



# Expanding the Capacities of Qatari Youth

## Mainstreaming Young People in Development





Qatar's Third National Human Development Report

# Expanding the Capacities of Qatari Youth

*Mainstreaming Young People in Development*

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Cover design is by Tariq Spence, Student, Graphic Design Department, Virginia Commonwealth University-Qatar. It depicts a falcon which is of great importance to the Qatari culture. The training of a falcon is a skill that is passed from father to son. It takes incredible dedication to maintain a falcon's loyalty once it has been given the chance to fly. The falcon is a long-living animal that breaks through the bonds of time and reminds us of traditions. As the youth of this country mature, they have a very strong sense of pride in where they come from, yet still work hard to modernise and assimilate with global influences. Islamic patterns are used to shape the form of the falcon. But unlike the precise symmetry of traditional Islamic symbols, this image breaks from the past as it embraces youthful asymmetrical shapes. The shapes explode from the national flag, another great source of pride for Qatari youth.

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# Foreword

In November 2008 His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, Heir Apparent, launched *Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV 2030)*. *QNV 2030* foresees Qatar continuing to transform into a diversified and advanced knowledge economy—capable of sustaining its own development and providing for a high standard of living for all its people for generations to come.

To help make its vision a reality, Qatar launched its first National Development Strategy in March 2011. The strategy is an ambitious plan of action containing priority national development programmes with related outcomes and targets.

Through *QNV 2030* and National Development Strategy 2011–2016, Qatar aspires to build a safe, secure and stable society. Fulfilling that vision begins with strengthening families and ensuring that all citizens are protected in their homes, jobs and communities. Also, enhancing the physical, emotional and intellectual well-being of individuals, especially youth, will ensure long-term excellence.

As part of the General Secretariat for Development Planning's efforts to support the achievement of *QNV 2030* and the programmes of the National Development Strategy 2011–2016, Qatar's third *National Human Development Report* turns the spotlight onto youth. With the theme of expanding the capacities of Qatari youth, the third *National Human Development Report* focuses on the development challenges and opportunities confronting Qatar's youth.

About half Qatar's population is under age 20. Investing in Qatar's youth will provide young men and women with opportunities and choices throughout their lifetime. Beyond being beneficiaries of development, Qatar's third *National Human Development Report* sees youth as a critical force in shaping national development and focuses on five critical areas in Qatari youth development.

The first is the challenge for youth in a changing demographic and socioeconomic setting. Qatar is undergoing remarkable demographic changes; among them are rising age at first marriage, reductions in childbearing and rising levels of divorce. Qatari youth are being positively and negatively affected by globalization, especially the revolution in information and communications technology. The ongoing and far-reaching changes present new challenges and exciting opportunities, especially in building capacities for the youth to participate in all spheres of society. Youth need to adapt to modernization as well as rapidly changing demographics. The trends call for intercultural understanding and tolerance, as well as intergenerational dialogue.

The second is building knowledge and expanding education opportunities. Qatar has made large investments in education and training infrastructure for young Qataris, and multiple opportunities now exist. But education performance is not progressing at a commensurate pace, despite a decade of reforms. Stronger incentives and opportunities to retain youth in education through the tertiary level are required.

The third is enhancing youth participation in the labour force. Qatar's economic diversification aspirations necessitate building the country's human capital to create a more productive and skilled labour force. Given that the number of new Qatari entrants to the labour force each year is lower than what the economy demands, it is imperative that incentive structures are strengthened to increase youth labour force participation at higher skill levels.

The fourth is improving health and well-being. Qatar has made substantial investments in its healthcare system towards achieving the *QNV 2030* goals of world-class standards. As in most affluent societies, being overweight and obese is highly

prevalent among young Qataris. The country also faces high mortality and disability rates because of road traffic accidents, especially among young men. The report suggests policies that promote self-care and preventative measures to reduce risk-taking behaviour and encourage a healthy and active lifestyle among youth.

The fifth is the empowerment and civic participation of youth. Today's young men and women are tomorrow's workers, parents, citizens and leaders. Youth need an enabling environment in which they can be encouraged to participate in their own and Qatar's development. Young people are an asset to their communities, and pathways need to be established to ensure their inclusion and participation in all aspects of development.

Qatar's third *National Human Development Report* was prepared in partnership with relevant ministries and government agencies, the private sector, civil society and the United Nations Development Programme's United Arab Emirates office. It is based, among other things, on 15 background papers, the outcomes of a focus group workshop, an essay competition to obtain the voices of youth and inputs from a National Advisory Committee.

I would like to sincerely thank members of the National Advisory Committee (listed on page V) for their guidance in preparing this report. I would also like to thank the authors of the background papers and the youth who have provided important insights, as well as members of Qatar's third *National Human Development Report* Project Team for their professionalism in putting this publication together. I am sure that the analysis and recommendations that this report contains will prove useful to all involved in youth development.

## **Saleh Al-Nabit**

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January 2012

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*Health Status of Youth in Qatar and Policies and Programmes to Promote Better Health and Well-Being of Qatari Youth*
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# Overview

Qatar has successfully steered its economy to its current position of high income and stability in less than a generation. Wise investments of returns from the country's abundant hydrocarbon resources have yielded modern infrastructure, world-class education and health systems and comprehensive social protection. While hydrocarbons will remain important to the economy for the foreseeable future, *Qatar National Vision 2030* aspires to a diversified knowledge economy, with expanded opportunities and human capabilities and an emphasis on sustainability.

Diversification requires more emphasis on knowledge and skills development, particularly in the sciences. The key challenges to managing the transition to a knowledge economy are population and employment dynamics and the small pool of Qataris, which determine how the economy can diversify. Qatar's first National Development Strategy for 2011–2016, with its prioritized public sector investment programmes and related outcomes and targets, is designed to help the country achieve its chosen development path.

Youth are a major human resource for development and effective agents of positive social change. Harnessing their ideals, enthusiasm and creativity, with supporting technological innovation, will greatly contribute to meeting the country's development goals. Expanding choices and opportunities and building the human capital required for advancing the country towards a diversified knowledge-based society will require greater focus, coordination and investment of resources in Qatar's youth.

## The challenges of rapid demographic and socioeconomic change

Youth everywhere are being positively and negatively affected by an increasingly globalized and interconnected world. One important driver has been the revolution in information and communication technology (ICT) which has shrunk the world in time and space and created a global cyber-culture that is testing traditional ideas and national values. By allowing access to information and ideas, ICT is empowering

and engaging youth. These ongoing, far-reaching changes present new challenges and exciting opportunities for all societies, especially in building capacities for youth to participate in all spheres of society.

As an energy-rich country, with rising revenues from gas and oil exports, Qatar invested heavily in infrastructure projects in the first decade of the 21st century. Multiple megaprojects resulted in large inflows of non-Qatari workers—more than 1 million between 2004 and 2010, many of them young—boosting the population from 0.7 million to 1.7 million. One result is that Qatari youth have become a minority in the total population, as well as in the education system and labour force. These changes affect their lives, as the youth become aware of the difference between traditional Qatari values and the contrasting cultures of non-Qataris and the global community.

Qatari youth make up 15% of the Qatari population, who generally grow up in large families with extended kinship ties that are highly influenced by tribal authority and traditional culture. But family life is also undergoing substantial change, particularly as women are increasingly encouraged to take part in economic, political and social activities. A growing number of better-educated Qatari women are not marrying and are remaining childless, leading to falling fertility rates. The divorce rate among young Qatari couples is also increasing. These changes affect youth and families, who are the foundation of Qatari culture. Divorced women with children are at a high risk of falling into relative poverty, especially since their remarriage rates are much lower than those for divorced men. Youth in households where a divorce has occurred face many challenges, including lower educational attainment and lower skilled employment.

Given Qatar's rapid economic growth and increasing presence on the world stage, it is essential that young Qataris are motivated to play key roles in all areas of economic and social development. They will need guidance in identifying opportunities for engagement and ongoing support as they gain the experience, which comes only with active

participation in the economy and in society. Young women will need encouragement and understanding as they attempt to reconcile domestic responsibilities with increased participation in economic, political and social activities.

## Youth development through education

Qatar's education and training system aims to prepare young people for success in an increasingly complex world. The system not only serves as a vehicle for social and economic transformation, but also offers young Qataris opportunities to realize their intellectual potential, develop their abilities and follow their aspirations and interests. The evolving system must also motivate Qataris to use their knowledge and skills to better society by encouraging analytical and critical thinking, creativity and innovation.

To achieve world-class standards, Qatar has made substantial investments to modernize its entire education system. Multiple opportunities now exist for young Qataris, and the quantity of education inputs is high. But Qatari students' education performance is not progressing at a commensurate pace, despite a decade of reforms. Below the tertiary level, Qatari education performance is linked to the quality of education provision.

Many boys drop out of school after completing their basic education. Their failure to gain relevant post-secondary qualifications is seriously inhibiting Qataris' placement in responsible employment positions and thus delaying effective labour force participation. This situation is exacerbated by declining enrolments in subjects central to Qatar's economic development, including science, mathematics and technology.

Among Qataris who pursue tertiary education, a significant proportion fail to meet the requirements to enter the university directly and have to undertake foundation courses. Dropout rates from foundation courses are high, and even among those who gain access to degree courses, some fail to complete them. Some university graduates are ill-prepared to participate in the labour force because their qualifications are in low demand. Informed career advice is urgently required for school leavers entering tertiary education or the labour force and for students choosing courses at the early stage of secondary school. Young people and their families need to be made aware of both the more rigorous standards being adopted in public sector employment and the many career opportunities in the private sector.

Alternative education pathways, as well as lifelong learning opportunities, are required to enable youth who drop out of school to resume study at an appropriate level and in relevant fields. This would benefit both the individuals themselves and the economy by decreasing waste of valuable human resources and increasing the number of Qataris in the labour force.

## A diversified, knowledge-based labour force

Young Qataris joining the labour market have previously undreamed of choices and opportunities but often lack the skills and qualifications to take advantage of them.

Qatar's economic diversification aspirations necessitate building the country's human capital to create a more productive, skilled and motivated labour force. As the economy has expanded at breathtaking speed and the demand for non-Qatari workers has grown correspondingly, the number of Qataris in the labour force has declined significantly. There are fewer new Qatari entrants to the labour force each year than the economy demands. In this environment employment quotas can create distorted incentives for employers to hire nationals.

Second chance programmes offer Qatari youth who have not completed secondary education the opportunity to salvage their life prospects, reduce waste of valuable human resources and increase the number of Qataris in the labour force. In most cases the second chance will be in technical education and vocational training but should be facilitated according to individual needs and abilities. Programmes must be in skills and training that are in demand, with accredited qualifications of acceptable standard to employers, and be undertaken with a realistic career outcome in mind. Mindset changes in favour of technical work are also required.

Public service employment is so entrenched in family traditions that most Qatari youth seldom give serious consideration to other options. Disparities between the public and private sectors in salaries and conditions of service need to be addressed. Entrepreneurship has the potential to offer young men and women a viable alternative to employment in the public sector. But it requires support for project incubation and for a culture of innovation.

While labour force participation rates for young women have increased considerably from a low base, these women have sought employment almost exclusively in the public sector; that is, in government administration, health and education. Changing attitudes to the role of women, who are increasingly better-educated than their male counterparts, are making private sector employment opportunities more feasible. A supportive response is needed from private companies to show their awareness of the cultural sensitivities of prospective female employees.

Many young Qataris transitioning to the world of work lack awareness of the opportunities available to them, of how to search for jobs and of how to access career advice. Most lack labour force readiness and appropriate soft skills. Internships for tertiary (including vocational) students could provide young Qataris with experience of working life in career-related activities. Students and their parents need to be made more aware of training and employment opportunities. Intermediary services for job seekers, which are partially provided by the Ministry of Labour, Qatar Career Fairs and Qatar Petroleum, need to be expanded to include special needs groups, as articulated in the National Development Strategy 2011–2016.

## Health and well-being of young people

Substantial investments in healthcare, including successful vaccination campaigns, have resulted in a marked decline in Qatar's childhood mortality rates and low levels of most communicable diseases. Qatar's youth now have a good start in life, as a healthy birth, infancy and childhood provide the foundation for physical and mental well-being in maturity. Interventions targeted at the young, before they acquire unhealthy habits and lifestyles, will greatly improve their chances of wellness later in life.

Unhealthy lifestyles and risky behaviours are the key determinants of ill health. As in most affluent societies, being overweight and obese, caused by excessive eating and insufficient physical activity, is highly prevalent among young Qataris. Studies of secondary school Qatari students indicates alarming levels of overweight and obesity of up to 70% and 45% respectively, particularly among children in secondary school. Unhealthy eating and poor exercise habits ingrained early in life can lead to chronic noncommunicable diseases

such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancers in later life. The use of tobacco products is another key driver of chronic noncommunicable diseases. One in five secondary students in Qatar reports using tobacco products.

Qatar's high rate of mortality from road traffic accidents, frequently involving young men, has become a silent epidemic. Risk-taking and reckless driving have not been deterred by past safety and awareness campaigns and laws. The new comprehensive road safety strategy that is being prepared as part of the National Development Strategy 2011–2016 must focus on youth driving behaviour.

Sports and physical activity are integral features of healthy lifestyles. Health education linked to sports development can change youth behaviour and encourage a healthy way of life. Particular focus should be given to encouraging young women, who are often constrained by social and cultural influences, to participate in healthier and more active lifestyles.

The National Development Strategy 2011–2016, which incorporates the National Health Strategy, identifies that the key healthcare needs are a strong preventive approach and a robust primary care system. It emphasizes how cross-sectoral links, especially between education and sports, are crucial for achieving a healthy population. Establishing healthy behaviours during childhood and youth is easier and more effective than trying to change unhealthy behaviours during adulthood and will contribute to higher human development.

## Active participation and agents of social change

The transition between childhood and adulthood is a period when young people are seeking to establish their own independent and stable identities. Qatar's exceedingly rapid economic and social change, and its strong cultural and traditional values, pose particular challenges for young people. The challenges have been intensified by globalization, where information and ideas travel almost instantaneously but where macro policy and legal changes take much longer. Among Qatari youth there has been spectacular growth in Internet use such that by 2010, 9 out of 10 youth were regularly connecting. This has introduced a new and potentially important driver of social change.

Youth need an enabling environment in which they are encouraged to participate in their own and their country's development. Given the opportunity, youth can be active contributors in decision-making for the common good. Young people are an asset to their communities, and pathways need to be established to ensure young people's inclusion and participation in all aspects of development.

Developing positive attitudes, participatory skills and leadership should commence in school, where educational experiences can integrate soft skills, concepts of community service, classroom knowledge and critical reflection to promote understanding. Opportunities for broader youth participation need to be created not only in the public sector, but also through private sector partnerships that encourage market orientation, build leadership capacity and promote youth enterprise and entrepreneurship.

Qatar needs a dedicated ministry or agency to cover and mainstream youth affairs. This agency could coordinate a National Youth Development Policy, consistent with the United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth and aligned to Qatar's National Development Strategy 2011–2016, and be responsible for implementing youth development programmes, including involving youth through all stages.

## **Recommendations: mainstreaming youth in national development**

Five broad recommendations emerge from the detailed analysis of the challenges and opportunities confronting Qatari youth that are linked to related National Development Strategy 2011–2016 programmes and projects.

- Develop an integrated and comprehensive policy framework that ensures youth have pathways to meaningful participatory roles in all facets of society.
- Broaden the incentives and opportunities for youth to sustain educational experience in advanced areas of knowledge, skills and communication that will meet the demands of the labour market and add value at the personal, community and national levels.
- Strengthen measures to increase youth participation in an increasingly diversified labour market, including the reintegration of youth that are not participating to their full potential.
- Review and reinforce policies that contribute to health and well-being by promoting self-care and preventative measures to reduce risk-taking behaviour and damaging lifestyles among youth.
- Ensure that all national legislation and regulation create an enabling environment for effective participation by youth in development processes.

In support of these recommendations, a single umbrella agency for youth affairs is proposed. Such an agency could coordinate the preparation and implementation of a National Youth Development Policy, including cross-sectoral youth development programmes. This would greatly help in expanding the capacities of Qatari youth and mainstreaming young people in development.



Qatari Youth  
in a Changing Demographic  
and Socioeconomic Setting





# Qatari Youth in a Changing Demographic and Socioeconomic Setting

“*Qatar National Vision 2030* aspires to build a safe, secure and stable society and firmly commits to creating a vibrant and prosperous future for the country. From a social development perspective, fulfilling that vision begins with strengthening families and ensuring that all citizens are protected in their homes, jobs and communities. The next step is to ensure long-term excellence beyond the essentials of family and finances by enhancing the physical, emotional and intellectual well-being of individuals, especially youth.”

*National Development Strategy 2011–2016*

*Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV 2030)*, launched in November 2008 by His Highness the Heir Apparent, Sheikh Tamim, defines Qatar’s long-term development outcomes and provides a framework within which national development strategies and implementation plans are prepared. Built on Qatar’s 2004 Permanent Constitution, *QNV 2030* foresees the transformation of Qatar into a diversified and advanced knowledge economy, capable of sustaining its own development and providing a high standard of living for all its people for generations to come.

*QNV 2030* identified five major challenges facing the country:

- Moulding modernization around the preservation of Qatari culture and traditions.
- Balancing the needs of this generation with those of future generations.
- Managing growth and avoiding uncontrolled expansion.
- Matching the size and quality of the non-Qatari labour force to the selected path of development.
- Aligning economic growth with social development and environmental management.

In March 2011 Qatar launched its first National Development Strategy 2011–2016. The National Development Strategy 2011–2016 identifies national priority transformational initiatives designed to overcome these challenges. The strategy provides a consistent

and coherent approach to achieving sustainable development. It represents a plan of action that builds the foundations of sustainable prosperity and supports the transition from a carbon-based economy to a diversified knowledge economy.

The National Development Strategy 2011–2016 recognizes that it is essential to build human capital and enhance the physical, emotional and intellectual well-being of individuals, especially youth, who will be the initiative takers and the driving force in national development. As a vehicle for social and economic transformation, the National Development Strategy 2011–2016 places high priority on building the human capital of knowledge and skills for a diversified and competitive economy. Aligning these economic objectives with the social priority of preserving national values and identity will ensure a substantial increase and diversification of the current labour force participation of young Qataris.

Aligned to *QNV 2030* and the National Development Strategy 2011–2016, Qatar’s third *Human Development Report* focuses on the theme of expanding the capacities of Qatari youth. This report identifies key human development opportunities and challenges facing Qatari youth. It focuses on youth in a setting of rapid change, their education, employment, health and well-being, as well as their empowerment and civic participation.

While some sections of the report focus on the country's total youth population, the primary focus is on Qatari youth. Most non-Qatari youth are transient expatriate lower skilled workers; however, policy recommendations have a positive bearing on both Qatari and non-Qatari youth.

## Economic growth and human development

Qatar's remarkable economic growth and transformation have brought impressive gains in human development. Qatar's exploitation of its hydrocarbon resources, especially natural gas, and numerous large-scale public and private investment projects, particularly in the construction sector, have led to exceptionally high economic growth.

Between 2000 and 2010 Qatar's real gross domestic product (GDP) grew at an annual average of 13%. Over this period Qatar's economy has grown faster than any other, and its per capita GDP in purchasing power parity terms is now among the highest in the world. Much of this expansion has occurred since 2004—from 2004 to 2010 real GDP growth averaged 16% a year.

The increasing financial returns from gas and oil exports have enabled Qatar to invest heavily in modern infrastructure, world-class education and health systems, and social protection. These investments continue to contribute towards significant gains in human development. Human development is a conceptual approach used to assess progress in development that goes beyond income. Human

### Box 1.1

### Human Development Reports and the Human Development Index

Since 1990 the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has produced an annual global *Human Development Report (HDR)* with the goal of putting people-centred policies at the forefront of the development agenda. UNDP's global *HDRs* are complemented by regional *HDRs*, and many countries also produce periodic national reports. National *HDRs* aim to place priority human development challenges at the forefront of the national policy agenda.

For Qatar, national *HDRs* can serve as a vehicle to help realize the goals of *QNV 2030* and the National Development Strategy 2011–2016. Beyond raising public awareness and triggering action on critical human development concerns, *HDRs* entail a participatory process that strengthens national capacity for data analysis. They also strengthen national ownership of the policy agenda.

The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite measure used to rank countries by level of human development. The HDI combines three dimensions of human capacities:

- A long and healthy life measured through life expectancy at birth.
- Access to knowledge measured through mean years of schooling and expected years of schooling (prior to 2010 it was measured through adult literacy and gross enrolment in primary, secondary and tertiary school).

- A decent standard of living, measured through the gross national income (GNI) per capita (in PPP dollars) with logarithmic transformation (For GNI natural logarithmic transformation of GNI is used).

It is computed as:

- $D_{it} = \frac{X_{it} - X_{i, \min}}{X_{i, \max} - X_{i, \min}}$   $D_{it}$  is one of three indexed dimensions of HDI in given year.

$$0 \leq D_{it} \leq 1.0 \quad i = \text{HDI dimension.}$$

$$HDI_t = \left( \prod_{i=1}^3 D_{it} \right)^{1/3} \quad X_{it} \text{ is the value achieved and } X_{i, \min} \text{ and } X_{i, \max} \text{ are the minimum and maximum value selected.}$$

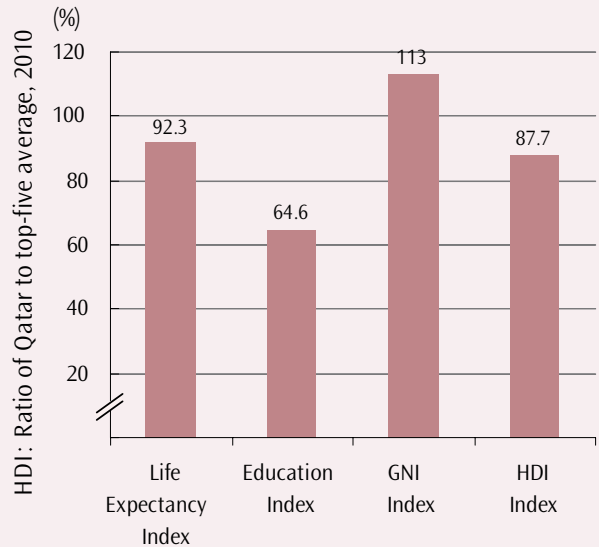
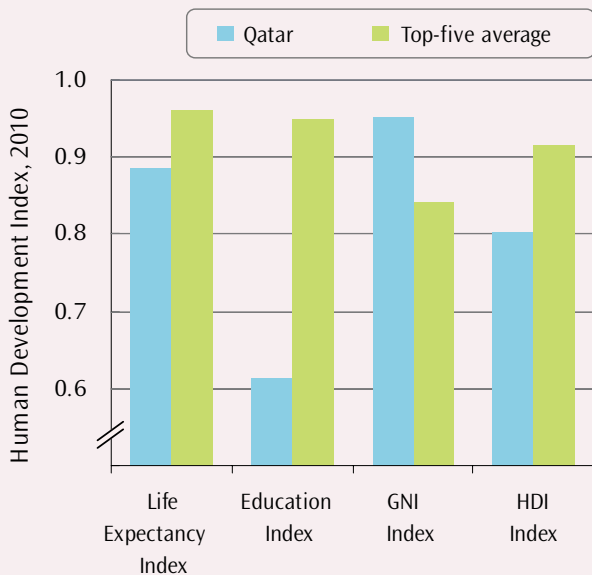
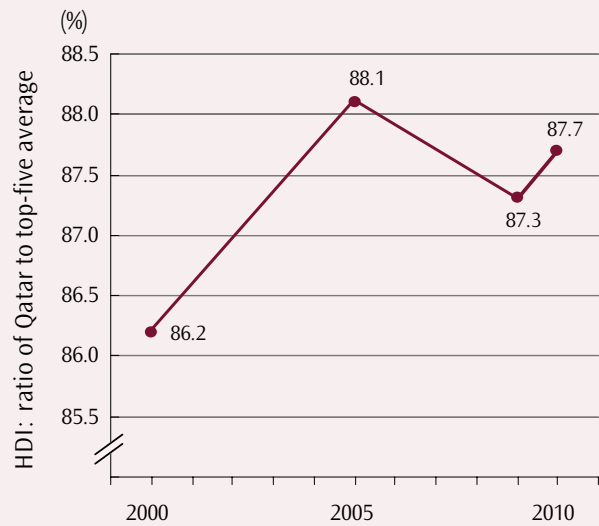
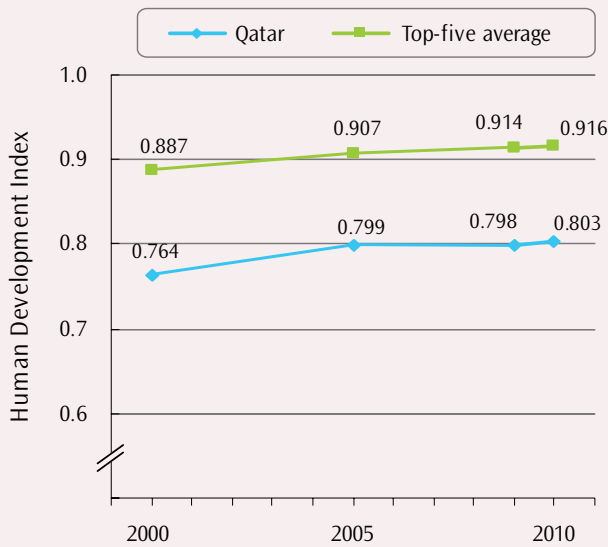
As a supplement to the standard HDI, in 2010 UNDP's global *HDR* introduced the Inequality-adjusted HDI, which is a measure of the level of human development that takes into account some aspects of inequality as determined through its three dimensions (UNDP 2010).

development represents a process of increasing people's capacities, choices and opportunities. It implicitly embodies a vision of the realization of human rights and human freedoms. National progress in human development, as well as comparisons with other countries, can be measured through the Human Development Index (HDI) (box 1.1).

Qatar has made remarkable progress between 2000 and 2010, as measured by the HDI. The country advanced to 38th in the world in 2010, compared with 51st a decade earlier. Qatar has progressed relative to the world's top five countries. In terms of the three component dimensions of the HDI, Qatar now ranks the second highest in the GNI per capita index, some 13% above the top five countries, and its

**Figure 1.1**

**Qatar's progress in human development benchmarked against the world's top five countries**



Note: Top five HDI countries in 2010 are Norway, Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Ireland.  
Source: Computed from UNDP (2010).

Table 1.1

### Qatar's Human Development Indicators compare favourably with Gulf Cooperation Council countries, 2010

	Human Development Index value	Rank	Life expectancy at birth (years)	Mean years of schooling	Expected years of schooling	Gross National income/Capita (PPP 2008US) <sup>a</sup>
Bahrain	0.801	39	76.0	9.4	14.3	26,664
Kuwait	0.771	47	77.9	6.1	12.5	55,719
Oman	na	na	76.1	11.1	na	25,653
<b>Qatar</b>	<b>0.803</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>76.0</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>12.7</b>	<b>79,426</b>
Saudi Arabia	0.750	55	73.3	7.8	13.4	13,971
United Arab Emirates	0.815	32	77.7	9.2	11.5	58,006
Qatar relative to other Gulf Cooperations Council countries (index= 100)	na	na	100	86	99	107

Notes: na. signifies data is not readily available a. Log scale was used  
Source: UNDP (2010).

achievements in health are exemplary. However, Qatar's results in the education dimension lag markedly behind the world's top five countries (figure 1.1).

Qatar's HDI is very slightly behind that of the United Arab Emirates but ahead of other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries (table 1.1). Qatar ranks highest in the GNI per capita index, but its education indicators are lagging, due largely to low enrolment in tertiary education (see chapter 2). Given Qatar's ranking in GNI per capita and with the extensive programmes and reforms that are underway in the health and education sectors, further advances in its HDI position can be expected in the coming years. Globally Qatar performs less favourably on UNDP's gender-related indexes especially compared with other developed countries (UNDP 2010). However, as the chapters in this report show, in all spheres in human development, there has been significant progress in recent years, in women's empowerment, especially in relation to education, labour and health outcomes, as well as in sports participation. With Qatari girls outperforming boys at all levels of education, as well as policy reforms proposed in the National Development Strategy 2011-2016, reductions in gender gaps will continue.

## Youth development—an issue worldwide

### Youth and global change

Youth is the period of life generally considered as the transitional phase between childhood and adulthood. The United Nations defines youth as those ages 15–24. While age is the defining feature of youth, young people should not be considered a single, homogeneous demographic category, but a multiplicity of diverse subgroups covering a wide spectrum of perceptions, attitudes and abilities. Hence in this report the UN definition of youth is applied flexibly (box 1.2).

Youth today are increasingly well educated and vocal, proclaiming their aspirations and making their views known across the globe. Globalization and technological advances have been changing economies and social behaviour everywhere. The changes in the distribution of power and gains have raised questions about legitimacy and sustainability. Inadequate attention to the human side of globalization has created a gap in understanding its impact on life and work. Young people are facing new challenges in transitioning from school to work.

In 1995 the United Nations strengthened its commitment to young people ages 15–24, by directing and coordinating the international community's response to the challenges of youth in the 21st century. The United Nations adopted an international strategy, the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, to address more effectively the issues of young men and women and to increase opportunities for their participation in society.

The programme provides a policy framework and practical guidelines for national action and international support. It aims to improve the situation of young men and women and to empower them to participate in building their societies. The programme builds on other international instruments and has 15 priority areas: globalization, poverty and hunger, education, employment, environment, leisure-time activities, full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and in decision-making, intergenerational issues, information and communications technology, health, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, juvenile justice, girls and young women, and armed conflict.

Understanding the importance of youth, the United Nations and its Regional Commissions have attempted to set out a youth policy framework to support progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. For example, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the League of Arab States' (2007) report, *The Millennium Development Goals in the Arab Region 2007: A Youth Lens*, stressed the need to focus on policies predicated on the premise that young men and women are not only beneficiaries, but also active agents of economic, social and political transformation.

Within the United Nations, the Programme of Youth aims to build an awareness of the global situation of young people, promote their rights and aspirations and boost young people's participation in decision-making to achieve peace and development. It also provides advice and technical cooperation for the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth (see <http://social.un.org/index/youth.aspx>).

Building on the World Programme of Action for Youth, the World Bank's (2006) *World Development Report 2007: Development and the Next Generation* recommended greater investment in youth during the five transition stages that the young undergo: learning, work, health, family and citizenship. The report identifies three policy directions for helping youth develop themselves and contribute to society:

- *Expanding opportunities*; broaden opportunities for young people to develop their human capital.
- *Enhancing capabilities*; developing the capabilities of young people as decision-making agents.
- *Providing second chances*; offering a second chance to manage consequences of bad outcomes that occur early in life.

The report recommended that the returns to investing in young people would be substantially enhanced by trade and labour market reforms that deploy human capital more efficiently through more open competition. For countries to mobilize economic and political resources to stimulate reform, there needs to be a better coordination of youth issues that cut across all sectors, and integration with national policy, a stronger voice for youth and a more rigorous evaluation of youth-oriented programmes and policies.

Sources: Adapted from the UN ESCWA (2009a); WB (2006).

For some, increased access to ICT and the opening of national economies to international competition through trade and investment have generated income and improved welfare; for others, globalization has been a source of persistent inequality and social exclusion (Al Matawi 2011a). Many

young women and men do not have work that taps their individual creativity or uses their productive potential. The challenge is to ensure that globalization opens opportunities for work and increases opportunities for young people's active participation in society.

## Youth and regional change

Youth constitute the largest age group in Arab countries, accounting for nearly 20% of the population. Rapid socioeconomic changes and the growth of the youth population present both opportunities for and challenges to national development plans. At the same time, youth can be a potent development force when given access to education skills, health services and opportunities to participate effectively in development planning (box 1.3).

While many of the issues being discussed by youth are common worldwide, priority concerns and the extent of engagement vary considerably from region to region. The Arab Youth Survey conducted in December 2010 by ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller canvassed the views of some 2,000 young people ages 18–24 in 10 countries in the region (the 6 Gulf Cooperation Council countries and 4 others). Arab youth were asked about the biggest challenges facing the region today. Overall young people saw the rising cost of living as the biggest challenge, especially in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries. Unemployment,

### Box 1.3

#### Youth engagement in Arab countries

Youth engagement can be defined as involving young people in creating their own destinies. From a regional perspective, the United Nations Development Programme's (2002) *Arab Human Development Report 2002* focused on creating opportunities for future generations and measuring the concerns of youth as a yardstick for the status of human development. Key development challenges identified for young Arabs were job availability and education. Education is vital for empowering women, safeguarding children from hazardous labour and promoting human rights and democracy. Conversely, the lack of productive work for young people perpetuates poverty and can lead to crime, substance abuse, conflict and political extremism.

More recently, *Egypt National Human Development Report 2010: Youth in Egypt: Building Our Future* (UNDP and Egypt Institute of National Planning 2010) highlighted that Egypt's youth bulge is at its peak, but opportunities appear less promising than those of previous generations. The outcome of overly generous job creation in government in the 1970s and 1980s, little or no reform in the education and training system and the failure to control rapid population growth have resulted in a serious drop in productivity and an accompanying decline in real wages and stagnation in living standards.

Youth affected by the consequences of a globalizing world, but not allowed access to the benefits often merge traditional values with new perceptions of freedom and democracy. Young women and men are a formidable force for change. Growth in youth unemployment and social exclusion within some segments of a population can lead young people to aspire to challenge authority, sometimes by nonpeaceful methods (UN ESCWA 2009b).

In 2011 the aspiration for radical political change, democratic reforms, human rights and freedoms led to uprisings in many Arab countries. The Arab Spring was led by young men and women, many of whom were novices at political activism. They used modern tools such as social networking sites on the Internet and texting over mobile phones to organize and amplify their protests. And they had similar demands; the right to choose and change their leaders, an end to rampant corruption and the opportunity for employment and improvement—in brief, a longing for human development.

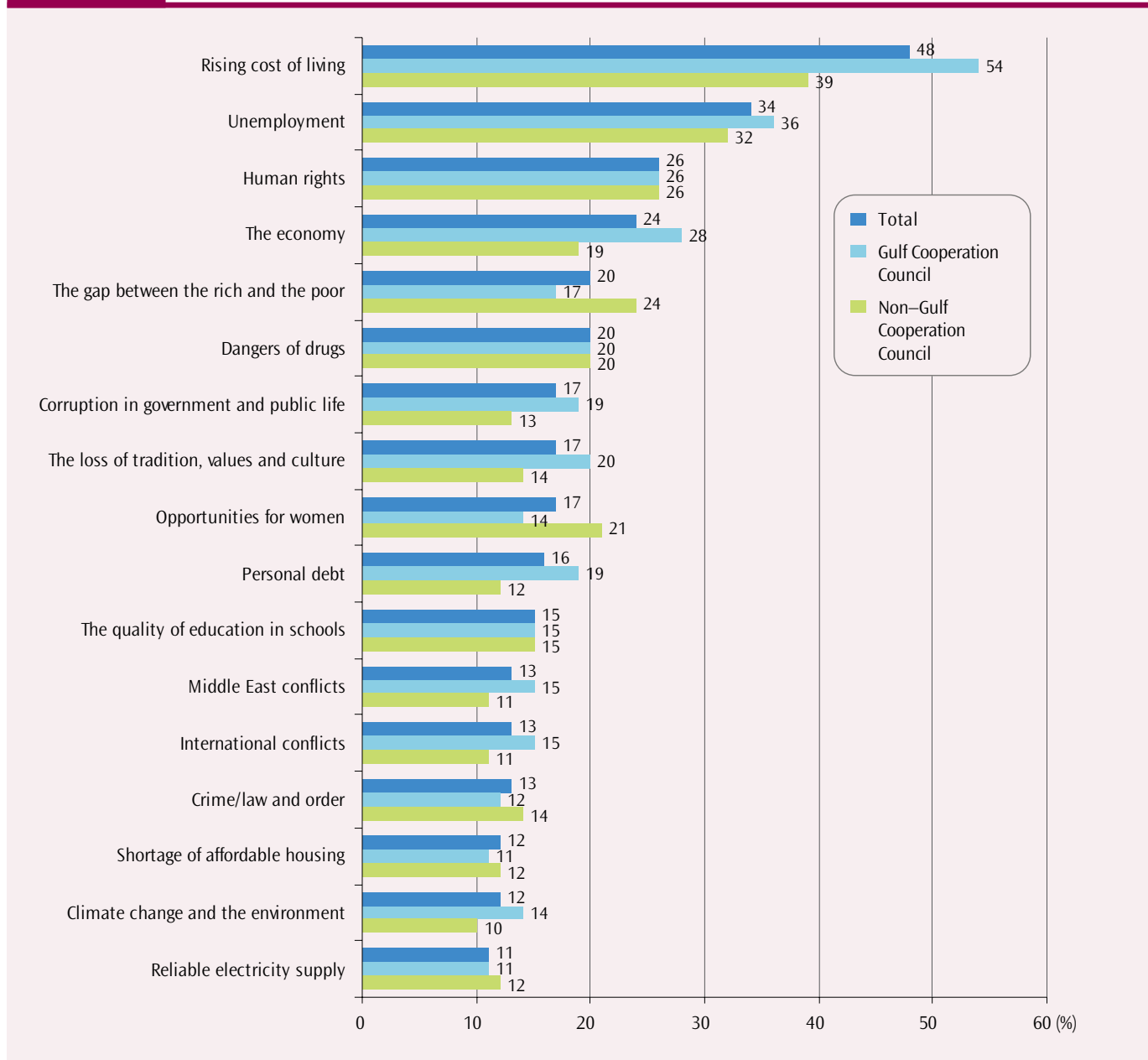
Sources: Adapted from UNDP (2002 and 2008); UN ESCWA (2009b); Ghosh (2011).

human rights and the economy were other challenges (figure 1.2). Young people in non-Gulf Cooperation Council countries were more concerned with the gap between the rich and the poor and with the lack of opportunities for women. Addressing these challenges requires both a national and regional effort. Of the concerns listed in figure 1.2, Qatari youth expressed

the most unease about the threat of the high cost of living. Among the 10 countries surveyed, Qatar's youth scored the highest (88%) in expressing that the country is "heading in the right direction". Providing youth with decent employment is a priority for many countries in the region (box 1.4).

**Figure 1.2**

**Arab youth perceptions of the biggest challenges facing the region, 2010**



Source: ASDA/A Burson-Marsteller Arab Youth Survey (2011).

## Box 1.4

### Youth unemployment: a priority in Arab countries

Throughout many Arab countries, rapid population growth is fuelling enormous demographic pressures. Population densities are reaching a breaking point, infrastructure support is inadequate and world food prices are skyrocketing.

Employment growth is not keeping up with the population surge, at least not in decent jobs with decent wages. The increasingly literate and digitally connected generation of young people in the region are being forced to compete globally for jobs in an interconnected world labour market, against more productive manufacturing workers with high-quality infrastructure. The result is a growing youth unemployment crisis, especially among poor and working-class youth. In the Middle East and North Africa the youth unemployment rate was 30% or higher in 2010, and unemployed and underemployed young people's frustration is spilling over into the streets.

If democracy is to take hold and flourish in the Arab countries, the new reform-minded governments must make the youth unemployment crisis their highest priority. Arab countries should elaborate strategies to improve the quality and increase the length of schooling, invest in job training, establish private sector

apprenticeships and develop small and medium-size businesses. They should identify key infrastructure projects needed to ensure private-sector productivity, and they must work together to deepen regional trade integration, thereby creating a much larger market.

With oil prices back over \$100 per barrel, the Gulf Cooperation Council countries are enjoying a bonanza. Sachs (2011) suggests that these countries create a special fund for youth employment in the region through the Islamic Development Bank. There can be no better way to use the region's resources than to ensure that its young people's lives are enriched by education, skills and high-quality jobs.

Qatar is already playing its part in the global partnership for development, the eight United Nations Millennium Development Goals, by supporting many initiatives to improve the lives and livelihoods of young people in less developed countries, as for example with the Silatech Initiative (see chapter 3).

*Source: Sachs (2011).*

#### Qatar youth looking to expanded horizon

With Qatar's GDP predicted by government and international agencies alike to grow almost 20% in 2011 and the National Development Strategy 2011–2016 moving into the implementation phase, Qatar is in a strong position to progress towards the goals of *QNV 2030*. Qatar is taking its expanding prosperity into the future: a future that looks bright for the Qatari youth who will have important roles in fulfilling national plans and ambitions (box 1.5).

There is already evidence of Qatar's success in raising its profile on the world stage and fulfilling leadership roles in the region and beyond. This is engendering respect

and recognition in such diverse and challenging worlds as those of politics, business, development and sports.

As Qatar moves into this ever-expanding role in the world, there will be a challenge to the versatility and strength of Qatari society and its ability to maintain its values and identity in a new era of national development (box 1.6). This will affect the nature and outlook of individuals, families and communities and to a substantial degree, the emerging generation. Youth, the prime movers and leaders of future development can look to benefit from and contribute to Qatar's success and well-being.



### Box 1.5

### The challenge of change has benefits for Qatari youth

Qatar's increasing openness to the global economy and global cultural influences is creating unique challenges as Qataris struggle to balance tradition with the growing complexities of modernization. Thus, while Qatari youth are positioned to benefit dramatically from the country's rapid economic growth and socioeconomic change, they are also squeezed by the changing dynamics of the economy. These pressures are not the same for all Qatari youth. The pathways to adulthood for men and women are quite different.

The spectacular growth and increasing diversification in Qatar's economy has allowed ever-increasing education, training and employment opportunities, especially for

youth. *QNV 2030*, which is driving change, empowers all citizens, and more directly women, by identifying goals to advance their position and status in society. The provision of high-quality training opportunities, building capacities and empowering Qataris to participate fully in political and economic spheres, especially in decision-making roles, will correspond to their ambitions and abilities. *QNV 2030* envisages all Qataris working together in pursuing these aspirations, with strong Islamic and family values guiding their collective energies. Change has benefits for youth who seize the opportunities.

Source: Adapted from Al Matawi (2011a).

### Box 1.6

### Voices of youth: managing the conflict between tradition and change

It is an interesting time to be a Qatari youth, observing and being part of rapid change. Economic and social change is inevitable, and in the last decade Qatar has witnessed dramatic modernization. Wealth from the country's hydrocarbon resources has brought with it rapid development and business opportunities. The population size has quadrupled as demand for labour from all sectors has increased.

I understand that development comes at a cost. But as a proud Qatari youth I am upset that changes are affecting our customs, traditions, values and even our mother tongue. My Qatari identity is being compromised as I feel that to be successful in today's Qatar, I must give up a great part of that identity.

I am expected to excel in a foreign language, while my mother tongue is neglected; I must agree to work side by side with the opposite sex which goes against my cultural beliefs; and I must sacrifice my home life and work from morning to afternoon: my family members simply become people I share a house with. One of the most noticeable aspects of the change taking place is that Qatari women have stepped out of their traditional role as housewives and mothers, to be more involved with national development. As an ambitious young Qatari woman, I too want to be part of this change, I want to compete with the best in my field and rise to the top. But I worry that if I and other women of my generation do so, in the long run it will affect Qatar

negatively, because it will mean that instead of having five or six Qatari children like our parents, we will just have one or two. And our children will probably be raised by a nanny from a foreign country.

As I prepare to join the labour force, I am concerned about competing with foreign employees. There is a stereotype that Qataris are not as hard working, not as productive as foreign workers. But my experience interning in various companies suggests otherwise. I still feel that many believe this stereotype and that it is difficult for a young Qatari to find a good job.

I have a great love for my home country Qatar, and as a Qatari youth, I realize that we should embrace change. I have informed myself about *Qatar National Vision 2030* (QNV 2030) and the National Development Strategy 2011–2016. Consequently, the fear that I had is now replaced with comfort because I know that efforts are being made to preserve Qatari traditions. I believe that many young people are ignorant about *QNV 2030* and the National Development Strategy 2011–2016. It is vital to educate them and make them understand that measures are being taken to protect traditional Qatari identity while embracing change positively.

Source: Adapted from an essay by Mariam Al-Mohannadi (2011).

## Growth and impact on youth

The unique character of Qatar’s population will strongly influence the way that national development programmes and projects unfold. A large non-Qatari component dominates the labour force, with particular effects on the Qatari youth as they enter and participate in the world of work. The evolving character of Qatar’s population with a focus on youth is outlined below.

Over 1990-2010, and especially since 2005, Qatar’s population has grown at an unprecedented rate. From 421,000 in 1990, it grew to 614,000 in 2000 and reached almost 1.7 million by 2010—a fourfold increase in 20 years (table 1.2).

This exceptionally rapid rise, averaging 15% a year between 2004 and 2008 (figure 1.3), when growth was at its peak, is unprecedented historically and globally. Most of the growth is attributable to huge inflows of predominantly unskilled and semi-skilled male labour from South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East and North Africa, driven by Qatar’s phenomenal economic growth. Due to the high inflows of non-Qatari workers, the nationality composition in Qatar’s population changed substantially, with the share of Qataris falling from 28% in 1990 to 27% in 2000 and to 14% by 2010.

**Table 1.2**

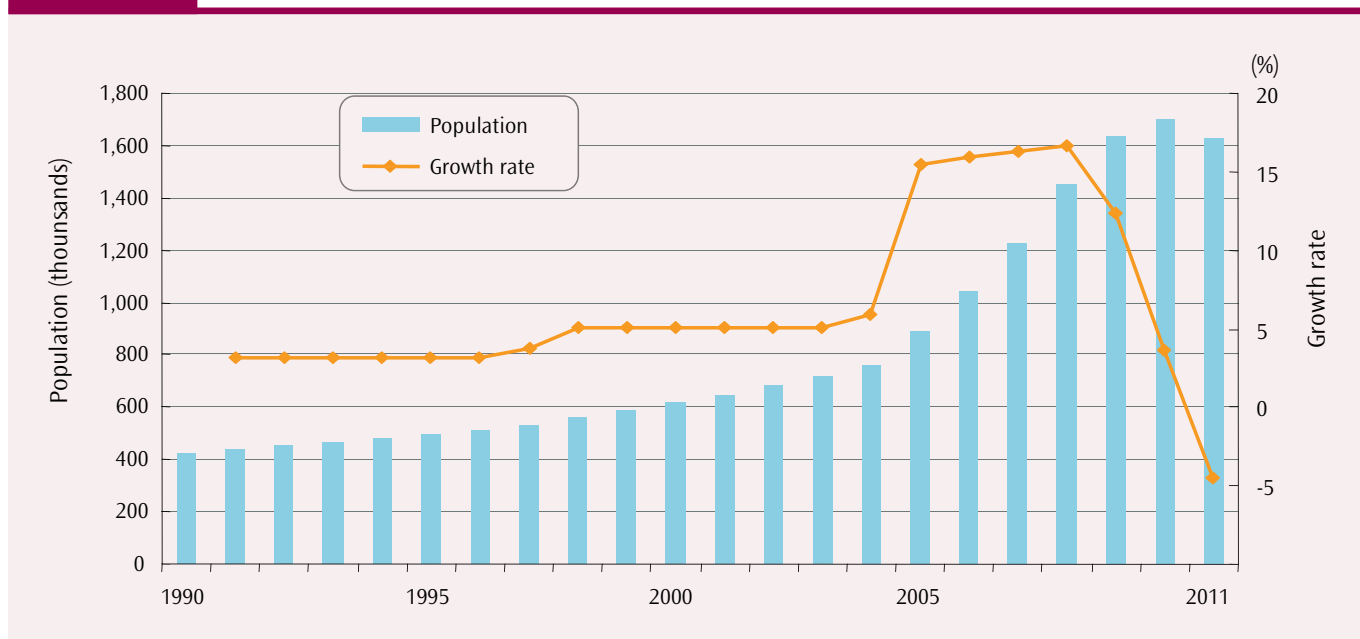
**Spectacular growth of Qatar’s population especially in most recent decades**

	Population (thousands)			
	1990	2000	2005	2010
Total	421	614	906	1,699

Source: QSA (2010a and 2011a).

**Figure 1.3**

**Population growth was especially high between 2004 and 2009**



Source: Computed from QSA (2010a, 2011a and 2011b).

### Impact of inflows of non-Qataris

Demographic changes have had a significant impact on the size of Qatar's youth population. Consistent with the growth in the total population, Qatar's population ages 15–24 grew from just 57,000 in 1990 to more than 252,000 in 2010, with the majority being young non-Qatari workers. Over these two decades the proportion of Qataris in the 15–24 age range fell from over 43% in 1990 to 19% in 2010. The youth component in Qatar's population grew from 13% in 1990 and 2000, peaking at 17% in 2005 before falling back to 15% in 2010 (table 1.3).

The age composition of a population depends on past trends in fertility, mortality and net international migration. In the Qatari population the migration effect is minimal because outflows of Qataris are small (mostly people going overseas to study or work and then returning to Qatar). In a population growing rapidly because of a natural increase, the number of people in an age group will normally be larger than the number in the next older age group. Hence, the shape of the age distribution takes the form of a pyramid, as shown for the Qatari population in 2010 (figure 1.4).

The age pyramid for Qataris is typical of a population that has not yet undergone the substantial fertility decline that is associated with a demographic transition. The demographic transition describes the shift from

a high-mortality and high-fertility population to one with low mortality and, with a longer time lag, low fertility. Population growth accelerates during the period of mortality decline because fertility remains high and thus the rate of natural increase rises. Subsequently, as fertility declines, population growth also declines.

Qatar's population is relatively young. The median age in 2010 (the age at which 50% of the population is younger and 50% older) was 30 overall but just 19 for the Qatari population. In 2010 some 15% of men and 16% of women were in the 15–24 age group (figure 1.4). In the Qatari population, 20% of men and 19% of women were in the 15–24 age group. The pattern for Qataris and non-Qataris is significantly different because few non-Qatari workers are under age 20. Among non-Qataris, 14% of men and women were in the youth group (though that the absolute number of women is much smaller; see figure 1.4).

In many countries where there are large inflows of transient foreign workers, the majority are male and concentrated in the prime working age group of 20–39. This pattern is evident for non-Qataris living in Qatar, with more than 62% in the 20–39 age group, about 83% of them are male. Most non-Qataris are single or have a spouse who does not live in Qatar.

**Table 1.3**

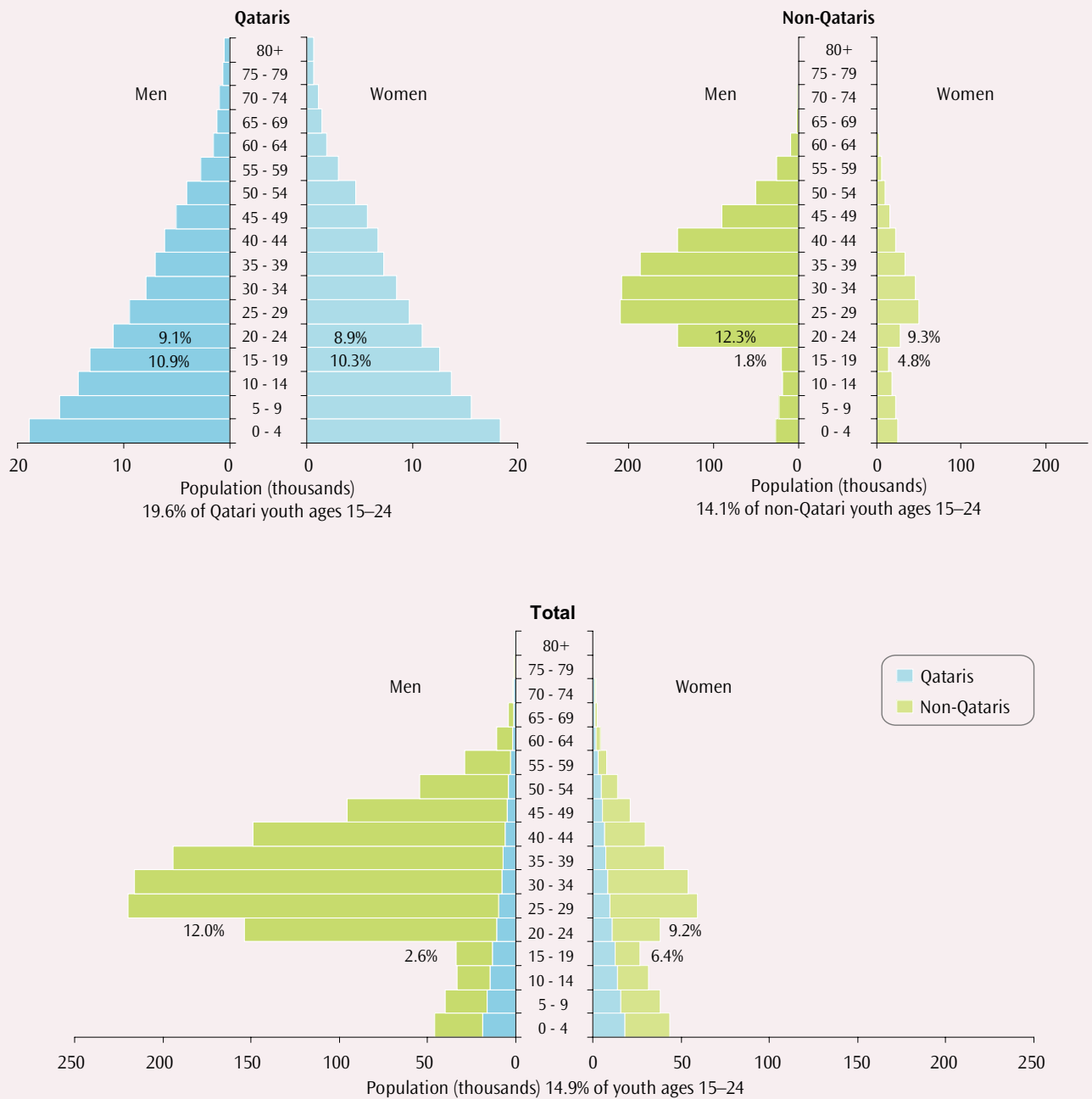
**The youth population in Qatar is growing rapidly, 1990-2010**

	Population ages 15–24 (thousands)			
	1990	2000	2005	2010
Qatari	24.4	31.0	37.6	47.7
Non-Qatari	32.1	55.1	117.2	204.8
Total	56.5	86.1	154.8	252.5
Share of youth in total population (%)	13.4	14.0	17.1	14.9

Source: Computed from QSA (2010a and 2011a).

Figure 1.4

Age pyramids for Qatari and non-Qatari population, 2010



Note: Percentages show the proportions of males or females in a specified age group.  
 Source: Computed from QSA (2011a).

### **Cultural impact of non-Qatari inflows on youth**

High non-Qatari inflows, resulting in increasing population diversity, inevitably have both a positive and negative impact on Qatari culture and values. The former may involve the spread of new ideas and new capacities.

The latter relates to the adoption of behavioural patterns that are alien to the country's traditional cultural values.

Most low-skilled workers have limited interactions with Qataris. They are typically in Qatar without their families, and are unlikely to participate in social activities with, or go to places frequented by Qataris. However, the impact of higher skilled expatriates is potentially greater because this group will commonly frequent places that are regularly visited by Qataris, and because social interactions are much more likely.

Arabic expatriates, who are the closest to Qataris in cultural values, have more opportunities for educational, employment and social interactions. Because their language, culture, and religion are close, the cultural threat is probably least. Nevertheless, cultural differences exist, especially in the value systems of Arabs from different countries. Western expatriates, whose cultures are the most different from Qatar's, will typically have limited social interaction with Qataris. Nonetheless, because they frequent the same places, the different way they dress and the leisure activities in which they engage may impact on their culture and values.

Given the centrality of the Arabic language to the Islamic faith, its use reinforces the Islamic identity of the nation. With the massive influx of expatriate workers, many other languages are commonly spoken, especially English. Where expatriate workers are not conversant in Arabic, cultural exchange is limited although there are efforts to encourage higher-skilled expatriates to learn Arabic through government and non-governmental organizations. Similarly, there is an increasing thrust towards the use of the English language throughout the education system, particularly at tertiary level.

The major inflows of expatriate workers have resulted in the growing awareness of, and need for, an active policy on cultural diversity. This is further encouraged by the growth of tourism, Qatar's increased diplomatic role in regional and international affairs and its ambitions to become

a key international hub for sport and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions) industry. These issues are addressed in Qatar's National Development Strategy 2011-2016.

## **Households, family formation and dissolution**

Sustained economic growth and social changes are impacting on Qatari youth through changing patterns in marriage, childbearing and divorce. Family life is undergoing substantial change.

### **Qatari family and household**

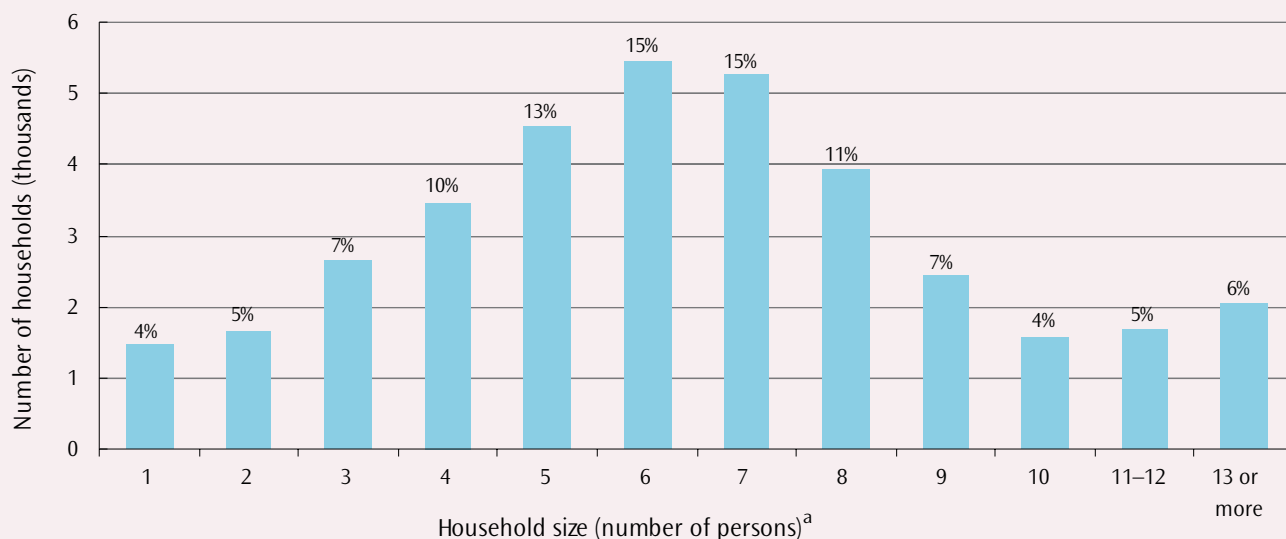
The family is the fundamental unit of society. It nurtures the young and provides guidance and opportunities in the transition from childhood to adulthood. In Qatar the family is firmly embedded in culture, religion and patriotism. Qatar's Permanent Constitution protects the family, supports its structure, strengthens its ties and protects people during infancy, childhood and old age. These values are enshrined in *QNV 2030*, which aims to preserve strong and cohesive families that enjoy support, care and social protection. Qatar's strong Arab and Muslim identity pervades all aspects of family life. Despite global pressures, leading to increasing international convergence in patterns of family formation, structure and dissolution, Qatar's family structure continues to be characterized by:

- The large size of extended families.
- Traditional kinship ties.
- Tribal authority that determines the behaviour of sons and daughters, especially with regard to marital choice.
- Descent, with associated ideological and ethnic affiliations influential in society.

Most Qatari households are relatively large compared with those in other countries of the region and high-income Western countries. Average household size according to the 2010 population census is 6.7 people per household (9.7 persons when domestic helpers are included). Some 74% of households have 5 or more members and almost 15% have 10 or more (figure 1.5). The modal household has six members and accounts for 15% of all households; one person households account for 4% and two-person households account for 5%. Qatari households have a young age composition. In 2010 81% of Qatari households had at least one child under age 15 and 57% had at least one youth (table 1.4).

**Figure 1.5**

**Qatari households remain relatively large**



*a. Excludes domestic workers.*

*Note: Numbers above the bars are the percentage of all Qatari households.*

*Source: Computed from QSA (2011a).*

**Table 1.4**

**Most Qatari households have children under age 15, and 57% have at least one youth, 2010**

Household type	Qatari Households	
	Number	Share of total (%)
With children under age 15	29,320	81.1
Without children under age 15	6,848	18.9
With youth	20,661	57.1
Without youth	15,507	42.9
Total	36,168	100.0

*Source: Computed from QSA (2011a).*

**Marriage and fertility**

Marriage can be defined as a social contract between men and women, determining individual rights and obligations. It provides the foundation for the formation of Qatari families, and is deeply rooted in traditional customs and identity. In Qatari society, as elsewhere in the region, premarital relationships are prohibited and most marriages are arranged by parents, in keeping with Islamic Sharia, culture, social habits and traditions.

Qatar is undergoing a remarkable economic transformation that is increasingly challenging the more traditional aspects of family life. Women’s status within the family is changing, and the youth are leading this change. *QNV 2030* advocates that women should play a significant role in all spheres of life, especially in the economic and political arenas (box 1.7).

Investments in the advancement and empowerment of women, especially young women, have been shown internationally to be supportive of economic growth and can lead to many positive development outcomes. The drivers with the most impact are investments in health, education, employment and leadership roles.

In 2009 Qatar ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, a framework for a human rights-based approach to issues affecting women.

In line with international conventions and with the 2004 Permanent Constitution, the *QNV 2030* and the National Development Strategy 2011–2016 support an expanded role for Qatari women in national development, encouraging gender mainstreaming in sectoral development policies and programmes, whilst recognizing the need to take into account Qatar’s cultural and social setting.

There is a collective recognition that Qatar’s future generation of women will have the educational ability and qualification to assume leadership positions.

There is, however, still a culturally conditioned underestimation of scope and ability, and traditional views about appropriate avenues for women’s employment (educational, administrative or clerical). The challenge will be to identify and create awareness of new opportunities in Qatar’s expanded and increasingly modernized labour market that are being created by

sustained economic growth. To promote youth and women’s empowerment, the National Development Strategy 2011–2016 proposes initiatives that cover four main areas namely:

- Building the education and skill capacities of Qataris.
- Helping Qataris and young entrepreneurs work in the private sector and participate in the business environment.
- Removing obstacles to women’s participation in the labour force.
- Promoting women as leaders.

To increase the number of women in political, organizational and business-related decision-making positions by 30%, two interrelated programmes have been proposed:

- A women’s leadership centre to strengthen and build women’s capacities. The challenge for the Centre will be to remove key impediments to women’s taking up leadership positions in political life and in society. Quality leadership training will help provide the technical and “soft” skills needed for these positions.
- A programme will be initiated to change public perceptions of the role of women in employment, business and society. It will include a new civil society organization to promote and advocate for women’s issues.

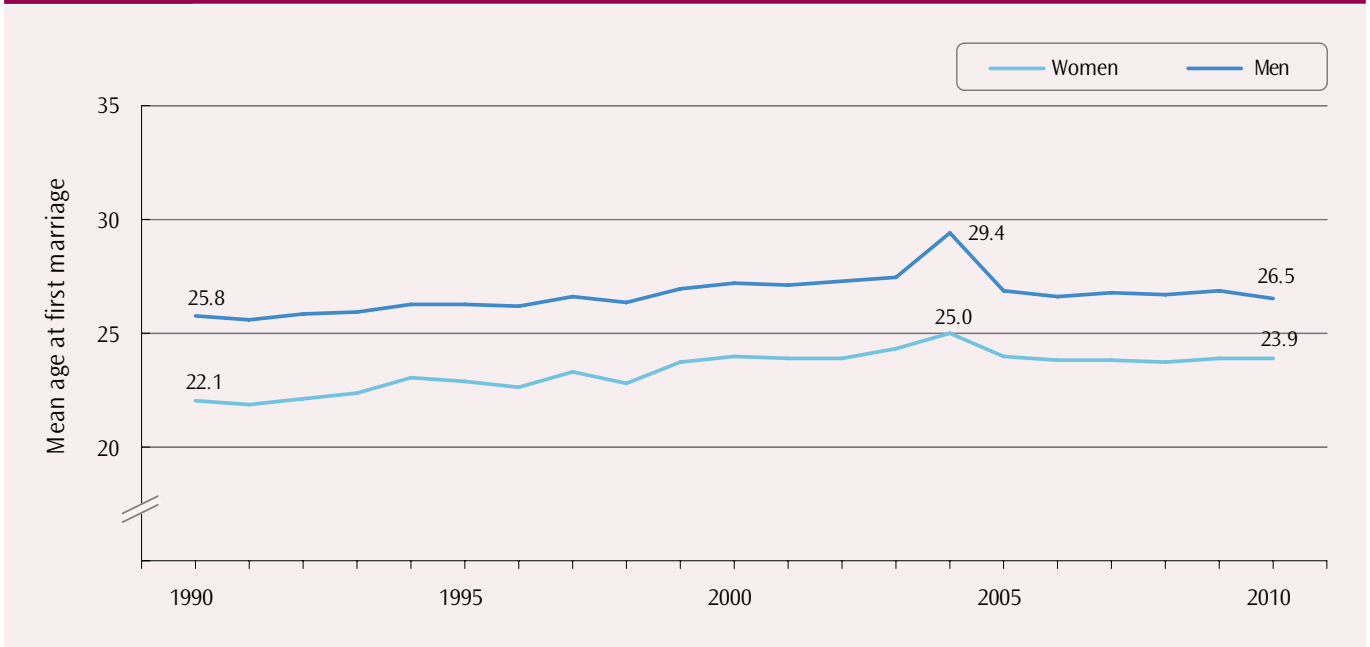
Source: Adapted from Hadi (2011) and Ibrahim (2011).

With the increasing tendency towards post-secondary education, Qatari men and women are getting married for the first time at older ages than in the past. The mean age at first marriage for men rose from 25.8 in 1990 to above 29 in 2004 before falling back to 26.5 years in 2010: the corresponding ages for women were 22.1, 25.0 and 23.9 years (figure 1.6). One reason for the fall in marriage age since 2004 could be that the growth in prosperity made marriages more affordable.

According to 2010 census data only a small proportion—less than 1% of men and 4% of women—marry at ages 15–19. In 2010 some 59% of men and 64% of women in the 25–29 age group had married, compared with 52% of men and 70% of women in 1997 (figure 1.7). Increasing proportions of young women are remaining single—a phenomenon perhaps associated with their rising educational attainment as compared with young men.

**Figure 1.6**

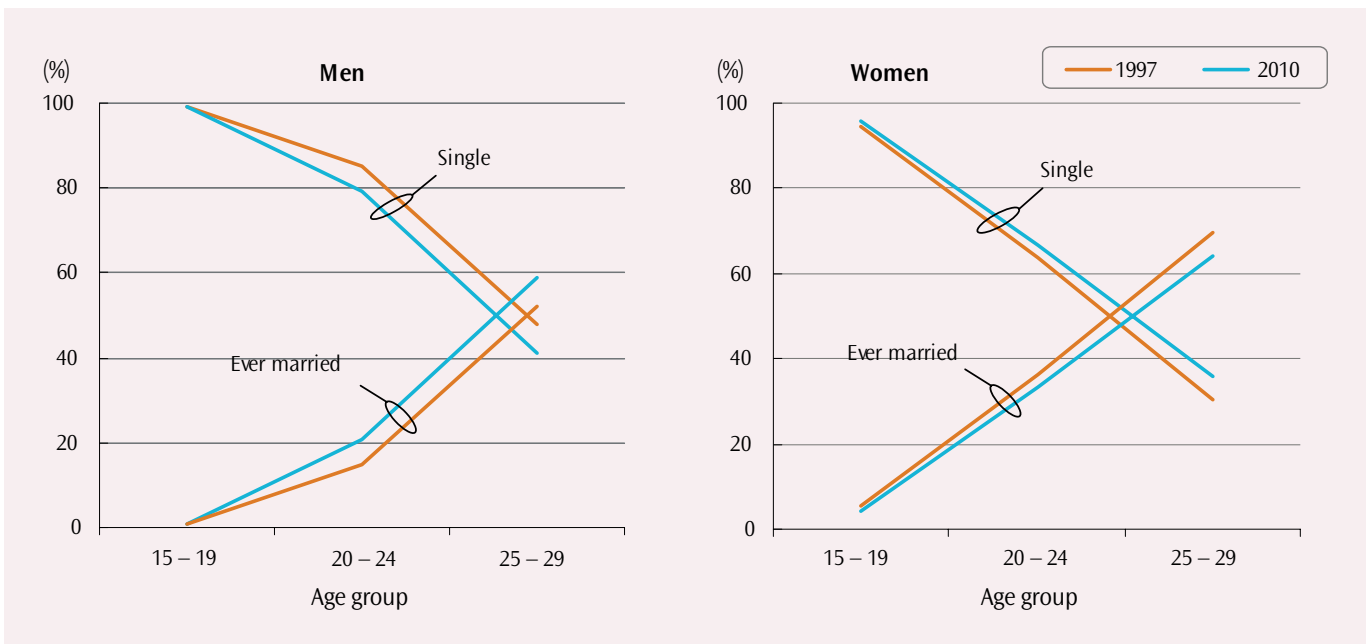
**Rising age of Qataris at first marriage, 1990–2010**



Source: Mohammed, Ucar and Leete (2011).

**Figure 1.7**

**Rising proportion of Qatari females remaining single, 1997 and 2010**



Source: Mohammed, Ucar and Leete (2011).



There is a strong tendency for Qatari men and women to marry a partner of the same, or similar, educational background. In Table 1.5, ratios higher than 1 indicate a greater tendency for inter-marriage, while ratios less than 1 indicate a lesser tendency for inter-marriage between the same educational groups. The tendency for men and women of a given educational level to

marry each other is shown by the ratios in the diagonal cells. The lower educational attainment levels of men as compared with women, as well as a reluctance to marry someone of lower educational status, may well be factors in the rising proportions of Qatari women remaining unmarried.

**Table 1.5**

**Qataris most likely to marry someone of same educational status<sup>1</sup>, 2010**

Education status of husband	Education status of wife				Number
	Primary and below	Preparatory	Secondary	Tertiary	
	Ratio of observed to expected <sup>2</sup>				
Primary and below	3.63	1.55	0.73	0.59	185
Preparatory	1.38	1.57	0.94	0.71	339
Secondary	0.70	1.03	1.12	0.75	730
Tertiary	0.18	0.35	0.96	1.74	482
<i>Number</i>	119	218	1,018	381	1,736

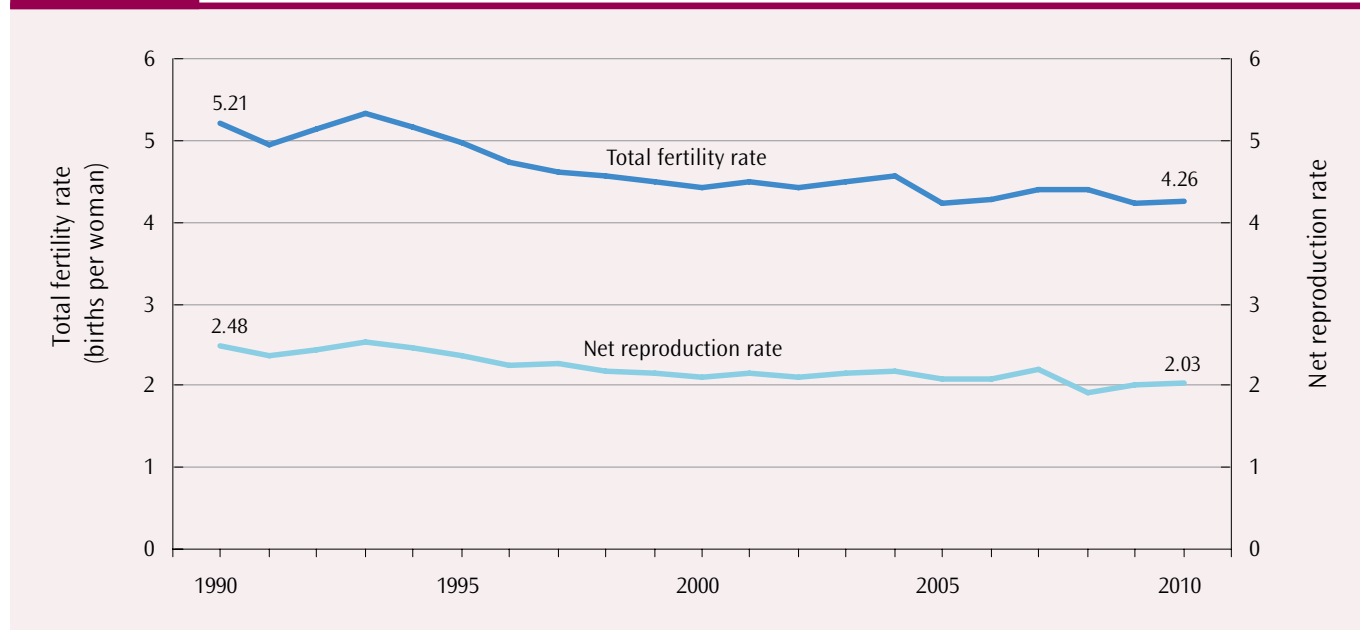
Note 1. The ratios along the diagonal represent marriages between persons of the same education background; those above to women marrying above their education status, and those below to men marrying above their education status.

2. The expected number which would have occurred if the choice of a marriage partner had been independent of education status.

Source: QSA (2011g).

**Figure 1.8**

**Steadily declining trends in fertility of Qatari women, 1990–2010**



Source: Mohammed, Ucar and Leete (2011).

Qatari women are also having fewer children than a generation ago. The total fertility rate, which measures the average number of children women will have by the end of their child-bearing years, was around 4.3 in 2010, compared with 5.2 in 1990 (figure 1.8).

The trend towards smaller family size can also be seen in the cumulative number of children born to young women. Qatari youth reaching ages 25–29 in 2010 had an average of 1.3 children compared with 1.4 among the same age group in 2004; for women who had ever been married the corresponding figures were 2.1 and 2.2 (table 1.6).

One effect of the rising age at first marriage and the declining rates of marriage at younger ages has been a rise in the proportion of women under age 30 without any children. The younger the women’s cohort, the higher is the proportion of childlessness at any given age (table 1.7). For example, one-third of women born in 1960 were childless at age 25, compared with 46% of women born in 1980. Similarly, just 23% of women born in 1960 had not given birth by age 30, compared with 34% among women born in 1980.

**Table 1.6**

**Declining mean number of children ever born to Qatari women under age 30, 2004 and 2010**

Age groups	All women		Ever married	
	2004	2010	2004	2010
15–19	0.02	0.02	0.59	0.39
20–24	0.38	0.32	1.16	0.97
25–29	1.42	1.30	2.18	2.05

Source: Mohammed, Ucar and Leete (2011).

**Table 1.7**

**Rise in Qatari women remaining childless at ages under 30**

Birth cohort of women	Age in 2010	Percent of women childless at the given age		
		20	25	30
1960	50	66.6	33.6	22.6
1962	48	70.3	32.2	21.8
1964	46	71.1	34.1	22.7
1966	44	75.3	36.9	25.4
1968	42	75.0	36.7	23.3
1970	40	73.4	35.2	22.0
1972	38	75.4	37.0	25.2
1974	36	76.6	42.2	27.9
1976	34	76.4	39.6	25.7
1978	32	81.6	45.2	30.5
1980	30	82.3	45.5	34.4

Source: Mohammed, Ucar and Leete (2011).

## Divorce

There is concern about the steady rise in the number of Qatari couples seeking divorce, especially younger couples. The increase may be attributable in part to the increasing number of married couples. Younger Qatari couples, particularly within the first five years of marriage, are more likely to divorce. In 2010 63% of divorces took place after less than five years of marriage and 31% before the marriage was consummated. The Qatari divorce rate increased from 17.4 per 1,000 married people in 1995 to 18.2 in 2010 (figure 1.9). Further analysis of divorces in 2010 by GSDP indicates that divorce rates are highest among Qatari couples where the wife's educational level is higher than that of her husband.

Key causes of divorce among Qataris include differences in social status of spouses, neglect of marital and family responsibilities, domestic violence and financial pressures. A 2006 study by the Supreme Council for Family Affairs shows that divorce is more likely when the wife's educational level is higher than her husband's (Al Merekhi 2006). Higher educational attainment levels of young women as compared to young men is a relatively common situation in Qatar (see chapter 2).

Knowledge of the divorce's effect on the Qatari family and on youth well-being is limited. The available empirical evidence, however, suggests that divorced household heads are more than twice as likely as married heads to be living on a relatively low income, especially for women who lack financial support from their ex-husbands. International research on divorce in high-income countries indicates adverse outcomes for the well-being of young people. These are normally associated with parental conflict and missing post-divorce contact with both parents.

Government programmes to strengthen marriage, reduce divorce and support divorcees—including pre-marriage counselling, expanded psychological and counselling services for couples who face separation and a social safety net for those facing divorce, especially women—were proposed in the National Development Strategy 2011–2016. With the rising trend in divorce, understanding divorce's effect on youth well-being and ensuring the continuity of cohesive families are crucial for youth and national development. Families are the core of Qatari society and provide the care and support necessary for young people as they move through their stages of learning, work, family and citizenship.

Figure 1.9

Increasing number of Qatari divorces filed from 1995 to 2010



Note: Data are three-year moving averages.

Source: Computed from QSA (2010b).

## Relative poverty and Qatari youth

There is no absolute poverty or hunger in Qatar.

There is, however, a natural tendency for individuals to assess their level of well-being by comparing their situation to that of their peers and to be seen by those peers as in some sense deprived if they do not possess those assets owned by the great majority of the population. A case can therefore be made for Qatar's social protection system to include a mechanism supporting households living in relative poverty, consistent with *QNV 2030*'s aim of ensuring an adequate income to maintain a healthy and dignified life for all.

### Relative poverty

A relative poverty line has been developed that interprets poverty in relation to the prevailing standards of society at a given time (box 1.8).

Some 9% of Qatari households were classified as being in relative income poverty. Low income and expenditure households in 2006/2007 tended to be larger in household size than average. If equivalized expenditure is used to measure household welfare, the prevalence of poor children (15.4%) was substantially greater than the prevalence of poor households (11.5%; table 1.8). The prevalence of low income among Qatari households increases from 9% to 14% if household incomes are not supplemented by government transfers. This differential indicates the critical role played by government transfers.

#### Box 1.8

#### Deriving a relative poverty line for Qatar

A relative poverty line interprets poverty in relation to the prevailing standards of the society at a given time. The most common approach is to define a country's poverty line income as a certain percent of the country's median, or mean, level of income.

A relative poverty line was developed using data from the Qatar Statistics Authority's 2006/2007 Household Income and Expenditure Survey to analyse the incidence and intensity of low income (and spending) among Qatari households. Qatari household incomes and expenditures were adjusted to allow for a household's needs varying with its size and composition. A larger household naturally requires higher income and expenditure to attain the same welfare for its members as a one-person household.

The adjustment involved division of each household's total income and expenditure by the number of adult equivalent members. These numbers were estimated from adult equivalence scales which take into account

the differential needs of adults and children. They also take account of the potential for scale economies: some expenditure per household member will be lower in larger households (rents, household durables and so on). For Qatar, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (modified) equalizing scale was used, where a value of 1 is assigned to the head of household, 0.5 to each additional adult member ages 14 years and older and 0.3 to each child under age 14.

The relative poverty line income for Qatar was defined as half the median household equalized income. A household is said to be in relative income poverty if its income per equivalent adult falls below this line. In the 2006/2007 Household Income and Expenditure Survey the threshold for annual equalized income (the relative poverty line income) was QR 64,286.

*Source:* GSDP (2010).

**Table 1.8**

**Low-income Qatari households**

Category	Prevalence 2006/2007 (%)	
	Income-based	Expenditure-based
Household	9.2	11.5
Individual	12.0	14.8
Child (under age 14)	13.7	15.4
Elderly (age 60 and over)	13.4	17.0
Others	11.0	14.3

Source: Computed from QSA (2008a).

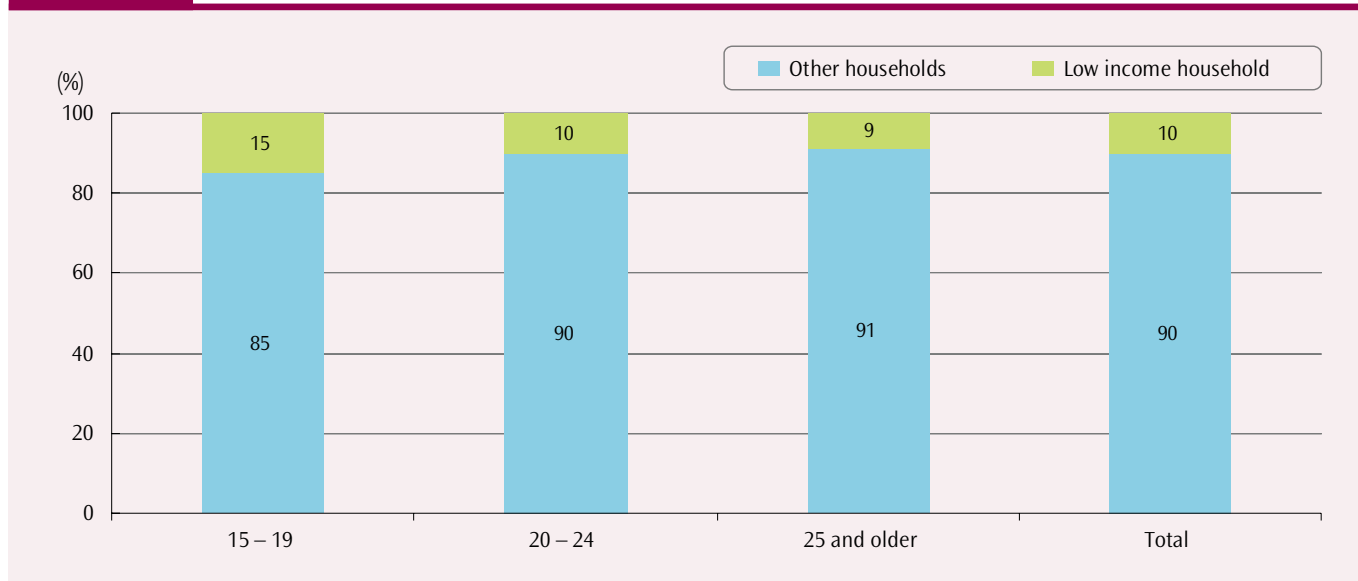
**Impact of low income on youth**

Some 13% of Qatari youth live in low-income households, compared with 9% of Qatari adults (figure 1.10). Because many young people do not contribute to household income, households with larger numbers of youth members tend to have lower per capita income.

Young people in low-income households face many challenges, including lower educational attainment, leaving school earlier and higher unemployment. They are more likely to have a below secondary education (11% higher for 15–19 year olds, 14% higher for 20–24 year olds) (figure 1.11).

**Figure 1.10**

**About 13% of Qatari youth live in low-income households, 2006/2007**



Source: Computed from QSA (2008a).

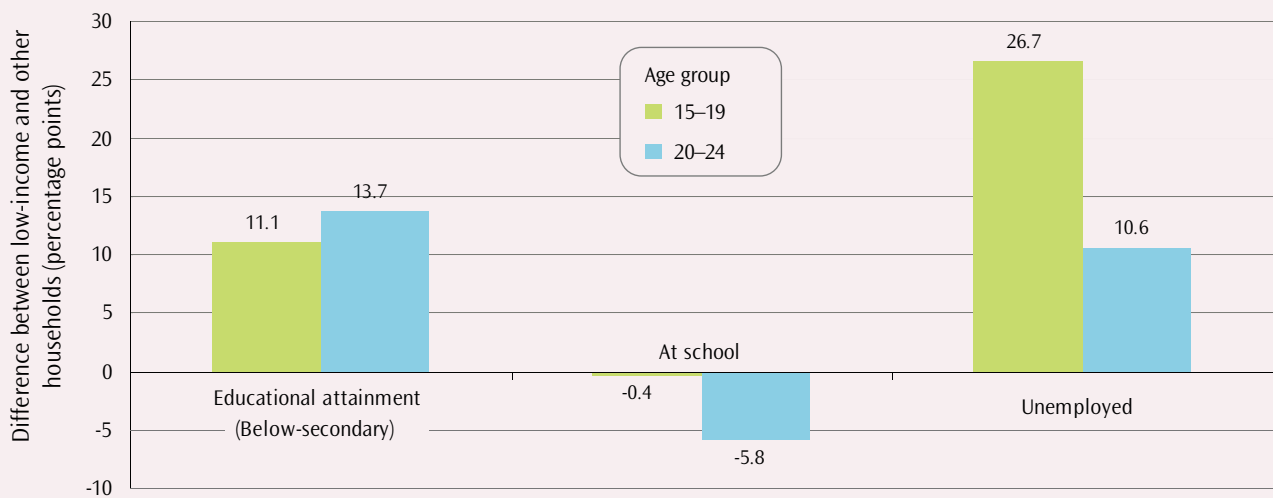
They also have a slightly lower proportion attending school (0.4% and 6% lower) and are much more likely to be unemployed (27% and 11% higher). Such early disadvantages faced by youth in poorer households often become deeply entrenched and are extremely difficult to remedy once they reach adulthood. Suitable measures for social protection are required to mitigate the adverse effects of relative poverty on youth. Qatar provides a generous family and employment-based social protection system to its citizens. A national relative poverty line can support and facilitate stronger legislation to ensure sufficient cash transfers are available under both government and nongovernment assistance programmes for vulnerable children, single mothers, unemployed, the disabled, prisoners' families and the elderly.

Existing welfare programmes do not take account of changing economic conditions, such as inflation, nor are they linked to a wider fiscal framework. Developing and implementing a fund to assist in raising low-income Qataris to half the median income threshold would significantly improve the poorer households' quality of life.

There needs to be a gender dimension in social protection policies and programmes as evidence indicates that divorced women and widows are at a high risk of falling into relative poverty. Low-income households generally need greater assistance with housing and also additional help to educate their children in order to improve intergenerational mobility and break the cycle of poverty and low income.

**Figure 1.11**

**Youth in low income households have lower educational attainment, 2006/2007**



Source: Computed from QSA (2008a).

## Conclusion

Youth everywhere are being positively and negatively affected by the increasingly globalized and interconnected world. One important driver is the revolution in ICT which has shrunk the world in time and in space, creating a global cyberculture that is testing traditional ideas and national values and allowing youth to build and communicate through social networks. Through this access to information and ideas, ICT is empowering and engaging youth. These ongoing far reaching changes present new challenges and exciting opportunities for all societies, especially in building capacities for the young to participate in all spheres of society.

Youth make up almost 15% of Qatar's population, and Qatari youth account for almost 20% of the Qatari population. QNV 2030 and the National Development Strategy 2011–2016 are beginning to drive Qatar's transformation into a diversified and advanced knowledge economy. Rising income and continued economic expansion have contributed to impressive gains in human development. Youth have been important beneficiaries through better health, improved education and rising affluence.

As an energy-rich country, with rising revenues from gas and oil exports, Qatar invested heavily in infrastructure projects in the first decade of the 21st century. Multiple megaprojects resulted in large inflows of non-Qatari workers, many of whom are young. There were more than 1 million persons added to Qatar's population between 2004 and 2010, the country's population grew from just 0.7 million to 1.7 million. One result is that Qatari youth have become a minority in the total population, as well as in the education system and the labour force.

Qatari youth thus need to adapt to the dramatic modernization taking place in their traditionally conservative culture, as well as to rapidly changing demographic dynamics. These trends call for intercultural understanding and tolerance, as well as intergenerational dialogue.

Changing patterns in marriage, child-bearing and divorce are affecting youth development. Qataris are marrying later, more women are not marrying, fertility rates are falling and more women are remaining childless. A growing proportion of more educated women are remaining permanently unmarried. Divorce is steadily increasing, especially among young Qatari couples, and particularly within the first five years of marriage. Measures to support strong cohesive families that care for their members and strengthen the institution of marriage need to be strengthened.

Divorced women with children are at a high risk of falling into poverty, especially because their remarriage rates are much lower than divorced men's. Youth in households where a divorce has occurred face a number of challenges, including lower educational attainment and lower skilled employment. While there is no absolute poverty in Qatar, some 13% of Qatari youth live in households that are classified as poor. A social safety net that ensures an adequate income to maintain a healthy and dignified life is required. From a social development perspective an effective social protection system and strengthened family cohesion are critical to support youth in the transition from childhood to adulthood.



Building Knowledge  
and Developing the Skills  
of Qatari Youth





# 2

## Building Knowledge and Developing the Skills of Qatari Youth

“Through education Qatar seeks to go beyond preparing citizens to be part of the country’s economic engine. Education provides a solid grounding in Qatari religious, moral and ethical values, national identity, traditions and cultural heritage. Education helps people make better decisions about health, marriage, parenting and social responsibility and education supports innovation in science and industry. The National Development Strategy 2011-2016 will introduce education programmes that equip Qatari children and youth with the skills and motivation to contribute to society.”

*National Development Strategy 2011-2016*

Young people’s education experience is a critical determinant of their future well-being and yields multiple benefits throughout their lifetime. Investments in learning at an early age generally have larger returns, partly because they increase the productivity of later investments. There are substantial personal and social benefits if children and young adults acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes required to become self-reliant and successful individuals, productive members of the labour force, good parents and responsible citizens. Learning opportunities need to be provided for individuals of all ages, especially young people who have not realized their full potential the first time around (World Bank 2006).

Qatar’s future economic success will depend on the ability of its people, men and women, and especially its youth, (box 2.1) to deal with a global environment that is knowledge-based and extremely competitive. Education initiatives that address the intricate relationship between human capital and the labour market are essential. Economic success is based increasingly on effectively using intangible assets such as knowledge, skills and innovative potential. Education is the bedrock of competitiveness (UNDP 2010).

### Box 2.1

#### Voice of youth: igniting minds

Education is one of the most critical factors contributing to young people’s chances of leading healthy, productive and responsible lives. Educating a woman has implications for her family, for the community and for society.

Investments in young people’s education supports the transition from youth to good citizen. Youth should be encouraged, inspired and motivated to strive hard

to gain knowledge and self-confidence. Igniting the minds of youth can be a powerful resource. Our government should focus on harnessing the energy of young people for their constructive engagement.

*Source: Adapted from an essay by Hana Abdul Hameed (2011).*

## Educational provision

In marked contrast to the situation a generation ago, basic schooling of Qataris is now universal and literacy rates for those ages 15-24 are close to 100%. Despite some improvements, the quality of primary, preparatory and secondary education does not yet meet international standards, especially in mathematics and science. More emphasis is needed on the attainment of soft skills such as analytical thinking and teamwork, which will enhance the ability of young Qataris to find employment. While school enrolments have increased substantially up to the secondary level, tertiary enrolment rates could be much higher, especially among men.

Children of the growing number of non-Qataris constitute the majority of students at all levels of education. The growth in the number of children of non-Qataris has been accompanied by a substantial increase in private international and community schools. More and more Qatari parents are sending their children to international schools, and thus Qatari children are increasingly mixing with their peers from a diverse group of countries and cultural backgrounds. This interaction provides them with opportunities to establish friendships with and share learning experiences in culturally diverse school settings; however, it also poses challenges to traditional value systems. These may be partially overcome with the mandatory teaching of Arabic, religious studies and civic education.

The sub-sections below outline the educational opportunities provided for young Qataris, the investments being made and the ongoing and prospective reforms to the education and training system. This provides the background for an assessment of performance later in the chapter.

### The basic education system

Qatar's education system entails six years of primary schooling (commencing at age 6), followed by three years at the preparatory stage and three years of secondary schooling; the first nine years are compulsory. After secondary school, several pathways are available for post-secondary education. For Qatari children, as well as for children of non-Qataris working in the public sector, primary and secondary education is free. Public schools provide additional support for students with special needs and learning difficulties, as well as for those with behaviour that adversely affects their schooling.

In addition to compulsory schooling, there has been a rapid growth in pre-primary kindergarten education in support of early childhood development, since the start of the Education for a New Era reforms that began almost a decade ago. The uptrend in kindergarten education has been driven by private providers, which in 2009/2010 accounted for some 80% of total enrolments. However, kindergarten schooling is not mandatory, and not all Qatari children attend, despite it being free. Those who do not attend, currently more than half, are less well prepared for entry to primary school. There is considerable international evidence that suggest that preschool enhances children's future learning ability.

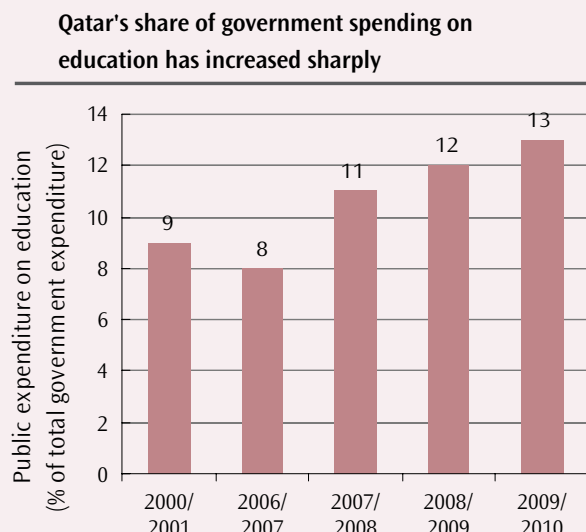
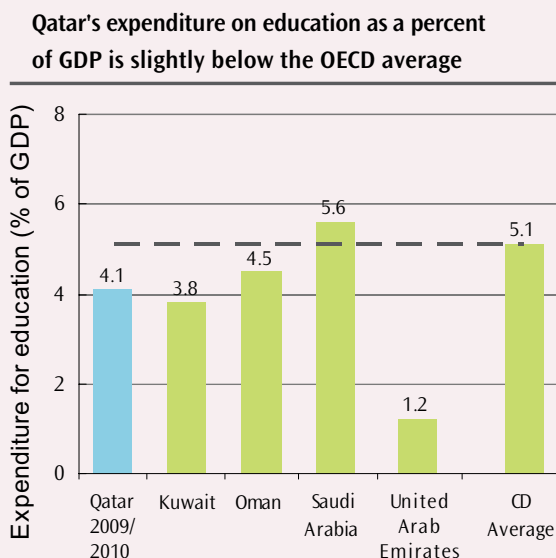
In addition to the public and private provision of kindergarten and basic education, Qatar Foundation offers outstanding education to cover all grades from kindergarten up to secondary school. For example, the Awsaj Institute of Education aims to raise the educational performance of students with learning challenges, engages in partnerships with stakeholders to develop the potential and abilities of students, and develops and promotes the application and assessment tools, teaching methods and curricula for effective teaching professionals. The Awsaj Institute includes two entities: the Awsaj Academy, a school for K-12 students who face academic difficulties, and the Awsaj Centre of Teaching and Learning, which offers specialized services for students who need more individual attention and provides professional development for teachers.

### Investment in education

The establishment of a world class education and training system is a major goal of *QNV 2030's* human development pillar and is intended to support Qatar's transition from a resource-dependent economy to a diversified knowledge economy. In recent years Qatar's education system has benefited greatly from increased revenues. Substantial resources have been allocated to improving infrastructure, as well as to the human, material and organizational inputs into the education system. Expenditure on education accounted for around 4.1% of GDP in 2009/2010, which is in line with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average and is comparable to other high-spending Gulf Cooperation Council countries (figure 2.1). While overall government expenditure increased six-fold over the period 2000-2010, that on education increased nine-fold, accounting for 13% of total government expenditure in 2009/2010.

Figure 2.1

Marked rise in government spending on education



Note: Data include expenditures at all levels of education.  
 Source: Computed from UIS (2011), QSA (2011d); MOEF (2011).

In 2009/2010 around 47% of Qatar’s education expenditure went to capital investment, whereas in most OECD countries the corresponding proportion was much lower, with salaries accounting for 80%–85% of total expenditure. Qatar’s higher capital expenditure reflects the demand for increased infrastructure development in a period of rapid population growth of the school-going population. It also reflects the government’s strategy of investing in best practice models of education. Total expenditure per student including public (79%) and private (21%) expenditure for all schools in 2009/2010, was estimated at QR 24,500 for primary education, QR 30,500 for preparatory and QR 39,000 for secondary. While the value for secondary education is 15% higher than the OECD average (OECD 2011a), that for primary and preparatory schooling is some 1%-5% less. These figures exclude expenditure on infrastructure, amenities, information and communication technology and professional development.

**Educational reforms**

The Supreme Education Council established in 2002, directs Qatar’s education policy and plays a vital role in developing and implementing the Education for A New Era reforms that began in that year (MFA 2010). At the heart of these reforms are increased variety and choice in education

provision through a well regulated private sector alongside autonomous government-funded Independent schools (GSDP 2011a); internationally benchmarked curriculum standards in Arabic, English, mathematics and science; and continuous performance monitoring of schools (RAND 2009a; Erman 2007).

By the start of school year 2010/2011, all the former Ministry of Education schools had become fully Independent schools, completing this component of the reform process. These schools (which include preprimary, primary, preparatory and secondary) have considerable autonomy in mission, vision and strategy, staffing, expenditures and teaching methods and are encouraged to be innovative in meeting the needs of individual students and parents within the framework of the new curriculum standards. Each independent school has a board of trustees, a parent association and a student parliament. The board of trustees has a consultative role and provides guidance and quality assurance.

Qatar now has curriculum standards comparable to international benchmarks in Arabic, English, mathematics and science, for kindergarten and all 12 grades. Religious studies is also taught as a main subject. Using this framework, the Qatar Comprehensive Evaluation Assessment

is administered annually to students in every independent school and all schools are to be reviewed every three years.

Competition with the growing private sector involved in education is being encouraged, and a voucher programme was instituted in 2008. The programme is intended to remove financial barriers and allow children from relatively disadvantaged households access to a select group of private schools that meet rigorous quality criteria (SEC 2010a). The Supreme Education Council is reviewing the voucher system to determine the feasibility of extending it to a broader group of students.

Following a comprehensive sectorwide review of the education and training sector, including a situation analysis, diagnostic studies and regional and international benchmarking, an education and training sector strategy for 2011–2016 was formulated in 2010. The priority programmes and projects were subsequently incorporated into the National Development Strategy 2011–2016. The proposed outcomes build on and extend the Education for a New Era reforms and include initiatives in the core areas of education and training—namely cross-cutting education and training; general education (that is, K-12); higher education; technical education and vocational training; and scientific research.

### **Vocational education**

Qatar provides relatively limited opportunities for young Qataris, especially girls, who seek a nonacademic alternative at the end of compulsory schooling. Only three public schools provide the technical and vocational secondary education that offers labour market-relevant qualification for boys: the Qatar Independent Technical School, the School of Commerce and the Qatar Religious Institute. Enrolment in these schools rose from 472 in 2006/2007 to 739 in 2009/2010, which still accounts for a small percentage of enrolment (SEC 2011b). In the future there are plans to provide technical and vocational options for girls.

The Qatar Independent Technical School, established in 2004, is the only technical secondary school in Qatar and offers boys ages 15–17 a three-year secondary programme that leads to a diploma. In 2011 the school enrolled 245 students. It follows the Australian Training and Further Education qualification framework and is run by Qatar Petroleum with an agreement with the Supreme Education Council. Around 30% of classroom time is allocated to hands-on workshop and laboratory training activities and students have access to a range of summer internships and industrial placements.

Since 2009 students have been eligible for a government scholarship. Graduates are guaranteed employment at Qatar Petroleum, and highly successful graduates can enter certain majors at Qatar University.

In 2011 the Supreme Education Council in partnership with Qatar Central Bank established the independent School of Commerce, for secondary school students to study business-related subjects. The School provides business and financial sector training as part of a curriculum dedicated to grooming candidates for purposeful roles in the country's financial sector. Qatar Central Bank supervises student training in coordination with many Qatari banks and coordinates directly with English and computer training institutes to provide students with fundamental training in these two areas.

In 2010/2011 the Qatar Religious Institute, established in 1913, became an independent religious school. The institute is a learning centre for students in grades 7–12 and provides specialized courses in Arabic studies, English and experimental sciences. The institution enrolls some 200-300 students, about 10% of them are Qataris.

One of Qatar's new international private schools, the Michael E. DeBakey High School for Health Professions, might also be considered a vocational/technical school for preparatory and secondary students seeking a career in medical science. In 2011 the school enrolled some 150 students.

### **Post-secondary education**

Qatar has several post-secondary and tertiary education institutions that offer formal education for secondary school graduates. These courses lead to a professional diploma or associate degree. Four such institutions are:

- *College of the North Atlantic-Qatar* with about 2,300 students in 2011, opened in 2002 as a post-secondary institution combining a Canadian curriculum and industry expertise in health sciences, information technology, engineering technology and business studies.
- *Community College of Qatar* opened in September 2010 with 300 full-time and 150 part-time students and plans for considerable expansion. Run in partnership with Houston Community College, it offers technical and liberal arts programmes and is open to students of all ages.
- *Qatar Aeronautical College* was founded in 1975 as the Civil Aviation College of the Gulf States in partnership with Qatar Airways. The institution graduates some 50 Qatari pilots a year and prepares students to take on other roles within the aviation industry, such as engineering,

passenger services, airport operations and cargo.

- *Ahmed Bin Mohamed Military College* operated in cooperation with Sandhurst Royal Military Academy in the United Kingdom, offers a curriculum in military studies and science. Since the first graduating class in 2001, six cohorts of cadets from the armed forces, Ministry of Interior and other security forces have graduated with bachelor degrees.

There are many other initiatives at the post-secondary level, including the Qatar Finance and Business Academy (Qatar Financial Centre Authority) established in 2009 and the proposed Vocational Education and Training College.

### Tertiary education

The Emir of Qatar, as Supreme Head of Qatar University, initiated reforms in 2003 to turn Qatar University into a model national university, one that would meet the needs of a new generation of young Qataris (RAND 2009b). Qatar University is the country's oldest public university and caters to most Qatari university students, albeit a slightly declining proportion. By 2009 all the principal recommendations had either been completed or were in progress and most academic programmes, including biological sciences, chemistry and business and economics, had received prestigious international accreditations. Qatar University is also becoming a leading research hub with the recent establishment of the Social and Economic Survey Research Institute, the Environmental Studies Centre, the Gas Processing Centre, the Office of Academic Research, the Materials Technology Unit and the Office of Quality Management.

In 1998 Qatar Foundation through a visionary and forward-looking initiative, established Education City, a state-of-the-art international campus and learning environment. Initially occupied by the Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar, by 2011 it had expanded to include nine government-assisted branch campuses of globally recognised universities, offering bachelor's and master's degrees in various fields of specialization (figure 2.2). Education City universities currently account for almost 10% of all Qatari tertiary enrolments (see table 2.2). Admission standards and accreditation of programmes are the same as those in their mother institutions in Europe and the United

States. The Academic Bridge Programme provides secondary school graduates with English pre-university courses to help them meet university entry requirements. The fees for Qatari students at these institutions are paid by the government or a corporate sponsor such as Qatar Petroleum.

The reform of Qatar University and the creation and growth of Education City universities have created outstanding opportunities and choices for Qatari youth to study at a higher education institution of international repute. Almost all programmes are internationally accredited and courses support Qatar's aim of equipping and preparing graduates for the needs of a knowledge-based economy. Yet there is considerable scope for improvement in participation and performance.

In addition to Qatar University and Education City universities, which in 2010 came under the umbrella of Hamad bin Khalifa University, Qatar has two private universities:

- *Stenden University Qatar*, which took its present form in 2009, specializes in four-year undergraduate bachelor programmes accredited by the Dutch Flemish Accreditation Organization. It offers degree courses in international hospitality and tourism management, and has its own foundation course for students who do not meet its entry requirements. It has a small international campus with students from numerous countries.
- *University of Calgary-Qatar* provides education in clinical practice and family healthcare through its nursing programme, to help bolster Qatar's health and medical resources. It offers a bachelor of nursing degree for post-secondary students, or transfer students from the College of the North Atlantic-Qatar's pre-nursing programme.

Qatar has outstanding infrastructure in place for scientific research with programmes to draw young Qatari researchers and to build partnerships with universities and businesses. Under the leadership of Qatar Foundation, in 2011 the Qatar National Research Fund awarded 58 research grants worth \$53 million to scientists at four Qatar Foundation universities, Texas A&M University-Qatar, Weill Cornell Medical College-Qatar, Carnegie Mellon University-Qatar and Virginia Commonwealth University-Qatar. The fund offers grants of \$20,000–\$350,000 a year for up to three

Figure 2.2

Education City universities catering to a knowledge-based economy and innovation

Enabler	University	Field of specialisation	Research
Academic Bridge Programme 2001 (post-secondary foundation)	Weill Cornell Medical College 2002	▪ Biomedical research and healthcare targeting women and child health; utilizing molecular and genetic medicine approaches	Scientific and technical
	Carnegie Mellon 2004	▪ Computer science and management	
	Texas A&M 2007	▪ Science and engineering, research in environment, process safety, petroleum reservoirs, telecommunication and power	
	Georgetown School of Foreign Service 2005	▪ International and regional studies, public policy	Policy, social, science and business
	Northwestern University 2008	▪ Journalism and communications programme	
	Faculty of Islamic Studies 2007	▪ Relate Islamic legacy to modern challenges and solutions	
	HEC Paris 2010	▪ Executive education programmes in financial management; fostering strategic innovation; and leadership and change	
	Virginia Commonwealth 1998	▪ Fashion, textiles design and testing, design sector mapping	Innovative design
	University College London Qatar 2011	▪ Research in archaeology, conservation, cultural heritage and museology	Culture and heritage

years, as well as seed funding for students of up to \$10,000 a year. The grants encourage multidisciplinary research in medicine, biotechnology, environmental sciences, information technology, nanotechnology and engineering.

Recognizing the importance of promoting a culture of scientific research at an early age, the Qatar National Research Fund in cooperation with the Supreme Education Council launched a research programme for high school students. It aims to encourage research among students in secondary schools (public, independent and private), under their teachers' supervision.

Qatar Science and Technology Park promotes corporate research, technological development and commercialization through engagement with international industry leaders and research institutions and provides guidance about how research projects can be commercialized and identifies the commercial potential of each funded project. This has helped Qatar develop, promote and attract technology production and investment in cutting-edge research and development providing Qatar's youth with outstanding research opportunities (figure 2.3). Qatar's National Development Strategy 2011–2016 foresees an even more productive scientific and research system with the development of a national strategy that defines priority areas for scientific research and development, and an increase in the number of scientific research publications and patents.

Figure 2.3

Qatar's Science and Technology Park expanding cutting-edge research opportunities for youth

Research programme	Objective	Partners
Development and deployment of cost effective sustainable energy technologies (2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean energy research and development</li> <li>• Advanced cooling technologies</li> <li>• Renewable power generation</li> <li>• Energy storage</li> <li>• Carbon capture and sequestration</li> <li>• Water treatment systems</li> </ul>	Green Gullf, Chevron Energy Solutions and Water Sustainability Centre (Conocco Phillips and General Electric)
Research on transportation solutions for integrated mobility and extreme climates (2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobile energy unites in light rail systems</li> <li>• Understanding impact of extreme environmental conditions on urban mobility</li> </ul>	Siemens and Williams Technology Centre
Solar energy technology (2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solar carbon black reactor for solar thermal production of carbon black and hydrogen from Methane with the minimum CO2</li> </ul>	Chevron and Green Gulf Inc
Solar technology (2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solar cracking reactor for solar-thermal production of hydrogen from methane</li> <li>• Reduction of CO2 emissions</li> </ul>	Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft and TAMUQ
Research on LNG safety, sulfur, and environmental management (2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carbon capture and sequestration</li> <li>• Reduction of CO2 emissions</li> </ul>	Qatar Petroleum, Qatar Shell Research Centre and ExxonMobil

## Educational quality and student incentives

With the possible exception of secondary vocational education, there are plentiful opportunities for young Qataris to benefit from an education system that is generally well resourced at all levels. Detailed analysis of indicators such as pupil/teacher ratios, class sizes, access to information and communication technology (ICT), time spent learning per pupil and so on confirms that the *quantity* of inputs can largely be ruled out as a reason for poor student performance (GSDP 2010b). The education system has struggled to keep up with the demand for school places in a period of rapid increase in the school going population. The *quality* of the learning process below the tertiary level remains a challenge despite initiatives such as the use of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), International Language Testing System (IELTS) and the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) to better prepare students for university.

### National curriculum standards

Though formal education standards, met by a limited number of students, exist, there is no detailed national curriculum. Providing such a curriculum, setting out the steps required to meet the established standards and offering detailed guidance to teachers on how to effectively instruct students (for example, by specifying lesson plans, appropriate textbooks or learning tools) would give teachers a much-needed framework for planning their activities to meet their students' needs. Opportunities for digitizing these processes and for using e-assessments are available.

### Language of instruction

The issues relating to the language of instruction are complex. To support the move towards the establishment of a knowledge-based economy and ensure that secondary graduates do not require a foundation year prior to university

entry, English is used to teach mathematics and science from grade 1 of primary school. However, not all primary school teachers are fluent in English, and only a few can teach it as a second language to the level required for the mathematics and science curricula. Moreover, independent schools can choose their language of instruction as long as they follow the standard curriculum. Some instruct in Arabic and some in English, although the Supreme Education Council has encouraged them to teach mathematics and science in English. Private Arabic schools teach in Arabic, while international schools teach in English or another language. Overall, many Qatari students as well as many teachers continue to have problems with instruction in English.

### **Teacher quality**

International studies strongly suggest that teacher quality is the most important determinant of the overall quality of an education system. International comparisons suggest that teachers in Qatar are, on average, better qualified academically but more often lack professional teaching qualifications. Just over 90% of Qatari students are taught by teachers with a university degree, compared with the Progress in International Literacy Study (PIRLS) international average of 60% (SEC 2007).

In independent schools, only 62% of teachers have a formal teaching qualification (68% across all school types), while the PIRLS 2007 international average was 98% (SEC 2009). Majority of teachers are non-Qataris (70% in 2009/2010) (SEC 2011b) which tends to be linked to issues of high turnover and effects on students' culture and values.

The lack of professional teaching skills is a particular problem in the absence of a detailed national curriculum. Teachers in independent schools are highly autonomous and are encouraged to develop innovative strategies in line with the student-centred approach to classroom teaching instituted as part of the Education for a New Era reforms. Curriculum standards were designed on the assumption that teaching would develop the research and analytical thinking skills of pupils, enhance their ability to solve problems and prepare them for competition in the best international universities. Not surprising, many students struggle with the higher demands of self-managed work, while many teachers lack the basic lesson-planning skills required to function effectively under the new system (Knight and others 2010).

While in-service training is available, interviews with teachers indicate that it is not addressing their most urgent training needs, such as effective professional development of their

English language skills. There are also limited incentives for teachers to improve their overall performance. While the overwhelming majority of schools report that they regularly evaluate teacher performance, there is no clear link from evaluation, professional development or improvements in practical teaching skills to financial or nonfinancial incentives. In 2011 the government substantially increased teachers' salaries and allowances. All schools regularly conduct performance assessments of their teachers linked to their professional development. These measures are aimed at helping to reduce teacher turnover. The Supreme Education Council in collaboration with Qatar University also established a sponsorship programme for high school graduates planning to become teachers.

Schools with autonomy in expenditure and staffing, whether in the public or private sectors, will not necessarily employ the best-qualified teachers if they demand substantially higher salaries than adequately qualified colleagues. This is a particular issue in a country such as Qatar, where schools have relatively unhindered access to the global labour market (RAND 2009c). Unsurprisingly, turnover of teachers in Qatar's schools is high, partly associated with non-Qataris being offered only short term contracts. More generally, international experience suggests that greater autonomy, while providing substantial opportunities for innovation and adaptation to meet the needs of specific student populations, widens performance inequalities between schools, a tendency that is reinforced by competition among parents to obtain places in the best schools for their children (Bunar 2010).

### **Information and communication technology in education and training**

ICT is a powerful enabler of successful education and training, and the ability to use ICT is a necessary skill for youth entering modern employment. Qatar has invested significantly in ICT infrastructure in K-12 schools and by 2010, almost all students have access to computers. In independent schools as few as five students share one school computer. Qatari students enjoy access to computers at a rate comparable to that in European countries. Together with the Supreme Education Council, ictQATAR has implemented several initiatives to make ICT an integral part of the student's learning experience, ranging from providing children with tablet PCs and learning software, to developing e-content for student self-learning programmes, to developing integrated student data management systems for teachers, principals, students and parents. Further enhancements are planned and the National Development Strategy 2011–2016 proposes an integrated strategy linking



ICT use in K-12 education with higher education, technical education and vocational training, as well as modernizing administrative processes and education information systems.

### Motivation to learn

Effective learning requires collaboration between good teachers and willing students. Although 65% of secondary school students report that they want to achieve a higher level degree, many fail to achieve this ambition (SEC 2009). Several quantitative indicators suggest that few students are highly motivated. On average, Qatari students spend approximately 50% fewer hours per week doing homework than the international average. They also exhibit a high degree of absenteeism, amounting to 15% of school days (compared to 3-4% in the United States).

One oft-cited reason for students' apparent lack of motivation is that many Qataris are able to secure employment and obtain a relatively high standard of living regardless of their qualifications. The availability of secure, prestigious, and well paying public sector jobs, including in the police force and military, that do not require post-secondary schooling may act as a disincentive to pursuing further education (RAND 2007). Growing affluence has meant that many Qatari parents have accumulated significant material possessions in a short period, which provides little incentive for them to encourage their children to successfully complete secondary and university studies.

The most important reasons for underachievement of male students are all family-related, as reflected in a 2007 study (LMS 2007). Respondents noted that young Qatari men are typically provided material wealth without having to work for it. Many families were focused on employment opportunities rather than on education qualifications or long-term goals. They insist that their sons seek employment when they have completed high school.

Much of the discussion around educational incentives has focused on young male Qataris (box 2.2). Less consideration has been directed at the underlying motivations of Qatari girls and young women, who have consistently displayed substantially higher participation rates and performance in higher education (see figure 2.5 and 2.10). Largely for cultural reasons, less-educated Qatari women have limited employment opportunities. Post-secondary qualifications are seen as one means of gaining access to clerical or professional employment in culturally acceptable government posts. In recent years a virtuous circle has been established in Qatar as in other Gulf Cooperation Council countries, with governments supporting the entry of women into the labour force and their increasing visibility, encouraging others to join them (Willoughby 2004).

#### Box 2.2

#### Overcoming the gender gap: increasing the retention of boys

Rising educational attainment by girls not only contributes to human capital formation and higher productivity, but also provides them with the capacity to make decisions and broadens their life choices. Almost all Qatari girls are enrolled at primary and preparatory school and enrolment rates are high at the secondary level. But it is at the tertiary level that females excel, substantially surpassing the participation and achievements of their male counterparts. For example, in 2010 the ratio of women to men studying mathematics and sciences at Qatar University was six to one.

The gender challenge for Qatar is to increase male enrolment in higher education. Significant challenges remain in technical education and training. Despite the huge importance of technical competencies to the

Qatari economy, attitudes towards acquiring these competencies through vocational training are often negative, and a radical change of perspective is needed if significant numbers of young Qataris are to participate in this segment of the knowledge-based economy.

Linked to this situation is the entrenched gender gap that results from the relatively low retention rates of Qatari men in secondary school and subsequent educational programmes, especially in subject areas such as mathematics and science that constitute the basis of most technical training and competence.

Source: GSDP (2011).

## Educational participation and achievement

Substantial investments have been made to modernize the national education system through massive investments in infrastructure, technology and other inputs. How have these investments affected the educational performance of young people?

### Trends and patterns in the education performance of Qataris

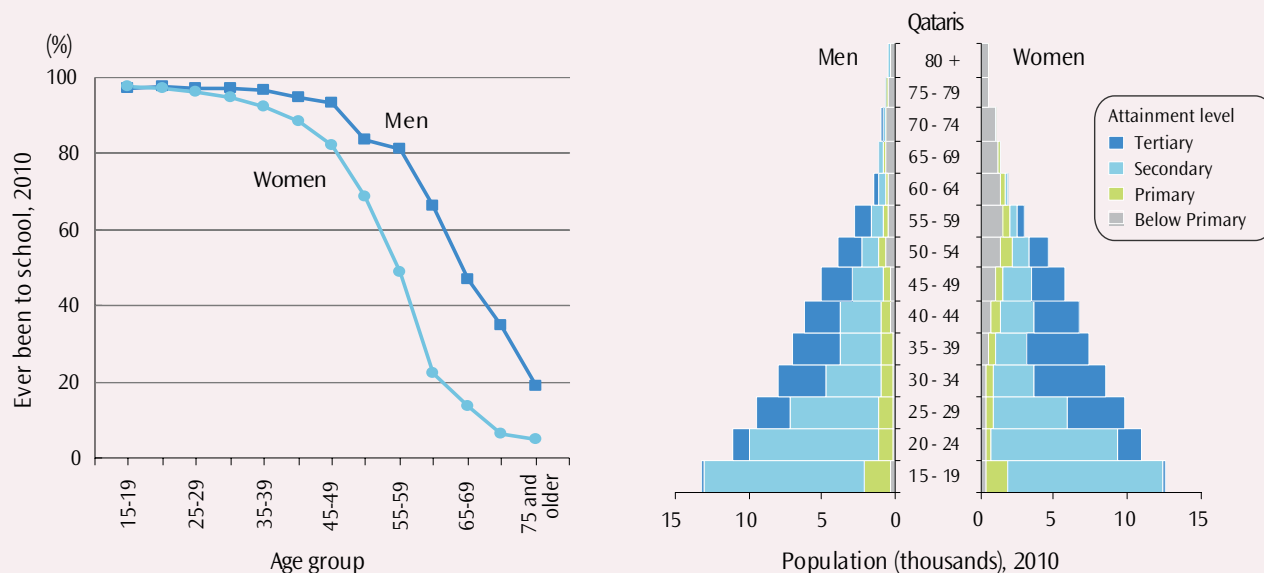
Whereas it is now compulsory for all Qataris to undertake at least nine years of education, among those ages 50 and older a substantial proportion (almost 34% of men and 60% of women) reported in the 2010 census that they had never been to school. This has given rise to a situation in which educational attainment has a high inverse correlation with age (figure 2.4).

### Rising attainment levels

There has been a strong upward trend in the proportion of Qataris attaining higher level qualifications. The expansion of education opportunities in Qatar at all levels can be seen in the progressively higher education attainment levels of the adult Qatari population over time. By 2010 some 77% of Qatari men ages 25 and older and 70% of Qatari women in this age group had attained at least secondary education compared with 57% and 49% in 2001 (figure 2.5). This situation is mirrored in the rapidly declining proportion of those ages 25 and older with below secondary education, which fell from 43% to 23% for men and from 51% to 30% for women. The gender difference is noteworthy: among older youth in the 20–24 year age group, a smaller proportion of women (13%) than men (23%) had an educational attainment level below secondary in 2001. The gap had narrowed somewhat by 2010, with women at 11% and men at 7%.

Figure 2.4

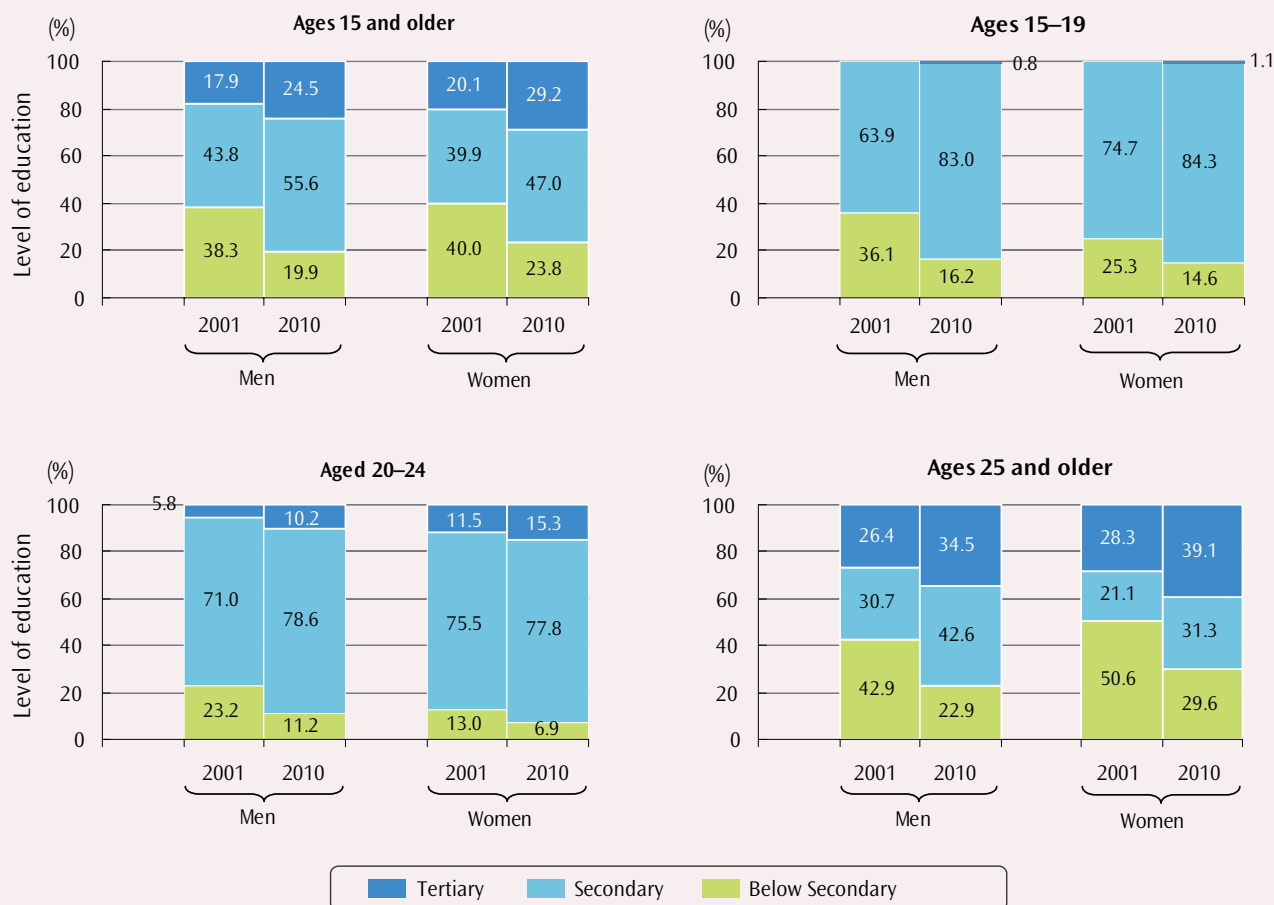
Today's Qatari youth are better educated than older generations



Source: QSA (2011a).

Figure 2.5

Educational attainment of Qatari youth has improved markedly over time



Source: QSA (2002 and 2011a).

Among younger cohorts, Qatari women have achieved far higher educational attainment levels than men of the same age (figure 2.6). They outperform men at all ages under 40. Older women with less education are being succeeded as they age by their better educated young counterparts. The goal of empowering women in education is steadily being realized and has implications in broader issues relating to gender equality among today’s youth.

Another way of assessing progress in educational outcomes is through the average length of time spent in the educational system at all levels. Younger generations are spending more time than older generations in education. For example, of Qataris reaching ages 25–29 in 2010, the mean number of years spent in education was 12 years compared with 9.3 years among those of the same ages in 2001.

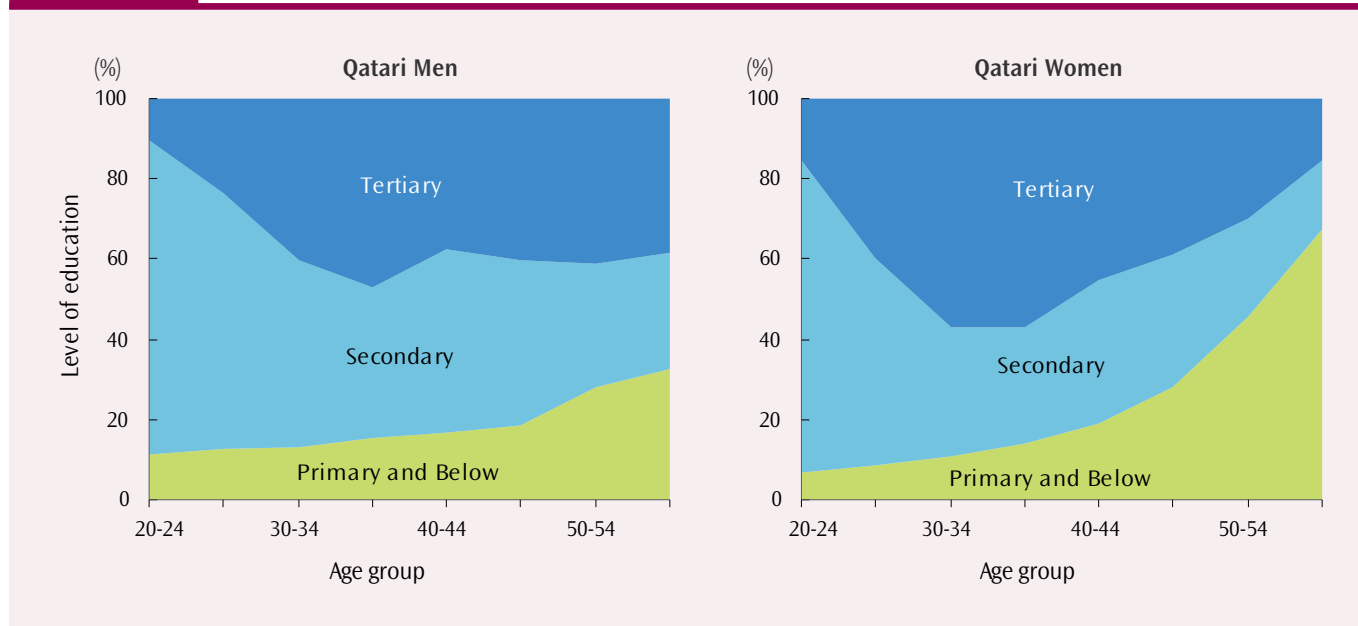
**Illiteracy**

Among youth illiteracy is largely a phenomenon of the past. Over 99% of young Qataris are literate, which has led to an overall decline in illiteracy in the Qatari population from 11% in 2001 to 5% in 2010 (table 2.1). Among male youth ages 15–19 illiteracy rates declined from 1.7% in 2001 to 0.4% in 2010, which is lower than the rate typically quoted for countries in North America and Western Europe (UIS 2009). Rates are also similar for men and women.

The relatively small number of illiterate Qatari men and women are concentrated among the older age groups and reflect historical differences in education opportunities as well as gender disparities that prevailed when these people were of school age. Compared with the Middle East and North Africa average of 15% for men and 30% for women, Qatar’s

**Figure 2.6**

**Educational attainment of young Qatari women far exceeds that of men, 2010**



Source: QSA (2011a).

**Table 2.1**

**Low levels of illiteracy among Qatari youth (%)**

Age group	Men			Women			Total		
	2001	2004	2010	2001	2004	2010	2001	2004	2010
15–19	1.7	0.8	0.4	1.6	1.5	0.3	1.6	1.1	0.3
20–24	1.2	1.2	0.4	2.0	2.3	0.8	1.6	1.7	0.6
Others	9.2	7.2	3.6	21.3	16.7	10.9	15.3	12.0	7.4
<b>Total</b>	7.0	5.5	2.5	15.7	12.6	7.6	11.4	9.0	5.1

Source: QSA (2002, 2005 and 2011a).

rates are low and the country does not show the same gender imbalance that many other Arab countries do (World Bank 2008). Illiteracy is thus no longer a priority development area for Qatar.

### Increasing enrolment and improving learning outcomes

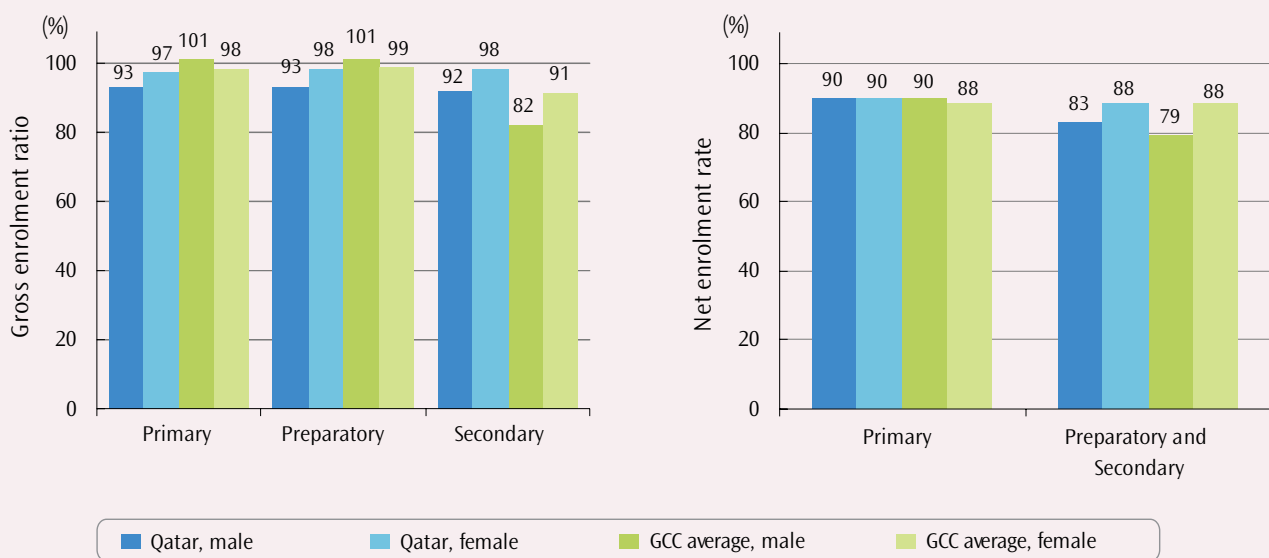
The past two decades have seen large increases in school enrolments at primary, preparatory and secondary enrolment for Qatari boys and girls. Most students now attend school for the compulsory nine years, and demand for secondary

schooling (grades 10–12) is high. Qatar’s achieving almost universal education can be attributed to several factors, including government investment in education infrastructure and growing realization by Qatari parents of the need for and value of schooling their children.

Gross enrolment ratios for Qatari nationals are in line with the Gulf Cooperation Council average for all phases of education. Qataris’ gross secondary enrolment ratio is above the Gulf Cooperation Council average (figure 2.7).

Figure 2.7

**Qatari enrolments in primary, preparatory and secondary in line with or above GCC benchmarks in 2009/2010**



Note: Gross enrolment ratio is the total number of enrolled students in a given phase of education as a percent of the population in the defined age group for that phase. Net enrolment ratio is the number of enrolled students in the defined age group for a given phase of education as a percent of the population in the same age group. Gulf Cooperation Council averages should be interpreted with caution because of frequent changes in the size and composition of the expatriate population in some countries. Source: UIS (2011); Qatari data computed from QSA (2011e).

But there is a marked gap between the primary/preparatory and secondary enrolment ratios mainly because of the almost automatic promotion of children through the end of preparatory schooling. The net enrolment ratio for Qataris is above the Gulf Cooperation Council average in primary education and comparable in preparatory and secondary education.

Overall, Qatar has significantly increased secondary enrolment since 1999 and improved on an already high primary enrolment ratio. And participation of boys and girls has been roughly equal at both levels. But the substantial differences between net and gross enrolment rates reflect a tendency for children older than the defined age group to attend each level of education, suggesting late entry to primary school and grade repetition.

Since the implementation of the Education for a New Era reforms, primary and preparatory school dropout rates have fallen significantly, as students are more easily promoted to the next grade, at least until the end of compulsory schooling. At the end of the 2009/2010 school year 99.6%

of primary school students, 99.2% of preparatory school students and 92.8% of secondary school students passed the final exam in the first or second session (SEC 2011a).

Qatar provides good general education, but is less successful in providing high-quality learning outcomes, as measured by schooling success rates and national and international assessment results. Students who want to move on to tertiary education must often participate in foundation courses to catch up on topics they have not covered. Many lack essential skills in English, science and mathematics that would enable them to take advantage of a growing range of high-quality post-secondary education opportunities.

**Student choice of subjects**

At a time when Qatar is moving towards developed status economically and when a more diversified economy requires a labour force with wide-ranging skills in science and technology, fewer graduates from secondary schools and the national university are qualifying in the appropriate subjects (Said, 2010) (box 2.3).

### Box 2.3

### Declining student interest in science and mathematics

The declining interest in, and uptake of, science subjects in secondary school and tertiary education in Qatar has recently reached serious levels leading to the closure of major science and mathematics programmes at Qatar University (the only national university offering such programmes) at a time when the demand for science and technology graduates has increased. These skills and qualifications are needed more than ever to supply the demand for skilled teachers, scientists, researchers and technologists, and to meet the requirements of advanced economic and technological development.

Declining interest in mathematics and science in Qatar's schools and colleges may be attributed to a combination of interrelated factors, most important of which is the lack of qualified teachers, the complexity associated with

introducing English as a medium for instruction, poor career counselling and the weak link between schools, workplace and research centres. There is also the lack of knowledge and understanding of the importance of mathematics and science to every day life, as well as insufficient Qatar role models in these disciplines.

In the learning process as a whole, the most effective role is that of the teacher who can markedly influence students' desire and interest in science and mathematics. Students must be motivated and encouraged through a meaningful learning experience that is related to their life and environment. Successful reforms in mathematics and science teaching require major changes in educational, cultural and social values. A new approach is called for.

*Source:* Adapted from Said (2010).

Qatar's education system has curriculum standards in science and mathematics which are in accordance with international standards. Students participate in international tests to assess their performance in these two subjects.

Between 2000/2001 and 2009/2010 the share of school grade 12 graduates in the science stream in former Ministry of Education schools declined from 28% to just 8%. Lack of harmonization between the outputs of education and training on the one hand and of labour market needs on the other is a prevailing problem that all Arab countries face, despite their differences (UNESCWA 2009b). Many private sector occupations show little prospect of recruiting youth or more experienced Qatari workers who are qualified and willing to work in this sector. A public service career and the requisite education qualifications have much greater appeal to many students.

#### Student performance on national assessments

Since 2005 students in grades 4–11 in independent schools have been tested annually in Arabic and English, mathematics and science by the Qatar Comprehensive Educational Assessment, which evaluates performance relative to the standard curriculum set by the Supreme Education Council. The language of testing depends on the language of instruction at the school (Rand 2009). In 2011 religious studies have been added to these tests. Over time, the results have shown improvement.

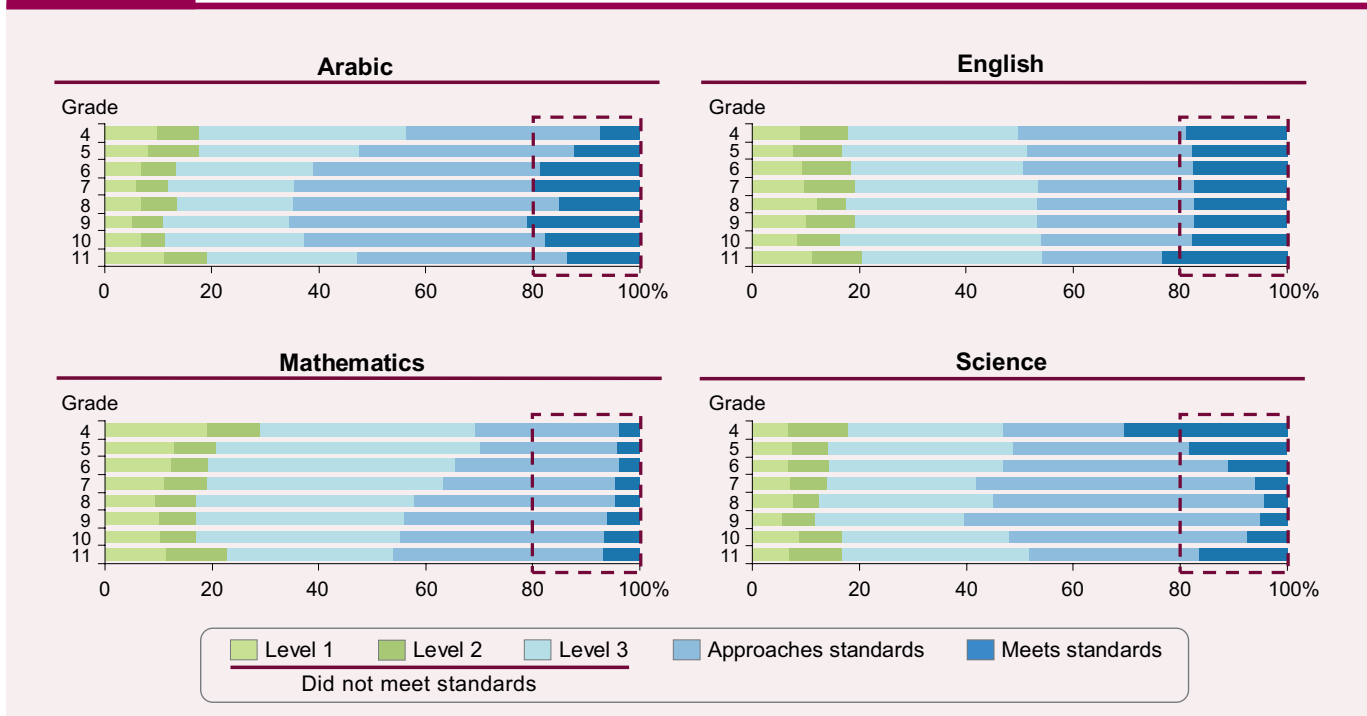
The results of 2010/2011 relative to the previous two years show that there has been a significant increase in performance for all subjects (figure 2.8). For example, in the science test in 2010/2011, on average 13% of the students (grade 4–11) meet standards, whereas the corresponding figure in the previous two years, was just 1%. It is unclear to what extent the changes reflect real increases in performance, or revisions in the levels of the tests.

The Qatar Senior School Certificate is administered annually for students leaving secondary school in Islamic studies, Arabic language, English as a second language, mathematics, chemistry, biology and physics. It is based on the curriculum standard for grade 12. The certificate was introduced in 2007 and covers all independent schools. In 2010/2011 some 10,000 students participated (SEC 2011d). Performance varies by subject and sex (figure 2.9). Student performance was weaker in science subjects and English. Female scores were 20 points higher than male scores.

As a majority of students fail in the Qatar Comprehensive Educational Assessment in grades 4–11, it may be considered surprising that many students perform well on the Qatar Senior School certificate assessment. One reason may be that 40% of the certificate results are based on a school-internal assessment, and only 60% are externally evaluated.

**Figure 2.8**

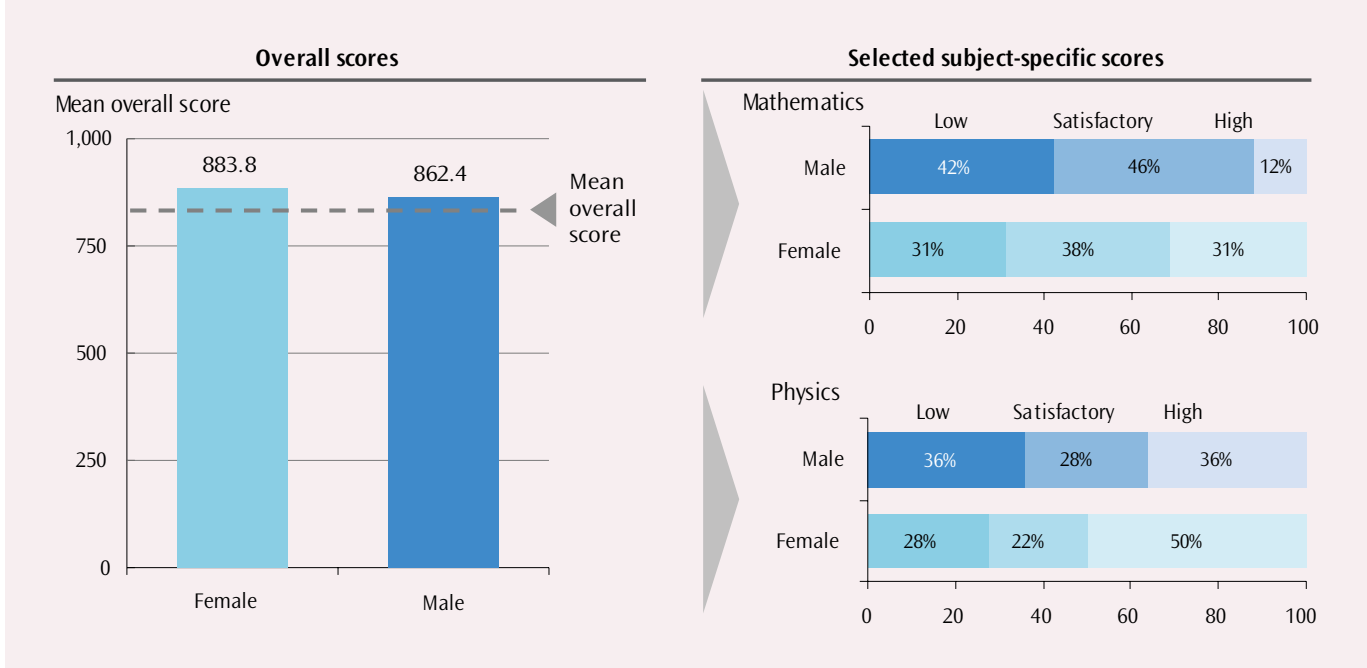
**Student achievement on the 2010/2011 Qatar Comprehensive Educational Assessment test**



Source: SEC (2011c).

**Figure 2.9**

**Female students scored much higher than male students on the 2008/2009 Qatar Senior School Certificate**



Source: SEC (2009b)

## Student performance on international assessments

Qatar's schools have participated in international tests to assess student performance against international benchmarks. Student performance on international assessments<sup>2</sup> is similarly below expectations. The overwhelming majority of students in Qatar are classified in the lowest performance level on these assessments.

- The 2009 Programme for International Student Assessment showed slight improvements in average proficiency in reading, mathematical and scientific literacy over the 2006 test among secondary students in Qatar (table 2.2)
- In the 2007 Progress in International Literacy Study, Qatari students in grade 4 scored 353 points, compared with the 40 country average of 500 points. Only Kuwait, Morocco and South Africa scored lower. The study results also show that all students in Qatar, particularly boys, report a high number of hours per day

spent watching television and playing electronic games compared with the study average: these activities are assumed to come at the expense of reading.

- In the 2007 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Studies, the performance of Qatari students was low in mathematics and science in grade 4 and somewhat better, though still below the international average in grade 8.

Girls outperformed boys in all three tests, most notably in 2006 and 2009 Programme for International Student Assessment. Gender differences are most pronounced in independent schools. Qatar has the second highest gender difference in reading achievement (+37 points after Kuwait) (PIRLS 2007). Qatari-born expatriate students outperformed Qatari students, and the performance gap widened with increasing levels of parental education. Foreign-born expatriate students had even higher scores, outperforming Qatari-born expatriates by 40 points and Qataris by 80 points (SEC 2007).

**Table 2.2**

### Qatar secondary students' test results in science and mathematics have improved slightly but remain below international benchmarks

Country	Mean score		Percentile <sup>a</sup>		Mean score		Percentile <sup>a</sup>	
	2006	2009	2006	2009	2006	2009	2006	2009
	<b>Science</b>				<b>Mathematics</b>			
Finland	563	554	2	3	548	541	4	9
Japan	531	539	11	8	523	529	18	14
Australia	527	527	14	15	520	514	21	23
United Kingdom	515	514	25	25	495	492	42	43
United States	489	502	51	35	474	487	61	48
Italy	475	489	63	54	462	483	67	54
Dubai (United Arab Emirates)	--	466	--	63	--	453	--	63
Thailand	421	425	81	75	417	419	77	77
Jordan	422	415	79	78	384	387	89	86
<b>Qatar</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>95</b>

Note: 57 countries participated in 2006, and 65 countries participated in 2009.

a. Percentile values denote the percentage of participating countries that had a higher mean score than that indicated for the given country.

Source: OECD, PISA 2009 Database. statLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932343342>. Accessed 30 September 2011

<sup>2</sup>The three main international student assessments are the Programme for International Student Assessment, which surveys 15-year-old students in mathematics, science and reading (all school types in Qatar participated for the first time in 2006 and scored the second lowest of 57 countries; the Progress in International Literacy Study, which surveys students in grade 4 (all students in semi-independent, independent and private Arabic schools in Qatar were tested for the first time in 2007 in Arabic and scored the fourth lowest of 40 countries); and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Studies, which surveys students in grades 4 and 8 in mathematics and science (Qatari schools participated for the first time in 2006 and scored the lowest and second lowest of 70 countries).



## Voices of youth: improving primary and secondary education to meet higher education requirements

Qatar has been blessed with many natural resources. However, there is no resource as significant as the knowledge and education of Qatar's people—its human capital. Thus investing in human resources by building a world-accredited and world-renowned education system is a national goal.

So far much of the focus has been on higher education, and Qatar's new higher education institutions have produced bright and ambitious professionals and scholars. Yet I believe that a greater segment of Qatari youth than is currently the case should utilize higher educational resources and reap their benefits. To achieve this, greater focus needs to be given to preparing children at primary and secondary school.

While participating in university-sponsored programmes that bring together middle school or high school students, I have noticed that there is a divide between the strengths of students attending private schools compared with those in public schools. While higher education institutions continue to strengthen and raise standards, it seems as though public sector primary and secondary education institutions are stagnating. They are not producing sufficient students that meet the requirements for admission to higher education and who will be able to excel at university.

Primary and secondary education institutions need to keep pace with the accelerated national and international developments in higher education. Programmes, such as Qatar University's Foundation Programme and Qatar Foundation's Academic Bridge Programme, do help address this problem by bridging the admission gap. However, I believe that much more work can be done at the primary and secondary levels.

As Qatar's labour market becomes more competitive and complex, and as university graduates continue to be in high demand, we should make sure that nobody is left behind due to low primary and secondary education achievements. If we do there will be a socioeconomic divide. In many countries that are not as resource rich as Qatar, such social divides appear inevitable.

While more school reforms could be one solution, grassroots initiatives are also necessary to change the educational culture. University students with stronger educational backgrounds have a part to play and could be involved in strengthening the education culture. Initiatives could include summer programmes, conferences, expanded extracurricular activities, public classes or lectures, community service projects that use human resources from all schools and more intra-Qatar competitions.

*Source:* Adapted from discussions with Georgetown University School of Foreign Service—Qatar students (2011).

### Access to tertiary education

With the rapid growth in private universities and technical colleges, Qatari youth now have more tertiary education choices. As expected, this has led to changes in the pattern of tertiary enrolment. While most Qatari post-secondary students who continue their education go to Qatar University, increasing numbers are being enrolled in private universities, up from 260 students in 2005/2006 to 800 in 2009/2010, and technical colleges, up from 1,200 to 2,050.

Consequently the share of Qatari tertiary students at Qatar University has fallen from 80% in 2005/2006 to 65% in 2009/2010 (table 2.3).

The enrolment pattern in tertiary education among Qatari men and women differs markedly (table 2.4). Most Qatari men (56%) enrol in technical colleges. By contrast, far more Qatari women (81%) enrol in Qatar University; only a few opt for technical college.

**Table 2.3**

**The share of Qatari tertiary students who go to private universities and technical colleges is increasing (%)**

Year	Qatar University	Private universities	Technical colleges	Total (number)
2005/2006	79.8	3.5	16.7	100 (7,450)
2006/2007	74.6	5.2	20.2	100 (7,780)
2006/2008	70.0	7.1	22.9	100 (8,240)
2008/2009	68.7	8.3	23.0	100 (8,150)
2009/2010	65.4	9.6	25.0	100 (8,220)
Average annual change, 2005/2006 to 2009/2010 (%)	-2.5	31.5	13.3	2.5

Source: QSA (2011e).

**Table 2.4**

**Among Qatari tertiary students, boys prefer technical colleges and girls universities, 2009/2010 (%)**

	Qatar University	Private universities	Technical colleges	Total (number)
Men	35	9	56	100 (2,740)
Women	81	10	9	100 (5,480)
Total	65	10	25	100 (8,220)

Source: QSA (2011e).

### Tertiary education levels

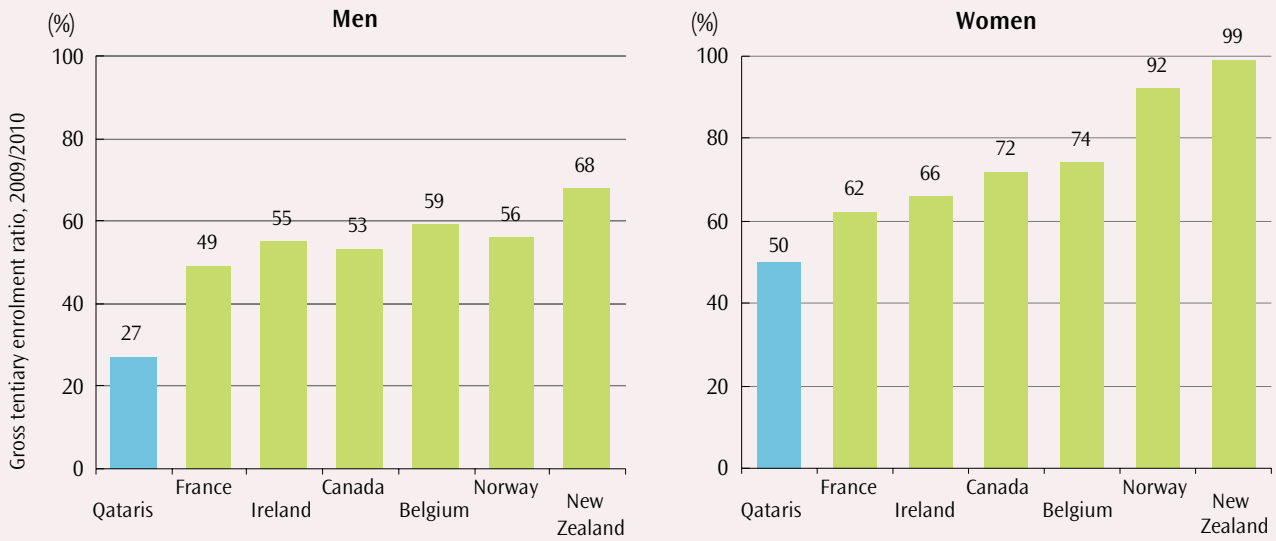
While secondary school enrolments have increased substantially over the last decade, tertiary enrolment levels remain low and there is a substantial gender gap. Gross tertiary enrolment ratios are 50% for women and 27% for men in 2010. The low Qatari tertiary enrolment ratios reflect low performance levels at the secondary level, high dropout rates from foundation programmes and a perceived lack of incentives for young people to invest time in higher education. Qatari tertiary enrolment rates compare unfavourably with those for selected OECD countries (figure 2.10). However, a substantial number of Qataris (predominantly boys) are undertaking tertiary education overseas, estimated at around 1,000–1,500 in 2010. These students are excluded in the estimates given in figure 2.10.

The number of Qatari youth obtaining Supreme Education Council scholarships for tertiary and higher education both locally and overseas is steadily increasing (figure 2.11).

There are also opportunities for postgraduate studies abroad for young Qataris, especially for men. Some 126 Qatari students (83 men and 43 women) obtained external scholarships for undergraduate and postgraduate studies in the 2010/2011 academic year. The United Kingdom, United States and Canada are the top three countries receiving Qatari students. Engineering (37.3%), business administration (31.0%) and the social sciences (7.9%) attracted the most Qatari students in 2010/2011. A study at Qatar University that tracked the 2004/05 cohort of newly enrolled Qatari students found that 45% dropped out within four years, compared with the OECD average of 38%.

**Figure 2.10**

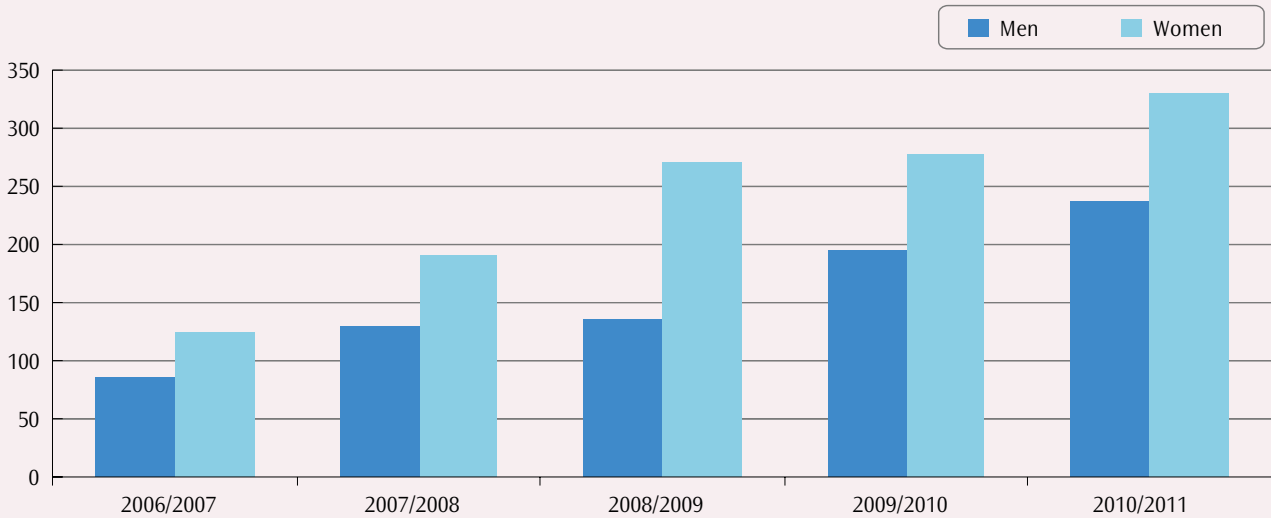
**Tertiary enrolment is especially low among Qatari men**



Source: QSA (2010a and 2011e), UIS (2011).

**Figure 2.11**

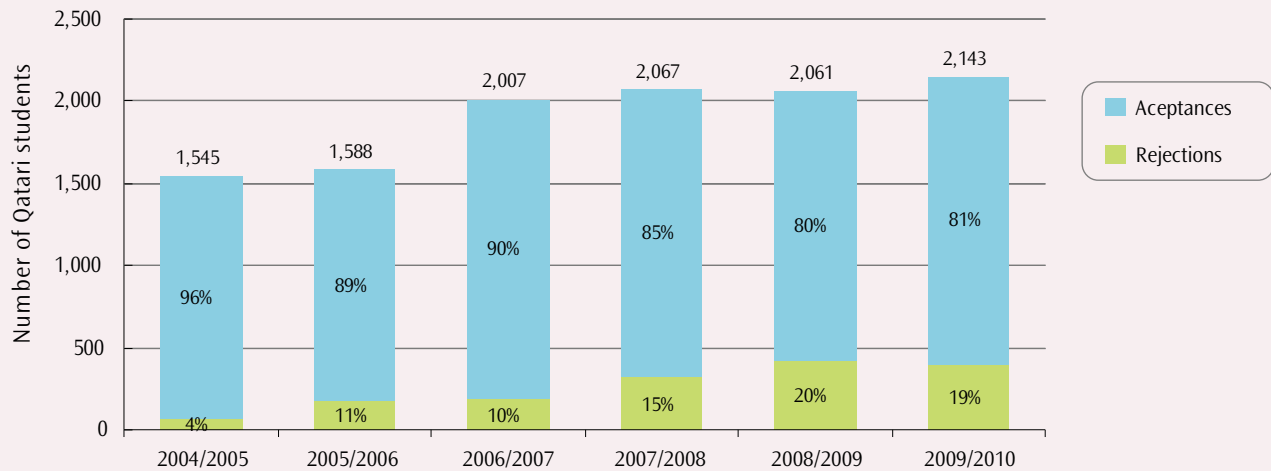
**Increasing numbers of Qataris age 15–24 are obtaining scholarships for local and overseas tertiary studies**



Source: Al Kuwari (2011).

Figure 2.12

Declining proportions of Qatari students are accepted to Qatar University



Source: QU (2011).

The acceptance rate of Qatari students to Qatar University has been declining over the past five years from 96% in 2004/2005 to 81% in 2009/2010 (figure 2.12). Of admitted students, only 6% gain direct entry into an undergraduate programme; the rest spend at least one year in the Foundation Programme. One reason for the decline in the acceptance rate is that the university raised entry requirements to ensure course completion. Complementary reforms of the K-12 system should in the future lead to students being able to meet those requirements, but the education system is still in transition.

Until recently, K-12 teaching methods focused primarily on memorization rather than critical thinking and analysis. Most classes were taught in Arabic, while lectures at university were taught in English. Streaming practices forced students to choose either an arts or a mathematics/sciences curriculum, making it difficult for some secondary graduates to pursue their desired higher education qualification. While these issues have been addressed in the K-12 reforms and in the National Development Strategy 2011-2016, the effects may not be evident for some years.

Many Qatari students fail to meet entry requirements for direct admission into an undergraduate programme at Qatar University (which accounts for the majority of university enrolments). Students need to achieve minimum standards in English (Test of English as a Foreign Language), mathematics (SAT, ACT) and computer skills (Internet and Computer Core Certificate). If they are unable to do so, they can be admitted to Qatar University's Foundation Programme. The low proportion of students gaining direct admission indicates the inadequate level of K-12 student preparedness for university education.

Since the Qatar University reforms, the number of graduates in engineering has increased. However, in 2010 39% graduated with specializations that do not cater to knowledge-based economy industries, a higher figure than in OECD countries (figure 2.13). Qatar's future economic success will require more knowledge-based economy graduates. Reforms at Qatar University and initiatives of Qatar Foundation are helping meet these needs. Graduates from the Education City universities are much more concentrated in knowledge-based economy subjects.

Figure 2.13

## About 39% of Qatar University graduates with non-knowledge-based economy specializations, 2009/2010

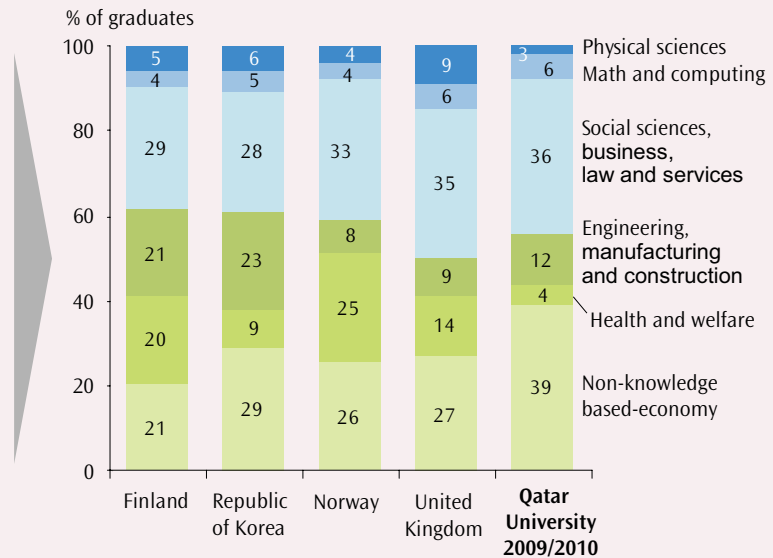
### Knowledge-based economy industries and specialisation

■ According to OECD, the following industries are considered part of a knowledge-based economy:

- High and medium-technology manufacturing
- Finance
- Insurance
- Telecommunication
- Business services
- Health
- Higher Education

■ Specialisations that cater to these industries at a university are:

- Sciences
- Business and economics
- Engineering
- Law
- Pharmacy and medicine
- Higher Education



Source: OECD (2011b) and QSA (2011e).

## Economic return to education

Experiences and skills acquired in school are influential throughout life and not just through higher earnings. Nonmonetary returns include better decisions about social responsibility; improved attitudes towards health, marriage and parenting; enhanced civic participation; and more openness to reforms. Nonetheless the economic return to education is an important dimension of schooling choice, both for government and for individuals themselves.

An econometric analysis undertaken by the Department of Social Development examined the relationship between education and labour market outcomes (box 2.5). The analysis based on the Qatar Statistics Authority's 2006/2007 Household Income and Expenditure Survey asked: "By how much will income be expected to rise as a result of one more year of formal schooling?"

The rate of return is defined as the percent increase in lifetime net income (less education costs) that can be expected to follow from one more year of schooling

(assuming that existing wage rates and employment opportunities remain constant over time; Bennell 1996). Given that education at all levels is free to Qataris, the rate of return is simply the percent increase in lifetime earnings (including allowances for housing, transportation and leave entitlements for sickness, maternity and pension benefits). The only cost of schooling is the income foregone when at school—the opportunity cost of education.

The findings summarized in table 2.5 indicate that:

- The returns to schooling are higher for men than for women.
- The rates of return for women are of the same order of magnitude at the primary, intermediate and secondary education levels.
- The marginal rate of return to one more year of higher education is significantly higher than other rates of return.
- Schooling raises the probability that Qatari women will work and raises their incomes if they do work.

## Box 2.5

### Return to schooling

In his survey of the effects of education on earnings, David Card (1999) wrote: “Hundreds of studies in many different countries and time periods have confirmed that better-educated individuals earn higher wages than their less-educated counterparts”. This additional income can be viewed as a return to the schooling investment.

Each additional year of schooling incurs two costs to the individual: direct costs (like schooling fees, etc.) and the opportunity cost—the income foregone during the schooling period. The indirect costs are substantially greater than the direct costs, and when the state provides free education (as in Qatar), the only cost relevant to the schooling decision is the income foregone. Education can thus be viewed as an investment of the earnings forgone,

the return to which is the additional income that the educated individual will enjoy.

The rate of return to the individual is the additional income earned due to one more year’s schooling expressed as a percentage of the income foregone during the year spent at school. The economic decision to continue in formal education beyond secondary level hinges on the answer to this question: is the expected additional income worth the loss of income that would otherwise have been received? The international evidence from highly developed nations suggests that this will almost certainly be the case.

Source: GSDP (2011)

**Table 2.5**

**Benchmark marginal rates of return for Qataris (%)**

Educational level	Men	Women
Primary (6 years) <sup>a</sup>	0.7	} 2.5
Intermediate (9 years)	3.1	
Secondary (12 years)	5.2	
Diploma (14 years) <sup>b</sup>	13.8	14.6
University (16 years) <sup>b</sup>	10.8	8.7

Note: Data are adjusted for self-selection and may be interpreted to mean the percentage increase in extra lifetime income earned as a result of one more year of schooling at the given level.

a. Accumulated years of schooling.

b. As compared with income at the secondary level.

Source: QSA (2008a).

The rates of return to university education are high, especially for Qatari men, and justify an aggressive policy to encourage the continuation of education beyond secondary schooling, although returns will vary depending on the course followed. The low male continuation rates to higher education suggest a lack of appreciation of the potential economic returns (as well as noneconomic returns). Raising awareness of the benefits of continuing education beyond the secondary level could boost tertiary enrolment rates.

Rates of return for women are a little lower than those for men. This may be a labour market response to the substantially larger number of women progressing to higher education or possibly wage discrimination. In addition, some alternative means of income generation open to Qatari men may not be available to women, such as sponsorship businesses managed by non-Qataris. Women with higher schooling levels are more likely to work. Promoting higher education for women will raise both their labour force participation rates and their incomes when employed.

## Conclusion

Qatar's education and training system aims to prepare young people for success in a world of increasingly complex requirements, serving as a vehicle for social and economic transformation. Educational outcomes are linked closely to demographic behaviour, such as age at first marriage and fertility levels, labour force participation and health. It offers young Qataris opportunities to realize their intellectual potential, develop their abilities and follow their aspirations and interests. The evolving system must also aim to motivate Qataris to use their knowledge and skills to compete in an increasingly borderless and cross-cultural world. It needs to encourage them in analytical and critical thinking, creativity and innovation.

Aiming to achieve world-class standards, Qatar has made substantial investments to modernize its entire education system. Multiple opportunities now exist for young Qataris and the quantity of education inputs is high. But education performance of Qatari students, as measured through examination results, is not progressing at a commensurate pace, despite a decade of reforms.

Below the tertiary level, Qatari education performance is linked to the quality of education provision and to the motivation of students. Well qualified teachers who can inspire young people to take advantage of the outstanding education opportunities provided for them need to be hired, incentivized and given opportunities for continued professional development. A national curriculum setting out the steps required to meet the established standards with detailed guidance for teachers needs to be put in place.

Measures are required to retain all youth in education once they have completed their nine years of compulsory schooling. The dropouts rate at the secondary level remains high, especially among boys. The low male continuation rates to higher education suggest a lack of appreciation of the potential economic and social returns that can be achieved. Targeted media campaigns aimed at students and parents, emphasizing the benefits of a university and other forms of post-secondary education and training, especially for Qatari men, should help encourage them to remain in education beyond the secondary level.

On account of the challenges confronting the K-12 system, Qatari students are struggling to attain the entry requirements to gain access to a higher education, and many who are admitted fail to complete a degree course.

Some are ill-prepared to participate in the labour force because their qualifications are in low demand and they lack soft skills. Informed career advice will improve preparation of young Qataris for employment. It is also crucial to provide more technical and vocational pathways to employment, especially for those students who are not academically oriented or unable to meet the admission criteria of universities. Feedback mechanisms between higher education institutions and K-12 institutions and students are required, and declining enrolment in science and mathematics needs to be reversed, especially at the tertiary level, to better fulfil the needs of knowledge-based economy industries.

Most programmes at Qatar University are now internationally accredited and Qatar University graduates are increasingly sought after by employers. A positive development in university education has been the increasing proportion of Qatar University graduates studying engineering courses. Another is the growing proportion of Qatari undergraduates studying at Education City universities, although the figure is still low. In both Qatar University and Education City universities, there has been a deepening of a research culture including international partnerships, with the research focus more aligned to the needs of national development, including entrepreneurial development.

With Qatar's education and training system becoming ever-more complex, a comprehensive education information system is required to facilitate decision-making at all levels, as well as for planning, monitoring and research. While there have been some improvements in the availability of data as part of the ongoing educational reforms, Qatar lacks a model for collecting, analysing and disseminating education data that can be used across all phases and institutions. There is thus a need for an education information system that integrates data at all levels, as well as longitudinally. Ready access to such data would increase accountability and support evidence-based policy-making that advances the development of the education sector.

Qatar will not be able to improve significantly its relative standing in relation to other countries in the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index without significant improvements in education performance. Nor will the huge potential for Qatari youth to play a more prominent role in Qatar's development be realized without their attaining relevant education qualifications and soft skills, such as good communication and team working abilities—a topic explored further in chapter 3.

# 3

## Enhancing the Labour Force Participation of Qatari Youth





# 3

## Enhancing the Labour Force Participation of Qatari Youth

*Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV 2030)* foresees that in the transition towards a knowledge-based economy, “Future economic success will depend increasingly on the ability of the Qatari people to deal with an international order that is knowledge-based and extremely competitive.” To achieve this objective, *QNV 2030* states that “Qatar will strive to increase the effective labour force participation of its citizens.”

*Qatar National Vision 2030*

A key function of education systems is to adequately prepare young people for work by acquiring the knowledge and skills to compete effectively in the labour market and the motivation and self-confidence to take full advantage of life opportunities. Effectively managing the transition to working life requires

an appropriate policy and institutional environment. Unlike many countries in the region, Qatar has ample and attractive employment opportunities for young people (box 3.1). But capabilities do not always match opportunities.

### Box 3.1

#### Creating jobs for young people and matching their skills with needs of the labour market are regional issues

Arab countries are at a demographic turning point. Many countries in the region are reaching the peak of their “youth bulge,” meaning that the share of young people in the country’s population will soon begin to decrease. At the same time, young people in the region continue to account for a large share of the population and face the persistent challenges of high unemployment and increasing underemployment.

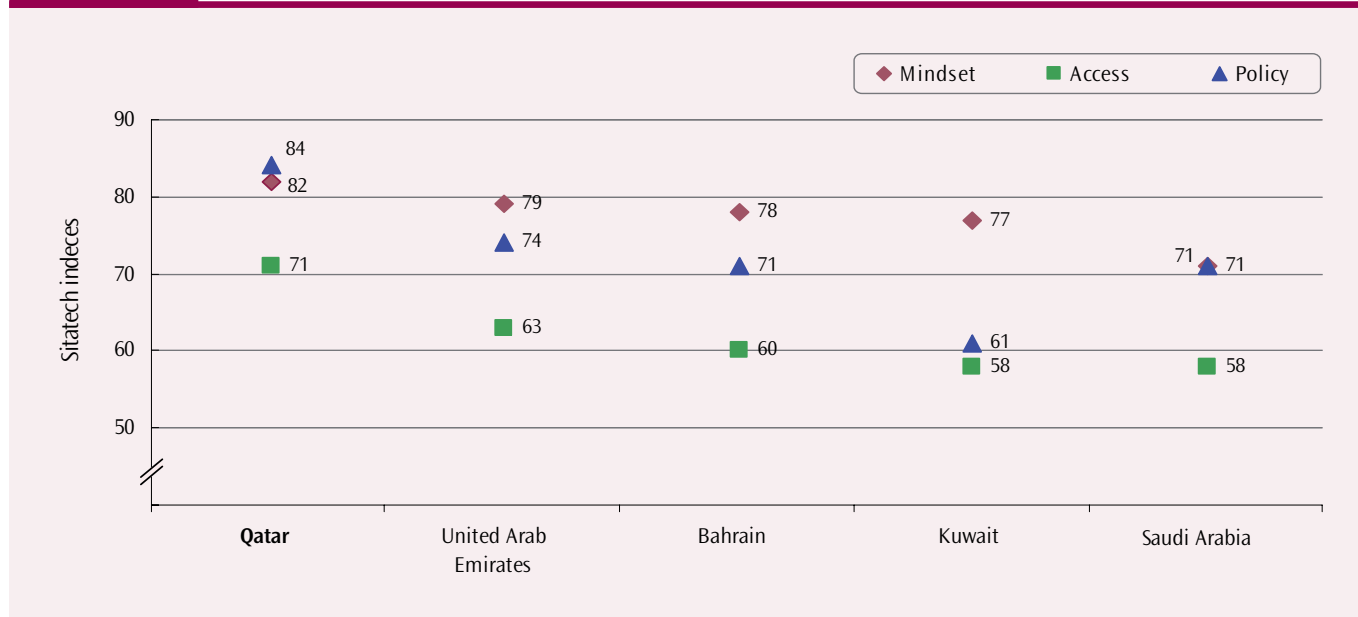
According to estimates from the United Nations Development Programme and the League of Arab States, the region’s economies will need to create around 51 million jobs by 2020 to meet the demand of those currently unemployed and those entering the labour force. A significant proportion of these jobs will be needed for young people over the next decade (UNDP 2010a).

Arab youth face many challenges, most notably the mismatch of educational attainments and the skills needed in the labour market. Developments in knowledge and technology, imposed by rapid globalization, have reduced demand for university and higher-level graduates in some Arab countries. Further, the distribution of specializations is unbalanced, with too many students specializing in the humanities and social and education sciences rather than in the natural sciences. Less than 30% of students are enrolled in scientific disciplines. Arab youth have to reconsider their marketable skills and make every effort to enhance those skills, especially in information and communications technology.

*Source:* Adapted from Al Ansari (2011).

Figure 3.1

Qatar outperforms Gulf Cooperation Council countries in all three Sitatech domains, 2010



Source: Gallup (2011).

Silatech, a social enterprise founded in 2008 and chaired by Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Missned, has proposed a framework for assessing young people’s views on labour market challenges (see chapter 5). The framework includes an index covering three domains—mindset, access and policy—measured through national youth surveys. The results help guide new country initiatives for job creation. The 2010 survey results showed that Qatar outperforms other Gulf Cooperation Council countries in all three domains (figure 3.1). Young Qataris gave positive assessments of the economy and expressed satisfaction with efforts to increase the number and quality of jobs. Conversely, there was a slight decline in Qatar’s score on the mindset index due largely to declining satisfaction with the education system (Gallup 2011).

### Qataris in the labour market

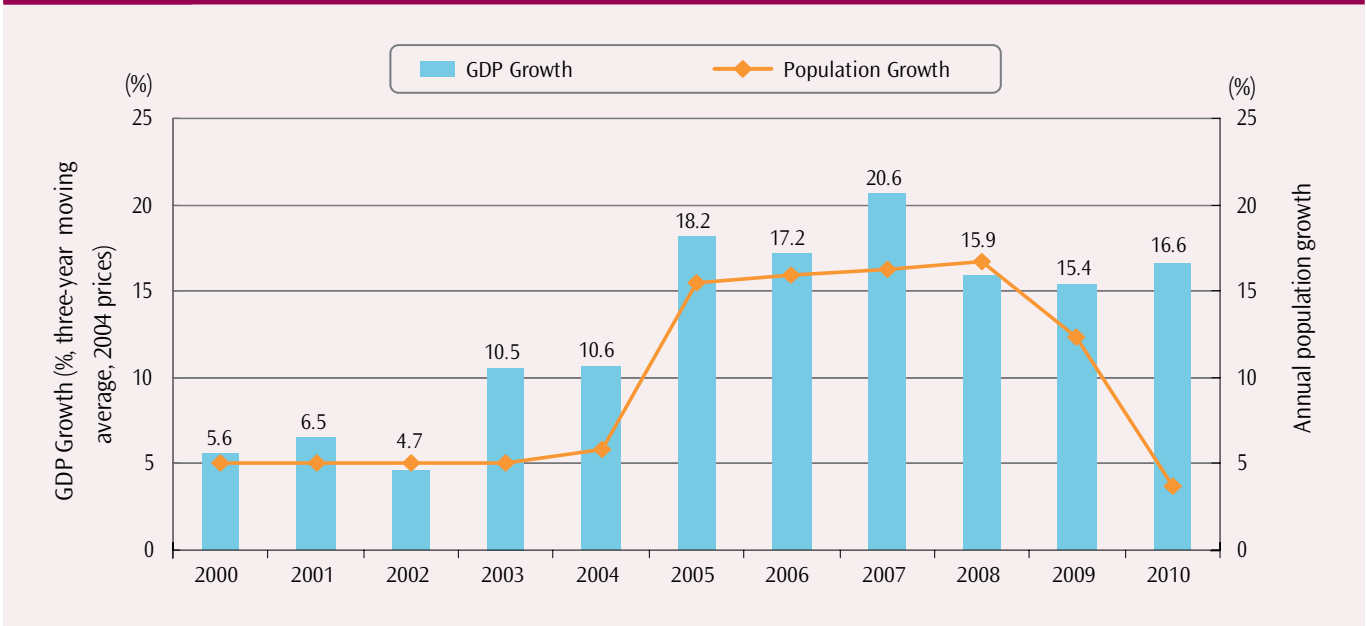
*Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV 2030)* promotes increased and diversified participation of Qataris in the labour force. However, the number of Qataris exiting the education system, 3,000–3,500 a year, is insufficient to meet the needs of the rapidly growing economy. Qataris are underrepresented in the private sector, including in professional and senior managerial positions.

Like many countries in the region, Qatar’s labour force comprises mainly foreign expatriates, reflecting the scale of the economy relative to the small Qatari population. Of the total Qatari population, some 60% (146,300) are in the employable age range (ages 18 and older), but only 51% (74,100) of those people are economically active (QSA 2011a). The rapid economic development of Qatar, especially over the past decade, combined with an open-door policy for foreign labour, has resulted in a dramatic increase in the population (figure 3.2). In addition to massive growth in hydrocarbons, construction, transport and communications, trade, and services has all seen rapid growth, further boosting demand for labour.

Population growth is both an enabler and a driver of economic growth. Growing Qatar’s economy, based on the exploitation of natural resources, required increasing the labour force by more than the natural population increase. The non-Qatari labour being used to fill the gap in turn created additional demand for goods and services that further contributes to economic growth.

**Figure 3.2**

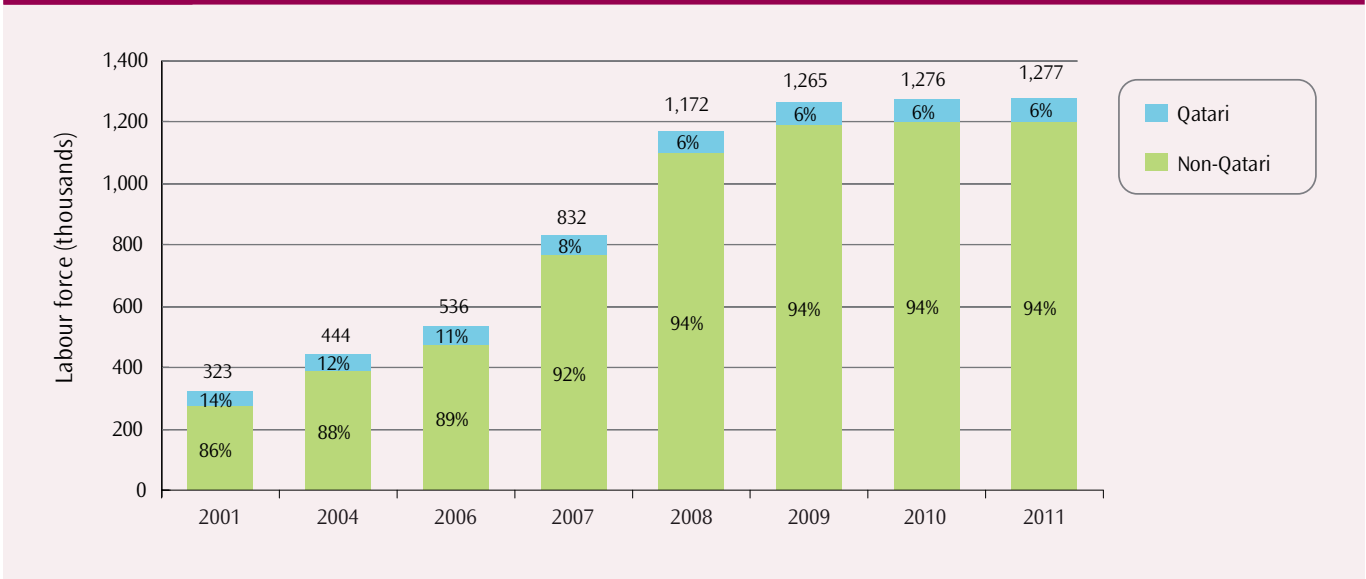
**GDP and population grew rapidly between 2000 and 2010**



Source: QSA (2011a).

**Figure 3.3**

**Qataris comprise just 6% of the total labour force**



Sources: Computed from QSA (2005, 2011a and 2011h).

The demand for labour far outpaced growth in the Qatari working-age population. Rapid economic expansion over the period 2001–2011 was accompanied by 15% growth in the non-Qatari labour force, compared with 5% in the Qatari labour force. This resulted in a steep decline in the Qatari share in the labour force, from 14% in 2001 to 6% in 2011. There were around 1.2 million non-Qatari workers in Qatar in 2011 (figure 3.3).

Given the limited size of Qatar’s domestic population relative to its economy, rapidly introducing excessively strict limits on access to foreign labour would have serious consequences for the economy and for Qatari’s living standards. One strategy to increase the proportion of Qataris in the labour force and their influence over the economy is to increase aggregate labour productivity by diversifying into higher productivity economic activities and promoting capital investment and greater use of higher skilled labour. Another is to equip Qatari workers with the skills required to attain their maximum potential in both the public and private labour markets.

One downside of the openness to low-skilled foreign workers coming into Qatar is depressed labour productivity. Another is insufficient investment in automation and technology, which encourages a low-wage private sector.

### Qatari youth employment by sector and occupation

Almost 9 in 10 Qataris are employed in the public sector, with 71% working for government departments and 16% working for government-owned companies and corporations such as Qatar Petroleum and Qatar Telecoms. Most young employed Qatari men (68% of those ages 20–24) and women (48% of those ages 20–24) are in public administration (table 3.1). Many also occupy positions in education, health, social work and financial intermediation. Of workers ages 15–19, some 10% of men and 3% of women are employed in mining and quarrying.

**Table 3.1**

**The share of young Qataris in public sector employment is higher for men than for women, 2010 (%)**

Sector	Men			Women		
	15–19	20–24	25 and older	15–19	20–24	25 and older
Mining and quarrying	10.1	12.1	8.6	2.9	6.6	2.2
Manufacturing	0.2	1.5	1.6	0.0	0.3	0.2
Electricity, gas and water	3.4	3.1	2.9	1.2	2.2	0.8
Public administration	73.2	67.9	61.5	54.9	47.8	47.0
Education	2.6	1.3	3.9	16.9	14.6	28.1
Health and social work	1.7	1.3	2.6	5.6	6.2	9.5
Financial intermediation	2.1	3.9	2.2	12.1	11.4	3.9
Wholesale and retail trade	2.0	2.1	3.4	3.1	2.1	1.2
Information and communication	2.3	2.7	3.6	1.6	3.6	2.4
Others	2.4	4.1	9.7	1.7	5.2	4.7

Source: QSA (2010a).

The legacy of public sector employment in Qatar means that the working parents of today's youth are nearly all public employees. As such when young people are exploring career options, they have few role models or examples of family members who have worked in the private sector. The advice and pressure those young people receive from family steer them towards public sector employment.

The choices of youth are steered by logical economic decisions. Not only are wages often better in the public

sector, but public sector jobs offer limited hours (often allowing public sector employees to manage other business interests after work hours), job security, predictable salary increases that are not necessarily tied to job performance and access to the public sector pension scheme. With the ability to retire as early as age 40, young people have an important incentive to choose public sector employment.

*Source: Al Ansari (2011).*

Qataris have more ready access to public sector jobs than to private sector jobs, with strict limits on competition from non-Qataris (box 3.2). The 2009 Law of Human Resources Administration (Article 14) requires that Qataris be given preference in government department and ministry hiring decisions. The perception is that education requirements in the public sector are low, reducing the incentive for Qataris to pursue tertiary education. A 2007 RAND survey found that 65% of Qatari high school students who were not contemplating tertiary education were inclined towards public sector jobs, compared to 57% of all students. However, since the 2009 law came into effect, public sector employment increasingly requires that Qataris meet the education requirements in job descriptions. The few young Qataris graduating from Education City universities are in great demand and can readily find employment in government-owned companies or in the private sector, where salaries for highly educated graduates exceed those in the public sector.

In 2010 some 88% of Qatari youth were employed in skilled or highly skilled occupations, compared with 21% of non-Qatari youth (table 3.2). Just 12% of Qatari youth were in semi-skilled or unskilled occupations. In the private and mixed sectors almost all young Qataris were in highly skilled or skilled occupations, and none in unskilled occupations. Only the public sector has a significant proportion of young Qataris, in semi-skilled and unskilled occupations. Qataris account for 70% of youth employment in the public sector, compared with less than 1% in the private sector.

Quotas are rarely applied in the private sector because there are not enough Qataris with the required skills entering the labour market each year and willing to work in the sector. The Ministry of Labour has a programme with more than 64 companies to identify their needs for the Qatari workforce. However, quotas can create a sense of entitlement, particularly among graduates who have limited information about the labour market, and perverse incentives by employers to hire Qataris without fully informing them of the job they are accepting and the skills required (Bunglawala 2011).

### Labour force participation

The Qatari labour force grew almost 5% a year over 2001–2011, and the Qatari labour force participation rate rose from 46% to 49%. However, this increase was attributable entirely to the growing participation of young Qatari women in the labour force. Women are helping to meet the ever-growing demand for skilled workers and the increase is consistent with their rising educational attainment. Women are now better represented in the labour market, and exhibit a strong preference for jobs in the public sector where working conditions and working hours are more attractive (Hadi 2011). Labour force participation rates increase with age plateauing around 25, as young people exit the education system (figure 3.4).

Table 3.2

## Most Qatari youth are in skilled or highly skilled employment, 2010 (%)

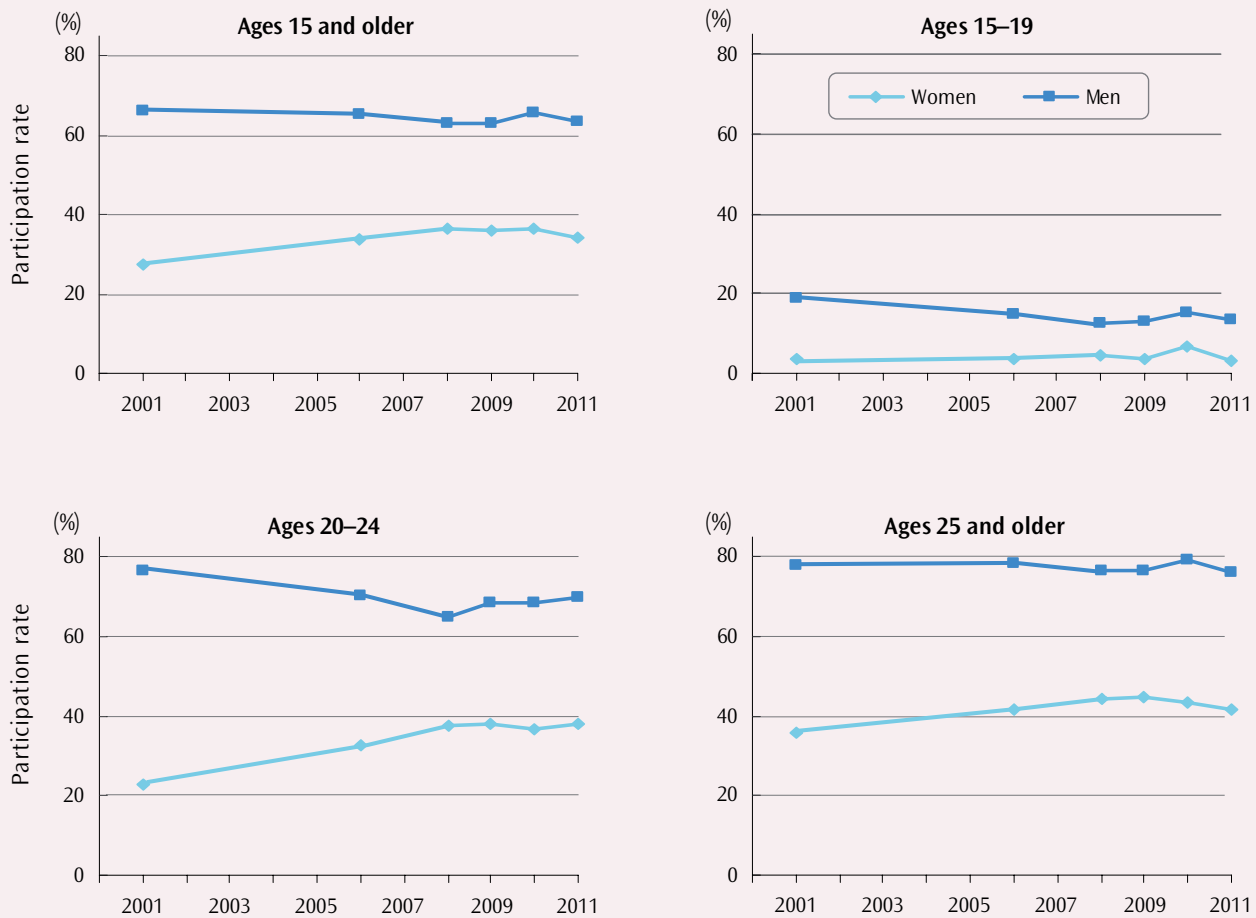
Skill level	Sector					Total
	Government	Government-owned corporation	Mixed	Private		
<b>Qatari</b>						
Highly skilled	29	51	61	52	36	
Skilled	57	40	34	44	52	
Semi-skilled	2	6	5	3	3	
Unskilled	12	3	0	1	9	
Total	100	100	100	100	100	
<b>Non-Qatari</b>						
Highly skilled	24	16	7	5	6	
Skilled	38	46	45	13	15	
Semi-skilled	6	16	40	55	52	
Unskilled	32	22	8	27	27	
Total	100	100	100	100	100	
<b>Qatari's share of total youth employment</b>						
Highly skilled	73.8	77.1	68.3	7.8	35.8	
Skilled	77.8	48.3	16.5	2.7	23.6	
Semi-skilled	40.4	28.8	3.2	0.1	0.5	
Unskilled	48.3	13.6	1.3	0.0	3.0	
Total	70.1	51.9	20.7	0.8	8.3	

*Note:* Highly skilled occupations include legislators, senior officials and managers; professionals; and technicians and associate professionals. Skilled occupations include clerks; service workers and shop and market sales workers; and skilled agricultural and fishery workers. Semi-skilled occupations include craft and related trades workers and plant and machine operators and assemblers. Unskilled occupations include elementary occupations.

*Source:* QSA (2011a).

Figure 3.4

Rising labour force participation rate among Qatari women ages 20–24



Source: QSA (2011a) and LFS (various years).

Levels and changes in participation rates at young working ages are determined mainly by changes in education enrolment patterns (box 3.3). A decline in male participation since 2001 is strongly evident for the 15–19 and 20–24 age groups and almost certainly reflects increases in what were relatively low enrolment rates for men in the post-primary education and training systems. However, youth enrolment

rates for women were already high in 2001 and continued to increase, though not as much as for men (see chapter 2). Consequently, labour force participation rates for women remained low and static in the 15–19 age groups, when most women were still in the education system, but increased substantially in the 20–24 age group and, to a lesser extent, in the 25 and older age group.

**Box 3.3****Factors influencing labour force participation of Qatari youth: odds ratio analysis**

Logistic regression provides a useful means of estimating the effects of social and economic factors (such as age, marital status and education) on Qatari youth labour force participation. The magnitude of particular factors' influence can be shown through odds ratios. The ratio of being in the labour force to that of not being in the labour force is defined as the odds. The odds for a particular group, compared with the corresponding odds of a reference group, taken here as those who are single with a below-secondary education, is the odds ratio.

The pattern of determinants of youth labour force youth participation differ by sex. Age and marital status

influence young Qatari male labour force participation much more than young Qatari female labour force participation. Young married Qatari men are much more likely to be in the labour force than are young single Qatari men with an odds ratio of 6.5 to 1. But being married is more likely to keep young Qatari women out of the labour force. Qatari youth with higher education, especially women, tend to participate more in the labour force. The age variable is more reflective of young people's need for school enrolment. The results show that the odds increase by a factor of 58 for each year, but the increase is less as the age for young Qatari men rises.

**Results of odds ratio analysis for Qatari youth, 2004 and 2010**

Variable	Men	Women
Age	57.64	1.79
Age-squared	0.92	0.99
Married	6.49	0.46
Divorced	3.30	1.51
Widow	14.51	1.03
Secondary	0.69	3.81
Tertiary	1.33	20.80
Year 2010 compared with 2004	0.96	1.10
R-squared	0.54	0.51

Note: Reference group is single with below secondary education.

Source: Computed from QSA (2005 and 2011a).

Trends in youth labour force can be assessed in relation to those for all people ages 15 and older. Overall the male labour force participation rate remained constant over 2001–2011. Unlike for other years, the 2010 participation rate is derived from the Census which may explain the jump between 2009 and 2010. By comparison, female labour force participation increased markedly from 27.4% to 34.1% (table 3.3). Non-participation rates differ between men and women because of the higher proportion of female homemakers.

Participation rates for Qatari youth, especially for women, are substantially lower than those in some advanced countries (table 3.4), and cannot be explained by skill differentials. This reflects the high female enrolment rates in Qatar. In many countries young men and women ages 15–19 leave school to gain an independent source of income or contribute to overall household expenses.



Table 3.3

**Qatari female labour force participation rates rose markedly over 2001–2008 but appear to have stabilized since then (%)**

Year	Men			Women		
	Labour force	Non-labour force		Labour force	Non-labour force	
		Student	Others		Student	Others
2001	66.1	19.7	14.2	27.4	28.6	44.0
2006	65.1	20.9	14.0	33.6	23.6	42.8
2007	64.7	21.5	13.8	34.6	22.9	42.5
2008	63.1	22.0	14.9	36.3	23.3	40.4
2009	62.8	22.7	14.5	36.0	23.3	40.7
2010	65.7	20.5	13.8	36.3	20.5	43.2
2011	63.6	21.5	14.9	34.1	24.8	41.2

Source: QSA (2011a, 2011h) and LFS (various years).

Table 3.4

**Labour force participation rates of young Qataris are below those of young people in benchmark countries**

Gender	Age group	Labour force participation rate (%)	
		Qataris, 2011	Average of eight advanced countries <sup>a</sup>
Men	15–19	13.4	31.1
	20–24	69.9	74.1
	25 and older	75.9	73.7
Women	15–19	3.0	30.5
	20–24	38.0	68.7
	25 and older	41.7	56.8

Note: a. France, Germany, Japan, Norway, Singapore, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Source: QSA (2011h) and ILO (2009).

### Gender gap in salaries

Salaries of female Qataris are lower than those of male Qataris at all ages, a disparity that grows with age (table 3.5). Having tertiary education helps to reduce the differential, but at older working ages the average male salary remains about 50%–60% more than the average female salary. Qualitative studies suggest that wages are less important to young women than to young men in deciding to enter

the labour force. It is too soon to determine the extent to which the 2009 Law of Human Resources Administration, which legislates for equal salaries, is reducing gender gaps.

### Youth unemployment

Unemployment in Qatar was low leading up to 2011. The overall unemployment rates for Qataris was 4.1% in 2010 and 3.9% in 2011, compared with 11.6% in 2001 (figure 3.5).

**Table 3.5**

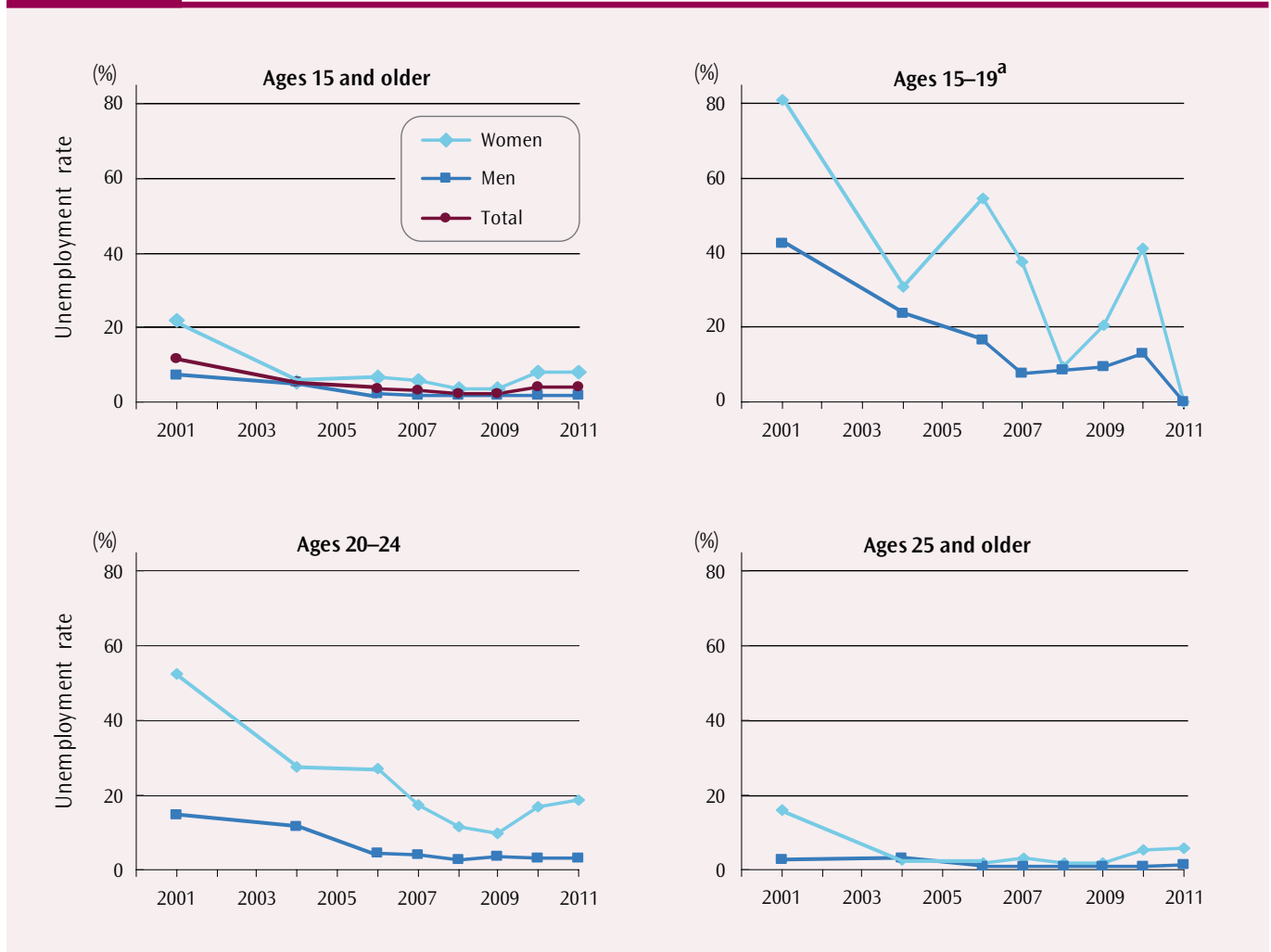
**Gender gap in Qatari salaries, 2011 (QR thousands)**

Gender	Age group							
	20–24	25–29	30–34	35–39	40–44	45–49	50–54	55–59
Men	180	213	252	271	289	310	330	313
Women	152	171	181	192	218	201	209	215
Ratio of Men to Women	1.2	1.2	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.5	1.6	1.5

Source: QSA (2011h).

**Figure 3.5**

**Unemployment rates are low overall but relatively higher among young Qatari women**



Note: a. Based on very small numbers, mostly first time job seekers.

Source: QSA (2005, 2011a) and LFS (various years).

Unemployment was concentrated among the young, first-time job-seekers, with 37% of the unemployed under age 25 in 2011. Unemployment rates are higher for women than for men across all age groups. 72% of the unemployed are women, and nearly a third of the unemployed are women under 25 (figure 3.5). Inadequate skills, inappropriate qualifications and a lack of previous work experience are frequently cited as the main causes (box 3.4). There is virtually no unemployment of non-Qataris, because they must be sponsored by employers to obtain work and reside in Qatar.

The skill levels of unemployed Qatari youth are revealed through their education levels (figure 3.6). Some 44% of unemployed youth have only secondary education, and 34% have just preparatory or below. There are relatively few unemployed tertiary education graduates, and all are women.

**Box 3.4**

**Voice of youth: training and guidance for the world of work**

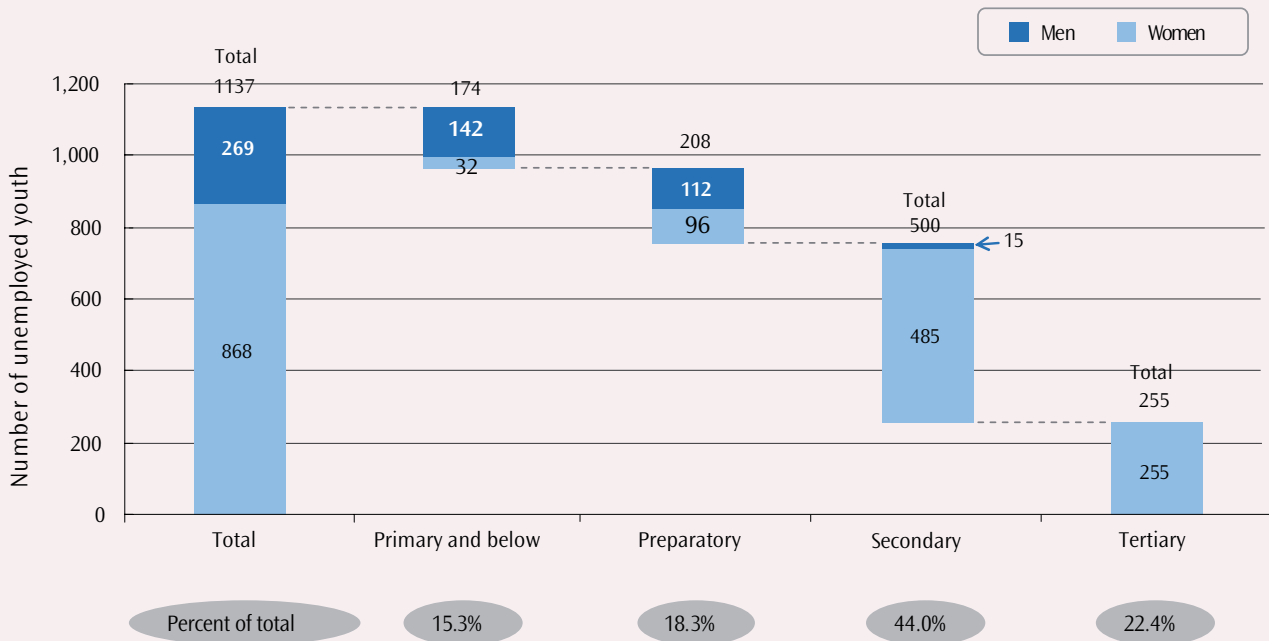
As a young person, I feel that I am more vulnerable to unemployment than older people are. I perceive a gap between the skills of graduates and the needs of employers. For the skills of young Qataris to be more relevant for the labour market, there must be stronger partnerships between education institutions, business, industry and youth. We need vocational guidance.

We also need practical training, including soft skills, to prepare us for the competitive and performance-driven environment of the world of work. The higher the level of youth participation in practical training programmes, the easier the transition between university and work.

*Source: Adapted from an Essay by Elham Al-Naqeb (2011).*

**Figure 3.6**

**Of the 1,137 Qatari youth unemployed in 2011, just over half have only secondary education**



Source: Computed from QSA (2011a).

**Figure 3.7**

**Reasons why Qataris are reluctant to work in the private sector differ between men and women, 2011**



Source: QSA (2011h).

Data from the 2011 Labour Force Survey indicate that many unemployed Qataris were reluctant to seek private sector employment. The reasons differed between men and women (figure 3.7). For Qatari men, the main concerns were social status, lower wages and longer working hours. For Qatari women similar reasons were given, except that working in a mixed environment was seen as a major deterrent.

Evidence from a small focus group study conducted by the General Secretariat for Development Planning and the Ministry of Labour in early 2009 confirmed the role of social and cultural factors in young women’s decisions not to take up available job opportunities. Female participants reported that their families do not object to their working in government agencies, where conditions of service are conducive to their cultural requirements, but that they would not be comfortable working in small, privately owned companies.

**Duration of unemployment**

Long spells of unemployment, especially for young people, can be detrimental to human capital. They run down the stock of on-the-job skills and create an employment history that is disadvantageous for securing work. Data on duration of unemployment for the employed and the unemployed are collected in the Qatar Statistics Authority’s Labour Force Surveys. For the currently employed the information relates to

unemployment before their present jobs. For the unemployed the durations of their unemployment are censored or incomplete because they have not yet found a job. This has been taken into account in the survey, and both types of data are used to compute the likelihood that the actual durations of unemployment are longer than those reported.

The likelihood that the duration of unemployment is longer than five months is 0.56 for young men and 0.62 for young women (table 3.6). The likelihood of a duration of five months or longer is higher for women, and gender differentials increase with duration. That women tend to take longer to find employment explains the country’s higher female unemployment rates.

**Approaches to seeking work**

While unemployment in Qatar is exceptionally low, it remains a problem among first-time job seekers. The transition to work has important implications for youth development; thus it is important to assess the types of policies that can best assist them in this transition. A useful input for policy formulation is the methods of searching for employment and the extent and types of labour market intermediaries used by those seeking work. The main role of such intermediaries is to bring together employers and the unemployed. Most Qataris prefer to seek employment instead of being self-employed.

**Table 3.6**

**Likelihood of longer unemployment duration among Qatari youth high for women, 2008**

Duration (months)	Likelihood that unemployment duration is longer than that shown in first column		
	Men	Women	Female-male ratio
1.5	1.00	1.00	1.00
5	0.56	0.62	1.11
8	0.26	0.34	1.30
11	0.12	0.23	2.00
14	0.06	0.12	2.19
17	0.05	0.11	2.39
21	0.04	0.08	2.04
24 and longer	0.05	0.14	2.80

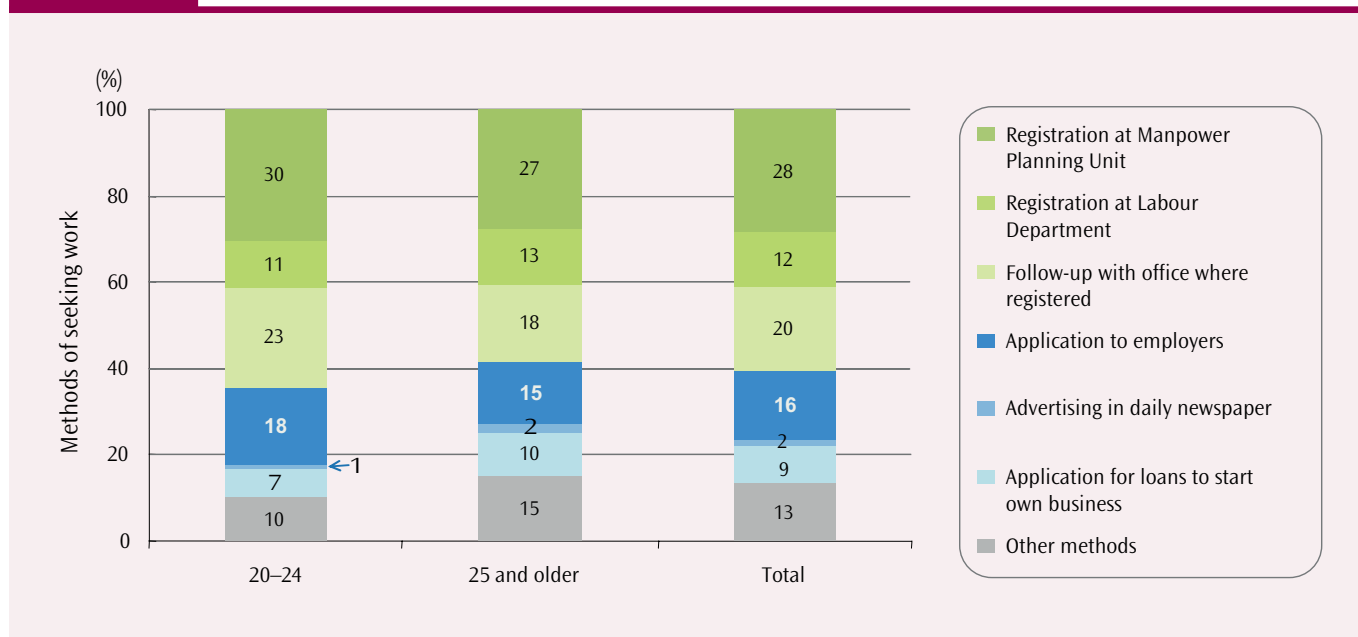
Source: OSA (2009a).

The most popular approach to finding work is registering at the Ministry of Labour’s Manpower Planning Unit. All age groups favour registration at the Labour Department.

As might be expected, these preferences indicate that unemployed Qataris depend largely on public sector labour market intermediaries to find work (figure 3.8).

**Figure 3.8**

**Methods of finding work among young unemployed Qataris, 2011**



Note: Each respondent was given a maximum of three choices. Source: OSA (2009h)

Table 3.7

### Youth seeking Ministry of Labour support in job placement is highest among secondary school graduates

Education level	Number of youth employment applicants			
	2007	2008	2009	2010
Primary and below	139	319	182	185
Preparatory	88	133	102	109
Secondary	1,078	2,119	3,312	2,386
Tertiary	42	136	270	264
Total <sup>a</sup>	1,347	2,707	3,866	2,944

Note: a. Excludes a small number of cases where the education level is unknown.

Source: MOL (2011).

The overwhelming majority of job seekers using the Ministry of Labour's employment placement services are secondary school graduates (table 3.7). This indicates the mismatch of job seeker's qualifications and labour market needs, a reluctance to accept lower paid private sector employment and a lack of knowledge of available employment opportunities.

#### Qatar Career Fair

Since 2007 Qatar Foundation has sponsored the annual Qatar Career Fair to provide an opportunity for students and those seeking work, especially first-time job seekers, to familiarize themselves with the labour market and discover the types of employment available, the skills in demand and the main organizations seeking employees (box 3.5). The career fair builds a bridge between Qatar's education and training system and the world of work.

The career fair is not merely about finding jobs for people: it increasingly emphasizes training and development opportunities for young Qataris. Since 2010 the career fair has

organized dialogues with public sector and human resource directors and with directors of Qatar's universities, colleges and schools to develop a shared vision, understanding and get feedback from key stakeholders. Many participants are not first-time job seekers or the unemployed; they are simply looking for a better job. Initiatives are under way to encourage more first time job seekers to attend, including strategies that help the career fair better distinguish between, and support, job seekers with a secondary school education and those with university background. For the first time the 2011 Qatar Career Fair had a special focus for people with disabilities, and all employers were encouraged to offer opportunities for students with disabilities.

In the future better use of social networking media could regularly inform students about the world of work. Further, many non-Qatari young people attend the career fair and this should be taken into account, especially since they are likely to have received their education in Qatar.

**Box 3.5****Qatar Career Fair: guidance and opportunities for job seekers**

Qatar has a fast-growing economy and the structure of employment opportunities is changing rapidly in line with the aim of transforming the country into a diversified knowledge-based economy. Since 2007 Qatar Foundation's Qatar Career Fair takes place annually for one week in Doha and provides an opportunity for job seekers to learn what employment options they have, the skills required to perform them and where they are available. It is attended by thousands of Qatari high school students and university graduates, many of them first-time job seekers and people seeking to change jobs. It also brings together education providers and public and private sector employers and policy-makers. The opportunities it provides for various stakeholders include:

*Qatari job seekers* can discover the world of work, and the fair provides them with an idea of labour market opportunities in Qatar and abroad, available career counselling and advice services (such as curriculum vitae preparation, interview best practices, how to secure high-quality jobs and so on). It is a learning and exchange

experience and helps motivate young people to acquire the skills for the occupations they want to pursue.

*Employers* can showcase and market their organizations, especially those in the private sector, and recruit the best available talent. They can meet with school and university graduates (and their parents), answer job seeker's questions and encourage them with such incentives as scholarships and internships to take jobs in their organizations.

*Education and training providers* can learn the priority needs of Qatar's labour market in order to promote, tailor and adapt their courses to better meet the expectations of students (and their parents) and satisfy employer's skills requirements.

*Policy-makers and labour market planners* can interact with Qatari job-seekers, employers and education and training providers to design and implement evidence-based labour market policies.

**Box 3.6****Mentorship programmes can encourage greater participation of women in the labour force**

Qatar University has undertaken several initiatives to support increase young women's participation in the labour force. One initiative is a scholarships programme for law graduates to undertake post-graduate studies at universities in the United Kingdom and the United States, leading to a PhD or LLM in law. Upon obtaining their degree, they can become professors of law at Qatar University. A second initiative is a women's mentorship programme in collaboration with the American Bar Association's Rule of Law Initiative, that pairs aspiring female lawyers with practicing female attorneys, to expose

them to the challenges and opportunities that come with the profession. It provides young Qatari women with career guidance, helps in their professional development and offers opportunities for internships. While the programme has had positive feedback, it has also faced challenges, with respect to participant's commitment. For example, out of 25 students at the start of the programme in 2011, 10 dropped out.

*Source:* Adapted from discussions with Marlana Valdez, Program Director, Rule of Law Initiative Qatar (2011).

## Mobilizing the Qatari youth labour force

Meeting the needs of economic diversification requires improving incentives for young Qataris to enter private sector employment, as well as creating a culture of entrepreneurship among them.

### Qatari youth in the labour market

Qatar's rapid economic growth provided attractive employment opportunities for young people (box 3.7). Most young non-Qataris enter into unskilled work. As Qatar's labour force grew from 323,000 to 1.28 million between 2001 and 2011, it became younger. The youth component (ages 15–24) in Qatar's labour

force grew from 34,000 (10.4% of the total) in 2001 to 177,000 (13.8%) by 2011. But most were non-Qataris ages 20–24.

The Qatari and non-Qatari components of the youth labour force grew at very different rates. The average annual growth rate for the 15–19 and the 20–24 age groups among non-Qataris was four to five times that among Qataris (table 3.8). This has resulted in a sharp decline in the Qatari share of the youth labour force, to 29% of youth ages 15–19 and 8% of youth ages 20–24 by 2011 (figure 3.9).

#### Box 3.7

#### Successfully creating access to quality jobs for youth in Qatar

In its first comprehensive report on the attitudes of young people in the League of Arab States, Gallup, in a survey sponsored by Silatech, found that in many of the countries surveyed, only a small proportion of respondents express satisfaction with efforts to increase the number of quality jobs.

Gallup polled Qataris between the ages of 15–29 in March 2009 to explore the attitudes among Qatari youth towards entrepreneurship, work environment, job skills training

and education. With regard to the current job market, 58% of Qatari youth said it was a good time to find a job, a proportion that is significantly higher than the Arab League median of 34%. A majority of Qatari youth, 65%, also said they were satisfied with efforts to increase the number of quality jobs in their country. However, when asked whether knowing people in high positions is critical to getting a good job, 56% of young Qataris agreed, while only 27% disagreed.

Source: Gallup (2009).

Table 3.8

#### The average annual growth in the non-Qatari component of the youth labour force over 2001–2011 was huge (%)

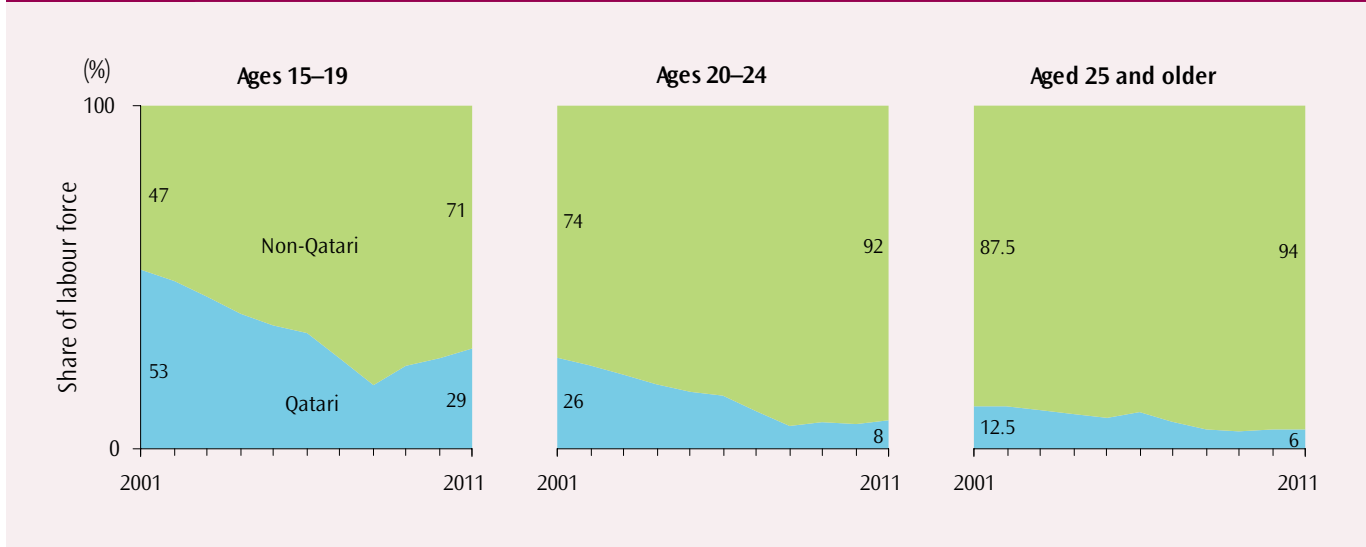
Age group	Qatari	Non-Qatari	Total
15–19	1.1	11.0	7.0
20–24	5.8	19.7	17.4
25 and older	5.3	14.1	13.4
Total	5.2	14.7	13.8

Source: QSA (2002 and 2011h).



**Figure 3.9**

**The share of Qataris in the labour force varies markedly with age**



Source: OSA (2011a).

### Working Teenagers

In 2011 some 2,300 or 8% of Qatari teenagers ages 15–19, were in the labour force. This amounted to 3% of the Qatari labour force. Whether teenagers should work at this age—and if so—how much—have received considerable policy attention, especially in industrialized countries where the numbers involved are much larger. While teenagers augment the Qatari labour force in the short term, leaving school before obtaining a secondary education can have long-term effects on future employment and lifetime earnings. Starting work too early may prevent Qataris from acquiring the basic skills in school that would make them more marketable. For example, Qatari age-income profiles computed from the 2006/2007 Household Income and Expenditure Survey show that, by age 35, those with educational attainment below the secondary level have lower annual earnings than those with secondary education, a gap that widens with age.

### Vocational Training

In 2008, 2% of Qatari secondary students and 19% of Qatari tertiary students pursued technical or vocational programmes (table 3.9). There is thus a need to expand technical and vocational education opportunities for young Qataris not inclined towards academic education. Qatar plans to invest

more resources on technical education, and the National Development Strategy 2011–2016 includes a programme for providing the additional pathways at the preparatory level.

These programmes are intended to provide a structured link between school and the labour market by imparting skills that young people can use in their jobs. They typically form part of the formal school structure and are administered by government agencies dealing with education. Many countries also offer second chance programmes in which youth and adults who have left school can obtain specific occupational skills. The evidence on the success of technical education and vocational training is varied and depends on whether trainees are provided with skills that are in demand in the labour market.

Some information on vocational training undertaken by unemployed Qataris with a secondary education is available from the Labour Force Survey. Table 3.10 shows the percent distribution of different types of training undertaken. For all age groups, training in computers is by far the most popular, especially among unemployed people ages 25 and older (49%). The second most popular is learning English, with 37% of the responses from those ages 15–19 in this category.

**Table 3.9**

**Enrolment in technical education and vocational training at the secondary level in Qatar is lower than in most benchmark countries, 2009 (%)**

Country or group	Preparatory education	Secondary education	Tertiary education
Bahrain	0	24	8 <sup>a</sup>
Kuwait	1	4	0
Oman	0	0	30 <sup>a</sup>
<b>Qatar</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>21</b>
Saudi Arabia	6	0	17
United Arab Emirates	0	0	9
Gulf Cooperation Council average	1	5	14
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development average	8	48	15

Note: a. Data are for the most recent year available.

Source: UIS (2011).

**Table 3.10**

**Acquiring computer and English language skills frequently undertaken by unemployed Qataris with secondary education, 2011 (%)**

Type of training	Age group		
	20–24	25 and older	15 and older
English language	36.6	37.2	37.0
Computer	51.5	45.8	49.1
Secretarial	4.1	8.6	5.9
Typing	2.0	8.4	4.6
Others	5.8	0.0	3.4
Total	100	100	100

Note: Each respondent was given a maximum of three choices.

Source: QSA (2011h).

### Soft skills

Lack of adequate technical skills is just one challenge facing many young Qataris starting their working career. Another is the lack of noncognitive skills, such as problem solving, interpersonal and team-working abilities. Not having these skills is a barrier to Qatari's increasing effective participation in the labour market and securing leadership positions.

Beyond increasing productivity and competitiveness, soft skills inspire confidence in individuals for managing the complex challenges of the world of work. New entrants to the labour

force require soft and practical skills—problem solving, communications, foreign languages, interpersonal and team-working abilities—that are critical to further advancement.

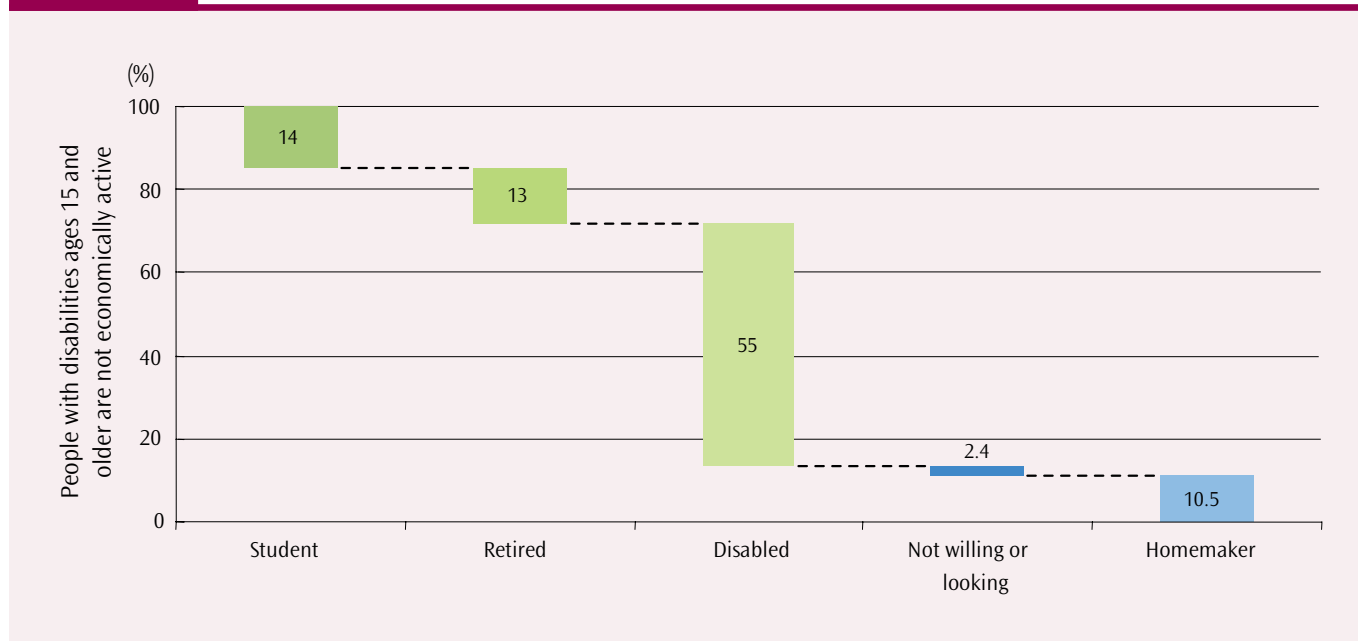
### Youth with disabilities

Road traffic accidents are one of the main causes of disability in Qatar. Many serious road accidents involve youth, especially young men. Of the total disabled persons at ages 15–19 there is a higher proportion of disabled Qatari men compared with women, while in the age group 20–24 the shares are similar at 9%.

Only 23% of people with disabilities are economically active. Of the total number of people that are not economically active, 55% do not participate in economic activity because of disability (figure 3.10). Efforts are being made to empower

and enable youth with disabilities to participate in the labour market by providing necessary skills, especially in information and communication technology (box 3.8).

**Figure 3.10** Reasons why people with disabilities are not economically active, 2007



Source: Noor Martian and Al-Buainain (2008).

**Box 3.8** Initiatives to empower and enable youth with disabilities

The *Qatar Committee for Rehabilitation of Persons with Special Needs* was established in 1992 to provide education and training for people with special needs in centres that include the Social and Cultural Centre for Special Needs and the Learning Centre for Education of Mothers. It also produces and manufactures equipment, teaching aids and various artificial limbs for its members. The rehabilitation programmes are used by 10% of disabled Qatari men and 9% of disabled Qatari women; the education qualification programmes are used by 15% of disabled Qatari men and 14% of disabled women.

The *Al-Noor Institute for the Blind* was established in 1998 to provide education and rehabilitative services for young people ages 3–21 who are visually impaired, to help them

overcome obstructions and be a socially productive group. The institute enrolls 6% of disabled Qatari men and 63% of disabled Qatari women.

The *Qatar Assistive Technology Centre (Mada)* is a nonprofit organization that provides assistive technology solutions for people with disabilities to empower and enable them through information and communication technology. Fewer than 5% of books, and even less for Arabic text, needed by people with print disabilities (including the blind, vision impaired, learning or physically disabled) are available in accessible formats such as digital text or digital Braille. Mada in partnership with Bookshare, aims to deliver 500 Arabic e-books by the end of 2011.

Sources: Al Mereki and Al Buainain (2008); ictQATAR (2011).

## Reforming Qatar's labour market

Comprehensive reforms of Qatar's labour market are fundamental to realizing the goals and aspirations of *QNV 2030* for young Qataris. The National Development Strategy 2011–2016 sets out programmes that support Qatar's human development goals of increased and diversified participation of Qataris in the labour force, and targeted participation of non-Qatari labour. The National Development Strategy 2011–2016 proposes a series of interventions to promote high human capital development and ensure greater labour-market efficiency; many of them focus on youth employment (box 3.9).

### Youth and the new knowledge-based economy

The predominance of youth, both Qatari and non-Qatari, in the population not only confers a natural advantage for

a knowledge-based economy, thanks to technology-smart young people, but also leads to a substantial demand for information to be conveyed and disseminated instantly. Qatari youth, like young people everywhere, are caught up in the proliferation of modern information technology and social media that facilitate instant communication and radical change through global and local networks and are demanding to be included in change and development.

New technology requires skills relevant to education and employment in addition to the social uses that initially engage most young people. Modern economies depend increasingly on capacity for effective knowledge and information management. But data available on youth and information and communication technology are lacking (box 3.10).

#### Box 3.9

#### Prioritizing employment issues for national youth policies in Qatar

National youth policies relating to employment need to address:

- *Employability*—investing in education and vocational training of young people and elaborating strategies to enhance the impact of investments.
- *Equal opportunities*—giving young women the same employment opportunities as young men.
- *Entrepreneurship*—making it easier to start and run enterprises for young people.
- *Employment creation*—focusing on the demand and supply sides of the labour market.
- *Decent job creation*—making jobs a priority for macroeconomic policy and social planning.
- *Participation*—providing for active participation of young people in the design and implementation of national employment policies.

Source: Al Ibrahim, Hassan (2011b).

#### Box 3.10

#### ictQATAR: determining current and future information and communication technology trends

ictQATAR will continue to allocate considerable resources to protecting children online, and will explore ways to effectively use technology as a catalyst for change and innovation in schools. In early 2011 ictQATAR conducted a comprehensive study on how information technology is affecting Qatari young people's lives and aspirations. It aims to develop a framework to assess the impact of information and communication technology on young people. It envisages that this framework will be used in other countries in the region.

The study, based on a sample of 1,000 young Qataris ages 11–29, will provide baseline information for a comparative assessment of the socioeconomic impact of information and communication technology on the young. It will also provide insights into how information and communication technology shapes youth identity. The findings from the study will support policy recommendations on how to best harness the power of information and communication technology to help young people realize their full potential.

Source: ictQATAR (2011).

Table 3.11

## Almost all young Qataris use the computer and Internet, 2010

Technology	Age group			Total
	15–19	20–24	25 and older	
<b>Inside home</b>				
Computer	92.0	90.8	70.7	77.5
Internet	90.1	89.2	69.1	75.8
<b>Outside home</b>				
Computer	83.0	81.4	60.9	67.8
Internet	80.1	79.2	59.2	65.9

Source: OSA (2011a).

A skilled labour force is essential for building a knowledge-based economy. In many countries the spread of new technology has increased demand for highly educated workers with skills in this area. Such workers' earnings have risen substantially.

Computer and Internet use in Qatar is high, comparable to that in most industrialised countries, with 708 Internet users per 1,000 people (ages 4 and older) in 2010, compared with an average of 740 for the top eight Human Development Index countries in 2008 (UNDP 2010). Consistent with experience in other countries, Qatari youth are more likely than older groups to use computers and the Internet (table 3.11). Adolescents are the most likely to be major users. Among Qataris, well over 90% of youth are computer and Internet users, compared with only two-thirds of adults. Public sector policies can focus on the use of information and communication technology as a means for more effective youth development.

In 2007 there were an estimated 1.2 billion Internet users worldwide, only about 20 million of them in Arab countries. That is equivalent to about 70 users per 1,000 people in Arab countries, compared with 178 per 1,000 worldwide. However, Internet use in Arab countries since 2000 has nearly tripled, compared with Internet use worldwide that has more than doubled.

Information and communication technology's role was discussed during a youth focus group conducted by the General Secretariat for Development Planning and Qatar University. The group felt that not having strong information and communication technology skills and access was a new form of illiteracy. Youth respond better to visual stimulus and social media, which can be used to improve learning. Electronic resources can extend access, reaching youth outside urban areas and those with special needs. There is a need to develop education indicators for information and communication technology literacy.

### Working towards the knowledge-based economy

While general use of modern information and communication technology is high, Qatar's higher education system is not producing the requisite number of graduates with science and technology specializations for productive employment in a knowledge-based economy (see chapter 2). The profile of Qatari graduates from higher education does not match that of key benchmark countries with more developed knowledge-based economies. For example, the share of graduates with knowledge-based economy specialization is 80% in Finland, compared with 60% in Qatar. Three factors contribute to this gap:

- Students are neither fully aware of the importance of studying knowledge-based economy subjects nor cognizant of the career opportunities available to them as graduates in knowledge-based economy specializations.

- Students are not motivated to enrol in knowledge-based economy specializations because the benefits of pursuing other specializations and external job opportunities are perceived to be higher.
- Not all knowledge-based economy specializations are available to Qatari students.

The National Development Strategy 2011–2016 strongly emphasizes programmes to upgrade human capital through better access to higher education and a range of skills required for the effective use of new information technologies. The National Development Strategy 2011–2016 will contribute towards *QNV 2030* goals of:

- A world-class education system that equips citizens to achieve their aspirations and meet the needs of Qatari society.
- A national network of formal and nonformal education programmes that equip Qatari children and youth with the skills and motivation to contribute to society.
- Well developed, independent, self-managing and accountable educational institutions operating under centrally determined guidelines.
- An effective system for funding scientific research shared by the public and private sectors and conducted in cooperation with specialized international organizations and leading international research centres.
- A significant international role in cultural and intellectual activity and scientific research.

### **Expanding opportunities and increasing employability**

Given the small proportion of Qataris in the labour force, Qatar foresees both increased labour force participation among Qataris and a larger proportion of Qataris holding senior positions. Improving skills, especially when aligned to labour market needs, should lead to higher and more effective labour force participation. However, lack of technical and vocational training opportunities for less academically oriented Qatari youth limits growth in effective labour force participation. Responding to this challenge, the National Development Strategy 2011–2016 proposes a skills-upgrading programme for Qataris, including leadership training, designed and implemented primarily through public and private institutions (box 3.11). The programme includes:

- Upgrading skills in the public sector to guarantee better institutions and administration for the country.
- Improving skills in the private sector to promote a more diversified role for Qataris in the economy.
- Expanding access to vocational training to improve skills of new entrants with varying levels of education, as well as for more disadvantaged categories.
- Providing stronger leadership skills in both the private and public sectors to ensure that Qataris are a driving force throughout the entire country.

### **Incentivizing private sector employment and entrepreneurship**

Qatar's private sector has a limited role in the economy but a big profile in employment. It employs a majority of the labour force, but employs only a small share of Qataris (5%), compared with the target of 15% by 2016. Some 87% of Qataris are employed in the public sector, with 71% working in government administration and 16% in government-owned companies and corporations. Public sector employment is generally higher paid and has better working conditions and more favourable social benefits. It is thus unsurprising that most Qatari youth pursue public sector employment. While Qatari women's labour force participation has increased significantly, they remain only marginally represented in private sector employment.

The National Development Strategy 2011–2016 proposes a programme to promote labour force participation in the private sector, focusing on three areas. First, alignment of compensation (wages and allowances) between the public and private sectors will be improved. An in-depth study will be conducted to determine how best to achieve this alignment. Second, an entrepreneurship initiative, targeting youth and Qatari women will be launched to, among other things, study barriers to entrepreneurship, launch a business plan competition and encourage internships in domestic, regional and international enterprises. Third, economic incentives will be provided to private companies and campaigns implemented to promote attitude changes in terms of meeting the needs of female Qatari employees in the private sector.

Qatar's energy sector, through companies such as Qatar Petroleum (see chapter 2), Shell, ExxonMobil and RasGas, have specific social, economic and environmental programmes that support mainstreaming youth in sustainable development, aligned with the National Development Strategy 2011-2016.

ExxonMobil Qatar Inc has various initiatives focused on the education sector, including the Qatar University ExxonMobil Teachers Academy, a pilot programme designed to help educators enhance their math and science teaching skills, a Visiting Professors Initiative with Qatar University, which aims to bring world renowned professors to teach engineering, math and science classes and the INJAZ Qatar mentorship programme whereby ExxonMobil employees serve as mentors to youth to help them build professional skills.

ExxonMobil also plays a role in labour market integration of Qatari youth through its Student Intern Programme. This programme enables high school and university students, to solve real life issues, helping them have a better understanding of their career path options while also helping ExxonMobil identify top Qatari candidates for sponsorship and employment opportunities.

Shell has various programmes in education, labour market integration, health and well-being, and the environment. For example, Shell has all-encompassing programmes providing opportunities for university graduates to pursue technical and functional careers, and a technical programme for those without a degree to become operators in the energy industry. Once graduates and technical students are recruited the aim is to retain them by ensuring long-term careers within the company. Shell prepares young persons for their careers, helping them develop long-term career paths, sponsoring international assignments and encouraging feedback to make sure that the company is meeting their expectations.

One of Shell's goals is to achieve simplicity and improve performance through innovation. Youth can make a significant contribution to achieving this goal. In addition to material gains awarded to innovative thinkers, Shell has established a research and development center in Qatar Foundation's Education City. Youth are encouraged to suggest alternative ways of doing things that are more efficient and eco-friendly. For example, they were able to recycle water used at company plants mixed with sulfur, previously considered waste, to make concrete. Through outreach initiatives such as Shell's Eco Marathon, the company encourages university students to think innovatively and find ways to have model cars run longest distances efficiently. Shell also leads and sponsors educational campaigns that raise awareness among youth about career options, research, and health and safety. Such initiatives include Life is Engineering, which focuses on embracing science majors and through a joint project with the Ministry of Interior and the Supreme Education Council to integrate road safety practices into school curricula.

RasGas has established a University Advisory Committee to help achieve its Qatarization goals. The Committee plays a role in expanding student capacities, starting with educational development, career awareness and helping with career-building. RasGas sponsors the Qatar University Career Fair where students have the opportunity to apply directly online at the RasGas booth for summer internships, scholarships and graduate recruitment opportunities, and the Higher Education Institute annual student meeting in London, attended by more than 100 sponsored Qatari students. RasGas also seeks to optimize its human resources, the companies strongest asset, through initiatives such as the Employee Development Project. Through career development plans and succession plans, RasGas seeks to retain its employees, helping develop them within the organization while achieving quality Qatarization.

*Source:* Adapted from discussions with Shell and materials from ExxonMobil and RasGas (2011)

Within the private sector, both entrepreneurship and wage employment among Qataris are limited. This is despite the 2010 Gallup survey canvassed on behalf of Silatech, that 50% of Qatari youth had thought about starting their own business. With the current focus on high value-added small and medium-size enterprises, it is necessary to encourage Qatari entrepreneurs, only 2% of whom actively manage and invest in their own businesses. Entrepreneurs can act as catalysts to drive Qatar's current hydrocarbon-dependent economy to a modern diversified one. Entrepreneurial development of Qataris, especially of youth and women, will be encouraged as part of the National Development Strategy 2011–2016. Barriers to entrepreneurship will be studied and initiatives launched—including stronger incentives, increased business training and capacity-building—at home and abroad in areas relevant to labour market needs.

The government is trying to understand and reduce barriers that discourage Qatari youth from starting small businesses. Enterprise Qatar and ictQATAR are seeking inputs and feedback from young entrepreneurs to minimise their risk of failure (box 3.12).

Enterprise Qatar is facilitating access to capital for entrepreneurs, creating an environment that supports small and medium-size enterprises, and setting up projects that will help young entrepreneurs. ictQATAR has an incubation centre that helps young entrepreneurs start their businesses, with mentoring and tutoring for up to two years.

The Roudha Centre, to be completed in 2015, will address many of the concerns of young women interested in entrepreneurship (box 3.13).

### Box 3.12

### Concerns of Qatari youth interested in entrepreneurship

During a 2010 AIESEC Forum, young Qatari entrepreneurs were asked to identify their concerns and the obstacles to becoming successful. Major concerns include:

- Lack of accessible business knowledge.
- Absence of publicly available market information and analysis.
- Parent's rarely planting the seeds of entrepreneurship at a young age and encouraging their children to become successful businessmen or businesswomen.

Obstacles that were identified include:

- Mentoring and coaching are not centralized.
- Sponsorship and legal procedures are prohibitively difficult.
- Local office space and accommodation for employees are too expensive.
- Required financial investment is too large (for example to register a company, a bank account with a minimum capital share of QR 200,000 is required).

- Legal licence procedures are difficult to negotiate.
- A company is allowed only a certain quota of visas, and visas for workers of certain nationalities are difficult to acquire.
- There is a lack of clarity when checking the availability of a company name or brand.
- It is difficult to earn money officially and legally operate a small scale, home-based business.
- Current support efforts do not consider the special needs of technological businesses (for example the software a company needs to use or develop).

Enterprise Qatar is partnering with local institutes and universities to conduct market research and help provide open-access sources of information to support young entrepreneurs.

*Source:* Key discussion points from the AIESEC Youth to Economy Forum, 27 September 2010, Doha.



The Roudha Centre is evolving into a “one stop shop” that provides support for women entrepreneurs. The Centre aims to offer women a culturally-tailored resource, where they can obtain support at any point in their business processes. This could include researching the feasibility of a new idea or scaling up an already successful business. Roudha helps women learn about the specifics of how to launch a business and obtain the necessary skills and knowledge, and use technologies needed to make their ideas successful. The Centre targets women between the ages of 18–50. But in practice, the most enthusiastic participants are youth between the ages of 20–24. It leverages the strengths of its partners such as Silatech and Qatar Development Bank for funds, capacity building and business know-how.

The Roudha Centre is an initiative of two ambitious and highly driven young women who recognize that many Qatari women have innovative business ideas and a desire to operationalize them. However, such women face multiple challenges including the availability of applicable, robust and transparent processes and financial resources to support them. Women in Qatar are faced with needs and concerns that are fundamentally different from those of men, yet the Roudha Centre is continuously challenged with the question “why design a centre for women?”

*Source:* Adapted from discussion with Shareefa Fadhel, Co-founder of Roudha Centre (2011).

### Encouraging automation and innovation

Labour force productivity will be a critical driver of Qatar’s transition from a hydrocarbon-based economy to a knowledge-based economy. Compared with labour force productivity levels in benchmark countries, Qatar’s current productivity is comparable in knowledge-intensive sectors, but lower in labour-intensive sectors. Labour force productivity in labour-intensive sectors declined between 2005 and 2010. Employers have taken full advantage of an open-door immigration policy, which makes available an almost inexhaustible supply of unskilled and semi-skilled labour at an international wage rate. This has left little incentive to invest in capital equipment or use more highly skilled labour that would reduce overall demand.

Without reducing the recruitment of low-cost workers, or increasing the attractiveness of capital investments or high-skilled labour, the economy will struggle to reach its economic diversification aspirations.

Qatar’s aim is a highly productive labour force that is rewarded well enough to drive high participation rates. To boost labour productivity, Qatar must address the ready availability of low-cost, low-skilled non-Qatari labour and encourage firms to invest in capital improvements. Higher skilled labour will reduce the size of the labour force relative

to real output, increasing the output to labour ratio and driving up productivity. The National Development Strategy 2011–2016 aims to raise labour productivity by:

- Improving the attractiveness of high-skilled labour to employers, through levies on employers to discourage recruitment of low-skilled workers or a points system for entry into Qatar.
- Instituting programmes to improve access to capital.
- Assessing current production methods, including the capital and labour components, international best practices and the readiness of stakeholders to implement change.
- Developing a communications and change management plan for ensuring buy-in from all affected stakeholder groups.

### Human Resources Master Plan

Rapid economic growth, with corresponding increases in the size and changes in the composition of the labour force, has resulted in an increasingly diversified and complex labour market.

The current planning and research capacities of the Ministry of Labour, which has a small Planning and Research unit, are insufficient to provide labour market analyses in relation to the needs of Qatar’s chosen development path. A Human Resources Master Plan should bridge this gap by enabling coordination between the needs of the economy, government strategy and the labour market. The plan will define the required labour force skills and capabilities for relevant sectors, consider the type of higher education and training that should be offered to Qataris and determine the appropriate mix of non-Qatari workers required for the relevant sectors.

The plan will also combine various perspectives, including the leaders of key industries (such as Qatar Petroleum) and sectors within the Qatar government (such as the Supreme Education Council), to publish a statement of action for developing future labour force requirements. By defining the required number and type of employees, both Qatari and non-Qatari, the plan will allow all relevant stakeholders to understand the direction being taken to enhance the efficiency of the labour force. Associated education and training requirements will also be defined. The plan will include:

- Delineation of labour force needs by sector until at least 2016.
- Specification of education and training requirements to meet Qatari labour force needs.
- A description of targeted non-Qatari labour required by the economy.
- A management plan for maintaining the relevance of the Human Resources Master Plan.

### **Creating a more flexible labour market**

Since 2009 public sector employment in Qatar has been regulated by the Law of Human Resource Administration, which provides a wide range of benefits for Qataris, including preference in government hiring decisions and various allowances, bonuses, leaves and severance benefits. But the law discourages young Qataris from improving their qualifications and developing their skills and education. It will be reviewed and revised to encourage more effective labour force participation by young Qataris.

Improved labour market performance will result from increasing the capacity of the main stakeholders, improving their organization and structure, and promoting more efficient coordination. Efforts to ensure stronger coordination will require stronger partnership between government agencies and the private sector.

### **Building the evidence base for policy-making**

Qatar's labour policy-making is hampered by a lack of comprehensive labour market data and research. No single source consolidates all the available data on the labour market. Stakeholders have difficulty accessing and reconciling relevant databases from different sources. For example, the Ministry of Labour is the primary source of data on the Qatari labour force, the Ministry of the Interior is the primary source of data on the non-Qatari labour force

and the Cabinet Office is the primary source of data on public sector employees. These databases need to be linked and explored to better inform labour market policy.

A national Labour Market Information System could build on parallel efforts already taking place. The most extensive source of labour market data is the Qatar Statistics Authority's annual Labour Force Survey. Though a rich data source, it does not capture some important features of Qatar's labour market, such as the participation of Qataris in income-generating activities. The system will use a user-friendly electronic platform to aid labour policy-makers. It will complement the other proposed National Development Strategy 2011–2016 projects, and help consolidate labour market data onto one platform. Developing the system will require identifying variables needed by different parties, establishing a methodology to share information, creating guidelines to ensure privacy of individual data records and conducting operational research on factors affecting the labour market.

### **Enhancing employment services**

Modern employment services are critical for a flexible and efficient labour market and are especially beneficial for youth. The only labour intermediation service in Qatar is provided by the Ministry of Labour, whose manpower department registers unemployed Qataris. Information on training and employment opportunities for job seekers, especially for young adults, and on career counselling and mentorship is not readily available. Qatari youth are insufficiently informed about the economic returns to post-secondary education. Special needs groups, particularly the unemployed, women and the disabled, are inadequately supported by the current labour market institutions and employment services.

The Ministry of Labour runs an employment exchange, but intermediary services need to be undertaken by a broader and more independent group of stakeholders, especially in the context of Qatar's ever more diversified labour market. Labour intermediation services will be designed and a system to start these agencies will be implemented. The National Development Strategy 2011–2016 proposes selecting a model of ownership for the labour intermediation companies, designing the services provided by the labour intermediaries and running an awareness campaign.

## Conclusion

Young Qataris have previously undreamed of choices and opportunities on joining the labour market. But many lack the skills and qualifications to take advantage of them. Qatar's economic diversification aspirations necessitate building human capital to create a more productive, skilled and motivated labour force. As the economy has expanded at breathtaking speed and the demand for non-Qataris in the labour force has grown correspondingly, the proportion of Qataris in the labour force has fallen significantly. The number of new Qatari entrants to the labour force each year is less than the economy demands. In this environment, employment quotas can create distorted incentives for employers to hire nationals.

Second chance programmes offer Qatari youth who have not completed secondary education the opportunity to salvage their life prospects, reduce waste of valuable human resources and increase the number of Qataris in the labour force. In most cases the second chance will be in technical education and vocational training but should be facilitated according to individual needs and abilities. Programmes must be in skills and training that are in demand, offer accredited qualifications of acceptable standard to employers and be undertaken with a realistic career outcome in mind. One precondition for the success of such programmes is a favourable attitude among Qatari youth, and more generally Qatari society, to technical employment. This may require a change in incentive structures.

Public service employment is so entrenched in family traditions that few Qatari youth seriously consider other options. Disparities between the public and private sectors in salaries and conditions of service need to be addressed. Entrepreneurship has the potential to offer youth a viable

alternative to employment in the public sector. But it requires support for project incubation and for the creation of a culture of innovation.

While the labour force participation rates for young women has increased considerably from a low base, they have sought employment almost exclusively in the public sector; that is, in government administration, health and education. Changing attitudes towards the role of women, who are increasingly better educated than men, are making private sector employment opportunities more feasible. A supportive response is needed from private companies to show their awareness of the cultural sensitivities of prospective female employees.

Many young Qataris transitioning to the world of work often lack awareness of the opportunities available to them, how to search for jobs and how to access career advice. Most lack labour force readiness and appropriate soft skills. Internships for tertiary (including vocational) students could provide young Qataris with experience of working life in career-related activities. Students and their parents need to be made more aware of training and employment opportunities. Intermediary services for job seekers, currently partially provided by the Ministry of Labour, Qatar Careers Fair and Qatar Petroleum, need to be expanded and to include special needs groups.

Qatar's emerging labour market strategy, a part of the National Development Strategy 2011–2016 will make the labour market more efficient and flexible. They will benefit Qatari youth by expanding high-quality training opportunities, incentivizing private sector employment and enhancing employment and career counselling services.

# 4

## Improving the Health and Well-being of Young Qataris



# 4

## Improving the Health and Well-being of Young Qataris

Improving health status and reducing the risks of death and illness at all ages are major national development goals. Investments in health can promote the overall well-being of the population, boost labour force productivity and foster social cohesion. Qatar is investing heavily to establish a world-class healthcare system that is affordable and accessible to the entire population. The incidence of most communicable diseases has been reduced to very low levels and neonatal, perinatal and infant child mortality rates have declined substantially, though not yet to levels achieved by some other countries.

Most of the large non-Qatari population is young adults at a healthy stage of life. Because they must pass a basic health screening test to obtain a visa, they are unlikely to make major demands on the health services, which are readily obtainable at relatively low cost and subsidized by the government. Their main health risk is of work-related injury.

Demographic and epidemiological changes now under way will almost certainly have important longer term implications for Qatari healthcare. Already, the main serious health problems affecting Qataris relate to heart and respiratory diseases, diabetes and cancers associated with aging or lifestyle, which are expensive and difficult to treat. The per capita cost of care is already very high for the country's current age structure, and unless early action is taken, these costs will grow even more rapidly as the population ages.

Today is a short-term “window of opportunity” to address the social factors driving the growth in chronic diseases, such as obesity, circulatory and respiratory diseases and diabetes. Action should be taken now to avoid the increasingly serious problems currently affecting most highly developed countries, which are spending a large and growing proportions of GDP on care for chronic illness and for the elderly sick (Crisp 2010).

As with education, the most effective and efficient interventions are likely to be those that target people from a young age. Risky behaviours by young people can have tragic consequences much later in life. Smoking tobacco at an early age may cause cancers that are detected only in middle age. Sexually transmitted infections acquired in adolescence may lead to infertility, physical and mental health problems or even early death—during the prime of life.

Perhaps even more important is the need to intervene before the young people acquire the habits and lifestyles that can greatly increase their risk of serious illness later in life (World Bank 2006). Young people need to be able to make informed judgements about the health risks associated with smoking, drug use, alcohol consumption and sexual activity. They need to understand the links between obesity and many serious chronic diseases and be encouraged to develop healthy dietary habits and appreciate the benefits of regular exercise.

## Getting a good start in life

Substantial investments in healthcare have resulted in a decline in childhood morbidity and mortality rates. The challenge now is to promote healthy lifestyles and to reduce risky behaviour among young people.

### Birth, infancy and childhood

The earliest years of a child's life may have profound implications for later development. A healthy birth, infancy and childhood can provide the foundation for physical and mental well-being in maturity. The most common measures of the extent to which society provides a good start to life are infant and child mortality rates.

Qatar's under-five mortality rates have steadily improved over the last two decades, falling to 8 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2010—one of the lowest rates in the Gulf Cooperation Council but substantially higher than in the top eight

Organisation for Economic Co-operation (OECD) countries (table 4.1). While neonatal and postnatal death rates have fallen as a result of improved antenatal and postnatal care, the death rate among toddlers (ages 1–4) has not fallen as much (figure 4.1). One factor is road traffic accidents, which affect toddlers as well as adults: some 5% of road traffic accident deaths among Qataris are among toddlers.

Improvements in the maternal mortality ratio reflect improvement in antenatal and postnatal care. Qatar's maternal mortality ratio in 2010, was just 10 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, reflecting the relatively low risk for women of childbearing age. The high standards of maternal healthcare are consistent with the high quality of reproductive health and information services. Family planning is available and widely used among Qatari couples for birth spacing and to curtail childbearing once a desired family size has been achieved.

**Table 4.1**

**Qatar's under-five mortality rate is below the Gulf Cooperation Council average, 2010**

Gulf Cooperation Council		Top eight Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries <sup>a</sup>	
Country	Deaths per 1,000 Live Births	Country	Deaths per 1,000 Live Births
Bahrain	12	Iceland	2
Kuwait	11	Finland	3
Oman	9	Japan	3
<b>Qatar</b>	<b>8</b>	Luxembourg	3
Saudi Arabia	18	Norway	3
United Arab Emirates	7	Singapore	3
Average	11	Sweden	3
		Austria	4
		Average	3

Note: a. Ranked by under-five mortality rate.

Source: WHO (2011a).

Figure 4.1

Neonatal deaths remain a major component of under-five deaths



Source: QSA (2011).

Some concerns remain nutrition and post-partum maternal care. For example, satisfactory child development depends on nutrition, which is less common in Qatar. United Nations Children’s Fund data for 2005 showed a 12% exclusive breastfeeding rate in the early months of infancy. Other nutritional problems affecting both mothers and infants include iron deficiency and diets high in sugar and saturated fats and low in essential fatty acids, vitamins and minerals. Post-partum depression, rarely acknowledged, is also an area of concern. Failure to address these concerns during pregnancy can harm child development, as well as the mental health of the mother.

In addition, broadening the discussion and providing information about sexual and reproductive health need to be considered—as age at first marriage increases and young people are exposed to risk-taking behaviours (box 4.1)

The National Development Strategy 2011–2016 emphasizes that the key healthcare concerns in Qatar relate to behaviour patterns, especially among young people, which should be addressed through a strong preventive approach and a robust primary care system. In developing a preventive approach, the role of education in promoting health is strongly emphasized. A central part of health promotion is providing health education to change youth behaviour and encourage healthy behaviours. Education can have at least two beneficial consequences for health behaviour. First, it raises individuals’ ability to absorb information. Second, it changes expectations and attitudes about the future. People with more education are likely to value the future more highly and be less prone to risky behaviour.

**Box 4.1****Voice of youth: breaking the silence on reproductive health**

Young people's lives today differ dramatically from those of their parents. In the past the transition from childhood to adulthood occurred abruptly through early marriage and childbearing. Today's youth spend more time in school and marry later. During adolescence, young people may have sexual relations before marriage, putting them at risk of unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.

The issue of reproductive health amongst youth needs to be acknowledged. Social and cultural habits that stay silent on the subject need to change. Parents, teachers and perhaps even religious leaders may be the key groups to help break the silence. They themselves would need to be educated on reproductive health issues so that they can encourage youth to talk about the subject. The media, Internet and health centres could be used to increase awareness.

Reproductive health is a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality. Qatar's reproductive health information and services have mostly been oriented mostly towards maternal

and child health. Currently primary healthcare centres provide four services related to reproductive health, namely: pregnancy care, vaccination, breast and cervical cancer screening programmes, and health education. Internationally, comprehensive reproductive health includes the reproductive health of women and men throughout their life cycle, extending before and beyond the reproductive years.

To improve reproductive health care to meet the needs of Qatari youth, primary healthcare centres need to provide more comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services such as:

- Improving antenatal, delivery, postpartum and newborn care.
- Providing high-quality services for family planning.
- Providing infertility services.
- Eliminating unsafe illegal abortion.
- Combating sexually transmitted infections including HIV and reproductive tract infections, cervical cancer and other gynaecological morbidities.

*Sources:* Adapted from essay by Marwa Alameri and Aisha Al Ghafri (2011).

**Adolescence and young adulthood**

Progressing from infancy through adolescence to adulthood has its own set of issues, notably obesity and high-risk behaviour. Qatar's population suffers from the same major causes of illness and death that most western countries face – chronic, noncommunicable diseases that are linked to an affluent lifestyle, as well as a high rate of injuries, primarily from road traffic accidents and work-related incidents. Unhealthy lifestyles and unnecessary risk taking are resulting in avoidable illness and death that can be

mitigated by changes in behaviours, such as regular health monitoring and screening, increased physical activity, adoption of a healthy diet, avoidance of tobacco use, and maintenance of a healthy body weight. Of particular concern is that these unhealthy lifestyle patterns are increasingly common among Qatari youth, thus putting their continuing health and survival into mature adulthood at risk.



## High-risk behaviours

### Criminal and delinquent behaviour

Of the few criminal offences committed by juveniles (ages 6–16), 48% were against people and 31% against property. Indicators on delinquent behaviour from the Ministry of Interior for 2009/2010 reveal that driving without a license was the most common offence of juveniles, followed by running away from home and attempted suicide (figure 4.2).

### Accidental deaths

Deaths caused by accidents and suicides are the most common external causes of death (figure 4.3); those resulting from homicide or other violent offences are negligible but the external causes of deaths differ markedly between Qataris and non-Qataris. For Qataris, deaths from road traffic accidents dominate external causes, whereas for non-Qataris, road traffic accidents and work-related deaths are both important external causes.

Among young non-Qataris, work-related injuries are a cause for concern especially on account of falling from a height and from being struck by falling objects at construction and work-sites (figure 4.3). Qatar sees approximately 4–5 work-related fatalities per 100,000 workers a year, roughly double the rate in the European Union. While Qatar has

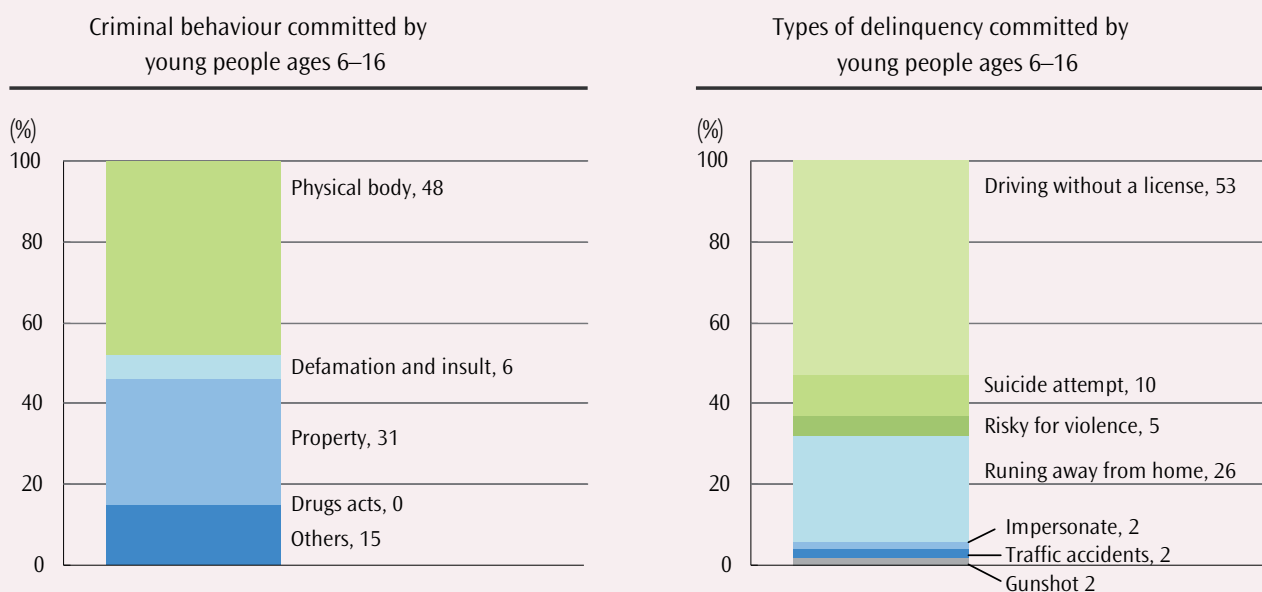
strictly enforced health and safety standards and has a fine track record in its hydrocarbon sector, health and safety standards in the construction sector are lagging. The labour law contains regulations on health and safety, but steps need to be taken to review and strengthen their implementation and enforcement. Noncompliance with occupational health and safety standards can seriously harm the country's reputation.

While the upward trend in deaths from road traffic accidents has stabilized, they remain the main cause of death among Qatari and non-Qatari youth, particularly among men (figure 4.4). Road traffic accident deaths involve not only drivers and passengers, but also pedestrians who account for almost a third of annual deaths, most of them among non-Qataris ages 30 and older. The main contributing factor to road traffic accidents is the high-risk behaviour of road users—typically aggressive driving by young men.

The main causes of road traffic accidents have remained much the same over time, with reckless driving, crossing the median, insufficient distance and lane changing errors (at roundabouts and on higher speed roads) responsible for more than 90% of accidents.

Figure 4.2

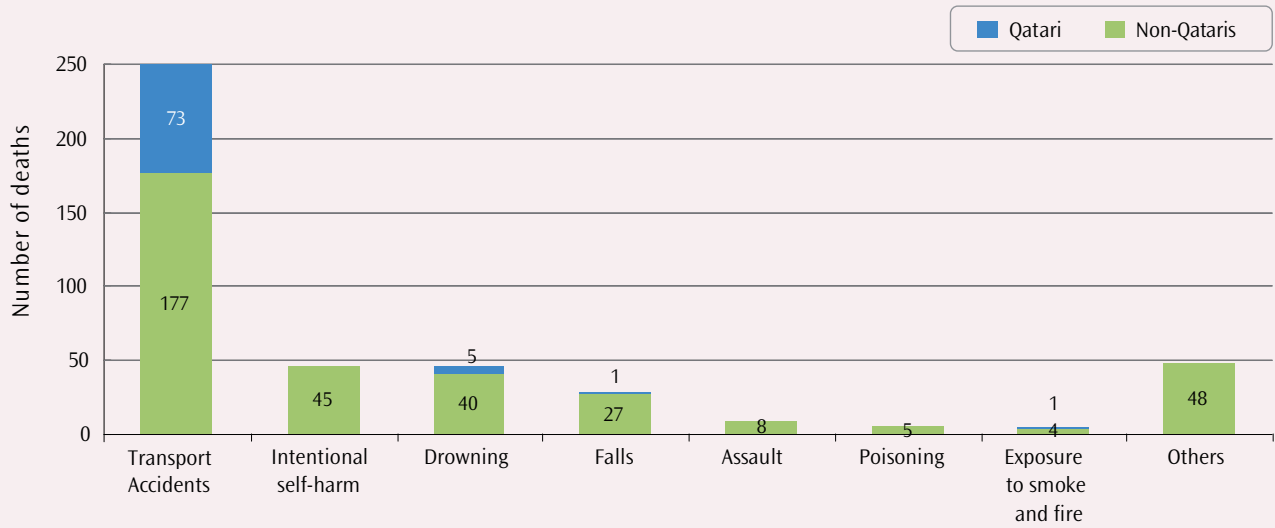
Criminal and delinquent behaviour, 2009–2010



Source: Al Ibrahim, Hamad (2011a).

**Figure 4.3**

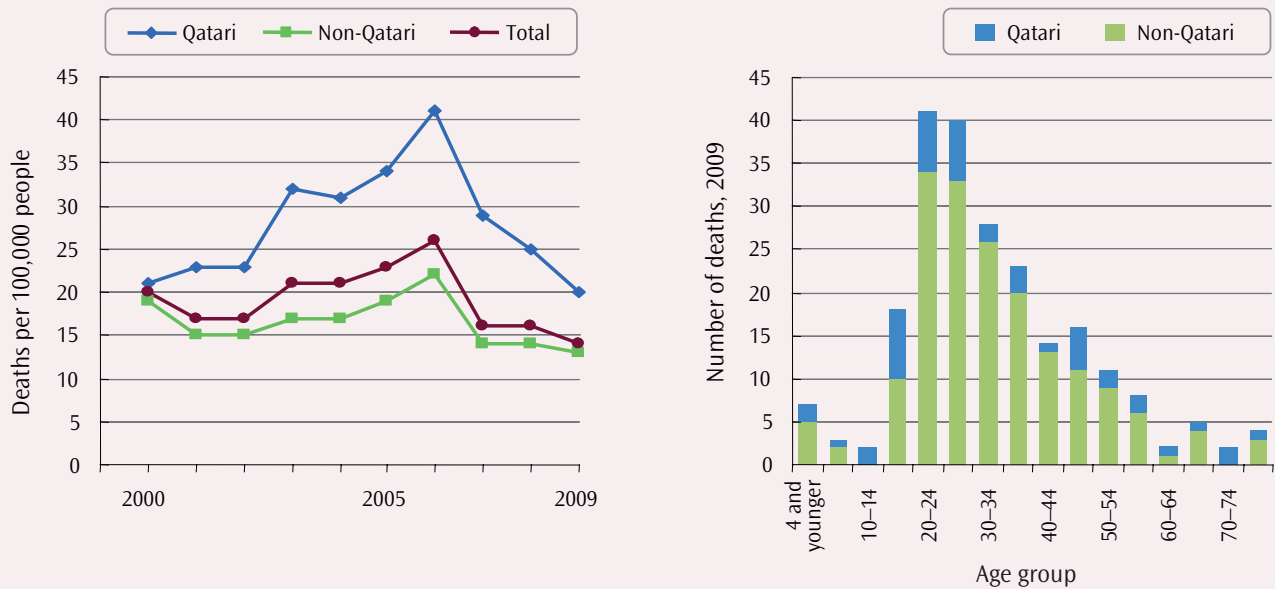
**Traffic accidents are a major cause of accidental deaths, 2009**



Source: QSA, (2010c).

**Figure 4.4**

**Road traffic accident death rates have fallen from their peak but remain high among youth**



Sources: QSA (various years) and 2009 data from MOI (2010a).

Qatar's efforts to address road traffic accidents have not had the desired impact. Traffic offences carry severe punishments but are not always enforced. Most offences—those for speeding and failure to comply with traffic junction signals—are detected by radar and cameras. Police patrols are limited. New initiatives for improving road safety need to focus on behavioural changes among young Qatari men.

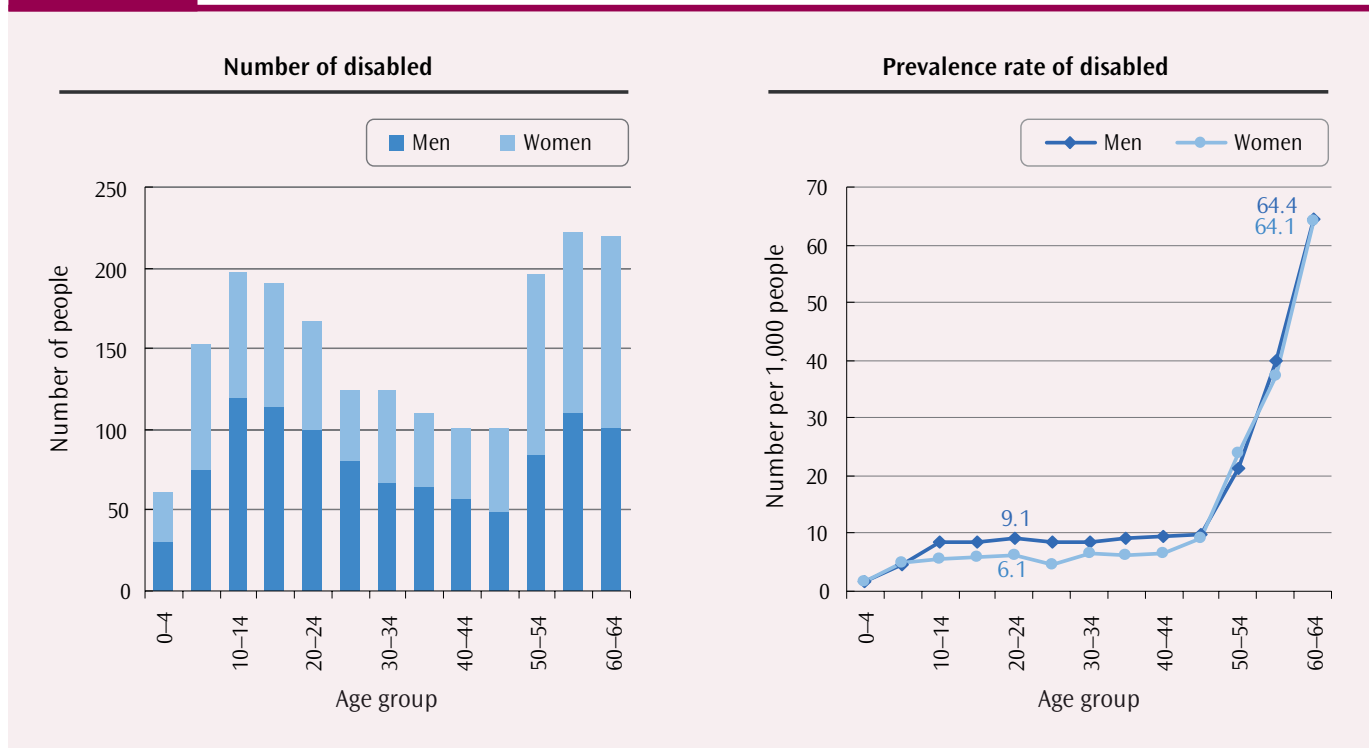
Injuries caused by road traffic accidents, often overlooked, total many thousands of lost health years. A significant proportion of patients on long-term ventilation support in Qatar are there because of road traffic accidents. Furthermore, many of the relatively young victims face

extended rehabilitation and potentially lifelong disabilities requiring financial and medical support, which adds a significant social and financial burden.

### Disability among the youth

In 2010 a large proportion of Qataris with a defined disability were either children under age 14 years or young people ages 15–24. The disability rate declines steadily up to age 50 after which it increases sharply (figure 4.5). The number of disabled men is the same as women at most ages except at ages 10–29. For this age group there is a predominance of men reflecting the impact of road traffic accidents.

**Figure 4.5** Disabilities are high among young Qataris, 2010



Source: QSA (2011f).

## Life style risks

### Obesity

The serious health consequences of being overweight or obese are well established. Cardiovascular disease, diabetes, musculoskeletal diseases and cancers have all been linked to overweight. A common indicator used to assess obesity is the body mass index, which is based on a measure of weight-for-height and is defined as weight in kilograms divided by the square of height in metres. A score greater than 25 is considered overweight, while a score greater than 30 is considered obese and a score greater than 40 is considered morbidly obese. A score between 20 and 25 is considered desirable but there is evidence that the risk of chronic disease increases above a score of 21.

Maintaining a healthy weight requires both good dietary habits and regular exercise. Adequate consumption of fruit and vegetables is one way to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and certain cancers and is important in providing a diversified diet (WHO 2003). The World Health Organization recommends an average of five or more servings of fruit and vegetables a day. Findings from the 2006 World Health Survey (NHA 2008) indicate that only around 16% of Qatari adults— and even fewer young people—meet this target.

It is generally accepted that physical activity protects against ischaemic heart disease, strokes, type 2 diabetes and certain cancers. Evidence also suggests that exercise has positive effects on hypertension, osteoporosis, osteoarthritis and mental and psychological health. The World Health Organization defines sufficient exercise as at least 30 minutes of regular, moderate-intensity physical effort for at least five days a week. Some 46% of adult Qataris reported undertaking sufficient “moderate” exercise (for example, taking a brisk walk) in a typical week. Less than 16% reported that they undertake more than 150 minutes of vigorous exercise a week (for example, engaging in a strenuous sporting activity). The percentages for young people ages 18–29 were only slightly higher.

The 2006 World Health survey suggested that some 75% of Qataris were overweight and 40% were obese. Other recent estimates suggest that a third of Qatar’s male population and more than two-fifth of the female population are obese (Bayram 2010). Qatar has the highest prevalence of overweight and obese adults in the Gulf Cooperation Council and considerably higher than most OECD countries (table 4.2). This problem was confirmed by a World Health Organization study in which Qatar had the sixth highest prevalence in the world (WHO 2009).

**Table 4.2**

**Overweight and obesity among adults are higher in Qatar than in benchmark countries, 2010 (%)**

Country	Gulf Cooperation Council		Selected Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries	
	Overweight (%)	Obese (%)	Overweight (%)	Obese (%)
<b>Qatar</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>32</b>	Finland	21
Qataris	75	40	Sweden	13
Kuwait	70	30	Norway	13
United Arab Emirates	67	25	Denmark	12
Bahrain	61	21		
Saudi Arabia	63	23		
Oman	43	8		

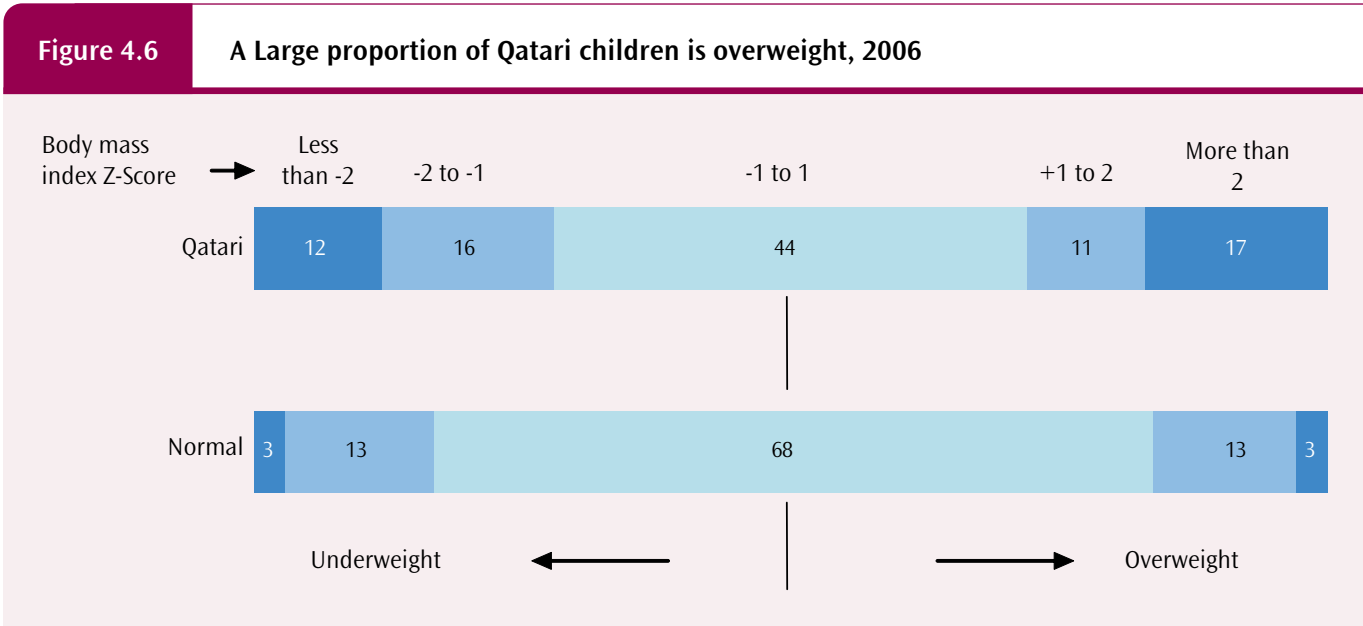
Note: Overweight refers to body mass index greater than or equal to 25 kg/m<sup>2</sup>, and obese refers to body mass index greater than or equal to 30kg/m<sup>2</sup>. Source: WHO, (2011b) and Qatar and Qatari data from NHA (2008).

The high rates of obesity seen across the Arabian Gulf Cooperation Council are generally attributed to poor diet, a climate that is unfavourable to outdoor activity and encourages a sedentary lifestyle, and cultural barriers to physical activity. There is evidence that good eating and exercise habits among young people are inculcated at a young age. The 2006 World Health Survey compiled data on Qatari children under age 5 (figure 4.6) and found that about 44% had a z-score in the normal range (between -1 and 1), 28% had a z-score above 1 (above normal range). Some 17% of Qatari children had a z-score above 2, indicating a high body mass index for age. The survey also indicated that as few as 50% of boys and men and less than 40% of girls and women reported regular participation in sports or other physical activity. Conversely, 12% of Qatari children had a z-score below -2, indicating a very low body mass index for age. The percentage is four-fold higher than expected. Further study is required to better understand the factors associated with this phenomenon.

**Obesity among Qatari students**

In 2009 the Qatar Olympic Committee conducted a study on the weight and height of a sample of Qatari students ages 12–17. The study found that compared with the adult population of Qataris and to the national level, the student population had a significantly higher level of obesity (table 4.3). Again, this suggests that diet and exercise habits are established at an early age.

A school based survey, found that the prevalence of overweight and obesity among adolescents in Qatar was highest in the 15–18 age group—46.2% compared with 6.6% in the 11–14 age group. Similarly the prevalence of obesity was highest among the 15–18 age group—9.4% as compared with 4.9% in the 11–14 age group (Al Ibrahim, Hamad 2011a). A study of the habits of Qatari students’ habits found that 8–11% of overweight students watched television during meals and that only 11–17% participated in physical activity (Kamal and Kholi 2009). A similar study of 1,017 Qatari students ages 12–17 also found extremely high rates of childhood obesity, with over 45% classified as obese and 18% classified as morbidly obese.



Note: Body mass index for children is measured using z-scores, categorized into five groups. A negative z-score indicates a lower index than normal, and a positive score indicates a higher index than normal. A score of under -2 indicates a low index for the child's age, and a score of over 2 indicates a high index for the child's age. The normal range is between -1 and 1.

Source: Computed from NHA (2008).

**Table 4.3****Obesity among Qatari students starts at an early age, 2009 (%)**

Age	Overweight and obese (%)	Obese (%)
12	74	42
13	58	42
14	77	50
15	70	47
16	75	50
17	69	47
12–17	70	45
18 and older	75	40
<b>Qatari and Non-Qatari 18 and older</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>32</b>

Note: adult data are from NHA (2008).

Source: Student data are from QOC (2009a);

### Diabetes

Promoting youth health requires public sector intervention. Most governments try to reduce risky behaviour that could be detrimental to young people's future health. Individuals, and in particular youth, have incomplete information on the consequences of their behaviour, such as whether or when they will face adverse outcomes (box 4.2).

Obesity is closely associated with the risk of diabetes, which is threatening to become a major health problem. The World Health Survey estimated that the prevalence of diabetes among Qataris is 12% in 2006 (NHA 2008)—more than twice the world average (estimated at around 5%) and much higher than the rate among non-Qataris (less than 7%).

**Box 4.2****Health issues are complex and need proper attention**

Many health issues, such as obesity and diabetes, are interdependent with other aspects of health, such as nutrition. Vitamin D deficiency is a common problem in Qatari children, and vitamin D supplement intake among diabetic children is very poor. Vitamin D deficiency becomes severe in children with type 1 diabetes.

People with type 2 diabetes are usually more obese and are significantly more likely to come from a family that has had a consanguineous marriage to a first-degree

relatives than people who do not have diabetes. In addition, smoking habits and a family history of diabetes are strongly associated with people developing diabetes.

Further evidence for the interdependence of health factors comes from a study that found that Qatari children with rickets were significantly more likely to have a family history of vitamin D deficiency (44.2%) and diabetes (53.5%).

Source: Al Ibrahim, Hamad (2011a).

A further 10% of adults are classified as pre-diabetic based on measurement of raised blood glucose levels. Juvenile onset diabetes is also higher in Qatar than in other Gulf Cooperation Council countries. Diabetes related deaths from diabetes will likely increase because of the substantial proportion of Qataris who already have type 2 diabetes and because risk rises with age. Although a genetic predisposition is an important factor, lifestyle choices significantly affect both the risk of getting the disease and resulting mortality patterns. An estimated 90% of type 2 diabetes cases are linked to excess weight (Hossain, Kavar and Nahar 2007).

Efforts are being made to raise awareness of diabetes amongst youth. The Qatar Diabetes Association visits schools to discuss diabetes and health choices and participates in health and wellness fairs, such as the one at the College of the North Atlantic-Qatar (Al Ibrahim, Hamad 2011b).

### Smoking and related substance abuse

Tobacco use is one of the most preventable causes of premature death and disease. All forms of tobacco consumption—including smoking and chewing—are harmful. Tobacco is believed to be responsible for more than 10% of adult deaths. The main illnesses associated with tobacco

use are lung cancer (and other cancers), vascular disease (including heart disease and strokes), chronic bronchitis and emphysema (World Bank 1999)

In 2006, some 14% of adults in Qatar reported smoking and 11% of them reported doing so every day (rates were similar among Qataris only; NHA 2008). Smoking prevalence was much higher for men (24%) than for women (3%). Because smoking is seen as socially undesirable, these figures may underestimate true prevalence rates, particularly among women.

The Qatar Global Youth Tobacco Survey, conducted by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, includes data on the prevalence of cigarette and other tobacco use as well as information on five determinants of tobacco use—access; availability and price; environmental tobacco smoke exposure; availability of cessation options and support; media and advertising practices; and school curriculum—that Qatar could include in a comprehensive tobacco control program. The 2004 and 2007 surveys show high and rising use of cigarettes and other tobacco products by Qatari students ages 14–16 (El-Awa, Warren and Jones 2010). The 2004 survey provided comprehensive detail not only on prevalence of tobacco use amongst young teenagers, but also on knowledge and attitudes, access and availability, and environmental exposure to smoking (box 4.3).

#### Box 4.3

#### Smoking is a significant issue among youth

The 2004 Global Youth Tobacco Survey was a school-based survey of students who ages 14–16 years old. Salient findings for Qatar include:

##### Prevalence

- 26% of students had ever smoked cigarettes (36% of boys and 18% of girls).
- 20% currently use any tobacco product (26% of boys and 15% of girls).
- 10% currently smoke cigarettes (15% of boys and 5% of girls).
- 16% currently use other tobacco products (boys 19% and girls 14%).
- 19% of non-smokers are likely to initiate smoking next year.

##### Knowledge, attitude, access and availability

- 30% of boys and 21% of girls think people who smoke have more friends.
- 21% of boys and 15% of girls think people who smoke look more attractive.

- 21% usually smoke at home.
- 47% buy cigarettes in a store.
- 73% who tried to buy cigarettes in a store were not refused purchase because of their age.
- More than 80% of students think smoking in public places should be banned
- 67% of smokers want to stop smoking now and 67% of smokers tried to stop smoking during the past year.
- 60% of students saw anti-smoking media messages in the past 30 days.
- 70% of students saw pro-cigarette ads in the past 30 days.

##### Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS) exposure is high:

- 30% of students live in homes where others smoke in their presence.
- Almost 50% are exposed to smoke in public places.
- Over 25% of the students has at least one parent who smokes.
- 11% have most or all friends who smoke.

Source: CDC (2009).

#### Box 4.4

#### Regulations governing tobacco

In 1980 advertisers of tobacco products in Qatar were required to note that “smoking is bad for your health”. In 1982 a tax on tobacco products was introduced, and in 1999 the tax rate on tobacco products was raised to 150%–2% of which is directed to health education and smoking reduction. Emiri Law 20 of 2002 was issued to monitor the use and sale of tobacco products and to prohibit smoking

in enclosed public places. The law also bans the sale of cigarettes to any person under age 18 and within 500 metres of an educational institution. Growing tobacco is not permitted in Qatar.

*Source: Al Ibrahim, Hamad (2011a).*

An unpublished 2009 school-based study of adolescents between ages of 15–18 found that smoking tobacco is not the only type of substance abuse occurring among Qatari youth (Al Ibrahim, Hamad 2011a). The prevalence of shisha (water pipe) smoking was 26% for men and 12% for women and about 19% overall. The prevalence of chewing tobacco was 15–18 age group was 6.8%—noteworthy considering Qatari law prohibits the sale of tobacco products to anyone under age 18 (box 4.4). The survey also found that the prevalence of illegal drugs use was almost 2%, over 4% of students admitted to drinking alcohol, and over 12% had used inhalants. Women reported a higher usage of inhalants than men did (16% compared with 8%).

#### Drug use

Drug abuse is a major public health problem impacting all societies, but the Ministry of the Interior data suggest that in Qatar it is a less significant issue for youth health and well-being than are diabetes and obesity. Drug-related crimes committed by Qataris appear to have fallen in recent years (MOI 2010b).

Qatar’s National Drug Control Strategy 2010–2015 aims to strengthen the role of various government institutions in collectively addressing drug use. The Ministry of the Interior’s Drug Prevention Department combats drug crimes, including smuggling and trafficking, possession and cross-border crimes, and the Permanent Committee for Drug and Alcohol Affairs suggests policies for combating, treating and rehabilitating drug and alcohol abusers. The committee cooperates with local, regional and international organizations in eradicating illicit cultivation of narcotic drugs and plants or psychotropic substances and monitors legitimate activities involving the import of legal drugs.

Qatar is raising awareness among school and university students of the dangers of drug abuse. For the future the focus must be on advertising in popular websites or satellite channels as alternative means to raise awareness about the harm and risk of drugs.

### Youth health and well-being through sports

Sports are a powerful tool for building a healthy and cohesive society. Being physically active provides people with a range of physical, social and mental health benefits. Children and young people in particular can gain more from physical activity than just improved physical health. Involvement in sports from an early age builds character and discipline in children that can be applied in other aspects of life. Qatar has a growing, young and increasingly affluent population with ample leisure time, but participation in sports and physical activity is below expectations.

Qatar remains committed to increasing sports participation and active lifestyle practices to improve health outcomes, forge global friendships and enhance relations with countries around the world. In January 2011 Qatar successfully hosted the coveted Asian Football Confederation’s Asian Cup after successfully hosting the 2006 Asian Games.

Qatar won the bid to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup and has formally submitted a bid to host the 2020 Olympics. These initiatives will promote Qatar as a leading destination for international sports. This is in line with the Qatar Olympic Committee’s vision to increase Qatari youth participation in sports. In addition to participating in the games, Qatari youth will be involved in organization and administrative work as well as volunteering.



Major sports events in Doha present opportunities for youth to see their world sporting heroes compete in tennis, golf, motorcycle racing, football and other sports. When accompanied by sports clinics conducted by the world's leading players, the events generate more value because youth participate in various roles, get help from these champion players, and are further motivated to play to the highest standards. The events also enable youth to participate as volunteers on and off the field and to enhance friendships, teamwork, their sense of social responsibility and other essential interpersonal skills.

### Healthy lifestyles

Sports and physical activity are integral parts of a healthy lifestyle. They decrease the risk of cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure and stroke and to contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They also minimize excessive weight gain. Health and physical education are essential to the school curriculum, and special emphasis is placed on education classes at preparatory and secondary schools in Qatar. Programmes and sports activities such as running, cycling, swimming and aerobic exercise are essential for obesity control and weight management and need to be continuously encouraged.

Qatar is proud of its recent achievements in sports, including the expansion of all types of sporting activities and participation in international competitions. Sports management and youth development are administered by independent agencies that promote the active sports movement and engage youth in healthy habits, physical activity and regular exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle.

The ASPIRE ACTIVE programme of the ASPIRE Academy for Sports Excellence offers a range of recreational physical activities and fitness courses for young men, women and children. ASPIRE Active has had unprecedented success in contributing to well-being through aerobics, circuit training, body training, Pilates, swimming, martial arts and mother and toddler classes.

The Global Sport Fund is a UN initiative, sponsored by the Qatar Olympic Committee that helps young people ages 11–17 live safer and more peaceful lives through sports while teaching them to play by the rules, engage in teamwork and show respect for each others. The fund uses sports to improve physical and mental health, reinforce positive social skills, and shield youth from the temptation of drug use and juvenile delinquency. It organizes periodic youth camps, in Qatar and elsewhere, with the most recent of which was held

in Doha in 2010. These camps have allow young Qataris to experience sports with similar children from other countries at home and abroad.

### An integrated sports landscape

To improve the overall health of the population, the state and its citizens must both commit to appropriately modifying lifestyles. All sectors of the government must work in unison to promote healthy and active living among the public by incorporating sports and physical activity into a broader preventive health agenda.

The organized sports landscape in Qatar follows a largely centralized model built around the Qatar Olympic Committee and Aspire Zone Foundation, with the various sports federations, clubs and sports committees channelling participants into these core organizations. Peripheral bodies that serve the education, health, environment, culture, tourism and leisure, and youth sectors collaborate with specialist sports organizations.

The Qatar Olympic Committee is charged with promoting Olympics principles and facilitating sports from the community level through to elite performers. The scope of its work extends from building sports venues and funding federations to developing athletes and running national and international competitions.

The Aspire Zone Foundation is responsible for developing sports champions and promoting healthy lifestyles through its three strategic business units:

- ASPIRE Academy for Sports Excellence, which offers athletics training to youth and is charged with identifies and transforms promising student athletes into world-class competitors.
- ASPETAR, the first specialized orthopaedic and sports medicine hospital in the region, which provides injury prevention care, performance improvement, research in sports medicine and awareness in nutrition.
- Aspire LOGISTICS, which builds and manages the sporting facilities in Aspire Zone.

Young people who want to take up formal, competitive and organized sports may choose from a number of entry points: directly through a club or federation, through school physical education programmes, through the Schools Olympic Programme (a yearly event organized by the Qatar Olympic Committee), through Aspire Academy's Multisport and Sport-Specific Development Programmes (box 4.5) or through privately run sports centres and clubs not directly associated with lead organizations.

**Box 4.5****ASPIRE Academy's outreach programmes**

Aspire Academy's outreach centres focus on school-aged, Arabic-speaking children and enable talented athletes to be considered for selection into the ASPRE Academy for Sports Excellence. Two types of programmes are provided: Multisport Skill Development Programmes and the Sport-Specific Development Programmes.

The main goal of the Multisport Skill Development Programmes is to increase the number of Qatari and Arabic-speaking boys and girls ages 6–14 who are capable of mastering motor development skills and movement fundamentals required for frequent sports participation.

The programmes have a coach to child ratio not exceeding 1:16 (lower for some groups) and each instructor is a certified physical education teacher or licensed coach.

Sport Specific Development Workshops are invitational eight-week invitational workshops in sports where children must be able to demonstrate skill and affinity. The workshops are delivered by either ASPIRE Academy staff or federation coaches.

*Source: Bayram (2010).*

**Sports venue access and use**

All countries developing youth sports programmes require an effective sports infrastructure. However, it is often difficult to find large suitable areas of land that are readily accessible to youth, spectators and athletes alike. Such infrastructure includes outdoor and indoor areas for informal sporting activities and for structured and open training as well as for serious competition at the national, regional and international levels.

Competition between public open space needs and dedicated space for elite athlete use can result in high costs and incompatible activities. Since 2004 Qatar has had a concerted infrastructure-building programme ensure more facilities for competitive sports, neighbourhood playgrounds and cultural centres so that youth can engage in sports. While most public sports facilities are built by the Qatar Olympic Committee for federations and clubs, private entities also operate many venues—particularly in taekwondo, judo and karate combat sports.

Major sports facilities exist at the Aspire Zone, military and police bases, independent schools, private schools, hotels and other private establishments. Thus, the number of places for youth to pursue sporting interests in Qatar is high. Open public space for casual sports is limited. Walking tracks along the Doha Corniche and Aspire Zone are heavily used but there is a shortage of suitable parks for ball games and sports requiring any sort of equipment are in short supply.

The Qatar Olympic Committee-administered venues are used almost exclusively for sports training or competitive events. These venues may attract more use given the increasing tendency for sports venues worldwide to be used for other purposes such as concerts, ceremonies, banquets and multisport events.

**Limited participation despite significant health benefits**

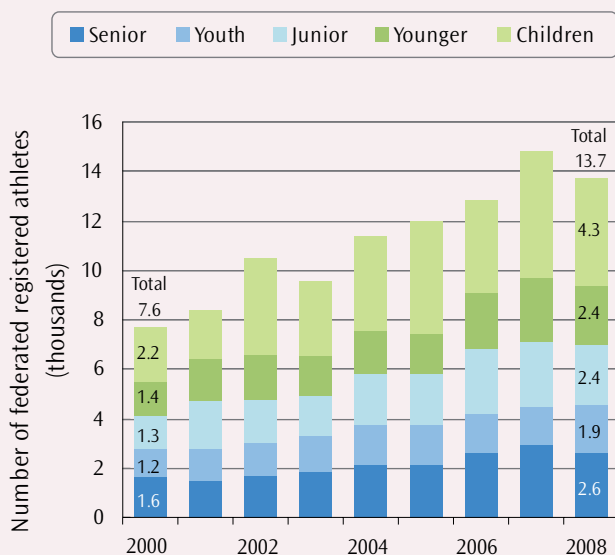
Participation in organized sport is limited and recent male athlete registrations at Qatar's sports federations have not kept up with rapid population growth—largely because unskilled non-Qatari male workers do not take up organized sport. However, growth in female athlete registrations has been consistent across most age groups, though the numbers participating remain very small.

The number of registered players in Qatari federated teams and sports clubs increased from 7,500 in 2000 to 13,700 in 2008—an average annual growth rate of 7.8%. The number of child participants grew at above the average rate (8.9%), the junior category at the average rate the remainder grew at below the average rate. While the share of Qatari women in the total number of athletes is exceedingly small, it is rising—from a negligible amount in 2000 to 7.3% in 2008 (figure 4.7). The growth in the number athletes over 2000–2008 was much higher among women (23%) than men (4%).

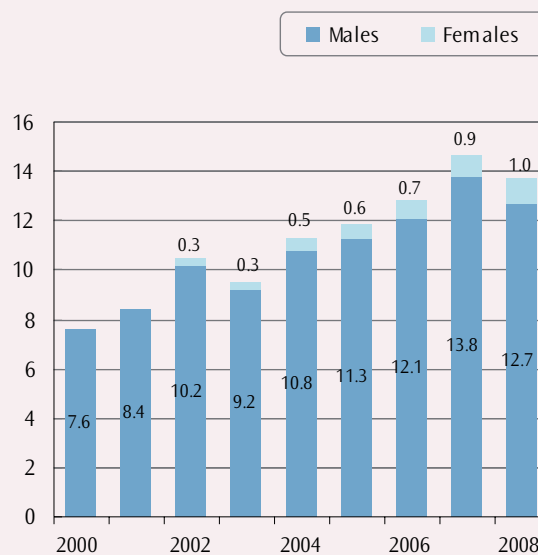
Figure 4.7

Increasing number of athletes in Qatar

Children, younger and junior Qatar athletes have increased most



Qatari athletes are predominantly male



Source: QSA (2009b).

Women play a critical role in promoting healthy lifestyles through their influence on children’s health and well-being. A 2009 study by the Qatar Olympic Committee found that just 15% of Qatari women ages 15 and older regularly participated in sports. More than half either seldom or never participated. The type of sports and physical activities most frequently participated in were walking, running, aerobic exercise, and swimming (table 4.4).

Despite the huge number of advantages that women can accrue through sport and physical activity, participation is still constrained by many factors. A Qatar Olympic Committee study found that social and community influences were the most important factors constraining Qatari women’s participation (box 4.6).

Table 4.4

Qatari women’s participation in sports and physical activity, 2009 (%)

Frequency of participation	Distribution (%)	Activity	Distribution (%)
Regularly participates	15	Walking	58
Sometimes participates	36	Running	12
Seldom participates	32	Aerobic exercise	14
Never participates	17	Swimming	6
		Others	10

Note: Data are for 959 respondents  
Source: QOC (2009b).

**Regularity of participation**

- Lack of regular participation.
- Paucity of appropriate facilities.

**Problems impeding participation**

- Family tradition.
- Embarrassment at being observed while exercising.
- Male family member forbids going out for sports.
- Responsibilities of daily life intervene to prevent participation.

**Requires**

- Suitable places for women to exercise.
- Change of attitude on part of family.

**Personal characteristics of women**

- Health status of women does not allow them to exercise.
- Women's belief that sports are for men not women.
- Women's bodies are not suited to exercise.
- Exercise may cause women harm.

**Requires**

- Dispelling misconceptions.
- Making women and men aware of the benefits.

**Shortcoming of available practice facilities and programmes**

- Lack of guidance on what to do and how to do it.
- Lack of easy programmes to encourage participation.
- Lack of collective sports programmes to encourage participation.
- Lack of programmes for different ages.

**Requires**

- Customized programmes according to need.
- Qualified Qatari women as trainers.

**Deficiencies in information and education in sports**

- Lack of guidance on the contribution of sports to health.
- Lack of awareness programmes for special circumstances (such as obesity, pregnancy, postnatal, menstrual cycle).
- Deficiency in communications between media sports programmes and women.
- Absence of media programmes illustrating the positive relationship between Islamic law and sports.

**Requires**

- Media participation in health knowledge and education programmes.
- Assurance of the compatibility of religious law and physical activity.
- Educating individuals about health risks they are exposed to.

Source: QOC (2009b).

Clustering the issues according to the frequency of the responses, the study found that the greatest number of concerns related to social and community aspects (82%), problems associated with information and education on sports (80%), problems associated with the characteristics of the women (76%) and problems

associated with facilities and programmes (75%). The ordering of these concerns suggests that a small, tight-knit community, like that of the Qataris, imposes a form of behaviour that must observe the prevailing customs.

## Physical education in schools

In 2007 the Supreme Education Council undertook a project to build the capacity of agencies involved in providing physical activity in schools and at community sites to increase the regularity of participation in physical activity among students, boost the quality of the activities offered and improve student attitudes towards lifelong participation in sports. All independent schools have implemented the new Physical Education Curriculum Framework, and physical education is now compulsory in schools from kindergarten through grade 12.

A strategic plan to 2013 for improving the quality of physical education taught in schools has since been developed to tackle the challenges faced by policy-makers, school leaders, teachers and parents. A major part of this challenge relates

to the centrality of sports and physical activity in a school environment, rather than sports being treated as a marginal subject.

The annual Schools Olympic Programme, an initiative by His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, was launched in 2007. It aims to inspire young people in public and private sector schools to participate in sports and adopt active and healthy lifestyles. The programme is hosted under the auspices of the Qatar Olympic Committee and the Supreme Education Council at the Aspire Dome, and a new theme is chosen each year to be co-administered with another government ministry and relevant agencies. Recent themes include sports and health, sports and the environment and sports and culture.

**Table 4.5**

### Substantial increase in boys' and girls' participation in the Qatar Schools Olympic Programme

Season	Participants			Total Students	Participation rate (%)
	Boys	Girls	Total		
<b>Number of participants in individual sports - athletics, fencing, gymnastics, swimming and table tennis</b>					
2007/2008	974	396	1,370	136,677	1.0
2008/2009	1,740	601	2,341	143,141	1.6
2009/2010	3,104	1,259	4,363	151,229	2.9
2010/2011	3,602	1,731	5,333	157,647	3.4
Average annual growth, 2007/2008 to 2010/2011 (%)	44	49	45	5	
<b>Number of participants in team sports - basketball, football, handball and volleyball</b>					
2007/2008	3,952	1,777	5,729	136,677	4.2
2008/2009	5,268	1,908	7,176	143,141	5.0
2009/2010	6,784	3,138	9,922	151,229	6.6
2010/2011	8,290	3,869	12,159	157,647	7.7
Annual growth, 2007/2008 to 2010/2011 (%)	25	26	25	5	

Source: Computed from QOC (2011b) and QSA (2011e).

The programme is an interschool sports competition held from November through March, involving primary, preparatory and secondary schools which play each other over a series of preliminary rounds, with winners gradually advancing through to the final competition held over two days in March (with one day for boys' events and the other for girls' events). Finalists receive gold, silver and bronze medals for their efforts. The Qatar Paralympic Committee also coordinates athletes from special needs schools to compete against similar schools in the SOP. The success of programme is highlighted by the phenomenal growth in male and female student participation between 2007/08 and 2010/11, with more than 12,000 students from about 300 schools competing in the most recent year (table 4.5). Because of the programme, student participation in team and individual sports has increased significantly.

### **Vocational development of athletes**

The Qatar Olympic Committee provides talented young Qatari athletes with opportunities for a monthly stipend and other incentives through its affiliated federations and clubs, including:

- Incentive programme for national team players who study at local universities—the Qatar Olympic Committee pays players a monthly salary and 25% of the university fees.
- Local and international scholarships for talented athletes—the Qatar Olympic Committee pays for the academic studies and professional training of talented athletes who have the potential to excel in international competitions.
- Employment programme for high school graduates—Qatar Olympic Committee offers outstanding high school students scholarships to study abroad in various specializations. Returning graduates are offered jobs at the QOC.
- Voluntary training programmes for youth—these programmes provide Qatari youth in secondary school with administrative and field experience.

The continuing large government investment in Qatar's sports sector, including the organizing of international sports events, has opened up many employment opportunities for young Qataris in sports related work. Beyond careers in coaching and sports administration, athletes can work in sports media, sports facilities building and maintenance, sports sciences, event management, sports clothing and merchandising or sports finance. Qatar's more successful athletes also enjoy a pension scheme.

### **Sports education and training**

Participation in sports is vital to the holistic development of young people, fostering their physical and emotional health and promoting social integration. Within schools physical education is an essential component of quality education. Besides promoting physical activity, such programmes are correlated with better academic performance (UN 2003). The Qatar Olympic Committee's 2008–2012 Strategic Plan (QOC 2008) aims to strengthen sports education and culture in schools through programmes that reinforce and strengthen physical education curricula; support teacher development, training and assessment; and introduce a sports culture in schools through innovative areas such as sports photography, literature, painting, sculpture, music, dance and song.

In 2004 Qatar established the ASPIRE Academy for Sports Excellence (ASPIRE), to provide sports training and education to students with sporting potential in an exceptional learning and sporting environment. The purpose is to produce well trained athletes in various sports to meet the needs of Qatari society and realize its aspirations in regional and international sports competitions.

The academy enrolls 200 male student athletes in grades 7–12 who specialize in football, athletics, squash, table tennis, sailing, judo, gymnastics, tennis, fencing, rowing, shooting and golf; 121 students have graduated since 2007/2008.

The academy also sponsors local and international community programmes. ASPIRE ACTIVE, a public fitness programme, reaches 3,500 adults and children in Doha. ASPIRE Sports Skill Development Centres reach more than 5,000 children in Doha. For tertiary level, for young athletes who are academically qualified and wish to continue their studies in Qatar—particularly women who prefer to study locally for cultural reasons—a range of university options exist, though only Qatar University offers a sports major.

Qatar University has a long history of graduating physical education teachers and recently has diversified its curriculum by introducing a Bachelor of Science in Sports Science. The new programme is a four-year undergraduate course focusing on three tracks: sports management, physical education, and exercise and fitness. The internationally accredited programme (with 30 male and 30 female places) was first offered in 2009 and is expected to produce its first 60 graduates in 2013. Two-thirds of the programme is taught in English and the remainder in Arabic. This programme will allow athletes and aspiring sports administrators to add value to the sports sector in Qatar at the professional level.

The Qatar Olympic Committee in cooperation with the International Olympic Committee has awarded five scholarships to senior professionals in Qatar's sports sector to obtain an Executive Masters in Sports Organizations Management from the University of Poitiers. The one-year programme is similar to an MBA and is spread over four residential modules emanating from and culminating in Lausanne, Switzerland—the Olympic capital. Qatari scholars in this programme can use work time to attend lectures and carry out assignments, and all fees are covered.

The Qatar Olympic Committee's Qatar Olympic Academy offers diplomas in advanced management of sports institutions in cooperation with Olympic Solidarity at the International Olympic Committee in Lausanne. The programme aims to train and upgrade administrative skills of sports managers to global standards.

### Developing talent for the future

Given Qatar's small population, consistently producing talented young athletes to represent the country at the international level will be challenging. Naturalization of non-national born athletes is a contentious but global issue confronting the international sports movement, and one that has considerable significance for the local sports sector.

Research is integral to the improvement and well-being of young athletes. ASPIRE focuses on developing adolescent men's sporting performance through an integrated approach that uses sports science, sports medicine and education (box 4.7).

The Qatar Olympic Committee's Strategic Plan 2008–2012 aims to increase opportunities for talented athletes through the education, participation and competition of Qatari boys and girls, supporting them in realizing their sporting dreams. Ultimately, the depth of talent can be expanded only if more children and adults compete in the amateur sports federations that feed into professional-level performance. Given the few sporting organizations in Qatar, policy on the establishing clubs and leagues needs to be reviewed to encourage wider participation at amateur levels. Proactive government intervention in establishing more leagues and allowing more school facilities to be open to weekend leagues could add depth to Qatar's pool of sporting talent and may help address the serious childhood obesity problems.

#### Box 4.7

#### ASPIRE sports science research to improve youth sports development and well-being

Between 2007 and 2011, Qatar's ASPIRE Academy for Sports Excellence has:

- Profiled and monitored young athletes at the ASSPIRE Academy to understand Qatari youth sporting development.
- Developed and used technology to monitor the technical and tactical profiles of athletes as they develop.
- Initiated research on athlete development profiles for boys in the region, focusing on formulas such as peak height velocity, the time at which an individual is growing at their fastest, benchmarked against Gulf Cooperation Council and European populations.

- Studied training loads and their impact on growth-related diseases in adolescent athletes.
- Initiated studies on nutritional strategies for health and performance.

ASPIRE also works in close partnership with the Supreme Education Council to track children's growth and development patterns and to profile school students to identify potentially talented athletes. ASPIRE's research can provide benefits not just to the development of youth athletes but to the health and well-being of all Qatari youth.

*Source: Adapted from ASPIRE (2011).*

## Conclusion

Substantial investments in healthcare, including successful vaccination campaigns, have reduced childhood mortality rates and the levels of most communicable diseases in Qatar. Young people now have a good start to life, as a healthy birth, infancy and childhood provide the foundation for physical and mental well-being in maturity. Interventions targeted at young people before they acquire unhealthy habits and lifestyles, will greatly improve their chances of wellness later in life.

Unhealthy lifestyles and risky behaviours are the key determinants of ill-health. As in most affluent societies, overweight and obesity, caused by excessive eating and insufficient physical exercise, are highly prevalent amongst young Qataris. Studies of secondary school Qatari students indicate alarming levels of overweight and obesity, particularly among older secondary school children, of up to 70% and 45% respectively. Unhealthy eating and exercise habits ingrained early in life can lead to chronic non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancers in later life. Use of tobacco products is another key driver of chronic non-communicable diseases; one in five Qatari secondary students reported current use of tobacco products.

Qatar's high rates of death and disability from road traffic accidents especially among young men, have become a silent epidemic. Risk-taking and reckless driving behaviour by young men have not been deterred by past safety and

awareness campaigns and laws. The new comprehensive road safety strategy being prepared as part of the National Development Strategy 2011–2016 must have the driving behaviour of youth as a central focus.

Sport and physical activity are integral features of healthy lifestyles. Providing health education linked to sports development can change youth behaviour and encourage a healthy way of life. Particular focus should be given to encouraging young women, often constrained by social and cultural influences, to participate in a more healthy and active lifestyles.

The National Development Strategy 2011–2016, which incorporates the National Health Strategy identifies that the key healthcare need is to change behavioural patterns through a strong preventive approach and a robust primary care system. It emphasizes how cross-sectoral links, especially between education and sports are crucial for achieving a healthy population. Establishing healthy behaviours during childhood and youth is easier and more effective than trying to change unhealthy behaviours during adulthood and will contribute to achieving higher human development.

The Qatar School Olympic Programme initiated by Qatar Olympic Committee in partnership with the Supreme Education Council is an excellent example of how young people can be drawn into sports and thereby to healthy lifestyles.







Empowering Young People  
and Promoting their  
Civic Participation





# Empowering Young People and Promoting their Civic Participation

Among the development goals of *Qatar National Vision 2030*, two human development outcomes relate to participatory development of youth: fostering a strong sense of belonging and citizenship, while empowering youth to shape their tomorrow by enhancing their participation; and creating a people-centred strategy in the expertise, ideas, needs and dreams of Qatari society.

*National Development Strategy 2011*

Youth is a period when young people begin searching for a stable identity. The greater freedoms and wider choices provided by Qatar's economic and social progress have changed the values and culture of youth. A key challenge for young Qataris, and youth more generally, is reconciling traditional and modern values and norms. While families and peer groups are important in shaping youth identity, social organizations provide spaces for young people to develop a sense of belonging. An enabling environment should be created to provide youth with opportunities to be seen and heard as active citizens in their own communities and societies.

Despite rapid economic and social gains as well as political change, Qatar has largely maintained its cultural and traditional values, with the family playing a central role in Qatari life. Families will remain the main influence during the transition from childhood to adulthood, but young Qatari men and women should also be fully engaged with the broader community and participate in processes that allow them to express their needs and aspirations to decision-makers.

Participation means working with people, not working for them. Youth should be encouraged to become full partners, and even leaders, in designing, formulating and

implementing programmes, consistent with the United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth (box 5.1). They should be regarded not only as targeted beneficiaries but also as active agents in their own development and that of their communities and societies.

Young people need services, support and training, but they also need opportunities to contribute. The best preparation for self-reliance and leadership tomorrow is participation today. Participation should not be seen as contributing only to one's own development. Young people can and do play critical roles as agents of change in their families, peer groups and communities (box 5.2).

As much as possible, youth should be given full responsibility for their undertakings and the fruits of their success or failure in solving collective problems. Such ownership includes an essential measure of decision-making authority and can assume a range of forms, from planning and advising roles to implementation and advocacy. Youth need to be recruited and assured of authentic roles, avoiding the ever-present risk of adult-directed activities with youth invited. Mutual trust sparks an interdependent relationship between involved parties and fosters a climate in which youth and adults are able to act with confidence, honesty and openness.

**Box 5.1****Integrating youth in the development process: the United Nations Programme of Action for Youth****Objectives in the field of youth development**

- Mobilize the efforts of decision-makers to adopt a strategy aimed at integrating youth into the development process.
- Create a national list of indicators that measure progress in implementing the Programme of Action for Youth.
- Build a national database on youth that is accurate, reliable, timely, detailed and comparable across regions and over time.
- Develop a regional resource manual on how to formulate and monitor the implementation of national youth policies.

**Recommendations to renew the commitment of Arab countries to:**

- Integrate youth issues into development planning.
- Accelerate the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth.
- Develop capacity-building programmes and create national and regional mechanisms aimed at improving the quality of life of this group of the population.

**Recommendations to United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia member countries:**

- Use contemporary scientific methodology to address youth as a sociodemographic group facing specific challenges.

- Adopt a national strategic vision for youth based on citizenship, rights and duties, and on the human being as the centre and goal of development.
- Establish a national body for coordinating among ministries and various actors dealing with youth issues, including nongovernmental youth organizations, and identify the functions of those actors, enhance their powers and establish cooperation frameworks among them.
- Use standard indicators with specific targets and timeframes to devise a national agenda for youth development and provide better opportunities to assess progress made in implementing national youth policies.
- Participate, within available resources and possibilities, in supporting and funding the regional project on strengthening national capacities to formulate youth policies
- Establish youth parliaments and enhance their legislative powers and capacities in order to encourage youth participation in public life and political decision-making.

Source: UN-ESCWA (2010).

**Box 5.2****Isolating young people discourages their participation**

Isolating young people from adults through negative attitudes, role stratification and overemphasis or denial of age differences translates into low expectations for young people. Low expectations in turn discourage the creation of pathways for young people's civic engagement and involvement as partners in building civil society. The cycle

is self-reinforcing—isolation and low expectations feed off each other—with the consequence that pathways for youth civic engagement remain limited and underdeveloped.

Source: Adapted from Camino and Zeldin (2002).

Youth civic engagement is a collective concept involving others. The meaning of participation, as well as its consequences depend not only on the motivation and skills of the young people involved, but also on the context in which it occurs – it is rarely youth working entirely alone. Civic engagement is accomplished through youth-adult partnership – sometimes with a young person and an adult working together one-on-one, sometimes with a few young people working with a group of adults and sometimes with a few adults and a group of young people. Youth want and expect adult guidance, support and expertise but within a context of mutual trust and respect.

Pathways for youth civic engagement are often transient and difficult to sustain in the context of staff turnover, youth burnout and the tendency of well meaning adults to take control when plans do not work out as intended or group cohesion is poor. In societies where social norms do not encourage adult involvement and consultation with nonfamilial young people, it is imperative to enact policies and build structures to support youth civic engagement. Such policies and structures provide the scaffolding that articulates the vision, expectations and support for the pathways to inclusive participation (Camino and Zeldin 2002).

Broad areas for engagement in civil society have been identified, including individual, community, government, business and voluntary endeavours—social spaces in which citizens engage as participants rather than as complainers, victims or accomplices. Although these pathways do not exclude youth, on the whole they offer only minimal opportunities for young people to act affirmatively as part of civil society.

These limited opportunities for engagement are being challenged. Youth are increasingly questioning accepted stereotypes, societal norms, policies and practices that assume they are unable or unwilling to participate in a full spectrum of civic activities. Increasingly, new practices and policies suggest that youth can be active contributors to the common good but that empowerment works best when adults serve as allies or partners and youth gain the support and institutional power they need to help them achieve individual and collective goals.

## Qatar's investment in youth

Youth are an asset to their communities. Given the opportunities, they can be active contributors towards community and national development. But to realise this potential of youth, it is necessary to establish appropriate mechanisms and pathways for their participation.

### The rationale of investment

Investing in youth citizenship affects patterns of participation, development priorities and thus development outcomes as young people age. But young people are important not merely because they are future adults; they can define and achieve positive change today (box 5.3). The political, moral and even stylistic choices of youth help society see what is culturally important and achieve what is politically possible. The emergence of youth permits a society to achieve fresh contact with its cultural and social possibilities, and this fresh contact facilitates re-evaluations of policies and practices and encourages people to discard whatever is no longer useful and to value the new, the innovative and the challenging.

#### Box 5.3

#### Young people are an integral part of the development process

There is wide recognition of the need to make the needs and experiences of youth an integral part of the development process in social, political and economic areas. Young people are a valuable asset to their societies, and investing in them brings significant benefits.

It is crucial to engage young people in the development of their country today because they will be the decision-makers of tomorrow.

*Source: Al Matawi (2011b).*

Globally, there is a growing momentum in youth participation and engagement in development. To realize this potential, governments worldwide are supporting ministries and organizations that target youth, developing programmes and policies that promote their participation in development and allocating budgets for youth development. Qatar is no exception, having established government departments, formulated specific policies and implemented directed programmes all related to youth (box 5.4). The objective is to

empower Qatari youth so that they can influence core policy decision-making in an ongoing participation process within the context of local cultural values and traditional practices.

School-based service learning maximizes individual learning while addressing community needs. Schools offer educational experiences that integrate community service, classroom knowledge and critical reflection to promote understanding and skills among students (box 5.5). This provides a vehicle

#### Box 5.4

#### Background on Qatar's focus on youth

Qatar has paid special attention to youth since 1972, when the Youth Care Department (renamed the Supreme Council of Youth in 1979) was founded. To support Qatar's emphasis on sports, Emiri decree No. 90, established the General Authority for Youth and Sports in 1990, (renamed the Youth General Authority and merged with the Qatar Olympic Committee in 2000). The responsibility of youth welfare was designated to two administrations—Youth Centres Administration and Administration of Youth Activities and Events—under the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage.

The ministry plays an important regional and international role, representing the country at annual ministerial meetings of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the League of Arab States as well as at technical committees on youth such as the United Nations Economic and Social Commission's Expert Group Meeting on Integrating Youth in the Development Process 2009.

The administrations are responsible for a wide range of associations and organizations including cultural, scientific and social clubs, a volunteer centre and various youth societies working to sponsor and upgrade young people's talents and aptitudes. They also delegate young men and women to youth events abroad. The administrations provide the requisite administrative and material support for these establishments. In 2010 more than 150 activities were held, including activities for gifted youth, youth with special needs, delinquent youth and potential youth leaders.

Based on Qatar Statistics Authority data, young people ages 13–25 accounted for some 38% of participants in nonsports activities in 2010, but youth participation has declined—from 2,308 in 2007 to 1,476 in 2009.

*Source:* MCAH (2011); QOC (2011a); QSA (2009b).

#### Box 5.5

#### Developing youth leadership and expanding social participation

Developing leadership begins at school, where teachers can help to instil confidence. Leadership does not equate only to good academic results; other characteristics include initiative, good communication skills and self-confidence. Programmes should be established to enhance these characteristics. Co-curricular activities such as model United Nations, AIESEC, Reach Out to Asia

and volunteer work could be linked to university credit to encourage youth participation. There is a need to raise awareness with parents to support greater understanding of the value of volunteerism and soft skills.

*Source:* General Secretariat for Development Planning and Qatar University focus group (2011).

Table 5.1

## Growth in Internet use among Qatari youth has been spectacular

Age group	Men			Women			Total		
	2004	2010	Change	2004	2010	Change	2004	2010	Change
	%	%	Percentage points	%	%	Percentage points	%	%	Percentage points
4–14	18	61	43	17	60	43	17	60	43
15–24	63	90	28	64	89	25	63	90	26
25 and older	53	76	23	40	63	23	46	69	23
4 and older	43	74	31	38	68	30	41	71	30

Source: QSA (2005 and 2011a).

for positive youth development and education for citizen action and acts as a catalyst for social change. Young people are constantly challenged to strengthen their decision-making and collective problem-solving abilities and to carry these skills forward into the community when they graduate.

Internet use among Qatari youth has grown spectacularly, with 90% of youth regularly connecting to the Internet in 2010, compared with 63% in 2004 (table 5.1). Internet use is also growing even more spectacularly among Qataris under age 15. This new media has empowered youth and given them a collective voice that can be harnessed in support of development.

## Outstanding initiatives

### Youth enterprise and private sector partnerships

Intilaaqah Qatar was established in 2006 in partnership with Qatar Shell, the College of North Atlantic-Qatar, HSBC (Middle East), Qatar Microsoft, Salam International and the Social Development Centre. The programme aims to promote youth enterprise and entrepreneurial skills development in line with Qatar National Vision 2030. Intilaaqah is an initiative of Shell's Social Investment in Qatar and has been modelled on the Shell LiveWIRE social entrepreneurship programme running in 26 countries worldwide. Intilaaqah's objectives are to stimulate and encourage Qatari youth to consider starting a business and to assist those who aspire to do so by providing them with training and counselling.

### Youth and business training

The Social Development Centre was founded in 1996 as a member of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Sciences and Social Development. It offers youth capacity-building programmes, including Start and Improve your Business, which targets young men and women and offers three major courses: Get Your Business Idea, which assists youth wishing to start their own business in exploring, analysing and considering different investment opportunities; Start Your Business, which trains youth with defined business ideas that are ready to implement to conduct an economic feasibility study of their project; and Improve Your Business, which provides youth who already have small business enterprises, with training on the way to improve these enterprises (UN ESCWA 2010).

### Youth and leadership

Qatar Leadership Academy invests in youth to enable them to become future leaders. Founded in 2005 to prepare youth ages 11 and older to become future leaders in business entrepreneurship and politics, it engages youth in an environment that promotes excellence in academic endeavour, leadership, athletics and character through two phases: a medium level in which students are taught English, Arabic and French, humanities, information technology, sciences, mathematics and Islamic and cultural studies; and a secondary level in which students are offered the International Baccalaureate curriculum (UN ESCWA 2010).

## **Expanding regional and entrepreneurial opportunities**

Silatech aims to address the ever-growing need to create jobs and economic opportunities for youth by promoting large-scale job creation, entrepreneurship, and access to capital and markets for young people, starting first in Arab countries, where the highest rate of youth unemployment exists. It is committed to mobilizing interest, investment, knowledge, resources and action to drive large-scale comprehensive employment and enterprise development programmes.

As a knowledge consortium, Silatech and its partners focus on directly contributing to youth employment in Arab countries by conducting original research, analysing information and trends, evaluating programme impact and providing thought leadership at the country and regional levels. It also explores the effectiveness of different approaches to supporting young people, with particular emphasis on the growth and replication of successful initiatives. Silatech develops comprehensive strategies and modalities for their implementation and hosts a range of opportunities for scholars and practitioners to cross-fertilize ideas and experiences, such as workshops and conferences and communities of practice.

Reach Out to Asia was established in 2005 as a local Qatari charity with regional and international outreach programmes. It operates under the auspices of Qatar Foundation and focuses on developing education through research and on extending community welfare. Its mission is to provide assistance to countries in Asia facing development challenges through volunteerism and partnerships with the public and private sectors in Qatar. In 2009 the organization was granted special consultative status in the United Nations Economic and Social Council. It operates in nine countries engaging youth; providing equal access to safe, quality, primary and secondary education; connecting communities and educators; increasing social and economic opportunities; advocating for the universal right to education and reaching out to assist in rebuilding communities after human-caused and natural disasters (ROTA 2007).

Reach Out to Asia held its first annual youth conference on personal leadership, service learning and global citizenship in 2009, which aimed at creating a platform for young people in Qatar to be empowered and equipped for leadership and to express a concerted voice in addressing local and global issues within a practical learning context. Following the conference, the organization committed to establishing a network of youth service clubs in schools and universities to provide a service learning framework that enables young people to actively identify and lead initiatives that address social needs within their communities.

With more than 60,000 members in 110 countries, AIESEC is the world's largest student-run organization to allow young people to be global citizens and to gain relevant skills and experience. AIESEC brings its international experience to youth in Qatar by offering cultural internships and professional international exchanges, having sponsored 10 students in overseas internships and placed 15 international students in Qatar to learn professional skills, to be exposed to local culture and gain a positive perspective about Qatar and the region; and a leadership development programme that places students in leadership positions where they learn how to work productively in a team and gain skills to be active citizens and receive the real-life experience of being a leader and how leadership can impact society.

## **Youth and open debating**

QatarDebate, established in 2007 by Qatar Foundation, develops and supports formal public debate in Arabic and English among students and young people in Qatar and the region. It aims to promote free speech and open discussion. Geared towards secondary schools and universities, QatarDebate has involved students from many schools in workshops, annual debate leagues and national competition ([www.qatardebate.org](http://www.qatardebate.org)).

Al Jazeera, through its Centre for Studies, Media Training and Development Centre and New Media Department, is encouraging youth to get involved in regional political and social dialogue. It targets young people ages 18 and older and aims to have a presence and be part of the conversation across social media platforms, forums and conferences, where Arab youth from different political and intellectual affiliations can contribute to building a better future (box 5.6).



**Box 5.6****Al Jazeera is expanding opportunities for youth to participate in political and social dialogue**

In May 2011 Al Jazeera held a forum in Doha on youth and change in the Arab World. More than 80 young men and women from 18 Arab countries participated, including youth representatives who had played key roles in the reform efforts of the Arab Spring. The participants discussed change in Arab countries in the light of the wave of revolutions and popular protests. Arab youth had an opportunity to meet, exchange experiences, increase understanding and integration, cooperate and conduct open discussions with regional and international experts.

Key discussion points included the challenges of active participation of Arab youth and the use of new media in political and social reforms. New media such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are low-cost, real-time tools for open information exchange and allow youth to share their views and opinions widely. While these platforms have virtually no content controls and can encompass all ideological trends, they should be subject to professional

and ethical rules. Moreover, all users—and especially young people—find it difficult to assess the credibility and reliability of many websites. Recommendations from the forum included:

- Studying the relationship between traditional and new media systems.
- Developing mechanisms that verify the credibility of new media to avoid fraud materials and provide balanced coverage of events.
- Training youth leaders to use new media technology.
- Preparing youth leaders with good communication skills so that they can address local and international media.
- Protecting those using and working with new technologies and social media from political repression and ensuring their safety and security.

Source: Adapted from Al Jazeera (2011).

Technology and social platforms increasingly play a growing role in how young people converse and debate. Enabling environments, such as the Dialogue Cafe in Doha, are important tools for empowering youth and providing a hub for exchanging ideas. Based on the concept that people and cultures around the world, especially youth, have a lot in common, Dialogue Cafe provides a vibrant venue for youth to brainstorm ideas with academics, intellectuals, politicians, journalists and civil society actors from around the world. As a partner of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, Dialogue Cafe promotes cross-cultural communication and exchange using real-time video-conferencing technology.

## Addressing Qatar's challenges

Qatar must address its institutional challenges to increase participation among young people. While there is no shortage of financial resources, considerable efforts are required to get youth more involved in decision-making processes and positions (box 5.7). More nongovernmental organizations for youth development and engagement—and different types of youth groups including more inclusive professional and student associations—need to be established.

**Box 5.7****Creating conditions for youth to overcome the burden of development**

Young peoples's inability to contribute to their communities' development can be explained not only by their lack of self-capacity to attend to the burdens of development, but also by lack of opportunity to participate in economic, social and political development

and lack of an integrated strategic vision aimed at creating adequate conditions to absorb this group in both quantity and quality.

Source: UN ESCWA 2009b.

**Box 5.8****Role of government in supporting civil society and social institutions**

The government's role in supporting civil society and social institutions and whether decision-makers believe that youth really have enough knowledge and experience to influence policy were debated at a focus group discussion with young people, civil society, government agencies and the private sector at Qatar University.

The group felt too many constraints prevent Qatar from establishing independent nongovernmental organizations or youth organizations such as AIESEC. Thus, many young people with ideas and aspirations have insufficient outlets

for self-expression. Some youth also feel that they lack a forum to raise issues. They suggested that the government provides a mechanism, forum or framework for formal consultation, feedback and a vote from youth on various issues or include youth representatives on committees, such as for national development. However, there is a question of how to prepare young people to be able to contribute and participate effectively in these committees.

*Source:* Adapted from General Secretariat of Development Planning and Qatar University focus group (2011).

Despite explicitly accepting the rationale for linking community and youth development, government is still at an early stage in putting it into practice. Opportunities to build on the growing interest in youth among community development organizations exist but it remains unclear how readily this interest in youth will translate into a commitment to action. Special, separate provisions for young people—which they may request or consider desirable, but some would view as marginalizing youth—may seem in conflict with involving young people in mainstream, real-world economic, social and political issues, but this is not a justification for inaction.

Qatari youth cannot vote until age 18, but young people have been encouraged to express opinions and act independently at much younger ages. Opportunities for community service are actively promoted through schools and community organizations, and youth participate despite having limited decision-making power. Few institutional mechanisms or societal norms that encourage young Qataris' involvement in community governance or support them as societal entrepreneurs or activists. Although the 2004 Qatari Law of Associations and Private Institutions supports the establishment of associations and private institutions by Qatari youth, the legislation should be reviewed to determine potential constraints in doing so.

The challenges inherent in implementing relevant policies and plans and being assured of their practical value and efficacy (box 5.9) include:

- *Generating publicity* – creating information and messages that elicit public support for positive youth participation and publicizing them.

- *Establishing partnerships* – shifting from a focus on youth problems to an understanding of youth as partners in development.
- *Offering second chances* – providing a safety net for youth to recover from outcomes of bad decisions made earlier.
- *Adopting best practice models* – finding methods of youth participation that move society forward but are compatible with the local cultural and social context.
- *Affecting outcomes* – ensuring that contributions from youth are actually incorporated in policies and decision-making.

Youth are no longer constrained by previous limitations. Their widespread enthusiastic adoption of social media for sharing ideas and influencing opinion has had broad, major and immediate impact, creating a dynamism that needs to be harnessed for the benefit of the whole society.

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia member countries have become aware, though unevenly, of how important it is to address youth issues with specific policies. However, several obstacles impede their capacity to formulate appropriate national youth policies. Such obstacles may be structural (insufficient knowledge of modern approaches to youth issues and of the priorities of the World Programme of Action for Youth), institutional (lack of an effective coordinating institution) or circumstantial (war, civil unrest, lack of stability and security). The commission can help enhance countries' capacity to formulate a national youth policy, follow up on implementation and evaluate it.

**Box 5.9****How effective are youth policies in setting a strategic programme?**

The policy vision at the country level—often articulated through national youth policy—is usually narrow in scope. In 2001, 82% of all countries had a national youth policy, 89% had a designated national youth coordination mechanism and 60% were implementing a national youth programme of action. But 70% of national youth policies focused on the narrow range of concerns of the

department of youth, with few links to other youth-serving ministries, such as education, health or labour. Even broad policies may not be very strategic, reading more like a laundry list of desirable policies than a programme of action.

*Source: Adapted from World Bank (2006).*

## What still needs to be done?

Greater efforts should be made to increase the involvement of youth in formulating national youth policies, evaluating the extent and effectiveness of their participation and ensuring a more coordinated approach to youth development. For this to happen there must be genuine support and partnerships with government, business and civil society.

### **Participation in civic life promotes shared growth and partnership**

Inclusive participation is a primary element of civil society. The essence of inclusive participation is that all citizens have legitimate opportunity to influence decisions on identifying,

leveraging and mobilizing community resources (Camino and Zeldin 2002). The aim is to ensure a balance between individual rights and responsibilities to the collective good.

Governments and communities work better in places where social and interorganizational networks allow for collective decision-making, disperse decision-making broadly and offer multiple pathways for civic management. It is thus ironic that, whereas engagement is both a right and responsibility of citizenship and inclusivity benefits the individual and the collective, pathways for civic engagement remain extremely limited for youth in Qatar and other Arab countries (box 5.10).

**Box 5.10****Institutional setup for youth participation in civil life**

Arab countries lack an institutional framework for youth participation that allows access to adequate and appropriate programmes and services by all young people, regardless of sex, geographic location, social, cultural and economic circumstances. In fact, discrepancies in participation among youth are large, and many young people do not recognize the importance of active citizenship.

Current avenues for participation are insufficient, and many young Arab people are thus perceived as apathetic or disengaged. Effective strategies for youth participation must move away from ad hoc activity-based approaches to inclusion in core aspects of social structures, institutions and processes.

*Source: UN (2007).*

Infusing youth in organizational decision-making promotes intergenerational communication. Community-based youth organizations can create new pathways for civic engagement by fully involving young people in decision-making. Such organizations need to ensure the meaningful involvement of young people in all aspects of their structures and programmes and orient their activities to create strong, caring, mutually respectful relationships between young people and adults. Where this can be achieved, young people have strong potential to exert positive effects on the adults and related organizations with whom they are collaborating.

### **Opportunities for political participation encourage active citizenship**

It is no accident that a new generation of young leaders has been involved in the transition to democracy and economic openness in Latin American countries, the political reforms in Eastern and Central Europe and the adoption of new information technology everywhere. Similarly, across Arab countries the voices and movements for change have been led by youth. Less embedded in older patronage and exchange networks than adults are, these young leaders are positioned to exploit new political, social and economic conditions.

It also makes sense that young people everywhere are more receptive to emerging values and world views, such as environmentalism and the adoption of green technologies. Historically, young people have been crucial participants in China's anti-imperialist and democratic movement that began in Beijing on May 4, 1919, the 1942 Quit India movement, the pro-democracy movement in South Africa following the Soweto uprising in 1976 and the Otpor youth movement in the former Yugoslavia between 1998 and 2000 (World Bank 2006).

### **Involving youth in public policy consultation**

Consulting youth on public policy allows young people to advise public leaders and policy governance bodies, so that no public policy deliberation or action, particularly one focused on youth issues, is taken without reference to the perspective of youth. Such a process would encourage new institutionalised pathways for youth civic engagement to be gradually created through government agencies. Funding and programme priorities would then increasingly reflect the importance of youth involvement in community affairs.

The UN World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond stipulates that "The capacity for progress in our societies is based, among other elements, on their capacity to incorporate the contributions and responsibility of youth in building and designing the future, and this is conditioned by enabling the economic, social and political participation of youth as a matter of critical importance." Such participation is limited in Arab countries (box 5.11). A United Nations Development Programme report on Arab youth and the Millennium Development Goals found that Arab youth are excluded from participation in legislatures or parliaments, which have no members in the 15–24 age group (UNDP 2007).

Several Arab countries encourage youth participation in public life. In Oman, the energy of young people is channelled through volunteer work that complements government activities and supports agencies that provide direct services to communities. The government pays young men and women to encourage them, particularly job-seekers, to invest their leisure time in useful activities that benefit themselves and their communities.

#### **Box 5.11**

#### **Limited participatory involvement of Arab youth in legislatures**

Arab parliaments do not have separate committees for youth issues; instead, these are dealt with by committees on sports, culture or family affairs as part of their wider scope of work. Some studies on the involvement of Arab youth in civil society have found that although young people are employed for special tasks, their participation in boards of directors is limited and often based on appointment and selection, and they participate in activities that are not commensurate with their experience

and skills. Furthermore, older people control the process and mechanisms of youth participation in those societies. Qatari youth are aware of the importance of participation and its relevance to them and their communities. However, they are averse to political participation because they lack confidence in its procedures, results and the winners, who may only serve their own personal interests.

*Source:* UN-ESCWA (2009a).

In supporting the National Development Strategy 2011–2016 targets to reduce domestic violence, to review and adopt legislation to criminalize domestic violence and to create follow-up policies (in coordination with law enforcement) to protect victims, the American Bar Association’s Rule of Law Initiative launched a domestic violence civic education programme in Qatar in March 2011 that offers “street law classes”. Qatar University law students design and conduct English and Arabic courses that educate Qataris outside the legal profession about domestic violence and the existing legislative tools that empower victims. This is consistent with the National Development Strategy 2011–2016 target.

The idea for the domestic violence project came from a law student at Qatar University who encouraged 15 colleagues to volunteer their time to work on the project.

No academic credit was granted for participating in the project. The student has since graduated and has been offered a scholarship to pursue her LLM (post-graduate law) degree at the University of California–Berkeley, after which she will return to Qatar University law faculty in 2013 to teach a new generation of law students.

The Rule of Law Initiative hopes to further engage Qatar University law students in civic reform and has submitted a proposal to establish a clinic course, where students discuss the implications of domestic violence, study existing legislation, draft a new law against domestic violence and advocate for its adoption. Through this initiative, Qatari law students will have a meaningful role in preventing violence against women and children.

*Source:* Adapted from discussions with Marlana Valdez, Program Director, Rule of Law Initiative Qatar (2011).

In Qatar currently, opportunities for civic participation are fairly limited. Youth have greater opportunities for participating and exhibiting leadership in the economy and labour force, and increasingly in relation to the implementation of National Development Strategy 2011–2016 (box 5.12)

Qatari youth’s participation in the political life began with the enactment of Law 12 of 1998 which organizes the Central Municipal Council elections and gave young people the right to vote for a constituency representative. The 29 elected constituency representatives bring issues to the attention of the appropriate municipality body or ministry responsible. Qatar University, under the Doha Youth and Consultation programme, launched initiatives and training courses designed to raise awareness among young men and women of the importance of participation in political life, to strengthen their capabilities and to support the efforts of women to stand for election.

The number of young Qataris voting in the Central Municipal Council election has decreased since 1999 despite the Ministry of Interior’s awareness campaigns encouraging Qatari youth and citizens to participate (figure 5.1). This may reflect lack

of interest in the municipal administration, as there is a perception that the municipal councils do not make decisions on matters of national significance.

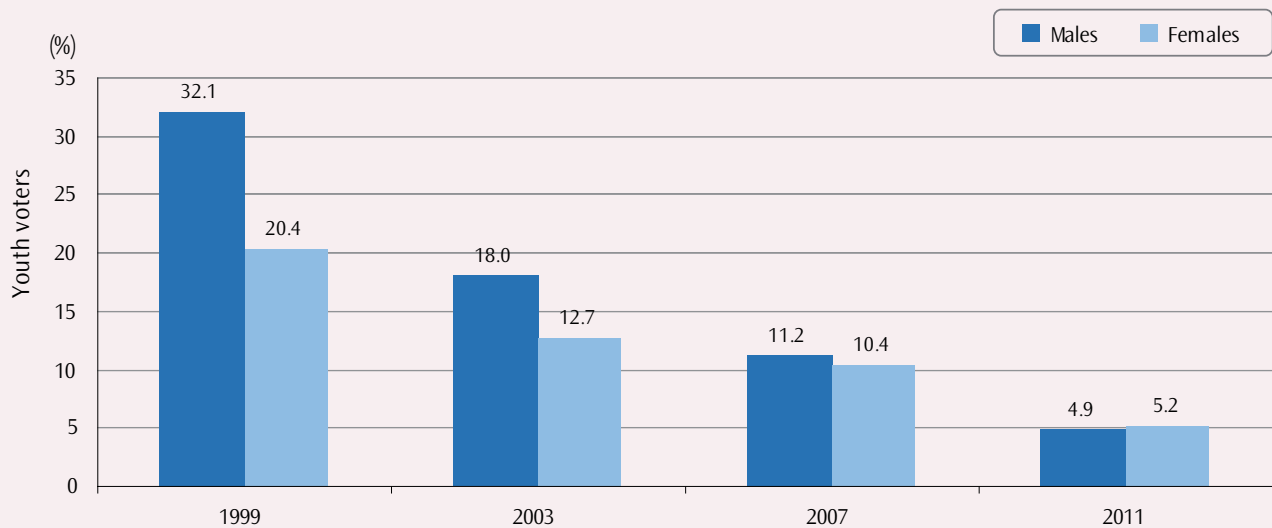
### Confirming identity and a sense of belonging

Because community coalitions operate at a more immediate level than policy consultation, they can provide an effective forum for citizen representation and voice and demonstrate the benefits of participatory democracy. At their best, community coalitions can move on whatever youth issues are at the centre of the community’s interest. Because coalitions involve diverse institutions and interests and can engage in cross-sector networking and resource sharing, they hold great potential to transform communities. In particular, they can build community capacity for positive youth development and create and strengthen alternative pathways for youth civic engagement.

Activating youth participation in voluntary activities is an established means of involving youth. The goal is to transfer volunteerism from a simple social and professional experience to a significant institutional initiative. A wide range of training opportunities and hands-on activities is available to equip youth volunteers with the necessary knowledge, skills and attributes to serve their community and culture as efficiently as possible.

**Figure 5.1**

**Declining share of Qatari youth voters at municipal elections**



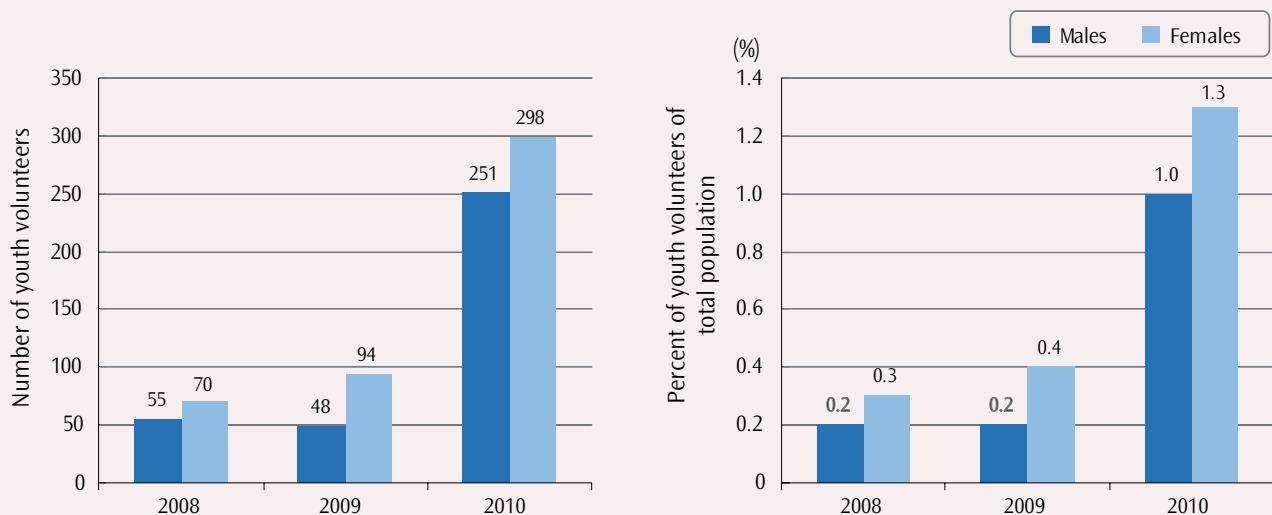
Source: Al Kuwari (2011).

Qatari youth participation in voluntary work (both male and female) has increased. In 2010 the proportion of young Qataris who participated in voluntary work increased to 1%

among men and 1.3% among women (figure 5.2). Programmes such as the Global Changemakers Time Bank are enhancing awareness of volunteer work among youth in Qatar (box 5.13).

**Figure 5.2**

**Qatari youth participation in voluntary work increasing**



Note: Participation rate computed from (2009a,2010d and 2011a).

Source: Al Kuwari (2011).

Global Changemakers is a British Council programme that exists in more than 80 countries. It supports a growing network of future social entrepreneurs and youth who are prepared to make a change. In Qatar, youth members have agreed to establish a virtual time bank, which is designed to increase the value of time and give it a financial meaning. Youth can make deposits of time by doing volunteer work, invest their time in initiatives that they develop and donate their time, knowledge and skills to their peers who have innovative ideas. Youth who are motivated to use their time contributing to their community obtain valuable experience and recognition certificates that help enhance their resumes.

Through the time bank initiative and network, the British Council provides opportunities for youth in Qatar to build their capacity in various sectors, change perceptions,

learn how to use time effectively and draw on skills and resources of their peers to contribute to their projects' success. In addition, opportunities for participants to attend meetings conducted by high-profile organizations, such as the World Economic Forum and the United Nations, ensure that the voices of youth are heard and that their leadership skills are developed and shaped by the experience. So far Global Changemakers have conducted more than 50 workshops and events.

The Global Changemakers initiative also encourages institutions and organizations that work in collaboration with the British Council to consider the potential of youth when developing their corporate social responsibility programmes.

*Source: British Council Qatar (2011).*

### Evaluating whether youth are participating

Evaluating the extent and effectiveness of Qatari youth participation is problematic because there is limited data available beyond that presented on participation in voting and volunteerism. Al-Matawi (2011a) notes that communities that actively engage in discourse with youth are more likely to gain positive responses from youth. Recent efforts to shift adult perceptions of youth from “problems” to “resources” and “partners” have been important. The Urban Strategies Council recommends supporting organizations that bring together youth and community, including those that provide youth development opportunities and in particular those that address community concerns.

The Forum for Youth Investment concluded that successful community and youth development efforts tend to foster youth awareness and responsibility towards communities, increase youth leadership capacity and create more opportunities for social action. Other forums have emphasized youth participation in promoting social justice. Effectively engaging young people requires organizations to view them as competent citizens with rights to participate, express themselves and engage in efforts to create socially just communities.

Few evaluations of youth programmes unambiguously identify the impact of specific policies, programmes or outcomes, giving youth policy the aura of being soft and lacking in rigour. Many programmes that expand opportunities and build capabilities fall into the “promising but unproven” camp. They include most life-skills programmes and many others for promoting youth citizenship, including student councils and service learning. Almost no second chance programmes are rigorously evaluated. Even when evaluations exist, they may be on narrow outcomes.

What can be done to ensure that youth policy is not destined for failure? To increase the chances of success, policy-makers must articulate a coherent view of desired outcomes for young people, integrating that view with national planning and implementation mechanisms. This improves accountability of outcomes. The capacity to implement this strategy at all levels is required. Accountability is easier to assign if there is a well articulated set of national objectives for youth, developed with key ministries and stakeholders.

## Strengthening Youth Governance

The United Nations General Assembly has long endorsed policies and programmes for youth in national development. Governments should involve youth and youth organizations in formulating national youth policies and ensure a more coordinated approach to meeting young people's needs and aspirations.

A 2005 report of a comparative analysis of national youth policies by the International Council of National Youth Policy (ICNYP) in 2005 found that only 30% of UN member countries had cross-sectoral national youth policies and included active youth participation in the process (ICNYP 2005). About a third of the countries had adopted a national youth policy in the national parliament (box 5.14). The report also highlighted that the Arab Council of Ministers of Youth and Sports had given more sustained attention to youth and sports than to youth policy issues. It concluded that due to political constraints and lack of active civil society, many countries in the region faced problems developing and implementing effective cross-sectoral national youth policies with youth participation in all phases.

The report recommended that in formulating, adopting, implementing and evaluating youth policies and action

plans, governments pay more attention to active youth participation in all areas and ensure a sustained and sufficient budget commitment for effectively implementing a national youth policy. Another lesson was the need to have a realistic legal definition of youth.

Many Qatari ministries and agencies, along with a few civil society groups already have programmes benefiting youth. But these programmes need to be strengthened and coordinated under a single umbrella agency for youth affairs. Such an agency could coordinate the preparation and implementation of a National Youth Development Policy, including cross-sectoral youth development programmes.

Many one-off activities can obtain the views of youth. But based on feedback from youth, a permanent youth forum for their voices is needed, with a mechanism for the outcomes to be fed back to the government. This would give the Qatari youth a real voice in decision-making and planning. An umbrella agency could function as an intermediary and advocate for a youth forum, which could take the form of a facilitated e-discussion platform linked to the heart of government such as the Emiri Diwan and the Council of Ministers.

### Box 5.14

#### Youth governance: the Malaysian experience

Malaysia has had a long track record of effective youth governance. The National Youth Development Policy of Malaysia was formulated in 1985 and revised in 1997. It serves as a framework for planning and implementing youth programmes in the country. Youth development is managed primarily by three major organizations: the National Youth Consultative Council, the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Malaysian Youth Council.

The Seventh Malaysia Plan (1996–2000) represented a breakthrough for youth in Malaysia, with a chapter on youth programmes and initiatives included in the country's national plan for the first time. The youth chapter and a budget increase for youth, from RM 1.05 billion to RM 2.74 billion, demonstrated the government's commitment to youth development. Youth development programmes during the Seventh Plan period focused on skills training and developing a resilient youth community that could contribute positively towards nation building.

Malaysia was one of the first countries to develop indicators and a methodology to evaluate the impact of its national youth policy over 20 years. Doing so allowed the country to track how well initiatives improve young people's economic, education and health status.

The 2010 budget allocated RM 20 million for the Malaysia Youth Fund to provide financial support for young people to undertake creative projects that nurture national unity. The fund reflects the government's commitment to empower young people. The scope and the projects should address three goals: to nurture unity in Malaysia, to have a multiplier effect on the general community, and to be led by young people.

*Source:* UN (2002); ICNYP (2005); Wikipedia (2011).



## Conclusion

Youth is a period when young men and women are seeking to establish their own independent identities. Qatar's exceedingly rapid economic and social change and strong cultural and traditional values pose particular challenges for young people in transition. The challenges are intensified by globalization, where information and ideas travel almost instantaneously, but where macro policy and legal changes take much longer. Internet use among Qatari youth has grown spectacularly with 9 out of 10 youth regularly connecting in 2010.

Young people need an enabling environment in which they are encouraged to participate in their own and their country's development. Given the opportunity, youth can actively contribute to decision-making for the common good. Young people are an asset to their communities and pathways need to be established to ensure their inclusion and participation in all aspects of development.

Developing positive attitudes, participatory skills and leadership should commence in school, where educational experiences can integrate soft skills, concepts of community service, classroom knowledge and critical reflection to promote understanding. Opportunities for broader youth participation need to be created not only in the public sector, but also in the private sector through partnerships that encourage market orientation, build leadership capacity and promote youth enterprise and entrepreneurship.

Qatar needs a dedicated ministry or agency to cover and mainstream youth affairs. This agency could coordinate a National Youth Development Policy, consistent with the United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth and aligned to Qatar's National Development Strategy 2011–2016, and be responsible for implementation of youth development programmes, including involving youth through all stages.

# 6

## Expanding the Capacities of Qatari Youth: Recommendations



# 6

## Expanding the Capacities of Qatari Youth: Recommendations

Five broad recommendations emerge from the previous chapters' analysis of the challenges and opportunities confronting Qatari youth. They are discussed briefly below and linked in summary form to related National Development Strategy 2011–2016 programmes and projects (table 6.1).

To support the broad recommendations below, a single umbrella agency for youth affairs is proposed. Such an agency could coordinate the preparation and implementation of a National Youth Development Policy, including cross-sectoral youth development programmes. This would greatly help in *expanding the capacities of Qatari youth and mainstreaming young people in development*.

### **Develop an integrated and comprehensive policy framework that ensures youth have pathways to meaningful participatory roles in all facets of society.**

Youth is a period when young people are seeking to establish their own independent identities. Qatar's exceedingly rapid economic, demographic and social change, and strong cultural and traditional values pose particular challenges for young people. Youth need an enabling environment in which they are encouraged to participate in their own and their country's development. Young people are an asset to their communities, and pathways need to be established to ensure young people's inclusion and participation in all aspects of development. Young people's roles in decision-making should be meaningful, and their contributions should be taken as seriously as those of others.

Given Qatar's rapid economic growth and increasing presence on the world stage, it is essential that young Qataris are motivated to play key roles in all areas of economic and social development. They will need guidance in identifying opportunities for engagement and ongoing support in a successful and increasingly globalized economy. Youth will require opportunities to participate in ongoing modernization, while recognizing traditional values and Qatari identity.

### **Broaden the incentives and opportunities for youth to sustain educational experience in advanced areas of knowledge, skills and communication that will meet the demands of the labour market and add value at the personal, community and national levels.**

Many Qatari youth believe that they can secure jobs and make a good living despite having low academic qualifications. Similarly, many parents fail to appreciate the benefits of a high-quality education when advising their children. Increasingly, for both personal and economic reasons, Qatar must ensure that youth are getting the best possible training and continuing to advanced education in order to meet the employment demands of the labour market and a knowledge-based economy. Some youth cannot gain admission to universities or complete higher education requirements; alternative education options, such as adult education, part-time education, distance learning and study abroad, can open up pathways to job opportunities for them.

Young people who have dropped out of school need second chance pathways to resume study at an appropriate level and upgrade their qualifications or skills. This would reduce waste of valuable human resources and increase the number of Qataris in the labour force. In most cases the second chance will be in vocational education but should be facilitated according to individual needs and abilities. They must receive skills and training that are in demand in the labour market, offer accredited qualifications of acceptable standard to employers and be undertaken with a realistic career outcome in mind.

Informed career advice is required for school leavers entering tertiary education or the labour force and for students choosing courses at the early stage of secondary school. This advice should emphasize the policies being implemented to raise recruitment standards in the public sector and gradually reduce disparities in employment conditions between the public and private sectors.

### **Strengthen measures to increase youth participation in an increasingly diversified labour market, including the reintegration of youth that are not participating to their full potential.**

Many young Qataris, especially women, are unemployed, representing a serious loss to the labour market. The increasing proportions, albeit small, entering the private sector assist in the Qatarization of the labour force outside the public service and support economic diversification. Better selection of programmes and subjects in school and university would improve this situation even further and open up even more employment options for youth. For various reasons some youth have made unsatisfactory choices that hamper their progress and limit their job choices: second chances at further education and training in vocational programmes can greatly improve their opportunities.

Given the small size of the Qatari population, the number of young people entering the labour market each year will remain limited, far less than required by a rapidly expanding economy. Unless present trends are reversed, the net increase in Qatari workers each year will be even lower, as older Qataris, especially men, retire much earlier than in other parts of the world. Able young Qatari entrants to the labour force will need to be placed into more strategic and productive positions and provided with support and mentoring while they gain the practical experience required to be fully effective in those position.

Qatari labour force participation in the private sector must be promoted. The tradition of Qataris working in public service is so entrenched that few youth seriously consider other options. Entrepreneurship could offer youth a viable alternative to wage employment in the public sector.

### **Review and reinforce policies that contribute to health and well-being by promoting self-care and preventative measures to reduce risk-taking behaviour and damaging lifestyles among youth.**

Qatar aims to enable people's full potential by improving their physical and mental wellness. For youth the greatest concerns relate to high risk-taking behaviour, especially among men, and lifestyle choices. Deaths and injuries due to road traffic and workplace accidents seriously affect not only individuals, but also employment rates and the healthcare system. Similarly, lifestyle choices relating to diet and physical fitness seriously affect the health of many Qataris.

Both these concerns can be addressed by young people making better decisions about their driving and lifestyles, which is why the National Development Strategy 2011–2016 sets in place a number of policies and projects that can have a positive impact on youth.

Health education to change youth behaviour and to encourage healthy lifestyles is a priority. Reducing lifestyle diseases, however, is not a challenge left to the health sector alone. Community attitudes and behaviour need to be changed to reduce child obesity, smoking and young male adult risk-taking. Public awareness of the seriousness of the choices, of options for prevention and of healthy alternatives needs to increase. Establishing healthy behaviours during childhood and youth is easier and more effective than trying to change unhealthy behaviours during adulthood.

### **Ensure that all national legislation and regulation create an enabling environment for effective participation by youth in development processes.**

Qatari youth have limited opportunities to engage in activities that promote participatory development and active citizenship. Such opportunities develop the life skills and understanding required to strengthen national and civic pride, to value justice and integrity and to develop a sense of civic and personal responsibility. Acceptance of reasonable legal and regulatory constraints also supports preventative practices that limit high-risk behaviour and promote self-care that ensures a healthy diet and physical and mental fitness.

Youth need an enabling environment in which they are encouraged to participate in their own and their country's development, including through volunteerism and innovative use of new media. Active citizenship needs to be encouraged so that young people can be active contributors in decision-making. Pathways need to be established to ensure that youth are included in all ongoing development. Positive

attitudes, participatory skills and leadership should be taught in school, where educational experiences can integrate community service, classroom knowledge and critical reflection to promote understanding. Sports at all levels and in many different forms provide an area in which youth can participate and excel in both competition and administration.

**Table 6.1**

**Mainstreaming youth in National Development Strategy 2011–2016**

Recommendations	National Development Strategy 2011–2016 programmes and projects
Develop an integrated and comprehensive policy framework that ensures youth have pathways to meaningful participatory roles in all facets of society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen marriage and family ties.</li> <li>• Reduce incidence of divorce and its effect on the family.</li> <li>• Develop a comprehensive domestic violence prevention and protection system.</li> <li>• Promote rights and welfare of children.</li> <li>• Increase youth participation and appreciation for culture (Culture and Youth Project).</li> </ul>
Broaden the incentives and opportunities for youth to sustain educational experience in advanced areas of knowledge, skills and communication that will meet the demands of the labour market and add value at the personal, community and national levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen Qatari values through education and training.</li> <li>• Extend educational opportunities to students who cannot directly enter universities.</li> <li>• Increase and improve sports talent, development, management and performance (Athlete Development Pathway Model).</li> <li>• Increase high-quality artistic talent (Artist Development Project)</li> </ul>
Strengthen measures to increase youth participation in an increasingly diversified labour market, including the reintegration of youth that are not participating to their full potential.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve work skills and awareness of the world of work at the preparatory and secondary levels.</li> <li>• Align higher education specializations to the needs of the knowledge-based economy.</li> <li>• Develop differentiated technical education and vocational training programmes aligned to labour market needs.</li> <li>• Plan for industrial partnerships to further develop technical education and vocational training.</li> <li>• Incorporate technical education and vocational training into career guidance.</li> <li>• Promote diversified participation of Qataris in the labour force.</li> <li>• Provide Labour market employment services with career counselling and mentorship.</li> <li>• Develop an expanded job-seeking and matching database.</li> </ul>
Review and reinforce policies that contribute to health and well-being by promoting self-care and preventative measures to reduce risk-taking behaviour and damaging lifestyles among youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage proper nutrition and physical activity (Active Qatar Campaign).</li> <li>• Provide tobacco cessation programmes.</li> <li>• Support women's and children's health and additional public health services.</li> <li>• Develop and implement a safe system approach to road traffic safety.</li> <li>• Increase community participation in sports and physical activity for a healthier population (National Sports Curriculum Guidelines Project).</li> </ul>
Ensure that all national legislation and regulation creates an enabling environment for effective participation by youth in development processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the number of women in leadership and political decision-making positions.</li> <li>• Encourage and support change in public perceptions of women's roles.</li> <li>• Increase environmental awareness among the population (Environmental Awareness Campaigns).</li> </ul>

# Annex: Qatar's Human Development Indicators, 1990-2010

## 1. Human Development Index and its Component Indices

	1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Human Development Index (value)	na	0.764	0.799	na	na	na	0.798	0.803
Life expectancy index	na	0.740	0.834	0.838	0.841	na	na	0.886
Education index	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	0.614
GNI index	na	0.870	0.938	1.000	1.000	na	na	0.958

Note: na signifies data is not readily available

Source: UNDP (2010).

## 2. Components of the Human Development Index

	1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Life expectancy at birth (years)	69.2	69.6	75.0	75.3	75.5	na	na	76.0
Adult literacy rate (% , ages 15 and above)	79.4	87.8	90.6	89.5	93.1	na	na	na
GDP per capita (PPP US\$)	15,004	27,214	49,228	57,330	61,528	na	na	79,426

Note: na signifies data is not readily available

Source: UNDP (2010).

## 3. Demographic Trends

	1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total population (millions)	0.4	0.6	0.9	1.0	1.2	1.4	1.6	1.7
Annual population growth rate (%)	3.2	4.6	13.5	15.1	16.3	16.7	12.3	3.6
Total fertility rate (births per woman) Qatari	5.7	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.4	4.4	4.2	4.3

#### 4. Commitment to Health: Resources, Access and Services

		1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Health expenditure	Public (% of GDP)	2.40	1.31	2.28	1.83	1.81	1.5	2.1	1.6
	Private (% of GDP)	0.04	0.08	0.08	0.14	0.15	0.4	0.6	0.5
One-Year olds, fully immunized	Against tuberculosis (%)	96	100	100	100	96	98	98	97
	Against measles (%)	79	91	100	99	92	95	100	98
Births attended by skilled health personnel (%)		99.5	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Physicians (per 100,000 people)		170	191	248	238	228	245	282	320
Population with sustainable access to affordable essential drugs (%)		100	100	100	100	100	na	na	na

#### 5. Water, Sanitation and Nutritional Status

		1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Population with sustainable access to improved sanitation (%)		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Population with sustainable access to an improved water source (%)		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Percentage of families with access to electric power		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Percentage of population with access to primary healthcare facilities		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Children underweight for age (%)		--	10.4	6.0	12.6	12.6	na	na	na
Infants with low birth weight (%)		7.9	8.8	8.5	8.8	8.3	8.1	7.2	7.6

## 6. Leading Global Health Crises and Risks

	1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Condom use at last high-risk sex (%), women	na	48	48	20	48	na	na	na
Malaria cases (per 100,000 people)	28.0	24.0	21.1	23.6	15.9	15.0	15.0	26.0
	Per 100,000 people	25.0	20.3	20.3	21.7	20.3	na	na
Tuberculosis cases	Detected under DOTS (%)	na	48.0	40.8	40.4	40.8	na	na
	Cured under DOTS (%)	na	7.30	11.6	13.7	11.6	na	na

## 7. Survival: Progress and Setbacks

	1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Life expectancy at birth (years)	69.2	69.6	75.0	75.3	75.5	na	na	76.0
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	13.50	11.70	8.21	8.10	7.46	7.70	7.10	6.80
Under-five mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	16.60	13.10	10.45	10.69	9.10	9.50	8.80	8.50
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	na	8.3	22.4	7.10	31.80	11.60	21.80	10.30

## 8. Commitment to Education: Spending

	1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	
Public expenditure on education	As % of GDP	4.2	3.0	3.4	2.3	3.2	2.9	4.1	na
	As % of total government expenditure	10	9	13	8	11	12	13	na

## 9. Literacy and Enrolment

	1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Adult literacy rate (% ages 15 and above)	79.4	87.8	90.6	89.5	93.1	94.0	94.7	96.3	96.4
Youth literacy rate (% ages 15-24)	96.5	98.0	98.9	92.0	99.0	95.7	97.8	96.8	97.9
Net primary enrolment ratio (%)	95.4	83.1	91.2	86.6	88.7	88.9	92.5	92.6	na
Net secondary enrolment ratio (%)	77.3	78.8	81.7	79.9	81.6	86.8	87.1	76.9	na

## 10. Technology: Diffusion and Creation

	1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Telephone main lines (per 1,000 people)	218	260	258	219	196	na	na	na
Cellular subscribers (per 1,000 people)	0	194	900	883	1,002	1520	1200	1500



## 11. Economic Performance

		1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
GDP	US\$ billion	7.4	17.8	44.5	60.9	79.7	115.3	97.8	127.3
GDP <i>per capita</i>	USD\$ '000	17.4	28.8	50.1	58.4	65.0	79.6	59.7	74.9
GDP <i>per capita</i> annual growth rate (%)		9.9	36.2	20.2	16.6	11.2	22.4	-25.4	22.5
Average annual change in consumer price index (%)		3.0	1.65	8.8	11.8	13.6	15.2	-4.9	-2.4

## 12. Structure of Trade

		1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Imports of goods and services (% of GDP)		23.0	22.3	31.1	35.8	35.8	28.1	29.0	23.3
Exports of goods and services (% of GDP)		52.9	67.3	68.3	62.8	57.2	52.1	51.4	59.0
Primary exports (% of merchandise exports)		49.47	65.28	50.1	47.1	45.9	na	na	na
Semi-manufactured exports (% of merchandise exports)		0.79	23.34	38.8	44.3	46.2	na	na	na
Manufactured exports (% of merchandise exports)		10.74	4.74	11.1	8.6	7.9	na	na	na

## 13. Priorities in Public Spending

		1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Public expenditure on education (% of GDP)		4.24	2.98	3.49	2.30	3.24	na	na	na
Public expenditure on health (% of GDP)		2.45	1.39	2.36	1.97	1.96	1.90	2.70	2.10

## 14. Energy and the Environment

		1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Electricity consumption <i>per capita</i> (kilowatt-hours)		12,082	14,944	16,316	14,383	14,201	na	na	na
Ratio of the protected area to the total area		0.17	0.17	11.12	12.46	21.72	na	29.30	29.70

## 15. Components of Gender-Related Development Index

		1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Life expectancy at birth (years)	Female	na	71.3	75.8	76.1	76.8	na	na	na	na
	Male	na	68.7	74.6	74.9	74.8	na	na	na	na
Adult literacy rate (% age 15 and above)	Female	73.0	84.2	87.5	87.8	90.4	92.7	92.9	95.4	95.6
	Male	85.7	91.3	93.6	93.7	93.8	94.3	95.1	96.5	96.6
Combined gross enrollment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary level schools (%)	Female	80.3	84.1	86.8	85.7	82.3	80.3	79.2	79.3	na
	Male	65.4	77.2	76.6	72.4	56.0	48.5	44.9	45.0	na

## 16. Components of Gender Empowerment Measure

		1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Seats in parliament held by women (% of total seats)		0	0	3.4	3.4	3.4	na	na	na	3.4
Female legislators, senior officials and managers (% of total)		0.9	6.6	8.1	7.2	6.8	4.3	4.3	10.8	7.9
Female professionals and technical workers (% of total)		26.8	25.9	24.5	25.0	19.6	22.8	21.0	22.8	23.9

## 17. Gender Inequality in Education

		1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Adult literacy	Female rate (% ages 15 and above)	73.0	84.2	87.5	92.0	90.4	92.7	92.9	95.4	95.6
	Female rate as % of male rate	85.2	92.2	93.5	103.4	96.4	98.3	97.7	98.9	99.0
Youth literacy	Female rate (% ages 15-24)	95.0	97.3	98.4	98.9	98.7	96.7	97.9	99.5	98.7
	Female rate as % of male rate	96.8	98.5	99.2	111.5	99.6	101.6	100.3	103.3	101.1
Net primary enrolment	Female ratio (%)	96.1	93.0	94.6	90.0	91.4	92.7	93.2	94.0	na
	Ratio of female to male	1.01	1.23	1.07	1.08	1.06	1.06	1.01	1.03	na
Net secondary enrolment	Female ratio (%)	86.1	87.6	93.8	90.6	90.0	91.7	90.0	78.4	na
	Ratio of female to male	1.23	1.23	1.30	1.27	1.20	1.11	1.07	1.04	na
Gross tertiary enrolment	Female ratio (%)	36.0	na	34.0	36.2	29.5	27.4	26.1	26.1	na
	Ratio of female to male	3.6	na	3.7	4.4	4.4	4.8	5.4	5.4	na

## 18. Gender Inequality in Economic Activity

		1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	
Female economic activity rate (ages 15 and above)	Rate (%)	27.5	35.2	40.6	45.4	49.3	50.4	49.1	52.2	52.1	
	As % of male rate	29.6	38.7	44.3	48.9	52.0	52.6	51.2	54.4	54.4	
Female employment by economic activity (%)	Agriculture	Female	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7
		Male	3.5	4.3	3.2	3.5	2.7	1.7	1.7	1.5	8.6
	Industry	Female	1.5	1.9	3.1	6.9	4.8	3.9	6.1	3.8	2.5
		Male	35.5	38.0	47.6	68.8	58.4	66.0	64.1	61.9	53.8
	Services	Female	98.5	98.1	96.8	96.1	95.2	96.1	93.9	96.2	95.8
		Male	61.0	57.7	49.2	48.7	39.0	32.3	34.2	36.5	37.5

Source of data: Based on Al Kuwari (2011) and QSA various years.

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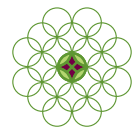
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