

EVALUATION OF THE CHILD FRIENDLY EDUCATION INITIATIVE IN SULTANATE OF OMAN

Evaluation Report 2012-2025



Foreword: Ministry of Education

The Sultanate of Oman places the highest priority on education as a cornerstone of national development, social cohesion and the advancement of a knowledgeable, skilled and values driven society. Education is viewed as a strategic investment in children and young people and a fundamental driver of sustainable development, through which capable and responsible generations are prepared to contribute effectively to the nation's continued progress.

In alignment with national education priorities, the Ministry of Education continues to advance comprehensive improvements aimed at enhancing the quality, accessibility and inclusiveness of the education system. These efforts focus on strengthening governance, fostering innovation and ensuring that all learners benefit from safe, supportive and stimulating learning environments.

Within this national framework, the Child Friendly Education initiative represents a significant step toward institutionalizing inclusive, rights based learning principle within schools and classrooms. By integrating national priorities with international standards and evidence based practices, the initiative has contributed to strengthening school communities, enhancing teaching and learning practices and promoting supportive environments that respond to the diverse needs of all learners.

In this regard, the evaluation of the Child Friendly Education initiative provides valuable insights into progress achieved, lessons learned and areas for further strengthening, supporting the Ministry's ongoing efforts to enhance education quality and equity through participatory approach.

The Ministry of Education expresses its sincere appreciation to UNICEF for its constructive partnership, technical expertise and continued support in advancing the Child Friendly Education initiative. This collaboration has played an important role in supporting national education agenda and reinforcing shared commitments to inclusive, high quality education for every child in Oman.

His Excellency Dr. Badr bin Hamoud bin Rashid Al-Kharousi
Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education for Education
Ministry of Education



Foreword: UNICEF

Every child has the right to quality education that nurtures their potential, builds confidence and prepares them to contribute meaningfully to society. At UNICEF, education is recognized as a cornerstone for equity, resilience and sustainable national development. Investing in education is therefore an investment in the future of every child and in the long term prosperity of the nation.

The Sultanate of Oman continues to demonstrate strong commitment to strengthening its education system. Guided by Oman Vision 2040 and the School Education Law (2023), human capital development has been positioned as a central pillar of the national agenda. Through strategic reforms, inclusive policies, and ongoing system enhancement, Oman continues to prioritize equitable access to quality learning opportunities for all children and young people. These national efforts provide a strong foundation for advancing child centred and inclusive learning environments.

Within this context, the Child Friendly Education initiative represents a key strategic approach supported by UNICEF under the leadership of the Ministry of Education. The initiative aims to promote safe, inclusive, participatory and effective learning environments by strengthening school level practices, enhancing teacher capacities, and embedding child centred principles within the education system.

This evaluation of the Child Friendly Education initiative represents the first evaluation conducted under the UNICEF–Government of Oman Country Programme 2022–2025. As such, it constitutes a foundational learning exercise for the current programme cycle. The evaluation provides timely evidence on the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of UNICEF supported education interventions within the national context and contributes to strengthening evidence based decision making, informing programme adjustments, and guiding future strategic directions.

UNICEF is honoured to work in close partnership with the Ministry of Education and national stakeholders throughout this evaluation process. Through continued collaboration and a shared commitment to learning, accountability, and results, we can further strengthen education systems and ensure that every child in Oman is afforded the opportunity to learn, thrive, and reach their full potential.

Sumaira Chowdhury, UNICEF Representative to the Sultanate of Oman



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The evaluation was conducted by Mr. Waddah Abdul Salam, whose expertise, commitment and analytical rigour were crucial in delivering this robust, relevant and forward-looking evaluation.



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01 ACRONYMS



AOU	Arab Open University
CFE	Child-Friendly Education
CFS	Child-Friendly School
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ECD	Early Child Development
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organizations
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MCSY	Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoSD	Ministry of Social Development



MTFP	Medium-Term Fiscal Plan
NCSI	National Center for Statistics and Information
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
NPOs	Non-Profit Organizations
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMCs	School Management Committees
SQU	Sultan Qaboos University
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WHO	World Health Organization



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





Background & Objectives

The Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) initiative is a model that was co-constructed by the Government of Oman and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2012 – 2015 (annex 04). With principles derived from the 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child and other human rights instruments and declarations such as **“Education for All,”** the CFS model aims to facilitate the access of all children in Oman to educational systems where the principles of child-centeredness, democratic participation and inclusiveness exist.

This summative evaluation was commissioned to support the Government of Oman in assessing the Child-Friendly Education (CFE) initiative after 12 years of implementation (2012–2024).

It examined the initiative’s

- **Relevance**
- **Effectiveness**
- **Efficiency**
- **Coherence**
- **Sustainability**
- **Impact**

while also identifying cross-cutting issues and areas for improvement. The evaluation aims to generate lessons learned and provide actionable recommendations to guide policy and programme development.

The primary audience includes the Ministry of Education (MoE) and its departments across all 11 governorates, with secondary beneficiaries such as the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, and the Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit. **(annex 01- ToR)**

The objectives of the evaluation were to assess alignment with national education priorities, measure effectiveness and sustainability, explore the extent to which interventions promote child-friendly learning environments, document lessons for regional and global sharing, and propose recommendations for strengthening CFE delivery in Oman.

Methodology

The evaluation employed a mixed-methods, participatory approach guided by OECD-DAC criteria and implemented across a number of schools in the **four governorates**:



Muscat

Dhofar

South Sharqya

Musandam

The project used a variety of data collection tools ([annex 06](#)), including:

- ▶ A **document review** of strategic plans, policies, reports, and training materials was complemented by other **primary data collection** that ensured wide stakeholder representation:
- ▶ **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs):**
16 interviews in total, including **7 male** and **9 female** participants drawn from government institutions, civil society organizations, and academic institutions.
- ▶ **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):**

35 sessions with 228 participants, disaggregated as follows:

participants	Total	Male	Female
Students	120	59	61
Teachers	58	15	43
Parents	50	27	23

Classroom Observations: a total of 5 sessions across the governorates and subjects to capture teaching practices and learning environments.

1. Case Studies:

two case studies were conducted under the following titles ([annex 07](#)):

- **Case study 1:** Hand in Hand: Towards a Bright Educational Future in Oman
- **Case Study 2:** Empowerment for a Better Future: The Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Education Through the CFE Initiative.

All qualitative data were transcribed, coded, and thematically analyzed, with triangulation against secondary data to ensure validity. Ethical standards were rigorously applied, including informed consent, anonymity, data security, and child safeguarding measures to guarantee safe participation for children and vulnerable groups.



Findings

Relevance:

The CFE initiative showed strong relevance to national education priorities, integrating child-friendly approaches into policy frameworks, operational manuals, and curriculum reform discussions. Its multi-tiered governance structure balanced national direction with local adaptation, while community engagement enhanced legitimacy, though participation varied by region.

Evaluation findings, however, point to major gaps. Committees often lacked operational capacity and accountability, stakeholder roles remained unclear, and professional development was too limited in both coverage and depth. Fragmented monitoring systems further restricted impact assessment and adaptive management.

Financial sustainability emerged as the most critical risk. Heavy reliance on external funding and the absence of dedicated government budget lines threaten continuity, placing progress in teaching quality and student wellbeing at risk. To transform pilot gains into systemic change, urgent action is needed to strengthen governance, expand professional development, and secure long-term financing mechanisms



Effectiveness:

The Child-Friendly Education (CFE) initiative made notable progress in creating learner-centered environments that promote holistic child development. Gains were evident in student participation, enrollment, and teacher use of participatory, differentiated, and positive discipline methods.

Yet, systemic challenges constrained outcomes. Limited funding restricted resources and infrastructure, while professional development lacked sufficient practical application. Training coverage was uneven, with content not fully aligned to competency frameworks or performance indicators.

Efforts toward inclusion of learners with disabilities showed progress but remained limited by shortages of specialized staff and adapted materials. Provisions met basic accessibility needs but fell short of comprehensive accommodation.

Institutional mechanisms functioned at a basic level but required clearer roles, stronger accountability, and improved coordination with government and civil society. Weak partnerships reduced opportunities for resource mobilization and technical support.

Overall, CFE laid critical foundations, but advancing impact requires sustained funding, more practical teacher training, and stronger institutional and partnership frameworks.



Efficiency:

The initiative demonstrated strong efficiency in adapting learner-centered pedagogies and materials to local contexts, effectively applying international best practices within available resources. This alignment enhanced both program relevance and operational capacity.

However, financial shortfalls limited the scope of activities, creating inequities in resource distribution—urban schools received greater support than rural ones, undermining inclusivity. Staffing challenges persisted, as deployment policies failed to ensure equitable teacher placement, leaving underserved schools with minimal intervention.

Despite these barriers, **schools showed resilience by adapting approaches to local conditions, indicating readiness for scale-up if adequate support is provided.** Yet, the absence of robust monitoring and evaluation systems remains a critical gap, hindering the identification of efficiency gains and evidence-based adjustments. Clear efficiency indicators and systematic performance tracking are urgently needed to sustain progress.



Coherence:

The CFE initiative demonstrated strong coherence with national, regional, and international education frameworks, aligning well with government strategies and global commitments to quality education. Its integrated design—combining training, infrastructure, pedagogy, and community engagement—enhanced program logic and efficiency while complementing broader sector reforms, particularly in inclusive education and life skills.

However, operational coordination lagged behind strategic alignment. Program components often ran in parallel without systematic integration, reducing potential synergies. Missed opportunities included fragmented teacher training and duplicated community campaigns, which limited resource efficiency and collective impact.

The lack of sector-wide coordination platforms further constrained collaboration and standardization. Establishing cross-sectoral working groups, unified monitoring, and common quality benchmarks will be critical to translate conceptual alignment into practical, system-wide coherence.

Impact:

The CFE initiative contributed to improvements in student wellbeing, teaching practices, and community engagement. Schools reported fewer bullying incidents, stronger psychosocial support, and lower dropout rates, while parents and communities became more involved in school life. Teachers adopted more interactive and student-centered methods, reflecting meaningful shifts in classroom practice.

Yet, data limitations constrained impact assessment. The absence of unified monitoring systems and standardized indicators made it difficult to measure progress or attribute outcomes directly to CFE activities. Policy influence also remained unclear, with limited evidence of systemic adoption.

Impact sustainability challenges were evident. High staff turnover weakened continuity, and new teachers often lacked exposure to CFE methods. Student councils functioned more symbolically than substantively, limiting youth participation. Moreover, without systemic reinforcement, there is a risk that teaching reforms will not endure once external support ends.



Sustainability:

The CFE initiative made notable progress in embedding child-friendly approaches into national education structures, with policy integration reflected in manuals, strategic plans, and curriculum reform discussions. A multi-layered governance system at national, regional, and school levels supported coherence and local adaptation, while parent and community engagement added legitimacy, though effectiveness varied across regions.

Despite these achievements, sustainability challenges remain. Committee structures were inconsistent, with uneven functionality and weak accountability. Stakeholder roles lacked clarity, innovation mechanisms were limited, and professional development programs provided only partial coverage and insufficient depth. Monitoring systems were fragmented, constraining evidence-based adaptation.

Financial vulnerability remains a major structural risk for the initiative, as schools' annual plans are not linked to dedicated budgets and the system does not yet operate under a school-based management model that grants financial autonomy. The absence of secured national budget lines undermines continuity and limits schools' ability to translate CFE priorities into actionable plans. Without establishing stable government financing, clearer budget linkages, and diversified resource streams, the initiative cannot maintain momentum or achieve long-term institutionalization across all schools.

Conclusion



This evaluation stands as a clear roadmap of various applicable activities and approaches to fulfill the initiative's intended goals and protect children rights; especially the right to access quality, equitable and inclusive education for all children in Oman. By integrating the initiative's principals in the education system, the Sultanate of Oman is one step closer to achieve its educational strategic goals, and its Vision 2040.

The evaluation highlighted the positive impact of the child-center approach of the initiative and its role in enhancing the integration of all children in education. This was evidenced by the academic improvements, enhanced wellbeing and active participation of children reported within the pilot schools. Further sustained commitment to building the capacities and skills of teachers remains vital to fully create safe inclusive learning environments and guide broader reform efforts of the sector.

Moreover, it is important for the MoE, UNICEF and other relevant partners to build on the findings, lessons learned, and recommendations documented in this report to address the remaining challenges and scale effective practices to successfully achieve quality equitable and inclusive education for all children in Oman



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Lessons Learned



The evaluation of the Child-Friendly Education (CFE) initiative in Oman yielded several valuable lessons:

1. Securing stakeholder buy-in and ownership from the outset is crucial for driving success and reducing resistance to change.
2. Adapting interventions to local contexts while adhering to core principles enhances relevance and impact.
3. Transforming ingrained practices requires a systemic approach to capacity building, embedding continuous professional development within the education system.
4. Achieving inclusion demands comprehensive support systems including accessible infrastructure, specialized resources, teacher competencies, and attitudinal change.
5. Engaging parents and local stakeholders in decision-making and awareness-raising amplifies the initiatives impact.
6. Robust monitoring and evaluation with clear indicators and feedback loops is essential for tracking progress and informing adaptations.
7. Institutionalizing child-friendly principles within policies and curricula is a gradual process requiring multi-level alignment.
8. Ensuring the initiative benefits the most marginalized children necessitates targeted strategies and a consistent equity lens.
9. Shifting leadership to local actors while providing ongoing support is critical for long-term sustainability.
10. Leveraging strategic partnerships with diverse sectors can accelerate progress and optimize resources for shared goals.



Recommendations



Based on the evaluation findings, the following actions are advised to strengthen Child-Friendly Education (CFE):

System Strengthening

1. Create a comprehensive CFE policy and strategic frameworks to ensure consistent implementation across the education system and meet the diverse needs of schools in urban and remote areas.
2. Establish a dedicated CFE unit in the Ministry of Education for leadership and accountability.
3. Improve data systems (EMIS) to support evidence-based, equity-focused decisions and promote disaggregated data use.
4. Develop a long-term, sustainable financing strategy that draws on both public and private sector resources and is grounded in principles of equity, efficiency, and accountability.
5. Create sector-wide coordination platforms and working groups to harmonize efforts and share knowledge.

Inclusive Practices

6. Adopt an inclusive education policy and costed action plan to accelerate full inclusion with addressing budgetary constraints through dedicated funding and resource mobilization.
7. Establish comprehensive resource centers in each directorate, equipped with well qualified staff, assistive devices and learning materials to provide specialized support and consistent trainings for schools, families and communities.
8. Conduct a comprehensive accessibility assessment and definite timelines to improve schools' infrastructures to ensure the accessibility of children with disabilities to schools and education.
9. Enhance teaching methodologies, curricula and resources to become fully comprehensive and aligning with the cultural context, which focusing on equity, across all levels.

Capacity Building

10. Integrate CFE into teacher training to build skills and sustain good practices.
11. Design and offer structured and obligatory professional development programs centered on practical application for all teachers.
12. Design national guidance programs for the CFE initiative that connects experienced teachers with new ones and create a network of constant support, problem-solving, and sharing the best practices.

Monitoring and Evaluation

13. Conduct participatory school self-assessments and improvement planning.
14. Plan a 2030 impact evaluation to assess long-term results and guide future efforts.



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Timely, coordinated action on these recommendations can drive systemic change. **This will ensure every child receives a child-friendly, inclusive, quality education in Oman.**



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PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES, AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION





Purpose of the Evaluation

The overall purpose of this summative evaluation is to support the Government of Oman in its assessment of the Child-Friendly Education (CFE) initiative in the Sultanate. **The review assessed the initiatives relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, sustainability, impact, and any cross-cutting issues**, as well as areas that require improvement following 12 years of implementation (2012-2024). The intention is to identify lessons learned and present actionable recommendations that will enable sound decision-making regarding the development of relevant policies and programmes.

The primary audiences of the evaluation include government entities, namely, the MoE and its directorates and departments in all **11 governorates**. Secondary beneficiaries include **the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), the Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, and the Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit**.



Evaluation Objectives

The overall objectives of the evaluation are:

1. Assess the alignment of the CFE intervention with the national education policies and programmes, focusing on Oman Vision 2040 priorities.
2. Assess the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, impact, and sustainability of the CFE initiative in enhancing children's learning and strengthening the educational system.
3. Explore to what level educational interventions have been designed to become child-friendly, promote children's learning, and drive improvements in the educational system.
4. Identify and document lessons learned in implementing the CFE initiative in Oman, which can be shared with other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries at regional and global levels to inform their educational practices and policies.
5. Provide actionable recommendations for effective CFE delivery in Oman and support decision-making in developing relevant policies and programmes.



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EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY





Approach and Design



The final evaluation of the Child-Friendly Education (CFE) Initiative in Oman (2012–2025) employed a mixed-methods, participatory, and utilization-focused approach, guided by the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria. The methodology was designed to be inclusive, engaging a wide range of stakeholders to assess the initiative's effectiveness across the Omani education system.

The evaluation adopted a participatory approach, actively involving key stakeholders such as government officials, school administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members throughout the evaluation process. This approach ensured the relevance and ownership of the evaluation findings and recommendations.

The CFE Theory of Change (**ToC**) served as the guiding framework for the evaluation, illustrating the causal pathways through which the initiative's inputs and activities are expected to lead to desired outcomes and impact (**see Annex 05 for a visual representation of the ToC**).

The evaluation questions (**annex 06**) and indicators were strategically linked to the ToC components to enable a comprehensive assessment of the initiative's performance. For instance, the question *To what extent have the capacities of the educators to implement the CFE principles and implementation stages been strengthened?* is connected to the **«Capacity Building»** component of the ToC, which aims to enhance the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of education staff to effectively implement CFE.

The evaluation process began in January 2025 with consultative meetings involving UNICEF Oman, the regional UNICEF Evaluation team, and the CFE Steering Committee. These meetings were crucial in refining the scope, developing sub-questions and indicators, and building consensus on the approach. An inception report was prepared, translated into Arabic, shared for feedback, and finalized.

Considering the diverse geographical settings, a blended design was adopted, combining a two-week field mission across four governorates (April–May 2025) with remote interviews and consultations. This approach allowed for a comprehensive data collection process, ensuring the inclusion of perspectives from various contexts.



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Sampling

A purposive sampling strategy ensured representativeness and diversity. Selection criteria included:

- **Participation in CFE:**
Schools engaged since 2012 (first piloted schools), and those joining after 2016 were selected to assess results over time; a number of representatives from non-CFE schools were also interviewed.
- **Gender balance:**
Equal representation of male and female schools.
- **Inclusion of students with disabilities:**
Inclusion Schools with enrolled children with disabilities were purposefully included.
- **School type:**
Both public and private schools¹ were sampled.
- **Grade levels:**
A balance between grades 1–4 and grades 5–11 to assess effects across education stages, if any.
- **Geographical distribution:**
A purposive sampling method was used to select areas across Muscat, Musandam, Dhofar, and Ash-Sharqiyah South. The selection was guided by criteria such as urban versus remote location, the level of engagement in the initiative (ranging from early to later stages), and geographical distribution (capital, south, east, and west), to ensure maximum variation.



Within each school, interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with **principals, teachers, social counselors, students, and parents to capture multiple perspectives.**

¹Schools that focus on integrating students with disabilities

Data Collection Methods

To ensure triangulation and reliability, the following tools (**annex 06**) were used:

- 1. Document Review:** A comprehensive analysis was conducted of all available CFE programme documentation, including strategic plans, annual progress reports, operational guidelines, and training materials developed since the initiative's inception. Relevant national education policies, frameworks, and legislative reforms were also reviewed to understand how CFE principles align with broader sector priorities in Oman. Additionally, secondary data, including statistical reports, research studies, and evaluation findings from previous educational initiatives, were examined. This review provided essential background information, helped identify key trends and gaps, and guided the formulation of data collection tools and evaluation questions, ensuring they were contextually relevant and evidence-based.
- 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs):** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 16-key (9 females and 7 males) stakeholders representing diverse perspectives on the CFE initiative. Participants included specialists from UNICEF, officials from the MoE, MoH, and MoSD, school principals, representatives from non-governmental organizations, and academic staff from the Arab Open University. These interviews explored the initiative's relevance to national priorities, operational efficiency, coordination across sectors, and the results achieved at school and system levels. The discussions provided in-depth insights into policy alignment, implementation challenges, and perceived outcomes, enriching the evaluation with evidence from decision-makers, implementers, and education partners.
- 3. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** A total of 35 sessions were conducted with 228 participants across 11 selected schools in the four governorates, disaggregated as follows: 120 students (59 male, 61 female), 58 teachers (15 male, 43 female), and 50 parents (27 male, 23 female). The FGDs engaged a diverse range of stakeholders, including students, teachers, parents, caregivers, and children with disabilities. Separate sessions were organized for each group to encourage open dialogue and ensure that all voices—particularly those of children and vulnerable groups—were heard. These discussions provided valuable opportunities for participants to share firsthand experiences with CFE implementation, including observed changes in teaching practices, classroom dynamics, and school environments. They also explored perceptions of inclusivity, child participation, learning outcomes, and overall satisfaction with the initiative. Insights from these sessions helped capture the human dimension of CFE's impact, shedding light on both achievements and ongoing challenges in day-to-day school life.
- 4. Classroom Observations:**

Five different lessons were observed in each of selected school, covering various subjects (e.g., mathematics, science, language, social studies, and art). These observations focused on:

 - Student participation and interaction with teachers and peers.
 - Use of child-centered teaching approaches.
 - Classroom inclusivity, particularly for children with disabilities.
 - Gender dynamics in participation and group activities.
 - Application of CFE principles in lesson planning and delivery.
- 5. Comparative School Observations:** Visits to both CFE and non-CFE schools to observe learning environments, child participation, and inclusion practices.
- 6. Case Studies:**

two case studies were conducted under the following titles (annex 07):

 - **Case study 1:** Hand in Hand: Towards a Bright Educational Future in Oman
 - **Case Study 2:** Empowerment for a Better Future: The Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Education Through the CFE Initiative

All data collection sessions were moderated **by the evaluator, ensuring informed consent of all participants, child safeguarding, and confidentiality.**

Ethical Considerations

The evaluation followed UNEG ethical guidelines. IRB clearance was obtained from UNICEF's ethics committee. All participants provided informed consent, anonymity and data security were assured, and strict child safeguarding measures were applied.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data were transcribed, coded, and synthesized thematically. Findings from KIIs, FGDs, observations, and case studies (annex 07) were triangulated with documentary evidence and secondary data, strengthening validity and highlighting patterns, gaps, and systemic bottlenecks.

Validation of Findings

A preliminary finding and validation workshop, co-hosted by the MoE, UNICEF, and key education stakeholders through the SC Committee, was held to review preliminary findings. Feedback was incorporated to ensure accuracy, credibility, and ownership of results.

Limitations and Mitigation Strategies

The evaluation faced several methodological limitations that challenged the depth of analysis and the certainty of attributing results to the CFE initiative. These limitations included the lack of baseline data, scarcity of well-organized historical documentation, absence of a structured monitoring system, and inconsistencies in existing records. These factors hindered the ability to conduct robust trend analysis and measure long-term outcomes effectively.

To address these limitations, the evaluation team employed various mitigation strategies:

1. Developing a retrospective Theory of Change (ToC) matrix to organize evidence and clarify assumptions.
2. Conducting a historical policy analysis to provide context on the CFE initiative's contribution to sector reforms.
3. Undertaking a comparative analysis between CFE and non-CFE schools to generate plausible evidence of impact.
4. Drawing upon secondary data sources from government records and existing research studies to broaden the evidence base.

While these strategies helped to improve the credibility and reliability of the findings, the evaluation cannot fully address the challenges of attribution or precisely quantify the magnitude of the initiative's impact due to the retrospective nature of the evaluation and the lack of a robust monitoring system from the outset.

Future evaluations would benefit from a prospective design, the establishment of clear baselines, and the implementation of continuous monitoring systems to enable more rigorous impact assessment. Despite the limitations encountered, the evaluation team's mitigation strategies contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the CFE initiative's implementation, outcomes, and potential impact.

Vision, Objectives, and Strategy of the CFE Initiative



Introduction

As part of its vision of refining its education system to meet the demands of an ever-changing world and contribute to sustainable development, the Government of Oman, in partnership with UNICEF, introduced the CFE programme in 2012. The CFE initiative, in line with Oman's Vision 2040, aims to build a sustainable economy and society that is open and equal for all, by ensuring access to a safe and inclusive learning environment for all children in Oman.

As a high-income country, Oman's population of 0 to 19 years old (1.4 males:1 female ratio), which made up roughly 30 per cent of the 5.1 million population in the 2024 census, has shown considerable progress in providing universal access to primary education over the previous several decades. The government has always placed education as its highest priority, as evidenced by several of its policies and programmes, such as the National Strategy for Education Vision 2040 and School Education Law 2023, which seeks to create an integrated and independent system to regulate and assess the educational ecosystem, provide inclusive education, promote lifelong learning, and enhance scientific research.

The CFE is a holistic approach that closely aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (particularly Goal 4) and with UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025 and incorporates child-centred teaching methodologies, safe and healthy learning environments, the inclusion of life skills and values in the curriculum, and engagement of parents, caregivers, and communities. **In Oman, this initiative is being implemented using UNICEF's Child-Friendly Schools Manual, as part of a CFE initiative, to ensure that this model reaches every child in Oman.**

In 2016, an evaluation was carried out to assess the implementation of the pilot CFE initiative in nine public schools across three governorates (Muscat, Dhofar and Musandam). Reflecting this, UNICEF Oman is conducting this evaluation, in collaboration with the MoE, to evaluate the scale-up implementation of the CFE model in Oman from 2012 to 2023. **This summative evaluation aims to assess the CFE initiative's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, sustainability, impact, and cross-cutting issues and to document lessons learned.** The key focus is to support the Government of Oman in identifying areas for improvement and recommending actionable measures to inform prioritized decision-making. For further details, please refer to the annex 04.

Overview of CFE Framework

The CFE framework in Oman is a comprehensive approach to ensuring all children's right to quality, inclusive education. The Ministry of Education and UNICEF jointly developed this CFE framework based on the following six principles: equality, adaptability and sustainability, child-centeredness, participation, inclusiveness, and protection. The CFE framework provides a systematic structure for applying these principles at all levels of the education system, from national policy to school-based practice. In summary, the CFE handbook equips readers with all the relevant guidance on the frameworks, processes, and methodologies needed to work towards a vision of education that prioritizes the holistic development and well-being of children. By aligning with national aspirations and leveraging existing national educational initiatives, the CFE framework aims to redefine schools in Oman as caring, rights-oriented learning environments that enable optimum learning, development, and realization of full potential for all children, including children with disabilities.



CFE Initiative Vision

The vision of the CFE approach in Oman is to create a purposeful, attractive, and safe educational environment for all children.



CFE Initiative Mission

The mission is to provide the components of CFE in accordance with the principles of child rights and the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030.

CFE Initiative Principles of Child-Friendly Education

The framework aims to promote a safe and engaging educational environment for children based on child rights principles and sustainable development goals. The key themes covered are:

Equality:	Child-Centered Approach:	Protection:
Ensuring a fair learning environment for all children.	Providing curricula that focus on children's needs and rights.	Creating a safe school environment that shields children from all forms of violence and neglect.
Inclusivity:	Participation:	Sustainability and Adaptability:
Offering educational opportunities for all children, including those with disabilities.	Encouraging children's involvement in the learning process and allowing them to express their opinions.	Developing a flexible education system that responds to various challenges.

CFE Initiative Objectives

- › Strengthening child rights within the educational system. •Developing policies that foster creativity and citizenship among children.
- › Enhancing the quality of school environments to make them more attractive and engaging.
- › Strengthening partnerships between schools and different community sectors.
- › Linking education outcomes to the job market to ensure a sustainable future for children.

Implementation Mechanisms

- › Assessing schools' initial needs.
- › Selecting appropriate principles for each school based on its requirements.
- › Developing and implementing plans to activate CFE.
- › Monitoring and evaluating progress through defined performance indicators.

Narrative Theory of Change

End Goal (Impact)

IF

Oman implements a comprehensive Child-Friendly Education system across all schools, THEN all children in Oman will enjoy their right to quality education in safe, inclusive, and participatory learning environments that foster their holistic development and prepare them for active citizenship, contributing to the achievement of SDGs 4 and 5.

Pathway of Change From Inputs to Outputs

IF

the Ministry of Education provides the CFE manual and guidelines, allocates adequate financial resources, mobilizes technical expertise from UNICEF and other partners, demonstrates sustained government commitment, and invests in school infrastructure improvements,

AND

these resources are effectively deployed through capacity building programs, policy development initiatives, community mobilization efforts, infrastructure upgrades, partnership development, and monitoring systems,

THEN

The following outputs will be achieved:

- › CFE committees will be established and functional at the ministry, governorate, and school levels.
- › Education staff at all levels will be trained on CFE principles and implementation.
- › Schools will develop context-specific improvement plans aligned with CFE principles.
- › Student councils and participation mechanisms will be activated.
- › Parent associations will be strengthened and actively engaged.
- › Comprehensive monitoring and evaluation systems will be operational.

Pathway of Change From Outputs to Outcomes

IF

these outputs are successfully delivered and sustained

AND

there is continued support from leadership, adequate resources, and community buy-in,

THEN

the following behavioral and system changes will occur:

- › Teachers will consistently apply child-centered pedagogies that respect individual differences and learning styles.
- › Students will actively participate in school decision-making processes and take ownership of their learning.
- › Parents and communities will be meaningfully engaged in supporting children's education.
- › Schools will implement inclusive practices that ensure no child is left behind.
- › Child protection mechanisms will be functional and effectively prevent harm.
- › Data-driven decision-making will guide continuous improvements in educational quality.



Pathway of Change From Outcomes to Changes

IF

these outcome-level changes are achieved and reinforced over time

AND

supportive policies remain in place and stakeholder commitment is maintained,

THEN

The following systemic transformations will occur:

- › Child rights approaches will be fully institutionalized in education policies, curricula, and daily practices.
- › School cultures will be transformed to prioritize child well-being, participation, and holistic development.
- › Sustainable multi-stakeholder partnerships will be established to support the quality of education continuously.
- › The education system will be resilient and able to maintain quality during crises or challenges.

Key Assumptions

1. Political will: The Omani Government maintains a commitment to CFE implementation despite potential political changes.
2. Resource availability: Adequate financial and human resources continue to be allocated.
3. Cultural acceptance: Communities embrace child participation and rights-based approaches.
4. Coordination: Effective collaboration among the Ministry of Education, Health, and Social Development, Oman Vision 2040, the Authority for Environment, civil society organizations, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Communication and Technology, and the private sector.
5. Capacity: Schools have sufficient infrastructure and human resources to implement CFE.
6. Sustainability: CFE principles become embedded in organizational culture rather than being project-dependent.



Contextual Risks

1. Economic constraints: Budget limitations may reduce support for CFE activities.
2. Resistance to change: Traditional educational approaches may persist among some stakeholders.
3. Competing priorities: Other educational reforms may divert attention from CFE.
4. Implementation gaps: Inconsistent application of CFE principles across schools.
5. External shocks: Natural disasters, pandemics, sociocultural resistance, or conflicts could disrupt implementation.
6. Social barriers: Gender, disability, or socioeconomic discrimination may limit inclusive practices



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Stakeholder Contributions

Ministry of Education:

- Provide policy framework and guidelines.
- Allocate budgets and resources.
- Build teachers' capacity and provide training on CFE principles and methodologies for practical implementation in schools.
- Coordinate implementation across levels.
- Track and assess progress using established indicators with clearly defined baselines and targets.

Directorates of Education (Governorate Level)

- Supervise and support schools in implementing CFE, while providing necessary technical and administrative assistance.
- Facilitate coordination between schools, local authorities, and relevant stakeholders.
- Monitor implementation progress at the school-level, and consolidate schools reports into a singular comprehensive report that is to be submitted to the MoE.
- Support capacity-building initiatives through localized training and mentoring for school staff.

CFE Committees in Directorates of Education

- Act as coordination enhancing, participatory platforms bringing together representatives of schools, communities, parents, and local stakeholders.
- Improve local awareness of the CFE principles.
- Identify the school-specific challenges and propose context-appropriate solutions
- Strengthen accountability and feedback mechanisms between schools, communities, and education directorates.
- Support broad inclusive participation of parents and communities in the educational process, while ensuring the representation of marginalized groups.

School Principals:

- Enhance CFE principals by adopting innovative activities and implementation methods that suits the local context
- Facilitate and organize continuous trainings for the teachers and social counsellors to build their capacities and enhance they skills
- Integrating parents and caregivers, local communities and the private sector (e.g., Energy and Telecommunications companies) actively in the educational process
- Create safe and inclusive school environments
- Follow up on the CFE progress, rising changes, and assessing the impact to ensure the fulfilment of the CFE goals.

Teachers:

- Apply child-centered methodologies.
- Respect children's voices and choices.
- Identify and support students with disabilities.
- Monitor children's performance
- Collaborate with parents.



Students:

- Actively participate in learning.
- Contribute to school decisions.
- Support peer protection.
- Take responsibility for maintaining a positive school environment.

Parents/Communities:

- Support children's education.
- Participate in school activities.
- Contribute resources and expertise.
- Advocate for child rights.

UNICEF and Partners:

- Provide guidance and technical assistance.
- Support capacity building and monitoring.
- Share global best practices.
- Facilitate knowledge exchange.

Monitoring Framework

- Progress will be tracked through:
- Process indicators for each CFE principle.
- Outcome indicators measuring behavior change.
- Impact indicators assessing child well-being and learning outcomes.
- Regular reviews using the CFE monitoring tools.
- Participatory evaluations involving all stakeholders.

This Theory of Change outlines a comprehensive pathway for transforming Oman's education system into one that prioritizes the well-being and rights of every child—fostering inclusive, participatory, and supportive learning environments that enable children to thrive, contribute meaningfully, and realize their full potential in alignment with Oman Vision 2040 and the Sustainable Development Goals. **(annex 05)**



Findings

The findings in this section are presented by OECD DAC criterion of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, coherence, sustainability, and impact.

Relevance

The CFE initiative in Oman demonstrated close alignment with Oman's national priorities and the UNICEF CFE frameworks, exhibiting strong responsiveness to structural areas of improvement and development needs, while considering stakeholder needs and contextual relevance. However, greater adaptability and flexibility would have aided in fully realizing the initiative's potential and better responded to the growing diversity of the Omani students' population. This section analyzes the initiative's relevance to these national priorities and frameworks, the extent of responsiveness to weaknesses, needs and contextual differences.

Alignment with National Priorities and UNICEF's CFE Framework

CFE initiative in Oman exhibits robust alignment with the nation's overarching educational policies, strategic development frameworks, and UNICEF's global CFE implementation approach. Oman Vision 2040, the country's guiding development roadmap, prominently features inclusive education as a strategic priority, aiming to "provide inclusive education that caters to all children's diverse needs, abilities, and backgrounds."² The CFE initiative's core principles of inclusion, equity, quality, and child-centrism directly contribute to realizing this ambitious vision.

Insights from interviewed KIIs in the education sector in Oman, highlight strong synergies between the national vision and the CFE initiative. Although Vision 2040's key performance indicators (KPIs) do not explicitly reference CFE, there is flexibility to develop tailored KPIs within the MoE's performance monitoring dashboards. This adaptability enables context-specific measurement of schools' adherence to CFE principles, ensuring alignment with national priorities. One interviewed Officer emphasized "inclusive education, which is intrinsically linked to the child-friendly school model, ranks among the vision's top strategic objectives for the education sector." An official KI, on the other hand, further explained how CFE is being leveraged as a strategic tool by the MoE to improve education sector outcomes, particularly in advancing child protection, fostering inclusion, and setting clear, measurable objectives for long-term impact.

At the implementation level, the three-stage mechanism adapted for rolling out CFE in Oman, encompassing school capacity building, regular monitoring visits, and comprehensive evaluation against CFE standards, appears well-suited to the centralized education system. In Oman, the Ministry of Education exercises strong authority over curriculum design, teacher training, and school governance, which allowed for uniform guidance and direct oversight of the initiative across governorates. This centralized structure has further enabled the MoE to develop and disseminate standardized manuals on CFE and Children's Development Characteristics, while also convening targeted meetings on priority issues such as children with disabilities, early childhood education, and equality. Such an approach ensured consistency in implementation while aligning school-level practices with national policies and standards. Interviews with UNICEF staff and government partners validated the appropriateness of the three-stage approach, emphasizing that it enables the "systematic integration

of CFE principles into school management, teaching practices, and learning environments." Similarly, one beneficiary noted that the approach provides "structured support and accountability to ensure all schools progress towards child-friendly standards."

However, feedback from school-level stakeholders suggests room to further tailor training content, delivery methods, and ongoing support to the unique needs and constraints of different regions and school types. For instance, teachers in remote areas often emphasized the need to address school-specific challenges and the limitations of resources in schools and trained teachers, while those in urbanized settings called for more in-depth exploration of various strategies to engage diverse learners and foster inclusive classroom cultures. Incorporating context-specific insights can greatly strengthen the relevance and effectiveness of CFE capacity-building efforts across Oman's varied educational landscape.

² Oman Vision 2040 Official Interview

Responsiveness to Structural Development Needs

A thorough assessment of Oman's educational landscape reveals persistent challenges and structural inequities that the CFE initiative proactively targets. Chief among these are disparities in educational access, quality, and outcomes across geographic regions, socioeconomic strata, and student populations. By promoting child-centered pedagogy, inclusive infrastructure, active community engagement, and equity-focused policies, CFE squarely confronts these systemic barriers to equitable learning.

Insights from teachers and Ministry officials affirm CFE's potential to bridge quality gaps and level the educational playing field. One experienced teacher shared, "The child-friendly model has fundamentally transformed our classroom approach. We now prioritize active learning, differentiated instruction, and cultivating a welcoming, inclusive environment for all children, irrespective of ability, background, or learning style." This shift towards learner-centric practices is a cornerstone of CFE and directly addresses the need for more responsive, adaptive teaching to meet diverse student needs.

A KI interviewee further emphasized CFE's comprehensive approach to quality improvement, noting that "the CFE standards provide a holistic roadmap for enhancing education quality across all domains, from pedagogy and learning resources to health, safety, and community partnerships. By engaging the whole school community in the improvement process, CFE plants the seeds for sustained, transformative change." This systems-level perspective is crucial for addressing the root causes of geographical educational disparities and driving lasting, large-scale impact.

However, fully actualizing CFE's potential to structurally reshape Oman's education system requires further investments in several key areas, pinpointed by various Key stakeholders. Firstly, ongoing capacity development, including pre-service training and in-service professional development, is essential to equip teachers with the skills and mindsets to implement child-friendly practices effectively. Secondly, robust accountability mechanisms, such as regular school inspections, performance-based incentives, and public reporting of CFE indicators, can accelerate progress and ensure all schools meet minimum standards of quality and inclusivity. Thirdly, peer learning networks and communities of practice can facilitate the spread of best practices, foster innovation, and provide a platform for collective problem-solving. By connecting CFE champions across schools and regions, these networks can accelerate improvements at scale and promote a culture of continuous learning and adaptation.

Lastly, generating and utilizing rough disaggregated data is paramount for identifying and closing equity gaps. In particular, collecting and analyzing data on vulnerable groups, such as children with disabilities and learners from low-income or in remote areas, can sharpen CFE's equity focus, stated an interviewed education specialist, and inform targeted interventions. Schools are already utilizing their own data collection methods, including observations and surveys. Teachers carry out data analysis and categorizations to identify areas of improvement and best practices, measure students' progress, and prioritize areas of development. However, these strategies remain basic, and there is still a need to strengthen the Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) and build the capacity for data-driven decision-making at all levels—from classrooms to ministries—to help translate evidence into action for educational equity.

The CFE initiative's built-in mechanisms for continuous improvement, including school self-evaluation and context-specific action planning, hold significant promise for gradually dismantling entrenched disparities. By empowering schools to assess their own strengths and areas of improvement against CFE standards, set improvement goals, and design tailored strategies to achieve them, this approach fosters local ownership and agency while maintaining accountability for progress.

However, realizing this potential requires expanded data collection, robust monitoring systems, and differentiated support to ensure all schools, especially those serving the most vulnerable populations, can meet child-friendly benchmarks and provide truly inclusive, equitable education. Leveraging technology, according to one UNICEF staff, such as mobile data collection tools and online learning platforms, can help overcome resource constraints and reach even the most remote communities with quality CFE programming. Ultimately, a combination of top-down policy frameworks and bottom-up, context-responsive implementation is needed to fully harness CFE's transformative potential for educational equity in Oman.

Consideration of Beneficiaries Needs and Contextual Relevance

Stakeholder consultations resoundingly affirm the CFE initiative's strong relevance and responsiveness to the diverse needs, aspirations, and lived realities of learners, families, and school communities across Oman. Students consistently reported that child-friendly schools nurtured their voice, agency, love for learning, and holistic development. As one student said, "What I

³World Bank Education Sector Review, 2018.

love most about my [CFE] school is that our teachers truly listen to us and encourage us to participate actively. They create space for us to share ideas, take on leadership roles, and shape our own learning journeys. It makes coming to school exciting and helps build our confidence and skills for life.”

This was also evident in teachers’ efforts to create a safe space for students, where all students can practice self-expression in various forms. Students are gaining a new profound sense of confidence to “reach out to [the teachers and school management] without fear whenever they are facing a problem, when in the past, they often tended to either ignore their problems [e.g., bullying] or try to solve it on their own.”

These sentiments were echoed by countless students who often described CFE schools as “welcoming,” “engaging,” and “empowering spaces” that valued their unique perspectives and fostered their individual and collective growth; a description often shared by parents as well. By placing students at the heart of the educational process and providing them with meaningful opportunities to exercise voice and choice, CFE directly responds to learners’ developmental needs and rights.

Parents and caregivers likewise praised CFE’s holistic, participatory approach and its emphasis on strong home-school partnerships. One mother eloquently captured the value of this collaboration, explaining, “The child-friendly approach nurtures all aspects of our children’s development—academic, social, emotional, physical, and creative. It recognizes that learning happens best when schools and families work together. As parents, we feel genuinely valued, respected, and engaged as partners in our children’s educational journeys.”

This commitment to meaningful family engagement is a hallmark of CFE and responds to parents’ desires to be actively involved in their children’s learning and school decision-making processes. Countless statements were recorded by parents throughout the group discussions on the schools’ encouragement and active efforts for parents to be part of their children’s educational process.

Teachers constantly involved and guided parents of children with disabilities on how to support, take care of and interact with them to overcome the disability barrier

One notable example was shared by a mother whose daughter, in the 12th grade, was experiencing significant challenges and stress. “The school not only reached out to me and referred me to an expert for support, but they also provided guidance on how I could help my daughter cope with her difficulties and reduce her stress.” While parents’ overall engagement was still considered somewhat limited, the CFE initiative has opened multiple channels for community and parental participation, ranging from regular communication and volunteer opportunities to leadership roles



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on school committees. These efforts help strengthen the sense of shared responsibility and mutual accountability between schools and families, fostering a more supportive environment for student success.

FGDs and KIIs have also repeatedly testified to CFE's positive impact on student well-being, participation, and even retention, with many noting marked decreases in absenteeism and disengagement after adopting the model. One seasoned teacher recounted, "Since our school began implementing CFE, we've seen a dramatic shift in student attitudes and behaviors. Children are more excited to come to school, more actively engaged in their learning, and more supportive of one another. CFE has transformed our school culture and made teaching a more joyful, fulfilling experience."

This teacher's experience, and others', underscores CFE's power to create inclusive, nurturing learning environments that promote student well-being and resilience, which are key protective factors that can mitigate the risk of dropout and improve educational outcomes, particularly for vulnerable learners. Students' safety, needs, best interests, and well-being were noted to be central in any and all activities designed and implemented by schools.

While CFE's core tenets of child-centrism, democratic participation, inclusivity, and equity appear well-aligned with Oman's collectivist culture and Islamic values of social solidarity and communal responsibility, stakeholders highlighted the need for greater contextual adaptation and flexibility to fully realize the model's potential across the Sultanate's diverse regions and communities.

In particular, teachers in remote, resource-limited areas noted persistent challenges in implementing CFE due to infrastructure and staffing constraints, and socioeconomic barriers. These challenges often result in schools needing to prioritize their needs as they are incapable of fully catering to all areas of improvement. As one teacher shared, "While we deeply believe in CFE principles, the reality is that many of our schools need improvement of basic facilities, learning materials, and trained personnel to fully implement the model. We need more targeted support and resources to overcome these obstacles and ensure that all children, regardless of location or background, can benefit from a truly child-friendly education."

Similarly, teachers across various settings called for more culturally and linguistically responsive strategies to engage parents and mobilize community partners, particularly in areas where traditional involvement structures may be less effective. Although the private sector and stakeholders have been actively contributing to the educational sector, their efforts are not enough to cover all areas. Stakeholders added some complementary suggestions ranging from leveraging local religious and cultural institutions to deliver CFE messaging and programming, to recruiting and training community members as teaching assistants and outreach workers, to developing multilingual communication materials and events that cater to Oman's linguistic diversity.

By tailoring CFE interventions to local norms, assets, and needs, the initiative can enhance its contextual relevance and community ownership, leading to more sustainable, impactful change. This localized, adaptive approach is also critical for advancing educational equity and inclusivity, as it helps ensure that CFE reaches and benefits the most vulnerable learners and families.

The CFE initiative also shows significant promise in responding to the growing diversity of Oman's student population, particularly in terms of disability inclusion. With the government's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the collaboration with the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and the recent passage of national inclusive education policies⁴, there is a strong momentum and political will to ensure all children, regardless of ability or disability status, can access quality education in mainstream schools.

⁴ In its effort toward ratifying the Law for Persons with Disabilities, the Ministry of Social Development is holding consultative meetings with government, private, and community-based rehabilitation centres to strengthen disability services. Although the ratification has not yet been approved, participants emphasized the need for stronger stakeholder coordination, improved quality and accessibility of rehabilitation services, wider issuance of disability identification cards, better provision of assistive devices, and policy reforms to address challenges facing centres. Overall, the discussions highlighted the importance of a systematic and inclusive framework to ensure sustainable improvements in disability services across Oman.





Children with disabilities are breaking out of their isolation and enthusiastically engaging with their classmates and communities.

Schools are making active efforts to integrate students with disabilities into the educational journey and within their classrooms. By accommodating learners' disabilities through the provision of assistive learning tools, easing accessibility to various facilities, and encouraging their participation and self-expression, children with disabilities are showing promising overall development.

CFE's core emphasis on accessibility, individualized support, teacher capacity building, and creating safe, bullying-free environments directly aligns with and advances these inclusion goals. By promoting Universal Design for Learning principles, assistive technology use, and differentiated instruction, CFE equips teachers with the tools and strategies to effectively support diverse learners. Likewise, its focus on social-emotional learning, positive discipline, and celebrating diversity helps foster more welcoming, accepting school cultures that value difference and protect vulnerable students.

However, despite these promising foundations, significant work remains needed to fully realize the right to inclusive education for all children in Oman. With an estimated thousands of children with disabilities still excluded from schooling and many more experiencing barriers to participation and achievement, such as financial difficulties, inadequate infrastructure, and the prevailing negative mindsets, concentrated cross-sectoral action is imperative to dismantle persistent attitudinal, physical, and institutional barriers.

The CFE initiative has, for instance, established partnerships among the MoH, MoSD, and OPDs (organizations of persons with disabilities) to advance system-wide inclusion reforms. Despite the partnerships catalyzing in a variety of forms and sharing core 'inclusion and equality' goals, NGOs' efforts are not always a direct part of the CFE.

The efforts, by the different stakeholders, include developing national accessibility standards for school infrastructure, integrating inclusive pedagogy into teacher training curricula, strengthening early identification and intervention systems, and conducting large-scale awareness campaigns to combat stigma. By mainstreaming disability inclusion and leveraging strategic partnerships, CFE can serve as a powerful catalyst for educational equity and social transformation.

Summary Conclusion

The CFE initiative in Oman demonstrates strong alignment with national priorities, UNICEF's global CFE framework, and the diverse needs of learners, families, and school communities. The initiative's core principles directly contribute to realizing Oman Vision 2040's strategic objectives for the education sector, and the MoE has the flexibility to develop tailored indicators to track schools' adherence to CFE principles. The three-stage mechanism for rolling out CFE in Oman appears well-suited to the centralized education system context, but there is room for further tailoring to the unique needs of different regions and school types.



Stakeholder consultations affirm the CFE initiative's strong relevance and responsiveness to the diverse needs of learners, families, and school communities. However, stakeholders highlighted the need for greater contextual adaptation and flexibility to fully realize the model's potential across Oman's diverse regions and communities. The CFE initiative shows significant promise in responding to the growing diversity of Oman's student population, particularly in terms of inclusive practices for students with disabilities. **By mainstreaming disability inclusion and leveraging strategic partnerships, CFE can serve as a powerful catalyst for educational equity and social transformation. A combination of substantial alignment with national priorities, responsiveness to contextual needs, and a commitment to continuous improvement and adaptation will enable the CFE initiative to fully realize its potential in creating inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education for all children in Oman.**



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Effectiveness

The CFE initiative was effective in achieving its objectives, namely: promoting inclusivity and child-centered educational environments. It has successfully achieved its goals and institutionalized CFE into the Omani education sector, building the capacities of teachers, and improving the alignment of teaching methods, outcomes, and resources. However, budgetary constraints, limited resources, a need for more targeted, structured and practical trainings still persisted, impacting the effectiveness of the initiative's activities. This section will analyze the initiative's achievement of its objectives and results, the various intrinsic and extrinsic factors influencing the initiative, the inclusivity and educational access, the institutionalization mechanisms and capacity building efforts, and the strides to enhance teaching methods, learning outcomes, and resource alignment.

Achievement of CFE Objectives and Results

The CFE initiative in Oman has achieved notable progress toward its intended goals, as reflected in stakeholder feedback and school-level experiences. Testimonies highlight meaningful advancements in creating inclusive, child-centered learning environments that foster students' holistic growth.

Teachers perceived improvements in academic performance, noting higher levels of student engagement and a stronger emphasis on equality and recognition of individual differences. This shift towards participatory, learner-focused teaching methods was particularly evident in CFE-adopting schools. As one teacher expressed, "CFE has transformed my classroom practice. I now prioritize active learning, differentiated instruction, and nurturing a caring, inclusive climate where every child feels valued."

Principals and official representatives observed that students demonstrated heightened awareness of their rights, stronger cultural understanding, and noticeable improvements in academic achievement. Parents expressed appreciation for the positive and safe learning environments that enabled their children to channel their energy into healthy, supervised activities.

Factors Influencing Objective Achievement

Intrinsic and extrinsic factors played major roles in the achievement of the CFE objectives. On the one hand, intrinsic factors, such as the initiative's phased capacity-building approach, have been pivotal in translating CFE principles into tangible classroom practices. Extrinsic factors, including heightened societal awareness and strong parental support, on the other hand, have served as critical enablers of success. A UNICEF staff emphasized that Oman offers an ideal setting for implementing CFE effectively: "Oman provides a suitable environment for UNICEF to work effectively and meaningfully in high-income contexts that increasingly seek technical expertise, not just in the education sector." Parents particularly appreciated schools' efforts toward "intellectual integration" for students with disabilities (CwD), noting its direct impact on their children's growth: "The school assigned two teachers to support CwD, which helped them become more confident, motivated, and actively engaged with their classmates and the wider community."

However, stakeholders highlighted several areas where further improvement could strengthen the initiative's effectiveness. Key suggestions included increasing the availability of practical, school-based training and on-the-job coaching, enhancing data management systems for better decision-making, and involving academics in shaping effective teaching methodologies. An interviewee proposed the development of "a sub-guide to the original manual with detailed instructions on how to implement CFE methodologies and strategies in practice." Others pointed to the need for stronger community engagement and expressed concern over a noticeable decline in CFE activities. Additionally, interviewees stressed the importance of reinforcing collaboration with other ministries and sectors to advance CFE objectives, citing the potential of "cross-committees with the MoSD, MoH, and Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MoHERI), especially those responsible for Children's Rights, Family Affairs, and People with Disabilities, to significantly enhance the initiative's reach and effectiveness."

There is a need for direct involvement of NGOs with the CFE, UNICEF and MoE, whose goals and principles are aligned with the project.

Budgetary constraints and competing policy priorities have at times hindered schools' ability to fully implement CFE standards, emphasizing the need for sustained investment and stronger multi-sectoral collaboration. Limited resources and high costs were repeatedly cited as major challenges for effective implementation. As one teacher explained, "There are not enough tools and equipment, especially in laboratories. This insufficiency is forcing us to limit and minimize students' engagement in classroom experiments." Financial shortages have led some schools to resort to sharing resources, which limits the quality and consistency of CFE activities. At the institutional level, NGO representatives acknowledged the growing awareness and improved attention to children's rights; however, they noted that "the change is slow and incapable of keeping up with the rapidly changing lifestyle, which makes it harder to fulfil actual needs effectively."

A dedicated budget allocation is required exclusively for the implementation of the CFE initiative.

engagement in classroom experiments." Financial shortages have led some schools to resort to sharing resources, which limits the quality and consistency of CFE activities. At the institutional level, NGO representatives acknowledged the growing awareness and improved attention to children's rights; however, they noted that "the change is slow and incapable of keeping up with the rapidly changing lifestyle, which makes it harder to fulfil actual needs effectively."

Inclusion and Educational Access

Oman's CFE initiative has made noteworthy progress in promoting equitable access and inclusion for vulnerable groups, particularly children with disabilities. Through its emphasis on individualized support, enhanced teacher training, and improved accessible infrastructure, the initiative has played a vital role in strengthening disability-inclusive education and creating more welcoming, supportive learning environments for all students.

Schools have taken meaningful steps to accommodate students with mobility impairments by installing ramps and accessible restrooms. Principals shared several examples of efforts to meet diverse student needs, such as providing Braille materials, enlarged text, and assigning dedicated teacher aides to support learning. CFE schools have also introduced specialized teachers to assist students with hearing or visual impairments. One notable example highlighted a student with a visual impairment who initially felt uncomfortable using Braille papers during exams, fearing it would single her out. In response, the school adapted by enlarging the exam text, arranging for a teacher to read questions aloud when necessary, and providing a computer equipped with large-print books and materials supplied by the MoE, ensuring both accessibility and a sense of inclusion.

The initiative has evidently transformed teachers' attitudes and approaches, encouraging them to be more inclusive and attentive to individual needs. One teacher explained: "The initiative has played a significant role in shaping teachers' values on supporting students with disabilities and developing their skills, ensuring equal access to education." Teachers gained a better understanding of how to modify activities and assessment methods to ensure fairness and inclusivity: "students with disabilities are being included in both academic and extracurricular activities, where assessments have been adapted according to their needs and abilities."

Teachers are better able to support children with disabilities, recognize and build their potential, and approach them with more compassion.

While the inclusion of CwD in mainstream education is still relatively new, teachers believe it "has been gaining momentum in Oman since 2008, with schools beginning to actively implement it two years ago." The inclusive approach has helped raise awareness on the rights

Increased awareness and collaboration with parents result in greater acceptance and support of children with disabilities.

of People with Disabilities and their ability to actively engage in school life and society. CwD have been breaking out of their isolation, gaining confidence, and actively engaging with their peers and in school activities. Parents are also exhibiting higher willingness and openness to enroll their children, with disabilities, in regular schools. As noted in one focus group "parents who were initially hesitant are accepting the integration of their children within mainstream classrooms."

Despite the progress made, challenges to achieving full inclusion and accessibility persist. Some schools, for instance, need more specialized personnel, assistive devices, and adapted learning materials to support children with disabilities effectively. Additionally, limited awareness and lingering societal stigma among certain parents and communities continue to affect enrollment and active participation. Strengthening multi-tiered support systems, further enhancing teacher competencies, and fostering positive shifts in attitudes toward disability remain essential steps to fully realizing CFE's vision of inclusive and equitable education for every child in Oman.

Institutional Mechanisms and Capacity Building

Dedicated CFE structures within the MoE and regional directorates have been instrumental in guiding and overseeing the initiative's implementation. These mechanisms offer a strategic direction, technical assistance, and quality assurance to schools.

The MoE has hosted experts who provided training and workshops on CFE and its application to teachers, focusing on improving schools' infrastructure and aligning the educational system with the CFE principles. UNICEF's Regional Office, on the other hand, supported CFE implementation by presenting best practices, tools, and experiences from other MENA countries. They held meetings with the MoE to discuss integrating life skills and various topics into the curriculum.

Capacity-building initiatives, including teacher training, leadership development, and peer learning forums, have been a cornerstone of Oman's CFE approach. Teachers reported that these trainings introduced innovative strategies for creating inclusive, learner-centered classrooms. Many teachers shared testimonies during focus group discussions: "The CFE taught us how to use active learning, learning through games, and peer learning to help transfer knowledge to students, build their personality and confidence, and center the educational process on them."

However, confusion remained regarding the distinction between CFE-specific training and the Ministry's annual training programmes. Some KIs and teachers expressed a need for more targeted capacity-building efforts to better equip school staff with the skills required for effective CFE implementation. Staff in the development department, responsible for teacher training, specifically requested more CFE-focused workshops and informational sessions.

Teachers echoed this sentiment, noting that many had not received direct CFE training from the MoE and often had to rely on personal initiative and experience to apply CFE principles. At the same time, some interviewees provided a different perspective, highlighting UNICEF's contributions in offering training and sharing experiences from other countries. Simultaneously, NGOs and other stakeholders highly emphasized their engagement in developing enrichment activity guides and training the national team and teachers on enrichment approaches.

Nonetheless, the absence of new trainings and inconsistency have created a gap between older and newer staff, with schools needing to carry out their own personal efforts to bridge. Principals were the most unsatisfied with this gap, especially in schools with high staff turnover: "95% of our staff changes annually, and new teachers often have no previous knowledge of the CFE and its principals constantly need to be trained. This is also affecting the students who need to interact with new teachers every year."

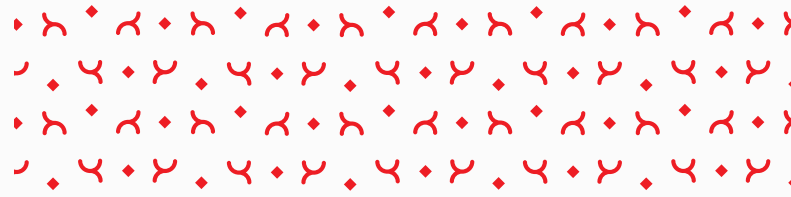
Some schools' staff changes every year, and new inexperienced teachers need to be re-trained on CFE.

As a result, several interviewees highlighted the need to further strengthen capacities by developing comprehensive guidance and training programmes for all teachers, offering opportunities for international exposure and learning, and enhancing data literacy and utilization at every level of the education system. These efforts would support more evidence-based decision-making, enable better resource allocation, and contribute to refining the CFE's strategic framework. Clearer indicators and a strengthened monitoring and evaluation process were also emphasized as essential to track progress effectively and ensure the initiative's long-term success.

Teaching Methods and Resource Alignment

CFE's learner-centered methodology has driven a significant shift in teaching approaches in the schools that implement it in Oman. Increased adoption of participatory pedagogies, formative assessment, and differentiated instructions were observed to cater to students' diverse needs. Teachers emphasized creating well-equipped and attractive learning environments, utilizing positive reinforcement, and adopting interactive learning, group work, games, and the "Students as Teachers" initiative in the FGDs. These activities were effective in building students' confidence and improving their overall academic achievements, especially for children with learning difficulties.

Children with disabilities have benefited the most from the CFE initiative, with notably improved academic achievement and active participation.



These methods effectively contributed to more engaging and relevant learning experiences that cultivate 21st-century competencies like critical thinking and creativity. Students highlighted the use of interactive boards, multimedia, innovative teaching methods, well-equipped laboratories, and facilitative learning tools (e.g., group work, games, and peer-teaching) as the most effective approaches that improved their academic achievements, enhanced their mental and physical health, and built their skills. Among the most prominent testimonies was one student who noted how their “participation in a literary competition helped them improve their academic outcomes and literary knowledge.” Testimonies also praised how accounting for individualistic differences in levels and abilities greatly impacted their results.

However, gaps persist in aligning curricula, assessments, and resources to fully support child-friendly teaching and learning. Teachers highlighted the need for more flexible, competency-based curricula and formative assessment tools aligned with the CFE principles. Resource alignment and capacity building require a specialized department within the MoE to collect and analyze CFE data, identify gaps, determine training priorities and needs, and coordinate with other ministries and bodies. While UNICEF collaborated closely with the MoE on providing technical support, collaboration with other NGOs/INGOs was limited, with some having no direct involvement in the CFE initiative, which calls for better collaboration and coordination efforts.

Summary Conclusion

The Child-Friendly Education initiative in Oman has made commendable progress in achieving its objectives, fostering inclusive, child-centered learning environments that support holistic development. Stakeholder testimonies highlight improved academic performance, increased student engagement, and a focus on individualistic differences. The shift toward participatory, learner-centric pedagogies was evident in schools adopting CFE. The initiative has made notable strides in promoting equitable access and inclusion for children with disabilities, transforming the attitudes and approaches of teachers.

However, budgetary constraints, limited resources, and the need for more practical training and coaching were identified as areas for improvement. The need for specialized personnel and resources in some schools, as well as persistent stigma among parents and communities, posed critical challenges. Moreover, confusion existed between CFE-specific training and the ministry’s annual training, with most teachers relying on personal efforts and experiences. As a result, guidance, training, international exposure, and enhanced data literacy were highlighted as further opportunities for strengthening capacities. Gaps also persist in aligning curricula, assessments, and resources to fully support child-friendly teaching and learning. Thus, the need for a specialized department to handle resource alignment and capacity building within the MoE is vital to enhance effectiveness. While UNICEF collaborated closely with the MoE, the NGOs/INGOs involvement was still limited.



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Efficiency

The CFE initiative in Oman has made notable strides in advancing quality education through innovative teaching methodologies, relevant materials, and a strong emphasis on learner-centered approaches. This section examines how efficiently these methods and resources have been implemented to achieve the intended results. It reviews strengths in the selection and adaptation of pedagogical approaches, responsiveness to emerging needs, and opportunities to further enhance resource utilization and equity across schools.

Implementation of Educational Methodologies and Materials

The CFE initiative in Oman has demonstrated commendable efficiency in the way it selected, adapted, and utilized educational methodologies and materials to achieve intended outcomes. By streamlining the use of learner-centered and participatory pedagogies, the initiative maximized available resources to foster student engagement and critical thinking. According to an interview with an official, these approaches effectively optimized classroom practices to achieve stronger results without unnecessary resource strain.

Moreover, CFE's emphasis on contextually relevant, culturally responsive materials has further enhanced the initiative's efficiency and effectiveness. By adapting global best practices and resources to local realities, values, and needs, CFE has ensured that educational content is targeted, relatable, and resonant for Omani learners. Interviewed teachers highlighted how the development and dissemination of CFE guidelines, training modules, assessment tools, and classroom resources in Arabic has not only facilitated smooth implementation by teachers but also promoted a sense of ownership and cultural pride among stakeholders.

However, while the overall quality and relevance of CFE methodologies and materials have been widely recognized by the different stakeholders and beneficiaries, there

remain further opportunities to optimize resource utilization and ensure equitable access across schools. Several interviewees highlighted that the availability and condition of CFE materials, as well as the presence of trained teachers, varied significantly, partly due to a lack of interest among teachers in relocating to remote areas such as Musandam. Moreover, the MoE often hires teachers who may not have prior experience with the CFE methodology, leading to inconsistencies in implementation. In addition, resource-constrained institutions and overcrowded schools, particularly in remote regions, faced considerable challenges in applying the initiative effectively. These disparities in resource allocation, teacher preparedness, and support risk deepening existing educational inequities and may hinder CFE's ability to reach and benefit the most marginalized learners.

To address this challenge, UNICEF regional staff recommended strengthening the systems for resource sharing, leveraging digital platforms, and fostering school-to-school collaboration to help maximize the reach and impact of CFE methodologies and materials. For example, establishing online repositories of CFE resources, creating peer support networks for teachers, and facilitating inter-school exchanges of best practices could enable more efficient dissemination and utilization of limited materials.



Responsiveness to Changing Scenarios and the Capacity to Address Emerging Areas of Improvement and Opportunities

The CFE initiative has demonstrated adaptability and responsiveness to changing scenarios in the education sector. School principals underscored the efficiency of their start-of-the-year regular training on centralizing the education process for the students. Various stakeholders exhibited interest in improving the initiative's outputs and have made recommendations to address emerging areas of improvement and opportunities to enhance its efficiency. Teachers, for instance, suggested offering training on child psychology, play-based teaching, and new teaching strategies/methods, and parents' awareness workshops, especially parents of children with disabilities, to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the initiative and its activities.

Additionally, investing in the development of low-cost, locally sourced learning aids, along with building stronger partnerships with community organizations and the private sector, could significantly improve access to quality CFE resources in a sustainable way. A decentralized, network-based approach to resource management would allow the initiative to deliver educational methodologies and materials that are better suited to the varied needs and contexts of Omani schools. This is particularly important for schools in remote areas, where access to tailored resources is often limited.

In addition, the CFE initiative would benefit from adopting a more structured and data-driven system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of its methodologies and materials. While early feedback suggests positive results, there remains a clear need for systematic assessments to measure the actual impact on student learning, well-being, and overall development. Setting well-defined indicators and benchmarks, along with clear feedback mechanisms, would help identify existing gaps, highlight successful practices, and guide future decisions.

By focusing on continuous learning and adapting its approaches based on reliable evidence, the CFE initiative can further enhance efficiency. This will help maintain relevance, strengthen implementation, and ensure a lasting positive impact across Oman's education system.

Summary Conclusion

The CFE initiative has demonstrated a high degree of efficiency in its implementation of educational methodologies and materials, leveraging contextually relevant, learner-centered approaches to foster meaningful engagement and holistic development. However, there is scope for further enhancing the equity and sustainability of resource utilization through strengthened systems for sharing, collaboration, and community partnership.

By adopting a more decentralized, data-driven approach to resource management and continuous improvement, the CFE initiative can optimize its efficiency in delivering quality, culturally responsive education to all learners in Oman. Ultimately, the success of CFE will depend on its ability to adapt and innovate in response to emerging needs and opportunities, while remaining true to its core principles of inclusion, participation, and child-centeredness.

Coherence

The CFE initiative in Oman exhibited high coherence and alignment with relevant national, regional and international policies, strategies and goals on education. The initiative had a high internal coherence within its own core elements, which directly impacted the achievement of its goals and objectives.

However, potential areas of improvement included a strengthening of linkages and synergies between components, and an improvement of monitoring and adaptation systems. **Teacher trainings and professional development, in particular, had overlapped and missed opportunities that could have further enhanced the coherence.**

This section looks at the initiative's coherence at the national, regional and international levels, its internal consistency and complementarity, and its compatibility with other educational interventions in Oman.

Alignment with National, Regional, & International Policies, Strategies, and Goals

The CFE initiative in Oman demonstrates a high degree of coherence and alignment with relevant national, regional, and international policies, strategies, and goals related to education and children rights. At the national level, the initiative is firmly anchored in Oman's overarching development framework, Oman Vision 2040, which places a strong emphasis on developing a "high-quality, equitable, and inclusive education system that responds to the current and future needs of the labor market and contributes to sustainable development."⁵



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⁵ Oman Vision 2040, p. 23



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The CFE approach, with its core principles of learner-centeredness, safe and nurturing learning environments, and holistic child development, directly contributes to the realization of Vision 2040’s educational aspirations. As noted by an interviewed beneficiary, “The CFE initiative is a critical vehicle for achieving our Vision 2040 goals. By focusing on all children and creating inclusive, participatory learning spaces, we are laying the foundation for a more equitable, innovative, and resilient education system.”

The CFE initiative is closely aligned with Oman’s Strategy 2040, which calls for a paradigm shift towards «student-centered learning, enhanced teacher competencies, and stronger school-community partnerships.»⁶ The initiative’s emphasis on continuous professional development for teachers, participatory school governance, and meaningful parental engagement is highly consistent with these strategic priorities.

As a UNICEF staff member observed, “CFE is not just about changing classroom practices, but about transforming the entire education ecosystem. It’s about empowering teachers, engaging parents, and creating a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement.”

At the regional level, Oman’s CFE initiative is in line with the Arab Regional Education Strategy 2030, which stresses the importance of **“inclusive, equitable, and quality**

education for all learners” and the **“promotion and protection of the rights of children and youth.”⁷** Oman’s experience with implementing CFE has been recognized as a promising model for advancing these regional goals and has been shared as a good practice in various regional forums and networks.

On the global stage, the CFE initiative makes a significant contribution to the attainment of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4**, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. The initiative’s child-centered approach, with its strong focus on equality, inclusion of learners with disabilities, and emphasis on improving learning outcomes, directly supports the achievement of **key SDG 4 targets related to access, equity, quality, and relevance of education.**

Furthermore, the CFE initiative is firmly grounded in the principles and provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which Oman ratified in 1996. The initiative operationalizes core CRC articles related to children’s rights to education (Article 28), protection from all forms of violence and harm (Article 19), and participation in decisions affecting their lives (Article 12), among others (CRC Articles). By creating safe, inclusive, and empowering learning environments, CFE serves as a vehicle for realizing children’s rights in and through education.

⁶ Education Sector Strategy, p. 12

⁷ Arab Regional Education Strategy, p. 5





Internal Consistency and Complementarity of the CFE Initiative's Components

A critical aspect of coherence is the internal consistency and complementarity of an initiative's various components, ensuring that its objectives, strategies, and activities form a logically connected and mutually reinforcing framework. In this regard, Oman's CFE initiative exhibits a high level of internal coherence, with its core elements carefully designed to work in synergy towards the achievement of its overarching goals.

As articulated in the CFE Project Document, the initiative's main objectives are to "enhance the quality of education, promote inclusive and equitable learning opportunities, and foster the holistic development and well-being of all children in Oman."

To achieve these objectives, the initiative employs a multi-pronged strategy encompassing four key components:

- capacity building for teachers.
- school infrastructure improvements.
- curriculum and pedagogy reforms.
- community engagement and awareness-raising.

These components are **logically sequenced and interconnected, with each building upon and reinforcing the others**. For instance, the teacher training and professional development component equips teachers with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to implement child-centered, inclusive pedagogies in their classrooms. This is complemented by the provision of conducive learning environments through school infrastructure upgrades, including the creation of **accessible, well-equipped, and stimulating learning spaces**.

Similarly, **the curriculum and pedagogy reform components** ensure that the content and methods of teaching and learning are aligned with CFE principles and are responsive to the diverse needs and interests of learners. This is supported by **the community engagement component**, which raises awareness among parents and the broader public about the importance of child-friendly education and encourages their active participation in children's learning and development. **The importance of the interconnectedness of the components** was noted by a UNICEF staff member, "The beauty of the CFE initiative is that it takes a holistic, system-wide approach to change. It recognizes that creating child-friendly schools requires action on multiple fronts - from building teacher capacity to engaging communities to reforming policies and practices. It ensures that these different pieces work together in a coherent, integrated way.»

This internal coherence is further reinforced by the logical sequencing of activities within each component, as outlined in the initiative's annual work plans. For example, teacher training begins with foundational modules on **child rights and learner-centered pedagogy**, progressively building towards more specialized training on inclusive education, formative assessment, and classroom management. This phased approach allows for **a cumulative deepening of knowledge and skills**, while also ensuring that each step lays the groundwork for the next.



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However, while the overall design of the CFE initiative is highly coherent, some stakeholders noted **potential areas for further strengthening the linkages and synergies between components**. For instance, co-teaching with special education specialists or access to assistive technologies, coupled with **practical inclusive education training for teachers**, would improve both the relevance and effectiveness of the CFE.

Similarly, parents observed how “the community awareness campaigns are great but could be more directly connected to the actual changes happening in schools, so that we can see the impact and feel more invested in the process.”

These insights underscore the importance of **continuously monitoring and adapting the initiative** to ensure that its components are not only internally consistent but also **mutually reinforcing in practice**. By regularly soliciting feedback from key stakeholders and using it to inform programme design and implementation, the CFE initiative can strengthen its internal coherence and maximize its impact on teaching and learning.



Compatibility with Other Educational Interventions in Oman

Another key dimension of coherence is the extent to which an initiative is compatible with and complementary to other interventions operating in the same sector or context. In the case of Oman's CFE initiative, there is evidence of **strong alignment and synergy with the government's broader education sector reform efforts, as well as with other educational programs and projects.**

At the policy level, the CFE approach is highly consistent with the MoE's strategic priorities and ongoing initiatives aimed at improving educational quality, equity, and relevance. For instance, the Ministry's National Strategy for Inclusive Education, launched in 2019, shares many of the same goals and principles as CFE, including the promotion of accessible learning environments, individualized support for learners with disabilities, and teacher capacity building for inclusion. **Similarly, the government's efforts to integrate life skills and citizenship education into the national curriculum are well-aligned with CFE's emphasis on holistic child development and preparation for active civic engagement.**

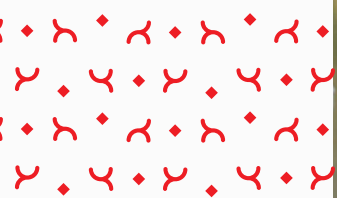
In terms of donor coordination and setting the international framework, the CFE initiative benefits from strong partnerships with other international organizations and NGOs working in the education sector. For example, UNICEF collaborates closely with UNESCO on issues related to inclusive education and equality, while also engaging with local civil society organizations to support community outreach and mobilization around CFE.

While the direct involvement of other NGOs in the CFE is restricted, and often indirect, there is an irrefutable coherence in their goals. One prominent example includes an interviewed NGO whose main area of work is the health sector and its collaborations are mostly with the MoH. However, its capacity building programmes and trainings also target developing students' skills, training teachers, and improving schools' environment and infrastructure. Similar indirect collaboration and coordination is clear evidence of the alignment between the CFE and other interventions carried out by a variety of stakeholders from different fields. **The various partnerships help to ensure a coordinated and coherent approach to education sector support, leveraging the comparative advantages of different actors and minimizing duplication or fragmentation of efforts.**

However, some stakeholders noted potential areas of overlap or missed opportunities for synergy, particularly in the realm of teacher training and professional development. As a KI interviewee observed, **"There are currently several different initiatives focused on building teacher capacity, including CFE and several various NGO-led programmes. While these are all valuable, we need to ensure better coordination and harmonization to avoid duplication and maximize impact."**

The CFE initiative will benefit from stronger linkages with university education programs to create a pipeline of teachers equipped with the principles and practices needed to implement CFE from the outset.

⁸ Ministry of Education Representative Interview



These insights highlight the **need for continued efforts to strengthen coordination, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing among different actors and initiatives in the education sector.** By establishing **clear mechanisms for communication, joint planning, and mutual learning,** the CFE initiative can enhance its compatibility and complementarity with other interventions, leveraging existing resources and expertise to achieve greater impact.

This may involve, for example, the creation of **a sector-wide coordination platform or working groups on child-friendly education,** bringing together government, NGO, and academic stakeholders to share information, identify synergies, and coordinate activities. It may also involve the development of common tools, frameworks, or standards for teacher training, school evaluation, or community engagement, ensuring a **more harmonized and coherent approach across different initiatives.**

Ultimately, the coherence and compatibility of **the CFE initiative with other education sector interventions** will depend on the strength and sustainability of the partnerships and coordination mechanisms that underpin it. By investing in these enabling factors and continuously seeking opportunities for alignment and synergy, Oman can maximize the collective impact of its education sector reforms and accelerate progress towards its **Vision 2040 goals.**





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Summary Conclusion

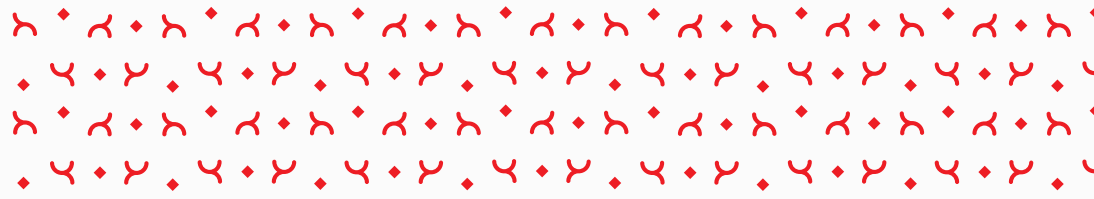
The Child-Friendly Education initiative in Oman demonstrates a high degree of coherence and alignment with relevant national, regional, and international policies, strategies, and goals related to education and child rights. The initiative is firmly anchored in Oman's Vision 2040, directly contributing to the realization of their educational aspirations through its core principles of learner-centeredness, safe and nurturing learning environments, and holistic child development.

At the regional level, Oman's CFE initiative is in line with the Arab Regional Education Strategy 2030, and its experience has been recognized as a promising model for advancing inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all learners. On the global stage, the initiative makes a significant contribution to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 4, and is firmly grounded in the principles and provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The CFE initiative exhibits a high level of internal coherence, with its core elements carefully designed to work in synergy towards the achievement of its overarching goals. There is evidence of strong alignment and synergy with the government's broader education sector reform efforts, as well as with other educational programs and projects. The consistency of priorities and initiative resulted in shared benefits from the strong partnerships with other international organizations and NGOs.

However, stakeholders noted potential areas for further strengthening the linkages and synergies between components, underscoring the importance of continuous monitoring and adaptation. Stakeholders also noted potential areas of overlap or missed opportunities for synergy, particularly in the realm of teacher training and professional development.

These insights highlight the need for continued efforts to strengthen coordination, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing among different actors and initiatives in the education sector, possibly through the creation of sector-wide coordination platforms, working groups, or the development of common tools, frameworks, or standards.



Impact

The CFE initiative in Oman has made significant progress in promoting student wellbeing, transforming teaching practices, and engaging parents and communities. However, there is limited concrete evidence that the initiative has directly influenced systemic change. This section analyzes the initiative's perceived achievements and challenges across key dimensions, though its broader longer-term policy-level impact remains unclear.

Promoting Student Wellbeing and Protection

The CFE Initiative has contributed to the holistic well-being of children through the integration of life skills education, psychosocial support, and child protection mechanisms. In a FGD with parents, one revealed, "The CFE initiative fostered an educational environment rooted in compassion and emotional support, which in turn made students more eager to attend school and engage actively in their academic and personal development."

The initiative strengthened the focus on students' psychological wellbeing by establishing safe spaces for self-expression, providing counseling sessions, and equipping teachers with skills to identify and address signs of emotional distress. A parent highlighted the essential role of school counsellors in addressing students' emotional challenges and providing the necessary support. School students were observed to be highly active in creating a positive and safe environment that caters to the well-being of all students.

Students' psychological wellbeing and emotional needs are successfully supported and strengthened through CFE activities.

Teachers at CFE schools are now more sensitive to the students' challenges, especially emotional, and respond with greater flexibility. This is most evident in a statement by one principal about a student who is on antidepressant medicine: "teachers provided her with tailored support; especially during exams, where they would extend her test time, offer continuous encouragement, and guide her through the questions to reduce her stress and help her stay focused." Even in schools not targeted by the CFE directly, teachers are taking active roles in designing and implementing activities that foster positive and safe learning environments, protecting students' wellbeing, and raising them to be able to positively impact their communities.

The initiative's focus on fostering inclusive and nurturing school environments has led to a noticeable decline in bullying, and violence, according to accounts from parents and teachers. CFE schools

Children are now better aware of their rights and more confident to report abuse or mistreatment faced by teachers or peers.

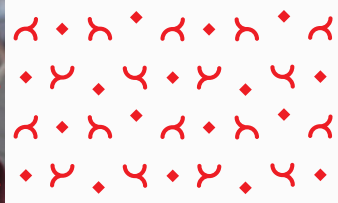
have undertaken proactive efforts, including awareness campaigns that promote open and respectful self-expression while cultivating a culture of empathy and mutual respect among students. One school principal shared: "In the past, we faced incidents of violence among students. However, through our awareness campaigns, we successfully encouraged the use of dialogue and discussion to resolve conflicts. We strengthened students' trust in the administration, making them feel confident to seek help when needed."

For children with disabilities and learning difficulties, schools implemented targeted measures to reduce bullying. One example shared was: “We launched an initiative to address bullying faced by students with disabilities. We also created a playroom equipped with educational games designed for students with developmental challenges, shyness, selective mutism, and ADHD. Since then, we have noticed improvements in their confidence and ability to stand up in the face of bullying.” Schools are also paying attention to students exhibiting challenging behaviors. Each school has established its own corrective processes aligned with CFE principles to address these cases. As a result, schools reported a decrease in negative behaviors and a stronger commitment among students to positive values, beliefs, and respectful conduct.

However, visits to non-CFE schools (those not involved in the early stages of the initiative) revealed that student well-being and protection practices are also being increasingly applied in these settings. A MoSD interviewee highlighted several factors contributing to this broader shift. Directives from the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said and His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tareq have played a pivotal role in advancing societal awareness of child-related issues and rights. Additional drivers include the growing awareness among parents and child-focused institutions, Oman’s accession to international agreements, and strong partnerships with UN agencies in promoting lifelong learning. Furthermore, national legislation emphasizing rights-based approaches, coupled with active collaboration among stakeholders, has fostered a more supportive environment for protecting children’s rights and promoting their holistic development.



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Student Enrollment, Attendance, and Engagement

Despite the lack of quantitative data, the CFE has significantly, as evidenced by the collected qualitative data, improved student enrollment, attendance, and engagement. Parents reported increased classroom participation, extracurricular involvement, and growth in leadership and self-expression skills.

Most schools prioritized increasing enrollment rates to ensure education is inclusive and accessible to all children, regardless of their gender. Efforts focused on engaging families, particularly those hesitant or facing challenges in enrolling their children, through financial assistance, awareness campaigns, and information-sharing initiatives. Actively involving parents was seen as essential, emphasizing their crucial role in supporting their children's education and fostering a positive home environment that encourages regular attendance and continued learning. As a result, and according to the MoE data, the dropout rate dropped to 0.4 per cent in 2025 from 2012's 1.2 per cent, with completion rates rising to 99 per cent for the same year. In remote areas, awareness campaigns on the importance of academic achievement and education in securing future employment led to a significant decrease in dropout rates, especially among females, and improved academic achievement.

Student participation has also noticeably improved as a result of CFE schools' efforts to foster a more engaging and enjoyable learning environment through interactive activities and motivational incentives. Parents noted significant improvements in students' participation due to consistent implementation of engaging activities, acknowledgement of academic achievements and offering incentives. Schools have reported remarkable transformations among students, particularly in their self-esteem, confidence, leadership skills, and overall mindset.

Students, too, are projecting growing interest in participating and being more engaged within the school; especially in competitions and initiatives that challenge their creativity. The "Students as Teachers" initiative and variety of teaching methodologies have had a direct impact on students' desire to participate, confidence, public speaking, creative thinking, and innovative abilities: "utilizing teaching aids such as interactive boards, pop quizzes, games, research groups, and periodic competition" commented one student "definitely improved our overall participation, our ability to carry discussions, and instilled in us an open-mindedness to accept different opinions."

However, students' engagement and participation through student councils remain limited in influencing major school decisions. Nonetheless, the councils currently play significant roles in organizing activities, suggesting changes to school facilities, and resolving conflicts; operating on principles of participation, inclusivity, respect and equality. They serve as a bridge between teachers and students, voicing students' concerns and suggestions while coordinating student-centered activities. Their efforts have helped strengthen peer relationships, ease classroom tensions, and promote positive communication among students.

The student council reaches out to students/peers exhibiting negative behaviors and help referring them to the counsellor for support.





On the other hand, some parents believed the significant improvement in students' interest in learning and consistent attendance is largely due to the personalized support provided by teachers: As one parent shared, "students can go to teachers during breaktime and ask for help re-explaining the lesson, and the teachers welcome them with open arms." **This dedicated attention helps the students overcome academic challenges, boosts their self-confidence, and encourages them to attend school regularly. Testimonials collected from children and parents further confirm this trend. Teachers linked the rise in attendance and engagement to a combination of more engaging and enjoyable school activities, better monitoring of absenteeism, and the implementation of a reward system for regular attendance.**

Improved academic performance

The CFE initiative is perceived, despite the gaps in quantitative data, by most stakeholders and beneficiaries to have contributed to improvements in students' academic performance. Parents reported noticeable improvements in their children's grades, discipline, and academic interest. The initiative is also believed to have supported the development of students' personalities, cognitive abilities, critical thinking, and imagination. As one teacher noted, "Academic performance has improved by 70 per cent, as students have become more proactive in self-learning, acquiring new skills independently, and learning from their mistakes through experience rather than relying solely on memorization."

This progress can largely be attributed to the implementation of supportive teaching practices, including teachers' willingness to experiment with various instructional methods and actively seek and incorporate student feedback. Teachers are showing increased commitment to supporting students' academic growth and offering assistance beyond regular classroom hours. Improvements in academic performance were also driven by efforts to actively engage students in the learning process through classroom discussions, presentations, and school competitions. **Countless students shared experiences showing how these activities enhanced their confidence, strengthened their critical thinking skills, and improved their overall achievements.**

By engaging below-average students in interactive activities and using level-suitable exercises, students' GPAs went up from below to over 50%

The visited CFE schools placed a particular focus on engaging underperforming students in activities, helping them build confidence, enhance their social skills, and make notable academic progress. Teachers employed various approaches tailored to students' abilities, encouraging active participation and gradually boosting their confidence. The implementation of the reward systems and consistent use of positive reinforcement have played a significant role in encouraging the students to make greater efforts, acknowledge their progress, and stay motivated to excel academically. **The CFE initiative has also directly contributed to building stronger, more positive relationships between students and teachers, which boosted the academic performance. However, in some schools, these efforts were undermined by frequent staff turnovers, which disrupted the continuity of quality teaching and student support. Students were often assigned new teachers who lacked adequate training or experience in CFE principles, hindering the academic progress that had previously been achieved.**

Transforming Teaching Practices and Student Learning

The CFE initiative has catalyzed a significant shift in teaching practices and classroom interactions in Oman. The emphasis on child-centered, active learning pedagogies has transformed the role of teachers from mere transmitters of knowledge to facilitators of learning.

Classroom observations and student feedback indicate a greater use of participatory methods, group work, and differentiated instruction to cater to diverse learning needs and styles. The “Students as Teachers” initiative encourages active participation by allowing students to step into the teacher’s role and lead aspects of the learning process. **This approach enhances communication skills, fosters stronger peer relationships, alleviates the fear of public speaking, boosts confidence, and deepens students’ understanding of the material.**

Teachers’ capacities have significantly improved since the adoption of CFE and mainstreaming students’ centralization.

The initiative has encouraged teachers to adopt a more flexible approach by incorporating a variety of teaching strategies. Thus, teaching practices have shifted towards more dynamic and enjoyable methods, making learning both stimulating, relatable, and meaningful. Teachers have gained the skills to design engaging classrooms and link complex concepts to everyday experiences: **As one**

Teachers are trying to use each student’s name, encourage everyone to participate, and pay attention to all students during lessons. They recognize that we, the students, have different levels of understanding and are giving us more time and attention to absorb key information.

teacher explained, “the CFE promoted better discipline among teachers to consider students’ needs proactively. The newly adopted methods have uncovered students’ intrinsic motivations and eagerness to learn new skills.” Teachers now place greater importance on responding to students’ unique needs and pay careful attention to their individual learning difficulties. They ensure all students have equal opportunity to ask questions and engage in class discussions.

Another noticeable shift is the increased use of modern technology in classrooms, reflecting teachers’ efforts to align with the interests of today’s students. The importance of incorporating technology was highlighted in parents’ FGDs, who noted how modern digital tools capture students’ interests and attention, and provide strong support aids to the educational experience.

However, the depth and sustainability of these changes in teaching practices and teacher capacity remain a challenge. Some teachers, particularly those in remote areas or with limited exposure to CFE training, still struggle to fully adopt child-centered approaches; mainly due to the limited resources and expertise in the CFE. High turnover of teachers and school principals also poses risks to the continuity and institutionalization of CFE practices. Ensuring ongoing support, mentoring, and incentives for teachers will be crucial to maintain and deepen the impact of the CFE initiative on teaching and learning.

Fostering Active Parental Participation in School Life

Oman’s CFE initiative has prioritized the active engagement of parents, caregivers, students, and communities as key partners in creating child-friendly schools. Regular communication, participatory decision-making structures, and community outreach have fostered a shared vision and collective responsibility for children’s holistic development. Parent councils played a supportive role by raising funds to finance essential school improvements and modifications, helping to reduce the financial burden on the school administration. They also helped tackle student absenteeism; especially among children with disabilities, by collaborating with the school administration, engaging with families, and urging the adoption of strict regulations on regular attendance.

Parent councils also helped reduce negative student behaviors by promoting awareness, involving students in positive activities, and informing parents about behavioral concerns. They served as a vital link between the school, families, and the wider community. They further strengthened relationships with families by acting as a communication channel, relaying parents’ concerns to



school staff and keeping families informed about school-related matters. As one parent noted, “communication with the school staff became open and inclusive, with the administration actively encouraging feedback from all parents who wish to contribute ideas aimed at enhancing students’ wellbeing and overall development.”

The parent councils are, thus, playing a key role in encouraging parental involvement in their children’s learning and academic progress, as well as in organizing events and initiatives that promote awareness of the CFE approach and children’s rights. As one parent explained, “The council collaborates with the school in implementing various activities on children’s rights and responsibilities, and aids in guiding and raising parental awareness in various ways.” They have, to some extent, grown in influence over school culture, policies, and practices. They actively participate in shaping school regulations related to children’s rights and engage in discussions with regional governors on school-related challenges.

As for community engagement, teachers reflected on the engagement of the surrounding communities and private sector in education and schools, noting generous donations and charities to aid necessary rehabilitation. However, this involvement was largely inconsistent and limited. Although the engagement is inconsistent across all schools and districts, it still offers a strong foundation and a sense of contribution among stakeholders that can be further expanded.

On the other hand, MoE engagement with the CFE initiative was primarily focused on providing operational support, with a supervision team conducting field visits to assist schools in implementing activities. Interviewed representatives considered this support limited and weakened by frequent staff changes. They also indicated that the number of field visits and training sessions did not meet expectations. Although the MoE Committee for CFE provided schools with important information and updates on the initiative, its overall impact was similarly restricted due to the constant staff turnover.

The MoE’s collaboration with other government entities was also noted as an area requiring further improvement. One interviewed KI highlighted the need for timely and effective coordination, particularly to address cases of violence and child abuse. Another significant challenge for the CFE was the need for reliable statistics and data on educational progress and outcomes, stemming from the absence of a designated entity responsible for receiving and compiling relevant data.

Contribution to Systemic Changes in Education Policies and Programmes

At the national level, Oman’s Vision 2040 and School Education Law 2023 have incorporated several similar CFE principles as core pillars of the country’s educational vision; however, there is no clear evidence linking these developments directly to the CFE initiative.

The CFE initiative has been perceived as a contributing factor toward strengthening Oman’s commitment to children’s rights, positioning the country as a child-friendly nation through connections between education, health, legislation, and child protection efforts. Nonetheless, there is no explicit indication that the initiative has influenced the revision of national curriculum frameworks, textbooks, or assessment systems to better reflect child-friendly education. While life skills, values education, and citizenship themes have been introduced, alongside formative and competency-based assessments, no concrete evidence links these reforms to the CFE initiative.



At the operational level, the CFE initiative has inspired the development and implementation of several child-friendly programmes and interventions, including inclusive education resource centers, expansion of early childhood education services, strengthening of school health and nutrition programmes, and the introduction of child protection policies and reporting mechanisms. These programmes have been instrumental in translating the principles of child-friendly education into concrete actions and benefits for children.

The CFE initiative has achieved significant progress within Oman's centralized education system, with opportunities for further strengthening its systemic impact by fostering greater involvement of non-state actors. While its direct influence on national policies and programmes has not yet been fully evidenced or systematically documented; its effect on school-level practices and community engagement has been more visible. Enhancing the capacity and empowerment of local stakeholders will be crucial to achieving more profound and more sustainable systemic change driven by the CFE initiative.

Summary Conclusion

The CFE initiative in Oman has made significant strides in promoting student well-being, transforming teaching practices, and engaging parents and the broader community. The integration of life skills education, psychosocial support, and child protection mechanisms has contributed to a perceived reduction in bullying, and violence. Notably, these practices are also being increasingly adopted in non-CFE schools, indicating a broader shift in awareness and priorities.

Several factors within Oman's educational system have contributed to this broader change. Directives from His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik played a pivotal role in advancing societal awareness of child-related issues and rights. Other key drivers include increased awareness among parents and child-focused institutions, Oman's accession to international agreements, strong partnerships with UN agencies promoting lifelong learning, national legislation emphasizing rights-based approaches, and active collaboration among stakeholders. Together, these factors have fostered a more supportive environment for protecting children's rights and promoting their holistic development.

However, the initiative's direct influence on national education policies and systemic change remains unclear. Critical challenges hindering the initiative's impact include frequent staff turnover, which undermines the continuity of quality teaching and student support, and the limited influence of student councils on major school decisions. The depth and sustainability of changes in teaching practices remain a concern, particularly in remote areas.

To enhance the initiative's results and build on the broader positive shifts in Omani society, it is essential to ensure ongoing support and incentives for teachers, strengthen the capacity of local stakeholders, and foster effective collaboration between the MoE, other government agencies, the private sector, and civil society organizations. By addressing these challenges and capitalizing on the growing awareness and commitment to child rights and well-being, the CFE initiative can continue to drive positive change and contribute to the holistic development of children in Oman.



Sustainability

According to the analysis of the interviews and collected data, it was noted that the CFE initiative in Oman has made **notable progress in embedding child-centered approaches within the national education framework**. Over recent years, the initiative has been recognized by stakeholders for fostering safer, more inclusive, and engaging school environments while aligning with broader educational reforms. This section analyzes the **institutionalization, organizational structures, implementation strategies, scalability**, and areas requiring strengthening to ensure long-term sustainability of CFE in Oman. (annex 04)

CFE Institutionalization

The institutionalization of Oman's CFE initiative marks a strategic shift within the national education framework, moving from pilot projects toward the integration of child-centered values, principles, and standards into pedagogy. Following the implementation of the CFE initiative in 2019, the MoE's adopted a more strategic approach, positioning CFE as a tool to strengthen the overall education system. Several key documents were developed to drive this institutionalization, including a CFE manual that helped the ministry gain a clear vision of its objectives and the standards schools must adhere to. Developed in collaboration with UNICEF, the CFE manual served as a roadmap, outlining the initiative, its objectives, and key indicators. The manual operationalized CFE as a normative framework within Oman's schools, focusing on child protection, inclusivity, the integration of persons with disabilities, and promoting student participation.

Initiating national curriculum reform has also been a key step in institutionalizing CFE principles. UNICEF facilitated discussions with the MoE on disabilities, with a strong focus on integrating life skills. As noted by regional UNICEF staff, "The MoE expressed particular interest in incorporating essential competencies such as financial literacy, climate change awareness, and environmental education," reflecting a shift toward a more holistic approach to education in Oman.

At the national level, the strengthening of the Sultanate's cooperation with the Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva, demonstrated through regular report submissions, has been attributed to its dedication to child-friendly education and children's rights. The initiative was, without a doubt, one of the tools that helped classify Oman as a child-friendly country.

At the institutional level, the KI representative noted that the initiative spurred several changes in schools, including the development of CFE plans, the integration of CFE into school plans, the creation of a more appealing and friendly school environment, and an increase in teachers' interest in child protection and rights. These changes demonstrated the significant growth in awareness of children's rights across educational institutions.

Moreover, the CFE initiative's alignment with the national strategic goals outlined in Oman Vision 2040 further demonstrates its institutionalization within the educational system. Although there are no direct indicators linking the CFE initiative to Oman Vision 2040, the policies and strategies are largely consistent with the initiative's objectives, as highlighted by a member of the CFE Committee. The concept of comprehensive lifelong education in the vision closely resonates with the core principles of CFE, indicating that its implementation supports the broader goals of Oman's educational reforms.



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Organizational Structure

The long-term sustainability of Oman's CFE initiative is closely linked to the strength, adaptability, and effectiveness of its organizational structure. The initiative has established a multi-tiered governance framework, with roles and responsibilities at the national, regional, and school levels, as outlined in the CFE Project Documents. Representatives' Interviews note how this structure has been instrumental in fostering ownership, accountability, and coordination among key stakeholders.

At the national level, the establishment of the National Team through a ministerial decision facilitated effective implementation and management of the initiative. The team was subsequently

Each school has developed its own CFE plan centered on empowering children's rights and protection.

reconstituted in 2016 to address the evolving needs and developments within the educational system. The team members conducted school visits, participated in stakeholder engagement, and oversaw the implementation of the CFE. Moreover, they often encouraged schools to clarify roles and responsibilities, document their activities and events and prepare a CFE initiative guide. However, recent findings

reveal that while the team was previously passionately active, the committee has not met regularly and has not established a structured monitoring framework to track nationwide progress.

Additionally, the MoE issued several administrative decisions, reflecting its ongoing commitment to regional implementation and governance, which facilitated decentralization within both the mandated regional and school-level structures. Decisions (Nos. 2/2017 through 8/2025), for instance, called for establishing regional CFE committees, comprised of local education authorities,





school principals, and community representatives. The committees are crucial for contextualizing the initiative, ensuring its responsiveness to local needs and priorities, fostering local ownership and empowerment, and ensuring the long-term viability of the initiative.

At the school level, decisions Nos. 1 and 9)2022) called for the establishment of CFE teams, comprised of administrators, teachers, parents, and students, as key drivers of sustainability. The teams would focus on leading the development and implementation of school improvement plans, mobilizing resources, monitoring progress, and identifying promising CFE practices and values at the grassroots level. By including the local community, the teams promote ownership, localized decision-making, and community engagement, ensuring that child-friendly values are not only adopted in policy but actively embedded in school culture. Complementing these formal structures, grassroots mechanisms, such as parent councils, have also played an active role in sustaining CFE efforts at the school level. The role of these councils was summarized during the Parent FGDs, “whenever schools were unable to provide resources like computers and laptops, the parent councils would collect donations and seek support from local merchants.”

The initiative’s growing sustainability is further evident in its increased involvement and leadership of national actors, reflecting enhanced national ownership, cross-sectoral coordination, and alignment with long-term educational goals. The interview with the national team representative highlighted the engagement of MoE and UNICEF with one another and with other stakeholders, including MoSD, MoH, MoL, and possibly NGOs and the private sector, through the numerous meetings to discuss the initiative’s standards with various stakeholders.

A KI highlighted that the UNICEF regional office team played a strategic facilitation role by engaging with the Oman Country Office to guide and support the MoE. They also contributed to the development of multiple national commitments, such as the 2022 Transforming Education Summit, which were used to anchor further discussions and advocate for prioritized focus areas that are of national concern. To promote inclusive education, early-childhood development, and disability inclusion, the UNICEF regional office engaged with the key focal point in the area.



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Building on the multi-tiered governance framework, the CFE initiative's success and sustainability have also been incredibly reliant on the extent and quality of cooperation between development partners, civil society actors, and national stakeholders. The UNICEF Oman office started a discussion with the MoE to develop future skills and guidelines for citizens' participation and to integrate people with disabilities into the education system.

Additionally, UNICEF engaged with the Ministry of Finance to explore opportunities for improving the allocations and efficiencies of funding for the Ministry of Education. CFE coordination efforts extended beyond the MoE to include other ministries, such as Social Development and Health, which collaborated with UNICEF on multi-sectoral models, particularly in early childhood development (ECD). The private sector also played a supportive role in the initiative by assisting schools, helping to expand its reach and raise awareness.

Furthermore, the private sector, particularly large corporations and energy companies, has shown a structured commitment to social investment. As noted by an interviewee of the CFE team, "Almost every large company in Oman has a dedicated department for community engagement initiatives and a designated budget for them, for instance, most energy-sector companies allocate a percentage of its budget to the Ministry of Labor's Training Fund." This presents an opportunity for the MoE to leverage organized private sector contributions and explore potential partnerships to support the initiative further.

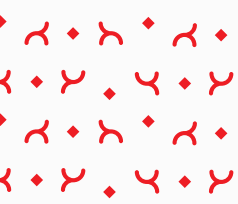
The private sector institutions have a special department dedicated to community initiatives and dedicate 1.2% of their funds to the Ministry of Labor's Training Fund.

Local NGOs supported the CFE initiative by providing training for teachers, developing educational materials, and promoting student well-being and healthy school environments. The interviewed NGO noted collaborating with the MoE and contributing to the drafted activity manual, as well as teachers' trainings. Although four international organizations operate in Oman (UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA, FAO and UNESCO), there was no structured collaboration among them, as the other agencies did not engage in school programmes in the assessed period, hence UNICEF's primary partnership remained with the MoE..

Implementation Strategies and Scalability

Building on its institutionalization foundation and multi-tiered organizational structure, CFE's strategies and implementation procedures present strategic depth and potential for scalability. Initially, the initiative started its pilot stage and progressed past it to spread throughout the country. The basis for statewide implementation was established by a methodical rollout in the governorates of Muscat, Dhofar, and Musandam, and ultimately expanding to Sharikiya South, Al Dkhilyah and Al Batinah South. According to the MoE, 186 government schools and over 300 private schools are now promoting CFE principles. In an attempt to improve the learning environment and encourage student engagement, the participating schools created child-friendly plans and started incorporating them into their lesson plans and classroom practices.

Another important sustainability mechanism has been the engagement and empowerment of local communities. According to insights from Parent FGDs, the CFE initiative has meaningfully involved parents, community leaders, and civil society organizations in school planning, decision-making, and resource mobilization. This participatory approach has enhanced the relevance and responsiveness of CFE interventions while fostering a stronger sense of shared responsibility for children's education.





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The inclusive teacher training programme, created by the MoE in partnership with UNICEF, has been a key implementation tool in supporting this rollout. Although initially conceptualized as a starting point, the programme has evolved to promote a more comprehensive vision of inclusive education, aiming to create educational environments that are inclusive for all children. Hence, teacher capacity building has emerged as a vital element of maintaining CFE practices. Simultaneously, the ministry has made efforts to incorporate essential life skills and competencies into the national curriculum. UNICEF-backed activities and discussions centered on topics such as financial literacy, environmental education, and climate change awareness, indicate the commitment to translating CFE into classroom practices, aligning CFE with current global issues, and supporting a comprehensive, future-oriented education system. Beyond the school level and the education sector, the MoE and UNICEF have participated in national and international policy discussions around disability rights and inclusive education.

Public and private partnerships are also being explored, especially in the field of early childhood education, where collaboration with the private sector is considered a means of promoting sustainability and long-term viability. Moreover, Oman has taken steps toward technical and fiscal sustainability, as highlighted by discussions on the Oman Efficiency Guidelines and Next Steps in Education 2022. These efforts include institutional planning for decentralization and inclusive service provision. Cross-sector collaboration and budget mobilization remain on the agenda, particularly in early childhood education and disability assessment services. Due to being a part of the broader development vision and trends, sustaining and scaling the CFE initiative plays a major role in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), and transforming it into a national priority and a global responsibility.

The CFE initiative reflects Oman's global, regional, and local trends on sustainable development to quality education.

These strategies demonstrate how the concept of CFE is being incorporated into Oman's educational system in a dynamic and multi-level manner. Although sustained institutional commitment and resource allocation are necessary for the initiative to succeed in the long run, the current mechanisms show a growing foundation that promotes scale-up and sustainability.



Areas and Opportunities for Strengthening

While the CFE initiative has made notable strides in Oman, some areas present opportunities for enhancing the initiative's sustainability. Some stakeholders noted that the roles and responsibilities of different actors are not always clearly defined or consistently understood. According to one KII, "There must be a permanent work team and clarified roles and responsibilities for various ministries through consistent meetings." They also emphasized the importance of establishing a "separate and independent body" to monitor the achievements and provide support to schools guided by specific principles and standards. Developing a comprehensive CFE governance manual, with detailed terms of reference for each committee and team, was suggested by a UNICEF staff to help streamline coordination and decision-making processes.

Another key opportunity for strengthening the initiative lies in enhancing its pace of development. KIIs noted, "The CFE initiative has experienced a period of slower innovation recently, as there are limited new materials available for schools within the framework of CFE, and the national team had fewer opportunities for exposure to alternative models and experience exchange." This presents a valuable opportunity to introduce fresh CFE approaches and foster continuous learning and innovation to further enrich the initiative.

At the operational level, both the CFE Committee and the National Team encountered several challenges that affected their overall effectiveness. One key area for improvement is the CFE Committee's limited access to comprehensive field data from schools across different regions in Oman, pointing to a structural gap in information flow and organizational processes. Similarly, the National Team faced constraints related to limited training opportunities, gaps in expertise, and the need for continuity. As one team member explained, "whenever new experts visited, the information shared remained largely the same, without introducing new insights on the initiative."



The National Team's KII noted that the team must be reconstituted at the MoE and governorate levels to enhance the initiative's sustainability. This restructuring should also be followed by a comprehensive media awareness campaign to engage the community, educational staff, and various stakeholders. However, financial support is highlighted as one of the most vital components for implementing such efforts. They suggested collaborating with the UNICEF experts to guide the communication techniques used in schools and provide psychological support for staff.

Stakeholders also highlighted the importance of further enhancing community ownership by fostering stronger partnerships with surrounding institutions to ensure the long-term sustainability of CFE. One KII observed, "Schools would benefit from building closer ties with health centers, public libraries, and other local institutions, as these entities are key partners in supporting the success and sustainability of this initiative."

Teachers have requested play-based learning trainings, continuous teaching strategies workshops, and an orientation course from MoE.

There is a continued need to strengthen the capacity of regional and school-level structures to plan, implement, and monitor CFE interventions effectively. Providing targeted training, mentoring, and resources to these decentralized entities can enhance their autonomy, adaptability, and resilience in the face of changing contexts and challenges, as reported by FGDs. Stakeholders emphasized the need to sustain and scale up an inclusive teacher training programme that focuses on active learning, 21st-century skills, creativity, and innovation, rather than traditional teaching, and how to apply CFE so that schools can be truly child-friendly. Teachers requested training on new teaching strategies, as well as courses in child psychology and modern educational techniques, and training in assessment methods, including standardized testing.

Motivation and support for participating schools were also thoroughly discussed. While many schools received certificates recognizing their participation, this alone was not sufficient to sustain the implementation of activities, as schools often had to cover most of the costs from their budgets. Financial vulnerability stands as a major structural risk for the initiative's sustainability, as schools' annual plans are not linked to dedicated CFE budgets. Moreover, the education system does not yet operate under a school-based management model that grants full financial autonomy. The absence of secured national budget lines undermines continuity and limits schools' ability to translate CFE priorities into actionable plans. Therefore, without establishing stable government financing, clearer budget linkages, and diversified resource streams, the initiative cannot maintain momentum or achieve long-term institutionalization across all schools. Stakeholders have also emphasized that ensuring the long-term success of the initiative requires adequate allocation of resources. They also noted that providing financial support to both the MoE and UNICEF would enable schools to implement CFE activities more effectively, thereby fostering a truly child-friendly learning environment.



Furthermore, there is a need to address strategic staffing and capacity constraints as a key priority. One KII highlighted that only three staff members currently retain institutional memory of the CFE initiative, despite the growing number of activities linked to it; with the high turnover resulting in a loss of the cumulative knowledge and a weakened sustainability and effectiveness of institutional efforts. A reviewed and updated CFE model is needed to capture lessons learned, address gaps, and introduce relevant enhancements. Additionally, strengthening M&E mechanisms is essential to better guide implementation, track progress, and identify necessary adjustments. As one informant emphasized, “There must be regular visits, actionable recommendations, and measurable indicators to support evidence-based interventions.”

A strategic focus on policy-level engagement was also emphasized, with stakeholders encouraging UNICEF “to continue working at the policy level and engage in policy dialogue.” While the development of a CFE manual marked an important step toward institutionalizing the initiative by outlining its objectives and key indicators, stakeholders noted the need for more clarity and depth. The manual, while serving as a general roadmap, provides limited guidance on pedagogy and requires further refinement; as it “needs to be more focused and provides more insight,” particularly on areas such as child-centered learning, accommodating individual differences, and diversifying teaching methods. Stakeholders suggested that these topics may warrant a dedicated manual developed with input from academics, parents, early childhood education teachers, the local community, and the children themselves.

Curricular reform remains an area requiring further advancement. According to UNICEF Oman, curriculum reform is currently undergoing trial phases and plans for national-scale adoption: “Oman wanted to try out this new curriculum for a period of one year, collect data, then scale it up at the national level,” explained one informant. However, a member of the steering committee highlighted the need to embed the concept of CFE and child rights more explicitly in school curricula. While Oman has its own Child Laws, there is limited awareness about them, making it essential to educate students on these rights through the curriculum across all levels of education.

To effectively track alignment and progress at the school level, it was recommended to establish KPIs directly linked to the Vision 2040 dashboards. Additionally, the Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Office may consider revising the national plan to integrate these indicators, thereby ensuring a more cohesive and streamlined monitoring framework.

To support sustainability and foster holistic child development within the CFE framework, stakeholders emphasized the importance of the MoSD’s role in advancing participation frameworks, strengthening child protection policies, and developing legal manuals to address harmful practices. KIIs also highlighted the value of enhancing inter-ministerial and multi-sectoral collaboration—particularly among the MoE, MoSD, Ministry of Environment, MoH, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, legal bodies, universities, higher education institutions, and the private sector. Strengthened coordination across these sectors and activating them as key partners can help prioritize environmental sustainability, reinforce child protection, and promote the overall physical and mental well-being of children.



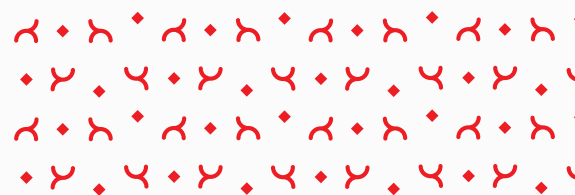


Summary conclusion

The CFE initiative in Oman has made significant progress in embedding child-centered values and principles within the national education framework. The development of the CFE manual and companion documents has provided a structured reference for schools, while its alignment with Oman Vision 2040 has ensured strong policy relevance. A multi-tiered governance structure, comprising national, regional, and school-level teams, has fostered ownership, accountability, and coordinated action across different layers of the education system. **The methodical rollout across governorates, the delivery of inclusive teacher training programmes, and the active engagement of parents and local communities have further strengthened the initiative's foundations, enabled localized decision-making and promoted sustainable, child-friendly practices across schools.**

Despite these achievements, several factors continue to limit the initiative's long-term sustainability. Coordination among key actors remains under-institutionalized, with gaps in collaboration between ministries, academic institutions, and development partners. Limited access to systemic field data has hindered effective planning and oversight, while capacity constraints persist at regional and school levels, particularly in terms of training, expertise, and resources to sustain interventions. **Furthermore, the initiative has experienced a period of limited innovation, with few new models or opportunities for knowledge exchange introduced to maintain momentum.** While the CFE manual has provided a general framework, it needs more detailed pedagogical guidance and practical implementation strategies that schools can easily adopt.

Strengthening sustainability will require a more robust governance mechanism to ensure clear roles, responsibilities, and stronger cross-sectoral collaboration. Continuous innovation should be encouraged by developing updated CFE models, introducing lessons learned, and facilitating experience-sharing with similar initiatives globally. Expanding inclusive teacher training, offering deeper guidance on pedagogy, and enhancing monitoring and evaluation systems with measurable indicators will also be key steps forward. In parallel, allocating dedicated financial and technical resources will help schools effectively implement CFE and maintain a truly child-friendly learning environment. With these measures in place, the initiative can build on its existing foundation, ensuring long-term success and making meaningful contributions to achieving quality education for all children in Oman.





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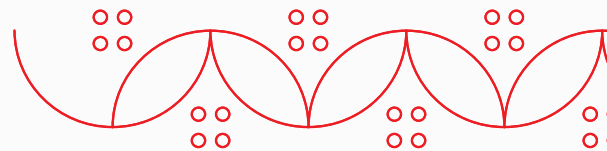




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CONCLUSION



The Child-Friendly Education (CFE) initiative in Oman has made progress in making child-centered, inclusive, and rights-based education practices part of the national education system. The MoE and UNICEF collaborated on this initiative from 2012 to 2025. The evaluation looked at the initiative's achievements, areas for improvement, and lessons learned using OECD-DAC criteria and input from different stakeholders.

The key findings were summarized in relation to the ToC (annex 05) and Results Framework, highlighting the progress made in capacity building, teaching and learning, participation and engagement, and protection and inclusion, as well as the challenges faced in each area (see pages 51-52). For example, the evaluation found significant progress in building the capacities of teachers to implement child-centered pedagogy, **with 80% of teachers trained, but also identified challenges in translating this training into consistent classroom practice. Similarly, while there was an increase in student participation and parental engagement, the evaluation noted the need for more targeted efforts to reach marginalized groups and ensure their meaningful involvement in school decision-making processes.**



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The CFE initiative was relevant because it aligned with Oman's education goals, such as Oman Vision 2040, and international agreements, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It helped move forward goals for inclusive education, protecting children, and supporting children's overall development. However, stakeholders noted that certain aspects of the initiative might overlap with existing MoE activities. This shows that enhanced strategic coordination and integration will be important going forward.

It was difficult to fully assess the initiative's efficiency due to the need for more financial information. Some stakeholders thought the initiative was costly, while others viewed it as a worthwhile investment in education, quality and fairness. Sometimes budget limits and other priorities made it hard to fully implement the initiative, especially in places with limited resources.

The CFE initiative was effective in several key areas, including promoting child well-being, changing the way teachers teach, and engaging parents and communities. Pilot schools showed better academic results, less bullying and violence, and more inclusion of children with disabilities. However, the depth and longevity of these changes varied in different places. There were still challenges with teacher skills, inclusive infrastructure, and social attitudes.

The initiative fits well with national, regional, and international education policies and goals. The different parts of the initiative worked well together overall, but stakeholders identified areas for improvement to enhance the connections and teamwork. The initiative worked well in conjunction with programmes supported by other stakeholders active in the sector; however, better coordination and alignment could further strengthen its overall impact.

Ensuring the changes last remains a top priority. Progress has been made in integrating CFE principles and practices into the national education framework as a lasting part of it. The way the initiative was managed at different levels, rolled out step-by-step across governorates, and involved local communities has laid a **good foundation**. **However, to ensure it lasts long-term, ongoing capacity building, dedicated resources, and the ability to adapt to changing needs and situations are necessary.**

It is not clear how much direct impact the initiative had on national policies and system-wide changes. But its influence on practices at the school level and in terms of community engagement is clear. Empowering local stakeholders, fostering innovation, and forming partnerships will be crucial in driving deeper, more lasting change.

In the end, the CFE initiative has sparked significant shifts towards child-friendly, inclusive education in Oman. To fully achieve the goal of quality education for every child, it will be essential to build on these successes while also tackling ongoing barriers and strengthening the factors that make it possible.



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LESSONS LEARNED



The following lessons emerged from the evaluation findings and are summarized as follows:

- **Stakeholder buy-in and ownership are critical drivers of success.** Cultivating a shared vision and securing the commitment of educators, parents, and community members from the start can speed up progress. It can also reduce resistance to change.
- **Contextual adaptation and flexibility enhance relevance and impact.** Interventions should be tailored to local norms, assets, and needs while staying true to core principles. This ensures the initiative resonates with diverse school communities in Oman.
- **Capacity building requires a systemic, sustained approach at all levels.** One-off trainings alone cannot transform deeply ingrained practices and mindsets. Continuous professional development, mentoring, and peer learning opportunities must be embedded within the education system to foster lasting change.
- **Inclusive education demands comprehensive support systems.** To achieve meaningful inclusion of children with disabilities and other marginalized learners, multi-tiered interventions are necessary. These should include accessible infrastructure, specialized resources, teacher competencies, and attitudinal change.
- **Parental and community engagement amplifies participation and impact.** Actively involving families and local stakeholders in school decision-making, resource mobilization, and awareness-raising can create a mutually reinforcing cycle. This cycle supports child-friendly education.
- **Robust monitoring and evaluation enable evidence-based adaptation.** Clear indicators, regular data collection mechanisms, and feedback loops must be established. They are essential to track progress, identify gaps, and inform ongoing program refinements.
- **Institutionalization is a gradual, multi-faceted process.** Embedding child-friendly principles and practices within education policies, curricula, and accountability frameworks takes time. It requires alignment across multiple levels of the system.
- **Equity and inclusion must be intentionally prioritized.** To ensure the initiative reaches and benefits the most vulnerable children and communities, targeted strategies, disaggregated data, and a consistent equity lens are required in planning and implementation.
- **Sustainability hinges on national ownership and capacity.** Leadership and technical responsibilities should be progressively shifted to local actors while providing ongoing support as needed. This is critical for long-term viability beyond donor funding cycles.
- **Strategic partnerships amplify reach and resources.** Leveraging the expertise and assets of other government entities, civil society organizations, academia, and the private sector can accelerate progress. It can also optimize limited resources for achieving common goals.



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RECOMMEN- DATIONS



The comprehensive evaluation of the Child-Friendly Education (CFE) initiative in Oman has revealed significant progress, challenges, and opportunities for enhancing the quality, inclusivity, and sustainability of education in the Sultanate. The recommendations presented in this section are the result of a rigorous and participatory process that involved a systematic review of the evaluation findings, extensive stakeholder consultations, and expert input.

The recommendations are categorized into four key areas: System Strengthening, Inclusive Practices, Capacity Building, and Monitoring & Evaluation. Each recommendation is accompanied by a suggested timeline for implementation (short-term, medium-term, or long-term) and the identification of the primary stakeholders responsible for its execution.

These recommendations represent a prioritized set of actions that can significantly contribute to the enhancement of the CFE initiative and the overall quality of education in Oman. The successful implementation of these recommendations will require close collaboration and coordination among key stakeholders, sustained political commitment, adequate resource allocation, and continuous monitoring and adaptation based on emerging lessons and changing contexts.






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System Strengthening

<p>1</p>	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>Develop a comprehensive CFE national policy framework, aligned with national education sector plans, to guide cohesive implementation and institutionalization across all levels of the education system.</p> <p>Responsibility MoE</p> <p>Timeframe Short-Term</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>Support the Ministry of Education's unit/department for professional and technical development, which responsible of providing trainings to teachers, to enhance coordination and accountability among all stakeholders, and to ensure the sustainability of the outcomes.</p> <p>Responsibility MoE</p> <p>Timeframe Short-Term</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>Strengthen Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) to enable disaggregated data collection, analysis, and utilization for evidence-based prioritized decision-making and equity-focused programming. In addition to building relevant stakeholders' capacity in data management, integrating the initiative's indicators with the updated system, and developing easy-to-use data presenting tools.</p> <p>Responsibility MoE,UNICEF</p> <p>Timeframe Medium-Term</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>Developing a long-term sustainable financing strategy that promotes equity, efficiency, and accountability, while ensuring adequate resource allocation for the initiative through local resources, private and donor funding, and innovative financing mechanisms. This includes increasing budget allocations, strengthening public-private partnerships, establishing a dedicated central fund for the initiative, and enhancing coordination among stakeholders to ensure sustained financial investment</p> <p>Responsibility MoE,UNICEF</p> <p>Timeframe Long-Term</p>



Inclusive Practices

<p>5</p> 	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>Develop and implement a national inclusive education policy and costed action plan, with clear standards, targets, and accountability mechanisms to accelerate progress towards full inclusion of children with disabilities.</p> <p>Responsibility MoE, UNICEF</p> <p>Timeframe Medium-Term</p>
<p>6</p> 	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>Establish Inclusive Education Resource Centers in each governorate to provide specialized support services, assistive devices, learning materials, and ongoing coaching to schools, families, and communities.</p> <p>Responsibility MoE, UNICEF</p> <p>Timeframe Long-Term</p>
<p>7</p> 	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>Conduct a comprehensive accessibility audit of school infrastructure and develop a time-bound plan to ensure all schools meet universal design standards and provide reasonable accommodations for all students.</p> <p>Responsibility MoE, UNICEF, UNESCO</p> <p>Timeframe Medium-Term</p>
<p>8</p> 	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>Enhance teaching methods, curricula and educational resources to make them inclusive and culturally relevant, with a focus on gender equality promotion across all subjects and educational levels. A comprehensive review of the current curricula should also be conducted to ensure the representation of cultural and social diversity, eliminate stereotypes, and provide positive models and examples for the marginalized groups. In addition, this includes developing supplementary learning materials, establishing clear indicators for inclusive education, and strengthening collaboration with civil society organizations and relevant local stakeholders to ensure relevance, and secure community support.</p> <p>Responsibility MoE, UNICEF, local community</p> <p>Timeframe Medium-Term</p>



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Capacity Building

9



Recommendation

Integrate CFE principles and inclusive pedagogy into pre-service teacher education curricula and practicum experiences to equip new educators with essential competencies from the outset.

Responsibility

MoE, Higher Education Institutions

Timeframe

Medium-Term

10



Recommendation

Design and deliver a mandatory modular, practice-based in-service teacher professional development program on CFE, with a focus on inclusive classroom strategies, formative assessment, and social-emotional learning.

Responsibility

MoE, UNICEF, Teacher Training Institutes

Timeframe

Short-Term

11



Recommendation

Establish a national CFE mentorship programme, pairing experienced champions with newer adopters, to provide ongoing support, problem-solving, and motivation to sustain best practices.

Responsibility

MoE, UNICEF

Timeframe

Medium-Term

12



Recommendation

Enhance schools' ability to effectively manage the CFE, by providing relevant trainings, sharing experiences between schools, conducting regular monitoring and guiding for schools, building the capacities and skills of schools' principals and fostering a culture of innovation and teamwork. In addition, trainings should cover the following areas: inclusive learning enhancement schools' policies, task distribution, evidenced-based decision making, and encouraging familial and community engagement in education.

Responsibility

MoE, UNICEF

Timeframe

Medium-Term



Monitoring & Evaluation

13



Recommendation

Develop, review and update a streamlined CFE results framework and monitoring toolkit, with a core set of SMART indicators, data collection tools, and reporting templates aligned with national EMIS.

Responsibility

MoE, UNICEF

Timeframe

Short-Term

14



Recommendation

Conduct periodic, participatory CFE school self-assessments and development planning exercises to empower local stakeholders to identify strengths, gaps, and improvement strategies.

Responsibility

MoE, Schools

Timeframe

Ongoing

15



Recommendation

Undertake a comprehensive impact evaluation of the CFE initiative in 2030, employing mixed methods and a quasi-experimental design, to rigorously assess long-term outcomes and inform future programming.

Responsibility

MoE, UNICEF

Timeframe

Long-Term





8

ANNEX 01

DESK REVIEW



Overview

Oman, located south of the United Arab Emirates at the mouth of the Arabian Gulf, is one of the oldest independent states in the Arabian Peninsula. With an area covering 309,500 KM,3 over 5.2 million people live in Oman. With most of the country’s interior falling within sandy, treeless, and waterless regions, coastal regions are bustling with life due to their fertility and closeness to the sea and inland mountains. The country has encompassed

11 governorates, as follows:

Musandam	Al Buraimi
Al Batinah North	Al Batinah South
Muscat (capital)	Ad-Dhahirah
Ad-Dakhiliyah	Al Wusta
Ash-Sharqiyah North	Dhofar
Ash-Sharqiyah South	



Considering its geographical landscape, the country’s climate is hot and dry in the interior areas and hot and humid in the coastal areas, resulting in hot summers and mild winters. Because of the limited water surfaces, vegetation in Oman is sparse and limited to locations where irrigation is possible, mainly around the Aflaj water channels, with Acacia trees being one of the most dominant trees. However, the country also hosts rare animal species, such as the Arabian oryx, Arabian leopard, mountain goat, and loggerhead turtle, and has a very diverse birdlife.

Oman has a national system whereby all the births are recorded, as evidenced by the universal birth registration rates for both male and female newborns. While government efforts to improve health services have led to sharp decreases in maternal mortality rate, reaching 17.1 per 100,000 live births in 2022 compared to 45.7 in 2021, the rate rose again to 19.9 per 100,000 in 2023. The infant mortality rate fell from 8.8 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2022 to 8.5 in 2023, and under-five mortality from 11.4 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2022 to 10.8 deaths per 1,000 in 2023. ¹²

⁹ NCSI, National Statistical Yearbook, 2024
¹⁰ op.cit
¹¹ ibid
¹² Ministry of Health, Annual Health Report, 2023



Economic Landscape

The World Bank's economic forecast for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) states that Oman's real GDP growth has been inconsistent in recent years. Oman grew at a 3.1 percent pace in 2021 and a higher 4.3 percent in 2022. The estimated growth, however, dropped to 1.4 percent in 2023, but the 2024 and 2025 forecasts showed an increase from the previous years at 2.7 percent and 2.9 respectively. In line with the World Bank's flagship report on economic growth and recovery, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecasts a real GDP growth rate of 3.1 percent for the country in 2025.

While the expansion of the hydrocarbon sector has had a major role in the growth, oil production cuts by OPEC+, subdued construction activities, the slowdown of global economic activities, and tighter financial activities have negatively influenced Oman's economic growth. On the other hand, increased gas production, the commencement of Duqm refinery operations, and non-hydrocarbon growth were positive factors in the achieved growth. Trade Balance has recorded a surplus of about 9.5 billion USD, while foreign assets gross remained at 18.2 billion USD.

Employment rates also reflect positive growth, as it was reported that the total number of employees reached around 2.7 in 2023, an increase of 6.8 percent compared to the previous year. The government has played a major role through its introduction of various initiatives that tackle the high share of expatriate workers. In order to lessen the country's dependency on foreign labor and encourage the hiring of skilled Omani citizens, the Omani Government implemented a crucial policy known as Omanization in 1988. This policy works to promote greater national self-sufficiency and economic progress, increase local employment, and improve skill development among the country's working population. Furthermore, the newly issued labor law highlighted the modernization of regulation, enhancement of working conditions, and flexibility of the market.

The 2040 vision of Oman focuses on the relations and roles of the public, private, and civil sectors in achieving effective economic management, developing a diversified and sustainable economy, ensuring fair distribution of development gains, and protecting the natural resources and unique environment. Thus, the national economic priorities highlight economic leadership and management, economic diversification and fiscal sustainability, and the cooperation between the different agents within the sector.

¹³ EU, GCC Country Economic Profile- Oman, 2023

¹⁴ Lloyds Bank, Oman: Economic and Political Overview, 2024

¹⁵ World Bank, OMAN, 2022

¹⁶ Statistical Year Book 2024

¹⁷ International Labour Org. Towards a New Oman Decent

¹⁸ Lloyds Bank, Oman: Economic and Political Overview, 2024

¹⁹ EU, GCC Country Economic Profile- Oman, 2023



Education

Oman's dedication to education is reflected in some of its policy and legislative documents, such as the country's Philosophy of Education, Oman's Child Law, and Oman's Vision 2040. The philosophy of education guides the Sultanate's educational growth, which serves as a national framework. This framework includes various goals and core principles that involve fostering one's national identity and citizenship and supporting students' growth. It also prioritizes teaching human rights and obligations, fostering responsibility, accountability, and morals. It also promotes sustainable development and emphasizes the significance of "Al Shura" (consultation) in education. It also promotes a link between education and employment, the development of a knowledge-technology-based society, and encouraging entrepreneurship, innovation, and research. Additionally, the philosophy highly values lifelong learning, mutual understanding, and education for peace.

Oman's Child Law, outlined by the Royal Decree, emphasizes children's educational rights. These rights include the development of children's personalities, talents, and abilities to the fullest extent while protecting their dignity and equipping them for adulthood. It seeks to foster a sense of loyalty, tolerance, national belonging, and brotherhood while promoting respect for children's parents, cultural identity, public rights, and national ideals. The decree aims to educate children about the balance between exercising one's rights and carrying out one's responsibilities in society.²¹

Furthermore, Oman's Vision 2040 emphasizes fostering social cooperation to create a superior educational system. It seeks to provide a strong governance and assessment framework that aligns with national and international standards and empowers workers in the education sector. The vision also emphasizes the significance of innovation, creativity, and scientific research to sustain a knowledge-based economy. While it promotes the development of an integrated curriculum and prepares students to pursue various academic paths, the vision's primary objective is to foster a competent workforce that can prosper globally and nationally.²²

All in all, education has traditionally been regarded as one of the backbones of social progress and welfare in the Sultanate of Oman. So much so that a new education law was issued in 2023 outlining a comprehensive framework for education in Oman. The Royal Decree 31/2023 Promulgating the School Education Law aims to support students' development intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, and physically in a holistic manner. With an emphasis on adaptive teaching, technological integration, and job preparedness, the Ministry of Education is entrusted with supporting an educational system

²⁰ Philosophy of Education in the Sultanate of Oman, 2017

²¹ Ministry of Social Development, Child Law, 2014

²² Oman Vision 2040, Priorities and Objectives



that adheres to national standards for high-quality education and the students' developmental stages. The law also highlights the importance of teachers' respect, community participation, and continuous professional development. Furthermore, it creates comprehensive guidelines for private schools, ensures free education in public schools, and launches a variety of educational initiatives, including adult literacy and special education programmes. In addition to addressing school administration, curriculum development, and evaluation standards, the 2023 law prioritizes students' rights to access education and have a secure, encouraging learning environment.

Reflecting on the country's commitment to improving access to quality education, Oman has made significant strides in education, achieving universal primary education and secondary education as well, as in 2020, secondary enrollment rates reached an outstanding 99.6 percent. Furthermore, Omani students have shown great improvement in terms of their PIRLS 2021 scores. PIRLS 2021, which stands for the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, assesses the reading achievements of students across 66 countries, enabling the educational systems to track and monitor their progress. The country's overall PIRLS average scale score was 429 in 2021, which is an improvement in contrast to the score of 418 in 2016.

According to the country's Vision 2040, the country's economic diversification policy and the development of a knowledge-based economy depend heavily on the education sector. In line with this, the Education and Higher Education Councils created the National Strategy for Education 2040 within the framework of Vision 2040 to establish a new framework for education, capacity building, delegation of authority and responsibility, and implementation of an outcome-based approach. The aforementioned education law, introduced in 2023, which guarantees the right to education for all children, aligns with the strategy's framework.

The education system in Oman has gone through three key stages to get where it is today. The first stage started in the 1970s and ended in the 1990s, which mainly focused on increasing access to education in the country through building educational infrastructure. The second stage, which started in the mid-90s, focused on reforms that improved the quality of education. The third ongoing stage is currently working on evaluating and reviewing the constructed system to enhance the students' outcomes.²⁸

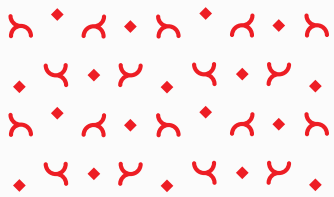
²³ Royal Decree 31/2023 Promulgating the School Education Law

²⁴ UNICEF, Annual Report, 2022

²⁵ Progress in International Reading Literacy Study 2021

²⁶ PIRLS 2021 International Results in Reading

²⁷ Alpen Capital, GCC Education Industry, 2023



There are two cycles in the public education system; the first cycle consists of the first four years of basic education, while the second cycle consists of the following six years, ending with the 10th grade. Both the 11th and 12th grades are considered post-basic education. In accordance with the aforementioned 2023 Education Law, basic education is free and mandatory for Omani students.²⁹ As for educational facilities, there are two primary school types: private schools owned by private establishments and public schools, which are free and accessible for Omani nationals. Public education is more prevalent in the country as 85 percent of Omani children attend them, with the remaining children attending private ones.³⁰

Recognizing that children have varying learning needs, pedagogy has moved towards developing a student-centered approach that permits a more personalized learning pace. However, despite the country's efforts to promote this approach, there are still areas for improvement in terms of teachers' proficiency in applying it. Additionally, the majority of student assessment procedures tend to focus on assigning grades instead of identifying students' areas of strength and areas that need development.³¹



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28 Challenges in Education System Affecting Teacher Professional Development in Oman, 2018

29 Oman, Education Law, 2023

30 Wajeha Al-Ani, Alternative Education Needs in Oman, 2016

31 Challenges in Education System Affecting Teacher Professional Development in Oman, 2018



Early Childhood Education & Care (ECEC)

Oman's commitment to prioritizing children's rights and education was prominently showcased in 2012 when the country designated it as the "year of the child." This declaration marked a renewed focus on ensuring the welfare and development of the nation's youngest citizens. Subsequently, in 2014, Oman further reinforced its dedication to children's well-being by issuing the Omani Child Law, which underscored the fundamental right of every child to access quality education ³².

Despite experiencing a need for improvement for standards and regulations in this sector, Oman has a promising opportunity to develop a comprehensive national policy framework specifically designed to strengthen the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) sector ³³.

The governance of ECEC in Oman is primarily divided between two key stakeholders: the Ministry of Education and the private sector. The Ministry of Education assumes the responsibility of regulating and providing technical and administrative supervision to private basic and post-basic schools ³⁴. However, the majority of ECEC provision, particularly for children under the age of 6, is dominated by private providers ³⁵. This heavy reliance on the private sector has led to limited access and equity in childcare and preschool education, as many families may find the costs of private ECEC services prohibitively expensive ³⁶. The ECE enrollment rate is 57 per cent in 2022 ³⁷, which is considered low for a high income country like Oman, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to improve access to quality ECEC programmes.

³² UNESCO, *Prioritizing Children's Rights and Education in Oman: Initiatives and Collaborative Efforts for Holistic Development*.

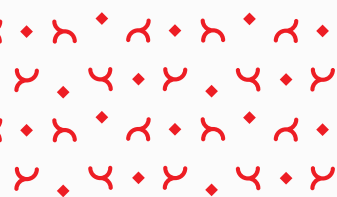
³³ Sultan Qaboos University, *Improving the Quality of Early Childhood Education and Care in Oman*, 2021.

³⁴ UNESCO, *Oman: Non-State Actors in Education*, 2022.

³⁵ World Bank Group, *Early Childhood Education Impact Evaluations for the Middle East and North Africa*, 2019.

³⁶ Sultan Qaboos University, *Improving the Quality of Early Childhood Education and Care in Oman*, 2021..

³⁷ NCSI portal, <https://ncsi.gov.om/Pages/NCSI.aspx>



Oman provides free and compulsory education for children in the basic education stage, which typically commences at the age of 6³⁸. However, pre-primary education, which caters to children between the ages of 3 years and 2 months and 5 years and 2 months, is primarily offered by private schools³⁹. This reliance on private institutions for early education has created disparities in access, particularly for children in low-income families.

Despite the challenges, Oman has been proactively engaging in initiatives and collaborations to enhance its ECEC services. The country has forged partnerships with renowned international organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Health Organization (WHO) to leverage their expertise and resources in strengthening the ECEC sector.

One notable collaboration is with WHO, which has been working closely with the Omani government to integrate the early detection of disabilities into the country's existing health strategy⁴⁰. This integration aims to ensure that young children receive comprehensive support for their physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional development through a coordinated approach across healthcare and education sectors.

Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) has also emerged as a key player in advancing ECEC in Oman. The university established its Early Childhood Education Department in 2006, with the aim of preparing distinguished graduates who can contribute to the field of early childhood care and education⁴¹. SQU has been actively involved in hosting training courses for Master Trainers in collaboration with WHO, focusing on nurturing holistic child development⁴². These initiatives demonstrate Oman's commitment to building local capacity and expertise in the ECEC sector.

In terms of areas that need development in the ECEC sector in Oman, there are a number of areas that need to be addressed. First developing a unified and standardized national curriculum⁴³, which results in variations in the quality of education and care provided across different ECEC centers. This inconsistency in curriculum and pedagogical approaches can lead to disparities in children's learning experiences and developmental outcomes. Additionally, the ECEC sector in Oman faces a need for development in addressing the shortage of trained professionals. There is a growing opportunity to enhance the quality of care and education in ECEC services⁴⁴ by increasing specialized training for teachers, caregivers, and staff. **By addressing this need, we can ensure that personnel are well-equipped to implement evidence-based practices and adapt to the evolving needs of the sector, ultimately benefiting young children.**

38 UNESCO, *Prioritizing Children's Rights and Education in Oman: Initiatives and Collaborative Efforts for Holistic Development*..

39 UNESCO, *Oman: Non-State Actors in Education*, 2022.

40 World Health Organization, *Improving access to quality early child development services through multi-sectoral partnerships in Oman*, 2023.

41 Sultan Qaboos University, *Early Childhood Education*.

42 World Health Organization, *Improving access to quality early child development services through multi-sectoral partnerships in Oman*, 2023.

43 World Bank Group, *Early Childhood Education Impact Evaluations for the Middle East and North Africa*, 2019

44 Sultan Qaboos University, *Improving the Quality of Early Childhood Education and Care in Oman*, 2021.





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8

ANNEX 02

EVOLUTION OF EDUCATION REFORMS

IN OMAN (1970-2025)





Introduction

Since 1970, the Sultanate of Oman has embarked on an ambitious and transformative journey to modernize its education system in alignment with global standards and national development aspirations. Central to this process has been the increasing recognition of education as a fundamental child right and the progressive adoption of child-centered pedagogies and policies ⁴⁵. This desk review traces this evolution chronologically, with a specific emphasis on the educational reform and the conceptualization, piloting, expansion, and institutionalization of the Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) and, later, the Child-Friendly Education (CFE) initiatives. By synthesizing insights from a wide array of official documents, reports, policies and interviews, the review aims to provide a comprehensive and analytically rigorous account of Oman's educational transformation.

Chronology of Major Education Reforms (1970-2022)

The development of Oman's modern education system can be traced through several distinct phases, each marked by key policy decisions, structural reforms, and conceptual shifts.

› 1970s-1980s: Foundations of Access and Equity

- 1970: Modern education development began under the visionary leadership of Sultan Qaboos bin Said, emphasizing the expansion of educational access and infrastructure as a cornerstone of Oman's socioeconomic development ⁴⁶.
- 1970-1990: Student enrollment increased exponentially from around 900 in 1970 to over 355,000 by 1990, enabled by large scale school construction and teacher recruitment drives ⁴⁷.

› 1980s: Oman's National Literacy Efforts

- 1981: The Ministry of Education launched the Al-Rashideen Library project to help newly literate individuals maintain their reading skills and prevent a return to illiteracy. The project began with 16 educational and informational booklets, later expanding to 30, covering topics such as religion, history, science, health, and social issues ⁴⁸.
- 1981–1986: A television-based literacy program was introduced to provide reading and writing instruction for individuals who could not attend formal literacy classes due to personal or logistical constraints ⁴⁹.

⁴⁵ Ministry of Education, Oman. (1970). Education Development in Oman. Muscat: Ministry of Education.

⁴⁶ <https://www.intechopen.com/chapters/65989>

⁴⁷ Ministry of Higher Education. Book of Statistics 2001-2002. Vol. 4. Muscat: Sultanate of Oman (English and Arabic); 2002

⁴⁸ Current Situation Analysis 2025 – Right to Education

⁴⁹ Current Situation Analysis 2025 – Right to Education

› **1990s: Shift towards Quality and Student-Centered Learning**

- 1996: Oman ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, reinforcing its dedication to ensuring every child's right to education ⁵⁰.
- 1998-1999: The Basic Education system was introduced in 1998-1999, marking a fundamental shift towards student-centered learning, life skills development, and promoting a culture of creativity and innovation ⁵¹.
- 2000s (Inclusive Education): Efforts towards inclusive education for children with disabilities gained momentum, with a focus on mainstreaming and the provision of specialized support services ⁵².
- 2006: UNICEF launched the global Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) initiative, promoting schools that are "inclusive, healthy and protective for all children, effective with children, and involved with families and communities - and children" ⁵³.
- 2010s: Oman increasingly adopted CFS principles and progressively integrated them into its educational policies and practices ⁵⁴.

› **2000–2010: Ongoing National Literacy Efforts in Oman – More Than 24,000 Classes Since 1973**

- 2000 – 2001: The Ministry carried out a literacy program for people with disabilities. The program's objective was to eliminate illiteracy among blind students aged 11 to 25 at the Omar Ibn Al-Khattab Institute ⁵⁵.
- 2006 – 2007: The Ministry launched the Cooperative School Project to engage schools throughout Oman's governorates in supporting literacy efforts. This initiative sought to leverage existing schools as centers for literacy education ⁵⁶.
- 2009 – 2010: A literacy initiative targeted illiterate employees within the Ministry of Education, such as cleaners, security guards, messengers, and drivers, to help them acquire basic reading and writing skills ⁵⁷.
- The Ministry of Education produced four educational booklets for adult learners, focusing on health and nutrition, home safety and security, managing household finances, and developing handicraft skills ⁵⁸.
- The Ministry of Education launched a reading initiative for adults, providing 10 booklets to learners who had completed literacy education up to the third grade. The goal was to help them retain their literacy skills by enhancing language proficiency and expanding general knowledge ⁵⁹.

⁵⁰ United Nations. (1996). Status of Ratification: Convention on the Rights of the Child. Retrieved from: https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=IV-11&chapter=4&clang=en

⁵¹ <https://www.intechopen.com/chapters/65989>

⁵² <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000186279>

⁵³ UNICEF. (2006). Child-Friendly Schools Manual. New York: UNICEF.

⁵⁴ UNESCO. (2014). Sultanate of Oman: UNESCO Country Programming Document. Paris: UNESCO.

⁵⁵ Current Situation Analysis 2025 – Right to Education

⁵⁶ Current Situation Analysis 2025 – Right to Education

⁵⁷ Current Situation Analysis 2025 – Right to Education

⁵⁸ Current Situation Analysis 2025 – Right to Education

⁵⁹ Current Situation Analysis 2025 – Right to Education

› **2010s: Strategic Planning, Curriculum Reforms, and CFS Pilot**

- 2012: The CFS initiative was officially piloted in Oman following a Ministerial Decree, beginning a formal program cooperation between the GoO and UNICEF.
- 2014: The Child Law (Royal Decree No. 22/2014) was issued, establishing a comprehensive legal framework for the protection of children's rights in various domains, including education ⁶⁰.
- 2015: With support from UNICEF Oman, the Ministry of Education created national Child-Friendly School (CFS) guidelines and training resources, and launched a pilot program in select schools ⁶¹. In the same year, the initiative expanded to more than 100 schools across all governorates, benefiting over 50,000 students ⁶².
- 2017-2018: The Cambridge Curriculum was introduced for mathematics and science across grades 1-12 in public schools, reflecting a commitment to international standards and a competency-based approach ⁶³.
- 2018: The National Strategy for Education 2040 was launched, outlining a long-term vision for enhancing educational quality, equity, and lifelong learning. It explicitly recognized CFS as a strategic approach ⁶⁴.
- 2019: The Ministry of Education, in partnership with UNICEF, officially launched the Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) program, aiming to reach 50 schools and 30,000 students ⁶⁵, while also training more than 1,000 teachers and school leaders ⁶⁶. That year, the Ministry also issued Administrative Resolution No. 983765/2019, which called for the establishment of a Child-Friendly Education Committee to lead the national rollout of child-friendly education ⁶⁷.

› **2020 - 2023: COVID-19 Response and Nationwide CFE Rollout**

- 2020-2021: Student voice and participation mechanisms, such as student councils, were strengthened and systematized in CFS schools ⁶⁸.
- 2022: In February 2022, the MoE announced the nationwide rollout of the Child Friendly Education (CFE) model to all 1,042 government schools (Grades 1-12), extending its reach to around 560,000 students ⁶⁹.
- 2023: The new School Education Law (Royal Decree No. 31/2023) was issued, reinforcing provisions on inclusive education, non-discrimination, and child protection in educational institutions ⁷⁰.

Oman. (2014). Child Law. Royal Decree No. 22/2014. Muscat: Government of Oman.

UNICEF. (2015). UNICEF Oman Annual Report 2014. Muscat: UNICEF.

Ministry of Education, Oman. (2016). Child-Friendly Schools in Oman: Progress and Achievements. Muscat: Ministry of Education.

<https://timss2023.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Oman.pdf>

Education Council, Oman. (2018). The National Strategy for Education 2040. Muscat: Education Council.

UNICEF. (2020). UNICEF Oman Annual Report 2019. Muscat: UNICEF.

Ibid

Mullis, I. V., Martin, M. O., Foy, P., & Hooper, M. (2020). Oman. In PIRLS 2021 Encyclopedia: Education Policy and Curriculum in Reading (pp. 1-10). Boston, MA: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center.

Al Abri, H. (2021). Student Voice and Participation in Omani Schools: Current Practices and Future Prospects. *International Journal of Education Policy & Leadership*, 16(5), 1-19.

<https://www.unicef.org/oman/press-releases/ministry-education-launches-child-friendly-education-model-nationwide-following>

Oman. (2023). School Education Law. Royal Decree No. 31/2023. Muscat: Government of Oman.

› **2023 – 2025: Enhancing School Enrollment and Retention: Expanding Schools, Transportation, and Student Safety Measures**

- High Enrollment Rates Across Education Levels: In 2025, Oman’s policy of compulsory and free education led to strong enrollment rates: 98.4% in grades 1–4, 96.6% in grades 5–10, and 85.6% in grades 11–12, reflecting broad access and continued participation across all stages of schooling ⁷¹.
- Expansion of Early Childhood Education: As a result of efforts to expand the number of private institutions offering early childhood education, the number of private, international, and global schools, along with kindergartens, reached approximately 1,223 educational institutions in 2024, compared to 880 institutions in the 2019–2020 academic year—reflecting a 39% growth rate. Additionally, the number of children enrolled in early childhood education during the 2024–2025 academic year reached 96,000 boys and girls, highlighting significant progress in expanding access to early learning opportunities ⁷².
- Oman Achieves Lowest School Dropout Rates: Thanks to targeted measures to prevent school dropouts, Oman has achieved some of the lowest dropout rates globally: 0% in primary, 0.7% in lower secondary, and 1.2% in upper secondary education. These measures included the appointment of 487 social and psychological specialists between 2021 and 2023, the expansion of school transportation with 3,068 new buses added previously and 800 more planned for 2025, and the construction of new schools to reduce overcrowding, bringing the total number of schools to 1,287 ⁷³.
- Literacy Programs Lead to Significant Decline in Illiteracy Rates: As part of lifelong learning efforts, Oman implemented literacy programs focused on enhancing continuous education and ensuring its quality. As a result, illiteracy rates dropped between 2023 and 2025 across age groups: from 7.4% to 4.8% for those aged 15 and above, 0.9% to 0.3% for ages 15–24, and 2.2% to 0.6% for ages 15–44 ⁷⁴.
- Enhancing Student Safety in School Transportation: Oman has expanded school transportation by adding over 3,068 buses, with 800 more buses approved for 2025. Safety measures were also adopted, include installing movement tracking and sensor devices inside and on the sides of buses to reduce the risk of accidents. Additionally, 405 female supervisors will be assigned to buses transporting students with disabilities as part of a safe transport initiative for the 2025/2026 school year ⁷⁵.

⁷¹ Current Situation Analysis 2025 – Right to Education

⁷² Current Situation Analysis 2025 – Right to Education

⁷³ Current Situation Analysis 2025 – Right to Education

⁷⁴ Current Situation Analysis 2025 – Right to Education

⁷⁵ Current Situation Analysis 2025 – Right to Education

2025 - Disability Services and Program Lab: In line with Oman Vision 2040, the Ministry of Social Development established a lab to empower people with disabilities through collaboration with key ministries, the private sector, civil society, and experts. The lab focuses on improving quality of life in areas such as health, education, employment, and rehabilitation. It promotes inclusion through events and workshops, and has launched several initiatives and investment opportunities to enhance early intervention and support in academic, professional, and social domains ⁷⁶.

Notable Initiatives – Ministry of Education

- Introducing vocational training opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities through private educational and training institutions.
- Increasing the inclusion of students with disabilities within public school systems.
- Ensuring safe and accessible school transportation for students with disabilities.
- Supplying assistive technology devices for students with hearing or visual impairments.
- Providing specialized educational support for students with autism through partnerships with private schools.



⁷⁶ Outputs of the Disability Services and Program Lab – 2025

The Lifecycle of CFS and CFE Initiatives

A

Conceptualization and Pilot Phase (2010-2012)

The groundwork for Oman's CFS initiative began around 2010, influenced by the international momentum around child rights and quality education.

- 2010: Formation of the National Working Team through Ministerial Resolution No. 213/2010 to study CFS principles and their application in the Omani context.
- 2012: Official launch of the CFS ⁷⁷.
- Pilot Design: Targeted 9 schools across 3 governorates - Muscat, Dhofar, and Musandam. Focused on six dimensions localized from the global CFS framework: Child Rights Promotion, Health Safety & Protection, Inclusiveness, Learning Effectiveness, Gender Responsiveness, and Social Participation.

B

Expansion and Standardization (2013-2019)

Building on the pilot insights, this phase focused on expanding coverage and developing national guidelines and training resources.

- 2014-2015: Expansion to 34 schools across 5 governorates, benefitting over 12,000 students. Beginning of specialized teacher training programs, reaching 800 teachers by 2015 ⁷⁸.
- 2016: First independent evaluation of CFS initiative, which found positive progress but also identified gaps related to institutionalization, inclusiveness, and monitoring and evaluation frameworks ⁷⁹.
- 2018-2019: Transition from CFS to CFE framing to emphasize a more comprehensive, system-wide approach. Formal establishment of the national CFE Committee through Ministerial Resolution No. 983765/ 2019 ⁸⁰.

C

Institutionalization and Nationwide Rollout (2020-2025)

The most recent phase has focused on system-wide integration and evaluation of the CFE model.

- 2022: Nationwide rollout announced, extending CFE to all 1,042 government schools and around 560,000 students.
- 2022-2025: Formation of governorate-level CFE committees through ministerial decrees to oversee localized implementation (e.g., Al Batinah, Muscat, Ash Sharqiyah North, Dhofar, Ash Sharqiyah South)
- 2023: Allocation of RO 40 million for school infrastructure development in alignment with CFE standards ⁸¹.
- 2025: Launch of comprehensive national evaluation of CFE in partnership with UNICEF under the current Country Program ⁸².

⁷⁷ <https://evaluationreports.unicef.org/GetDocument?documentID=133&fileID=35246>

⁷⁸ Ministry of Education, Oman. (2016). *Child-Friendly Schools in Oman: Progress and Achievements*. Muscat: Ministry of Education.

⁷⁹ Ibid

⁸⁰ Mullis, I. V., Martin, M. O., Foy, P., & Hooper, M. (2020). Oman. In *PIRLS 2021 Encyclopedia: Education Policy and Curriculum in Reading* (pp. 1-10). Boston, MA: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center.

⁸¹ <https://www.thearabianstories.com/2024/09/19/government-allocates-additional-amount-of-ro-40-million-to-construct-new-schools-in-oman/>

⁸² <https://www.unicef.org/oman/press-releases/ministry-education-and-unicef-oman-collaborate-child-friendly-education-evaluation>

UNICEF Support and Technical Assistance

UNICEF has played a pivotal role in supporting the conceptualization, implementation, and evaluation of CFS/CFE in Oman.

Specific areas of support included:

- Co-development of the Omani CFS model and standards.
- Capacity building of national and governorate teams on CFS/CFE principles and practices.
- Development of training manuals and implementation guidelines.
- Technical advice on integrating CFS/CFE into national policies and strategies.
- Support for piloting CFS model in schools and for phased expansion.
- Engagement in joint monitoring and evaluation exercises (2016 CFE evaluation & 2025 CFE evaluation).
- Co-organization of awareness-raising and advocacy events on CFS/CFE and child rights.
- Facilitating regional knowledge exchange and exposure to international best practices.

A senior UNICEF staff member noted:

“UNICEF’s partnership with the Ministry of Education in Oman has been instrumental in progressively aligning the education system with child rights principles. The CFS/CFE journey is a testament to the power of sustained engagement, evidence-based programming, and responsive capacity building ⁸³.”

⁸³ Interview with UNICEF senior staff



Policy and Legal Frameworks Underpinning CFS/CFE/education in Oman

Oman's education has been anchored in a supportive policy and legislative environment.

Key milestones included:

- Ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1996), which provided the overarching framework for child rights mainstreaming ⁸⁴.
- Inclusion of child rights and welfare provisions within the Basic Law of Oman promulgated in 1996.
- Enactment of the Child Law (Royal Decree No. 22/2014), which established a comprehensive framework for child protection and development, with specific articles on the right to education ⁸⁵.
- Launching of the National Strategy for Education 2040, which explicitly prioritizes inclusive, equitable, and quality education in alignment with SDG4 targets ⁸⁶.
- Issuance of the School Education Law (Royal Decree No. 31/2023), which further strengthens provisions on inclusive education, protection against violence and discrimination, and child participation in schools ⁸⁷.
- Integration of CFS/CFE standards into national educational regulations, guidelines, and curricula frameworks. (interview).

⁸⁴ United Nations. (1996). Status of Ratification: Convention on the Rights of the Child.

⁸⁵ Oman. (2014). Child Law. Royal Decree No. 22/2014. Muscat: Government of Oman.

⁸⁶ Education Council, Oman. (2018). The National Strategy for Education 2040: Executive Summary. Muscat: Education Council.

⁸⁷ Oman. (2023). School Education Law. Royal Decree No. 31/2023. Muscat: Government of Oman.



Timeline of Major Reforms and CFS/CFE Milestones

- 1970 Modern education development began under Sultan Qaboos with focus on access and infrastructure ⁸⁸.
- 1996 Oman ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Education in Oman ⁸⁹.
- 1998-1999 Introduction of Basic Education system, Education in Oman emphasizing student-centered learning ⁹⁰.
- 2006 UNICEF launched global CFS initiative ⁹¹.
- 2010 National Working Team formed for CFS (Resolution Review 01 No. 213/2010).
- 2012 Official launch of CFS initiative; Pilot in 9 Review 01 schools across 3 governorates.
- 2014 Enactment of Child Law (Royal Decree No. 22/2014) ⁹².
- 2014-2015 CFS expansion to 34 schools; Teacher training Review 08 began.
- 2016 First independent evaluation of CFS initiative. Review 01
- 2018 Launch of Education Strategy 2040 ⁹³.
- 2019 CFE Committee formed (Resolution No. 983765/2019) ⁹⁴.
- 2022 Nationwide CFE rollout to 1,042 schools announced. (UNICEF Press Release)
- 2023 School Education Law enacted ⁹⁵.
- 2023 RO 40 million allotted for 80 new schools per CFE Review 12 standards.

⁸⁸ Ministry of Education, Oman. (1970). Education Development in Oman. Muscat: Ministry of Education.

⁸⁹ United Nations. (1996). Status of Ratification: Convention on the Rights of the Child.

⁹⁰ Ministry of Education, Oman. (1999). Basic Education in Oman: Framework and Objectives. Muscat: Ministry of Education.

⁹¹ UNICEF. (2006). Child-Friendly Schools Manual. New York: UNICEF.

⁹² Oman. (2014). Child Law. Royal Decree No. 22/2014. Muscat: Government of Oman.

⁹³ Education Council, Oman. (2018). The National Strategy for Education 2040. Muscat: Education Council.

⁹⁴ Mullis, I. V., Martin, M. O., Foy, P., & Hooper, M. (2020). Oman. In PIRLS 2021 Encyclopedia: Education Policy and Curriculum in Reading (pp. 1-10). Boston, MA: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center.

⁹⁵ Oman Observer. (2023, June 1). New School Education Law Strengthens Child Protection in Schools.





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ANNEX 03

CFE THEORY OF CHANGE



IMPACT

Comprehensive Child-Friendly Education system implemented across all schools in Oman, ensuring all children enjoy their right to quality education in safe, inclusive, and participatory learning environments that foster holistic development and active citizenship, contributing to SDGs 4 and 5

RESULTS (Systemic Transformations)

INSTITUTIONALIZED CHILD RIGHTS	TRANSFORMED SCHOOL CULTURES	SUSTAINABLE SYSTEMS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child rights embedded in policies & curricula Rights-based approaches in daily practices Alignment with Oman Vision 2040 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priority on child well-being & holistic development Participatory school environments Inclusive cultures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-stakeholder partnerships established Resilient education system during crises Continuous quality improvement mechanisms

OUTCOMES (Behavioral and System Changes)

TEACHING & LEARNING	PARTICIPATION & ENGAGEMENT	PROTECTION & INCLUSION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child-centered pedagogies Respect for individual differences Data-driven improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active student participation in decision-making Meaningful parent/ community engagement Student ownership of learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Functional child protection mechanisms Inclusive practices ensuring No Child Left Behind Safe learning environments Support for students with disabilities

OUTPUTS

GOVERNANCE & CAPACITY	PARTICIPATION & MONITORING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CFE committees at the Ministry, governorate & school levels Trained education staff on CFE Context-specific school improvement plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activated student councils Strengthened parent associations Comprehensive M&E systems are operational Regular participatory evaluations CFE monitoring tools in use

INPUTS

POLICY & GUIDELINES	RESOURCES & EXPERTISE	STAKEHOLDER COMMITMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CFE manual and guidelines Policy framework from MoE Alignment with Oman Vision 2040 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate financial resources allocated UNICEF technical assistance Partner expertise Infrastructure investments 	<p>Ministry of Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy framework Budget allocation Capacity building Directorates & Schools: Implementation support Local coordination Communities & Partners: Active participation, Resource contribution





CRITICAL ASSUMPTIONS

- Political will: Sustained government commitment to CFE despite potential changes.
- Resource availability: Continuous allocation of financial and human resources
- Cultural acceptance: Communities embrace child participation and rights-based approaches
- Effective coordination: Multi-ministry collaboration (Education, Health, Social Development)
- Capacity sufficiency: Schools have adequate infrastructure and human resources
- Sustainability: CFE principles embedded in organizational culture

CONTEXTUAL RISKS

- Economic constraints limiting budget support
- Resistance to change from traditional educational approaches
- Competing educational reform priorities
- Inconsistent CFE implementation across schools
- External shocks (natural disasters, pandemics, conflicts) ⚠️ Social barriers (gender, disability, socioeconomic discrimination)

MONITORING FRAMEWORK

- Process indicators for each CFE principle
- Outcome indicators measuring behavior change
- Impact indicators assessing child well-being and learning outcomes
- Regular reviews using CFE monitoring tools
- Participatory evaluations involving all stakeholders



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ANNEX 04 TOOLS





Key Informant Interview Questions for Ministry of Education (MoE) Officials

Consent Form

Marhaba (Hello), my name is Waddah Abdulsalam, I am a researcher, and I am working with UNICEF as an independent consultant on evaluating the Child-Friendly Education (CFE) initiative in Oman. This evaluation is being conducted in partnership with the Ministry of Education and UNICEF Oman. You have been selected to participate in this interview because of your involvement in the CFE initiative as a stakeholder. This interview aims to understand your experiences, perspectives, and opinions regarding the implementation and effectiveness of child-friendly education in Oman.

Purpose of the Interview

This interview aims to collect information on the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, impact, and inclusiveness of the CFE initiative. Your responses will help us identify successes, challenges, and areas for improvement. Additionally, the data collected may be used as part of a case study to provide practical examples of how the CFE initiative has been implemented and experienced at the community level.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. You are free to decline to answer any question or stop the interview at any time without any consequences. Your decision will not affect your relationship with UNICEF, the Ministry of Education, or any other organization.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

The information you share will be kept strictly confidential. Your responses will be anonymized in the final report, meaning that your name or identifying details will not be mentioned. All data will be securely stored and accessible only to the evaluator. The findings of this evaluation will be presented in an aggregated form to protect the privacy of all participants.

Confidentiality Limitations

In accordance with ethical guidelines and UNICEF's reporting protocols, please be aware that while your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality, there are specific circumstances where confidentiality cannot be maintained. If you disclose information indicating that a child is being abused, neglected, or is at risk of harm, or if you disclose details of other criminal activities, the data collector is required to report this information to UNICEF for appropriate action. This is done to ensure the safety and well-being of individuals at risk.

Recording of the Interview

I want to record this interview for accuracy in documentation and analysis. The recording will only be used for transcription and analysis purposes and will not be shared outside the evaluator. If you prefer not to be recorded, I will proceed with written notes.

Use and Reuse of Data

The data collected during this interview or focus group discussion—including meeting minutes and any audio recordings—will be used solely for the purposes of this evaluation. If applicable, a de-identified dataset (with all names and personal details removed) may be created to support further analysis specifically related to this study. Any future use of the data beyond this evaluation will require separate approval and will fully comply with data protection and ethical standards. All data will be securely stored in password-protected and encrypted digital systems, accessible only to the consultant and authorized members of the evaluation team. The data will be retained for a period of up to 12 months following the completion of the evaluation. After this period, all collected data—including transcripts, meeting notes, and audio recordings—will be permanently deleted or destroyed to ensure participant privacy and confidentiality.

Duration

This interview will take approximately 60 minutes.

Potential Risks and Benefits

There are no known risks associated with participating in this interview. However, if at any point you feel uncomfortable, you may choose not to answer any questions or end the interview. While there is no direct benefit to you, your input will contribute to improving education policies and practices in Oman.

Consent Statements

1. Do you agree to participate in this interview?
2. Do you consent to recording this interview for transcription and analysis purposes?

(If the participant agrees, proceed with the interview.)

Thank you for your time and valuable input.

A copy of the consent form will be provided to the interviewee/s.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or would like to discuss your child's participation further, you may contact:

Waddah Abdulsalam

Independent Consultant – UNICEF Evaluation

Email: waddah@abc.ps

Phone: 009 72599 6666 78



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Interview Questions

Relevance:

1. How well does the CFE initiative align with Oman's Vision 2040 education priorities and the Ministry of Education's strategic goals over the implementation phases?
2. To what extent are CFE principles consistent with Oman's educational policies and strategies. Example: In what ways have the CFE principles been integrated into Oman's educational policies and legal frameworks, such as the 2023 Education Law, and what challenges have been encountered in this process? and how have these challenges been addressed?
3. In what ways were the three-stage implementation mechanisms of the CFE initiative adapted to suit the Omani context, and how effective have these adaptations been?
4. Considering the country's social, economic, and cultural diversity, how does the CFE initiative address the specific needs and concerns of Oman's children, teachers, parents, and communities? Examples/success stories where CFE mechanisms contextualization took place.

Effectiveness

5. What have been the key success factors and challenges in achieving the CFE objectives, intrinsic factors (program planning, administration, and delivery) and extrinsic factors (political, social, and financial)?
6. How effective has the CFE initiative promoted educational access and inclusion for disadvantaged groups and students with disabilities?
7. In what ways have the coordination and support mechanisms at the Ministry and directorate levels evolved to address implementation challenges and regional disparities in CFE effectiveness? What further improvements could be made to these mechanisms to ensure more equitable outcomes?

Efficiency

8. What are the main resource utilization challenges faced by schools in different regions, and how have these challenges been addressed to ensure efficient implementation of CFE methodologies and materials?
9. How efficiently have educational methodologies and materials been implemented to deliver the CFE initiative regarding effectiveness, adaptability, and suitability for generating desired outcomes?
10. How well has the CFE initiative followed its implementation schedule, including planning, coordination, and activity efficiency?
11. Can you provide examples of how the CFE initiative has adapted to changing scenarios and demonstrated the capacity to respond to emerging challenges (such as the COVID-19 pandemic) and opportunities in the educational sector?

Coherence

12. How has the CFE initiative navigated tensions between its core principles and cultural contexts in conservative regions, and what strategies have been employed to enhance cultural coherence without compromising fundamental values?
13. In what ways are the CFE initiative's components internally consistent and complementary, forming a coherent and logically connected framework?
14. How compatible is the CFE initiative with other interventions in Oman's education sector, and to what extent does it leverage or build upon existing initiatives or resources?

Sustainability

15. How does the organizational structure of the CFE initiative in Oman support its institutionalization, and what are the roles, responsibilities, and coordination mechanisms among different stakeholders?
16. How has the Ministry of Education worked to enhance coordination and minimize duplication between the CFE initiative and other donor-supported educational quality programs, particularly during the expansion phase? What opportunities exist for greater harmonization and synergy among these initiatives?
17. What strategies and mechanisms are in place to ensure the consistent maintenance of CFE interventions across all governorates, and how feasible and scalable are these strategies?

Impact

18. To what extent has the CFE initiative improved key education indicators (e.g., enrollment, attendance, retention, learning outcomes) and child well-being, particularly for vulnerable groups, compared to the baseline?
19. How has the CFE initiative influenced teaching practices, classroom interactions, and the capacity of educators and administrators to implement child-friendly education effectively?
20. To what degree has the CFE initiative contributed to systemic changes in national education policies, plans, and programs to become more child-friendly, inclusive, and aligned with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)?

Cross-cutting concerns

21. What specific measures have been taken to ensure that the CFE initiative reaches and benefits the most marginalized children, including those with disabilities, girls in conservative communities, and students in remote or under-resourced areas?
22. How has the Ministry of Education worked to strengthen data systems and monitoring mechanisms to better track progress toward inclusive education goals and identify areas requiring additional support or investment?
23. What partnerships or collaborations have been most effective in advancing the child-friendly education agenda in Oman, and how could these be further strengthened to accelerate progress toward SDG 4 and child rights commitments?



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These questions are designed to elicit comprehensive responses from the MoE directors and school administrators, covering all aspects of the evaluation matrix. The insights gained from these interviews will be crucial in assessing the performance and potential improvements of the CFE initiative in Oman.



Key Informant Interview Questions for Ministry of Health (MoH) Officials

Consent Form

Marhaba (Hello), my name is Waddah Abdulsalam, I am a researcher, and I am working with UNICEF as an independent consultant on evaluating the Child-Friendly Education (CFE) initiative in Oman. This evaluation is being conducted in partnership with the Ministry of Education and UNICEF Oman. You have been selected to participate in this interview because of your involvement in the CFE initiative as a stakeholder. This interview aims to understand your experiences, perspectives, and opinions regarding the implementation and effectiveness of child-friendly education in Oman.

Purpose of the Interview

This interview aims to collect information on the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and inclusiveness of the CFE initiative. Your responses will help us identify successes, challenges, and areas for improvement. Additionally, the data collected may be used as part of a case study to provide practical examples of how the CFE initiative has been implemented and experienced at the community level.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. You are free to decline to answer any question or stop the interview at any time without any consequences. Your decision will not affect your relationship with UNICEF, the Ministry of Education, or any other organization.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

The information you share will be kept strictly confidential. Your responses will be anonymized in the final report, meaning that your name or identifying details will not be mentioned. All data will be securely stored and accessible only to the evaluator. The findings of this evaluation will be presented in an aggregated form to protect the privacy of all participants.

Confidentiality Limitations

In accordance with ethical guidelines and UNICEF's reporting protocols, please be aware that while your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality, there are specific circumstances where confidentiality cannot be maintained. If you disclose information indicating that a child is being abused, neglected, or is at risk of harm, or if you disclose details of other criminal activities, the data collector is required to report this information to UNICEF for appropriate action. This is done to ensure the safety and well-being of individuals at risk.

Recording of the Interview

I want to record this interview for accuracy in documentation and analysis. The recording will only be used for transcription and analysis purposes and will not be shared outside the evaluator. If you prefer not to be recorded, I will proceed with written notes.

Use and Reuse of Data

The data collected during this interview or focus group discussion—including meeting minutes and any audio recordings—will be used solely for the purposes of this evaluation. If applicable, a de-identified dataset (with all names and personal details removed) may be created to support further analysis specifically related to this study. Any future use of the data beyond this evaluation will require separate approval and will fully comply with data protection and ethical standards. All data will be securely stored in password-protected and encrypted digital systems, accessible only to the consultant and authorized members of the evaluation team. The data will be retained for a period of up to 12 months following the completion of the evaluation. After this period, all collected data—including transcripts, meeting notes, and audio recordings—will be permanently deleted or destroyed to ensure participant privacy and confidentiality.

Duration

This interview will take approximately 60 minutes.

Potential Risks and Benefits

There are no known risks associated with participating in this interview. However, if at any point you feel uncomfortable, you may choose not to answer any questions or end the interview. While there is no direct benefit to you, your input will contribute to improving education policies and practices in Oman.

Consent Statements

- 1. Do you agree to participate in this interview?**
- 2. Do you consent to recording this interview for transcription and analysis purposes?**
(If the participant agrees, proceed with the interview.)

Thank you for your time and valuable input.

A copy of the consent form will be provided to the interviewee/s.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or would like to discuss your child's participation further, you may contact:

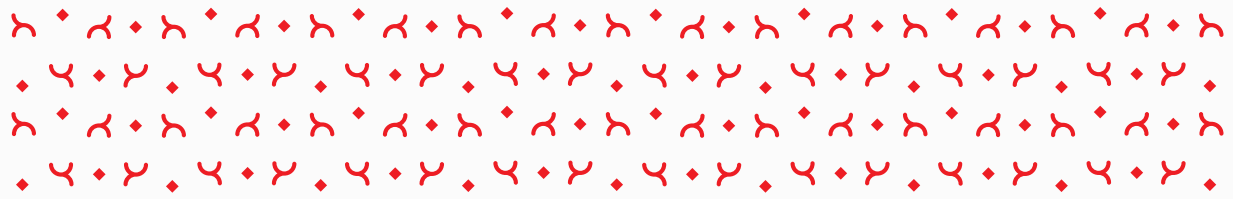
Waddah Abdulsalam

Independent Consultant – UNICEF Evaluation

Email: waddah@abc.ps

Phone: 009 72599 6666 78





Questions

Relevance:

1. How has the Ministry of Health's role in supporting the implementation and success of the Child-Friendly Education initiative evolved over the different phases of the program, and what have been the key drivers of this evolution?
2. In what ways does the Ministry of Health's involvement in the CFE initiative align with and contribute to the achievement of national health sector strategies and priorities, particularly those related to child and adolescent well-being?

Effectiveness:

3. What have been the most effective strategies or programs implemented by the Ministry of Health to ensure that schools participating in the CFE initiative are equipped to promote and protect the health and well-being of their students, and what factors have contributed to their success?
4. How has the Ministry of Health adapted its training, resources, and support for teachers and school staff to address the varying health-related needs and challenges across different regions and types of schools (e.g., urban vs. rural, conservative vs. progressive communities)?
5. What specific challenges has the Ministry of Health encountered in promoting the integration of health education and services within the CFE framework, and what innovative solutions have been developed to overcome these challenges?

Efficiency:

6. How does the Ministry of Health collaborate with the Ministry of Education and other relevant stakeholders to ensure a coordinated and comprehensive approach to child-friendly education?
7. Can you discuss any challenges or barriers the Ministry of Health has encountered in supporting the health-related aspects of the CFE initiative, and how have these been addressed?

Coherence:

8. How does the Ministry of Health engage with parents and communities to raise awareness and support for the health-related aspects of the CFE initiative, and what challenges, if any, have been encountered in these efforts?
9. How has the Ministry of Health worked to ensure coherence and alignment between the health-related components of the CFE initiative and other national health programs or campaigns targeting children and adolescents?
10. What opportunities exist for the Ministry of Health to further strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration and policy coherence in support of child-friendly education and child well-being more broadly?

Sustainability:

11. What are the key factors that will influence the long-term sustainability of the health-related components of the CFE initiative, and what strategies is the Ministry of Health pursuing to address these factors?
12. How is the Ministry of Health working to institutionalize the capacity, resources, and systems needed to sustain the integration of health promotion and services within the education sector beyond the lifespan of the CFE initiative?

Impact:

13. Can you share any notable successes or positive impacts the Ministry of Health has observed about student health and well-being since the implementation of the CFE initiative?
14. To what extent has the CFE initiative improved key child well-being, particularly for vulnerable groups, compared to the baseline?
15. What are the key remaining gaps or challenges in terms of promoting the health and well-being of all children in Oman, and how can the lessons learned from the CFE initiative be applied to address these challenges going forward?

Cross-cutting concerns:

16. In what ways has the Ministry of Health worked to ensure that the CFE initiative is inclusive and responsive to the diverse health needs of all students, particularly those from different backgrounds?
17. How does the Ministry of Health monitor and evaluate the health outcomes and well-being of students in schools participating in the CFE initiative, and what indicators or metrics are used?

Remarks

When interviews are conducted with Ministry of Health officials, a professional, respectful, and non-confrontational tone should be maintained, even when potentially sensitive or controversial topics are discussed. Clear and concise language should be used, and clarification or rephrasing of questions should be prepared as needed to ensure understanding.

Interviewees should be encouraged to provide specific examples and evidence to support their responses, and follow-up questions should be used to explore their perspectives more deeply. Attention should be given to any non-verbal cues or hesitations that may indicate discomfort or reluctance to answer certain questions, and adjustments should be made by moving on or rephrasing when necessary.

As with all research involving human subjects, ethical guidelines must be adhered to, with informed consent obtained from participants and their privacy and confidentiality protected throughout the process. Transparency regarding the purpose and intended use of the gathered information should be ensured, and participants' right to refuse to answer or withdraw from the interview at any time must be respected.

The insights obtained from these interviews can provide valuable information on the Ministry of Health's commitment, strategies, and challenges in supporting the health and well-being of students within the CFE initiative. **This information can help inform future improvements and collaborations to ensure that all children have access to a safe, healthy, and supportive learning environment.**



Annex 03 – Key Informant Interview Questions for Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) Officials

Consent Form

Marhaba (Hello), my name is Waddah Abdulsalam, and I am working with UNICEF as an independent consultant on evaluating the Child-Friendly Education (CFE) initiative in Oman. This evaluation is being conducted in partnership with the Ministry of Education and UNICEF Oman. You have been selected to participate in this interview because of your involvement in the CFE initiative as a stakeholder. This interview aims to understand your experiences, perspectives, and opinions regarding the implementation and effectiveness of child-friendly education in Oman.

Purpose of the Interview

This interview aims to collect information on the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, impact and inclusiveness of the CFE initiative. Your responses will help us identify successes, challenges, and areas for improvement. Additionally, the data collected may be used as part of a case study to provide practical examples of how the CFE initiative has been implemented and experienced at the community level.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. You are free to decline to answer any question or stop the interview at any time without any consequences. Your decision will not affect your relationship with UNICEF, the Ministry of Education, or any other organization.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

The information you share will be kept strictly confidential. Your responses will be anonymized in the final report, meaning that your name or identifying details will not be mentioned. All data will be securely stored and accessible only to the evaluator. The findings of this evaluation will be presented in an aggregated form to protect the privacy of all participants.

Confidentiality Limitations

In accordance with ethical guidelines and UNICEF's reporting protocols, please be aware that while your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality, there are specific circumstances where confidentiality cannot be maintained. If you disclose information indicating that a child is being abused, neglected, or is at risk of harm, or if you disclose details of other criminal activities, the data collector is required to report this information to UNICEF for appropriate action. This is done to ensure the safety and well-being of individuals at risk.

Recording of the Interview

I want to record this interview for accuracy in documentation and analysis. The recording will only be used for transcription and analysis and will not be shared outside the evaluator. I will proceed with written notes if you prefer not to be recorded.

Use and Reuse of Data

The data collected during this interview or focus group discussion—including meeting minutes and any audio recordings—will be used solely for the purposes of this evaluation. If applicable, a de-identified dataset (with all names and personal details removed) may be created to support further analysis specifically related to this study. Any future use of the data beyond this evaluation will require separate approval and will fully comply with data protection and ethical standards. All data will be securely stored in password-protected and encrypted digital systems, accessible only to the consultant and authorized members of the evaluation team. The data will be retained for a period of up to 12 months following the completion of the evaluation. After this period, all collected data—including transcripts, meeting notes, and audio recordings—will be permanently deleted or destroyed to ensure participant privacy and confidentiality.

Duration

This interview will take approximately 60 minutes.

Potential Risks and Benefits

There are no known risks associated with participating in this interview. However, if at any point you feel uncomfortable, you may choose not to answer any questions or end the interview. While there is no direct benefit to you, your input will contribute to improving education policies and practices in Oman.

Consent Statements

1. Do you agree to participate in this interview?
2. Do you consent to recording this interview for transcription and analysis purposes?

(If the participant agrees, proceed with the interview.)

Thank you for your time and valuable input.

A copy of the consent form will be provided to the interviewee/s.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or would like to discuss your child's participation further, you may contact:

Waddah Abdulsalam

Independent Consultant – UNICEF Evaluation

Email: waddah@abc.ps

Phone: 009 72599 6666 78





Questions

Relevance:

1. How has the Ministry of Social Development's role in supporting the implementation and success of the Child-Friendly Education initiative evolved over the different phases of the program, and what have been the key drivers of this evolution?
2. In what ways does the Ministry of Social Development's involvement in the CFE initiative align with and contribute to the achievement of national social development strategies and priorities, particularly those related to child protection, well-being, and rights?

Effectiveness:

3. What have been the most effective strategies or programs implemented by the Ministry of Social Development to ensure that schools participating in the CFE initiative are equipped to promote and protect the social and emotional well-being of their students, and what factors have contributed to their success?
4. How has the Ministry of Social Development adapted its training, resources, and support for teachers and school staff to address the varying social and emotional needs of students across different regions and types of schools (e.g., urban vs. rural, conservative vs. progressive communities)?
5. What specific challenges has the Ministry of Social Development encountered in promoting the integration of child protection and psychosocial support within the CFE framework, and what innovative solutions have been developed to overcome these challenges?

Efficiency:

6. How does the Ministry of Social Development collaborate with the Ministry of Education and other relevant stakeholders to ensure a coordinated and comprehensive approach to child-friendly education?
7. Can you discuss any challenges or barriers the Ministry of Social Development has encountered in supporting the social development aspects of the CFE initiative, and how have these been addressed?

Coherence:

8. What strategies has the Ministry of Social Development employed to engage with parents, communities, and other stakeholders to build support and address potential resistance to the social development aspects of the CFE initiative, particularly in more conservative areas?
9. How has the Ministry of Social Development worked to ensure coherence and alignment between the social development components of the CFE initiative and other national programs or campaigns related to child protection, rights, and well-being?
10. What opportunities exist for the Ministry of Social Development to further strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration and policy coherence in support of child-friendly education and holistic child development more broadly?

Sustainability:

11. What are the key factors that will influence the long-term sustainability of the social development components of the CFE initiative, and what strategies is the Ministry of Social Development pursuing to address these factors?
12. How is the Ministry of Social Development working to institutionalize the capacity, resources, and systems needed to sustain the integration of child protection and psychosocial support within the education sector beyond the lifespan of the CFE initiative?

Impact:

13. Question 8: Can you share any notable successes or positive impacts the Ministry of Social Development has observed in relation to student social and emotional development since the implementation of the CFE initiative?
14. To what extent has the CFE initiative improved key child well-being, particularly for vulnerable groups, compared to the baseline?
15. What are the key remaining gaps or challenges in terms of promoting the social and emotional well-being of all children in Oman, particularly those from vulnerable or marginalized groups, and how can the lessons learned from the CFE initiative be applied to address these challenges going forward?

Cross-cutting concerns:

16. In what ways has the Ministry of Social Development worked to ensure that the CFE initiative is inclusive and responsive to the diverse social and emotional needs of all students, particularly those from different backgrounds?
17. How does the Ministry of Social Development monitor and evaluate students' social and emotional well-being in schools participating in the CFE initiative, and what indicators or metrics are used?

Remarks

When interviews are conducted with Ministry of Social Development officials, a professional, respectful, and non-confrontational tone should be maintained, even when potentially sensitive or controversial topics are discussed. Clear and concise language should be used, and clarification or rephrasing of questions should be prepared as needed to ensure understanding.

Interviewees should be encouraged to provide specific examples and evidence to support their responses, and follow-up questions should be used to explore their perspectives more deeply. Attention should be given to any non-verbal cues or hesitations that may indicate discomfort or reluctance to answer certain questions, and adjustments should be made by moving on or rephrasing when necessary.

As with all research involving human subjects, ethical guidelines must be adhered to, with informed consent obtained from participants and their privacy and confidentiality protected throughout the process. Transparency regarding the purpose and intended use of the gathered information should be ensured, and participants' right to refuse to answer or withdraw from the interview at any time must be respected.

The insights obtained from these interviews can provide valuable information on the Ministry of Social Development's commitment, strategies, and challenges in supporting students' social and emotional well-being within the CFE initiative. **These insights can help inform future improvements and collaborations to ensure that all children have access to a nurturing, inclusive, and supportive learning environment that fosters their overall development and success.**



Key Informant Interview Questions for Environment Authority Officials

Consent Form

Marhaba (Hello), my name is Waddah Abdulsalam, I am a researcher, and I am working with UNICEF as an independent consultant on evaluating the Child-Friendly Education (CFE) initiative in Oman. This evaluation is being conducted in partnership with the Ministry of Education and UNICEF Oman. You have been selected to participate in this interview because of your involvement in the CFE initiative as a stakeholder. This interview aims to understand your experiences, perspectives, and opinions regarding the implementation and effectiveness of child-friendly education in Oman.

Purpose of the Interview

This interview aims to collect information on the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, impact and inclusiveness of the CFE initiative. Your responses will help us identify successes, challenges, and areas for improvement. Additionally, the data collected may be used as part of a case study to provide practical examples of how the CFE initiative has been implemented and experienced at the community level.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. You are free to decline to answer any question or stop the interview at any time without any consequences. Your decision will not affect your relationship with UNICEF, the Ministry of Education, or any other organization.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

The information you share will be kept strictly confidential. Your responses will be anonymized in the final report, meaning that your name or identifying details will not be mentioned. All data will be securely stored and accessible only to the the evaluator. The findings of this evaluation will be presented in an aggregated form to protect the privacy of all participants.

Confidentiality Limitations

In accordance with ethical guidelines and UNICEF's reporting protocols, please be aware that while your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality, there are specific circumstances where confidentiality cannot be maintained. If you disclose information indicating that a child is being abused, neglected, or is at risk of harm, or if you disclose details of other criminal activities, the data collector is required to report this information to UNICEF for appropriate action. This is done to ensure the safety and well-being of individuals at risk.

Recording of the Interview

I want to record this interview for accuracy in documentation and analysis. The recording will only be used for transcription and analysis purposes and will not be shared outside the evaluator. If you prefer not to be recorded, I will proceed with written notes.

Use and Reuse of Data

The data collected during this interview or focus group discussion—including meeting minutes and any audio recordings—will be used solely for the purposes of this evaluation. If applicable, a de-identified dataset (with all names and personal details removed) may be created to support further analysis specifically related to this study. Any future use of the data beyond this evaluation will require separate approval and will fully comply with data protection and ethical standards. All data will be securely stored in password-protected and encrypted digital systems, accessible only to the consultant and authorized members of the evaluation team. The data will be retained for a period of up to 12 months following the completion of the evaluation. After this period, all collected data—including transcripts, meeting notes, and audio recordings—will be permanently deleted or destroyed to ensure participant privacy and confidentiality.

Duration

This interview will take approximately 60 minutes.

Potential Risks and Benefits

There are no known risks associated with participating in this interview. However, if at any point you feel uncomfortable, you may choose not to answer any questions or end the interview. While there is no direct benefit to you, your input will contribute to improving education policies and practices in Oman.

Consent Statements

1. Do you agree to participate in this interview?
2. Do you consent to recording this interview for transcription and analysis purposes?

(If the participant agrees, proceed with the interview.)

Thank you for your time and valuable input.

A copy of the consent form will be provided to the interviewee/s.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or would like to discuss your child's participation further, you may contact:

Waddah Abdulsalam

Independent Consultant – UNICEF Evaluation

Email: waddah@abc.ps

Phone: 009 72599 6666 78





Questions

Relevance:

1. How has the Environment Authority's role in supporting the implementation and success of the Child-Friendly Education initiative evolved over the different phases of the program, and what have been the key drivers of this evolution?
2. In what ways does the Environment Authority's involvement in the CFE initiative align with and contribute to the achievement of national environmental strategies and priorities, particularly those related to climate change, sustainability, and environmental education?

Effectiveness:

3. What specific strategies or programs has the Environment Authority put in place to ensure that schools participating in the CFE initiative are equipped to promote environmental awareness, sustainability, and eco-friendly practices among their students?
4. What role does the Environment Authority play in providing training, resources, or support to teachers and school staff to effectively integrate environmental education and sustainability practices within the CFE framework?
5. What specific challenges has the Environment Authority encountered in promoting the integration of environmental education and sustainable practices within the CFE framework, and what innovative solutions have been developed to overcome these challenges?

Efficiency:

6. How have the collaborative mechanisms between the Environment Authority, Ministry of Education, and other relevant stakeholders evolved to ensure a more coordinated and efficient approach to integrating environmental education within the CFE framework, and what further improvements could be made to these mechanisms?
7. Can you discuss any challenges or barriers the Environment Authority has encountered in supporting the environmental aspects of the CFE initiative, and how have these been addressed?

Coherence:

8. What strategies has the Environment Authority employed to engage with parents, communities, and other stakeholders to build support and address potential resistance to the environmental aspects of the CFE initiative, particularly in areas where environmental awareness may be lower?
9. How has the Environment Authority worked to ensure coherence and alignment between the environmental components of the CFE initiative and other national programs or campaigns related to climate change, sustainability, and environmental protection?
10. What opportunities exist for the Environment Authority to further strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration and policy coherence in support of environmental education and sustainable development more broadly?

Sustainability:

11. What are the key factors that will influence the long-term sustainability of the environmental components of the CFE initiative, and what strategies is the Environment Authority pursuing to address these factors?
12. How is the Environment Authority working to institutionalize the capacity, resources, and systems needed to sustain the integration of environmental education and sustainable practices within the education sector beyond the lifespan of the CFE initiative?

Impact:

13. Can you share any notable successes or positive impacts the Environment Authority has observed in relation to student environmental engagement and action since the implementation of the CFE initiative?
14. What are the key remaining gaps or challenges in terms of promoting environmental awareness and action among all children in Oman, particularly those from environmentally vulnerable or underserved areas, and how can the lessons learned from the CFE initiative be applied to address these challenges going forward?

Cross-cutting concerns:

15. In what ways has the Environment Authority worked to ensure that the CFE initiative is inclusive and responsive to the diverse environmental contexts and needs of all students, particularly those from rural or culturally different areas?
16. How does the Environment Authority monitor and evaluate the environmental awareness and practices of students and schools participating in the CFE initiative, and what indicators or metrics are used?

Remarks

When interviews are conducted with Environment Authority officials, a professional, respectful, and non-confrontational tone should be maintained, even when potentially sensitive or controversial topics are discussed. Clear and concise language should be used, and clarification or rephrasing of questions should be prepared as needed to ensure understanding.

Interviewees should be encouraged to provide specific examples and evidence to support their responses, and follow-up questions should be used to explore their perspectives more deeply. Attention should be given to any non-verbal cues or hesitations that may indicate discomfort or reluctance to answer certain questions, and adjustments should be made by moving on or rephrasing when necessary.

As with all research involving human subjects, ethical guidelines must be adhered to, with informed consent obtained from participants and their privacy and confidentiality protected throughout the process. Transparency regarding the purpose and intended use of the gathered information should be ensured, and participants' right to refuse to answer or withdraw from the interview at any time must be respected.

The insights obtained from these interviews can provide valuable information on the Environment Authority's commitment, strategies, and challenges in supporting the integration of environmental education and sustainability within the CFE initiative. **These insights can help inform future improvements and collaborations to ensure that all children have access to a learning environment where their understanding and appreciation of the natural world are fostered, along with their role in protecting it for future generations.**



UNICEF MENARO – Education Advisor and UNICEF Oman Programme Manager Interview Questions

Consent Form

Marhaba (Hello), my name is Waddah Abdulsalam, and I am working with UNICEF as an independent consultant on evaluating the Child-Friendly Education (CFE) initiative in Oman. This evaluation is being conducted in partnership with the Ministry of Education and UNICEF Oman. You have been selected to participate in this interview because of your involvement in the CFE initiative as a stakeholder. Your experiences and perspectives are valuable in understanding the implementation and effectiveness of child-friendly education in Oman.

This interview aims to understand your experiences, perspectives, and opinions regarding the implementation and effectiveness of child-friendly education in Oman.

Purpose of the Interview

This interview aims to collect information on the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, impact and inclusiveness of the CFE initiative. Your responses will help us identify successes, challenges, and areas for improvement. Additionally, the data collected may be used as part of a case study to provide practical examples of how the CFE initiative has been implemented and experienced at the community level.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. You are free to decline to answer any question or stop the interview at any time without any consequences. Your decision will not affect your relationship with UNICEF, the Ministry of Education, or any other organization.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

The information you share will be kept strictly confidential. Your responses will be anonymized in the final report, meaning that your name or identifying details will not be mentioned. All data will be securely stored and accessible only to the evaluator. The findings of this evaluation will be presented in an aggregated form to protect the privacy of all participants.

Confidentiality Limitations

In accordance with ethical guidelines and UNICEF's reporting protocols, please be aware that while your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality, there are specific circumstances where confidentiality cannot be maintained. If you disclose information indicating that a child is being abused, neglected, or is at risk of harm, or if you disclose details of other criminal activities, the data collector is required to report this information to UNICEF for appropriate action. This is done to ensure the safety and well-being of individuals at risk.

Recording of the Interview

I want to record this interview for accuracy in documentation and analysis. The recording will only be used for transcription and analysis purposes and will not be shared outside the evaluator. If you prefer not to be recorded, I will proceed with written notes.

Duration

This interview will take approximately 60 minutes.

Use and Reuse of Data

The data collected during this interview or focus group discussion—including meeting minutes and any audio recordings—will be used solely for the purposes of this evaluation. If applicable, a de-identified dataset (with all names and personal details removed) may be created to support further analysis specifically related to this study. Any future use of the data beyond this evaluation will require separate approval and will fully comply with data protection and ethical standards.

All data will be securely stored in password-protected and encrypted digital systems, accessible only to the consultant and authorized members of the evaluation team. The data will be retained for a period of up to 12 months following the completion of the evaluation. After this period, all collected data—including transcripts, meeting notes, and audio recordings—will be permanently deleted or destroyed to ensure participant privacy and confidentiality.

Potential Risks and Benefits

There are no known risks associated with participating in this interview. However, if at any point you feel uncomfortable, you may choose not to answer any questions or end the interview. While there is no direct benefit to you, your input will contribute to improving education policies and practices in Oman.

Consent Statements

1. Do you agree to participate in this interview?
2. Do you consent to recording this interview for transcription and analysis purposes?

(If the participant agrees, proceed with the interview.)

Thank you for your time and valuable input.

A copy of the consent form will be provided to the interviewee/s.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or would like to discuss your child's participation further, you may contact:

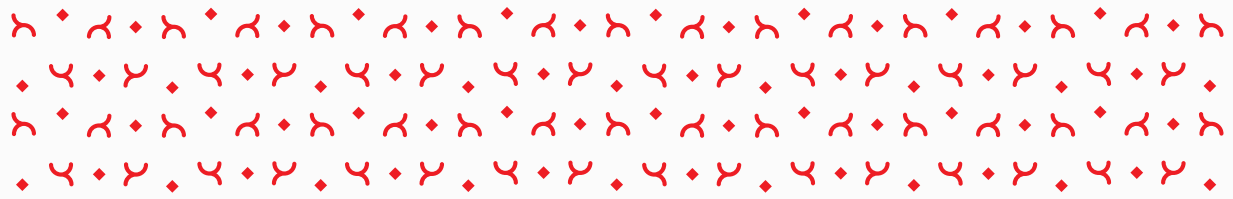
Waddah Abdulsalam

Independent Consultant – UNICEF Evaluation

Email: waddah@abc.ps

Phone: 009 72599 6666 78





Questions

Relevance:

1. Do you see any needs to update the UNICEF CFE guideline to adapt to the new emerging innovative teaching methods and monitoring mechanisms? If yes, please explain
2. How does UNICEF view its role in supporting the implementation and success of the Child-Friendly Education initiative in Oman as a high-income country?

Effectiveness:

3. Only for UNICEF Oman, What specific strategies, technical assistance, or resources has UNICEF provided to support the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders in implementing the CFE initiative in Oman?

Efficiency:

4. How does UNICEF collaborate with the Omani government and other relevant partners to ensure a coordinated and comprehensive approach to child-friendly education that aligns with international standards and best practices with the high-income country context?
5. Only for UNICEF Oman: Can you discuss any challenges or barriers UNICEF has encountered in supporting the CFE initiative in Oman, and how these have been addressed?

Coherence:

6. Looking forward, what are UNICEF's priorities and plans for further strengthening its support for the CFE initiative in Oman, and what opportunities or challenges do you foresee regarding sustainability and scalability?

Sustainability:

7. Based on UNICEF's experience supporting the CFE initiative in Oman, what are the key factors that will influence the long-term sustainability of child-friendly education practices and principles in the country, and what strategies is UNICEF pursuing to address these factors?
8. How is UNICEF working with the Omani government and other partners to build local capacity and ownership of the CFE initiative, to ensure its sustainability beyond UNICEF's direct involvement?

Impact:

9. Beyond the specific outcomes targeted by the CFE initiative, what broader impacts or changes has UNICEF observed in terms of attitudes, practices, or policies related to child rights and inclusive education in Oman?
10. What are the key remaining gaps or challenges in terms of promoting child-friendly education and realizing the rights of all children in Oman, particularly those from vulnerable or marginalized groups, and how can the lessons learned from the CFE initiative be applied to address these challenges going forward?

Cross-cutting concerns:

11. In what ways has UNICEF worked to ensure that the CFE initiative in Oman is inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs and rights of all children, particularly those with disabilities?

Remarks

When interviews are conducted with UNICEF officials, a professional, respectful, and collaborative tone should be maintained, recognizing the organization's expertise and commitment to advancing child rights and well-being globally. Clear and concise language should be used, and clarification or rephrasing of questions should be prepared as needed to ensure understanding.

Interviewees should be encouraged to provide specific examples and evidence to support their responses, and follow-up questions should be used to explore their perspectives more deeply. Attention should be given to any non-verbal cues or hesitations that may indicate discomfort or reluctance to answer certain questions, and adjustments should be made by moving on or rephrasing when necessary.

As with all research involving human subjects, ethical guidelines must be adhered to, with informed consent obtained from participants and their privacy and confidentiality protected throughout the process. Transparency regarding the purpose and intended use of the gathered information should be ensured, and participants' right to refuse to answer or withdraw from the interview at any time must be respected.

The insights obtained from these interviews can provide valuable information on UNICEF's role, strategies, and challenges in supporting the CFE initiative in Oman. **These insights can help inform future improvements and collaborations to ensure that all children in the country have access to a quality education that promotes their rights, well-being, and full potential. The findings can also contribute to broader global discussions and efforts surrounding child-friendly education and the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals related to education and child development.**





Parent Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) Questions

Consent form

Marhaba (Hello), my name is Waddah Abdulsalam, I am a researcher, and I am working with UNICEF as an independent consultant on evaluating the Child-Friendly Education (CFE) initiative in Oman. This evaluation is being conducted in partnership with the Ministry of Education and UNICEF Oman. You have been selected to participate in this focus group because of your involvement in the CFE initiative as a parent whose child participated in the CFE activities. Your experiences and perspectives are valuable in understanding the implementation and effectiveness of child-friendly education in Oman.

Purpose of the Focus Group

This discussion aims to understand how the Child-Friendly Education (CFE) initiative has influenced your children's learning experiences, school environment, and overall development. Your input will help improve education policies and programs to support children, families, and schools better.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this discussion is completely voluntary. You are free to decline to answer any question or withdraw at any time without any consequences. Your decision to participate or not will not affect your child's education or your relationship with the school, UNICEF, or the Ministry of Education.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

Everything you share in this discussion will be kept confidential. Your name and personal information will not appear in any reports or publications. We also ask that all participants respect each other's privacy by not sharing what is said outside of this group. All data collected will be securely stored and used only for evaluation purposes.

Confidentiality Limitations

In accordance with ethical guidelines and UNICEF's reporting protocols, please be aware that while your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality, there are specific circumstances where confidentiality cannot be maintained. If you disclose information indicating that a child is being abused, neglected, or is at risk of harm, or if you disclose details of other criminal activities, the data collector is required to report this information to UNICEF for appropriate action. This is done to ensure the safety and well-being of individuals at risk.

Confidentiality in Group Settings

Please be aware that FGDs involve multiple participants. While the consultant will stress the importance of keeping the discussion confidential, there is no guarantee that other participants will maintain confidentiality. Parents will be encouraged not to share personal or sensitive information during the discussion.

Recording of the Discussion

I want to record this discussion to ensure the accuracy of your thoughts and feedback. The recording will only be used for transcription and analysis by the evaluator and will not be shared outside of this process. I can take written notes if you do not wish to be recorded.

Use and Reuse of Data

The data collected during this interview or focus group discussion—including meeting minutes and any audio recordings—will be used solely for the purposes of this evaluation. If applicable, a de-identified dataset (with all names and personal details removed) may be created to support further analysis specifically related to this study. Any future use of the data beyond this evaluation will require separate approval and will fully comply with data protection and ethical standards.

All data will be securely stored in password-protected and encrypted digital systems, accessible only to the consultant and authorized members of the evaluation team. The data will be retained for a period of up to 12 months following the completion of the evaluation. After this period, all collected data—including transcripts, meeting notes, and audio recordings—will be permanently deleted or destroyed to ensure participant privacy and confidentiality.

Duration

The discussion will take approximately 90-120 minutes. I will ensure a comfortable and open environment where everyone can share their thoughts freely.

Potential Risks and Benefits

There are no known risks associated with participating in this discussion. However, if at any point you feel uncomfortable, you may choose not to answer a question or leave the discussion. While there is no direct benefit to you, your insights will improve the quality of education for children in Oman.

Consent Statements

1. Do you agree to participate in this interview?
2. Do you consent to recording this interview for transcription and analysis purposes?

(If the participant agrees, proceed with the interview.)

Thank you for your time and valuable input.

A copy of the consent form will be provided to the interviewee/s.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or would like to discuss your child's participation further, you may contact:

Waddah Abdulsalam

Independent Consultant – UNICEF Evaluation

Email: waddah@abc.ps

Phone: 009 72599 6666 78



Questions

Relevance:

1. How familiar are you with the activities and principles of the Child-Friendly Education (CFE) initiative in your child's school? Can you share some specific examples of CFE practices you have observed or heard about?
2. In what ways do you feel the CFE initiative aligns with your expectations and aspirations for your child's education and overall development, particularly in terms of preparing them for success in life and work

Effectiveness:

3. Can you share some specific examples of how the CFE initiative has fostered a more inclusive, child-centered, and supportive learning environment for your child?
4. How satisfied are you with the school's support, resources, and facilities to ensure the effective implementation of CFE principles and practices?

Efficiency:

5. How has the school communicated the goals, principles, and practices of the CFE initiative to you, and how well do you understand its importance and relevance to your child's education?
6. Can you discuss any challenges or barriers your child has faced in accessing or benefiting from the CFE initiative, particularly if they have special needs or are disadvantaged?

Coherence:

7. In what ways have you been encouraged or empowered to participate in your child's learning experiences and contribute to the implementation of the CFE initiative at the school level?
8. How would you describe the communication and collaboration between parents and teachers/school management about the CFE initiative, and what improvements, if any, would you suggest?
9. If you could recommend any changes, adaptations, or improvements to the CFE initiative based on your experiences and observations, what would they be, and why?

Sustainability:

10. What aspects of the CFE initiative do you think are most important to sustain and build upon in the long term, and why?
11. How can parents and the wider community contribute to the sustainability of the CFE initiative, and what support or resources would enable you to play a more active role in this regard?
12. In your opinion, what are the key factors that will influence the long-term success and sustainability of the CFE initiative in your child's school and the wider education system in Oman?

Impact:

13. To what extent has the CFE initiative improved key education indicators (e.g., enrollment, attendance, retention, learning outcomes) and child well-being, particularly for vulnerable groups, compared to the baseline?

Remarks

Focus group discussions with parents should be conducted in a welcoming, inclusive, and non-judgmental environment to encourage the open sharing of experiences, opinions, and ideas. Clear, jargon-free language should be used, and questions should be clarified or rephrased to ensure understanding.

Participants should be encouraged to share specific examples and stories to illustrate their points, and follow-up questions should be used to explore their perspectives more deeply. Attention should be given to group dynamics to ensure that all parents have an opportunity to contribute and that diverse viewpoints are heard and respected.

As with all research involving human subjects, ethical guidelines must be followed. Participants must provide informed consent, and their privacy and confidentiality must be protected throughout the process. Any concerns or sensitivities that may arise during the discussion should be addressed, and participants' right to refuse to answer or withdraw from the focus group at any time should be respected.

The insights gathered from these focus group discussions can provide valuable information on parents' collective experiences, perceptions, and recommendations regarding the CFE initiative. This information can help inform future improvements and adaptations to be





Teacher Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) Questions

Consent Form

Marhaba (Hello), my name is Waddah Abdulsalam, I am a researcher, and I am working with UNICEF as an independent consultant on evaluating the Child-Friendly Education (CFE) initiative in Oman. This evaluation is being conducted in partnership with the Ministry of Education and UNICEF Oman. You have been selected to participate in this focus group because of your involvement in the CFE initiative as a teacher involved in CFE activities. Your experiences and perspectives are valuable in understanding the implementation and effectiveness of child-friendly education in Oman.

Purpose of the Focus Group

This discussion aims to understand how the Child-Friendly Education (CFE) initiative has been implemented in schools, how it has impacted teaching and learning, and what challenges and opportunities exist. Your input will help improve education policies and programs to better support teachers and students. Additionally, the data collected may be used as part of a case study to provide practical examples of how the CFE initiative has been implemented and experienced at the community level.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this discussion is entirely voluntary. You are free to decline to answer any question or stop participating at any time without any consequences. Your decision to participate or withdraw will not affect your relationship with UNICEF, the Ministry of Education, or your school.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

Everything you share in this discussion will be kept confidential. Your name and personal information will not be mentioned in any reports or publications. We ask that all participants respect each other's privacy by not sharing what is said outside of this group. All data collected will be securely stored and used only for evaluation purposes.

Confidentiality in Group Settings

Please be aware that FGDs involve multiple participants. While the consultant will stress the importance of keeping the discussion confidential, there is no guarantee that other participants will maintain confidentiality. Teachers will be encouraged not to share personal or sensitive information during the discussion.

Confidentiality Limitations

In accordance with ethical guidelines and UNICEF's reporting protocols, please be aware that while your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality, there are specific circumstances where confidentiality cannot be maintained. If you disclose information indicating that a child is being abused, neglected, or is at risk of harm, or if you disclose details of other criminal activities, the data collector is required to report this information to UNICEF for appropriate action. This is done to ensure the safety and well-being of individuals at risk.

Recording of the Discussion

We want to record this discussion to ensure accuracy in capturing your insights. The recording will only be used for transcription and analysis by the evaluator and will not be shared outside this process. We will proceed with written notes if you prefer not to be recorded.

Use and Reuse of Data

The data collected during this interview or focus group discussion—including meeting minutes and any audio recordings—will be used solely for the purposes of this evaluation. If applicable, a de-identified dataset (with all names and personal details removed) may be created to support further analysis specifically related to this study. Any future use of the data beyond this evaluation will require separate approval and will fully comply with data protection and ethical standards.

All data will be securely stored in password-protected and encrypted digital systems, accessible only to the consultant and authorized members of the evaluation team. The data will be retained for a period of up to 12 months following the completion of the evaluation. After this period, all collected data—including transcripts, meeting notes, and audio recordings—will be permanently deleted or destroyed to ensure participant privacy and confidentiality.

Duration

The discussion will take approximately 90-120 minutes. We will ensure a comfortable and open discussion environment, with breaks as needed.

Potential Risks and Benefits

There are no known risks associated with participating in this discussion. However, if at any point you feel uncomfortable, you may choose not to answer a question or leave the discussion. While there is no direct benefit to you, your contributions will help shape future policies and practices to support teachers and improve education in Oman.

Consent Statements

- 1. Do you agree to participate in this interview?**
- 2. Do you consent to recording this interview for transcription and analysis purposes?**

(If the participant agrees, proceed with the interview.)

Thank you for your time and valuable input.

A copy of the consent form will be provided to the interviewee/s.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or would like to discuss your child's participation further, you may contact:

Waddah Abdulsalam

Independent Consultant – UNICEF Evaluation

Email: waddah@abc.ps

Phone: 009 72599 6666 78



Questions

Relevance:

1. How well do you feel the CFE initiative aligns with your understanding of effective teaching practices and the specific needs of your students?

Effectiveness:

2. Can you share some specific examples of how you have incorporated CFE principles and practices into your teaching, and what challenges, if any, have you faced in doing so?
3. How satisfied are you with the professional development opportunities and training provided to help you effectively implement CFE principles and practices in your classroom?
4. How would you describe the level of student engagement, participation, and motivation in your classroom since the implementation of the CFE initiative, and what factors do you believe contribute to this?
5. How do you assess and monitor student learning and development within the framework of the CFE initiative, and what tools or strategies have you found most effective?

Efficiency:

6. In what ways has the school leadership and management supported the implementation of the CFE initiative, and what additional support or resources would you find most helpful?
7. Can you discuss any adaptations or modifications you have made to the CFE approach to better suit your students' unique context and needs, and how successful have these been?

Coherence:

8. In what ways have you collaborated with other teachers, school staff, or parents to support the implementation of the CFE initiative, and what benefits or challenges have you experienced in these collaborations?
9. If you could recommend any changes, adaptations, or improvements to the CFE initiative based on your experiences and observations, what would they be, and why?

Sustainability:

10. What aspects of the CFE initiative do you think are most critical to sustain and build upon in the long term, and why?
11. How can teachers play a role in ensuring the sustainability of the CFE initiative, and what support or resources would enable you to contribute more effectively to this goal?
12. In your opinion, what are the key factors that will influence the long-term success and sustainability of the CFE initiative in your school and the wider education system in Oman?

Impact:

13. To what extent has the CFE initiative improved key education indicators (e.g., enrollment, attendance, retention, learning outcomes) and child well-being, particularly for vulnerable groups, compared to the baseline?
14. How has the CFE initiative influenced your own professional growth, job satisfaction, and sense of purpose as an educator, and what long-term effects do you think this could have on the teaching profession in Oman?

Cross-cutting concerns:

15. In what ways have you observed the CFE initiative promoting inclusivity for children with disabilities, and respect for diversity among students, and what challenges, if any, have you encountered in fostering these values?

Remarks

Focus group discussions with teachers should be conducted in a safe, collegial, and non-judgmental environment to encourage the open sharing of experiences, opinions, and ideas. Clear, professional language should be used, and questions should be clarified or rephrased as needed to ensure understanding.

Participants should be encouraged to share specific examples and stories to illustrate their points, and follow-up questions should be used to explore their perspectives more deeply. Attention should be given to group dynamics to ensure that all teachers have an opportunity to contribute and that diverse viewpoints are heard and respected.

As with all research involving human subjects, ethical guidelines must be followed. Participants must provide informed consent, and their privacy and confidentiality must be protected throughout the process. Any concerns or sensitivities that may arise during the discussion should be addressed, and participants' right to refuse to answer or withdraw from the focus group at any time should be respected.

The insights gathered from these focus group discussions can provide valuable information on teachers' collective experiences, perceptions, and recommendations regarding the CFE initiative.

This information can help inform future improvements and adaptations to better support teachers in implementing child-friendly education principles and practices, ultimately benefiting their students' learning and development.





Children Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) Questions – (For children aged 14-16)

Parental Consent Form for Child Focus Group Participation

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are conducting an evaluation of the Child-Friendly Education (CFE) initiative in Oman to understand its impact on children's learning experiences and well-being. As part of this evaluation, we would like to invite your child to participate in a focus group discussion with other children to gather their perspectives on their school and classroom environment. **The focus group will be facilitated by a trained researcher and will last approximately 45 to 60 minutes.**

Focus Group Discussion Topics:

1. What are some of the things you enjoy most about your school and classroom? Can you share what makes you feel happy and enthusiastic about coming to school?
2. Can you think of an example of something new or interesting you discovered in school recently? How did your teacher help you to better understand this topic?
3. When you have the opportunity to work together with your classmates, do you feel that everyone is included, respected, and treated fairly? Could you provide an example of how you collaborate with others?
4. If you ever experience feelings of upset, worry, or have a concern at school, who are the people you feel comfortable talking to, and in what ways do they help you feel better?
5. What are some of your preferred school activities, games, or subjects? Can you explain what makes them enjoyable for you?
6. Can you tell me about some of the things in your classroom that you believe help you learn more effectively, such as books, educational toys, or other learning materials?
7. Do you feel that your teacher values your ideas and opinions and shows genuine interest in what you have to say? Can you recall a time when you felt particularly heard and appreciated in your classroom?
8. How do you feel your school and classroom have changed over time? Are there any activities, lessons, or ways of learning that you think have become better or more enjoyable for you and your classmates?
9. If you had the opportunity to change or enhance anything about your school or classroom to make it an even more positive place to learn and play, what would you suggest, and why do you think this would be beneficial?

Please be assured that:

- Your child's participation in this focus group is entirely voluntary, and they may choose not to answer any question or withdraw from the discussion at any time without consequence.
- The focus group will be conducted in a safe and comfortable setting, and your child's responses will be kept confidential and anonymous.
- The information gathered from the focus group will be used solely for the purpose of evaluating the CFE initiative and improving children's educational experiences.

Use and Protection of Your Child's Data

The information your child provides will be treated with strict confidentiality. Children will be encouraged to use pseudonyms (false names) during the discussion to protect their identity. Your child's name or any identifying information will not appear in any report or publication.

Data collected will be used solely for this evaluation. It will be written into reports in a de-identified and aggregated format, ensuring no individual child can be recognized. Raw data will not be shared with the Department of Education in Oman or any third party. Additionally, the data collected may be used as part of a case study to provide practical examples of how the CFE initiative has been implemented and experienced at the community level.

All data will be stored securely and accessible only to the consultant and authorized members of the evaluation team. The data will be retained for a maximum of 12 months after the completion of the evaluation, after which it will be permanently deleted.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or would like to discuss your child's participation further, you may contact:

Waddah Abdulsalam

Independent Consultant – UNICEF Evaluation

Email: waddah@abc.ps

Phone: 009 72599 6666 78

Parental Consent Statements

Please review and check the boxes below:

- > I understand the purpose of this evaluation and voluntarily give permission for my child to participate in the focus group discussion.
- > I consent to my child's focus group discussion being audio recorded for transcription and analysis purposes.
- > I consent to audio recording the focus group.
- > I understand that my child may use a pseudonym during the discussion to protect their identity.
- > I acknowledge that raw data will not be shared with the Department of Education in Oman.

If you have any questions or concerns about the focus group or the evaluation, please feel free to contact the school headmaster or researcher.

Please indicate your consent by signing below:

I, _____ (parent/guardian name), give permission for
my child, _____ (child's name), to participate in the focus group
discussion as part of the evaluation of the Child-Friendly Education initiative in Oman. I understand
that my child's participation is voluntary, and their responses will be kept confidential and anonymous.

Signature: _____

Date: _____



Child Focus Group

Before starting the focus group

Marhaba (Hello), my name is Waddah Abdulsalam, I am a researcher, and I am working with UNICEF as an independent consultant on evaluating the Child-Friendly Education (CFE) initiative in Oman. This evaluation is being conducted in partnership with the Ministry of Education and UNICEF Oman. This interview aims to understand your experiences, perspectives, and opinions regarding the implementation and effectiveness of child-friendly education in Oman.

Purpose of the Interview

This interview aims to collect information on the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, impact and inclusiveness of the CFE initiative. Your responses will help us identify successes, challenges, and areas for improvement. Additionally, the data collected may be used as part of a case study to provide practical examples of how the CFE initiative has been implemented and experienced at the community level.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. You are free to decline to answer any question or stop the interview at any time without any consequences. Your decision will not affect your relationship with UNICEF, the Ministry of Education, or any other organization.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

The information you share will be kept strictly confidential. Your responses will be anonymized in the final report, meaning that your name or identifying details will not be mentioned. All data will be securely stored and accessible only to the evaluator. The findings of this evaluation will be presented in an aggregated form to protect the privacy of all participants.

Confidentiality in Group Settings

Please be aware that FGDs involve multiple participants. While the consultant will stress the importance of keeping the discussion confidential, there is no guarantee that other participants will maintain confidentiality. Children will be advised not to share sensitive or personal information and are welcome to use a pseudonym.

Confidentiality Limitations

In accordance with ethical guidelines and UNICEF's reporting protocols, please be aware that while your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality, there are specific circumstances where confidentiality cannot be maintained. If you disclose information indicating that a child is being abused, neglected, or is at risk of harm, or if you disclose details of other criminal activities, the data collector is required to report this information to UNICEF for appropriate action. This is done to ensure the safety and well-being of individuals at risk.



Recording of the Interview

We would like to record this interview for accuracy in documentation and analysis. The recording will only be used for transcription and analysis purposes and will not be shared outside the evaluator. We will proceed with written notes if you prefer not to be recorded.

Use and Reuse of Data

The data collected during this interview or focus group discussion—including meeting minutes and any audio recordings—will be used solely for the purposes of this evaluation. If applicable, a de-identified dataset (with all names and personal details removed) may be created to support further analysis specifically related to this study. Any future use of the data beyond this evaluation will require separate approval and will fully comply with data protection and ethical standards.

All data will be securely stored in password-protected and encrypted digital systems, accessible only to the consultant and authorized members of the evaluation team. The data will be retained for a period of up to 12 months following the completion of the evaluation. After this period, all collected data—including transcripts, meeting notes, and audio recordings—will be permanently deleted or destroyed to ensure participant privacy and confidentiality.

Duration

This interview will take approximately 45 to 60 minutes.

Potential Risks and Benefits

There are no known risks associated with participating in this interview. However, if at any point you feel uncomfortable, you may choose not to answer any questions or end the interview. While there is no direct benefit to you, your input will contribute to improving education policies and practices in Oman.

Consent Statements

1. Do you agree to participate in this interview?
2. Do you consent to recording this interview for transcription and analysis purposes?

(If the participant agrees, proceed with the interview.)

Thank you for your time and valuable input.

A copy of the consent form will be provided to the interviewee/s.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or would like to discuss your child's participation further, you may contact:

Waddah Abdulsalam

Independent Consultant – UNICEF Evaluation

Email: waddah@abc.ps

Phone: 009 72599 6666 78

Questions

Relevance:

1. What are some of the things you enjoy most about your school and classroom? Can you share what makes you feel happy and enthusiastic about coming to school?
2. Can you think of an example of something new or interesting you discovered in school recently? How did your teacher help you to better understand this topic?

Effectiveness:

3. When you have the opportunity to work together with your classmates, do you feel that everyone is included, respected, and treated fairly? Could you provide an example of how you collaborate with others?
4. Do you feel that your teacher values your ideas and opinions and shows genuine interest in what you have to say? Can you recall a time when you felt particularly heard and appreciated in your classroom?

Efficiency:

5. What are some of your preferred school activities, games, or subjects? Can you explain what makes them enjoyable for you?
6. Can you tell me about some of the things in your classroom that you believe help you learn more effectively, such as books, educational toys, or other learning materials?

Sustainability:

7. How do you feel your school and classroom have changed over time? Are there any activities, lessons, or ways of learning that you think have become better or more enjoyable for you and your classmates?

Impact

8. Do you feel that your teacher values your ideas and opinions and shows genuine interest in what you have to say? Can you recall a time when you felt particularly heard and appreciated in your classroom?

Cross-cutting concerns:

9. When you have the opportunity to work together with your classmates, do you feel that everyone is included, respected, and treated fairly? Could you provide an example of how you collaborate with others?

Remarks

Focus group discussions with young children should be conducted in a safe, comfortable, and engaging environment to encourage participation and the open sharing of ideas. Age-appropriate language should be used, a friendly and conversational tone should be maintained, and questions should be rephrased or simplified as needed.

Children should be encouraged to share their personal experiences and stories, with follow-up questions used to explore their thoughts and feelings more deeply. Attention should be given to group dynamics to ensure that all children have an opportunity to contribute and that no single voice dominates the discussion.

As with individual interviews, ethical guidelines must be adhered to, with informed consent obtained from parents or guardians and children's well-being and privacy protected throughout the process. Any concerns or discomfort that may arise during the discussion should be addressed, and children's right to refuse to answer or withdraw from the focus group at any time should be respected.

The insights gathered from these focus group discussions can provide valuable information on young children's collective experiences, perceptions, and aspirations regarding the CFE initiative. **This information can help inform future improvements and adaptations to better serve their needs and promote their overall well-being and development.**

Key Informant Interview Questions for Teachers

Consent Form

Marhaba (Hello), my name is Waddah Abdulsalam, I am a researcher, and I am working with UNICEF as an independent consultant on evaluating the Child-Friendly Education (CFE) initiative in Oman. This evaluation is being conducted in partnership with the Ministry of Education UNICEF Oman. Today, we are inviting you to participate in a focus group discussion to share your experiences, perspectives, and insights on the implementation of child-friendly education in your schools.

You have been selected to participate in this focus group because of your involvement in the CFE initiative as a teacher involved in the CFE initiative. Your experiences and perspectives are valuable in understanding the implementation and effectiveness of child-friendly education in Oman.

Purpose of the Interview

This discussion aims to understand how the Child-Friendly Education (CFE) initiative has been implemented in schools, how it has impacted teaching and learning, and what challenges and opportunities exist. Your input will help improve education policies and programs to better support teachers and students. Additionally, the data collected may be used as part of a case study to provide practical examples of how the CFE initiative has been implemented and experienced at the community level.

Voluntary Participation

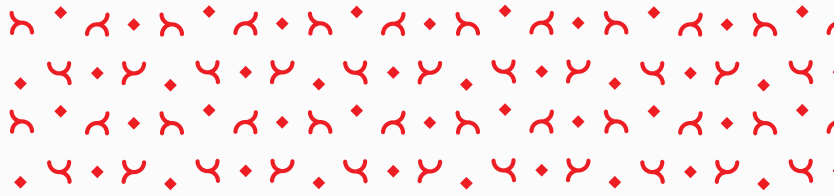
Your participation in this discussion is entirely voluntary. You are free to decline to answer any question or stop participating at any time without any consequences. Your decision to participate or withdraw will not affect your relationship with UNICEF, the Ministry of Education, or your school.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

Everything you share in this discussion will be kept confidential. Your name and personal information will not be mentioned in any reports or publications. We ask that all participants respect each other's privacy by not sharing what is said outside of this group. All data collected will be securely stored and used only for evaluation purposes.

Confidentiality Limitations

In accordance with ethical guidelines and UNICEF's reporting protocols, please be aware that while your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality, there are specific circumstances where confidentiality cannot be maintained. If you disclose information indicating that a child is being abused, neglected, or is at risk of harm, or if you disclose details of other criminal activities, the data collector is required to report this information to UNICEF for appropriate action. This is done to ensure the safety and well-being of individuals at risk.



Recording of the Discussion

To ensure accuracy in capturing your insights, we would like to record this discussion. The recording will only be used for transcription and analysis by the evaluator and will not be shared outside this process. If you prefer not to be recorded, we will proceed with written notes instead.

Use and Reuse of Data

The data collected during this interview or focus group discussion—including meeting minutes and any audio recordings—will be used solely for the purposes of this evaluation. If applicable, a de-identified dataset (with all names and personal details removed) may be created to support further analysis specifically related to this study. Any future use of the data beyond this evaluation will require separate approval and will fully comply with data protection and ethical standards.

All data will be securely stored in password-protected and encrypted digital systems, accessible only to the consultant and authorized members of the evaluation team. The data will be retained for a period of up to 12 months following the completion of the evaluation. After this period, all collected data—including transcripts, meeting notes, and audio recordings—will be permanently deleted or destroyed to ensure participant privacy and confidentiality.

Duration

The discussion will take approximately 60 minutes. We will ensure a comfortable and open discussion environment, with breaks as needed.

Potential Risks and Benefits

There are no known risks associated with participating in this discussion. However, if at any point you feel uncomfortable, you may choose not to answer a question or leave the discussion. While there is no direct benefit to you, your contributions will help shape future policies and practices to support teachers and improve education in Oman.

Consent Statements:

1. Do you agree to participate in this focus group discussion?
2. Do you consent to recording this discussion for transcription and analysis purposes?

(If the participant agrees, proceed with the discussion.)

Thank you for your valuable time and insights. Your input is essential in improving child-friendly education in Oman.

A copy of the consent form will be provided to the interviewee/s.

Contact Information

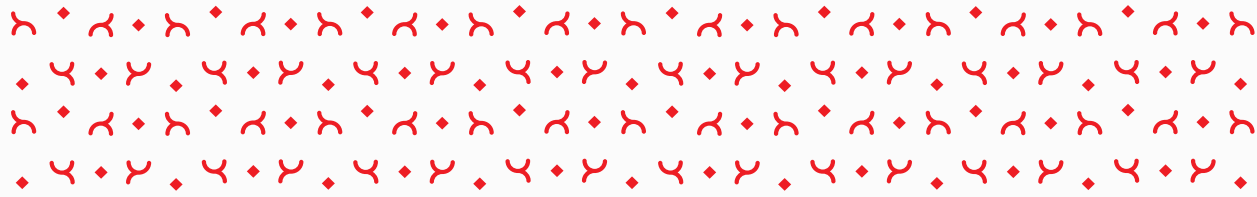
If you have any questions or would like to discuss your child's participation further, you may contact:

Waddah Abdulsalam

Independent Consultant – UNICEF Evaluation

Email: waddah@abc.ps

Phone: 009 72599 6666 78



Questions

Relevance:

1. How well do you feel the CFE initiative addresses the specific needs and concerns of your students, considering their diverse backgrounds and learning requirements?
2. In what ways have the CFE principles and approaches been adapted to suit your school's context, and how effective have these adaptations been in improving teaching and learning?
3. How has the CFE initiative influenced your perception of your role as an educator and your approach to creating a child-friendly learning environment?

Effectiveness

4. To what extent have you observed improvements in student learning outcomes, engagement, and well-being since the implementation of the CFE initiative in your school?
5. What have been the key success factors and challenges in implementing CFE principles and practices in your classroom?
6. How effective have the CFE capacity-building efforts been in strengthening your abilities to create inclusive, child-centered learning environments?
7. Can you provide examples of how you have aligned your teaching methods with the desired learning outcomes and resources provided through the CFE initiative?

Efficiency

8. How efficiently have the CFE educational methodologies and materials been implemented in your classroom in terms of their effectiveness, adaptability, and suitability for generating desired outcomes?
9. What challenges, if any, have you faced in adhering to the CFE implementation schedule and activities within your school?
10. How has your school leadership optimized the use of available resources and support to ensure the efficient implementation of the CFE initiative?

Coherence

11. In what ways do you feel the CFE initiative complements or aligns with other educational interventions or initiatives in your school or district?
12. How have you incorporated CFE principles and practices into your teaching strategies and curriculum, ensuring a coherent and integrated approach?

Sustainability

13. What support mechanisms or resources do you feel are essential to sustain implementing CFE principles and practices in your classroom and school over the long term?
14. How can teachers advocate for and contribute to the institutionalization and scale-up of the CFE initiative across Oman?
15. What opportunities do you see for strengthening the alignment and synergy between the CFE initiative and other efforts to promote child rights, inclusive education, and holistic child development in Oman?

Impact

16. Beyond academic outcomes, what broader impacts or changes have you observed in your students' social-emotional well-being, life skills, or overall development that you would attribute to the CFE initiative?
17. How has the CFE initiative influenced the attitudes, practices, and relationships among teachers, students, parents, and the wider school community?
18. What evidence or feedback have you gathered to assess the long-term impact of the CFE initiative on your students' educational trajectories, future opportunities, and personal growth?

Cross-cutting concerns

19. How have you adapted your teaching strategies and materials to accommodate the needs of children with disabilities and those from disadvantaged backgrounds in your classroom?
20. In what ways have you collaborated with school management, parents, and support services to ensure the accessibility and inclusivity of education for all children?
21. How do you monitor and assess the inclusivity of your classroom environment and teaching practices, and what steps do you take to ensure compliance with CFE principles and guidelines?



Key Informant Interview Questions for Parents

Consent form

Marhaba (Hello), my name is Waddah Abdulsalam, I am a researcher, and I am working with UNICEF as an independent consultant on evaluating the Child-Friendly Education (CFE) initiative in Oman. This evaluation is being conducted in partnership with the Ministry of Education UNICEF Oman. You have been selected to participate in this interview because of your involvement in the CFE initiative as your child has engaged in CFE initiative.

Purpose of the Interview

This discussion aims to understand how the Child-Friendly Education (CFE) initiative has influenced your children's learning experiences, school environment, and overall development. Your input will help improve education policies and programs to support children, families, and schools better. Additionally, the data collected may be used as part of a case study to provide practical examples of how the CFE initiative has been implemented and experienced at the community level.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this discussion is completely voluntary. You are free to decline to answer any question or withdraw at any time without any consequences. Your decision to participate or not will not affect your child's education or your relationship with the school, UNICEF, or the Ministry of Education.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

Everything you share in this discussion will be kept confidential. Your name and personal information will not appear in any reports or publications. We also ask that all participants respect each other's privacy by not sharing what is said outside of this group. All data collected will be securely stored and used only for evaluation purposes.

Confidentiality Limitations

In accordance with ethical guidelines and UNICEF's reporting protocols, please be aware that while your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality, there are specific circumstances where confidentiality cannot be maintained. If you disclose information indicating that a child is being abused, neglected, or is at risk of harm, or if you disclose details of other criminal activities, the data collector is required to report this information to UNICEF for appropriate action. This is done to ensure the safety and well-being of individuals at risk.

Recording of the Discussion

I want to record this discussion to ensure your thoughts and feedback accuracy. The recording will only be used for transcription and analysis by the evaluator and will not be shared outside of this process. I can take written notes if you do not wish to be recorded.



Use and Reuse of Data

The data collected during this interview or focus group discussion—including meeting minutes and any audio recordings—will be used solely for the purposes of this evaluation. If applicable, a de-identified dataset (with all names and personal details removed) may be created to support further analysis specifically related to this study. Any future use of the data beyond this evaluation will require separate approval and will fully comply with data protection and ethical standards.

All data will be securely stored in password-protected and encrypted digital systems, accessible only to the consultant and authorized members of the evaluation team. The data will be retained for a period of up to 12 months following the completion of the evaluation. After this period, all collected data—including transcripts, meeting notes, and audio recordings—will be permanently deleted or destroyed to ensure participant privacy and confidentiality.

Duration

The discussion will take approximately 60 minutes. I will ensure a comfortable and open environment where everyone can share their thoughts freely.

Potential Risks and Benefits

There are no known risks associated with participating in this discussion. However, if at any point you feel uncomfortable, you may choose not to answer a question or leave the discussion. While there is no direct benefit to you, your insights will improve the quality of education for children in Oman.

Consent Statements:

- 1. Do you agree to participate in this focus group discussion?**
- 2. Do you consent to recording this discussion for transcription and analysis purposes?**

(If the participant agrees, proceed with the discussion.)

Thank you for your time and valuable input. Your perspective as a parent is essential in helping improve child-friendly education in Oman.

Contact Information

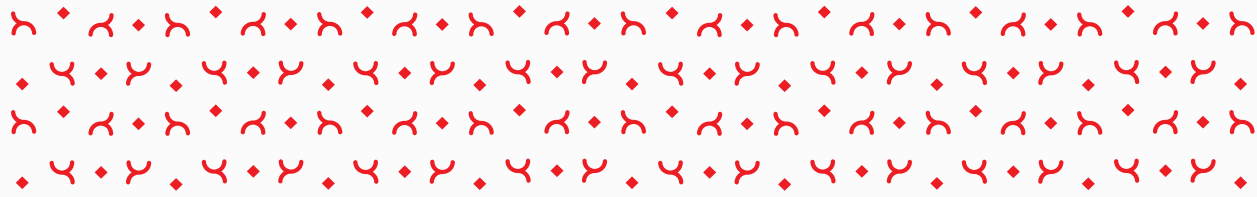
If you have any questions or would like to discuss your child's participation further, you may contact:

Waddah Abdulsalam

Independent Consultant – UNICEF Evaluation

Email: waddah@abc.ps

Phone: 009 72599 6666 78



Questions

Relevance:

1. How well do you feel the CFE initiative addresses the specific needs and concerns of your child, considering their unique learning requirements and personal development?
2. In what ways have you observed the CFE principles and approaches being adapted to suit your child's school context, and how effective do you believe these adaptations have been in improving their learning experience?
3. How has the CFE initiative influenced your understanding of your role as a parent in supporting your child's education and overall development?

Effectiveness

4. What changes, if any, have you noticed in your child's learning outcomes, engagement, and overall well-being since the implementation of the CFE initiative in their school?
5. How has the CFE initiative influenced your child's attitudes towards learning, their relationships with teachers and peers, and their motivation to attend school?
6. Can you provide examples of how the CFE initiative has fostered a more inclusive, child-centered learning environment for your child?
7. How has the CFE initiative impacted the learning experiences and well-being of different subgroups of children, such as girls, children with disabilities, or those from disadvantaged backgrounds?

Coherence

8. How has the school communicated the goals and principles of the CFE initiative to you, and how well do you understand its alignment with the overall educational objectives?

Sustainability

9. What aspects of the CFE initiative do you think are most important to sustain and build upon in the long term, and why?
10. How can parents contribute to the sustainability and scale-up of the CFE initiative across Oman, ensuring its benefits reach more children and families?
11. What support or resources would enable you to play a more active role in promoting and sustaining child-friendly education practices in your child's school and community?



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Impact

12. Beyond academic outcomes, what broader impacts or changes have you observed in your child's social-emotional well-being, life skills, or overall development that you would attribute to the CFE initiative?
13. How has the CFE initiative influenced your own attitudes, practices, and involvement in your child's education and the wider school community?
14. What long-term effects do you think the CFE initiative could have on your child's future opportunities, personal growth, and contribution to society?

Cross-cutting concerns

15. If your child has a disability how has the CFE initiative accommodated their specific needs and ensured their inclusion in the learning environment?
16. In what ways have you been involved in decision-making processes or consulted regarding the implementation of CFE principles and practices in your child's school?
17. How satisfied are you with the accessibility, quality, and inclusivity of the education provided to your child under the CFE initiative, and what improvements, if any, would you suggest?

Engagement and participation

18. How often and in what ways do you communicate with your child's teachers and school management regarding their progress and the implementation of CFE principles?
19. In what ways have you been encouraged or supported to participate in your child's learning experiences and contribute to the CFE initiative at the school level?
20. What barriers, if any, have you faced in engaging with your child's education and the CFE initiative, and how can these be addressed to foster greater parental involvement?

Key Informant Interview Questions for Educators (University Professors / Education Researchers & Centers):

Consent Form for Children First Association (Omani NPO)

Marhaba (Hello), my name is Waddah Abdulsalam, and I am an independent consultant working with UNICEF on evaluating the Child-Friendly Education (CFE) initiative in Oman. This evaluation is being conducted in partnership with UNICEF Oman and the Ministry of Education. We highly value the perspective and experience of the Children First Association, as your organization has been actively involved in promoting child rights and well-being in Oman. This interview aims to understand your organization's views on the implementation and effectiveness of the CFE initiative.

Purpose of the Interview

The purpose of this interview is to gather information on the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, impact, and inclusiveness of the CFE initiative from the perspective of the Children First Association. Your responses will help us identify successes, challenges, and areas for improvement in the implementation of child-friendly education practices in Oman. Additionally, the data collected may be used as part of a case study to provide practical examples of how the CFE initiative has been implemented and experienced at the community level.

Voluntary Participation

Your organization's participation in this interview is completely voluntary. You are free to decline to answer any question or stop the interview at any time without any consequences. Your decision will not affect your organization's relationship with UNICEF, the Ministry of Education, or any other organization.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

The information you share will be kept strictly confidential. Your organization's responses will be anonymized in the final report, meaning that the name of your organization or identifying details will not be mentioned. All data will be securely stored and accessible only to the evaluator. The findings of this evaluation will be presented in an aggregated form to protect the privacy of all participants.

Recording of the Interview

I would like to record this interview for accuracy in documentation and analysis. The recording will only be used for transcription and analysis purposes and will not be shared outside the evaluation team. If you prefer not to be recorded, I will proceed with written notes.

Use and Reuse of Data

The data collected during this interview or focus group discussion—including meeting minutes and any audio recordings—will be used solely for the purposes of this evaluation. If applicable, a de-identified dataset (with all names and personal details removed) may be created to support further analysis specifically related to this study. Any future use of the data beyond this evaluation will require separate approval and will fully comply with data protection and ethical standards.

All data will be securely stored in password-protected and encrypted digital systems, accessible only to the consultant and authorized members of the evaluation team. The data will be retained for a period of up to 12 months following the completion of the evaluation. After this period, all collected data—including transcripts, meeting notes, and audio recordings—will be permanently deleted or destroyed to ensure participant privacy and confidentiality.

Duration

This interview will take approximately 60 minutes.

Potential Risks and Benefits

There are no known risks associated with participating in this interview. However, if at any point you feel uncomfortable, you may choose not to answer any questions or end the interview. While there is no direct benefit to your organization, your input will contribute to improving education policies and practices in Oman, which aligns with your organization's mission to promote child rights and well-being.

Consent Statements:

1. Do you agree to participate in this interview on behalf of the Children First Association?
2. Do you consent to recording this interview for transcription and analysis purposes?

(If the participant agrees, proceed with the interview.)

Thank you for your time and valuable input.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or would like to discuss your child's participation further, you may contact:

Waddah Abdulsalam

Independent Consultant – UNICEF Evaluation

Email: waddah@abc.ps

Phone: 009 72599 6666 78



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Questions

Relevance:

1. To what extent are you familiar with the Child-Friendly Education (CFE) initiative in Oman, and what is your overall perception of its relevance and potential effectiveness in the Omani context?
2. In your professional opinion, how does the CFE initiative align with national education policies, plans, and strategies, as well as international conventions and frameworks such as the UNCRC and SDGs?
3. How do you think the CFE initiative addresses the specific educational needs and challenges faced by children in Oman, considering factors such as socio-economic disparities, cultural diversity, and geographical variations?

Effectiveness:

4. Based on your research or experience, what do you consider to be the main strengths and potential areas for improvement of the CFE approach in promoting inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all children in Oman?
5. How do you think the CFE initiative may have influenced teaching practices, classroom interactions, and the overall learning environment in participating schools, and what could be the potential challenges faced by educators in implementing CFE principles?
6. In your opinion, what are the key factors that contribute to the effectiveness of the CFE initiative, and how can these factors be strengthened or replicated in other educational settings?
7. How can the CFE initiative be further enhanced to better support the professional development and capacity building of teachers, school leaders, and other educational stakeholders?

Sustainability

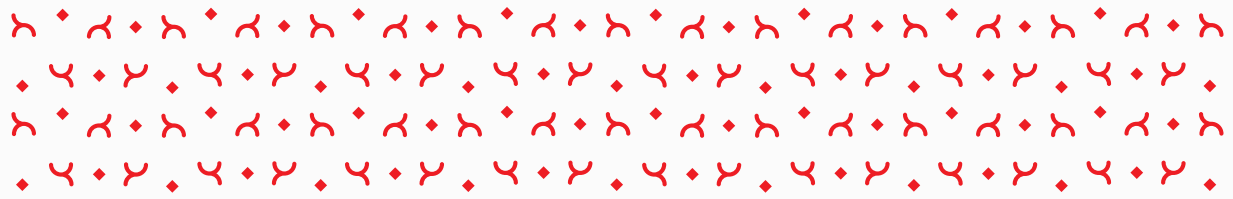
8. What do you consider to be the essential elements or best practices of the CFE initiative that should be sustained and scaled up in the long term, and why?
9. How can the CFE initiative be institutionalized and integrated into the mainstream education system in Oman to ensure its sustainability beyond the current program period?
10. What role can universities, research centers, and other academic institutions play in supporting the sustainability and continuous improvement of the CFE initiative through research, evaluation, and knowledge sharing?
11. In your opinion, what are the key challenges and opportunities for the long-term sustainability of the CFE initiative in Oman, and how can these be addressed?

Impact:

12. What do you consider to be the potential long-term impacts of the CFE initiative on the Omani education system, and how do you think its sustainability could be ensured beyond the current program period?

Cross-cutting concerns:

13. In what ways do you believe the CFE initiative could be enhanced to better address the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged children, such as girls, children with disabilities, and those from low-income families?



Key Informant Interview Questions for Children First Association (Omani NPO):

Consent Form

Marhaba (Hello), my name is Waddah Abdulsalam, and I am an independent consultant working with UNICEF on evaluating the Child-Friendly Education (CFE) initiative in Oman. This evaluation is being conducted in partnership with the Ministry of Education UNICEF Oman. As an educator, your insights and experiences are crucial in understanding the implementation and effectiveness of child-friendly education practices in Oman. This interview aims to gather your perspectives on the CFE initiative and its impact on teaching and learning.

Purpose of the Interview

The purpose of this interview is to collect information on the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, impact, and inclusiveness of the CFE initiative from the perspective of educators. Your responses will help us identify successes, challenges, and areas for improvement in the implementation of child-friendly education practices in Oman. Additionally, the data collected may be used as part of a case study to provide practical examples of how the CFE initiative has been implemented and experienced at the community level.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. You are free to decline to answer any question or stop the interview at any time without any consequences. Your decision will not affect your relationship with UNICEF, the Ministry of Education, or your educational institution.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

The information you share will be kept strictly confidential. Your responses will be anonymized in the final report, meaning that your name or identifying details will not be mentioned. All data will be securely stored and accessible only to the evaluator. The findings of this evaluation will be presented in an aggregated form to protect the privacy of all participants.

Confidentiality Limitations

In accordance with ethical guidelines and UNICEF's reporting protocols, please be aware that while your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality, there are specific circumstances where confidentiality cannot be maintained. If you disclose information indicating that a child is being abused, neglected, or is at risk of harm, or if you disclose details of other criminal activities, the data collector is required to report this information to UNICEF for appropriate action. This is done to ensure the safety and well-being of individuals at risk.

Recording of the Interview

I would like to record this interview for accuracy in documentation and analysis. The recording will only be used for transcription and analysis purposes and will not be shared outside the evaluation team. If you prefer not to be recorded, I will proceed with written notes.

Use and Reuse of Data

The data collected during this interview or focus group discussion—including meeting minutes and any audio recordings—will be used solely for the purposes of this evaluation. If applicable, a de-identified dataset (with all names and personal details removed) may be created to support further analysis specifically related to this study. Any future use of the data beyond this evaluation will require separate approval and will fully comply with data protection and ethical standards.

All data will be securely stored in password-protected and encrypted digital systems, accessible only to the consultant and authorized members of the evaluation team. The data will be retained for a period of up to 12 months following the completion of the evaluation. After this period, all collected data—including transcripts, meeting notes, and audio recordings—will be permanently deleted or destroyed to ensure participant privacy and confidentiality.

Duration

This interview will take approximately 60 minutes.

Potential Risks and Benefits

There are no known risks associated with participating in this interview. However, if at any point you feel uncomfortable, you may choose not to answer any questions or end the interview. While there is no direct benefit to you, your input will contribute to improving education policies and practices in Oman, ultimately benefiting the students you serve.

Consent Statements:

1. Do you agree to participate in this interview?
2. Do you consent to recording this interview for transcription and analysis purposes?

(If the participant agrees, proceed with the interview.)

Thank you for your time and valuable input.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or would like to discuss your child's participation further, you may contact:

Waddah Abdulsalam

Independent Consultant – UNICEF Evaluation

Email: waddah@abc.ps

Phone: 009 72599 6666 78





Questions

Relevance:

1. To what extent has your organization been involved in the planning, implementation, or monitoring of the Child-Friendly Education (CFE) initiative in Oman, and what has been your overall experience with the program?
2. From your organization's perspective, how does the CFE initiative aim to address the needs and rights of children in Oman, particularly those from vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds?

Effectiveness:

3. Based on your organization's observations, how do you think the CFE initiative may have impacted the well-being and development of children in participating schools, and what could be the potential challenges faced by children and their families in accessing quality education?

Efficiency:

4. How do you think non-profit organizations like yours could collaborate more effectively with the government, schools, and other stakeholders to support the sustainability and potential scaling-up of the CFE approach in Oman?

Coherence:

5. In what ways do you believe the CFE initiative has aimed to promote the participation and empowerment of children, parents, and communities in the education process, and how do you think this engagement could be further strengthened?

Impact:

6. Based on your organization's experience, what do you consider to be the key lessons learned and best practices from the CFE initiative that could potentially inform future education programs and policies in Oman?
7. In your opinion, what are the most significant changes or transformations that the CFE initiative can bring about in the lives of children, families, and communities in Oman, and how can these changes be sustained over time?

Partnerships and advocacy:

8. How can non-profit organizations like yours foster greater public awareness, support, and engagement for the CFE initiative in Oman, and what communication or advocacy strategies would be most effective in this regard?
9. What are the most promising opportunities for collaboration and partnership between your organization and other stakeholders (e.g., government, schools, communities, private sector) in advancing the goals of the CFE initiative, and how can these partnerships be strengthened and sustained over time?



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ANNEX 05

CASE STUDIES



Case Study:

Hand in Hand:

Towards a Bright Educational Future in Oman

Background and Evolution

The private sector's role in Oman's Child-Friendly Education (CFE) initiative represents a critical yet underutilized partnership model in the nation's educational reform journey. From 2012 to 2025, corporate engagement evolved from ad-hoc donations to structured support mechanisms, though implementation remained inconsistent across the country's 1,042 government schools.

As documented in the evaluation, "Almost every large company in Oman has a dedicated department for community engagement initiatives and a designated budget for them, with every energy company allocating a percentage of its budget to the Ministry of Labor's Training Fund." This institutional capacity for social investment created potential for systematic educational support, though actual engagement remained fragmented. The shift from viewing education support as charity to strategic investment aligned with Vision 2040's emphasis on multi-stakeholder collaboration, yet coordination mechanisms to harness this potential remained underdeveloped.

Motivations and Strategic Drivers

Private sector motivation for educational investment stemmed from multiple converging interests. Omanization policies requiring increased national employment created direct business incentives for workforce development. Energy companies faced regulatory requirements allocating revenue percentages to social development, which they increasingly directed toward education to address long-term talent needs.

The evaluation revealed that companies particularly valued education's tangible, measurable impacts that could be showcased to stakeholders. Parents employed in supporting companies became internal advocates when witnessing direct benefits to their children's schools. Regional talent competition further intensified corporate interest, as improving domestic education quality became essential for workforce retention in an increasingly competitive Gulf labor market.

Forms of Support and Implementation Mechanisms

Private sector support manifested through diverse but often uncoordinated mechanisms. Infrastructure development dominated, with companies funding classroom construction, laboratory equipment, and critical accessibility modifications. Teachers consistently cited "generous donations and charities to aid necessary rehabilitation" as enabling improvements impossible through government budgets alone.

Resource provision extended to technology and learning materials, with parent councils serving as intermediaries. When schools "were unable to provide resources like computers and laptops, the parent councils would collect donations and seek support from local merchants." Companies provided interactive whiteboards, specialized equipment for students with disabilities, and operational support including transportation and meals.

Technical assistance emerged as a valuable but underutilized contribution model. Technology firms assisted with digital platforms, construction companies advised on accessibility, and healthcare organizations supported school health programs. However, these knowledge transfers remained sporadic rather than systematic, limiting their transformative potential.

Partnership Models and Collaborative Approaches

Partnership models evolved from simple donor-recipient relationships toward more sophisticated collaboration, though full potential remained unrealized. Adopt-a-school programs in several governorates demonstrated promise, with companies providing comprehensive support to specific schools including employee volunteering and mentorship programs.

Parent councils emerged as crucial but informal intermediaries, leveraging professional networks for educational support. The evaluation noted their role in “collaborating with schools in implementing various activities on children’s rights,” often mobilizing private sector resources through personal connections. However, this grassroots approach created inequities between schools with well-connected parents and those without.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships showed potential but remained limited. While “collaboration with other NGOs/INGOs was limited, with some having no direct involvement in the CFE initiative,” successful examples demonstrated possibilities for broader engagement. The absence of formal coordination platforms meant opportunities for synergistic partnerships were frequently missed

Impact and Transformation

Private sector contributions generated significant localized impacts, though system-wide transformation remained elusive. Infrastructure improvements enabled inclusive education breakthroughs, with schools installing “ramps and accessible restrooms”, which were impossible within government budgets. Technology donations transformed teaching methods, with students citing “interactive boards, multimedia, innovative teaching methods” as directly improving learning experiences.

Financial support proved critical for CFE sustainability when “schools often had to cover most of the costs from their budgets.” Corporate donations provided essential buffers during budget constraints, particularly benefiting schools with established private sector relationships. This support enabled continuation of activities that might otherwise have ceased.

The multiplicative effects were notable where they occurred, corporate investment signaled education’s importance to communities, attracted additional local business support, and brought professional role models into classrooms. However, these benefits remained concentrated in areas with strong corporate presence, exacerbating geographic inequities.

Challenges and Limitations

Fundamental challenges severely limited private sector engagement’s potential impact. The evaluation identified “limited collaboration and coordination efforts” as primary constraints, with no systematic mechanisms for matching corporate capabilities with educational priorities. Support reflected corporate preferences rather than school needs, with remote areas like Musandam receiving minimal attention compared to urban centers.

Engagement remained “largely inconsistent and limited” across schools, creating planning difficulties and perceived inequities. Project-based support models often overlooked long-term sustainability, as schools received equipment they couldn’t maintain or programs they couldn’t continue after funding ended. The evaluation’s identification of “financial sustainability as the most critical risk” partly reflected over-reliance on unpredictable private sector support.

Accountability mechanisms were notably absent, with no systematic monitoring of how corporate contributions translated into educational outcomes. Companies prioritized visible infrastructure over potentially more impactful but less tangible interventions like teacher professional development, perpetuating ineffective approaches.

Lessons for Public-Private Partnership in Education

The Oman experience reveals critical requirements for effective private sector engagement in education. Systematic frameworks must align corporate capabilities with educational priorities rather than allowing ad-hoc interventions. The evaluation’s recommendation for “sector-wide coordination platforms” acknowledges that structured engagement produces greater impact than isolated initiatives.

Integration into broader educational strategies proves essential, private sector support operating parallel to government programs creates inefficiencies and missed opportunities. The CFE's multi-tiered governance structure could have incorporated private sector representatives formally, creating channels for corporate input into planning and implementation.

Sustainable impact requires addressing systemic challenges rather than symptoms. While infrastructure donations provided immediate relief, the evaluation's emphasis on needs for "continuous professional development" and "robust monitoring systems" suggests corporate support for capacity building could generate more lasting change.

Strategic Implications and Emerging Models

Emerging models offer blueprints for enhanced engagement despite current limitations. The existence of "dedicated departments for community engagement" in major companies suggests potential for professionalized approaches to educational support. Collective impact models where multiple companies collaborate around shared goals showed particular promise.

Skills-based volunteering remains underutilized; technology companies could provide digital literacy training, finance firms could support financial education, and healthcare companies could enhance school health programs. These contributions would leverage unique corporate expertise while building employee engagement.

The evaluation's recommendation to "leverage organized private sector contributions" requires translating intentions into structured mechanisms. Pooled funding approaches could support system-wide interventions rather than scattered projects, while innovative financing models could link corporate returns to educational outcomes.

Future Directions: Toward Systematic Partnership

The path forward requires fundamental restructuring of private sector engagement mechanisms. Establishing an education partnership council bringing together major corporate supporters could ensure strategic resource allocation. A national education fund managed jointly by government and private sector could pool the "designated budgets" that almost every large company maintains for social investment.

The critical challenge of "securing long-term financing mechanisms" demands innovative approaches beyond traditional donation models. Impact bonds, patient capital arrangements, and outcome-based financing could align corporate interests with educational goals while ensuring sustainability beyond project cycles.

Conclusion: Partnership as Catalyst for Transformation

Private sector engagement in Oman's CFE initiative demonstrates significant unrealized potential. While corporate support enabled critical improvements, accessibility modifications, technology provision, and financial sustainability during budget constraints, the impact remained fragmented and inequitable due to absent coordination mechanisms.

The evaluation reveals a paradox: "almost every large company" possesses dedicated social investment capacity, yet engagement remains "inconsistent and limited." This gap between potential and practice represents both challenge and opportunity. With structured frameworks, clear accountability mechanisms, and strategic coordination, private sector engagement could transform from sporadic charity to systematic investment in national development.

Moving forward, realizing this potential requires recognizing the private sector not as external donors but as stakeholders in educational outcomes. When companies understand that supporting education means investing in the future workforce, community stability, and national competitiveness, they become partners in transformation rather than merely sources of funds. The foundations exist, corporate capacity, government commitment, and successful local examples, but systematic approaches remain essential for converting isolated successes into system-wide change.

Case Study:

Empowerment for a Better Future: The Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Education Through the CFE Initiative

Background and Evolution

The integration of children with disabilities into Oman's mainstream education system represents a fundamental transformation within the Child-Friendly Education (CFE) initiative. The evaluation documented that inclusive education "has been gaining momentum in Oman since 2008, with schools beginning to actively implement it two years ago," accelerating significantly after CFE's 2012 launch.

This evolution reflects profound societal shifts. By 2025, "parents who were initially hesitant are accepting the integration of their children within mainstream classrooms." The legislative foundation was strengthened through Oman's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the 2023 School Education Law (Royal Decree No. 31/2023), which mandated inclusive education with explicit provisions against discrimination.

Policy Framework and Institutional Mechanisms

The Ministry of Education's approach evolved from fragmented initiatives to systematic integration. The 2019 National Strategy for Inclusive Education established clear standards, while the 2023 School Education Law transformed inclusion from aspiration to enforceable right, requiring reasonable accommodations and prohibiting disability-based discrimination.

Institutional support mechanisms expanded significantly. Between 2021 and 2023, the MoE appointed "487 social and psychological specialists" to support students with disabilities. The 2025 establishment of MoSD's Disability Services and Program Lab strengthened cross-sectoral collaboration, focusing on "improving quality of life in areas such as health, education, employment, and rehabilitation."

Forms of Support and Accommodation

Schools developed comprehensive support systems beyond basic accessibility. Physical modifications included "ramps and accessible restrooms," but accommodations extended to individualized learning support. One documented case involved a visually impaired student receiving enlarged exam text, verbal question reading, and computers with large-print materials, balancing accessibility with dignity.

Specialized support included "CFE schools introducing specialized teachers to assist students with hearing or visual impairments," provision of "Braille materials, enlarged text, and dedicated teacher aides," and assignment of "405 female supervisors to buses transporting students with disabilities." Schools established "playrooms equipped with educational games designed for students with developmental challenges, shyness, selective mutism, and ADHD."

Pedagogical Transformation and Teacher Capacity

Disability inclusion catalyzed fundamental pedagogical shifts. Teachers reported CFE "played a significant role in shaping teachers' values on supporting students with disabilities." Differentiated instruction became standard, with teachers learning to "modify activities and assessment methods to ensure fairness and inclusivity."

However, capacity gaps persisted. With "95% of staff changes annually" in some schools, new teachers often lacked inclusive education training. This turnover created inconsistency, requiring continuous retraining that strained resources. Teachers expressed needs for practical "training on child psychology" and specialized techniques beyond general awareness.

Student Outcomes and Social Integration

Impact on students with disabilities proved transformative where implementation succeeded. The evaluation documented how “CwD have been breaking out of their isolation, gaining confidence, and actively engaging with their peers.” Parents reported that dedicated support helped children become “more confident, motivated, and actively engaged with their classmates and the wider community.”

Schools successfully addressed bullying through targeted initiatives, with noted “improvements in their confidence and ability to stand up in the face of bullying.” The emphasis on inclusive activities normalized diversity, with peer relationships transforming from isolation to genuine integration.

Challenges and Persistent Barriers

Substantial challenges constrained full inclusion. Resource limitations emerged as critical, with “shortages of specialized personnel, assistive devices, and adapted learning materials” particularly acute in rural schools. While “provisions met basic accessibility needs,” they “fell short of comprehensive accommodation.”

Attitudinal barriers persisted despite progress. “Limited awareness and lingering societal stigma among certain parents and communities” continued affecting enrollment. Some families still preferred special schools, fearing inadequate mainstream support.

The gap between policy mandates and resource allocation created tensions. Without “dedicated budget lines” for inclusive education, schools relied on insufficient general funds. The absence of “unified monitoring systems and standardized indicators” made tracking progress difficult, creating inconsistent experiences across schools.

Systemic Enablers and Success Factors

Successful inclusion correlated with specific conditions. Strong leadership from principals who championed diversity created inclusive cultures. Parent engagement proved crucial, schools where “parents and communities became more involved” showed better outcomes, particularly when parent councils included parents of children with disabilities.

Multi-sectoral collaboration enhanced support when it occurred, though it remained “limited and indirect.” Schools partnering with health services, social services, and NGOs achieved more comprehensive support. The gradual, phased approach to inclusion, starting small and expanding based on experience, produced better outcomes than rapid implementation without preparation.

Policy Gaps and Implementation Challenges

Despite strengthened frameworks, implementation gaps limited impact. The evaluation found no evidence of “systematic adoption” despite policy mandates. Coordination between ministries remained fragmented, “collaboration with other government entities was noted as an area requiring further improvement.”

The unfunded mandate problem created frustration. While laws required inclusion and accommodation, inadequate resources prevented full compliance. This gap between aspiration and capacity undermined both teacher morale and parent confidence in inclusive education.

Lessons for Inclusive Education Development

The Oman experience reveals critical requirements for effective inclusion. Attitudinal change must accompany structural change; parent acceptance resulted from “sustained awareness campaigns and visible success stories” rather than mandates alone.

Comprehensive support proves essential. Physical accessibility without learning support creates incomplete inclusion. The evaluation’s recommendation for “mandatory modular, practice-based in-service teacher professional development” recognizes that inclusive competencies develop through supported practice, not theory alone.

Community engagement accelerates progress beyond institutional changes. When parents and stakeholders actively participate, social barriers diminish more rapidly than through policy alone.

Strategic Implications and Future Directions

The evaluation outlines clear next steps. The proposed “national inclusive education policy and costed action plan” would address resource gaps while establishing “clear standards, targets, and accountability mechanisms.” Recommended “Inclusive Education Resource Centers in each governorate” would provide sustainable support infrastructure rather than project-dependent assistance.

The call for “comprehensive accessibility audit” with time-bound improvement plans acknowledges persistent physical barriers. Integrating “inclusive pedagogy into pre-service teacher education” would ensure new teachers enter classrooms prepared for diversity.



Conclusion: The Unfinished Journey

The transformation from exclusion to emerging inclusion represents remarkable progress, yet remains incomplete. Students with disabilities “breaking out of their isolation” demonstrate inclusion’s transformative potential. Schools successfully creating environments where “students with disabilities are being included in both academic and extracurricular activities” prove meaningful inclusion is achievable.

Yet findings that efforts “remained limited by shortages of specialized staff and adapted materials” highlight the vision-reality gap. With “thousands of children with disabilities still excluded from schooling,” urgent action remains imperative.

The foundations exist comprehensive laws, strategic plans, changing attitudes. What’s needed is systematic implementation through adequate resources, sustained capacity building, and unwavering commitment. Each child moving from isolation to participation represents not just individual success but societal progress toward the CFE vision where “every child receives a child-friendly, inclusive, quality education.” The path forward is clear, the destination worthy, and the journey, though challenging, essential for truly inclusive education.



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ANNEX 06

SCHOOLS

ACTIVITIES

ANALYSIS

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The following tables give a summary of one sampled school in each of the four targeted governorates' activities, and the percentages of the activities from the school's own activities and the overall total activities of all areas. The tables cover the activities conducted in 2023, 2024, and 2025 (up to July). Due to the limitedness of activities, 2022 was excluded from this data analysis. It is important to note that the numbers cover the activities of one school only from each area, that were posted and published on X (previously Twitter) platform; therefore, unpublished activities were not included in these numbers.

In general, Sharqiya South had the highest percentage of activities carried out in 2025 (July) among all areas, ranking at 38.7 per cent, followed by Dhofar (37.5 per cent), Muscat (13.7 per cent), and lastly Musandam (10 per cent). While the Sharqiya South and Dhofar areas held the highest percentage of activities throughout the years, Muscat had more activities in 2023 compared to Musandam, which had a higher volume in 2024.

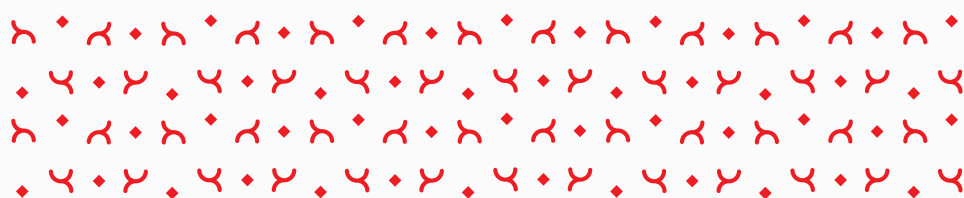
Until July 2025, Adaptability and Sustainability were the most carried out activities in Sharqiya South, with Child-Centeredness taking the lead in Muscat, and Participation activities were the highest in Dhofar and Musandam. Equality was more prominent in Muscat, Inclusivity in Dhofar, and Protection in Musandam. **These numbers show a shift in focus as Equality was more prominent in Sharqiya South in 2024, with Adaptability and Sustainability, Participation, and Inclusivity ranking higher in Musandam. Protection was Highest in Dhofar, and Child-Centeredness ranked highest in Muscat. The overall total of activities has been significantly decreasing over the years, from 254 in 2023 to only 160 in 2025 – July.**



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Principle (2025)	Governorate	# of activities	% of school total activities	% of overall total activities
Equality	Sharkiya South	8	12.9	5
	Musandam	3	13.6	0.9
	Muscat	3	18.7	1.1
	Dhofar	7	11.6	11.8
Adaptability and Sustainability	Sharkiya South	15	24.1	9.3
	Musandam	1	4.5	0.3
	Muscat	1	6.2	0.3
	Dhofar	3	5	5
Participation	Sharkiya South	14	22.5	8.7
	Musandam	6	27.2	1.8
	Muscat	7	43.7	2.7
	Dhofar	19	31.6	32.2
Inclusivity	Sharkiya South	5	8	3.1
	Musandam	1	4.5	0.3
	Muscat	1	6.2	0.3
	Dhofar	5	8.3	8.4
Protection	Sharkiya South	11	17.7	6.8
	Musandam	0	0	0
	Muscat	3	18.7	1.1
	Dhofar	9	15	15.2
Child-Centeredness	Sharkiya South	9	14.5	5.6
	Musandam	22	50	3.3
	Muscat	1	6.2	0.3
	Dhofar	17	28.3	28.8
Total	Total	160		

Principle (2024)	Governorate	# of activities	% of school total activities	% of overall total activities
Equality	Sharkiya South	31	25	9.5
	Musandam	7	12.9	2.1
	Muscat	8	13.5	2.4
	Dhofar	20	22.4	6.1
Adaptability and Sustainability	Sharkiya South	10	8	3
	Musandam	5	9.2	1.5
	Muscat	7	11.8	2.1
	Dhofar	7	7.8	2.1
Participation	Sharkiya South	36	29	22.5
	Musandam	21	38.8	6.4
	Muscat	25	42.3	7.6
	Dhofar	27	30.3	8.2
Inclusivity	Sharkiya South	4	3.2	1.2
	Musandam	2	3.7	0.6
	Muscat	5	8.4	1.9
	Dhofar	2	2.2	3.3
Protection	Sharkiya South	20	16.1	12.5
	Musandam	7	12.9	2.1
	Muscat	6	10.1	1.8
	Dhofar	17	19.1	5.2
Child-Centeredness	Sharkiya South	23	18.5	7
	Musandam	12	22.2	3.6
	Muscat	8	13.5	2.4
	Dhofar	16	17.9	4.9
Total	Total	124		



Principle (2023)	Governorate	# of activities	% of school total activities	% of overall total activities
Equality	Sharqiya South	21	22.5	8.2
	Musandam	11	22	4.3
	Muscat	12	26.6	4.7
	Dhofar	20	30.3	7.8
Adaptability and Sustainability	Sharqiya South	9	9.6	3.5
	Musandam	4	8	1.5
	Muscat	5	11.1	1.9
	Dhofar	1	1.5	0.3
Participation	Sharqiya South	33	35.4	12.9
	Musandam	22	44	8.6
	Muscat	18	40	7
	Dhofar	17	25.7	6.6
Inclusivity	Sharqiya South	3	3.2	1.1
	Musandam	1	2	0.3
	Muscat	3	6.6	1.1
	Dhofar	2	3	0.7
Protection	Sharqiya South	7	7.5	2.7
	Musandam	6	12	2.3
	Muscat	3	6.6	1.1
	Dhofar	5	7.5	1.9
Child-Centeredness	Sharqiya South	20	21.5	7.9
	Musandam	6	12	2.3
	Muscat	4	8.8	1.5
	Dhofar	21	31.8	8.2
Total	Total	254		





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ANNEX 07

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