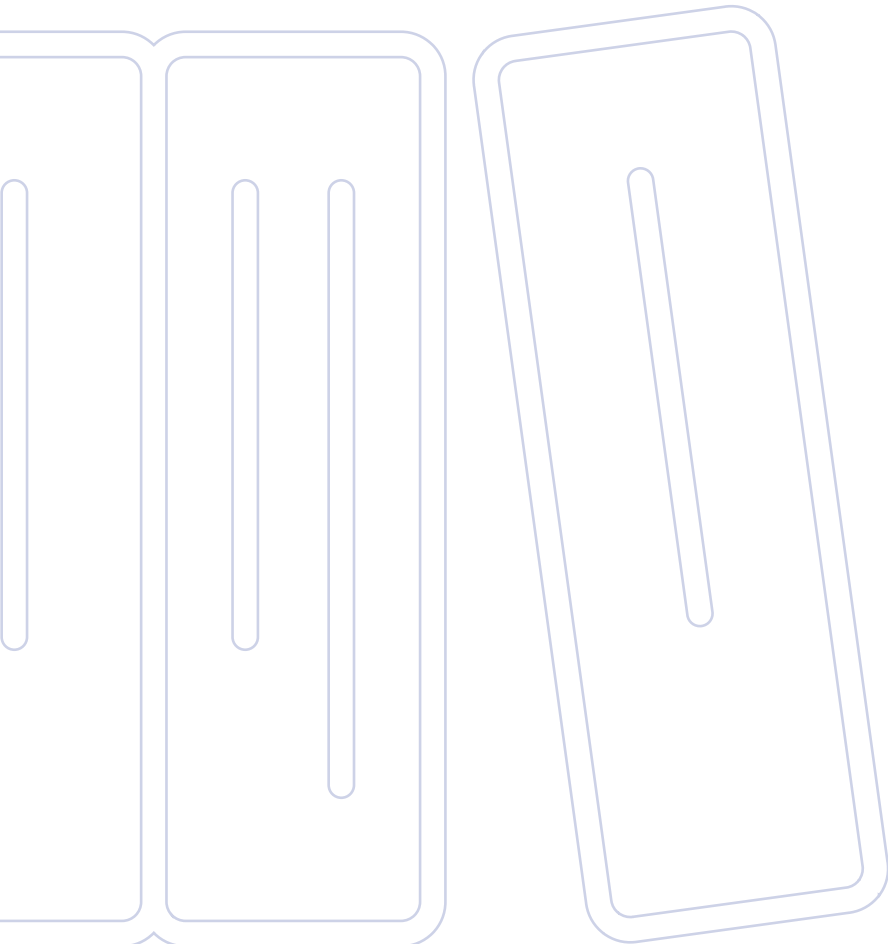


ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY  
EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING  
OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL (Smart Learning)



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## Smart Learning

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## CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4 aims to focus on the provision of quality education, which is considered the foundation in achieving sustainable development. Quality and smart education can improve the quality of life, equipping citizens with the tools required to develop innovative solutions to address the world's greatest problems. SDG 4 aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all.

It is estimated that more than half of the global population of children and adolescents are not meeting the minimum proficiency standards in reading and mathematics. There needs to be a refocused effort in improving the quality of education, addressing the disparities and gaps between genders, the urban and rural location and greater investment in education infrastructure

Obtaining a quality education underpins a range of fundamental development drivers, there needs to be greater progress in increasing access to education at all levels, especially for women and girls.

Basic literacy skills across the world have improved tremendously, yet bolder efforts are needed to achieve universal education goals for all. For example, the world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys, but few countries have achieved that target at all levels of education

### Need

#### Education as a national priority

Education is one of the UAE Government's top priorities in its endeavor to develop its human capital and a diversified knowledge-based economy.

### IDEA

The UAE's [Ministry of Education](#) (MOE) developed [the Education 2020](#) strategy, which is a series of ambitious five-year plans designed to bring significant qualitative improvement in the education system, especially in the way teachers teach and students learn. Smart learning programs, new teachers' codes, licensing and evaluation systems, a revision to the curriculum inclusive of teaching math and science through to English, are all part of this strategy. A key area of focus has been to transform K-12 programs, to ensure that students are fully prepared to attend universities anywhere in the world and be competitive.

### UAE's Education 2020

With the advent of the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution, countries will have the opportunity to advance their economy at a faster pace. In order to do so, countries will need to have a digitally savvy population. Studies have shown that the earlier that students grasp the tools necessary to work in the new digital economy, the better equipped the country will be to be fully integrated with the new digital economy. The UAE's Education 2020 is the vehicle that will enable students and young adults to be prepared to play a role in the knowledge economy.

In order to implement Education 2020, the following has been enabled: access to information and knowledge will start at an earlier age, tools and platforms will be in place to create the digital environment needed to succeed, teachers will be better equipped to transfer knowledge, special attention will be provided to student of determination to ensure that they are not left behind, and the education administration will be properly funded to implement Education 2020.

### PROJECT

The Mohammed bin Rashid Smart Learning Program was launched, aiming to shape a new learning environment and culture in government schools in Dubai and the northern emirates. The government promoted technology in schools to foster future employment opportunities amongst today's youth by introducing computers and tablets in all schools. Also, the government strongly supports education and learning services for students with special needs, [Federal Law No. 29 of 2006](#), is the first law in the UAE to protect the rights of people with special needs.

## Education in the Federal Budget

The focus on education in the UAE is underpinned by the UAE Cabinet (October 2016) approving a federal budget of AED 48.7 billion for the year 2017, receiving the [maximum allocation of 20.5 percent.](#)

## Enrolment in UAE Schools and Universities

The UAE's education sector is one of the fastest growing in the region, with about 1.03 million students enrolled in both public and private schools for the academic year 2016-17. The total number of students in schools and universities in the UAE is projected to grow by 4.1 percent annually by 2020.

## Smart Learnings

Mohammed Bin Rashid Program Smart Learning, in collaboration with the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), is hosting at the MoE headquarters the Arab Regional Training Program for National Smart Learning Strategies; launched in the presence of six regional and Arab countries representatives. The program aims to provide support and guidance to countries wishing to develop national strategies and policies in the field of smart learning, of which the UAE has become a recognized regional and international Smart Learning Centre for.

## The Education Journey of the UAE

Since 2008, the UAE has participated in many international tests to examine and benchmark the performance of its education system. These tests include PISA (Program for International Student Assessment), TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study), and PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study). The UAE received top ranks in the Arab world in line with the National Agenda which calls for the country to rank among the top 20 in PISA by 2021.

In 2017, MoE introduced the national-level Emirates Standardized Test (EmSAT) test to measure pupils' knowledge of Arabic, English, Math, and Science. EmSAT includes three types of tests:

1. Baseline test: This test measures the skills and knowledge of students required for Grade 1
2. Advantage test: This test tracks the development of students in Grades 4, 6, 8 and 10 during their general education
3. Achieve test: This test measures the knowledge and skills of students in Grade 12 as they finish their general education and move on to higher education. This test is vital for college admission and placement.

EmSAT replaces Common Educational Proficiency Assessment (CEPA) which all state school pupils in Grade 12 were required to take as a prerequisite to entering public universities or colleges in the UAE or receiving government scholarships to study abroad.

### **Reforming the teaching system**

The UAE has a new system for teachers licensing, which is called 'Teacher and Educational Leadership Standards (TELS UAE) and Licensing Program.' The professional licensing scheme for teachers was introduced in 2017 and expected to be fully implemented by 2021, in line with the requirements of the UAE National Agenda.

The system will standardize qualifications for Emirati and expatriate teachers in private and public schools. Teachers will have to pass a national examination and show a portfolio of evidence. The system is co-developed by National Qualifications Authority (NQA), Ministry of Education, the Department of Education and Knowledge, Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA), Abu Dhabi Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training and Institute of Applied Technology.

### **The UAE's regional support to education**

The UAE hosts the Regional Center for Educational Planning (RCEP)-UNESCO which is the technical arm of the MoE that is responsible for building individual capacities, developing human resources and disseminating knowledge in the areas of planning and policies to fulfill national priorities in line with the international best practices.

The RCEP's governing board has adopted a strategic plan in which education in 2030 is a strategic objective with stand-alone resources. In 2016, RCEP committed to developing an educational road map for the region, by allying with national and regional organizations that foster inclusive education across the broadest spectrum of incomes and ages in the Arab world.

## IMPACT

The UAE's education system remains one of the cherish success stories of the country. It has prepared the nation's youth by providing them with the skill sets to become fully engage in the country and to become vital part of the country's economy. In particular, the gender gap between boys and girls has been greatly reduced with girls in many cases outpacing the boys. More girls are excelling in math and science and becoming engineers, doctors, scientist and IT experts.

UAE signed the UN's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol. This has provided people of determination with greater opportunities in obtaining a quality education and placing them in the mainstream of the education system.

The UAE has allocated 20% of the budget to the education system, which provided free education in elementary schools to universities.

The adult literacy rate of the UAE has risen to 99% and the youth of the country are actively participating in hackathons, improved their digital literacy and have become more creative and innovative in emerging technologies such as robotics, 3D printing, artificial intelligence, augmented reality, virtual reality and the creation of drones.

The above are examples of the success of the education system in the UAE. The UAE has become a magnet for international students from both developing and developed countries. Students receive a high-quality education that fully prepares them for the digital economy.



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