

Education

Middle East Public Sector National necessities



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Introduction

There are continuing social and economic changes underway in the Middle East and effective education policy is central to addressing them. Around 60% of the population is under 30 years old and the labor pool of nationals and expatriates grows annually. This produces concerns about the balance between local and expatriate labor, how well prepared nationals are for the job market and, in particular, how well prepared, skilled and willing nationals are to enter the private sector. The private sector is seen as central to regional moves toward a diversified economy as public sector growth slows. Looking at the region's three main economies, expatriates make up 94% of the private sector workforce in Qatar and 90% in Saudi Arabia according to BBC research, while Insead Business School estimates that Emiratis make up between 60% and 70% of the public sector but less than 5% of employees in the private sector.

An educated and skilled population is vital for sustained economic and social growth. Parents, students and employers in the region are demanding improved outcomes from schools, universities and vocational training. A growing population means that the public sector can no longer sufficiently absorb school and university leavers as it could in the past. There is a growing focus on the economic role of the private sector, yet there is reluctance amongst many in the local population to work in the private sector. There are concerns in the private sector about how well young nationals are prepared by schools for life after study. Therefore, educational reform to produce

suitably prepared young people to enter private and public sector employment in more balanced proportions is a key issue in the Gulf region today.

In order to further develop a suitably educated population, many Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) governments are implementing major reforms, including new curricula, improved teaching standards, increased professional freedom and enhanced use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT). Modern schools, colleges and universities are being built with increased investment from both the public and private sectors. The reforms are challenging. Implementation is not always fast enough to keep up with moves to a diversified knowledge economy.

This white paper draws on research and experience from Deloitte's Education and Skills consulting practitioners. It suggests and reinforces what governments and stakeholders might do to support national missions and ensure educational systems are equipping. This means how they ensure educational systems are equipping students with skills that enable them to build successful, diversified, and knowledge-based economies that address the skills challenge facing the region.

Background

The majority of public schools across GCC countries have for decades used traditional teaching methods based on a teacher-centered approach. Beyond the GCC, several nations are using more diversified methods and producing learners with a broader range of skills and attitudes. GCC approaches too often mean that local schools produce students without the wider range of skills, experience and motivation needed to get a job in the modern world.

A senior civil servant explains that the misalignment between education and the needs of business is due to the swift growth of the oil-rich GCC countries, which meant that the government did not have time to plan for the needs of its future economy through the education system: "Here, the development boom happened in a very rapid manner and it was not expected at that time. Additionally, there was no projection of what would be required, and even if there had been a projection, the change was faster than what the education system could have kept up with. That created the misalignment between education system outcomes and market needs."

A Doha Bank executive points out examples of opportunities for the future: "The positive growth in the GCC region is going to invite investments from overseas. Huge project developments in the GCC require massive funds from overseas investors. Projects prevail in Qatar's non-hydrocarbon sector mainly in real estate and infrastructure. In Saudi Arabia, the major projects in the

It is only by having a highly skilled workforce that GCC countries will keep a competitive edge as the war for global talent accelerates

non-hydrocarbon sector include King Abdullah Economic City and Jizan Economic City. Major real estate projects in the UAE are witnessed in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Major projects in Oman include Duqm New Town and the Deep Water Gas Line worth USD 24bn. In Kuwait, the major projects include the 'City of Silk'."

Governments in the Gulf recognize that in order to excel on the world stage, it is paramount that they offer their students – both those belonging to the national community and those of the expatriate community – excellent schools, a modern curriculum, access to recognized vocational skills training and well trained teachers. It is only by having a highly skilled workforce that GCC countries will keep a competitive edge as the war for global talent accelerates. A growing national population and more expatriates entering the region means that the education sector is set for continued strong growth.

The number of students in the GCC region is expected to grow from 9.5 million in 2010 to 11.3 million in 2020, according to Alpen Capital's GCC Education Industry study (2010). Due to its relatively large population, some 75% of the students are in Saudi Arabia with the UAE the next highest with 8% of share.

The Alpen report forecasts that by 2020, 6,200 additional schools will be required in the region to meet demand, while an extra 163,208 teachers will be needed. The financial, strategic and logistical challenges of these changes are immense. At present, enrollment rates at primary and secondary level are above 90% for almost all Gulf countries as education is free and compulsory for all GCC nationals.

It is a different picture at the tertiary level with an average 23% enrollment rate across the region, which is much lower than in many developed countries. Deloitte's February 2011 report "Mind the Gap" found Finland (93%), the USA (82%), Italy (67%) and the UK (59%) have all achieved greater rates of tertiary enrollment. Anecdotal evidence indicates that state support and the availability of employment for school leaving nationals in the public sector may be limiting the uptake of progression into training and higher level skills.

The proportion of tertiary education students is expected to rise from 11% to 15% over the period to 2020, while the primary education share is forecast to decline from 46% to 43% and the secondary education share to drop from 43% to 42%, reflecting the changing age profile and demographic movements.

Meanwhile, enrollment in private education at the primary and secondary level is predicted to grow from 1.3 million students to 1.9 million in 2020. With the number of expatriates - primarily educated in the private sector - expected to grow, rising living standards and commitment from the local population mean the demand for high quality private education is likely to increase.



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Challenges

Education reform on the scale necessary to promote growth and innovation is a mammoth task. It extends from the boardroom to the classroom. Careful research, planning and preparation, as well as the cooperation of those who will be most affected by the new system are essential to success. Stephen P. Heyneman in “The Quality of Education in the Middle East and North Africa” (International Journal of Educational Development) points out the lack of reliable data on educational quality in the region. This lack impedes policy development and makes parental choices difficult.

This section looks at the reasons why ongoing reform is needed in the GCC and some of the obstacles to be overcome for innovations to succeed.

1. Improving preparation for progression

There has been a shortage of skilled teachers for English, science and math. Modern teaching methods and learning tools, such as ICT, are not widely used enough. This means that standards of achievement have varied so that too many young people enter further study or are insufficiently prepared for work. Career advice is weak in too many countries. Richard Barrett, Deloitte’s Middle East Education and Skills Consulting Lead, points out: “Good careers advice can have a positive and motivating effect on young people. Too often, career advice standards vary across the region and students get an incomplete view of the wealth of progression opportunities open to them.”

As one regional education expert explains: “I think the greatest challenge here is preparing the students for a future that is going to require them to be globally competitive. The current system is not working for them. At present, the educational systems of the GCC are not preparing the vast majority of students well enough so that they can pass the entrance examinations of the publicly-funded universities.”

This means that some students who need a good quality education in order to pursue a professional career are often opting to go overseas for education. Expatriate individuals with families who could fill the talent gap are sometimes reluctant to come to certain countries and this has a hidden economic impact in terms of missed opportunities to utilize the best global talent.

Too many students coming from public schools wishing to enter university are required to attend foundation courses ranging from six weeks to two years before starting their main course. Not only is this a drain on the education budget, it also means that students are completing courses at an older age compared with students from other nations, with the loss of productive contribution to the economy that this entails.

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2. Supporting teachers to manage change

Within countries in the Gulf, different pedagogical methods, ideas and curricula are deployed within the varied education systems. Too often, teachers are appointed predominantly on academic qualifications with classroom skills getting less attention. Therefore, it has been difficult to maintain a consistent standard so that teachers are delivering the same quality of education. The outcomes of teacher training, in-service education and licensing processes are not always understood by teachers, schools and parents.

Reforms are being introduced and schools are moving away from rote learning to introduce technology and active student participation

Reforms are being introduced and schools are moving away from rote learning to introduce technology and active student participation. This means policy-makers need to recognize and respond to the reality that active student learning represents a challenge to the long-established mindsets of students, parents and teachers. Where the authorities are engaging parents and business, and deploying school-based support with professional networks, these challenges are gradually being addressed.

3. Improving the take-up of tertiary education amongst young men

Enrollment rates for tertiary education are particularly low for men. A lower number of young males have been entering higher education than women, according to data from the World Bank. With fewer job opportunities for women, they tend to continue in education for longer. In Dubai, for example, some 75% of those enrolled in public universities are women while only 25% are men, according to the Dubai Knowledge and Human Development Authority.

This is due in part to GCC governments providing relatively high paying employment for male nationals with minimum qualifications. This means they are choosing this path over gaining more qualifications or a career in the private sector. But as the national

population grows, and as governments become less interventionist and countries experience spending slowdowns, there will be fewer public sector jobs available. This makes it important for more young men to consider private sector routes and to stay in post-school education to achieve appropriate qualifications.

In comments that could apply in many parts of the GCC, Prof. Stephan Schubert of Insead's Abu Dhabi campus was reported by the BBC as pointing out that "the whole educational system - the values, the traditional values which are transmitted through school, should probably put more emphasis on the notion of achievement, hard work, labor, earning what you get." He added: "I think to some extent, the wealth of this country that is based on oil which has enabled the growth and building the nation is also probably an obstacle because money doesn't always seem to be a problem - which can then easily distort expectations of young school leavers."

4. Providing affordable, consistently good quality private education

Private school fees in the region come into the global top tier bracket. High tuition fees as well as reservation fees, testing fees and transportation costs have been cited in media reports from kindergarten upwards and anecdotally reported as one of the reasons that expatriates return home. This results in the loss of often high-performing mid-career individuals.

A shortage of private school places has also meant that there has been fierce competition for places, which has in turn raised prices. In open market conditions, the supply might be expected to grow to meet surplus demand. However, licensing arrangements are sometimes complex and lengthy. This is a disincentive to investors, especially in a context of fee-level controls in some countries.

Recommendations

Meeting the skills challenge

In order to meet the challenges of youth unemployment in the region, governments are more actively promoting a policy of increasing employment for nationals and replacing expatriate employees. For example, Kuwait plans to reduce foreign workers by 100,000 a year, while companies in Saudi Arabia have quotas of Saudi employees and risk having their licenses removed if they fail to meet these targets. However, the Financial Times reports employer concerns that a combination of higher national wage levels and lower skills levels will threaten business effectiveness. Our recommendations focus on how skills levels can be raised to support the moves underway in several parts of the GCC to develop world-class education systems to help meet the skills challenge.

These recommendations cut across the issues we have described and are intended to contribute to a strategy to support continuing improvements in the public and private sectors:

1. Raise teaching standards – Help teachers manage change

Teachers need to be given world-class training that promotes a student-centered, non-didactic approach. Raised teaching standards should have a focus on relating the curriculum to the skills needed after leaving school. The delivery of careers guidance should be enhanced so that students are better prepared for the progression opportunities facing them.

Andy Hargreaves, professor of education at Boston College in the United States, told Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) Transforming Education Summit in 2012: “Currently, most teachers consider teaching to be a temporary job and move on once they find a higher-paid profession. We need to keep teachers in their professions and encourage them to seek better qualifications over time.”

Therefore, in order to attract high quality teachers, pay and conditions must be good and continuing professional development should be offered. According to recognition to professional development that is recognized in a licensing and pay system would further encourage career progression for teachers.

2. Prepare students for progression

The education systems of the GCC countries should ensure that students finish their education prepared for a future that requires them to be globally competitive. There needs to be a clear coordination between the Ministries of Labor, Education, Higher Education and the private sector (through Sector Boards and Chambers of Commerce), to ensure that today's educational reforms will provide tomorrow's skills requirements. This will require thorough and ongoing analysis of the labor markets and extensive communication of findings with students, parents, employers, schools, colleges and universities.

Emphasis should be placed on skills such as creative thinking, team work, purposeful writing, problem solving, research, innovation and technology. Regulations should be developed to ensure that each country has a curriculum and testing system that reflects this style of learning that users can understand.

Although debate continues over whether students should be taught in Arabic or English, it is certain that proficiency in both is vital for today's students.

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“If students are going to succeed, they need to not only understand their own language and culture, they need to be able to communicate effectively in English,” says one GCC education expert. “Some see that as an intrusion of their culture by insisting that the language of instruction is English. But the fact is that most of the research that is available is in English, most of the information available on the web is in English, so it becomes a vital skill and a matter of survival.”

Sometimes, resistance to curriculum change is driven by fears that these changes will reduce the status of Arabic and traditional cultural values. It is therefore crucial that policy-makers ensure that these values are safeguarded in the modernization process. Apps and social media developments using Arabic that are already underway have an important role in this process.

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3. Make greater use of ICT

ICT has been shown to increase the ability of learners to work independently, to organize their own work and to improve their cooperative working skills. Younger generations see the use of technology as naturally as older generations see the use of a pen. There are various ways to deploy and benefit from ICT in education. A “blended learning environment” which includes digital learning alongside traditional instruction can personalize the learning experience according to individual learning styles and pace. This enables students to work at their own pace online, freeing up classroom time with teachers for one-to-one tuition or to go over more

difficult questions. Digital learning tools, such as simulation, video, social media, and peer-to-peer tutoring can be combined with traditional classroom lectures.

Using a blended model improves test scores and student satisfaction, according to the USA’s National Center for Academic Transformation that found that Virginia Tech’s redesigned math course resulted in the failure rate falling by 39%.

More than 4 million students at the K-12 level took an online course in the USA in 2011, according to the Deloitte paper Disruptive Innovation (K-12 education). Furthermore, “at least two thirds of U.S. students will be doing most of their learning online by 2020,” says Tom Vander Ark, CEO of Open Education Solutions, in the same paper. Georgia Institute of Technology has launched a Master level degree delivered online at massively reduced cost allowing students to learn flexibly and accommodate their work-life balance. The UK’s Open University offers 600 courses leading to 250 qualifications through a variety of flexible part-time opportunities from pre-degree to post-graduate level.

The use of social media adds a further dimension to the learning experience. There is a basis for development. For example, Bon Education has worked with teachers to develop the use of social media and other technologies. Wamda.com reports that while this work was successful with some teachers claiming that they’ve come to enjoy teaching all over again, Anna Batchelder, co-founder of Bon Education sees evidence that “creative and highly motivated [educators]...seem to be stuck in a box due to the pressures of the test system.”

ICT can integrate the end-to-end management of learning. For example, the Dh1 billion “Mohammad Bin Rashid Smart Learning Initiative”, which is part of the UAE Vision 2021 and will be introduced in four stages over five years, is designed to provide a single digital platform to support teachers, students and parents.

4. Increase tertiary education enrollment and promote technical and vocational education

There needs to be effective coordination between K-12 and higher education in order to encourage more students to continue into post-school education. Universities and technical institutes must create better awareness of the benefits of their opportunities. Efforts to make entry routes into higher education more flexible to allow part-time study and blended learning should be developed further.

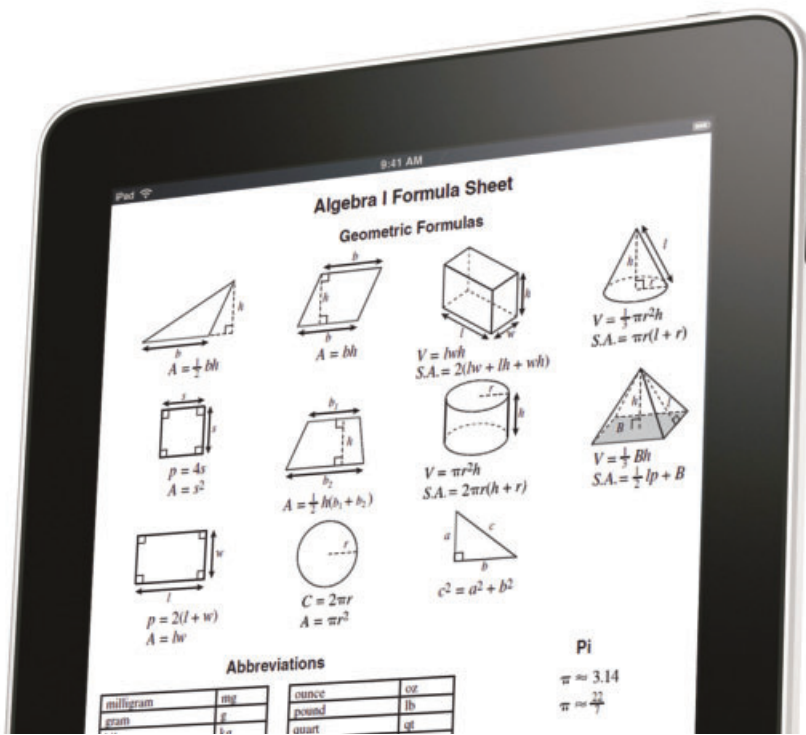
GCC countries can take advantage of the capability, resources and expertise of globally top-ranked universities by encouraging them to open branches in the Middle East, as has been done in Abu Dhabi with the opening of the Paris-Sorbonne University and New York University, and in Qatar with the world-class universities that make up the Education City development. This should attract those students who are unable, or do not wish to, travel overseas to study.

Mohammed Dabeer Rasul writes in the Deloitte paper "Mind the Gap": "Promoting a research culture in GCC countries will assist in enhancing the performance and quality of teaching in basic as well as applied research."

Universities and technical institutes must create better awareness of the benefits of their opportunities

He cites the progress already made with the establishment of institutions such as Masdar Institute of Science and Technology, in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates University, Qatar University and King Abdullah University of Science and Technology in Saudi Arabia.

Governments also need to promote technical and vocational education in order to ensure that the future working population can fulfill the needs of the economy. Assessment of vocational learning should be practical and linked to the demands of the workplace, independently monitored and with standards that are consistently applied. Efforts to make teachers better informed about the labor market and improved career advice are important in supporting parents and students in the decision-making process.



Attitudes to female employment are improving but there is still room for progress

The provision of flexible part-time or second chance routes to qualifications would increase the chances of these qualifications being achieved.

In order to benefit from this investment, it is important that graduates are encouraged into the labor market so that society can benefit from their skills. Attitudes to female employment have improved in this regard, but in some cases there is still room for progress.

5. Bring all stakeholders on board from the beginning and provide strong leadership

For any reform to work, there has to be a strong commitment from leadership about the direction that needs to be taken. It is also important that the reform is a state-owned strategy with a five, ten or 20 year target and is not something that will change each time an education minister departs.

In order to bring all stakeholders on board with education reform in Malaysia, the government started a "National Education Dialogue" which included the public in the consultation process.

Speaking about the process at Abu Dhabi's Education Summit, Muhyiddin Yassin, Malaysia's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, said: "For the first time we have a nationwide consultation program."

Forums where parents, teachers and other members of the community can meet to exchange ideas are essential in order to bring everyone onboard.

Involving education experts and practitioners early on in the concept and design phase will also ensure that projects deliver the requirements of teachers, students and researchers.

"Leadership support has to be visible to the people in the system doing the work; it has to be visible in the sense of capital resources being invested to allow the reform to unfold," a GCC education expert says. "There also has to be a connection with the stakeholder community; businesses require the stakeholders to come forward with their support, [and] parents have to embrace this as something they see as important for their children's success. If you cannot have those things in place you will not get the full effect of the reform."

Sector boards that bring together employers and vocational training providers have the capacity to improve the status and responsiveness of vocational training in the region. By providing a forum for collaboration, they have the potential to impact the way vocational learning is designed, delivered and assessed so that employers' needs are met and employment opportunities created locally. The UK Council for Education and Skills (UKCES) and Norway's National Council for Vocational Education and Training have both done this.

6. Give innovations time to work and use thorough evaluation to provide sound evidence for policy development

There is huge political and social will to see rapid educational improvements in the region. Too often western educational reform has fallen victim to ideological divisions and impatience. Regular on-going and participative evaluation, as opposed to punitive inspection regimes, should be developed to encourage peer review and knowledge sharing. This has the potential to avoid the errors made in the West, so that education policy is not only evidence based at its inception but also during its implementation. Building a professional and political consensus is more likely to lead to sustainable change.

One way to do this is to make sure the wealth of data available in the education systems in the region is turned into information that allows teachers and policy-makers to evaluate their work and plan developmental actions. Rigorous data analysis and presentation allows parents and students to make informed decisions about the education they want.

7. Speed up and simplify the process of opening schools and training providers

The varied legal and administrative processes for setting up and licensing schools and training provision in the different parts of the Middle East are beyond the scope of this paper. What is clear from our discussion is that too often, private school operators find the processes bureaucratic and burdensome and that the market for their services does not operate freely. The result is a shortage of places in many parts of the region that drives nationals overseas or prevents high value mid-career expatriates with children from taking a role locally and making a contribution. A similar point could be made with regards to university developments. An administrative review of the processes for setting up a school or university and the impact of managing prices in the private sector should be undertaken in areas where there are reported shortages of places.

The review should aim to protect the interests of children and parents while establishing the optimum levels of efficiency in execution with a transparent process. Governments should look to partner with private sector investment in schools and universities to reduce demands on the public purse and improve operational flexibility and responsiveness.

Conclusion

The countries that make up the GCC are far from uniform in size, resources and approach to education. A 'one size fits all' approach to the diverse education debate that is currently underway will not work. In recognizing this reality, our paper has attempted to indicate some of the common threads that run through the fabric of education reform in the region.

Their exact impact and importance will vary from country to country. We suggest only that they be considered by policy-makers and practitioners as a set of lenses for viewing their own developmental journey.

Whatever the direction of the journey to seek education from the cradle to the grave, we suggest the following principles should apply:

1. Put children and learners first
2. Use rigorously researched data to provide useful information that is shared with stakeholders
3. Aim for excellence in outcomes and excellence in process
4. Be aware of unintended consequences
5. Value diversity
6. Celebrate and share effective practice

Governments should look to partner with private sector investment in schools and universities



Appendix - Global case studies

Education reform remains a pressing issue, not only in the Middle East, but in every part of the world. When economies transform from an industrial or carbon-based economy to a knowledge-based economy, educational systems need to adjust swiftly to avoid a misalignment between skills and demand. Many GCC countries are already in the process of implementing reforms with the aim of giving a world class education to their citizens, providing a workforce that will fulfill the needs of their economy, and creating centers of excellence in research and training.

Many GCC countries are already in the process of implementing reforms with the aim of giving a world class education to their citizens, providing a workforce that will fulfill the needs of their economy

Here, we look at some of the ways various countries have improved standards, trained teachers and implemented educational reform.

Case study 1

ADEC, Abu Dhabi, UAE

ADEC launched a ten-year strategic plan in June 2009 in order to transform the education system. Its aim is to improve the quality of its 269 public schools to meet international standards, provide access to quality education for all children, ensure there is high quality and affordable private education, and to preserve national identity and local culture.

At the center of the strategy is the New School Model (NSM), an innovative approach to learning in the Emirates with the latest teaching methods and a modern curriculum.

The NSM "is grounded in two core beliefs: that all students are capable of learning, and that the teacher is responsible for student learning," ADEC says.

Teachers in the NSM are expected to achieve professional qualifications and to meet ADEC standards, while a professional development program is also being put in place. In addition, there is a focus on bi-literate education that will prepare students to read, write and speak both Arabic and English.

The NSM is being implemented in three phases and was introduced in 'cycle one' in kindergartens through to grade 3 in the 2010-11 school year. This will be extended to grade 5 in the current academic year with all school grades coming under the new system by 2015.

With reform underway in the public sector, a review of teaching standards, school premises and pupil outcomes in private schools is currently being conducted in Abu Dhabi and will report next year. Private schools will then be given a timeframe to raise standards, if required. Deloitte has been involved in a range of projects at ADEC including process re-engineering, customer service transformation and portfolio management.

Case study 2

Getting stakeholders on board for reform using "theory of change" model - The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), USA

In the USA, urban school districts introduce reform plans almost every school year but they do not always yield long-term results. One of the key difficulties has been in coordinating and uniting different groups of stakeholders so that they work together to push the reforms forward.

However, this was achieved after Deloitte worked with the Gates Foundation and the District of Columbia Education Compact (DCEC) to adapt a 'theory of change' model to support education reform in the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS).

More than 100 groups were involved in the reforms including parents, teachers, principals, school administrators, business leaders, community activists and concerned citizens. DCEC organized working groups that produced 400 pages of raw data, including ideas on educational issues and challenges, performance targets, lessons learned, objectives, risks and recommendations. But then DCEC had to make sense of the masses of material and transform it into a useable format.

Consultants from Deloitte, the Gates Foundation and the Institute for Research and Reform in Education worked together to adapt a theory of change model that enabled DCPS to articulate the reform ideals generated by the different groups and outline a plan to bring the ideas to fruition.

The long-term goal was to prepare college students to be college-ready and workplace-ready while near-term goals included building clean and safe facilities, excellent teaching and learning, and improved collaboration with stakeholders.

One of the successful outcomes was that 400 pages of data were transformed into an actionable executive brief, more than 100 community-based organizations were galvanized to work collaboratively on the reforms, and the model provided an ongoing mechanism to adjust goals and action strategies throughout implementation.

Juanita Wade, former director of the DCEC, said the model "helped to clarify in each stakeholder's mind their role in reforming the DCPS because of the way the model focused thought on long-term goals, short-term goals and the necessary steps towards those goals."

"Perhaps most importantly, the model helped generate trust between the communities," she added.

Case study 3

A GCC government entity

In order to modernize the education system, in 2009, one GCC government entity created a quasi-government holding company which would be charged with driving reforms forward and transforming the entire curriculum. It is also overseeing the integration of ITC into the education system, the professional development of teachers and the improvement of support functions, such as transportation, school meals and buildings.

In vocational training, the government is trying to address skill shortages in IT and industry with the introduction of a number of technical training centers. In higher education, it is spending large budgets on building new universities.

At present, the education ministry is piloting new ways of teaching K-12, examining training courses for teachers and leadership training. It is also looking at different classroom education tools and e-learning – with the introduction of the internet and iPads into teaching.

The implementation of a national education management system has been successful. Deloitte was taken on to help manage the implementation and roll out the system across the country's schools. The aim of the project is to have a nationwide system that enables students, teachers and the ministry to interact online.

The long-term goal was to prepare college students to be college-ready and workplace-ready

This should allow students to do their homework online, interact with teachers over the web and also to get their grades online. The ambition is to have a complete set of online services on the net. It is hoped the measure will help to personalize learning and also improve quality across the education system. It is also planned that the students will develop strong technology skills that will prepare them better for the world of work.

Muhannad Tayem, the engagement partner, says: "With Deloitte's help, the project was implemented and the system was rolled out successfully across the country." The project went on to win an international award and is now regarded as a flagship regional educational project.

In 2009, Deloitte was commissioned to deliver the Functional Skills Support Programme (FSSP). The aim of the program, which covered all English colleges, independent training organizations and some schools, was to prepare teachers, lecturers and managers to provide the new qualifications.

Deloitte created bespoke training sessions and peer support and also published a range of guidance materials linked to specific curricular and workforce needs.

In addition, an interactive website was launched, which worked as a 'one stop shop' and allowed participants to download resources, book training, get their questions answered and keep up-to-date with the latest policy developments.

Deloitte was also responsible for communications and marketing to promote functional skills, including a monthly e-bulletin, regularly updated program flyers, and regular meetings and collaboration with other workforce support programs and communications groups. By the end of the program, FSSP was able to regularly distribute communications to over 24,000 people.

The program reached a total of 23,086 participants through training sessions, 2,916 above the target. This means there was an overall over performance of 14%. Furthermore, the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Some 95% of participants said they were much more or a little more confident in their ability to deliver functional skills while 94% were very satisfied or satisfied with the quality of training they received.

Case study 5

Improving standards through peer review, Support for Excellence in the UK

There are around 2,000 organizations that provide Further Education (FE) in the UK outside of the school and university system.

Deloitte was taken on to help manage the implementation and roll out the system across the country's schools

Case study 4

Effective teacher training, functional skills in the UK

Up to four million adults in the UK have reading and writing skills below those of an 11 year-old. Concerns about the UK's ability to compete in global markets due to poor levels of literacy and math led to the commissioning of a report "The Leitch Review of Skills" which concluded in 2006 that the UK needed to urgently and dramatically raise achievements at all skills levels.

As a result, the government invested heavily in funding courses in a new 'functional skills' qualification that would cover the core elements of English, math and ICT, that enable an individual to operate confidently and effectively in life and at work.

As part of a drive to improve standards in response to the changing needs of the economy and skills needed by the UK workforce, the FE sector was set a challenge by the government in 2006, to move towards greater self-regulation.

The Support for Excellence Programme was commissioned to support organizations in developing their capacity for self-improvement on the road to self-regulation.

Deloitte led the program from August 2007, developing a delivery model that would engage a high number of providers and coordinate them into peer review and development groups – which meant they would be working together to analyze and challenge each other on the extent to which they were improving. They had to recognize their areas of weakness and put plans in place to address those areas.

By the end of June 2009, more than 800 organizations were taking part in the Support For Excellence Programme, almost 50% of the entire FE sector.

The program received an 86% satisfaction rating in an independent survey. Furthermore, the following business results were delivered: significant cost savings and efficiencies, staff development and improved learner satisfaction.

Collaborative improvement has also changed the way in which organizations think and interact with each other – transforming them from competitors to organizations supporting each other to succeed.

Julie Mercer, Deloitte UK Head of Education and Skills, says: “This was voted by the colleges and providers as being the most effective project the government had ever run in this space.”

“It has been a real success story in the way it helped colleges think about how they can collaborate in a competitive landscape.”

Deloitte created bespoke training sessions and peer support



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Deloitte provides audit, tax, consulting, and financial advisory services to public and private clients spanning multiple industries. With a globally connected network of member firms in more than 150 countries, Deloitte brings world-class capabilities and high-quality service to clients, delivering the insights they need to address their most complex business challenges. Deloitte has in the region of 200,000 professionals, all committed to becoming the standard of excellence.

Deloitte's professionals are unified by a collaborative culture that fosters integrity, outstanding value to markets and clients, commitment to each other, and strength from cultural diversity. They enjoy an environment of continuous learning, challenging experiences, and enriching career opportunities. Deloitte's professionals are dedicated to strengthening corporate responsibility, building public trust, and making a positive impact in their communities.

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Deloitte is among the region's leading professional services firms, providing audit, tax, consulting, and financial advisory services through 26 offices in 15 countries with around 3,000 partners, directors and staff. It is a Tier 1 Tax advisor in the GCC region since 2010 (according to the International Tax Review World Tax Rankings). It has received numerous awards in the last few years which include Best Employer in the Middle East, best consulting firm, and the Middle East Training & Development Excellence Award by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW).