

Population

Towards Better Life For Population

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Editorial

I am pleased to present the forty-sixth issue of “Sukkan” Population Magazine whose first topic includes an extensive presentation of one of Qatar Population Policy axes (2017-2022) represented in the “Education, Training and Youth” axis, in which the education sector is highlighted and its position in the State’s developmental directions in terms of ensuring the right to education for all, equal opportunities between males and females and the right of special groups of talented, disabled persons and others to appropriate education.

The main article reviews the development of the population in the State of Qatar during nearly half a century, that is, from independence up to date, and analyzes the factors that have affected this development, namely births, deaths and migrations.

The Issue’s dialogue with His Excellency Dr. Ibrahim bin Saleh Al-Nuaimi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in the State of Qatar, explains the most important milestones in the formal education process in the State of Qatar since 1952, which were represented by launching initiatives aimed at creating a modern educational system according to international specifications that contribute to the transformation of the State of Qatar to an advanced and prosperous society, in addition to the efforts made by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education through its strategy towards achieving Qatar National Vision 2030, to keep pace with the latest requirements and provide permanent and innovative learning opportunities. The dialogue also reviews the most important axes of the strategic plan of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education 2017-2022, especially e-learning and its tools.

The «Spotlight» section in this issue reviews the efforts of the Planning and Statistics Authority in the comprehensive preventive campaign in the State of Qatar related to the precautionary measures and actions taken to limit the spread of the emerging Coronavirus (Covid 19), through participation in the awareness campaign and advice to prevent infection and the steps to be followed to protect the community and follow the instructions of the competent authorities, while stressing that protecting the community and preserving its safety is a duty of everyone who lives in the State of Qatar.



Dr. Saleh M. Al-Nabit
Chairman of the Permanent Population Committee

Artical

Qatar Population Policy: Education, youth and training Axis



Prepared by: Yousef Breik, Permanent Population Committee

In the previous issue No. 45 of «Sukkan» Population magazine, we shed light on the second axis of Qatar Population Policy axes (2017-2022). In this issue, we will focus on the third axis «Education, training and youth».

This axis includes three main components, namely:

First) Education

The State of Qatar has endeavored to guarantee the right to education for all so that all social groups can learn from kindergarten to university level, while ensuring equal opportunities between males and females, and the right of special groups of talented and disabled persons and others to appropriate education for each category. The march of education in Qatar has been linked, first and foremost, to the centrality of this sector and its position in the State's development directions, which are reflected in the steady and increasing support for this sector, whose budget increased from QR 4.3 billion in 2010 to QR 22.1 billion in 2020¹.

The foregoing indicates Qatar's great interest in this vital sector, which has achieved many quantitative accomplishments, indicated by various relevant educational indicators, mainly:

- ❖ **High average school years:** Perhaps among the most important results of the State sponsorship of the education sector in recent decades is the increase in the expected number of years of schooling and the average years of schooling between 1990 and

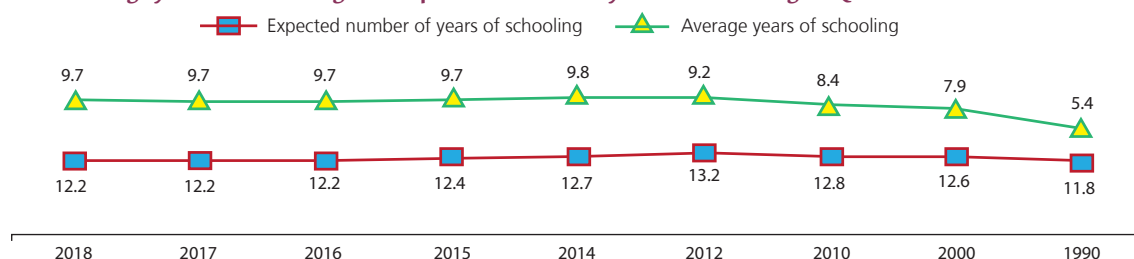
2012, and the two indicators' trend towards relative stability later on, as shown in the following figure:

In addition to health and per capita gross national income, the two indicators of average years of schooling and expected number of years of study contributed to the ranking of the State of Qatar among the countries with very high human development, ranking 41 out of 189 countries included in the Human Development Report issued by the United Nations Development Program in 2019.

The increase in the expected number of years of schooling and average years of schooling reflects the State's long-term efforts since it ratified the «Education for All» Program in 1990, by providing extensive educational opportunities and ensuring that students have access to long-term education. This has contributed to the State of Qatar achieving most of the targets of SDG4 of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030.

- ❖ **High gross enrollment rate in kindergarten:** According to the following table, the expansion of educational opportunities in Qatar in recent years has resulted in a noticeable and continuous rise in the number of Qataris and non-Qataris of both sexes in kindergarten. The gross enrollment rate for Qataris in kindergarten increased from 52.7% in 2012 to 62.3% in 2017, and the gross enrollment rate for their non-Qatari counterparts has also increased from 53.6% in 2012 to 55.5% in 2017.

Chart 1: Average years of schooling and expected number of years of schooling in Qatar between 1990 and 2018



Source: hdr.undp.org/en/composite/trend

¹ 2010 Statistics are quoted from: The Ministry of Education and Higher Education Annual Statistical Report 2016-2017 and 2020 statistics are quoted from: Ministry of Finance website (www.mof.gov.qa/en/Pages/StateBudget2020.aspx)

Table 1: Gross enrollment rate in kindergarten by sex, nationality and years(%)

Year	Qataris			Non-Qataris		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
2012	52.9	62.6	52.7	54.2	53.0	53.6
2017	62.2	62.4	62.3	55.8	55.3	55.5

Source: Planning and Statistics Authority, Sustainable Development Goals in the State of Qatar 2030, June 2018

The high gross enrollment rate in kindergartens has contributed to achieving one of the components of Target (4-2) of the Sustainable Development Goals in terms of quality education (SDG4), which is linked to ensuring that by 2030 all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.

❖ **Eliminate gender inequality in education:** The expansion of the educational system in Qatar in recent decades has also resulted in equal educational opportunities between males and females in all basic educational levels, as shown in the following table.

Table 2: Some indices of gender equality in basic education

		2015	2016	2017
Pre-primary education enrollment rate	Males	60.9	62.8	57.6
	Females	61.3	63.1	57.3
Gender Equality Index		1.01	1.00	0.99
Primary school enrollment rate	Males	101.2	104.0	106.2
	Females	101.0	103.4	106.0
Gender Equality Index		1.00	0.99	1.00
Middle school enrollment rate	Males	95.4	95.1	104.1
	Females	97.6	99.3	102.6
Gender Equality Index		1.02	1.04	0.99

Source: Planning and Statistics Authority, Sustainable Development Goals in the State of Qatar 2018

The openness of the educational system and the enhancement of the reality of women in Qatar have both contributed to equal educational opportunities between males and females, and to achieving Target (4-5) of SDG4 of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030, which is linked to eliminating gender inequalities in education, and “by 2030, ensuring equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for vulnerable groups, including for persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children living in vulnerable situations”.

❖ **The expansion of the higher education system:** The State's efforts in the field of education are not limited to basic education. They also include higher education, as the number of students enrolled in various institutions of higher education has recorded a continuous increase in recent decades. While the number of

students in the seventies of last century did not exceed a few thousands, it reached about 34,000 in 2018, distributed among various educational institutions, such as Qatar University, whose number of students in the academic year 2017/2018 reached more than 26,000², i.e. a rate of about 76.5% of total students enrolled in the said school year in all educational institutions in the country.

The quantitative expansion of educational opportunities in higher education has contributed directly to achieving Target (4-3) «by 2030, ensuring equal opportunities for all women and men to obtain technical and vocational education and quality and affordable higher education, including university education. In furtherance of these and other quantitative accomplishments in the field of education, the Population Policy of the State of Qatar 2017-2022 called in its primary target to «**Qualitative improvement of education**».

To this end, the Population Policy has set the following goals:

- ❖ **Promote high-quality education opportunities:** This goal has been transformed into a number of procedures, namely:
 - Raise the professional level of workers in various educational levels and linking curricula to the labor market.
 - Raise the efficiency of educational and training institutions (buildings, organization, administration ...).
 - Expand the adoption of information technologies at various educational levels.
- ❖ **Mainstream and organize academic and professional counseling in all educational institutions:** This goal has been transformed into a number of procedures, namely:
 - Establish academic counseling units in various educational institutions to ensure that students are directed towards the required majors.
 - Mainstream vocational guidance for young people and strengthen its programs.
 - Circulate career guidance to reconcile graduates' competencies with job requirements in the public and private sectors.
 - Prepare a specific agenda for Qatari scientific research: This goal has been transformed into the following two procedures:
 - Continue to expand the establishment of specialized research centers and research teams.
 - Link the expansion of research institutions to the transformations of local, regional and international economic realities.

Second) Training

The State of Qatar has endeavored to mainstream continuous training in all work sectors, whether by qualifying new entrants to the labor market or by rehabilitating those already in their workplaces to suit

2 Planning and Statistics Authority, Chapter of Education, 2008.

Table 3: Trainees by nationality, sex and training institution in 2017

	Qataris			Non-Qataris			Total		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Ministries and government institutions	15,395	18,120	33,515	134,394	63,578	197,972	149,789	81,698	231,487
Mixed institutions and companies	4,575	1,226	5,801	20,445	542	20,987	25,020	1,768	26,788
Private training centers	4,286	4,474	8,760	7,379	4,036	11,415	11,665	8,510	20,175
Total	24,256	23,820	48,076	162,218	68,156	230,374	186,474	91,976	278,450

Source: Planning and Statistics Authority, Annual Statistical Abstract 2017, Chapter of Training, 2019

their qualifications with the requirements of continuous development in the work sectors. Training plays a major role in bridging the educational gaps, as it focuses on what the trainee needs to master his/her work. Also, the rehabilitation of workers to accommodate what is emerging in their fields of work is one of the most important requirements for rapid changes in various fields of work.

According to the data presented in the table below, the number of trainees in 2017 reached more than 278 thousand; 83% of them belonged to ministries and government institutions. Such data highlight the importance of raising the competencies and capabilities of various employees of government institutions.

Trainees by nationality, sex and training institution in 2017

Source: Planning and Statistics Authority, Annual Statistical Abstract 2017, Chapter of Training, 2019

In furtherance of these and other quantitative accomplishments in the field of training, Qatar Population Policy 2017-2022 called in its primary target for «a qualitative improvement in training».

To this end, the Population Policy has set the following goal:

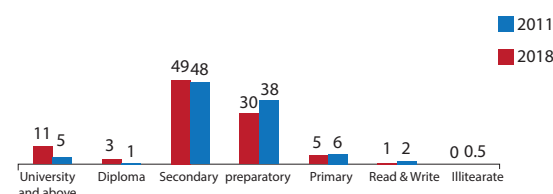
- ❖ Promote high-quality training opportunities: This goal has been converted to the following actions:
 - Raise the professional level of workers in various training institutions.
 - Raise the efficiency of training institutions (buildings, organization, administration ...).
 - Expand the adoption of information technologies in various types of training

Third) Youth

The number of youth in Qatar reached about 350,000 in 2018, or about 13% of total population of Qatar. Qataris represent 16% of total members of this age group, while non-Qataris represent 84%. In view of the importance of this segment, the State of Qatar has paid special attention to youth of both sexes, by enabling them in the field of education and work and expanding their participation in the political

and public life, thus deepening their affiliation to their country and nation, and developing their positive interaction with their society.

In the field of education, for example, the educational system has succeeded in raising the levels of educational and cognitive achievement for this segment of males and females alike. The following figure shows that the educational levels of Qatari youth have witnessed some transformations between 2011 and 2018, where the number of holders of university degrees and above, in addition to holders of diploma and high school, witnessed an increase that was also accompanied by an increase in educational attainment for Qatari youth, as the percentage of those who completed primary school and above increased to 99% in 2018.

Chart 2: The educational levels of Qatari youth (15-24 years) for the years 2011 and 2018 (%)

Source: Planning and Statistics Authority, Labor Force Survey, various years

In connection with the foregoing, Qatar Population Policy 2017-2022 called in its primary target to «expand opportunities for youth participation of both sexes in society or in public life».

In order to achieve this target, the Population Policy has set the following goal:

- ❖ Ensure youth participation: This goal has been transformed into the following two procedures:
 - Diversify institutional initiatives that support youth participation in the developmental, social and cultural fields and coordinate between them.
 - Ensure equal opportunities for young people of both sexes.

Artical

Population growth in the State of Qatar since independence and an analysis of the affecting factors



Prepared by: Prof. dr. Nizam Abdul Karim Al-Shafei,
Department of Humanities, Qatar University

The study of population phenomenon is among the vital themes for researchers in the field of human geography. Accordingly, this article will focus on the population growth in the State of Qatar during nearly half a century, and an analysis of the factors affecting this growth from independence to date.

First: Evolution of Population Numbers:

The population of Qatar has increased in nearly five decades by about 25 times. In 1970, there were 111,000 people, whereas, according to mid-2019 estimates, they reached 2.799.202 people, as shown in the following figure.

In a related context, the results of the last General Population and Housing Census 2015 showed that the size of the population of the State of Qatar amounted to about 2,437,790 people, while five years ago they were 1,699,435 people in the 2010 census, an annual growth of about 29% for the aforementioned period. In 2006, Qatar became a country of a million people for the first time in terms of population size³, as the population then reached 1,040,00 people.

Consequently, Qatar is the penultimate state, ahead of Bahrain, in terms of population size among the GCC countries, after it ranked last until 2010 (see the following table). In 2015, Qatar was ranked 19th

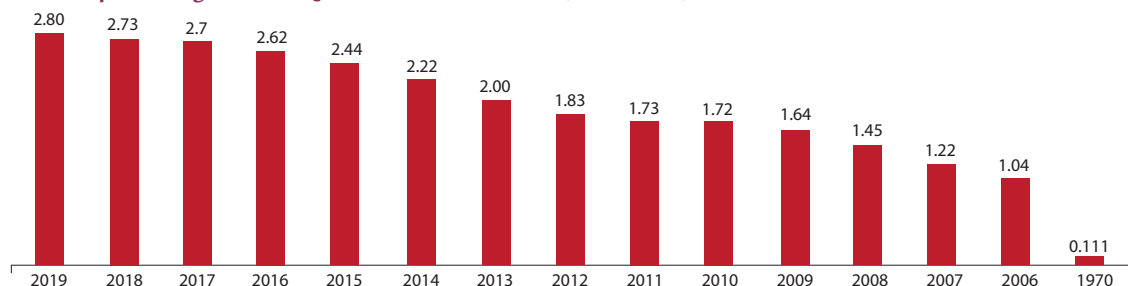
among the 22 Arab countries, at a rate of about 1% of total population of about 340 million⁴. It should be noted that the population of Qatar reached at least 120,000 people at the time of its independence in September 1971, where it was considered the smallest among the GCC and Arab countries. It is historically known that Qatar was not attractive to people during the pre-oil period. According to Lorimer's estimates, the population of Qatar at the beginning of the twentieth century (in 1905) was estimated at about 28,000 people, compared to the Emirate of Bahrain and Kuwait which had more than 100,000 people (and the number mentioned was for the diving period, where groups from the outskirts of the Gulf used to come to Qatar to participate in the season and then leave⁵).

Second) Factors affecting the evolution of the size and growth of population: analysis and interpretation

Based on the above, we can extract some features of the change in the growth of population sizes since 1970 until 2019, and try to provide explanations for each change in the different stages, whether for the category of citizens or expatriates:

1. The size of the population grew rapidly, from about 120,000

Chart 1: Population growth in Qatar from 1970 to 2019 (in millions)



Source: Planning and Statistics Authority

³ Planning and Statistics Authority, Annual Statistical Abstract, 2018

⁴ UN Population Fund (2015), 2015 World population data sheet.

⁵ Nizam Abdul Karim Al-Shafei and Others (2017), Qatar Geography, Part One, The Modern Printing Company, Doha, p. 46

Table 1: Population sizes in the Arab Gulf states in 2015 compared to 2000

Country	Year 2000 (million people)	% of total population	Ranking	Year 2015 (million people)	% of total population	Ranking
UAE	3.1	10	2	9.3	17	2
Bahrain	0.7	3	5	1.3	2	6
KSA	22.0	71	1	31.7	60	1
Oman	2.4	8	3	4.4	8	3
Qatar	0.6	2	6	2.6	5	5
Kuwait	2.2	7	4	4.3	8	4
Total	31.0	100	-	53.3	100	-

1. The General Secretariat of the Cooperation Council, the Statistics Department, various years.
2. Statistics Offices of the Cooperation Council States: among them are the Riyadh Center for Information and Consulting Studies (published in Riyadh newspaper, February 2015).
3. Nizam Abdul Karim Al-Shafei (2016), Evolution of population sizes and Labor Force in the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Imran Magazine, Issue No. 16, Spring 2016, pp. 103-128.

people in the year of independence 1971 to about 370,000 people in 1986 when the second general census was conducted by the Central Bureau of Statistics, i.e. they increased more than three folds. One of the factors that played a role in these increases was the large increase in the number of expatriates in Qatar, due to the rapid increase in oil prices in the mid-seventies up to about US\$ 40, as the State subsequently expanded into comprehensive development operations. In that period, the Arab group, especially Egypt and other confrontational countries due to the October 1973 war, was welcomed by the government, thus their numbers increased. For the first time, the number of Qatari births was less than non-Qatari births, starting from 1974. However, the decline in oil prices since the beginning of the eighties to less than US\$ 10 had a relatively negative impact on the departure of many or less recruitment. The Iranian revolution in 1979 and the Iraq-Iran war directly after that also played a negative role on this group as thousands of them left due to security tension and its negative effects on development operations.

2. From 1995 until 2006, for the first time, Qatar, quickly and unexpectedly entered the group of countries with one million people, based on the annual rates that preceded. In about ten years, the population grew dramatically again, increasing the population size from about 500,000 people in 1996 with an annual growth rate close to 7%. This increase can be attributed to the relative political calm in the region, and the gradually improving oil prices to more than US\$ 70, up from less than US\$ 25 at the beginning of the period. In addition, the State decided to exploit the huge reserves of natural gas in Al Shamal Field, where estimates have proven that the reserve has risen to more than 900 trillion cubic feet. The reserves development operations have greatly affected the growth of state treasury revenues, especially

when LNG prices have improved by values far from the planned profit margin of US\$ 3 per million thermal units to more than 5 times⁷.

3. In another decade (2006-2015), the population size increased again significantly from about one million to about 2.4 million people, or around 150% at an annual rate of about 8.3%. In some years of the aforementioned period, the annual rate of increases was between 17% and 19%, which is between the years of 2006 and 2008. This significant population growth was due to the comprehensive development, which is described as sustainable in all areas of life, mainly of course in the economic sector. The development has also moved to the field of education, higher education, health, cultural, sports and media services, and largely the field of the urban sector, construction and infrastructure with its huge projects, especially the 2022 World Cup projects. These projects needed new quality cadres from all over the world, including Arab cadres with scientific competencies. These high rates lasted until 2009. However, they suddenly fell to about 1.1% in 2011. During this period, the government spending rose greatly from tens of billions to nearly 200 billion annually. Qatar achieved economic growth rates of more than approximately 20% in some years of this period, and also achieved advanced levels in other areas of life according to international reports⁸.
4. As for the last five years (2015-2019), the available data indicate a severe decline in the general population growth. The annual growth rates were not the same as they were five years ago. During the above mentioned period, the population size increased 443,000 people at an annual rate of 3.3%. The reason for this decline can be attributed to the completion of the bulk of construction works, which led to the return of large groups of workers to their countries, especially unskilled labor, in addition to

6 Kaltham Ali Al-Ghanim (1996), Population and Manpower in the Qatari Society, Center for Documentation and Humanities, Qatar University.

7 Ibrahim Al Ibrahim and Frank Horrigan (2012), Qatar's Economy: Past, Present and Future, Q. Science Connect, Qatar Foundation Journal, 9 September, pp. 1-24.

8 Annual reports of the United Nations Development Program and the Food and Agriculture Organization (various years).

Table 2: A comparison between natural and migration-related increases in population in the State of Qatar (1990-2015)

Year	Annual total increases	Size of the natural increase	Size of migration-related increase	Rate of immigration-related increase
1990	13208	10151	3057	23%
1995	17331	9371	7960	46%
2000	27199	10077	17122	63%
2005	108064	11856	96208	89%
2010	76472	17534	58938	77%
2015	221610	24305	197305	89%

Source: The article author calculations are based on: Annual Statistical Abstracts, Qatar Statistics Authority, various years.

the expansion of the Qatarization policy.

5. In general, since independence in September 1971, the population sizes in the State of Qatar have increased from about 120,000 to about 2.8 million people, an increase of about 25 times in about 50 years.
6. It is no secret to any follower of population affairs in the State of Qatar or the rest of the GCC countries that the main driver of population growth is the factor of expatriate migration to Qatar since the discovery of oil, and the limited impact of local natural increases. The data in the following table shows the evolution of the impact of the migration factor on growth population in Qatar for the period 1990 - 2015, where the rate of abnormal increases increased from about 23% of annual increases compared to increases due to the natural factor, whether national or non-national. In the following years, the population increased significantly to about 63% in the year 2000, and to about 89% of the overall increases in 2015.

Conclusion:

The previous review clearly shows that the State of Qatar has witnessed large and rapid changes in population numbers since its independence. The growth rates have also varied across different time periods from low to medium and high. In general, it is expected that

the population growth in Qatar will be directed in the coming decades to lower rates, which will lead to a gradual increase in the proportion of citizens, with continued recruitment of expatriates to serve in areas that do not attract the national workforce.

During the analysis, it has become clear that a set of factors have affected the march of population sizes in the State of Qatar during the past fifty years. This march can be divided into at least four groups. There are a set of political factors such as the Iranian revolution, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the second Gulf War. There are as well economic factors such as the oil prices fluctuating between high and low and development operations that the country witnessed at its various levels between the initial development after the discovery of oil or at a greater rate in the seventies or the huge and very comprehensive and sustainable development in the last two decades. A group of causes and factors can be combined with the changing social base in society from the educational level of its male and female members and the culture of openness and contemporariness practiced, particularly the ones related to starting a family and the number of children. A fourth group can be called statutory or organizational/ administrative group, on top of which are nationality laws and residency regulations, in addition to the two population policies related to QNV 2030.

An interview with H.E. Dr. Ibrahim bin Saleh bin Khalifa Al-Nuaimi Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education

(*⁹)Based on the belief of the State of Qatar that its real and lasting wealth lies in the optimal investment in its human resources, education has become a priority of national investment and its ultimate goal for the development of the individual's capabilities in preparation for the future, which led to remarkable achievements in this field.

In view of the importance of education in our contemporary world, we'd like to ask the following questions that can shed light on many aspects of interest to the reader and increase his/her knowledge of the efforts of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in this regard:

Q1: Would you please elaborate on the first beginnings and the main milestones in the educational process in the State of Qatar?

Formal education began in the State of Qatar in 1952, when the government established the first primary school for boys. In 1957, the first system was established and the Ministry of Education was then created.

The formal education has witnessed many developments since that date in various fields. It was represented by launching a public education development initiative in Qatar called "Education for a New level" aimed at introducing a modern educational system according to international specifications that will contribute to the transformation of the State of Qatar into an advanced society that is more democratic and open to the world, in light of its strong and diversified economy. In 2002, a law decree was issued for the Establishment of the Supreme Education Council in Qatar as the highest authority responsible for drawing educational policy in the State of Qatar, followed by the Law for the Establishment of Independent Schools in 2006. The experience of independent schools continued until Law No. 9 of 2017 was issued which mandated the conversion of independent schools into government schools.

As for the education of students with disabilities, the State of Qatar, represented by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, has an ancient history in the field of education for students with disabilities, namely:

1. Opening one classroom in an elementary school for students with hearing disabilities in 1974.
2. Opening three classes in the same school with 8 teachers in 1980.



3. Opening Al- Amal Institute for Boys in 1981.
4. Separating students with hearing disability from students with intellectual disability and opening the school of thought for boys and girls in 1985.
5. Opening a psychological counseling and communication unit for students who suffer from psychological or speech problems or learning difficulties in 1990.
6. The inclusion of students with visual impairment in the general education schools from the preparatory level for boys and girls in 1999.
7. Allocation of two integration schools (as a pilot project) between the Ministry of Education and the Supreme Council for Family Affairs in 2001.
8. Officially opening the integration program in Al-Qadisiya Model School and Khalifa Primary School in 2003.
9. In completion of the merger project, Al Shaqab Primary School for Girls was opened in 2004.
10. Resolution No. 2 of 2004 was issued by the Emiri Court regarding people with special needs, 2004.
11. Establishing the Department of Additional Educational Support in the Supreme Education Council to supervise independent schools that provide additional educational support services in 2008.
12. Ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by Decree No. 28 of 2008.
13. Opening Ruaa Center for Evaluation, Consultation and Support, which is concerned with providing evaluation, consulting, support

⁹ In view of the importance of the information presented by His Excellency Dr. Ibrahim in our dialogue with him on issues related to the education sector in the State of Qatar, the magazine has decided to publish this dialogue on the current and next issues.

and follow-up services for students with disabilities in schools 2015.

14. The Special Education and Gifted Students Department was created to complement the efforts of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in providing the highest level of support services for students with disabilities in 2016.
15. In an effort by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to provide additional specialized educational services for students with disabilities and autism who need educational services that are not available in schools, a specialized kindergarten was established for persons with disabilities affiliated to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (Al Hedaya Schools Series for Persons with Special Needs) with the aim of providing early intervention services for students with disabilities, to prepare them for future inclusion in schools in 2016 .
16. The first specialized school for students with autism and simple-moderate intellectual disability was established in 2017.
17. A number of 68 schools have been identified to provide integration services for persons with disabilities, especially for students with intellectual disabilities and autism, provided that the rest of the schools provide support services for students with learning disabilities and those with disabilities who do not need any modification in the curriculum, while providing environmental arrangements and facilities necessary for them.

As for the specialized schools, the following schools were established: the Religious Institute, Qatar Technical School and Qatar Banking Studies and Business Administration School / for boys and girls.

Q2: Thanks to the continuous support and care of the wise leadership, and with proper guidance from His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Emir of the State, and as a result of the efforts made by various authorities, headed by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the State of Qatar has achieved advanced Arab and international scientific positions

in the field of education. So can you summarize some of the accomplishments that have already been achieved, and that have made a real difference in the education process in the State of Qatar?

- Hosting the International Junior Science Olympiad 2019 in the State of Qatar and achieving the following results: 1 gold medal, 5 silver medals and 12 bronze medals.
- Participating in the third edition of the Debates in its Arabic version that was held in the Sultanate of Oman and achieving the following results: 2 gold medals and 1 silver medal.
- Participating in the World Robot Olympiad in Hungary and achieving the following result: ranking 9th world wide in the World Robot Olympiad for the year 2019 in Hungary.
- Participating in the 13th Arab Championship for Robot in Jordan: first place in Project Category.
- Participating in the 12th Arab Championship for Robot in Kuwait: second place in Line Tracking Category – Advanced.
- Participating in the Gulf Physics Olympiad and achieving the following results: 3 silver medals and 1 bronze medal, and participating in the Gulf and international Olympiad in the field of physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy and mathematics.

Q3: In order to develop the educational process, the Ministry's vision stipulated the need to provide permanent, innovative and high-quality learning opportunities for the Qatari society. To what extent do you think that this vision has already been realized? What are the challenges (if any) that prevent this vision from being realized and ways to face them?

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education is actively working through its strategy towards achieving Qatar National Vision 2030. Much progress has been made during the first national development strategy 2011-2016. This progress has continued in the current national development strategy 2018-2022, and its affiliated education





and training strategy.

Regarding ensuring high-quality, innovative learning opportunities, much has been accomplished in this regard. In terms of higher education, there are now more opportunities available in Qatar than ever before with branches of prestigious universities in the Education City. Meanwhile, the reputation of Qatar University is continuously improving, supplemented by the North Atlantic College in Qatar which is one of the best institutions in providing Higher technical and vocational education in the region, and the Community College of Qatar, which among many of its accomplishments provide a second opportunity or alternative path for many Qataris to achieve their dreams of obtaining university degrees.

In addition, in the past few years, many private universities and colleges have been established to provide a variety of opportunities in Qatar. Currently, the focus is on attracting new universities that will provide a variety of educational programs with competitive fees, and able to serve the expatriate population residing in Qatar. Lusail University will also open in September this year, which will offer courses in Arabic and English. Moreover, an Indian university is scheduled to open in the coming academic year (a branch of Savitribai Phule Pune University).

As for compulsory education stages, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education has provided many Lifelong and innovative learning opportunities, including:

1. Development of Qatar National Curriculum so that the developed curriculum shall be:

- A broad and comprehensive curriculum that meets the educational needs of all pupils.
- Focusing on competencies needed by the students (Competency Based Curriculum)
- Providing an educational direction that is clear and consistent with Qatar National Vision 2030 by applying a set of values, principles and goals.
- Increased the alignment between curriculum standards on the one hand, and the needs of labor market and requirements of the

higher education sector on the other.

- More relevant to today's world and more relevant to students' lives and practical realities.
- Achieving integration with relevant study materials to enrich the educational experience.
- Effective use of technology in applying the curriculum.
- Updated, varied and appropriate assessment methods for measuring learning outcomes.

2. Development of an education plan that includes all tracks that fit the students' abilities and tendencies

The educational streams system was developed to keep pace with the requirements of the age in terms of taking into consideration that the educational curricula provide lifelong and innovative learning opportunities, and by introducing a third stream along with the scientific and literary streams, which is the technological stream. This stream aims to link technology to science, which provides students with excellent learning opportunities during the secondary stage and beyond in order to join future professional specializations needed by the State of Qatar in the field of science and technology.

3. Provision of lifelong, innovative and high-quality learning opportunities for people with disabilities

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education introduced 68 schools integrating students with different disabilities along with 124 schools to support people with learning difficulties and other students who face challenges in different educational practices. As well, it has established specialized schools; i.e. Al Hedayah Schools, for the people with special needs, people with intellectual disabilities and autistic people. Such specialized schools are concerned with providing intensive services to these students to ensure the provision of services at the highest level of quality. These schools consist of a specialized team, and state-of-the-art technological devices and tools to ensure the empowerment of such students to be self-dependent and to ensure that they are socially and academically integrated.

Moreover, there are also specialized schools for people with people



with hearing impairments; «The Audio Education Complex», that is equipped with the latest tools and devices necessary to provide educational services appropriate to their capabilities and needs. It also developed a policy for gifted students and provided programs and activities for the gifted and talented.

4. Inclusion of scientific research skills in educational and teaching plans and in classrooms through educational activities and school clubs. Besides, an annual competition for scientific research is organized in partnership with Qatar National Research Fund, and then the annual National Scientific Research Exhibition.

5. Development of technical and vocational education in the general education stage: Qatar Banking Studies and Business Administration Independent School for Girls was inaugurated in cooperation with the Qatar Central Bank (QCB) as of the academic year 2015/2016. (current technical and vocational schools are: Qatar Technical School. Qatar Banking Studies and Business Administration Independent School for Boys \ Girls, Religious Institute)

6. Design of an educational approach for Qatar Science and Technology School based on STEM Education and NGSS standards. The school is equipped with a unique infrastructure that includes laboratories: robotics, energy, digital manufacturing, virtual reality and augmented reality alongside physics, chemistry, biology and information technology laboratories that deal with learning programming.

7. Expansion of the STEM project to include the primary and preparatory stages in a gradual and studied way consistent with the outputs of the first project and based on a study of Qatar's needs in building a knowledge-based economy.

There is no doubt that there are challenges facing the ministry, such as: absence of efficient human resources that contribute to the achievement of the vision and goals of the educational system in Qatar; weak educational motivation of some pupils; weak role of parents in encouraging children's learning and commitment; students' reluctance to join scientific specializations and the shortage

in the number and quality of research and field studies that must be conducted continuously on various aspects of the educational system the same as the global systems in developed countries and the employment of their results.

In light of the Ministry's awareness of the challenges that persist, it is currently working, as one of its main initiatives in its current strategy, to select a qualified and objective partner to conduct a comprehensive "health examination" and an in-depth analysis of various aspects of the educational system. The causes of existing challenges will be studied in order to verify the feasibility and relevance of the policies, the feasibility and impact of the measures taken and the projects being implemented to overcome these challenges. Furthermore, a set of objective recommendations are being developed based on true and accurate data and realistic analyses of the education system profile in Qatar.

Q 4: The Ministry of Education and Higher Education's Strategic Plan 2017-2022 contains many important details about the education and training sector. Covering all these details being difficult, we kindly ask to highlight, concisely and intensely, the most important points set forth in this strategy, and - if possible - the general features of what has been achieved to date.

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education's Strategy, in line with the Education and Training Sector Strategy 2018-2022, aims to improve five (5) key areas:

- All students shall have access to education throughout all stages.
- Attainment — Provide all students with an opportunity to realize their individual potential and move to higher education levels while meeting the needs of the labor market and society.
- Teaching values, heritage and citizenship, including sustainability and global citizenship.
- Professionalism and the professional performance of educators, whether as leaders and teachers in schools or as employees at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.
- Governance and institutional performance of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in order to provide better service to stakeholders.

We have almost reached the mid-term in implementing the present strategy, and some of its achievements include the following:

A national curriculum framework has been developed and a comprehensive review of the national curricula has been conducted, in line with the requirements of international studies, while adopting a competency-based approach in accordance with the requirements of employers. Besides, it also opens the way for further flexibility for students to obtain alternative pathways in education based on their interests and capabilities.

The successful inauguration of Qatar Science & Technology Secondary School for Boys (STEM-based School) to encourage enrollment in the disciplines of science, technology, engineering and mathematics and improve achievement in it, within an integrated project-based approach, in line with the requirements of the knowledge-based economy. This will be followed by new projects to create a similar STEM-based school for girls, an additional school for boys and an initiative to build on the experience of STEM schools and to sharing these methods and lessons learned more widely and horizontally among public schools.

Modernizing 68 public schools, improving their capabilities, and providing them with the necessary resources to allow the integration of students with various disabilities in public education, while at the same time launching a program to establish a group of kindergartens and special education schools «Al Hedaya Schools» for students who need special support either in the short term or long-term.

Improving customer service provided through measures such as automating online services on a large scale (to be available soon via the new Ministry of Education and Higher Education website and application), establishing help desks that provide a full range of services in government service centers, and setting up a hotline for inquiring about and obtaining the ministry's services.

Other important initiatives; whether operational or about to start, include:

- An improved and wider education and training data system, which provides a better mechanism for making informed decisions and following them up at all levels.
- The establishment of a technology school for girls (in parallel with the existing Qatar Science and Technology Secondary School for Boys).
- The development of career paths for teachers and principals, linked to a program of supporting training packages.
- A program to solidify the Qatari national identity in state schools, while at the same time benefiting from the multinational and multicultural nature of the population of Qatar, with the aim of promoting tolerance and understanding

among cultures through cultural and heritage exchanges between government schools, private schools and community schools.

Q 5: To what extent has Qatar succeeded in building an educational system open to global developments, keeping pace with all new advancement in the knowledge field, and building a self-sufficient national economy in the face of the hardest circumstances and the most complex challenges, such as the unjust blockade imposed on Qatar during the past two years ?

Indeed, as His Highness the Emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, may God protect him, said, "It is a blessing in disguise". The leadership, government, and people of Qatar have managed to turn the ordeal (despite its hardness) into a grant. The efforts exerted by our wise government with regard to expansion of food and pharmaceutical, economic and technological security projects have been included in our curricula in a way that meets the educational goals.

Furthermore, concepts of values, trends and national identity were strengthened. All of them realize a modern and open educational system that keeps pace with not only the local and regional developments but also the global ones as well. This is evident in the numbers of Qatari male and female students in the scientific and technological disciplines at the university.

Through the national curricula, the Ministry of Education has focused on enhancing the concepts of citizenship among students by incorporating the concepts of pride in national identity and self-reliance in identity-related subjects (Arabic, Islamic education, and social studies) in addition to incorporating the country's accomplishments at all political, sports and service levels in the curricula.

Within the framework of building an educational system open to global developments, and keeping abreast with all developments in the field of knowledge, Qatar Science & Technology Secondary School was established as a modern educational system based on the integration of science, mathematics, engineering and technology and targeting outstanding Qatari students in order to promote diversity in the education system in the State of Qatar. It provides high-performing students in scientific fields with educational opportunities that fit their capabilities and tendencies to increase the educational outcomes of students who enroll in scientific majors in university education. This is in addition to developing diversifying streams in the secondary stage, while introducing a scientific and technology stream to provide opportunities for enrollment in scientific specializations and adopting an initiative within the Ministry of Education and Higher Education's Strategy aimed to develop a professional academic guidance system directed to the preparatory stage in order to increase the number of students enrolled in scientific disciplines.

Spotlight

The efforts of the Planning and Statistics Authority and the Permanent Population Committee in curbing the coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19)

Since day one the efforts exerted by the State of Qatar in taking precautionary measures by all its institutions to limit the spread of COVID-19, the Planning and Statistics Authority was part of the comprehensive preventive campaign in the state to protect all citizens and residents living on its soil.

PSA has started its participation in the preventive campaign by replacing the biometric attendance system (fingerprint system to record the attendance of employees) with the ID card system, which is used remotely to reduce surface contamination. This coincided with the distribution of posters throughout PSA building to direct employees towards the necessity of social and physical distancing, while ensuring that hands are continuously sterilized during working hours, especially during clocking in and clocking out of work..

The Planning and Statistics Authority has also activated communication and work-from-home services by providing security access to its multiple systems and by providing modern communication tools, cloud services and various government systems that enable employees to conduct their office work in a virtual way and through a complete work environment that simulates the work environment within PSA. The authority has also provided safe access to documents and files, in order to ensure the continuation of work in line with the current conditions related to public safety to counter the

outbreak of COVID-19.

Out of its keenness to implement the recommendations of the digital government in terms of basic technological infrastructure, information security and the provision of support services for the conduct of business, the Planning and Statistics Authority responded quickly to the requirements of the current stage of work-from-home. Thus, cloud services were activated through the government cloud, remote communication services, and a number of programs such as Office 365, Teams, OneDrive, Cisco Jabber, VPN tools, remote meeting management systems and other internal systems for which the external secured access was activated such as messaging systems, intranet, financial and human resources systems.

On March 18, ensuring the safety and health of families, individuals and field researchers, the Planning and Statistics Authority announced the suspension of the implementation of the General Census of Population, Housing and Establishments 2020 «Qatar Census 2020» until further notice, as households and individual data collection phase was scheduled to start on 22 March.

PSA has already completed all stages of the General Census of Population, Housing and Establishments that precede the collection of data for individuals and households. During the census freezing period, PSA will continue the procedures for improving technical and statistical infrastructure, and carrying out the necessary tests

كيف تجنب نفسك من العدوى أو نشر فيروس كورونا (كوفيد - 19)



تجنب الأماكن
المزدحمة.

تجنب لمس
عينيك وفمك
وأنفك.



اغسل يديك
بشكل متكرر



إذا كنت تعاني من
الحمى والسعال وضعوبة
التنفس، فالتمس الرعاية
الطبية مبكراً ولكن بعد
الاتصال أولاً بمقدم الرعاية
عبر الهاتف



الزم بيتك إذا شعرت
بتوسع حتى لو كانت
أعراضك مجرد حمى
خفيفة أو سعال بسيط



غطي فمك وأنفك
بمرفقك أو منديلك
عند السعال أو
العطس.



in cooperation with the competent authorities, so that it can be implemented effectively and fully after the end of such exceptional circumstances.

On March 24, the Planning and Statistics Authority launched a continuous awareness campaign on its Twitter and Instagram platforms, through designs that include advice to prevent infection and the steps that must be taken to protect society, especially staying at home and following the instructions directed by the competent authorities. Such awareness campaign ensures that protecting the society and preserving for its safety is the duty of everyone living on the soil of the State of Qatar.

PSA continued its awareness-raising duty to protect the Qatari community by participating in the celebration of the International Workers' Day, which falls on May 1 each year. The PSA's celebration of International Workers' Day this year came through the distribution of protective supplies to a segment of migrant workers, in addition to educational publications in multiple languages about the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

The educational publications focused on prevention methods to ensure the safety of the workers and society as well as their psychological and moral support, in line with the precautionary efforts and measures undertaken by the State of Qatar to limit the spread of the virus and to preserve the safety of migrant workers and the safety and health of society.

Pursuant to the precautionary measures and procedures followed, the Permanent Population Committee through its Technical Bureau followed up the implementation of Population Policy of the State of Qatar (2017-2022) in order to provide population policy data for the third stage 2020 and to complete the follow-up questionnaire for the

third stage (November 2019 - October 2020). The Technical Bureau of the Permanent Population Committee has attended the meetings of the working groups that were organized remotely and provided the technical bureau with the relevant minutes:

- The meeting on the elderly and persons with disabilities on Sunday, May 10, 2020
- The meeting on education, training and youth on May 28, 2020

In the context of attending virtual meetings with partners abroad, Mr. Abdul Hadi Al-Shawi participated in the virtual meeting of the Arab Council for Population and Development (ACPD) on Wednesday, May 20, 2020, which was devoted to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the people of Arab countries, the role of national population councils in response plans and the challenges facing councils or committees in this regard.

The Technical Bureau has contributed to the final statement issued by ACPD, which stressed the necessity of cooperation between Arab countries to overcome Covid-19 pandemic and highlighted the importance of joint Arab action in confronting the social and economic repercussions resulting from it.

This meeting falls under the framework of consolidating the role of the national population councils and committees as the reference in diagnosing and analyzing the population situation, giving advice to decision-makers and developing population policies and programs to respond to the repercussions of the crisis, by preparing studies and reports for the post-pandemic needs and requirements as well as developing advance plans and preparations for similar future crises, while taking into account the gaps and challenges that confronted countries during the current crisis.

Activities and events of PPC during Q1 of 2020

In the context of the implementation of the media plan of the Permanent Population Committee, the PPC mobile application was launched. It can be downloaded via App Store:

<https://apps.apple.com/qa/app/sukkan-%D8%B3%D9%83%D8%A7%D9%86/id1495756567>

This application falls within the communication strategy that contributes to achieving the population goals

endorsed by

the Permanent

Population

Committee, which

aim mainly to spread

population awareness

among the target

audience so that this

awareness turns into

daily behavior that

would eventually lead

to achieving the ultimate

goals of population policy.

This application is a

continuous media mean

targeting a broad audience

that will educate the target

groups through news,

mobilization and awareness. It also envisages focusing on modern

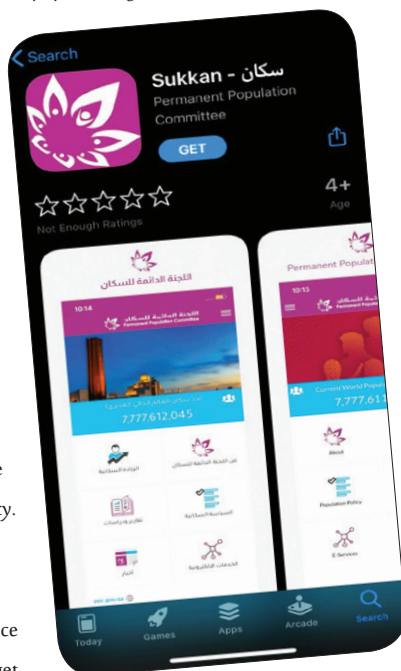
social media due to the rapid spread and reach of the target audience

and the ability to interact directly with citizens.

In addition to the periodic meetings, the Permanent Population

Committee participated in a number of domestic, regional, Arab and

international activities and events, the most important of which are:



First Meeting of the Experts Advisory Committee of the Arab Council for Population and Development (ACPD)

Cairo, 10 February 2020

The Technical Bureau of the Permanent Population Committee (PPC), represented by Mr. Yusef Mubarak Al-Dosari, took part in the first meeting of the Experts Advisory Committee of the Arab Council for Population and Development (ACPD), held in Cairo on 10 February 2020. This meeting responds to the decision issued by ACPD's first regular session regarding the activities of the General Secretariat in light of the population priorities of the Arab region. The decision stipulated that the first and second meeting of ACPD Executive Office shall be held during the year 2020.

ACPD formed its Executive Office in accordance with its statute which states that: «the executive office council shall consist of six members».

Participants also discussed the possibility of seeking the assistance of experts to contribute to the formulation and elaboration of a regional population strategy that guides Arab countries in cooperation with partner organizations, including the United Nations Population Fund. In addition, they discussed forming a task team responsible for preparing the strategy and assigning the team chairmanship.

Moreover, the meeting also deliberated the necessity of organizing activities to empower young people and engage them in the Sustainable Development Agenda, under the umbrella of the Arab Council for Population and Development, in partnership with the Youth and Sports Department and the United Nations Population Fund. As well, attendees called for launching artistic and cultural competitions among young people from various Arab countries, aimed at empowering youth and raising their awareness regarding population issues. The topics of the competitions were as follows: discrimination against women, early marriage, family planning, reproductive health, youth unemployment.



Studies & research

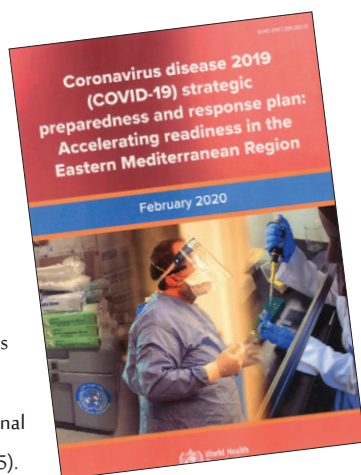
Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) strategic preparedness and response plan: Accelerating readiness in the Eastern Mediterranean Region: February 2020.

This report has been developed to establish a regional plan of action to support the countries of the Region to rapidly accelerate the scaling up of their capacities for the prevention and early detection of, and rapid response to, coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), as required under the International Health Regulations (IHR 2005).

The regional plan is aligned with the WHO global 2019 novel coronavirus strategic preparedness and response plan, but tailored to the regional context.

This plan is based on the fact that many countries in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region are directly or indirectly experiencing complex emergencies; compounded by fragile health systems, weak disease surveillance, poor response capacities and a suboptimal level of public health preparedness. These factors are likely to increase the emergence and rapid transmission of high-threat pathogen diseases. Furthermore, major religious mass gathering events take place in the Region, which pose unique risks to public health security. In 2019, widespread outbreaks of chikungunya, dengue, diphtheria, cholera, Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever, MERS-CoV, Rift Valley fever and extensively drug-resistant typhoid occurred in many countries of the region. Thus, detecting and responding to emerging infectious diseases have become important public health priorities for the Eastern Mediterranean Region. Although the majority of the countries in the region have influenza and other respiratory disease surveillance systems through an extended network of sentinel sites, overall capacity is inadequate to rapidly detect and respond to the potential importation or local transmission of COVID-2019 virus.

To date, 20 out of the 22 countries in the Region have functioning reference laboratories with the ability to detect and confirm seasonal influenza virus, MERS-CoV and other high threat pathogens. However, these national reference laboratories still require additional support to improve diagnostic capacity, biosecurity and biosafety, and specimens transportation. Most of the national influenza laboratories are active members of the Global Influenza Surveillance and Response



System (GISRS), whereby information, testing kits and other relevant components are shared. In the past, some countries in the Region have used the existing influenza surveillance system to detect and monitor emerging infectious diseases. For example, the system was sensitive enough to detect the emerging avian influenza virus in 2006 and MERS-CoV in 2012. Nonetheless, countries with complex emergencies and weak health systems are in need of additional support to enhance epidemiological surveillance for emerging infectious diseases.

The overall goal of this regional strategic preparedness and response plan is to support countries to accelerate the development of their capacity to prevent, detect and respond to any potential COVID-19 outbreak. It outlines key public health measures to be implemented by countries in collaboration with key stakeholders, including United Nations agencies, international nongovernmental organizations and donors. The regional plan complements and links to the operational guidelines to support country preparedness and response that have also been developed by WHO. It will also help to coordinate and streamline work with partners and mobilize the needed resources for implementing the plan.

United Nations: Report on the Implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management in the Arab Region: Progress on SDG indicator 6.5.1.

This report identifies areas for progress in an integrated water resources management in the Arab

world and is dependent on data presented by government officials and stakeholders from 19 Arab countries in reporting on SDG indicator 6.5.1. Implementing integrated water resources management (IWRM) is a central building block in achieving the SDGs in the Arab Region. Also, the successful management of these resources requires an interaction

between governments, organizations and the private sector at all levels and all sectors. Although the average for implementing IWRM is similar to the global score, there is a wide spread in the region, from very low to high. Among the 19 reporting countries, 63 per cent are unlikely to meet the global target (to reach a very high degree of implementation by 2030) unless progress is significantly accelerated.



Through analyzing the elements of the four fundamental dimensions of IWRM, this report identifies areas of progress, and areas that need urgent attention. The highest implementation level is found for both management instruments, and institutions and participation, the lowest for financing and the enabling environment. National efforts supported by bilateral, subregional and regional cooperation initiatives over the years have helped Arab countries implement elements of IWRM. Most countries, however, need to set targets in line with national priorities and capacities to encourage action on the ground and further progress. Given the importance of water management for sustainable development in this scarce water region, the implementation of integrated water resources management must be accelerated. Moving forward, the report findings could be used as an important source of information to foster regional dialogue and action to accelerate IWRM implementation.

The Arab region is the most water-scarce area in the world and has identified and studied its water challenges. The situation is worsening as demand increases beyond sustainable limits, with climate change projected to further stress already scarce resources. In recent decades, all countries have become aware of the need to better manage their resources and increase their focus on integrated water resources management (IWRM) rather than solely supply augmentation and service provision.

The Arab Ministerial Water Council's Arab Strategy for Water Security in the Arab Region: to meet the challenges and future needs for sustainable development 2010–2030 (ASWS) has prioritized enhancing IWRM implementation to address key challenges in ways that are economically efficient, socially equitable and environmentally sustainable. In adopting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG target 6.5, Arab countries have recommitted to IWRM implementation as an important mechanism for achieving sustainable development and management of water resources in the region. This report provides the first review of progress in implementing IWRM in the region, and identifies priority areas that will help accelerate full implementation.

The analysis is for the most part based on responses from 19 Arab countries to the global SDG indicator 6.5.1 self-assessment survey instrument. The indicator on IWRM implementation is measured on a scale of 0 to 100, based on the degree of implementing 33 elements, from very low to very high implementation. These elements cover the enabling environment of laws, policies and plans, institutional arrangements and stakeholder participation, management instruments for informed decision-making, and financing for sustainable water management.

The average implementation in the Arab region is 48 out of 100 (medium-low implementation), and similar to the global average of

49. This, however, masks a wide spread of IWRM scores, from 10 (very low) to 82 (high). Among the 19 reporting countries, 63 percent score in the medium-low, low or very low implementation categories and are unlikely to meet the global target (to reach a very high degree of IWRM implementation by 2030) unless there is significant acceleration in progress.

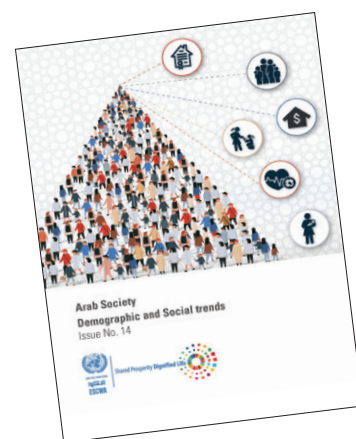
- Four countries score in the medium-high category and are potentially able to reach the global target if efforts are sustained towards 2030
- Three countries are in the high implementation category and are likely to meet the global target if momentum is maintained.

Given the significance of water management for sustainable development in this arid region, as recognized by ASWS, IWRM implementation needs to be accelerated in most countries.

United Nations – ESCWA – Arab Society: Demographic and Social Trends 2019

Issue No. 14

This publication is the latest in a series published biennially by the Statistics Division of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). For this edition, the report focuses on population dynamics, household composition, family formation, housing conditions, health, education, labor, poverty, inequality and culture and social participation.



Data in this issue have been drawn primarily from the national statistical offices of ESCWA member States. They have been supplemented by publicly accessible data from international agencies such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Bank and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Data emphasize that the population is young overall, but there is considerable heterogeneity in the age-sex profile of countries owing to varying demographic transitions, the size of the migrant laborer population and the influx of refugees in some countries.

For example, children below 15 years of age make up less than 15 per cent of the population in Qatar but over 40 per cent in the Sudan. The sex ratios for all countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) are large; in Qatar there are about 300 men per 100 women.

Total fertility ranges from below or near replacement level (2.1

children per woman) in Bahrain, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates to over 5 children per woman in Mauritania and the Sudan. Over the past few decades, the Arab region as a whole has experienced a decline in total fertility rates. The speed of that decline differs across countries, with some showing little or no decline in the last decade. In more recent years some countries, such as Mauritania, have even experienced a slight increase. Improvements in the health and longevity of the population are evident, although the data show clear disparities across countries. Life expectancy at birth currently ranges from 61 years for men and 64 years for women in Yemen to 79 years for men and 83 years for women in Qatar. Sex differences in life expectancy at birth are generally small, less than 2 years in countries such as Bahrain, Jordan and Yemen.

The number of international migrants in the region consistently increased from 2000 to 2015 in all countries in the Arab region. The GCC countries have relatively large migrant populations, consisting primarily of laborers from South and Southeast Asia. As of 2016, the region also has the largest number of refugees and displaced populations worldwide, with three countries (Jordan, Lebanon and the State of Palestine) hosting over 1 million refugees each.

Most countries in the region have moved away from the tradition of extended family households and increasingly show a nuclear household structure. According to recent data, the average household size ranges from a high of around 7 persons in Oman and Yemen to around 4 persons in Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia.

Throughout the region the numbers of registered marriages and divorces has surged in recent years, except in the Syrian Arab Republic where registered marriages have declined precipitously since 2009, owing to prolonged conflict there. In Iraq, Mauritania and the Sudan, the proportion of girls aged 15 to 19 years who have ever married lies above 20 per cent. Polygyny is no longer prevalent in the region, except in the Sudan, where over 20 per cent of women are in marriages with one or more co-wives.

On average, women tend to start bearing children soon after marriage and few among those aged 45 to 49 are childless. The latest available data show that in most countries in the region, more than 60 per cent of all households own the homes in which they live. The exception is in GCC countries where the low levels of home ownership is attributable to the high number of non-nationals living there.

United Nations (Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs) – Highlights on World Fertility and Family Planning 2020

In recognition of the 25th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 1994, governments reaffirmed the importance of the Programme of Action and its further

implementation for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The emphasis on universal access to a full range of safe and reliable family planning methods, which help couples and individuals to realize their right to decide freely and responsibly on the number, spacing and timing of births, remains as critical today as it did in 1994.

The growing use of contraceptive methods in recent decades has resulted not only in improvements in health-related outcomes such as reduced unintended pregnancies, high-risk pregnancies, maternal mortality, and infant mortality, but also in improvements in schooling and economic outcomes, especially for girls and women. Beyond the impacts of contraceptive use at the individual level, there are benefits at the population level. From a macroeconomic perspective, reductions in fertility enhance economic growth as a result of reduced youth dependency and an increased number of women participating in paid labor. Continued rapid population growth presents challenges for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa where countries must provide health-care services, education and eventually employment opportunities for growing numbers of children and young people. Long-term global population trends are driven largely by trends in fertility. It is therefore important to understand the relationship between contraceptive use and fertility, especially in high-fertility contexts, because of the implications for triggering or speeding up the demographic transition, and harnessing a demographic dividend. *World Fertility and Family Planning 2020: Highlights* presents new evidence on trends in contraceptive use and fertility, as well as insights into the relationship between contraceptive use and fertility at the global, regional and national levels for women of reproductive age. This publication draws predominantly from the 2019 revision of the *World Population Prospects and Estimates and Projections of Family Planning Indicators 2019*.

World Fertility and Family Planning 2020 Highlights: Key Messages

- Globally, women are having fewer babies, but fertility rates remain high in some parts of the world.
- The decline of fertility in sub-Saharan Africa has been relatively slow and occurring later compared to other regions
- Globally, the level of fertility is expected to continue declining.
- Today, many more women of reproductive age are using some form of contraception than in 1990.
- Use of contraceptive methods increased in all regions between 1990 and 2019.



United Nation Escwa. - Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the Arab Region 2018-2019

https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/publications/files/survey-economic-social-development-arab-region-2018-2019-english_3.pdf

The Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the Arab Region is an annual flagship publication of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). This publication is mandated by General Assembly resolution 35/56, para. 173; ESCWA resolution 270 (XXIV)



paras. 2, 3 and 4; and ESCWA resolution 303 (XXVII), paras. 1 and 2. This publication is linked to subprogramme 3 of ESCWA, on economic development and integration, which seeks to contribute to efforts by member States to reform economic institutions and develop and implement policies based on principles of good governance in order to enable economic planning and policymaking in support of inclusive and sustainable development. This 2018-2019 edition focuses on analysis of the most recent socioeconomic developments under a set format, with a reporting period primarily from January 2018 to March 2019. There are two main objectives: to analyse routinely monitored economic and social variables in the Arab region in a global context (chapters one and two) and to focus on studies of reforms of the energy subsidy system and the macroeconomic implications (chapter three). The trajectory of world economic growth in 2018 was largely shaped by the effect of the intensifying trade dispute between the United States and China. As a result, business confidence and investment deteriorated over the course of the year. These circumstances, combined with persistent geopolitical tension across the regions and the uncertainty of international policy, are expected to restrain global economic growth at 2.7 per cent in 2019. Meanwhile, the global demand for oil surged in 2018, driven particularly by strong economic activity in China, India and the United States. The oil supply dynamics were, however, complicated by the uncertain political situations in some oil-exporting countries. The oil production in Venezuela and Iran significantly dropped under sanctions, while the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) agreed upon an oil production cut in December 2018. Despite these cuts, the overall global supply during year 2018 increased, driven mainly by the rise in shale oil production in the United States. That said, such geopolitical volatility caused severe fluctuations in global oil prices in 2018. The price of

crude oil increased substantially during the first three quarters of 2018, mainly an effect of supply reduction in Venezuela, Canada and Libya; but it reduced during the fourth quarter, which was further associated with the policy change by the United States in dropping the Iran sanction waivers on the impacted countries during early 2019. Along with the rise in the oil prices throughout the year in 2018 and up to the first quarter of 2019, the economy in the Arab region recovered with a growth rate of 2.3 per cent in 2018, compared to 1.7 per cent the previous year. This growth was driven by the hydrocarbon sector in the region's oil-exporting countries, particularly Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. In contrast, oil-importing countries such as Jordan, Lebanon and the Sudan relied heavily on oil imports which widened their current account deficits and public debt. Exposed to such vulnerability to fuel prices, many parts of the Arab region were encouraged to implement a series of subsidy reforms and fiscal adjustment initiatives. Nevertheless, political instability, high levels of public debt, geopolitical tension and uncertainty about international policy continued to weigh down economic growth. The economic outlook in the years to come reflects this unpredictable backdrop in the Arab region, with 2.6 per cent growth anticipated in 2019 and 3.4 per cent in 2020. At the subregional level, the growth trajectory was heterogenous. The GCC countries significantly recovered the pace of economic growth in 2018 reaching 2 per cent, following a 0.2 per cent contraction the year before. In the meantime, the introduction of GCCwide value added tax contributed to mild inflationary pressures.

Labour market

In 2018, the employment situation in the Arab region recorded its worst performance since 2010. In page 81, Qatar continues to have low unemployment rates for both men and women in the region, accompanied with high rates of labour force participation, for women in particular. A stable participation rate of 67.3 per cent for men and 36.8 for women in the Qatari labour market was recorded in 2018. The unemployment rate gap between men and women continued to shrink recoding 0.1 per cent for males and 0.4 per cent for females in 2018. In addition to the "Qatarization" policy, Qatar has been working on educational reforms targeted towards equipping nationals with the skills required to satisfy the demands of the current labour market. This approach can be observed in the lunching of branch campuses of multiple major western universities to increase tertiary education in Qatar. Gross tertiary education enrolment increased from 9.85 per cent in 2010 to 16.2 per cent in 2017, according to UNESCO statistics.³⁰ At the primary and secondary education level, Qatar excels at providing premium schooling systems, that are productive, practical and free of charge, preparing young generations with the skills needed to match the labour market demand.



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