skills gap and climate change to digital transformation and disparities in access to quality education—requires activating institutional regional partnerships, particularly among GCC ministries of education and specialized entities such as the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States, the Regional Center for Educational Planning, and UNESCO's regional office in Doha. These partnerships form an essential foundation for fostering synergy, unifying efforts, sharing knowledge, and coordinating policies and initiatives according to shared priorities and integrated regional plans.

With its unique advantages—robust infrastructure, political and economic stability, qualified human capital, and clear political will for reform - the GCC is ideally positioned to serve as both a regional and global reference point for an educational model that balances authenticity with modernity, combines efficiency with equity, and elevates education quality from mere indicators to tangible impacts on learners' lives and their communities.

Thus, investing in education is not merely a developmental commitment, but a pledge to the shared future of the region - a guarantee of its advancement, stability, and leadership. Seizing this historic moment, activating joint Gulf action, and turning challenges into opportunities will enable GCC education systems to achieve a qualitative leap toward a more equitable, innovative, and sustainable future, underpinned by collaborative leadership and effective partnerships between educational decision-makers and relevant regional institutions.

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