

The Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Education

National Report on the Development of Adult Education in the Sultanate of
Oman
Sixth International Conference on Adult Education
Brazil - May 2009

Illiteracy eradication and adult education in the Sultanate of Oman:

Education in these two fields is practiced as follows:

Illiteracy eradication classes consist of learners from grade 1 to 3. The standard of grade 3 equals grade 6 in primary schools. Then the learners may proceed to adult education classes from grade 7 to 12. The number enrolled in adult education classes in the year 2006/2007 is 53957.

The illiterate is the one who is more than 25 years old and not enrolled in any educational institution and not reached a reasonable standard of writing, reading and arithmetics.

The number enrolled in illiteracy eradication classes in the year 2004/2005 is 13750.

Policies and legislation:

Adult education in Oman is implemented by the Ministry of Education. It is organized into two divisions:

- Formal study where the learner joins one of the scattered centers throughout the country and have regular periods of study and exams (centers are stationed in school buildings after students end their school day).
- Non-formal studies where the learner registers himself in one of the centres and comes only to sit for the final exams.

Regulations are continually updated to promote and develop adult education, the latest was the Ministerial Decision no.64/2001 which has permitted secondary school graduates to teach in these centers and the Ministerial Decision no. 204/2004 which has extended the period of study from two years to three years.

Objectives of adult education:

1. To enable adults to receive more education.
2. To implement lifelong education.
3. To give the chance for school drop-outs to continue their education.
4. To participate in the social development of the country.

Organizing adult education:

Adult education is organized by approved orders and regulations issued by the Ministry of Education. Its centers are regularly visited by supervisors from Education Regions and from Ministry headquarters.

Executive strategies:

There is close coordination between the Ministry of Education and other related sectors such as Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Labor and Royal Police Force. These sectors infiltrate important concepts and issues in adult education curricula to enrich learners' culture. These sectors also send representatives to give lectures and counselling for the benefit of adult education learners.

Other objectives:

Adult education is available for males & females and the same curriculum is practised in both male and female centers. Medium of instruction : Arabic - the official language. English Language is a basic subject for all grades.

Strategies and international development plans:

Education system in Oman is experiencing continual development in accordance with worldwide innovations. Because adult education is part of this system, it is also experiencing continual development. The curricula are subject to continued reforms and the teachers are offered training courses from time to time.

Financing Adult Education:

At present financing adult education is confined to the Ministry of Education. It provides teachers, buildings and textbooks with nominal prices. The annual budget paid by the Ministry of Education reaches 405121 Omani Riyals (1.052.384,14 US\$).

Challenges:

The continuous global changes impose direct effects on the educational system and the Ministry is aware of these challenges. It exerts its efforts to update this system in order to carry out its objectives. Curricula, methods of teaching, training of staff are always under processing. Modern technology is also introduced to the educational system.

Other policies affecting adult education:

The Omanization policy adopted by the Ministry of Education in the field of teaching has created some difficulties facing adult education. Omani teachers are unwilling to teach in adult education centers because its remuneration is not convenient. This job was dominantly carried out by expatriate teachers bearing in mind that teaching in adult education centers is an additional job for Ministry teachers done after their official working hours. There are suggestions to solve this problem by increasing the remuneration or reducing the official working hours for those who teach in these centers, or offering other incentives.

School plan for adult education:

School plan for grades 7-10

Subjects	7 th grade	8 th grade	9 th grade	10 th grade
	Number of hours per week	Number of hours per week	Number of hours per week	Number of hours per week
Islamic culture	3	3	3	3
Arabic language	5	5	5	5
English language	4	4	4	4
Mathematics	5	5	5	5
Sciences	4	4	4	4
Social Studies	3	3	3	3
Life Skills	1	1	1	1
Total	25	25	25	25

**School plan for grade 11
First group subject for all learners**

Subjects	Number of hours per week
Islamic culture	2
Arabic language	5
English language	5
Mathematics	4
Sciences	3
Social Studies	1
Life Skills	1
Total	21

2nd group subjects-learners choose two subjects

Subjects	Number of hours per week
English language	2
Physics	2
Chemistry	2
Biology	2
Economic Geography	2
History of Islamic Civilization	2
Total: two subjects on condition they are not chosen from the first group.	4

School plan for grade 12
First group subjects for all learners

Subjects	Number of hours per week
Islamic culture	2
Arabic language	5
English language (A or B)	5
Mathematics (Applied or Pour)	5
Sciences (Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Environmental Sciences)	2
Social Studies	1
Life Skills	1
Total	21

2nd group subject-learners choose two subjects

Subjects	Number of hours per week
English language skills	2
Physics	2
Chemistry	2
Biology	2
Economic Geography and IT	2
History of the World around me	2
Total: two subjects on condition they are not chosen from the first group.	4

- In case of success in the exams of the 12th grade, the learner will receive a *General Education Diploma in Adult Education*

Adults enrolled in Formal Studies Division (grade5-12)

During the years 96/1997-2006/2007

Academic year	Grades 5-6			Grades 7-9			Grades 10-12			Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
96/97	272	2263	2535	530	1624	2154	668	1425	2093	6782
97/98	219	1728	1947	511	1157	1668	701	1168	1869	5484
98/99	159	1759	1918	557	1195	1752	1090	1492	2582	6252
99/2000	200	1777	1977	549	1239	1788	1404	1589	2993	6758
2000/2001	200	1990	2190	522	1420	1942	1614	1636	3250	7382
2001/2002	236	2140	2376	653	1454	2107	1872	2341	4213	8696
2002/2003	304	2175	2479	657	1472	2129	1936	1693	3629	8237
2003/2004	280	2346	2626	683	1556	2239	1719	1932	3651	8516
2004/2005	213	2853	3066	604	1393	1997	1449	1601	3050	8113
2005/2006	96	2401	2497	501	1308	1809	1343	1411	2754	7060
2006/2007	20	611	631	464	1596	2060	878	2039	2917	5608

**Adults Enrolled in the Non-Formal Studies Division (grade 5-12)
During the years 96/1997-2006/2007**

Academic year	Grades 5-6			Grades 7-9			Grades 10-12			Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
96/97	253	235	488	2129	532	2661	3085	1646	4731	7880
97/98	227	308	535	1690	446	2136	3561	2368	5929	8600
98/99	210	197	407	1894	477	2371	4649	3750	8399	11177
99/2000	140	188	328	1457	526	1983	5019	4721	9740	12051
2000/2001	198	233	431	1862	551	2413	6566	6921	13487	16331
2001/2002	267	255	522	2109	604	2713	8229	7076	15305	18540
2002/2003	237	166	403	2778	752	3530	10319	8828	19147	23080
2003/2004	249	151	400	2921	538	3459	11521	8828	20349	24208
2004/2005	216	85	301	2566	594	3160	12448	9789	22237	25698
2005/2006	80	51	131	2877	619	3496	10498	3199	13697	17324
2006/2007	23	16	39	4894	11350	6244	30238	11828	42066	48349

(A) Activities conducted by males & females:

Due to the fact that most adult learners are busy during the day time, and the buildings are occupied during the morning period, studies for this group are practiced in the evening. For these reasons they are exempt from school activities.

Their evaluation is confined to semester exams.

(B) Adult Education Programs for the disabled:

Students with hearing impairment:

There is special school for this group "Al-Amal School". It includes five grades with 110 students. It is well equipped and provided with specialized teachers using sign language.

Students with visual impairment:

There is a special institute for the blind "Omar-Ibn-Alkhattab Institute for the Blind". It includes five grades for adults with 25 learners. It is equipped with all necessary aids and specialised teachers using Braille script.

Other Issues:

- Concerning drop-outs in the field of adult education, no statistics or studies have been conducted in this respect.
- Concerning assistance and encouragement to adults who are facing problems and difficulties to join adult education centres, the Ministry of Education established the division of non-formal studies in which attendance is not mandatory. He/she may come only at the end of the semester to sit for the exams.
- The learner can also change to upper classes in a shorter period of time as long as he/she is able to pass the exams, for example one can change to grade nine if he/she can pass grade eight final exams.
- Concerning conducting studies to enhance and promote adult education, the answer is that there are no such studies available but there are periodical reports written by concerned divisions in Education Regions and at the Ministry level. These reports tend to include several proposals and ideas to reinforce adult education. Some of these proposals are implemented and more steps will be taken in future.

Steps taken can be stated as follows:

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1. Establishing the non-formal education division for learners who cannot attend classes. This step has enabled many people to continue their education.
 2. Organizing a chance to change grades i.e. the learner can reduce his years of study by changing to an upper grade as soon as he can pass the required exams.
 3. Urging school administrations that are also responsible for administering adult education centers to utilize their maximum resources for the benefit of these centers.
 4. The Ministry is working for increasing the present remuneration for those who teach in adult education centers.
 5. The Ministry is giving more care to the disabled through providing more services to attract more of them to join special needs adult education.
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Evaluation:

Periodical exams are conducted to evaluate academic levels of learners.

Illiteracy Eradication for Adults

Changes in the Process of Learning Alphabetical Literacy since 1973:

The national census of 2003 showed a considerable big leap in the percentage of those who have achieved literacy among the Omanis.

The following table shows these percentages taken from the 2003 census:

Description	Alphabetical literacy according to 2003 census
All Omani population	78.1%
Omani males (15 years +)	85.5%
Omani females (15 years +)	70.6%
Omani males & females (15-24 years)	97.8%
Omani males (15-24 years)	98.7%
Omani females (15-24 years)	96.9%

New policies:

Besides establishing illiteracy eradication and adult education centers, the Ministry of Education implemented a number of proposals for different community groups in order to accomplish education for all. Some of these programs are:

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- Special programs for females
 - Programs of illiteracy eradication for the disabled
 - The learning village program
 - Permitting secondary school graduates to teach in illiteracy eradication centers
 - Experiment of volunteers teaching in illiteracy eradication centers
 - Cooperative school program
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Example of a creative experience

The learning village program is a creative experience initiated by the Ministry of Education. It has contributed in eradication illiteracy among the village population. The project has begun in the year 2004/2005 to eradicate illiteracy of males and females living in that village, in addition to improve and enrich their competences through utilizing various educational methods and by cooperation with the local community to accomplish this aim. The project also has utilized volunteer work and private sector resources aiming at giving more care to females in order to increase their contribution, and to empower them. The program is now successfully working in eight villages.

Illiteracy eradication program for males & females

The previously mentioned programs in addition to the developed curriculum are initiated for the benefit of both males and females. These efforts are also revealed by the different projects such as the adult library which contains thirty booklets given to each learner including various subjects of life skills in order to enhance their potential and enrich their culture. A number of additional booklets have been distributed named “the library of neo-literates” including various subjects to adapt the readers with the present innovations and changes occurring at present. The Ministry also distributed manuals to help literacy teachers to develop learners’ life skills, bearing in mind that literacy among females (15-44 years) according to 2003 census reached 85.4% and the females constitute 96.7 % of the total learners in illiteracy eradication centers in Oman.

Effects of policies and programs in establishing a knowledge environment

The future vision for illiteracy eradication can be drawn through analyzing its present status-quo and eliminating the obstacles and problems that arise on its way to development. The Ministry of Education has exerted considerable efforts during the last three decades in the field of illiteracy eradication and adult education and has been able to accomplish many achievements through conducting the following policies and programs:

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1. Providing the needed funds to implement its work plan through cooperating with the local community and the private sector due to the adopted principle that the issues of illiteracy eradication should be dealt with not only in the government level but also in the national level. It is the responsibility of all citizens.
 2. The Sultanate of Oman has almost reached the level of enrolling all school-age children so it nearly has reduced a big source of illiteracy. The other step is to take in consideration all necessary procedures to encourage “6-15 years old” to continue their schooling so as not to revert to illiteracy.
 3. Reducing illiteracy by 50% to achieve the objective of education for all in Oman by 2015/2016 as a vision hoped to be realized.
 4. Integrating the efforts of the Ministry of Education with the efforts of other concerned Ministries, Institutions, Regional and International Organizations.
 5. Spreading the projects presently implemented such as the learning school, the volunteer experiment, and the cooperative school and secondary school graduates

experiment in order to expand and enrich the scope of these programs particularly in the rural areas.

6. Continuous training to all those working in the fields of illiteracy eradication and adult education to improve their achievements in order to come out with better outputs.
7. Developing and updating curricula to accord with the innovations in the educational field and to satisfy the learners' ambitions.
8. Designing new plans and comprehensive programs in order to enhance both quantitative and qualitative measures to improve the present situation.