KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION

NATIONAL REPORT OF
THE KINGDOM OF BAHRIAN

(INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: THE WAY OF THE FUTURE)

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Kingdom of Bahrain: General Profile

The Kingdom of Bahrain is considered a fully sovereign independent Arab Islamic country. The ruling regime is a hereditary constitutional monarchy as stated in the constitution and the Royal decree in terms of inheritance.

The government system in the Kingdom of Bahrain is democratic in which the people are the source of entire authorities. All citizens, men and women, have the right to participate in public affairs and enjoy political rights including their right to vote and to stand for elections. The government system is based on the separation of the legislative, executive and judicial authorities while maintaining their inter-cooperation in accordance with the provisions of the constitution. The legislative authority is vested in HM the King and the National Council (the Shura and the Representatives Councils) Legislative authority, in accordance with the constitution. The executive authority is vested in HM the King together with both the Cabinet and the Ministers.

The Cabinet undertakes drawing up the general government policy in the political, economic and social fields and following up the execution of the policy and supervising the progress of work in all government bodies.

Since the Kingdom of Bahrain believes in the principle of consultation (Shura), the two consultative and representatives councils were established in accordance with decree no. 15 of the year 2002 and in accordance with the provisions of by-law of the two councils. The Shura Council task is to give opinion about the topics the Cabinet submits to the council regarding the bills and the general policy and construction projects for economic and social development and any other businesses the Council of Ministers wishes to take the Shura Council opinion in this regard. The Representatives Council undertakes the responsibility of monitoring the work and behaviour of the executive authority. Both Shura and Representatives Councils pass laws that are endorsed by HM the King. The legislative authority in the Kingdom of Bahrain is vested in both councils in accordance with the principles of the National Action Charter, approved by the people with an overwhelming majority that recorded 98.4%, that is according to the provisions of the Kingdom of Bahrain constitution, issued on February 24th, 2002.
• **Geography and Area:**
The Kingdom of Bahrain is an archipelago comprising of 40 islands, which is located centrally on the southern shores of the Arabian Gulf, between latitudes 32° 25’ and 20° 26’ north and longitudes 20° 50’ and 50° 50’ east, away from the east coast of Saudi Arabia at about 16 kilometers and 54 kilometers from the west coast of the peninsula of Qatar.

The total area of the Kingdom of Bahrain is (741.4) square kilometers (2006); the largest island is Bahrain Island, where the capital city, Manama, is situated. Bahrain island accounts for nearly (81.63%) of the total area of the Kingdom, and linked with Saudi Arabia through the King Fahad Causeway, which was inaugurated in November 1986.

The Bahrain Island is also linked with the second biggest island Muharraq and Sitra peninsula by bridges. The other big islands are Nabih Saleh in the east Jedah and Um Al-Na'asan islands in the south and the Hawar Islands in the south east.

• **Religion and Language:**
Islam is the Kingdom's official religion as stated in the constitution. Islam is embraced by the very large majority of the Kingdom's inhabitants. In the Kingdom of Bahrain, there are places of worship for other religions. Arabic is the official language in the Kingdom of Bahrain. English is used on a large scale in various business fields. English is also taught as a second foreign language.

• **Demographic Aspects (Population):**
  - The number of people in the Kingdom of Bahrain stood at 650,604 according to 2001 census. 405,604 were Bahrainis and 244,937 were non-Bahrainis, that 62.4% and 37.4% respectively.
  - Since the latest census held in 1991, the number of people has increased from 508,037 to 650,604 in the year 2001. The annual rate of population growth amounted to 2.7% between 1991– 2001 corresponding to 3.6 between 1981 –1991. Amongst Bahrainis, this rate recorded 2.5% and 2.9% during these two periods respectively.
  - The Kingdom of Bahrain is considered one of the most densely – populated countries as 914 people lived in a square km in 2001.
  - The male percentage out of Bahrain's population amounted to 50.44% relative to 49.56% for females. As for the non – Bahrainis, the males recorded 69.01% in

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1 Kingdom of Bahrain: Central Information Organization
comparison to 30.99% for females. That is 57.43% against 42.57% out of the total number of population in the year 2001. The increase in the number of males among the non–Bahrainis indicates that their migration to the Kingdom of Bahrain was for work. They came to Bahrain, at the utmost, without their families who stay behind in their countries of origin.

- The Bahraini community is considered a youthful society, based on a broad base of youngsters. Those who are less than 20 years of age constitute 47.44% males and 46.79% females) out the total number of Bahrain population according to the year 2001 census, whereas the percentage of those who are 50 years of age and over is 10.74%. This resulted from the decrease of mortality rate from 4.04 to 3.91 per thousand during 1991 – 2001 and the decline in the mortality rate for babies from 9.50 to 8.24 per thousand during the same period. As for the non–Bahrainis, the ages of those who are under 20 and those who and over 50 amount to 16.30% and 6.45% respectively.

- The number of people who are of school age and whose ages range between 3 and 17 amounted to 177,162 according to the year 2001 census, as stated in table No.4 in the statistical annexe, That number is equal to 27.23% out of the total number of population, and the percentage of males reached 24.22% relative to 31.29% females, yet the percentage of the Bahrainis of school age compared to the total number of the Bahrain population is greater as it recorded 36.18% opposite 12.40% for the non–Bahraini residents.

The pre–primary education stage (Kindergartens) includes the children whose ages range between (3–5) and whose number reached 36,907, that is 20.83% out of the total number of people who are of school age.

The six–year–long primary stage includes children whose ages range between "6 – 11" and whose number totals 74,150 that is 41.85% out of the total number of people of school age.

The three-year-long intermediate stage, includes youngsters whose ages range between "12 – 14", and whose number totals 34,412, that is 19.4% out of the total number of people of school age.

The three-year-long secondary stage, includes students whose ages range between "15 – 17", and whose number totals 31,693, that is 17.9% out of the total number of people of school age.
The percentage of illiteracy among the Bahraini population dropped dramatically in the ten years between the 1991 census and 2001. This ratio amounted to 7.5% for males and 17.0 for females and 12.3% for the two types together in 2001. While the illiteracy rate in the corresponding 1991 amounted to 13.3% for males and 28.7% for females and 21.0% for the two together. The percentage of illiteracy amongst the Bahrainis whose ages range between "10 – 44" has also declined. It reached 1.36% for males and 4.03% for females, with an average of 2.69 for both in the year 2001 compared to 2.40% for males and 10.51% for females with an average of 6.43% for both in the year 1991.

As for the educational level in 2001, the number of Bahrainis who obtained a secondary education degree and above amounted to 121,918 including 61,794 males and 60,24 females, that is 52.96% of the adult people who are 18 years old and above (51.75% for males and 50.40% for females). This number reached 66,819 of whom 36,433 were males and 30,386 females.

In the year 1991, this figure constituted 39.40% of the adults who were 18 years old and above (42.97% males and 35.84 females). In the year 2001, the number of Bahrainis who obtained a post-graduate degree and more amounted to 24,760 (13,012 were males and 11,749 females), that is 12.55% of the adults whose ages were 22 and above (12.76% males and 11.41% females). This number reached 11,463 (6,683 males and 4,781 females) in the year 1991. That number constituted 7.87% of the adults whose ages were 22 and above (9.20% males and 6.55% females). The Kingdom's strenuous efforts have led to the doubling of this figure in less than ten years.

The percentage of disability cases among Bahrainis is recorded at less than 1%, approximately (0.61%).

**Economic Profile:**
The Bahrain economy has limited natural and human resources and a limited geographic area as well, but it enjoys certain characteristics on the regional and international arenas as stated in the following indications.

- The Kingdom of Bahrain is placed in the high category of the economics of middle-income countries, in accordance with World Bank classification.
- The Kingdom of Bahrain occupies a position in the forefront of Human Development Index (HDI), issued by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
The Kingdom of Bahrain occupies the third position in the Economic Index of the countries which enjoy economic freedom, according to reports issued by American Heritage Foundation. Although Bahrain economy is small, it is a developing one and has been well-integrated in global economy. Initial data of the national accounts show an increase in the rate of Bahrain economic growth. The total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at fixed prices has reached 4.104.96 million Bahrain Dinars\(^2\). Compared with 3,152.97 million Dinars in 1991. This growth has been achieved by virtue of the good results accomplished by most of the non-oil sectors and economic activities such as conversion industries, financial corporations, building, construction, government services, education, health, real estate and business services.

On the other hand, the total gross domestic product has increased in current prices from 3,192.63 million Dinars in 2002 to 5,951.33 million Dinars in 2006 as a result of the rise in oil prices in world markets and the noticeable improvement in the banking sector's performance,

\(^2\) The Bahraini Dinar is equivalent to 2.66 US dollars
Chapter 1

The Education System Facing the Challenges of the 21st Century: An Overview

1-1 Major Reforms and Innovations in the Education System:

1-1-1 The Legal Framework of Education:

Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain is governed by a clear and modern legal framework since the Kingdom's constitution drafted in the year 2002 guarantees the right to free education and compulsory education as indicated in article 7 of the constitution. The article states that "the state shall sponsor sciences, literatures and arts and encourage scientific research besides providing educational and cultural services to the citizens. Education shall be free and compulsory in the first stages defined by the law which draws up the necessary plan to eradicate illiteracy."

In line with the constitution, education law No.27 of the year 2005 was passed on August 15, 2005. The law focuses on the existing gains such as free and compulsory education, training, and continuing education, sponsoring gifted students, providing the appropriate educational programmers for students with special needs and drawing up a framework which outlines the objectives of education in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Article 2 of the education law states that "education is a right to all citizens" while article 6 of this law states that education is compulsory and free. The article states that "basic education is a right to children who reach the age of six at the commencement of the academic year. The government should provide basic education free and parents and guardians should abide by this law for nine academic years at the least. The Minister of Education shall issue the relevant resolutions which organize and ensure that parents and guardians comply with the law".

Article 7 of the education law also states that "basic and secondary education is free in all state schools."

In view of the education law, the Ministry of Education started drawing up the necessary plans to implement the articles of this law by issuing the following regulations and resolutions;

- Resolution No.535 of the year 2006 regarding the organization and supervision of parents' compliance with the law on compulsory education for their children who are of school age. (8th July 2006).
• Resolution No 536 of the year 2006 regarding the rules and regulations for the intake of children who are under school age in basic education (8th July 2006).

In the field of orphans' sponsorship, royal order 25 for the year 2005 was issued regarding the establishment of the Royal Charitable Foundation. The foundation set up by His Majesty King Hamad on July 14th 2001 shall undertake to sponsor Bahraini orphans of needy families.

1-1-2 The Organization of Education:

1-1-2-1 Educational Management:

The MoE is the party responsible for monitoring the educational system in the country, drawing up its policies within the framework set by the Kingdom of Bahrain, defining its quality criteria and co-operating with the public and private organizations and establishments to enhance it and link it to the needs of the individual and society.3

The MoE has worked to develop its organizational structure in accordance with resolution 53 of the year 2005 on the Ministry's organizational structure and resolution 29 of the year 2006 on the re-organization of the MoE in order to respond to the development requirements and achieve competence in administrative work in line with the objectives and future programmers for educational development.

In the light of the new structure, the MoE now has seven main sectors supervised by two Undersecretaries; Undersecretary for Resources and Services and an Undersecretary for Education and Curricula Affairs. Each sector is supervised by an Assistant Undersecretary who controls a number of directorates affiliated to him/her. The sectors under the authority of the Undersecretary for Resources and Services are:

• Planning and information Sector.
• Human Resources Sector.
• Financial Resources and Services Sector.

The sectors under the authority of the Undersecretary for Education and Curricula Affairs are:

• Curricula and Educational Supervision Sector.
• General and Technical Education Sector.
• Educational Services and Students Activities Sector.
• Private and Continuing Education Sector.

3 Source: Education law No.27 of the year 2005 (Article 4)
There are other directorates that are attached directly to the Minister's office. They are: The Directorate of Public Relations and information, the Directorate of Organizations and Committees Affairs and the Directorate of Scholarships and Cultural Affairs.

The MoE employs its human and financial resources to achieve the educational policy goals and future trends to develop education and carries out the following tasks:

- Providing learning opportunities for every citizen to develop his/her capabilities and faculties to achieve self-assertion and develop his lifestyle and society.
- Drawing up educational plans to enhance the educational system (general and technical) within the framework of the Kingdom's policy and educational philosophy and to boost the quality of education with the aim of achieving society goals and meeting the current and future requirements.
- Providing human and technical resources and organizational bodies to execute educational plans, manage, supervise, assess and upgrade the educational system.
- Building schools and educational institutions and supervising these facilities.
- Drawing up study and syllabus plans in the various stages of education.
- Encouraging private education to help spread education within the framework of the Kingdom's policy in this regard.
- Giving special attention to the teacher through training him/her to enhance his/her performance and develop his/her capabilities to keep pace with modern changes and enable him/her to promote his/her vocational and cognitive standard by creating the favorable environment for this development.
- Boosting scientific, cultural, artistic, sports and scouting activities for students.
- Developing and revamping the syllabuses and teaching techniques in the general and technical education to cope with the wide variety in the sources of knowledge and changes in the fields of work and occupations in order to meet the requirements of the labour market.
- Introducing a variety of educational specialities tailored to student's individual needs and enriching their experience and giving attention to slow learners and students with special needs by following up their progress and integrating them into normal schooling.
- Drawing up a general policy for scholarships and student grants and following up this question in the Kingdom and overseas, taking into consideration the society needs and specialities available at higher educational institutions in Bahrain.

Source: Education law No.27 of the year 2005 (Article 5)
• Sponsoring the recipients of scholarships and fellowships in Bahrain and overseas and supervising students who study at their own expense overseas.
• Channelling the educational process towards the family and school to form an integrated society in order to facilitate the learning process.
• Adopting effective strategies for the concept of life-long learning.
• The MoE works to support and encourage the private sector to set up kindergartens while placing these facilities under its educational and administrative supervision.

There is no denying the fact that MoE is the body concerned with organizing and providing educational services since it provides free basic and secondary education for all citizens. 80% of students in all stages study at 205 government schools while 20% study at private schools, besides children who join private kindergartens.

The MoE new structure includes an advanced description of roles and tasks and a systematic approach with regard to the distribution of powers and responsibilities. The approach is based on the principle of the centralization of planning and the decentralization of execution. The ministry has taken the necessary steps to implement the Educational Districts system (for the primary stage) since the academic year 2005/2006. Each district comprises 20 primary schools at the rate of three districts for boys' schools and two districts for girls' schools. This system comes within the framework of the ministry plans to establish decentralized administration to enhance efficiency in school work, follow up work in a smooth easy way, enhance daily follow up and facilitate school work through co-ordination and integration between the central administration and the Education Districts. The MoE also implemented this system in the intermediate and secondary stages in the academic year 2006/2007.

The MoE new organizational structure comprises the higher Education Council General Secretariat which was founded in 2006 and is directly affiliated to the minister's office. The council is concerned with matters related to higher education and scientific research in Bahrain such as:

5 Source: Higher Education law No.3 of the year 2005 (Article 3)
6 Source: Higher Education law No.3 of the year 2005 (Article 5)

• Drawing up the general policy for higher education and scientific research.
• Putting forward proposals regarding the setting up of government higher educational institutions in Bahrain and endorsement of fields of specialization at the various levels of education and the amendments that might occur in future.
• Laying down the general rules for the intake of students in the higher education institutions.
• Discussing and proposing the amendment of higher education laws and regulations in the light of the development of general policies in the Kingdom.
• Reviewing the difficulties which face higher education and putting forward proposals to iron out these difficulties.
• Setting the conditions and criteria for granting licences to the various kinds of higher education institutions.
• Issuing the by-laws and decisions on organizing academic, financial and administrative affairs related to higher education.
• Granting licences for setting up private higher education institutions within the framework of the general plan for higher education and according to the conditions set by the council.
• Co-ordination between higher education institutions and bodies and scientific research institutions as well as co-ordination with the general education institutions to promote integration.
• Review of the annual reports issued by the higher education institutions and the government bodies concerned on the performance of higher education institutions and adopting the appropriate recommendations regarding the assessment and development of this performance.
• Following up the work of higher education institutions and monitoring their programmes and supportive services, the quality of their performance and outputs, besides their financial position.
• Encouragement of private investment in higher education.
1-1-2-2 School Administration:

The school, as an educational institution, undertakes to run its administrative and academic affairs under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education. The ministry has recently directed its concerns towards the development of the school and its mechanism to reform education and to further better its quality in the Kingdom of Bahrain. In the very beginning of 2006, due to the increase in the number of state-run schools, the ministry started to take the necessary procedures to introduce the educational districts system as part of the ministry scheme towards a decentralized administration to achieve further effectiveness in the schools work and follow them up in a better way without the need to consult the ministry's central directorates.

In 2008, the ministry adopted various formulas and programmes that would contribute to the development of school, upgrading its educational and administrative activities. Among these programmes is improving the school performance.
This programme tackles the school system from three sides namely: schools, the ministry and the school-ministry interaction. This programme includes five projects as follows:  

- **Model of an Excellent School.**  
This project gives a common definition for excellence that enables schools to utilize it for self-assessment and outlining their priorities.

- **School leadership:**  
This project aims to bolster school leadership. It includes the assessment of leader teams, strategic planning, budget and monitoring the performance of school teachers, administration and the technical staff.

- **Teaching to Boost Education:**  
This project is based on improving the effectiveness of the teaching process in the state-run schools. It consolidates the ministry's stance for the teaching practices by providing all necessary support to meet the needs of school and teachers in Bahrain.

- **School Performance:**  
This project fosters the requirements for information and transparency, (e.g. through the basic common performance indicators), (the challenging and supportive) system, operations and results and the criteria the ministry uses to evaluate schools performance.

- **Improving the MoE Performance:**  
This project aims to upgrade the level of the ministry's performance by pinpointing the required changes and their applications to further improve schools performance on a large scale.

1-1-3 **The Structure of Education:**  
The educational system in the Kingdom of Bahrain follows a ladder of nine years of basic education which includes both the primary and intermediate stages and three years of secondary education in its various tracks and then the higher education as illustrated in the following figure.

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In the Kingdom of Bahrain, (the nine-year-long) basic education is compulsory for children whose ages are between "6 – 14". It was introduced in 2006 in accordance with education law No 27 of 2005. All children must be enrolled either in the state-run schools or the private ones. Children with severe disabilities will join special education institutions.

The MoE has given great importance to the development of all educational stages in view of a carefully studied plan and programmed projects as follows:

- **Improving Primary Education:**
  The MoE has started the execution of the first stages of this project including the development of education system, administration, school environment, assessment and training in addition to curricula.

\[\text{The system of unified tracks commenced in the academic year 2005. It includes the science, literary and commercial tracks. It will be generalized by the year 2009. The system will replace and cancel the separated tracks system (General, Science, Literary and commercial).}

\[\text{Vocational Apprenticeship was first introduced in the academic year 2007-2008 in the secondary schools. It will be generalized and expanded in the forthcoming year.}

\[\text{In the Kingdom of Bahrain, (the nine-year-long) basic education is compulsory for children whose ages are between "6 – 14". It was introduced in 2006 in accordance with education law No 27 of 2005. All children must be enrolled either in the state-run schools or the private ones. Children with severe disabilities will join special education institutions.}

\[\text{The MoE has given great importance to the development of all educational stages in view of a carefully studied plan and programmed projects as follows:}

- **Improving Primary Education:**
  The MoE has started the execution of the first stages of this project including the development of education system, administration, school environment, assessment and training in addition to curricula.
A manual for school principals was completed in-collaboration with the other educational stages. Also documents of educational project were modified such as: Student's Council document, School Board document and Parents' Council document. At the beginning of the academic year 2006-2007, the MoE put the first experiment to extend the school day into effect in five pilot schools as part of the ministry's project to promote primary education. After finding this experiment successful, the ministry will apply this project to cover ten other schools in all the Kingdom's five governorates.

- **Improving Intermediate Education:**
The MoE is currently directing its efforts to introduce overall changes to develop the intermediate stage and improve its outcomes. A comprehensive plan has already been prepared with the aim of raising the standards of student attainment and performance to achieve the objectives of education for all in the basic education stage. In the academic year 2006/2007, the ministry activated the executive plan for the project of developing intermediate education through the reorganization of the school day in ten schools as a first step. It started teaching computer as a basic subject for all students starting from first intermediate grade. It built a second computer laboratory in those ten schools. It increased the number of lessons of Islamic studies, social studies and civics (a new course on the rights and duties of citizens) The ministry allocated two lessons weekly for vocational guidance, life skills, mental arithmetic, health and safety. It also started the introduction of the new structure of intermediate education directorate, the ratification of the educational districts in each governorate as part of a plan to carry out the decentralization policy and the activation of a site follow-up plan for schools' evaluation.

- **Unification of Academic Tracks in the Secondary Education:**
This project is part of the qualitative development process in the framework of the secondary education development plan as it has direct effects on the quality graduates who are needed for the country's development process and job market. The MoE started the execution of its first stage at the beginning of the academic year 2004/2005 on a gradual basis. It will continue expanding this project till it is generalized in all secondary schools at the start of 2009/2010 academic year.
The unified academic track in the secondary education will give all students the opportunity to join various universities and colleges either inside Bahrain or overseas. It will also help to slash the percentage of dropouts in the secondary education. This system contains motivation elements for all students whatever their interests and potentials are. It helps to conduct a
comprehensive restructuring of curricula and to limit, as much as possible, the amount of unnecessary superfluous details and particles in the textbooks. It ensures that all students receive the same amount of know-how and basic skills. It also tackles dramatically the points of little weaknesses that secondary school leavers have in English and Maths.

- **Improving Technical and Vocational Education:** This includes the following:

  - **The developed system for technical secondary education.** In the Kingdom of Bahrain, only boys join technical secondary education. Amongst the development aspects of this kind of education is that technical secondary schools in Bahrain have earned the recognition of the Scottish Qualifications Board in addition to applying Quality Assurance system, certified by international Standardization Organization (ISO). An academic advisory system was also introduced in these schools. As part of the continuous development of technical education in Bahrain, Shaikh khalifa bin Salman Institute of Technology was opened in the academic year 2004/2005. This institute is considered a remarkable turning point in the march of this developed system to create new and varied specialities that cope with the current and future requirements of job Market and keep pace with modern hi-tech developments. The matter is not restricted to the institute's varied technical disciplines, but it covers a complete modernization of teaching self-learning techniques that employ both the hardware and software in all aspects of the educational process in addition to applying the programmes of High National Certificate (HNC) and High National Diploma (HND). The institute also introduces community service programmes which are carried out by the Excellence Centre for technical and vocational education.

  - **Vocational Apprenticeship System:** This system is part of the initiatives of the national project to develop teaching and training in the Kingdom of Bahrain. This system is closely connected with the restructuring and revamping of secondary education, bringing into focus the technical and vocational education that primarily takes into consideration the requirements of the job market plus the students' wishes, potentials and their cognitive qualifications and skills. This system, which was first implemented in the academic year 2007/2008, is used in two schools, one for boys and the other for girls and will be generalized on a gradual basis.
• **Religions Education:**
Religious education is provided in two specialized institutes for boys only. This kind of specialized education is similar to basic education and secondary education in the state-run general education regarding the number of years students spend at school and the enrolment age. The two institutes teach the same basic subjects, taught at basic and secondary schools, but they give extra various materials related to Islamic Religion with the aim of preparing graduates to pursue their university education in religious studies. In the academic year 2004/2005, the ministry started developing the curricula of religious education with the aim of improving the output and ensuring the basic academic accreditation for university entrance.

• **Higher Education:**
In the Kingdom of Bahrain, higher education takes place in universities and colleges. There is only one government university in Bahrain namely the University of Bahrain which was founded in 1986.

Amongst the main initiatives included in the national project to develop education and training is the establishment of two new colleges in September 2008. The first one is a college for preparing and training teachers with its headquarters in the University of Bahrain campus. This college is one of elements of teacher – oriented initiatives that upgrades the programmes for preparing and training teachers and school principals with the aim of honing their professional skills and bettering their performance. The second is Bahrain Polytechnic College. It is an independent government college, attached directly to the Council of Ministers. This college offers courses in technical and applied sciences that would enable students to obtain qualifications and certificates, supported by practical training (praxis) and skills, greatly needed for the job market.

The polytechnic, in close co-operation with the private sector, helps to qualify Bahrainis by granting students diplomas or bachelor degrees to enable them to meet the increasing requirements of the flourishing Bahraini economy.

The privatization of higher education according to the concept of market economies is a new phenomenon in the Kingdom of Bahrain which was launched five years ago in the wake of the political reforms led by His Majesty the King. The first private university was opened in the Kingdom in 2002 and the number of private educational institutions reached 14 at the beginning of 2007. The state encourages investment in this field and provides all the necessary facilities in this regard to help make Bahrain a regional hub for higher education.
The higher education law passed in 2005 has endorsed for the first time setting up of a higher Education council which will look after the administrative, scientific research and student' affairs. The Higher Education Council General Secretariat has drawn up the financial, academic and administrative by-laws which organize the work of private higher education institutions, set conditions for the appointment of staff in academic jobs, introduce a data system for staff, besides a by-law on the organization of the higher Education council session meetings and another by- law in the building criteria for private higher education facilities.

1-1-4 The aims and Purpose of Education:
Since the philosophical framework of the MOE action plan is akin to the Kingdom's philosophical framework, His Majesty King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa issued law No 27 of 2005 on education. The law comprises 14 articles Article 3 which defined the education strategic goals in the Kingdom of Bahrain states that.8

Education aims to develop the learner at the cultural, vocational, scientific, national, emotional, ethical, mental, social, health, behavioral and sport levels within the tenets of Islam, Arab heritage, modern culture and the customs and traditions of the Bahraini society, Education also aims to inculcate in the learner the spirit of citizenship, patriotism and allegiance to the King. Emphasizing the role of Islamic religion in the integration of personality, family cohesion and unity within the society and highlighting the role of Islam as a guide in everyday life and its ability to keep pace with all modern developments at all times and places.

- Cementing ties between the GCC states and bolstering up Arab and Islamic bonds.
- Boosting the teaching of Arabic language in a way which enables the learner to master it and use it in the various areas of knowledge while giving attention to the teaching and mastery of foreign languages.
- Raising awareness of the principles of Human Rights and including them in the syllabuses.
- Promoting the concepts of education for spreading peace, a better future for human beings and inter- national co-operation and solidarity based on justice, equality and mutual respect among all states and nations.
- Raising Human Heritage and environmental awareness and the conservation of wildlife.
- Promoting national cadres to enable them to actively participate in forming an educated productive society to keep pace with the progress and sustainable changes.

8 Source: Education law No.27 of the year 2005 (Article 3)

- Promoting the individual's critical thinking that contributes to the technological, scientific, economic and social advancement.
- Developing research skills and self-learning by using various techniques and employing advanced information technology methods to enhance the teaching process.

The MoE general goals are:

- Fostering patriotic attitudes and citizenship rights in dealing with Bahraini students with emphasis on a balanced linkage between rights and duties with regard to citizenship.
- Implanting moral values and Islamic ethical standards in the mind of students in a balanced way which can dramatically affect his/her daily conduct.
- Developing the personality of the Bahraini student to prepare him to meet the challenges of life so that he can play an active role in production, building and growth and interact with the goals and requirements of his/her country and people.
- Providing general basic qualification for the student to qualify him/her for private and public life so that he/she can keep pace with the tremendous scientific and technological developments and the possible future changes.
- Directing the teaching process to adopt effective strategies for the concept of life-long learning.
- Giving attention to civil values and linking them to the educational concepts to lure students to play an active role in the guided environmental and community services.
- Attracting social and voluntary agencies and organizations to directly participate in the educational process in accordance with the MoE plans and future vision.
- Integration between the family, school and society since this can make these parties share the responsibility of achieving the goals of educating the generation.
- Integration between learning and job opportunities and the adaptation of education outcomes to the requirements of the job market.
- Amalgamation of the teaching and training processes at the workplace and merging scientific knowledge with vocational skills to produce integrated behavioral functional outcomes.
- Adapting school syllabuses to meet students' varied requirements while taking into consideration their individual differences and their miscellaneous needs, tendencies and skills.
- Giving special care to gifted and talented students and exploiting their innovative skills, besides providing special training and teaching programmes for this category of students.
• Giving special care to students with special needs and those who have physical, psychological and behavioral disabilities and providing the appropriate teaching and training programmes for this group.
• Highlighting the concept of school hygiene (physical and psychological).
• Providing continuous training for all teachers to ensure they assimilate the new developments and changes in syllabuses and to keep pace with the sustainable development in the field of science, technology, telecommunications and other fields of human knowledge.
• Underlining the importance of the Bahraini citizen who is the material and moral source of wealth for the Bahraini society.
• Enhancing the quality of education in the various areas of specialization through clear-cut criteria for the evaluation of the education system.
• The implementation of comprehensive quality management in education.

1-1-5 Curricular Policies, Educational Content and Teaching and learning Strategies:
The document entitled "The Outline of the Future Vision for Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain" specifies the policies related to the revamp of curricula through the article on the general indicators for inclusive quality development which touches on the "comprehensive Review and Programmed Updating of Curricula". The MoE strives to introduce the following indicators with the aim of revamping and developing curricula:
• The need to include the concepts of citizenship and patriotism in the new curricula.
• Diversification of vocational and academic tracks in secondary education.
• Interaction of curricula with the comprehensive development trends and the requirements of the job market.
• Directing curricula for further kinds of family, environment and health education.
• Response of curricula to the communications and information technology revolution.

In the light of this policy the MOE has adopted as part of its development plan- a series of projects which were implemented in the academic year 2004/2005. The ministry efforts have produced the following patterns of development:
• Development and review of the current curricula in the light of the scientific and technological advancement especially Arabic, English, math and science curricula. The development takes into consideration the optimal criteria for curricula planning.
• Implementation of a plan for developing science and math curricula in the context of the G.C.C. unified curricula. The MOE has signed a bulk buying contract for a series of
advanced science and math books to ensure the provision of these two subjects and adapt this series to local needs and provide training for teachers and trainers, besides providing the necessary technical material and praxis.

- **Converting a substantial portion of these curricula to electronic ones** in line with the conversion to the electronic school. This is a mere technical development; however, it also requires the development of techniques for demonstration and analysis of the subject and the conducting of experiments by using the most up-to-date techniques and teaching aids.

- **Implementation of the integrated curricula project in primary school** with the aim of incorporating it to become one entity.

- The **project of teaching English from first primary grade** aims to enable the child to learn this foreign language at an early age. This will have a positive effect on the child's language development when he/she learns another language besides his mother tongue and enable him/her to learn various things and deal with information technology in a better way. The MOE started implementing the first phase of this project gradually in a number of primary schools at the beginning of the academic year 2004/2005. The project will be introduced in all primary school in the academic year 2009/2010.

- **Introducing the civics syllabuses in all stages of education** and community service and life skills syllabuses as well. The latter includes social and personal life skills, hygiene skills and dialogue and thinking skills. There is no doubt that this qualitative development will have a role in moulding student's character.

- **Expansion in preparing teacher's guide** to deal with curricula properly and the implementation of teacher's guide to execute school programmes in the basic education.

- **Introducing the environmental sciences and environmental culture disciplines** in the track unification system at secondary schools.

- Implementation of the updated teaching plan in the intermediate stage.

- Implementation of the first course for small projects.

- Preparing and introducing 31 new courses in the various school stages in one year.

**1-1-6 Information and Communications Technology in Education:**

The introduction of communications and information technology in education reflects the strenuous efforts made by the Kingdom to achieve the goal of creating a highly-educated society and founding an economy based on knowledge. The introduction of these technological methods in education plays a pioneering role in this qualitative leap in teaching techniques.
This new technology was introduced in His Majesty King Hamad schools of the Future project which was inaugurated on 17th Feb 2005 in eleven pilot secondary schools. The project aims to use communications and information technology in the teaching / learning processes on a sound educational basis to provide the generations with competencies, skills and values that help to create a society of information and an economy based on technical know-how. Since its inception, the project has focused on a set of main operations which lead to a qualitative leap when applied properly.

These operations include: establishing electronic classes, the acquisition of a multi-purpose electronic teaching system, linking schools using the system electronically, adding electronic classes to the learning Resources Centre and training teachers to use computer to qualify them to obtain the International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL).

The assessment of the project's experiment stages has helped to move to the second and third stages in the two academic years 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 to add 82 schools to the project which will be generalized in all schools in the academic year 2009/2010.

1-1-7 Objectives and Principal Characteristics of the Current and Forthcoming Reforms:

Bahrain's Cabinet endorsed in September 2006 a new national project which included a number of quality initiatives as part of an integrated number of quality initiatives as part of an integrated project to develop the outcomes of education and training in the basic education, secondary education, technical and vocational education and higher education.

These initiatives lead to the adoption of new techniques to ensure the provision of quality education. They have also brought about a qualitative leap in education. In this context the MoE has worked in conjunction with the Economic Development Board (EDB) and the National Institute of Education (NIE) in Singapore to set up a new college for training teachers in the academic year 2008/2009. The new college is an initiative which reflects the attention the MoE gives to quality, the focus on the selection of more competent elements for joining the teaching profession and emphasizing the need to qualify and train teachers to ensure the quality of outcomes since the teacher plays a major role in any effective and tangible development.

The prospective college will consolidate and develop programmes for training teachers and principals to raise their efficiency and improve their performance. This comes in the context of apprenticeship which is linked to the new teachers' wage scale. There are serious endeavours to draw up a training and apprenticeship plan for teachers and principals and prepare programmes
for teacher trainers by seeking help from the advanced countries in this field. These initiatives are directed to vocational and technical training and teaching and particularly the restructuring of secondary education to balance between students' real potentials. This will ultimately lead to bridging the existing gap between the outcomes of education and the labour market requirements.

The system of apprenticeship was introduced as part of the secondary education structure at the start of the academic year 2007/2008, besides the setting up of a polytechnic college in the academic year 2008/2009. The development also includes the introduction of a new national system for admission to universities, the work of training centers and higher education institutions and laying down criteria for all forms of higher education to ensure integration between university education and pre-university education.

The initiative also included setting up an independent Quality Assurance Authority (QAA) to ensure the quality of education. The QAA which started work in 2007 shall carry out the following tasks:

- Putting forward suggestions regarding the general policy for performance assessment to ensure quality in the academic, training and administrative fields.
- Laying down system, criteria and various patterns used to assess the activities of university, educational and training institutions, besides the evaluation of performance.
- Supporting the setting up of job performance and quality assurance units at the educational, training and university institutions to provide consultation for conducting self-appraisal studies, collecting the results of these studies and analyzing them, demonstrating positive and negative aspects and submitting recommendations on the development of performance as a major step to obtain accreditation which boosts the quality of education.
- Suggesting a system and criteria for distinguished performance in the educational, research, training fields and society service, besides the various administrative fields.
- Analysis and evaluation of training programme results for training and educational sector personnel.
- Provision of technical advice to the training, educational and technical institutions in the field of performance evaluation and quality assurance.
- The creation of a public opinion which asserts that the training and educational programmes are in agreement with the international criteria.
- Contribution towards developing curricula, methodology and examinations.
The future economic vision for the Kingdom of Bahrain has a reflection on the MoE plans and the objectives of the strategic plan for the period from 2009 to 2014. The economic vision aims to create a quality educational system to serve the social and economic needs of the Kingdom.

The MoE vision focuses on developing a quality educational system for all learners, taking into consideration individual skills and the future ambitions of each learner. The system should be updated to suit individual skills and the ambitions of each learner and be in harmony with the Kingdom's economic vision. The development of teaching and training is an important factor in promoting social justice.⁹

To realize the economic vision, future strategic objectives for the period 2009-2014 were set. The vision involves four main objectives and other sub-objectives, these are:

**Strategic Objective 1: Raising the Quality of Performance in Government Schools.** It includes the following sub-objectives:
- Improving the selection criteria for people entering teaching profession
- Improving teacher training
- Improving teacher evaluation and incentives
- Improving school leadership and management
- Improving curriculum and educational materials
- Introducing new secondary vocational programmes

**Strategic Objective 2: Improving the Performance of the Ministry of Education.** It includes the following sub-objectives:
- Improving performance methods and institutional culture in the MoE
- Improving support and services provided to schools
- Developing the relationship and partnership with the local and international communities and the private sector

**Strategic Objective 3: Providing the Opportunity of Education For All and Encouraging the Investment in Education.** It includes the following sub-objectives:
- Continuation of expansion in providing educational services for children of school age.
- Increasing the percentage of enrolment in kindergartens and improving their quality.
- Encouraging investment in private education and improving its standard.

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- Reducing the drop-out and repetition rates.
- Expansion in the programmes designed for students with special needs.
- Developing adult education and continuing education programmes.

**Strategic Objective 4: Raising the Quality of Higher Education and Scientific Research.** It includes the following sub-objectives:

- Improving education quality in universities.
- Enhancing research and development (R&D).
1-2 Main Policies, Achievements and Lessons Learned:

1-2-1 Access to Education:
The Kingdom of Bahrain provides equal education opportunities for all. It has managed to accommodate all children who are of primary school age. Those children, with the other educational stages, witnessed a significant spread as shown in the indicators of the academic year 2006/2006. They are as follows:

- Percentage of gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in primary education is 99.5%.
- Percentage of Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) in primary education is 98.9%.
- Percentage of Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) in intermediate education is 103.6%.
- Percentage of Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) in secondary education is 100.1%.

1-2-2 Early Childhood:
Due to the Bahraini society's interest in this education stage and their awareness of the educational process to prepare children for schools and the Bahraini families' keenness to enroll both male and female children in early childhood programmes, the government of Bahrain has encouraged the opening of more kindergartens to accommodate the increasing large numbers of children of the age group (3-5) years old. The number of children who were enrolled at kindergarten stage reached 21621 (11252 males and 10369 females) in the academic year 2006/2007.

The Net Enrolment ratio in early childhood programmes amounted to 52.3% in the academic year 2006/2007.

Naturally, all children who attended kindergarten programmes and who reached the primary school age (6 years old) join either state or private schools. The percentage of the new entrants in first primary grade who attended some form of the organized programmes for early childhood development stood at 86.6% in the academic year 2006/2007.

Children who had previously attended kindergarten programmes have shown that they have formed positive attitudes towards learning that enabled them to develop their knowledge, which in turn, contributed to the acceleration of mastering the basic competencies required for primary stage. The MoE has noted that a number of new entrants who were only a few months over six and who were beyond the first grade abilities were eligible to be upgraded directly to the second grade of primary education as many kindergartens have focused on the teaching-learning process and introduced an appropriate curriculum for this pre-school stage.
On the other hand, the MoE has expressed its concern in early childhood stage by creating a new directorate for kindergartens in the ministry's organizational structure of 2006. Its efforts were crowned with the implementation of a number of programmes, projects and activities that included:

- The MoE has introduced an integrated unified curriculum divided into educational units specially designed for kindergartens. This curriculum aims at preparing children for school life to be integrated easily in the primary school by acquiring a set of common values, concepts, skills and competencies tailored to the needs of kindergarten children while taking into account their individual differences.

- Preparing a manual on how to teach critical thinking skills at the pre-school stage (5years old) and training them on how to apply them in various life situations before they are enrolled at school.

- Training female kindergarten teachers and preparing them to be well-qualified and promoting their professional efficiency to be able to understand children's needs, mould their character, motivate their creativity in an effective educational atmosphere, meet the needs of these working in the special educational institutions such as kindergartens, private schools and other social institutions that provide their services for children at this stage, holding refresher courses and workshops in light of training requirements.

- Introducing an extensive programme to eradicate female teachers' computer illiteracy by giving them a 15-hour long evening classes.

- Providing supportive educational advice to investors in this sector and creating sound concepts for both the investors and parents on the standards that should be available at the students' ideal environment.

- Issuing the kindergarten's manual that aims to assist kindergarten's administration to improve teaching-learning processes and build closer cooperation with children's families. This manual offers a good model on how to collect, classify and systematize data and information in a way that mirrors awareness of the kindergarten's educational role. The manual includes a full explanation of the kindergarten's objectives, its by-law, and its activities. The manual briefs parents on the role the kindergarten plays in a variety of administrative, educational, health and social fields with the aim of attracting their attention to the role they should play to assist the kindergarten to achieve its aspired goals.

- Assisting parents by apprising them of the latest methods to solve the behavioral problems their children face.
- Supporting kids centers, affiliated to the Ministry of social Development, in a bid to provide their cultural services and programmes freely to the children of the needy and low-income families.

1-2-3 Learning Outcomes and Student Attainment:

The Ministry of Education gives top priority to the outcomes of student attainment in terms of preparing him/her to be a good citizen, having a sense of belonging to his country, Bahrain and preparing him/her in accordance with the labour market needs and the requirements of Bahrain's comprehensive development plan, to learn effectively within and outside school as a lifelong learner by providing him/her with self-learning skills and abilities to benefit from the references of information and communication technology (ICT) and learning resources centers throughout his/her life. The MoE aims to assist him/her to possess good vocational and professional skills and competencies that would enable him/her to confront the hardships of future life and make him/her a productive person in his/her community.

The MoE sought to find methods, programmes and projects that aim to upgrade learning outcomes and direct students towards the academic and vocational studies as part of the ministry's philosophy of lifelong learning.

To fulfill this strategy, the ministry works through the support and assistance it receives to achieve the goals of development via a long list of projects and programmes prepared for the teacher, student, curriculum and school environment, the expansion in the use of e-learning, the completion of the legislative system that is closely connected with the various stages to be able to follow-up issues pertaining to dropouts and compulsory education in the light of education law.

Since the MoE considers education outcomes and quality as the crux for any successes/failures in education development plan, the ministry started the implementation of major steps towards diagnosis and treatment via voluntary participation in international trends to study maths and science (TIMMS 2003). This participation aimed at getting acquainted with the levels of Bahraini students performance in Maths and science subjects versus their peers in other participating countries and also be familiarized with the key factors that directly influence learning attainment with the aim of improving the teaching-learning processes of Maths and sciences subjects in addition to training local cadres in the field of preparing and conducting tests to measure quality and performance levels. Second year intermediate students in both the state and private schools were the target of this study. It has become clear from the report
issued in this regard that Bahrain was ranked in the middle category according to international criteria in the said subjects. This position certainly needs to be consolidated and improved. The ministry participated anew in (TIMMS 2007) tests. The second report shows the extent of improvement in this regard by virtue of the strenuous efforts exerted to get over the pitfalls that appeared in the previous report.

To measure students' performance in Bahrain schools, the National Exams Unit was established in 2007. This unit is attached to Quality Assurance Agency and not to the Ministry of Education. This unit prepares independent national exams for basic subjects (Arabic, English, Maths and science) for third, sixth and ninth grade students, the reading and writing skills plus Maths for the twelfth grade students to give a better picture on the achievements of the education system on a regular basis. Cambridge University for International Exams is currently undertaking the development of exams, as it is the international partner, in cooperation with Bahraini experts. The unit started conducting the exams in the academic tear 2007/2008. The results of the national exams will contribute to the promotion of drawing up the education policy in Bahrain, the development of curricula, teaching methods and schools performance, evaluation and frequent criteria control besides knowing the extent of students' progress on an individual basis.

1-2-4 Teachers:

The Kingdom of Bahrain has placed the teacher on top of its priorities for the effective role he/she plays as he/she is considered the nerve of the educational process who plays a pivotal role in its successes to care for the promising young generations. The ministry has shown its keenness to improve teachers' professional, social and economic conditions by constantly raising their efficiency, boosting their effective participation in drawing up development programmes in conformity with democratic methods and state-of-the-art requirements.

Here are some of the achievements:

1-2-4-1 Pre-service Preparation

In recognition of the pioneering role teachers play in the development and progress of the Kingdom of Bahrain (as teachers are responsible for preparing the future generations of the nation and as they are the first influential people in determining student attainment level), it has become necessary for the promising future of Bahrain that teachers should be highly qualified to achieve the best standards of education.
Hence came the initiative to promote teachers performance as part of the national project to develop education and training including the establishment of the new Bahrain Teacher College (BTC) of in the academic year 2008 – 2009 to prepare and train teachers to perform their noble services properly.

The college concentrates on teacher education programmes by providing fresh programmes for new teachers and in – service training programmes. On the other hand, the Education College at the University of Bahrain will direct its efforts towards higher studies. (MA and PhD degrees) and the promotion of education researches.

Bahrain Teachers College has set certain conditions that should be fulfilled by the applicants before being admitted and enrolled at the college. The criteria used to select the would–be students at the college include:

- Having a personal interview (verbal (literal), motivation readiness etc.)
- Sitting to psychometric test for the students wishing to register at the bachelor degree programme.
- Sitting to test in English language and the specialization for those who would like to join higher diploma.

It is noteworthy that these criteria were set in collaboration and coordination with the National Institute of Education (NIE) in Singapore and a local team to secure the quality of these criteria and that they conform with the standards of the local community to select the best and most efficient personnel who would be the teachers of the future.

The Ministry of Education, in coordination with Bahrain Teacher College, has introduced a number of incentives to attract students to join the college. The student will obtain the following privileges the moment he / she joins the college.

- A complete financial grant the moment he / she joins the college. This grant will be on the increase during his / her years of study.
- Complete free study for entrants.
- An international education standard programme with practical applications will commence form first year of study.
- A guaranteed teaching job at the Ministry of Education the time he / she graduates from college.

The college offers two programmes for new entrants:

- A four-year bachelor (BA)/(B.Sc.) degree for students who obtained the General Certificate of Education (G.C.E).
- A one-year Higher Diploma in education for student with BA/B.Sc.

These two programmes include distinguished theoretical and applied disciplines in the fields of Arabic language, English language, Maths and science in its three branches (physics, Chemistry and Biology) plus other specialized training programmes tailored to teachers' needs.

1-2-4-2 Appointment (Placement):
The MOE has set criteria for the appointment of teachers. A teacher should have at least BA/(B.Sc. in Education or equivalent (BA/B.Sc. in the major plus diploma in Education) in order to join the teaching profession, besides passing a test in his specialty and a job interview.

The MOE has worked in 2008 through the teachers development initiative on the upgrading of criteria for the selection and appointment of new teachers with the aim of selecting highly skilled teachers improve education to outcomes, solve the problem of unemployed university graduates, attract Bahrainis to rare specialities and make teaching more attractive.

1-2-4-3 Working Conditions and Teachers Positions:
Working conditions are the same for both male and female teachers with regard to salary, number of teaching periods, students, promotion prospects and occupational development.

As for salaries, the wage scale for teachers is different from that of laymen and specialists with regard to steps and increments. A newly appointed teacher starts on grade 3 however other graduating from Bahrain Teachers College he/she will start on Grade 4. The MOE has recently drawn up a new wage scale for teachers who also got 15% pay rise at the end of 2007. The new scale also includes financial rewards, training and enhancing

The teacher has promotion opportunities and he/she can be promoted to senior teacher, deputy head of a school or principal in accordance with the evaluation criteria and conditions for filling these vacancies. The new teacher's wage scale was introduced in line with the development and reform changes to encourage distinguished university graduates to join the teaching profession and provide promotion opportunities for all teachers according to their experience, qualifications and competence. The wage scale which was implemented in the academic year 2004/2005 aims to improve the financial situation of teachers and satisfy their ambitions of education. Promotion in educational jobs will be linked to the teacher's professionalization programme.
Ministerial resolution 1281 of 2007 organizes the number of periods a teachers should have weekly. The resolution recommended the following:

- Primary and intermediate teacher should have 22 periods a week.
- A secondary school teacher should have 20 periods a week
- A teacher at technical and vocational schools and institutes should have 24 periods a week.
- Physical education teachers should have 20 periods a week in all stages, however coaching students after school time shall be equivalent to four periods a week.
- Should the teacher have fewer periods than what is stated in this resolution, he will be given remedial lessons besides substitution lessons to cover the difference.
- Teacher's participation in School Board meetings and ministry committees shall be equivalent to one period per committee and shall be deducted from the basic periods in the teacher's timetable exclusive of the school administration supervisor and senior teacher.
- The substitute teacher will have between 8 and 15 periods a week to be taken from permanent staff; however these periods shall go back to the permanent staff in case the substitute teacher is transferred to another school. Administration resolutions shall be issued by the education administration concerned on the organization of these tasks.
- Teachers will also be charged with the following tasks besides their weekly lessons:
  - Carrying out the tasks of a class teacher.
  - School activities groups.
  - Supervising in the school yard duty.
  - Teaching substitution lessons.
  - Any other tasks which the school administration deems necessary but does not conflict with the nature of a teacher's work.
- The teacher will get overtime pay according to the rules in force in case the number of periods he teaches exceeds what is stated in this resolution and after the prior consent of the school administration concerned.
- The senior teacher is in charge of educational and academic supervision in his school and shall have to teach between 8 to 10 periods a week. Should he supervise more than one school, the number of periods will be reduced to be between 4 to 7 periods a week. He shall have to teach at least four model lessons, supervise a minimum of 5 teachers and a maximum of 10. Should the number of teachers exceed 10; another senior teacher will be appointed. However, only one senior teacher shall be charged with coordinating school work and he will be selected by the principal in consultation with the school board.
• The senior teacher of technical subjects shall be in charge of educational and academic supervision in one school or more and have a minimum of three teachers to supervise their work.

• The senior teacher of the class teacher system shall supervise 14 teachers at the least and teach between 6 and 9 periods a week taken from his teachers' weekly lessons. He shall have to give a demonstration in class to highlight certain teaching techniques he prepares according to his teachers' needs. Another senior teacher can be appointed if the work exceeds the stated limit.

• Should it be difficult to provide a senior teacher for any school under any circumstances, a coordinator (rapporteur) will be selected from among the staff to carry out the task of a senior teacher. The selected coordinator shall have fewer teaching periods after the approval of the educational bodies concerned.

• The number of school administration supervisors is determined according to the number of students as follows:
  - One supervisor for a number of students between 1 and 250.
  - Two supervisors for a number of students between 251 and 300.
  - Three supervisors for a number of students between 301 and 600.
  - Four supervisors for a number of students between 601 and 1000.
  - Five supervisors for a number of students between 801 and 1000.
  - For more than a thousand students, a supervisor will be appointed for every 250 students.

• The supervisor shall be charged with tasks stated in the job description and shall have between 6 and 10 periods a week.

In the field of **evaluation of teachers' performance**, government school teachers are subject to regular official evaluation; however this kind of evaluation focuses on the teachers' occupational behavior and not on their teaching competence. The MOE is currently working on an initiative to introduce a new system for evaluation and accountability to achieve quality and enhance teachers' performance.

In the field of **incentive** awards, the MOE has introduced a host of incentives which aim to enhance performance in the civil service sectors and promote services provided to the citizens. These incentives include the following: Quality performance award, outstanding achievement
Award, punctuality award, employee of the year award, suggestions award, letters of thanks and appreciation, indemnity and retirement pension.  

Besides these incentives, the MOE offers special incentives for the school administration staff to encourage them to carry out their duties diligently:

- Provision of grants and yearly scholarships for industrious persevering teachers to obtain MA and PHD degrees in their field of specialization.
- Sending teachers to participate in local and overseas conferences to enable them to benefit from the advanced educational techniques and experience of other people who work in the same field.
- Provision of grants and scholarships for teachers' sons in recognition of their educational services.
- Creating effective mechanisms to motivate teachers and assigning prizes for the creative and distinguished ones, besides honouring them in the important national circles.
- Providing incentives for outstanding and long-serving teachers and old-age pensioners on the Education Day and Teacher's Day and hailing their distinguished work by honouring them annually.
- Providing computers for the teaching staff to facilitate their work and encourage them to participate in the enrichment of their school work.
- Issuing legislations and by-laws on the position of long-serving teachers and reducing the bulk of work for teachers of poor health, besides coordinating with other ministries to provide health and psychological care for this group.
- Highlighting the works of distinguished teachers on the Education Day and in various exhibitions with the aim of providing moral and material support for them.

The MoE also works to develop the teachers' incentive scheme to motivate teachers, enhance their performance and boost their morale.

In the field of activating the role of teachers' participation in the educational process, the MoE has made the following achievements in the past few years:

- Activation of teachers' role in adopting educational resolutions and including them in the technical and special working committees which execute a number of projects and the unification of tracks in secondary education.

10 Kingdom of Bahrain: Civil Service Bureau. Bulletin (3) regarding the civil service scheme No. (430) with regard to the incentives and awards. 2004.
• Boosting teachers' role in making recommendations on the development of education and teacher's tasks. The MoE has set up parents' and teachers' councils in every school to encourage these councils to participate in enriching school activities and teaching techniques.

• Participation of teachers in annual educational conferences and work shops, besides the launch of seminars, debates and projects which aim to revamp and enhance the quality of education.

• Inclusion of teachers in the development of curricula through the selection of competent teachers for the curricula development committees such as the curricula advisory committees and teachers' advisory committee.

• Ministerial resolution of 2007/2008 on the re-formation of the teachers' advisory committee is one of a series of the steps taken by the MoE to activate the teachers' role and enhance channels of communication between the ministry and the teaching staff with the aim of benefitting from the ideas, opinions, remarks and innovative styles of those educationalists in solving technical, educational and vocational problems.

1-2-4-4 In-Service Professional Development:
The MoE gives attention to the continuous professional development of teachers by adopting a methodical approach in parallel with the key changes in curricula and the accelerating changes in the world of communications and technology. To achieve this goal the MOE organizes varied training programmes that fulfill the needs of teachers and meet the ministry development requirements.

The MoE has introduced a training programme for teachers and specialists to raise the efficiency and competencies and make them gain new teaching techniques to deal with different sections of learners. The training scheme is based on the concept of continuous teaching and training which involves the pursuing of organized study-under the supervision of the Directorate of Training and Professional Development - in an academic institution or by participating in conferences and workshops organized or approved by the MoE. Under the scheme, training is compulsory and part of the job requirements. Teachers and specialists are also obliged to attend the short and long seminars endorsed by the scholarships and Training Committee since this can help to develop their vocational skills. Training seminars are designed for male and female teachers alike.
The Directorate of Training and Professional Development is executing the following series of training programmes:

- **Professionalization Programme for the Deputy Heads of Schools:**
  The Directorate of Training has launched a professionalization programme for deputy head teachers who are on grades 5 and 6 as part of the MoE policy to promote the performance of supervisory, technical and administrative cadres and provide them with the skills they need to run their daily work. The programme focuses on practical applications related to administrative work to qualify trainees to carry out their school tasks and help them to pursue their specialized study in the field of school administration in the future.
  
  Two main aspects were taken into consideration in preparing and planning this programme: firstly the provision of intensive teaching material and secondly the special needs of this batch such as the provision of expertise that helps trainees to gain administrative experience, practical application skills and the sound instructions they need to boost their professional competence to enable them to carry out their duties properly.
  
  The training programme consists of 8 training seminars and runs for 20 hours to be completed in four days, besides five hours for workshop training which lasts for one day. Each group in various stages of education shall attend all school workdays.

- **Professional Development Programme for Senior Teachers and Acting Senior Teachers:**
  The programme aims to highlight the role of the senior teacher and his/her tasks and relations with the teaching and administration staff, besides the use of educational and learning strategies in teaching, the acquisition of technical skills related to educational supervision and the activation of the comprehensive quality system.
  
  The programme runs into 105 hours (7 credit hours) according to the teachers' wage scale and will spread over three semesters.

- **Programme for Enhancing Professional Efficiency of Primary Schools' Supervisors:**
  The importance of this programme lies in the concept of comprehensive professional development of supervisory, technical and administrative cadres to improve their performance and ensure quality outcomes. The role of a supervisor should be given special attention due to the hard tasks he carries out to maintain discipline, safety and security inside the school.
His role is closely related to the main components of the educational process (student, teacher, family and society) He also plays a major role in creating a healthy school environment which enhances human relations and motivates students.

The training programme which is supervised and executed by the Directorate of Training targets supervisors in all stages at government schools. The supervisors join an intensive training programme to promote their basic skills and enable them to carry out their duties smoothly and properly. The trainees' attend 11 seminars at the rate of 2 hours per seminar. The programme of 11 days duration is spread over six weeks.

The evaluation of trainees is made according to the principle of continuous observation and follow up the activities performed by the trainees. A research paper is to be presented at the conclusion of the programme.

- **The National Training Programmes for New Teachers as Trainees:**
  This integrated training programme aims to promote their skills and competencies to enable them to carry out their duties smoothly and properly.

  It is a 20-hour programme. The trainees attend it from 8a.m to 1p.m. The programme is designed to help new teachers in the various areas of specialization to bear the burden of teaching and administrative work.

Besides the Directorate of Training and Professional Development, the MoE has set up a Centre for Excellence for Technical and Vocational Education at Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman Institute of Technology.

The MoE has decided to establish the centre in coordination with UNESCO to provide advanced training programmes for technical school teachers to enable them to cope with the rapid changes in the local and regional labour market and the technical and hi-tech changes, besides the economic and cultural changes resulting from globalization.

To achieve this goal, specialists at the centre have drawn up a plan to train technical school teachers to enhance their performance, promote vocational behaviour and hone their skills to enable them to carry out their work properly. The teachers' training scheme includes the following training programmes:

- Pre-service training programme.
- In-service training programme.
- Vocational competence programme.
- A programme for boosting academic qualifications.
- A programme for developing proficiency in English.

These training programmes reflect the MOE strategy to achieve quality assurance through the vocational development of all MOE staff. The programmes are timed to coincide with the current preparations to set up the Teachers' Training College and the implementation of the teachers' wage scale. They also follow the outcome of surveys conducted to determine training requirements. The MoE has introduced varied training programmes that bear witness to the tremendous career development plans launched by the MoE.

In the field of future plans to develop professional skills the MoE has signed a contract with an international educational house to set up a teachers' training college in Bahrain.

This is one of the four initiatives to develop teaching in training as envisaged in the MOE plans. Moreover the philosophy of teachers' wage scale focuses on a linkage between the training track and the job track i.e. a teacher cannot get a promotion unless he passes through a series of training programmes offered by the Directorate of Training and Professional Development or the Bahrain Teachers College.

The MoE does not stop at this point but it also provides grants and scholarships for teachers to pursue higher studies (Higher Diploma in Education, MA and PHD) in the Kingdom and overseas in order to enhance the performance of its cadres.
1-3 The Role of the Education System in Combating Poverty As Well As Other Forms of Social Exclusion and Cultural Marginalization:

The Kingdom of Bahrain policies regarding combating poverty and other aspects of social exclusion and cultural marginalization have witnessed a great leap forward in the past few years that appeared clearly in the adoption of various policies that aim at assisting the needy families, the protection of children and motherhood, the caring for the people with special needs and the orphans, and widows plus other policies providing professional training programmes.

The government of Bahrain seeks incessantly to increase its support to the needy and marginalized people to enable them to get the basic services and other services pertaining to social and educational programmes.

These policies and services have greatly contributed to a decrease in dropout rates and an increase in the enrolment of people with special need, and the handicapped at various educational institutions and an increase in graduates' rate parallel to an increase in their employment rates. Professional training programmes have also gone up in quantity and quality as a result of those policies and services.

The improvement in the efficiency of the educational system and the increase in the attainment of basic and secondary education services plus the work done to enhance programmes for the development of the educational system all had played a key role in creating a balance between the outcomes of academic education and the requirements of labour market. They also were a principal factor in combating all forms of exclusion and marginalization, which no longer constitute a worrying phenomenon for educationalists as education opportunities are now available for all and the realization of the whole community of the importance and necessity of education as a social insurance and a way to find a good job.

The MoE and all state-run schools, through their diverse programmes provide all forms of support and assistance to the needy students to enable them to pursue their schooling till the higher education level. Various formal and non-formal circles also give a hand to the needy students through the provision of the school bag project as one example of their contributions.

In addition to that the ministry of social Development focuses on the rehabilitation and the employment of the poor youth especially school dropouts and those with special needs by providing them with special training programmes that help them to be integrated in the labour market.
Part Two: Inclusion Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

2-1 Approaches, Scope and Content:

2-1-1 Inclusive Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain: Concept and Current Vision.

The concept of inclusive education in the Kingdom of Bahrain enjoys an increasing interest, as a human right aspect as stated in the Kingdom's constitution and education law, mentioned previously in the first part of this report. The concept of inclusive education has previously been connected in the Kingdom of Bahrain, as it is the case with other countries, with the students with special needs "the students with physical and mental disabilities". The approaches and procedures that were in use in this regard were of remedial nature through the establishment of special centers for this category of students that ultimately leads to their isolation from the rest of students. The concept of inclusive education has developed since the ninetieth of the last century as part of the concept of education for all, issued in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990.

This concept means that all children should be subject to similar learning-teaching methods regardless of their social and cultural background and the different abilities and skills they possess. Education opportunities should be provided for all even for those with special needs of whom the ones with certain potentials should be integrated with the normal students. All services and facilities in addition to supportive educational materials should be provided to them, taking into consideration the principle of individual differences.

The creation of conditions and opportunities for all constitutes the basis for the concept of the right of all for education, clearly stated in the International Declaration on the provision of education for all, "EFA" issued in Jomtien 1990 and Dakar2000 the two of which were endorsed by the Kingdom of Bahrain, which committed itself to abiding by them.

The Bahraini society's perspective towards inclusive education is evidently connected, since HM King Hamad reform steps taken in 2001, with ongoing discussions on the kind of community we are living in, the extent of its soundness and the sort of democracy we wish to achieve (mutual relationship between education and the society). It depends on the vision that considers education a social policy that lays down the necessary foundations for the society's future development.

In the light of this extensive perspective, some of the basic issues on inclusive education are related to the following:
- Educating students with special needs (disabled and talented).
- Combating poverty and marginalization and gender discrimination.
- Considering the multi and diverse cultural aspects as an educational right that should be fully recognized.
- Maintaining the rights of minorities and immigrants.

The goal of inclusive education is not only to integrate all children in educational institutions, but also to integrate all citizens into their community. This reflects a change in the social relations (the principle of social justice).

From the educational perspective, the strategy of inclusive education takes into account the privacy of each child and adolescent as education opportunities should be provided for all groups throughout their lives. That strategy highlights teacher-students rapport and how to build that relationship on mutual understanding and respect. Hence inclusive education comprises four basic elements: Ensuring the right of children and adults to receive good educational experiences and valuable educational results.

- Ensuring the moral responsibility that aims to give priority to the students who face the risks of marginalization and exclusion from school and who get low school results.
- Considering basically the process to search for the best methods to respond to diverse matters besides the attempt to know how to learn from differences.
- Using multiple strategies to encourage students' creativity and the ability to solve problems.

To achieve all that, the Kingdom of Bahrain sought to enhance this comprehensive concept of inclusive education through:

- The adoption of an educational policy that stems from the spirit of the Kingdom of Bahrain constitution that calls for the right of education to those of school age, by giving special emphasis on removing barriers that hamper the access to education for woman, girls children with special needs, children outside school walls and the integration of children in the education system out of the perspective of equality. The Kingdom of Bahrain has provided opportunities for inclusive education as a human right and a translation of democracy.

The MOE focused its efforts, till the end of the ninetieth of last century and even before that, on the need to accommodate all children who are of school age. This achieved a 100% enrolment at the primary stage and a decline in the percentage of illiteracy of the group age 10-44 to only 2.7%.
Since the year 2000, the MOE focused on enhancing education quality and enabling all children to attain good, free and compulsory basic education as a minimum, to provide them with the necessary means to lead a social, psychological, stable, productive and promising life. Generally, education is free in all state schools either for Bahrainis or expatriates and compulsory for age group 6-15.

Establishing the Directorate of Special Education as part of the ministry's organizational structure of 2006 to undertake supervision of the students with special needs in schools and those who study at special institutions. This directorate refers the cases of students with mental-retardation, speech difficulties and hearing and vision impairments in the state schools to specialized institutes and centers. The MOE provides the said institutes and centers with specialized staff on a secondment basis and according to their needs.

Expansion of the gifted and talented students programme in schools via plans to identify those students, teacher training on a scholarship basis and the use of e-learning and enrichment programmes. All these initiative and programmes led to the establishment of a Gifted Students Centre. The centre aims at diagnosing, following-up the talented students and investing in their abilities to be creative and contribute distinctively in the construction and developments.

Providing the requirements of the early childhood care in a bid to develop it properly and introduce all forms that preserve children's rights in the light of the agreements and resolutions adopted in this regard.

Providing day residential care and external residential care for children of unknown parents, orphans and children of dysfunctional families.

Educational sponsorship and financial support for all Bahraini orphans, secured by the Royal Charitable Foundation. The aspects of caring for the orphans include the following:

- Honouring excellent orphan students in a large ceremony that is held under the patronage of HM the King to encourage them to be successful and to continue achieving excellence in their studies.
- An educational bag with all its contents, i.e. educational materials and school uniform is provided for each orphan who joins a school or university.
- In order to give all the sponsored orphans full educational opportunities and to pursue their studies similar to their peers, HM the King has ordered to allocate 50 scholarships for outstanding students to study at the university Bahrain. The foundation pays the full tuition fees, textbooks and other university expenses.
2-1-2 Challenges for Ensuring Educational and Social Inclusion:

Despite the fact that the Kingdom of Bahrain has achieved the goal to provide free and compulsory primary education before 2015, Bahrain has topped at the level of Arab countries in the Indicator of Education Development for all for two successive years in accordance with two international reports to monitor education for all 2007 and 2008, issued by United National educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), yet there are some challenges for ensuring educational and social inclusion mainly:  

- **Population growth and population density affect the education process.**

  The estimated annual population growth in the Kingdom of Bahrain puts pressure on education now and in the future if we take into account that 36% of Bahrain population for 2001 was of the age group 6 – 19 which is the age group that education institutions have to accommodate in various stages of education.

  The high population density in some areas in Bahrain and the scarcity of allocating plots of land to build state schools in line with the standard specifications defined in school buildings criteria pose problems for the MoE.

  Due to their small size the MoE can not add new classes in old schools to accommodate the increasing numbers of new entrants. This entails an onerous burden of responsibility which can hamper efforts made by the MoE to provide equal education for all. Also the uncertainty of future vision of the people's future movement to the new towns and expectations of new immigrants to Bahrain directly affects the possibility of mapping out the future educational plans and the services the MoE can provide to the ever increasing number of new school entrants.

  The MoE looks at those challenges in a practical way and thinks of adopting the concept of building schools vertically and not horizontally.

- **Education Finance**

  The quantitative expansion and qualitative development of education requires an increase in the education budget to cope with this expansion as the rising cost of manpower in education has affected development programmes that the government seeks to provide for all as the manpower cost takes the largest portion of the MoE budget, which reaches up to 86%. This is naturally reflected on the volume and the quality of development programmes that aim to create a state of the art education that is capable of serving development and

confronting future challenges. The unstable economic conditions and the fluctuation in oil prices placed certain limitations to the financing of education which necessitate finding formulas to involve the private sector to contribute to the funding for the education development projects such as HM King Hamad Schools of the Future Project and the establishment of the Gifted Students' Centre. Nobody can conceal the fact that the private sector has played a key role in funding the construction of the talented center.

- **Achieving education quality for all.**

  The Kingdom of Bahrain has achieved the qualitative indicators that are related to accommodating all children in schools, but another challenge comes to surface, that is the concentration on education quality in all education stages and provision of good quality of education for all. This challenge includes the following:

  - Assertion that the curricula taking into consideration the individual differences, diverse learning approaches and students development qualities for all students. These approaches should stay away from moulding students in a static traditional framework that depends on learning the materials by rote and indoctrination (teacher – centered lessons) through practice and experimentation.

  - Follow-up integration of students who suffer from learning difficulties and sensory and motor limitations by passing regulations that ensure their need for care as a human right and provide them with the specialized staff to develop their skills.

  - Caring for the gifted by providing modern methods to explore them. Creativity is one of the potentialities of the nation's progress. It is noticeable that the search for providing education for all led to neglecting gifted students' needs and the provision of equal education to students in mixed-class abilities. So we should create interesting enriched educational environments in which learning-teaching should go hand-in-hand with exploration and work, promote the ability of creativity, evaluation and takes into account individual differences and the restructuring of education and its curricula to shape the capable human being and enable him to encounter the challenges in our fast-moving dynamic world.

The MoE has given paramount importance to the provision of quality education for all. The ministry has taken some precautions and drawn up a number of plans and programmes, and established various institutions that would help in confronting the challenges and responding to the priorities, previously mentioned. These are some of these steps:
- Preparing curricula that take into account students' individual differences.
- Integration of students with special needs. The MoE carried out a programme on a partial integration of the Down's syndrome children and the slightly mentally-retarded children in basic education state schools as a prelude to their total integration.
- The establishment of the Gifted Students' Centre in 2005. This centre receives all talented students from various educational stages in all scientific, artistic and sports fields and gives them quality services to help them promote their aptitudes.

**Expansion in the early childhood stage**

Achieving high gross and net enrolment ratios in the early childhood programmes by the year 2015, whereby all children aged 3 to 6 can join kindergartens remains a big challenge. Therefore the MoE co-ordinates with the Ministry of Social Development to create partnerships between the various society sectors and the civil and government institutions to serve the underprivileged sections of the community or create alternative projects at home or in the Social Community Centre, besides the provision of acceptable alternatives for children with special needs to enable them to learn in a pleasant environment. The prospective scheme can also encourage kindergartens which have the proper potentials to accommodate children with special needs and help them to integrate into the local community, besides providing all forms of material and technical support to the kindergartens participating in the integration schemes.

**Eradication of illiteracy:**
- Despite the positive strides achieved to eradicate illiteracy, the following challenges still have to be met:
  - Reluctance to join adult education centers.
  - The large number of illiterates and lack of information about sex, nationality, age, previous learning experience, occupation, social status, financial status and punctuality.
  - Variety of teachers' groups and their levels—since a high percentage of these teachers have educational background in teaching youngsters in formal education and lack experience in teaching adults. The MoE has strived to tackle this problem through organizing training programmes for teachers to enlighten them on the adults' teaching requirements.

The MoE has drawn up a policy based on the philosophy taken from the educational concept of continuing education which enables the learner to achieve self-assertion and enrich his life through a string of projects directed to social and educational integration of adults such as the
eradication of alphabet literacy project for parent of formal school students and the Arabic programme for non-Arabic speakers.

**2-1-3 Legal and Regulatory Frameworks Refer to Inclusive Education Issues:**

In the first section of this report the legal framework for education has been mentioned, which includes all matters related to education as a right for all, as mentioned in the constitution and the Education law NO27 of 2005.

The policy of providing inclusive education for all sections of the Bahraini community without any discrimination is enshrined in the constitution which gives great attention to the national social fabric and combats sex discrimination in all fields. Article 4 of the constitution underlines the principle of equality of opportunity in all fields including the social and cultural fields since education is regarded as the bulwark of society. The article states that justice is the basis of governance,

"Co-operation and tolerance promote social cohesion and equality, security, education, social solidarity and equality of opportunity is the bulwark of society and is secured by the government." Article 8 of the constitution outlines the equal rights and duties of citizens including educational rights.

The article states that "people are equal in human dignity and are also equal in rights and duties irrespective of sex, race, language, religion or creed."

Bahrain has joined a number of regional, international and bilateral agreements (on education for all) embracing inclusive education.

The Kingdom has committed itself to abiding by the following agreements:

- Decree NO 16of1991 on Bahrain joining the UN agreement on child rights endorsed by the UN General Assembly in NOV.1989.
- Decree NO8 of 2000 endorsing the amendment of clause 2of article 43of the International Labour organization (ILO) agreement NO182of1999 on banning the worst forms of child labour and the prompt measures to stamp out this phenomenon.
- Decree NO 6 of 1998 on joining Arab agreement NO18 of 1996 on juvenile labour.
- Decree NO 5 of 2002 on eradicating all forms of discrimination against woman.
- Decree NO 8 of 1990 on joining the international agreement for the year 1965 on stamping out all forms of racial segregation and the international agreement for the year 1965 on combating racial segregation crime and punishing violators.

- Decree NO 6 of 2000 endorsing the amendment of article 8 of the international agreement for the year 1965 on the eradication of all forms of racial segregation which Bahrain joined under decree NO 8 of 1990.

- Decree NO 17 of 1999 joining the ITO agreement 159 of 1983 on labour and vocational rehabilitation of the handicapped.

- Endorsing an agreement in June 2007 on the rights of the handicapped at the UN headquarters. This agreement was endorsed at the UN General Assembly 61st session in December 2006.

The Kingdom of Bahrain has also signed several bilateral and technical cooperation agreements.

Bahrain has complied with all international and regional conferences' resolutions which emphasize the importance of securing basic education requirements such as the International Declaration on Inclusive Education (Jomtien, Thailand 1990 and the world labour Framework issued by the world Forum on Inclusive Education (Dakar, Senegal 2000). Bahrain is also committed to achieving UNESCO goals to eradicate poverty, reduce infant mortality rate and population growth and to achieve equality.

The Kingdom has also approved UN General Assembly resolution 54/122 issued in Geneva in 200 and adopted by UNESCO on the eradication of illiteracy within a decade starting from January 2003 to December 2012.
2-2 Public Policies:

2-2-1 Current Dimensions of the Phenomenon of Exclusion From Within Education and Indicators and Data to Inform Inclusive Educational Policies:

The constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain states as already mentioned that the state guarantees the provision of educational services for all citizens. The education law has also stated that education is compulsory in basic education and a right for all citizens. Therefore, we can safely say that exclusion from education is not an educational phenomenon in Bahrain since there are no exclusions in the Kingdom due to disability, poverty, geographical distance, economic and political suffering or sex or racial discrimination. Alternative programmes are arranged for failures and secondary school dropouts who can attend evening classes or study as external students.

The MoE has all indicators and data about students through a data and central statistical system linked with all schools. This system helps to draw up universal education policies. The ministry also co-ordinates with the bodies concerned to obtain data such as the central Informatics Organization, the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Health and the Royal Charitable Foundation.

The unit in charge of following up the implementation of compulsory education is affiliated to the Directorate of General and Technical Education. This unit ensures that students of compulsory school age (6-15) are enrolled in schools, follows up dropouts of the same age group and returns them to their schools in accordance with the decisions on the implementation of compulsory education.

The unit co-ordinates with the Directorate of Data systems and the Central Informatics Organization in searching for children who haven't joined school and dropouts to know the reasons and take legal action against violators. Disciplinary action is also taken against students who do not attend school for ten days in a row or separately during the academic year.

2-2-2 Groups Considered to be the Most Vulnerable to Various Forms of Exclusion From and Within Education:

The exclusion problem has been already mentioned that it is not a real phenomenon in the Kingdom of Bahrain, however there are some groups such as autistic children who may not have proper educational services.
The MoE is striving to enrol this group in government schools and provide it with all the necessary educational services. The rest of establishments in the Kingdom are working closely together to provide the necessary care for this group which also receives government support.

2-2-3 Educational Policies, Objectives and Strategic Plans for Inclusive Education:

The MoE policy on inclusive education is based on:

- The Kingdom's constitution which includes the following principles:
  - Equality of opportunity for all citizens as stated in article 4.
  - Equality between citizens as stated in articles 4 and 18.
  - Guaranteeing the provision of educational services to all citizens as stated in article 7.
- The outlines of the future vision for education development, endorsed by the cabinet in April 2003.
- The MoE strategic plan for the years 2009-2014.
- The international treaties endorsed by the Kingdom of Bahrain on achieving the principle of equal opportunity and parity between all citizens.
- Salamanca conference, Spain, on the principles, policies and techniques employed in teaching students with special needs. This international conference was approved by 88 governments and 25 international organizations. The conference recommended that students with special needs be allowed to join formal schools which should provide special teaching to satisfy the needs of this group (Salamanca, Spain June 1994).
- The MoE, in its capacity as the body concerned with mapping out educational policies, employs all its human and financial resources to achieve the educational goal and the future development plans in this field.

The MoE undertakes responsibility for this revamp as follows:  

- Providing learning opportunities for every citizen to promote his/her skills and competencies and to achieve self-assertion and develop his/her life and society.
- Drawing up plans to upgrade general and technical education within the framework and policy of the Kingdom in this regard. The plans focus on quality assurance and how education can be channeled to serve society and meet the current and future requirements.
- Provision of human and technical potentials and organizational bodies to execute educational plans, supervise, develop and evaluate the educational system.

12 Source: Education law No.27 of the year 2005 (Article 5)
- Setting up schools and educational institutions and supervising the management of these facilities.
- Drawing up study plans in the various stages of education and the spread of knowledge in line with the Kingdom's general policy.
- Encouragement of private education which can contribute to the spread of knowledge in line with the Kingdom's general policy.
- Training teachers to hone their skills and enhance their performance to keep pace with modern changes and upgrade their educational and vocational standards and create a favorable teaching environment.
- Developing students educational, cultural, artistic, sports and scouting activities.
- Developing and updating curricula and methodology in the general and technical education to cope with the variety of the sources of knowledge and change in the labour market and occupations.
- Diversifying educational opportunities according to student varied individual needs, sponsoring gifted and outstanding students and enriching their experience and caring for slow learners and students with special needs to integrate them into education.
- Drawing up the general policy for scholarship and student grants and following up this issue in Bahrain and overseas taking into consideration society needs and the specialities provided by the higher education institutions in Bahrain.
- Caring for students on scholarships and fellowships in Bahrain and overseas and supervising students who study overseas at their own expense.
- Directing the educational process to establish close links between school and family to facilitate the learning process.
- Directing education to adopt effective strategies for the concept of life-long learning.
- Encouraging and supporting the private sector to set up kindergartens and supervising them educationally and administratively.

Services related to inclusive education and provided by the MoE can be classified as follows:\textsuperscript{13}
- Educational services for all normal students aged 6-18 in the general, technical and vocational education. This includes the provision of teachers textbooks, teaching aids and varied programmes in the field of social, psychological, academic and vocational guidance, besides curricular and extra-curricular activities (cultural, artistic and sport).

- Educational services for students with special needs through the provision of special programmers for this group in formal education schools.
- Continuous and comprehensive training (vocational development) for school administrative, teaching and technical staff as well as MoE staff.
- Providing support for private school and kindergartens regarding teaching, training and curricula.
- Provision of all MoE data and educational statistics through a database.
- Provision of continuing education programmes for all citizens through specialized centers in all the Kingdom's governorates.
- Provision of adult education programmes for all citizens who are still illiterate plus the provision of adult education programmes for working adults.

2-2-4 Current Educational Reforms and Initiatives for Inclusive Education:

The MoE is currently introducing a set of measures and conducting working programmes and projects to enhance and reform education. Some of these projects and programmes support the idea of inclusive education in Bahrain.

The MoE is striving to bring about a qualitative leap in the educational process through the introduction of these reforms to keep pace with world developments in the field of inclusive education.

The MoE strategic plan has two main goals with respect to inclusive education. These goals are:

- **Expansion in programmes for students with special needs** to activate the principle of equal opportunities for all and to keep pace with the world initiatives to integrate this group with society. The MoE is making strenuous efforts to provide quality services for these children and open up new horizons that help them to integrate with the local community.

To achieve this goal, the MoE has introduced the following schemes:

- Developing strategies directed to the care of students with special needs (gifted and high-achievers) and the application of the integration experiment to all forms of disability such as poor eyesight, blindness, hearing disability, hearing impairment, physical disability, Down's syndrome, slight mental retardation and learning difficulties.
- Provision of alternative curricula for this group to meet their education needs and enhance their competencies and skills.
- Provision of a special evaluation scheme for this group.
- Provision of specialized and administrative staff to care for this group and help to develop learners' performance.
- Developing the infrastructure of schools which provide assistance to this group.
- Strengthening ties with the civil society establishments which can participate in exploring the potentials of student with special needs (gifted and high-achievers) and providing the necessary care for them.

• **Tackling the question of dropout rate and failures:** School; dropouts who haven't completed their secondary education earn meager salaries and are likely to join the ranks of the unemployed compared to students who finished school according to a survey conducted by the economic Development Board on manpower in Bahrain. Reducing failure rate could increase students chances to continue their studies and find productive jobs. This comes within the framework of the MoE vision to make Bahrainis find highly paid jobs or jobs which offer a reasonable wage. This goal can be partially achieved through the improvement of the quality of education and the provision of the following programmes:
  - Provision of new programmes to support secondary school possible dropouts
  - Provision of new programmes to lure dropouts and return them to schools.
  - Introducing new curricula and programmes which offer choices in case a student runs into difficulties or shows reluctance to pursue academic studies.
  - Organizing remedial lessons in the subjects which have a high failure rate.

To implement these projects and programmes, the MOE has allocated the necessary human and financial resources according to the strategic priorities.

The MoE and the other official bodies have specific strategies to support the family morally and financially. The strategies can be summed up as follows:

  - Family participation in providing quality education for all through the enhancement of inclusive education and development changes in the general policies and legislations.
  - Making partnerships with families and encouraging their participation in running schools through the remarks and suggestions of the Parents' Council.
- Development of partnership with the Royal Charitable Foundation which executed a number of projects in conjunction with the MoE such as the provision of computer for students with special needs including the blinds who are registered with MoE, electric wheelchairs for students with slight or severe physical disability, digital earpieces for students with hearing impairments and reading glasses for students with vision impairments, besides the support of curricula based on Braille teaching method by using computers specially-designed for the blind.

The partnership also aims to enhance varied activities and programmes designed for the orphans through the opening of youth and children summer clubs and the role of students' council to enable them to participate in the planning and evaluation of the programmes especially prepared to meet their needs.

- Prompting well-off parents to support educational projects which can build and develop students' capabilities.

- The objectives the MoE seeks to achieve underline the importance of luring social and voluntary bodies to participate in the educational process in accordance with the MoE plans, programmes and perspectives.

2-2-5 Organization and Management of Inclusive Education:

The MoE undertakes to plan and execute inclusive education programmes. The Directorate of Special Education which was set up in 2006 undertakes to determine disability cases in schools, supervise students with special needs in government schools and students at private institutes overseas, explore mental retardation, speech defect and hearing and vision impairment cases and refer such cases to specialized institutes or centers. The MoE supplies these centers with specialized cadres on a secondment basis according to their needs.

The MoE also works in co-operation with government and private institutions in mapping out strategies and plans and executing programmes related to inclusive education according to well-defined mechanisms. The work is usually done through the following joint committees and institutions:

- The Ministry of Social Development plays a leading role in executing a number of programmes for children with special needs (the handicapped, orphans, children of unknown parents and children of dysfunctional families). The ministry draws up plans and programmes for this group in co-ordination with the bodies concerned. The targeted group includes children between 4 and 6 years age. The ministry provides services through
children's centers set up in the Kingdom to provide free educational services to children of low income and needy families.

- The Supreme Council for Women is concerned with drawing up plans and programmes related to educating and training the Bahraini women and gender parity and disparity.

- The Royal Charitable Foundation which was founded by His Majesty King Hamad in July 2001 sponsors orphans of needy families. The Foundation sponsors more than 4700 male and female orphans over the Kingdom's governorates and pays a fixed monthly salary to each orphan.

- The National Institute for the Disabled-a high national committee- is concerned with drawing up plans and programmes to organize civil and government efforts to care for the different categories of the disabled with the aim of rehabilitating them and avoidance of duplication in the provision of services to this section of people.

- Bahrain Saudi Institute of the Blind is a regional institute based in Bahrain. It provides an integrated educational programme which targets the blind, besides cultural programmes and health, psychological and social programmes for the blind student of school age and students with poor eyesight. The academic teaching in this institute adopts the same techniques used in government schools with regard to curricula for primary and intermediate stages. When a student finishes the intermediate stage he is transferred to the formal secondary schools which provide special care to this group. Braille method is applied in teaching students of this institute.

- The Amal Institute which is affiliated to child and Mother Welfare society was set up to provide specialized educational services in the field of special education. The Institute accepts students with slight retardation and mentally retarded students aged 6-12 in the educational section and students aged 12-15 in the vocational section. Students are classified according to their learning abilities and not study stages. The Institute also provides individual services for the mentally retarded students through designing an individual teaching plan for every student by using special curricula to satisfy students' needs. The curricula contain varied subjects and activities such as arithmetic, language and social and activity skills.

- The Arabian Gulf University also plays a role in qualifying special education (excellence, learning difficulties, slight mental retardation and autism).
2-2-6 Financing Inclusive Education:

The government of Bahrain is the major financier of inclusive education. The educational services financed by the government include building school facilities according to certain specifications which take into consideration the needs of students with special needs, besides maintaining, furnishing and equipping these facilities. The government also supplies teachers and provides transport and free meals to the needy.

Government expenditure on education for all increases annually to match the increase in the number of the Kingdom's state budget. The MoE budget forms 13% of the state budget.
2-3 System, Links and Transition:

2-3-1 The Main Barriers to Inclusive Education:

Despite the efforts made by the government of the Kingdom of Bahrain to provide education for all, the MOE faces a lot of pressure, difficulties and challenges as already mentioned in this report. The major difficulties which face the educational institutions and slow down their efforts to provide inclusive education can be summed up as follows:

- Shortage of specialized human cadres in the field of the provision of care for students with special needs.
- Shortage of financial resources to execute project for inclusive education students with special needs. The equipment and other requirements of this group are also too costly.
- Lack of data and information about the cost of education for students with special needs whether they are in schools or private centers.
- High expectations of the parties concerned (society and parents) to get quick results following the integration of these children into formal schools can have a negative effect on the development process.

To meet these difficulties the MoE has taken a set of measures to iron out difficulties which hinder the application of inclusive education. These measures include:

- Co-operation with higher education institutions in the field of training and qualifying special teachers to cover the shortage in the field.
- Expansion in integrating students with special needs with ordinary students in formal schools.
- Conducting special studies on education costs for this group.
- Strengthening ties between the parents of children with special needs and the local community- and coordinating with them in the execution of programmes and projects.
- Providing decent utilities in schools for children with special needs (handicapped and talented).
- Setting up a specialized centre for gifted students.

2-3-2 The Facilities Provided for Inclusive Education:

The wise leadership of Kingdom of Bahrain and out of its concern to provide education for all has provided the following facilities:
• Creating a favourable school environment to accommodate different categories through the provision of lifts for students with special needs, toilets and a learning resources centre run by a highly competent veteran specialist.

• Providing the blind students with easy-talk computers in addition to a Braille typewriter for each student.

• Establishment of a Gifted Students' Centre with the aim of identifying the talented students, diagnosing and following them up besides investing their aptitudes.

• Replacing traditional educational supervision methods with others derived from methods of remedial supervision and fostering the role of school administration.

• Activating the family role to cooperate with the school administration as communication between the school and the parents' council and local community is of great benefit to all parties.

• Providing special programmes for intermediate school students before their transition to the secondary school and their selection of the most appropriate tracks. The school structure includes various jobs supporting the work of school administration such as administrative, social and academic supervisors. The MoE has different mechanisms to guide intermediate students to join either general secondary education or the technical secondary schools that would lead them to enroll at the polytechnic college.

• A standard of a social supervisor for every 250 students is applied in all educational stages.

• Granting a special allowance for special education teachers.

• Appointing a nurse in most of the Kingdom's schools.

• Providing programmes for evening classes and external students. These two groups have the right to sit the end of term exams as the other students enrolled at regular schools.

• Implementation of a number of educational and developmental projects in the various stages, directed towards the students, administrative staff and educational process in basic and secondary education for normal students and these with special needs, the introduction of HM King Hamad Schools of the Future Project in all stage expansion of the Design and Technology Curriculum in Basic Education and the creation of Community Service "track for secondary school students.

• Stressing the importance of education at early childhood stage. To achieve this goal, the MoE has established a new directorate for kindergartens and issued the resolutions organizing its activities, and upgrading the KG unified curriculum, designed by the MoE, to pave the way for children to be easily integrated into primary school life, and get parents
acquainted with the up-to-date methods on how to communicate with their children in ironing out any behavioral problems facing them. The curriculum also aims at supporting youngsters' centers, affiliated to the Ministry of social Development (MOSD) to offer all forms, of cultural service and programmes free of charge to the children of the needy and low-income families.

- Giving special attention to programmes of illiteracy eradication, adult education and continuing education as this is a national responsibility that aims to raise the standard of the citizens in social, cultural and career fields as stated in the education law. In this regard, the MoE provides all facilities to assist the centers such as providing transport to and fro the educational centers, curtailing the duration of years of study in view of the adults experiences and their practical life skills. The curriculum calls form the inclusion of the ladies studying at these centers at kindergartens and providing the textbooks free of charge for all adults and coordinating with state and private institutions to take the necessary procedures to facilitate the adults' attendance and the opening of morning classes for the ladies who are unable to attend evening classes.

The Ministry of Social Development\(^\text{14}\) has also an outstanding role in providing all the facilities necessary to head off the phenomenon of marginalization and exclusion from education through the improvement of economic and social conditions and providing social aid programmes, the development of family, child and social rehabilitation in the light of the wise leadership's interest in the welfare of the Bahraini family. Amongst the services the MoSD provides in the field of social aid are:

- Providing a monthly financial grant for resident Bahrainis but who have no bread winners. The aim behind this assistance is to meet the needs of no-income, or low-income individuals and families to satisfy the requirements of their living conditions. The needy families of the imprisoned people, the aged, disabled and those who are unable to work are all included in the Ministry of Social Development's financial assistance plan.

- Providing a monthly financial grant to all resident Bahraini handicapped in accordance with the ministerial decision NO.20 of 2005. All those with physical, hearing, vision, mental, multiple, Down's syndrome, cerebral palsy disabilities receive this assistance after their applications were approved by an authorized social worker.

\(^{14}\) Source: Ministry of Social Development: Our Services.
Some of the services provided in the field of social development to develop family and child care are:

- Assisting the sons and daughters of the needy families by exempting them from paying tuition fees for universities and institutes in coordination with the circles concerned.
- Providing recreational and educational services for children and how to use the computer and its various programmes.
- Organizing scientific, cultural and recreational camps.
- Encouraging children to participate in seminars, and local and international exhibitions.

The Ministry of Social Development also provides the facilities required for the caring for children, youngsters and social rehabilitation for those with special needs through the following:

- Child care Home. It provides care for children of unknown parents, orphans and children of broken homes. This home provides them with social, educational, psychological and health care plus meals till their family conditions improve.
- The young care Home accommodates those whose ages are over 18. This home is a social, educational and residential place that completes the role of child care Home. It provides living, social, health, psychological and recreational services tailored to their needs and the age of those boys of unknown parents. It also trains them and gives them the opportunity to carry on their education and find good independent stable life and rely on themselves.
- Al-Aman (Safety) Home. It is a temporary free of charge residential home for the members of families who are subject to aggressive violent attacks, the protection of underage boys and the house maids who are also subject to violence and maltreatment by their sponsors. This home provides refuge to those who were subject to family and society maltreatment and helps them to re-mould their character and secure their sound integration into the community.
- Home for Beggars and Homeless. It is a social institution that provides social, health, psychological, and living services for first time beggars and homeless (elderly and young). This home aims to combat the phenomenon of beggars and the homeless in the Kingdom of Bahrain and the coordination with the authorities concerned to provide them with material and moral assistance and to ensure that beggars will never go back to this uncivilized phenomenon in our streets.
- Bahrain child Protection centre. It is an institution for social care to protect children till the age of 18 from all forms of abuse, maltreatment and negligence with the family and the
society. It provides social, psychological and legal services and coordinates with the circles concerned to protect children and preserve their rights and follow-up the implementation and application of all laws and treaties, issued in this regard.

- The Handicapped Services Centre: This centre provides the disabled with hearing aids, wheelchairs and crutches. It also helps them to obtain special driving licences especially for the ones with physical and learning disabilities.

They also get air tickets at reduced prices with the help of this centre. It also finds suitable jobs for them and follows up their affairs in their workplaces at the Royal Charitable Foundation which also plays a humanitarian, social and economic role that contributes to the integration of the children with special needs and orphans into schools. It also provides social, health and educational assistance that contributes to alleviate the high cost of living for the needy families. It also cooperates with the MoSD in adopting a strategy to combat poverty and improve the standard of living for all the categories of the needy people. It also works in conjunction with the MoE and charitable societies to support and care for these with special needs.

2-3-3 Specific Approaches and Measures Have Been Adopted to Make the Education System More Inclusive:

During the past few years, the Kingdom of Bahrain has accomplished numerous achievements that aim to spread education for all till the end of the twentieth of the last century and even before that, the MoE has focused its efforts to accommodate all children of school age. It also encouraged the Bahrainis and Non-Bahrainis to give more attention to educate their children and lure them to enroll at state schools. It also facilitated the procedures to open private schools for the foreign communities residing and working in the Kingdom to enrol their children to learn there. To make education system inclusive, the Kingdom of Bahrain has adopted a variety of approaches and measures to achieve that goal, some of which are:

- Implementing compulsory education for all students who are compulsory age (6 – 15) in accordance with education law No.27 of 2005 and providing free education for children of school age.

- Removing barriers between pre-school and primary school education and familiarizing youth with educational relations, curricula and methodology to secure the real acquisition of knowledge and skills.
- Expansion of the education umbrella to cover normal students and those with special needs and giving special care for each individual to develop his readiness, abilities and skills to serve himself and his community as well.

- Diversification of education opportunities to meet diverse individual needs and the inclusion of the able-bodied students in the education process.

- Adopting the philosophy of students' inclusion in educational institutions as this has proved to achieve humanitarian and educational objectives that directly and indirectly affect the learner's future life. Some years ago, the MoE shouldered the responsibility of caring for the students with special needs and integrating them in the state-run schools including the poor-sighted, the blind, those with hearing problems, the physically disabled and the slightly mentally-retarded, Down's syndrome and the slow learners plus the gifted and talented students. The MoE realizes that many of the needs of these categories could be accomplished either in separate classes or with other normal regular students.

- Updating general education curricula to deal with the students with special needs and meet their needs. Modifications could be slight, medium or drastic, taking into account those children's educational needs, the nature of their disabilities and the degree of their severity. In the Kingdom of Bahrain, it has become evident that the most effective approach in the use of programmes that take into consideration the principle of individual differences. But as for the curricula of Down's syndrome students, special textbooks were provided to meet their educational needs, competencies and the skills required to integrate this category besides those with slight-mental retardation into schools according to their mental abilities and developmental faculties.

- Normal students and those with special needs should be evaluated in view of a general standards system, but special evaluation methods should be applied to each group separately.

- Provision of specialized teachers, appropriate educational services and a special curriculum for special education students.

- Providing a favourable class environment for learners to serve the educational process.

- Provision of all the necessary facilities by the government and private institutions to combat marginalization and exclusion from education
Specific Approaches and Measures Have Been Adopted to Make the Education System More Flexible and Offer Additional Educational Opportunities:

The educational system in Bahrain ensures a smooth transition from one stage to another and all students regardless of the difficulties they face and the learning disabilities they have can join school when they reach school age. Student can move from one stage to another until they graduate and make their way in life.

The main transition stages are: transfer from home to school, transition from one stage to another and transition to higher education for students who have readiness to pursue their studies except for some cases of students with special needs. However education opportunities are open only for teachable cases such as students with physical disabilities, the blind and the deaf.

The MoE in conjunction with the social Development ministry sponsors mentally-retarded students to qualify them vocationally (parallel teaching) three days a week at the rehabilitation centers and two days in school so as not to deprive them of learning and qualify them vocationally to earn their livelihood.

The question of school dropouts in the Kingdoms is not a serious matter in the primary stage as it is the case in other countries since the dropout rate doesn't exceed 1% in basic education. In fact the rate is less than 0.2%; however the dropouts from formal schools constitute an important section of society and should be lured to rejoin school within the framework of continuing education.

The MoE has not limited its concerns to providing education for students of school age but it also seeks to provide education to adults who had to quit for reasons beyond their control. This comes out of the concept of integration and co-ordination between formal and non-formal education.

School dropout and students who were suspended from school due to repeated failures can join adult education programmes and enrol in parallel classes or the vocational training affiliated to the technical and vocational education.

The continuing education system provides support and encouragement through the intake of the follow - up stage graduates in the intermediate stage (formal education) and the intake of dropouts and suspended students from the third cycle (intermediate) in this stage.
This group will be presented with an equalization intermediate certificate which enables the learner to join secondary school if he/she is under 23 years of age or study as an external student.

Out of this concept the MoE has made non-formal education parallel to formal education. The ministry has also opened channels between the two types of education by introducing flexible rules and regulations which made non-formal education more responsive to learners' needs. These regulations have given accreditation to its curricula and certificates which now equalize the certificates of formal education in all stages. This can boost self-learning among adults and motivate them to pursue their studies.

The education development scheme in the Kingdom of Bahrain underlines the importance of adopting effective strategies for the concept of lifelong education.

Two main goals for continuing education were set as follows:

- Providing life long education opportunities for varied sections of the society to develop and hone their varied skills to keep pace with the rapid changes in the field of knowledge, the technical and scientific development, labour market requirements, people's demands and their training needs, besides the empowerment of woman and achievement of social integration.
- Expansion in training programmes that focus on the basic skills which adults and youth need.

To achieve these goals the MoE has adopted a series of measures and programmes to achieve these two goals in co-operation and co-ordination with the private and government sectors as follows:

- Designing curricula and educational programmes in a way that motivates the learner to study, ferret out facts and acquire the necessary skills to cope with technological programmes. The programmes also emphasize the importance of enlightening adults on the cultures of other nations.
- Designing continuing education programmes in accordance with the principle of qualifying graduates to join the labour market and be peers for expatriates seeKing jobs in the local market. The designed programmes also emphasize the importance of performance and efficiency.
- Facilitating technological methods for the benefit of adult education learners with emphasis on self-learning.
• Employment of continuing education channels after secondary education to help the learner specialize in a certain field to promote society.

• Executing the Arabic programme for non-Arabic speakers to provide an educational service which meets the learner's needs. Some expatriates wish to learn Arabic to integrate with the local community. This is one of the positive steps the Kingdom has taken on the road to eradicate illiteracy (Directorate of continuing Education)
2-4 Learners and Teachers:

2-4-1 New Approaches Implemented in Teaching and Learning:

The choice of educational strategies is based on the goals we seek to achieve and the number of students, their faculties, needs and motives. The teacher should focus on enhancing the learners' faculties to enable them to meet future challenges, behave soundly, adopt the right decisions, solve problems and think creatively.

The following are some of the new strategies used by teachers in Bahrain to provide education for all, improve education outcomes and minimize disparity:

• **Strategies for teaching thinking skills:**
  These strategies have an environmental and instructional framework that helps to create active interaction between mental faculties and environmental and instructional changes. These strategies include the following:

  - **Creative thinking:** This is a method used by the learner to produce a host of ideas on the problem he faces (thinking fluency). These ideas are of ten varied and diverse (flexible) and are not repetitive or stale (original).

  - **Problem solving techniques:** This is a teaching situation which seeks to achieve goals fraught with difficulty and necessitates the exploration of appropriate methods to overcome obstacles in order to achieve this goal.

  - **Critical thinking:** This is a mental activity based on the use of deductive logic rules, besides evidence to reach results very carefully.

  - **Brainstorming:** This method is used to solve problems through gathering ideas and solutions in a short limited time. It is one of the most prominent techniques used in developing creative thinking. In this method learners are asked to generate an idea, an answer or information about a certain cause without any hesitation or limitations. This method is based on the quantity of generated ideas, which will ultimately lead to quality away from passing a judgment on ideas.

All the said strategies can be used in all classes and for all groups (outstanding, talented and average students).

• **Co-operative learning strategy:** This strategy is based on enhancing and encouraging co-operation and interaction between students and reduces intense competition between them. This strategy can also help to integrate slow learners into ordinary classes and encourage them to give their own opinions and put forward suggestion. It also achieves some
educational goals such as collective work, strengthens social bonds between students, and encourages slow learners to benefit from their outstanding colleagues.

- **Group teaching strategy:** This involves a group of students teaching each other. The mate can be a teacher or a student of the same age or older than his group mates. The strategy also helps to strengthen the ties of friendship and personal relations between students.

- **Field visits:** This involves accompanying students on a visit outside school to help them gain practical experience.

- **Self – learning:** This is an important strategy which should be highlighted when planning for a teaching situation. This is a procedure which makes the learner attempt to gain the appropriate amount of knowledge, concepts, data and values through practice according the steps shown in the programmes he/she possesses. This strategy highlights individual differences among learners since each student learns according to his/her level and capabilities. Example of self-learning are programmed education, teaching bag, simulation and special teaching for a small group.

- **"CORT" programme:** This programme focuses on promoting higher thinking skills and involves constructive, critical and creative thinking. It consists of six parts and each part has ten exercises which focus on skills such as expanding thinking horizons, organizing thinking. Promoting critical and creative thinking, promoting information and emotions. According to this programmes. The learner does his wonk step by step in a practical manner. "CORT" programme can be applied in all stages and in all school subjects. It can be taught separately as a means of promoting thinking ability or through a teaching matter in all stages of education.

- **Remedial programme:** This programme tackles difficulties and teaching problems in Arabic and Maths from first primary grade to sixth primary grade. The programme is executed by specialized teachers during certain hours of the school day. Work shall continue until a student masters the required competencies. The class teacher and special education teacher continue to follow up student's work and help him in his normal class.

2-4-2  **Curriculum Designing and Organization:**
Designing inclusive education curricula still represents one of the biggest challenges as this is a new experience. However, the Directorate of Curricula is giving great attention to the idea of changing Curriculum into a personalized framework. This means that the curriculum document will become an open project or a framework which enables the teacher to teach in a dynamic way, provide varied practice opportunities and make accomplishments at the level of content,
techniques and participation. The scheme rests on the teacher's discretion in dealing with the document according to the individual differences among learners with regard to his her learning style, the boundaries of his / her knowledge and his / her aptitudes focusing on "Core" competencies.

As for harnessing curricula, the Directorate of Curricula has almost finished the cross – curriculum document through which "Core" competencies each subject can be determined. These competencies include knowledge, skills and values taught to all learners to cope with individual differences in the inclusive classes.

The Directorate of Curricula introduced a methodical framework for Down's syndrome students in 2005. This is an improved version of the curriculum which outline the general aims and the teaching competencies this group needs.

Preparedness competencies were set according to three graded levels which aim to promote audio visual perception Motor–Vision co–ordination and linguistic ability. The pre–arithmetic competency and a set of competencies related to the emotional and physical aspects were introduced to satisfy student's recreation needs.

The curriculum also includes life skills which focus on making students work independently when they carry out their daily social and personal work. The competencies are determined in three graded levels with emphasis on the amendment of learner's behavior by using patterns, matrices, sequencing and indoctrination (teacher – centered lessons) as a form of recreation competencies related to school subject focus on variety and include instructional, sentimental and psychological teaching matter to develop the learner's character and make positive changes in his/her behavior and life style according to six graded horizontal and vertical levels. This gives the learner a chance to train on each competency and master it according to these levels.

In view of leaning competencies the content was chosen to enable the learner to practice various activities to adapt himself to various situations, express his feelings, satisfy his needs and explore and promote his own potentials. This content was designed according to six horizontal and vertical graded levels to ensure the learner moves from one level to another after mastering the competencies defined in every level.

The content also aims to teach this group of children in line with the education perspective based on specialized research in this field and to help students gain the targeted competencies.
The committees charged with designing and upgrading this curriculum work in the light of teachers' field experience and the remarks made by the committee members during their visits to the inclusive classes.

There is also an amended version of the curriculum which was adapted to gifted students' faculties with regard to complicated subject matter and challenging work. The version also provides varied information tailored to the needs and skills of this group.

The Directorate of Curricula has purposely included citizenship values, human rights concepts, equality, tolerance, acceptance of different views and respect of cultural variety in the civics, Arabic, Islamic education and social studies syllabuses.

The Directorate has also been keen to analyze, check and develop curricula and school textbooks with the aim of eliminating the stereotypical image of woman and gender backgrounds and concepts.

The Directorate was also keen to include positive concepts in the curricula to support efforts made to empower woman.

The MoE adopts a policy that aims to accommodate dropouts and failures through a self-learning scheme or giving such group a chance to study as external students. The scheme also allows this group to join school again and provides them with the syllabuses at the start of semesters, teaching material and remedial programmers. The MoE also accredits their results and sets special tests for this group and facilitates their return to regular school life wherever possible.

The committee in charge of reviewing and developing continuing education curricula has developed a general framework for continuing education curricula (2008) based on the principle of achieving competencies.

A Common horizontal competencies network was introduced with the standards of performance for each competency. The framework links learning to the culture of modern age, focuses on development needs and the mastery of communication and information, learning and self-learning.

2-4-3 Curricula Time:
Great importance is given to reading considered to be mother of competencies and key to learning. It is a daily activity practiced in all subjects.
About 120 lessons are allotted to reading activities in Arabic yearly, a total of 360 lessons in the first three years of the primary stage. Students have four reading lessons a week out nine lessons allocated for teaching Arabic competencies. All linguistic forms which a student studies help to train him/her in upgrading his/her reading skills.
Extra lessons are also allotted to some groups with reading difficulties such as students coming from other non-Arabic speaking countries. Programmes are prepared for these students to enable them to gain and master reading skills.

2-4-4 Instructional Language:
Arabic is the language used in teaching and Arab children do not have difficulty in learning it. But children of non-Arab origin (Arabic is not their mother tongue) find difficulty in learning Arabic. The following measures are taken to deal with this group:
- Consolidating support activities such as dictation and composition writing.
- Provision of special programmes (remedial lessons) to follow up the work of this group.
- Directing parents to speak Arabic at home in the presence of their children.
- Distributing non-Arabic speaking students in different classes rather than cramming them into special classes to encourage them to speak Arabic.

Students are given training in reading during the English lesson where English is to be taught from first primary grade. This scheme will be introduced at the start of the academic year 2009/2010.

In view of implementing this programme, the MoE has designed curricula which aim to make students gain linguistic competencies in listening speaking, reading and writing.

2-4-5 Teachers Education and Training:
Regarding the future education strategy, the MoE has given great important to the training field, as mentioned in the first part of this report, especially after the introduction of inclusive education concept in government educational institutions. The Directorate of Training and Professional Development has organized several specialized training courses - before the inclusion of Down's syndrome students in state schools-on the basic information concerning the inclusion of those with special needs(Down's Syndrome). The course was held in collaboration with Bahrain Society for Down's Syndrome, a number of school principals, a number of male and female senior teachers, curricula specialists, education supervision specialists with the aim of getting the (60) trainees acquainted with the methods on how to deal
with this group of Down's Syndrome. The same course was conducted in the presence of 35 parents of Down's syndrome students.

Other training programmes were organized on how to teach the skills of maths for teachers of special education (learning difficulties category) with the aim of providing those teachers with the basic competencies, closely related to the textbooks, the self-learning skills and the activation of science research role in the field of special education. The number of those who attended the course stood at 90 in the academic years 2006/2007-2007/2008.

A training programme on the strategies of teaching the skills of Arabic language was held for the group with learning difficulties with the aim of providing the teachers with reading skills and their applications in the field of learning difficulties in addition to the speaking and writing skills and to be familiarized with the remedial methods to solve the difficulties facing students in reading and writing. The number of (male-female) teachers who attended this course amounted to 47.

2-4-6 Formal and Non-Formal Learning Environment:
The MoE realizes that education environment positively affects the student's personality as well as the teacher's. The school building and its design are influential factors for both the student and the teacher. When constructing the new academic buildings, the MoE has put into consideration all the changes that are of close relationship with the education process for all stages and groups such as interior design which includes décor, artistic wall charts in addition to playing grounds and school yards that serve all supportive activities to achieve remedial education. It also provides all educational facilities in the school building to facilitate the easy movement of the disabled student from one utility to another and the necessary computer networks that are employed to serve the educational process and help the school to be open to local community.

The MoE has also built spacious classrooms equipped with suitable furniture and teaching aids, and reference books. Schools were also provided with corners for drawing, fine arts, music, First Aid, cutting and sticking clippings and others to enable the student to practise all activities. It is really an integrated classroom equipped with the necessary equipment that help students (normal, disabled and talented) to do mental games that assist them to promote their higher thinking skills.
The MoE has directed schools towards having a healthy environment that motivates students to receive the teaching-learning process. This can be achieved through:

- Providing the basic requirements to schools such as: equipment, materials and furniture to facilitate the processes of teaching and learning.

- Arranging furniture in a way that enables disabled students to see the whiteboard, the O.H.P. screen and to listen to the teacher's explanation clearly.

- Providing shelves for books and reference books, together with their textbooks, would enable students to do their assignments and enrich their knowledge.

- Providing students with team-work and self-learning corners to do certain projects or study a certain topic. The self-learning corner usually contains tape recorders and headphones, specific study topics or drills on certain skills to do a particular task.

- Providing students with stationery and crayons magic markers to corners for enrichment and recreational activities students might use when the need arises.

- Providing educational utilities with arrows, reference books and various information sources.

- Following a certain system to enable teachers and students to frequent the school's utilities individually or in groups.

- Beautifying school in a way that makes school atmosphere favourable to motivate students for the teaching-learning process.

- Creating projects to have a healthy educational environment in the school yards and corridors.

- Creating an environment that strengthens students' sense of belonging to their homeland, Bahrain.

2-4-7 Evaluation and Examination Methods in the Inclusive Education Framework:

The MoE has specified the aspects of a clear vision to promote education quality and drawn up its qualitative and quantitative educational plans to carry on the provision of quality education, to foster the techniques of formative evaluation as it is an integral part of the educational process within and outside the classroom, through directing in-class and extra-curricular teacher practices especially on how to use the tools of evaluation, observation and various forms of tests (verbal, written, practical, individual and team projects whether objective or subjective, reports and student achievement portfolio under the supervision of the Measurement and Evaluation Centre at the MoE, the transformation of the evaluation policy to
evaluate systems for each educational stage and the proportion of the interpretative evidences for these systems and following up their implementation.

In basic education (primary stage), the formative assessment system is applied with the aim of helping the learner to master certain competencies in various school subjects through a continuous educational diagnostic and reform process, the result of which will be to help the learner to assimilate all the contents of the competencies required. In his assessment, the teacher depends on varied methods and tools such as organized observation, daily drills, planned activities, individual and team projects and diagnostic and accumulative tests.

In the third cycle of basic education (Intermediate stage) students are evaluated through organized observation, daily drills, revision exercises, planned activities, individual and team projects, mid-term exams and end of term exams. The pass rate required is 50% out of the total mark of each subject. Students have the right to have a re-sit exam in case they fail in any subject according to certain conditions and regulations specified by Evaluation and Exams System in this regard. Students who fail have the right to repeat the same grade. They will be given remedial lessons to help them pass. The failures at this cycle will be allowed to sit the exam as external students and if they pass, they will be awarded the general Intermediate Education Certificate.

Secondary education evaluation system depends on in-class continuous diagnostic accumulative evaluation system that gives the student 30% out of the total mark of each subject. The teacher's in-class evaluation, on the school level, allots 20% to the student out of the total mark of each subject. Schooling at the secondary education ends with the student's acquisition of General Certificate of Education (G.C.E) in the track he joined after passing the exams set on the level of the Kingdom.

Concerning exams methods in inclusive education framework, such exams are set in various forms; verbal, written and practical for all students, but they take into consideration the students will special needs (physical and mental disabilities). The exams are prepared for this group according to the kind of disability they have.

- **Vision Impairment**: The exams for this group of students depend on the touching and hearing and other sensory abilities, the use of special paper with enlarged typing or preparing them following Braille raising dots system.
- **Hearing Impairment**: Students of this group sit the same written exams as their normal peers, but when their exams are verbal, they are transferred to be written.
• Mental Impairment: Students of this group are evaluated in a way that copes with their special abilities (written, verbal, practical).
• Motor Impairment: Students of this group sit the same exam with their normal peers if that was possible. But in case the student is unable to write, he is evaluated by answering the questions orally or one of the teachers is authorized to write the answers on his/her behalf or by recording the student's voice. Such students are exempted from handwriting exams. But if it was a dictation test, questions will be put in writing and they have to answer them orally.

To facilitate the procedures related to exams, and to cope with the needs of this group, school administrations are directed to form special halls for these students, give them extra time and provide them with the necessary care.

In coordination with the Bahrain-Saudi Institute for the Blind, exam papers are typed and answer sheet papers for the blind students are marked by using Braille method.

2-4-8 Parents-Community Participation in the Inclusive Education

There is a consensus on the significance of involving parents and the community in the inclusive education. So the MoE has established the Parents Council in each school at the three stages (Primary, Intermediate and Secondary) with the aim of enhancing family-school interaction, so that parents would support the role of school during the periodical Open Day discussions between the teachers and parents to discuss the level of their sons/daughters attainment and to brief parents on educational programmes schools introduce to raise the standard of all students and to involve them in their implementation. On the other side, the MoE aims to consolidate the role of community institutions in the light of the concept of (Community partnership) to spread this concept among our students and get them acquainted with the role of these institutions in the progress and development of their society. Here are some examples:
• Contacting parents and holding private meetings with them to know some information about the real situation of their sons/daughters' health, where they receive medical treatment and them follow up their cases with the circles concerned with the aim of finding satisfactory solutions.
• Seeking the help of community institutions to provide students with financial and material support such as medical glasses, earpieces, wheelchairs and their treatment by consultant doctors.
• Providing the following facilities:
  - Constructing ramps to facilitate the movement of wheelchairs, crutches and walkers.
  - Providing classrooms on the ground floor for the students with special needs.
  - An easy access of parents of the disabled to drop or take their children home.
  - Establishing a computer lab on the ground floor to enable the disabled to reach that place easily.
  - Tackling many cases through the follow-up of their daily meals by the teacher of family education for the patients who suffer from malnutrition and who have rickets.

The Parents' Council in the inclusive education also fulfils the following tasks:
• Creating a favourable environment for the development of students with various abilities and skills.
• Upgrading the students skills and knowledge and behaviour that can be reached only through the parents-teachers cooperation and through the proposals and recommendations put forward by the Parents Council.
• Smoothing over the difficulties facing the students within and outside the school because they are always in dire need of the assistance of others throughout their various age stages and their feeling for protection and safety.
• Combining school-parents efforts to boost students' national identity and inculcate in young people a good sense of belonging to their homeland and the duty of allegiance to their leadership.
• Broadening of participation base in all the activities schools hold on various occasions.
• Acquainting the Parents Council with the new developments of the educational march and educating the council members on the importance of their effective participation in giving their opinions freely to serve the education process.
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