



Oman

Yahya Bin Saud Al-Sulaimi
Minister of Education



Born in 1954, Mr. Yahya Bin Saud Al-Sulaimi was appointed as Minister of Education in Oman in 2001. He is a member of several important councils and committees including: the Ministers' Council, the Civil Service Council, the Council for Higher Education, the Research Council and the Research Committee for Protecting and Preserving the Omani Traditional Arts and their ownership.

Mr. Al-Sulaimi is the chairman of the Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science and he also chairs several high level committees including the Main Committee for Educational Policy and Development, and the Committees for Implementing the Electronic Educational Gateway Project and following up its progress.

Mr. Yahya Al-Sulaimi has participated and chaired various regional and international conferences and seminars. He has played a significant role in directing educational reforms in Oman. His areas of interest include reading, educational technology, and modern arts.

Inclusive education

Since the ascension of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said to the throne in 1970, the Omani education system has undergone a remarkable transformation and has played a key role in the country's development. During the early years of the modern Omani renaissance, the development plans focused on spreading education throughout the country and ensuring access to education for all. During this important period of quantitative expansion the emphasis was on increasing enrolment rates. The period was characterised by a massive expansion in school buildings and teacher qualification programmes. The Ministry of Education was aware of the importance of providing for students with special needs and special schools were established to provide educational and vocational training to students with disabilities.

With the onset of globalization and the knowledge-based economy, Oman recognised that it was important, not only to improve access to education, but to improve the quality of education. Starting in the mid-1990s, the Ministry of Education embarked on an ambitious and comprehensive educational reform programme. The cornerstone of this programme involved a significant shift from a teacher-centred to a learner-centred pedagogy. This was accompanied by an updated and more relevant curriculum and a revised assessment system which included continuous and formative assessment.

These bold reforms paved the way for the expansion of inclusive education. New school buildings were designed to accommodate students with disabilities, policies to mainstream students with disabilities in regular classrooms were adopted, the needs of all students were recognised through the student-centred and formative assessment approaches, and the needs of students with disabilities and learning difficulties were specifically addressed through specialised teachers within the regular school setting. Today, inclusive education has become an integral part of the Oman education system. The provision of specialised education services to students with disabilities is now allocated to regular school settings. The Ministry has also focussed on developing professional development programmes in the field of special education.