

Momentum for Education 2030 Educational Quality and Improved Learning Outcomes in the Gulf Cooperation Council States (GCC)

Sultanate of Oman Case Study

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OUTLINE

- I. BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF THE OMAN CASE STUDY**
- II. METHODOLOGY**
- III. OMAN PROGRESS TOWARDS EFA GOALS**
- IV. HIGHLIGHTS OF INTERNATIONAL & NATIONAL ASSESSMENT RESULTS IN OMAN**
- V. EDUCATION 2030 FRAMEWORK OF ACTION: CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES**
- VI. POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WAY FORWARD**

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I. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE OMAN CASE STUDY

- In Oman, what are the most significant achievements towards realizing the EFA Goals especially with regards to gender parity and equality?
- What are the best practices in education that can contribute to achieving the 2030 development goals in Oman?
- With a focus on the quality of education, what are the key challenges and constraints that impede the development of the education system in Oman?
- With a focus on the quality of education, what are the key priorities in Oman for setting a future agenda for Education 2030?

II. METHODOLOGY

- ❑ Document analysis: Literature review; Interpretation; Identifying Research questions
- ❑ Data Analysis: quantitative and qualitative data
- ❑ Case Study Research: Several case- studies to investigate country- specific strengths and weaknesses;
- ❑ Focused Group Discussions: Platforms for different target groups that work on a specific topic; meetings, workshops, seminars, study visits, meetings with target group officials for triangulation of data (e.g. Workshop on GMR Analysis in Oman, National Consultation on Gender Parity in Oman)
- ❑ Analysis of Key Findings
- ❑ Peer Review
- ❑ Final Report

III-A. Education For All (EFA) Goals: EFA progress and challenges in Oman

EFA Goal 1: Early childhood care and education

- In 2014, of the 126,795 children of the official age eligible for pre-primary education in Oman, 54% or 69,986 pupils were enrolled in pre-school education. From those pupils who were enrolled, 55% were female.
- Enrolment in private pre-school institutions as a percentage of total enrolment was 73% in the school year ending in 2014.
- The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for pre-primary education in Oman for pupils of both genders has improved significantly from **2% in 1990 to 54% in 2014**.
- The latest available data confirms that the GPI of the gross enrolment ratio in **pre-primary education in Oman was 0.7 in 1991 and improved to 1 in 2014**. Since the GPI value equals to 1, gender parity has been achieved in pre-school education.
- In 2014, all 2,532 pre-primary teachers in Oman were female and had received the minimum organized teacher training (pre-service or in-service) required to teach in Oman.
- **Fewer than 1 in 3 children aged 3 to 4 years** participate in an early childhood education programs.
- The demand for early childhood education far exceeds the available public and private provision. However, **children from low-income families and those living in rural or remote areas do not have equal access to quality public services for early childhood education**.

III-B. EFA Goal 2: Universal primary education

- In 2014, 233,306 children of both genders were enrolled primary education in Oman. Female pupils accounted for 51% of primary students in 2014.
- The **Adjusted Net Enrolment** rate for students of both genders in primary education has improved significantly from **67% in 1990 to 97% by 2014**.
- Enrolment at public institutions accounted for 79% of all pupils enrolling in primary education in 2014.
- The latest available data for the number of trained primary school teachers in Oman from 2012 showed that all primary school teachers had received the minimum organized teacher training (pre-service or in-service) required for teaching in Oman. Additionally, 51% of teachers in primary education in 2014 were female.
- The pupil-teacher ratio in primary education calculated on a headcount basis in 2012 was 6.5.
- The Number of pupils enrolled in the same grade for a second or further year (Repeaters) in primary education from all grades and both genders was 8,641 in 2013, a substantial reduction since 1990 where there were 27,714 repeaters. However, the GPI percentage of Repeaters in primary education from all grades and both genders **was 0.8 in 2014, indicating that more female pupils are repeaters than males**.
- The survival rate to the last grade evaluates the internal efficiency of the education system in terms of its ability to maintain students. In 2012, the survival rate to the last grade of primary education for male pupils was 99% and 98% for female pupils, showing that nearly all pupils of both genders starting Grade 1 reach the last grade of primary education.
- In the academic year beginning in the year 2013, 502 students, mostly male pupils aged between 6 and 15 years, were enrolled in one of the three special schools established by the state in Muscat for students with intellectual, visual or hearing impairments.

III-C. EFA Goal 3: Learning needs of all youth and adults

- In 2014, 391,099 pupils of both genders were enrolled at public and private secondary education institutions in Oman, a 358% per cent increase since 1990. Except for 73 pupils enrolled in secondary vocational programs at the basic level, in excess of 99 per cent of pupils were enrolled in General education programs.
- 89% of secondary school pupils were enrolled at public schools whilst the remaining 11% studied at private schools.
- The net enrollment ratio for secondary education of both sexes was 88% in 2012.
- **The GPI of the net enrolment ratio for secondary education was 1 in 2012, showing parity between pupils of both genders.**
- All secondary education teachers in 2009 were trained.
- The **youth literacy rate improved to 99% in 2015 from 97% in 2003**. The GPI of the youth literacy rate was 1 in 2015.
- Expenditure on secondary education as percentage of total government expenditure was 3.5% in 2013.
- The number of students enrolled in post-basic technical and vocational education rose from **2,088 students in the academic year 2000-2001 to 6,000 students** in the academic year 2009-2010. This increase amounts to approximately **200% over a period of a decade**. It is noteworthy that half of the students in technical colleges were admitted to the engineering disciplines, an increase likely attributable to the requirements of the labor market.

III-D. EFA Goal 4: Improving levels of adult literacy

- Initiatives to eradicate illiteracy and promote adult education in Oman were established in 1973 and the Decree No. 302/1975 issued the Illiteracy Eradication Law, which was amended in 1981.
- The **adult literacy rate** in Oman improved significantly from **81% in 2003 to 95% by 2015**. This value is 18 points higher than the regional average. The gender parity index of adult literacy was found to be 0.92 in 2015, suggesting that gender parity has almost been achieved with regards to this indicator and that there is equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults in Oman.
- In 2015, the number of **illiterate youth** in Oman was 2,277 females and 4,412 males. Females accounted for 40% of illiterate youth.

III-E. EFA Goal 4:) Improving levels of adult literacy

Table 4.5.1 Source: Adapted from UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015

Indicators	Oman	World
Literacy rate	95% (adults, 2015)	84% (adults)

The level of adult literacy in Oman is even higher than the average world literacy rate.

III-F EFA Goal 5: Gender parity and equality in primary and secondary education

Table 4.5.2: Gender parity index (GPI) of gross enrolment ratios (GERs)

Gender parity index (GPI) of Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)	
Pre-primary education	1.04 (2014)
Primary education	1.09 (2014)
Secondary education	1.01 (2012)
Tertiary education	1.37 (2011)

III-F. EFA Goal 6: Quality of Education

1. On teachers

- 1.1. Establishment of **15 centers** to provide training to its personnel, particularly teachers.
- 1.2 The Cambridge International Diploma for Teachers and Trainers (CIDTT) has helped to decentralize professional training and ensure the quality of education.
- 1.3 An **Intel Education Programme** to train teachers to use **technology** effectively in the classroom.

III-F. EFA Goal 6: Quality of Education

- On students

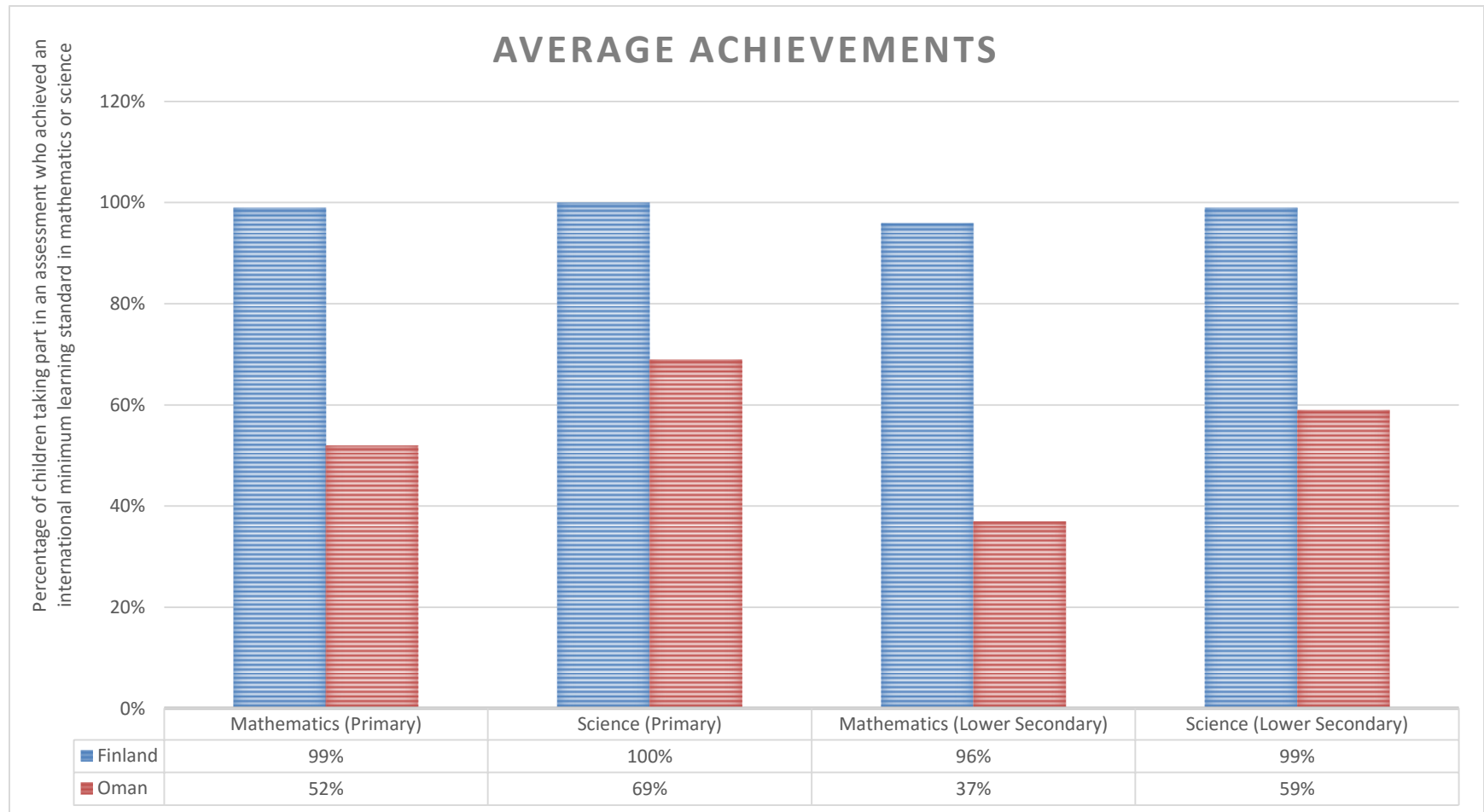
While the number of qualified **teachers** in Oman has **increased** steadily, the **student-teacher ratio** in Oman has declined across all educational levels in public schools.

The pupil-teacher ratio in primary education based on headcounts of pupils and teachers was 6.5, a value significantly lower than the world average number of 24. In grades 10 to 12 this ratio was 11 students per teacher in the academic year 2011-2012. However, the ratio at the secondary level was 20.2 in 2009, but no new data has been reported since this date.

IV-A Learning Outcomes: National and international assessments

Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)

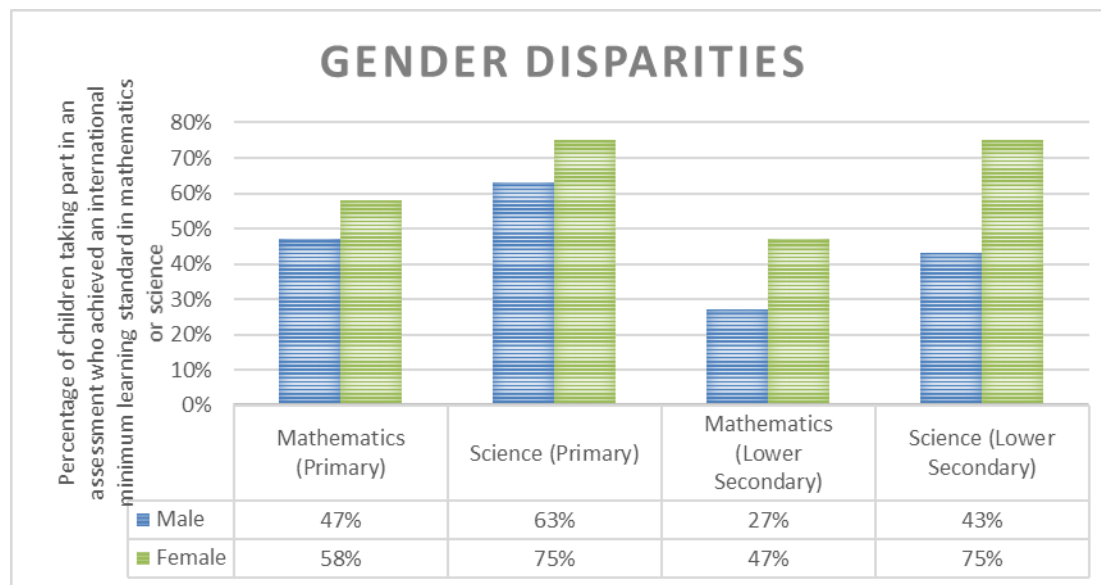
2007/2011



IV- B Learning Outcomes: National and international assessments Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2007/2011.

Gender discrepancy in learning achievement: Girls outperform boys in mathematics and science.

Figure 4.5.4: Gender Disparity and educational achievement in Oman, TIMSS 2011 (Source: UNESCO, data: World Inequality Database on Education (WIDE))



UNESCO. *World Inequality Database On Education – Oman.*

IV- C Factors Associated with Gender Differences in educational achievement in Oman

1. In **Grade 1**, where pupils of both genders are taught together, **females consistently outperform males**. This suggests that a factor of early experiences in the home, which precedes formal learning in schools, contributes to gender differences in educational attainment.
 2. The responses from grade 8 pupils to a TIMSS 2007 questionnaire showed that female pupils were less likely to watch television and play video games than male pupils. Females were also more likely to read for enjoyment. Furthermore, 69 per cent of female students indicated that they spent at least one hour every night completing homework compared to 48 per cent of males. This is evidence that gender differences in educational achievement may result from male pupils engaging in less constructive activities outside of the classroom.
 3. TIMSS 2007 questionnaire of pupils confidence in their ability to learn mathematics and science found that male pupils were more confident in their abilities than females. However, males were mistaken in understanding their ability to learn because they underperformed in comparison to females.
- *Sources: The Ministry of Education and The World Bank. Education in Oman – The Drive for Quality, TIMSS 2007 report*

IV-D. Learning Outcomes: National and international assessments Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2007/2011.



V-A Continuing educational challenges in Oman

- Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for teachers
- ICT in the classroom
- Lack of parental involvement
- Lack of qualified Omani specialist teachers
- Youth Unemployment
- Special Needs Education

V-B. Education 2030 Framework of Action: Challenges and Priorities

Table 4.5.30: Target 4.1

By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

Key Areas	Indicator	Challenges	Priorities
Learning	Increase Percentage of children/young people (i) at the end of primary and (ii) at end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (a) reading and (b) mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Lack of a stimulating environment in school and at home. – Geographic obstacles – Society's awareness of the importance of reading – Economic resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Clear laws exist with regards to compulsory education. – The involvement of families. – The creation of mobile libraries. – Activation of class libraries. – Activate the 1 hour reading in class. – Curricula computation and the use of technology in activities and games to encourage reading. – Training teachers.
	Administration of a nationally representative learning assessment (i) during primary (ii) at the end of primary and (iii) at the end of lower secondary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Review curricula to be in line with the assessment procedures and teaching methods. – Clear standards and performance indicators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Development of educational assessment methods, and training teachers and stakeholders. – Guarantee the quality of the assessment and its relevant tools.

Table 4.5.30: Target 4.1

By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

Key Areas	Indicator	Challenges	Priorities
Completion	Increase Gross intake ratio to the last grade (primary, lower secondary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– School dropouts.– Raising society's awareness about the dangers of school dropout.– The family's economic status.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Implement organizational lists for the sustainability of discipline and educational commitment.– Implement the children's law on child labor.
	Completion rate (primary, lower secondary, upper secondary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Curricula's inflexibility.– Lack of different academic programs.– Lack of organizational lists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Adopt laws that guarantee students' educational completion.– Diversify educational programs (vocational, trade, agricultural, mechanical programs).– Take into consideration the different educational programs in the national qualifications framework.

Table 4.5.30: Target 4.1

By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

Key Areas	Indicator	Challenges	Priorities
Participation	Decrease Out-of-school rate (primary, lower secondary, upper secondary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– The phenomenon's endurance.– Social environment and economic situation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Promulgate laws that ensure students' completion of their education.– Create a stimulating environment for students and teachers.– Diversify and renew teaching methods.
	Percentage of children over-age for grade (primary, lower secondary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Economic status.– Family's social awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Take into consideration individual differences when teaching.– Create support classes.– Enhance families' role in the follow-up process.

Table 4.5.31: Target 4.2

By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

Key Areas	Indicator	Challenges	Priorities
Readiness	Increase percentage of children of school entrance age who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Economic challenges.– School and family supporting environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Setting criteria on health, learning and psychological well-being.
	Increase Percentage of children under 5 years of age experiencing positive and stimulating home learning environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Lack of qualified and specialized cadres for this category.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– The establishment of children associations in different geographic locations.– Promote the roles of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Development.

Table 4.5.31: Target 4.2

By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

Key Areas	Indicator	Challenges	Priorities
Participation	Increase Participation rate in early childhood care and education in a given period prior to entry into primary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The need for laws and policies to govern the work and administration of this level. – Weak communication among relevant stakeholders in this category. – Establish a unified agency to supervise primary education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The Establishment of a Childhood Higher Council. – Expand early childhood care institutions. – Expand preparation classes in remote regions. – Guarantee the quality of services offered in these institutions for this specific age category.
	Increase Gross pre-primary enrolment ratio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Shortage of kindergartens in the establishments. – Mothers' long working hours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Add pre-school education to the educational ladder. – Open kindergartens in work establishments. – Allow working mothers to work

Table 4.5.32: Target 4.3

By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

Key Area	Indicator	Challenges	Priorities
	Increase Gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The harmonization of academic specialists with new labor market requirements. -achieving quality in input and output. - Insufficient support or lack of it in private education as required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Diversification and expansion of vocational and technical education disciplines. -Improving the quality of higher education. - Provide more opportunities to invest in learning and supporting the private higher education sector. -Recruiting National expertise eligible for teaching in higher education.
	Increase Participation rate in technical-vocational education programs(15- to 24-year-olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Address imbalances in the labor market from the technical side -Competition for jobs in foreign institutions due to preference of expatriate's experiences -Lack of staff training programs in companies -deficiency in places and training budgets. -Lack of career stability for people working in professional and technical disciplines across various institutions and companies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Developing and enhancing societal perception related to the value of vocational education through media awareness. -Facilitating Professional and technical disciplines equally for both genders to ease the transition to higher education -Providing more opportunities for technical and vocational training while minimizing on-the-job stresses. -Increasing employment opportunities by developing training and employment programs. -Increase the number of training centers to respond to demands from various

Table 4.5.33: Target 4.4

By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

Key Area	Indicator	Challenges	Priorities
Skills	Increase Percentage of youth/adults who have achieved at least a minimum level of proficiency in digital literacy skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -lack of available training programs for young people to develop digital skills. -inadequate implementation of e-government as required. -Lack of Adult awareness -Absence of digital service in remote mountainous areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Increase training programs related to the application of digital reading skills -Increase awareness programs for adults on the importance of interacting with digital skills - provide services in all the different areas and enhance infrastructure related to communications in general.
	Increase Percentage of individuals with ICT skills by type of skill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lack of specialized programs in information and communications technology. -lack of Specialized training programs. -Disconnect between available technologies and actual needs of the labor market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Increase national expertise in the field of information and communication technology by increasing the technological subspecialties in higher education -Provide training opportunities for the upper levels related to the various types of scientific skills. -Invite major companies like Microsoft and others to provide specialized technological training.
	Increase Youth/adult educational attainment rates by age group, economic activity status, levels of education and program orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need to align educational programs with future strategic economic plans. -The need to further on the job training of senior officials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Integration of strategic plans for the development of education in alignment with the community groups by age, educational and economic levels. -Linking the future economic plans with education programs. -Increase incentives and training for adults in order to further on the job training and professional growth.

Table 4.5.34: Target 4.5

By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities. indigenous peoples. and children in vulnerable situations

Key Area	Indicator	Challenges	Priorities
Policy	Increase Percentage of students in primary education whose first or home language is the language of instruction	Unavailable financial resources. Unavailable qualified human resources to develop curricula. *(primary education: indicator not clear)	Focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Pre-school education.– Developing curricula for kindergartens and primary education.– Train primary education teachers.– Establish public libraries for families.– Establish public libraries for society at large.
	Broaden Extent to which explicit formula-based policies reallocate education resources to disadvantaged populations	Unavailable financial resources Unavailable human resources in this field. Attract different relevant stakeholders in the private sector to contribute in this regards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Proceed to the adoption of the strategic plan for persons with disabilities, especially the educational aspect of it.– Enhance the private sector's contribution to the transformation of education.
	Increase Education expenditure per student by level of education		

Table 4.5.35: Target 4.6

By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy

Key Area	Indicator	Challenges	Priorities
Skills	Increase Percentage of the population by age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Lack of clear and precise indicators that clarify literacy rates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Prepare clear literacy and numeracy standards.– Create literacy and numeracy programs.
	Increase Youth/adult literacy rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Unify efforts or create an agency that ensures the coordination among different education stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– A national strategy to enhance adults' literacy awareness.– Contribute to society by disseminating the literacy culture.
	Increase participation rate of youth/adults in literacy programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Financial resources and qualified cadres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Design and prepare programs to enhance literacy.– Raising awareness through media outlets to the importance of youth's participation in implementing the aforementioned programs.

Table 4.5.36: Target 4.7

By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development

Key Area	Indicator	Challenges	Priorities
Knowledge	Mainstream (i) global citizenship education; and (ii) education for sustainable development in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment		Curricula to include topics encouraging human rights and the culture of peace, tolerance(Islamic Education and Social Studies)
	Increase percentage of students by age group (or education level) showing adequate understanding of issues relating to global citizenship and sustainability		Spread awareness through Lectures, symposiums or morning speeches delivered through the school radio, or the school newsletters.
	Increase Percentage of schools that provide life skills-based education		

VI-A. Policy Recommendations for the Ways Forward

- Involvement of parents
- Careers counseling
- Performance evaluation and monitoring.
- Explain the impact of socio-economic and gender factors on educational attainment
- Reduce the gap between male and female levels of performance and academic achievement
- Address the issue of youth unemployment
- ICT training programs and Internet connectivity in schools
- Special Needs Education
- Focus on developing skills in core subjects
- Reinforce the provision of teacher training

VI-B. Policy Recommendations for the Ways Forward

- The evidence presented so far suggests that the education system in Oman has made tremendous progress since 2000.
- The Ninth Five-Year national Development Plan (2016-2020) and 2020 Vision will inform the medium-term strategic direction of education policy in Oman.
- The Vision 2040 will decide the direction of education policy in the longer-term. A significant issue facing the Omani education system is to identify future areas for developments with a specific focus on learning and educational quality. The National Strategic Plan 2020-2040 highlights quality as an emerging issue.
- Many of the key education challenges and impediments to the development of the education system that have emerged in the analysis will have to be addressed by policymakers in order to continue to improve the quality of education in Oman.



GMR Workshop in Muscat, April 2015



Research Conference on PISA in March 2015 Qatar



TIMMS Math Workshop in Doha in September 2015



Second Panel of Experts Meeting, Doha, May 2016

Momentum for Education

Beyond 2015: Improving the Quality of Learning Outcomes and Enhancing the Performance of Education Systems in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries

Q&A

THANK YOU

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