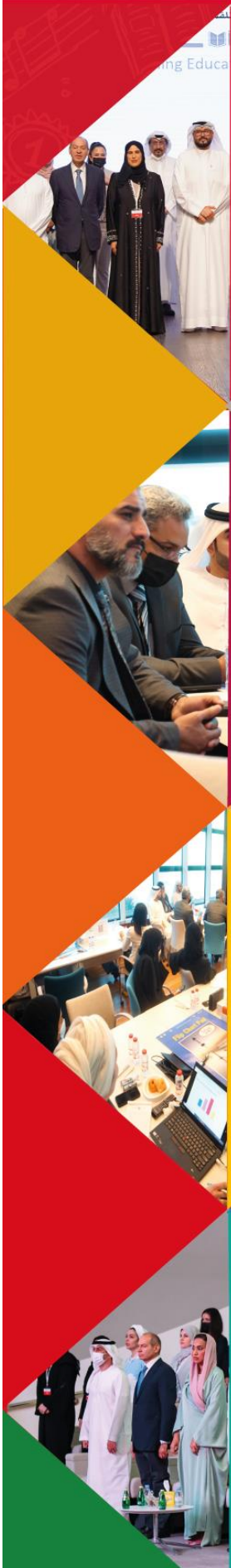




UNITED NATIONS
TRANSFORMING
EDUCATION
SUMMIT 2022



UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION



التقرير الوطني
لدولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة
حول المشاورات الوطنية



National Consultations Report
for the United Arab Emirates

4 QUALITY
EDUCATION



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1. TES NATIONAL CONSULTATION PROCESS

National Convener: Ministry of Education (MOE) of the United Arab Emirates (UAE)

Number of consultations (if more than one consultation takes place): 2

Basic information on all the consultation(s) convened Date(s)

Date(s)	Stage 1: June 24, 2022 Stage 2: August 3, 2022
Title(s)	Stage 1 of the UAE National Consultations to Prepare the National Commitment for the Transforming Education Summit (Online) Stage 2 of the UAE National Consultations to Prepare the National Commitment for the Transforming Education Summit (Face-to-face)
Types (e.g. National/Subnational)	National
Geographical Focus	Participants from across all Emirates of the UAE
Number of Participants for each consultation	Total: 184 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 1: 92 participants • Stage 2: 92 participants
Language used	Arabic and English

Participation

Age range of participants			
	Stage 1	Stage 2	Total
0-17	1	0	1
18-29	4	14	18
30-59	70	74	144
60+	3	4	7
No response	14	0	14

*Note: The above participation numbers are taken from the two stages of the national consultations. However, as part of the national consultations, we also refer to findings from previously conducted consultations with selected samples of youth held between 2020 and 2022. Details of these consultations are included in the section entitled “Focusing on youth as ‘agents of change’.”



Gender of participants			
	Stage 1	Stage 2	Total
Male	27	36	63
Female	51	56	107
Prefer not to say	0	0	0
No response	14	0	14

Number of participants from each sector			
	Stage 1	Stage 2	Total
Education	60	70	130
Child protection	2	1	3
Health	4	0	4
Labor	0	1	1
Environment	0	0	0
Finance	0	3	3
Nutrition	0	0	0
Communication	0	2	2
Information Technology	0	1	1
Social Protection	2	5	7
Water, sanitation, and hygiene	0	0	0
Other*	10	9	19

*Other categories include:

- Early Childhood Development
- Education, Science, and Culture
- Government (x2)
- Government -statistics
- Policy and innovation
- UAE Foreign Affairs – Foreign Aid
- Government nurseries
- Community development
- Military
- Youth affairs

Number of participants from each stakeholder group			
	Stage 1	Stage 2	Total
Teachers, educators, facilitators, and professors	28*	12	40
Youth and students (including children and adolescents)	1	7	8
School leaders (e.g., from UNESCO ASPnet school network)	8**	4	4
City and local government representatives	10	14	24
Parents and caregivers	0	1	1
Small/medium enterprises/unions	0	1	1
Large national businesses	0	0	0
Members of Parliament	0	0	0
Multi-national corporations	1	0	1
Local authorities	3	0	3
Government and national institutions	17***	32	49
Public Servants	2	5	7

Regional economic community	0	0	0
Local Non-Governmental Organizations	0	3	3
International and/or Regional financial institutions	0	1	1
International Non-Governmental Organizations	1	2	3
Indigenous people and community leaders	0	0	0
Scientific community, academic, universities and research institutes	0	3	3
Media	1	3	4
Other	4	2	6

*One nursery teacher selected “other” option, so was added to the “Teachers, educators, facilitators, and professors” category

**One school leader selected “other” option, so was added to the “School leaders” category.

***One MOE worker selected “other” option, so was added to the “Government and national institutions”

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

A whole-of-government approach

The UAE National Consultations Team invited participants from various ministries including the **federal and local authorities in education, health, social development, human empowerment, and finance**. The national consultation rounds also included members of **teacher associations, universities, youth councils, civil society organizations, community development organizations, and foundations**. Representatives from these organizations actively participated in the discussions and responses throughout all stages of the UAE National Consultations.

The National Consultations Team also made use of national reports and information including the UAE Vision 2021, the UAE Centennial 2071, MOE’s Strategic Plan for 2023-2026, the UAE’s National Strategy for Higher Education 2030, the UAE data on the achievement of the SDGs, the UAE’s Responses to Educational Disruption Survey (REDS) Global Study led by the International Association for Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) and UNESCO, and more. The Consultations Report further included inputs from Dubai Cares and Mohamed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global Initiatives, two key players in the education sector in the UAE and beyond.

Inclusion and equality

The UAE National Consultations ensured adherence to the principals of inclusion and equality in various ways:

1. Consultations included representatives from **different geographical regions** in the UAE.
2. Consultations included representatives from **diverse nationalities, ethnicities, genders, and ages** in the UAE.
3. Consultations were delivered through **interactive methods that actively engaged all participants**, including in the first stage which was delivered online. Consultations employed tools like Mentimeter, group discussions and prioritization exercises, and presentations from participants to ensure the inclusion of opinions from various stakeholder groups.
4. Stage 1 consultations made use of live translation to ensure the **inclusion of both Arabic and English speakers** in the discussions. Stage 2 consultations were delivered in Arabic,

given the majority of representatives were native Arabic speakers, but English translation was offered to those in need of translation.

5. **Use of information/data** from different sources.

Focusing on youth as ‘agents of change’

Representatives ages 18 to 29 participated in Stages 1 and 2 of the UAE National Consultations held in June and August, 2022. Additionally, in 2020, the UAE led the **50x50 Initiative which engaged 50,000 school students** from across the country to contribute to the country’s strategic plan for the next 50 years. Among the key areas of focus was the key directions and future transformations in the education sector, from the perspective of students. The National Consultations team **utilized findings and recommendations from these discussions as part of the national report**. Additionally, in 2022, the Ministry of Culture and Youth (MCY) organized a **series of 50 discussion sessions** led by youth. Similar to the 50x50 Initiative, these discussions examined key domains that affect the overall well-being of youth in the UAE, one of which was education. By including findings and outcomes from these initiatives, the UAE assured the voices of youth in the national consultations were heard as “agents of change” for the future of the UAE.

3. CONSULTATION FOCUS AREAS

1. Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools

The UAE National Consultations examined the following areas of focus in relation to Action Track 1 on *Inclusive, Equitable, Safe and Healthy Schools*:

- **Prioritizing safe and inclusive learning environments:** Ensuring that schools, even in times of distance learning, are safe spaces free from violence, discrimination, and bullying. In doing so, the government would continue to raise awareness to enable the detection and resolution of bullying, including cyber-bullying.
- **Promoting organizational flexibility within educational institutions:** Reforming classroom environment in such a way that teachers have the ability and flexibility to deliver lessons that rely on collaboration and practice-based learning. This has also included adopting flexible school hours and flexible study plans.
- **Assuring the positive health and well-being of teachers and students:** Adopting programs and initiatives that promote the health and well-being, including socio-emotional well-being, of students and teachers, especially in light of post-Covid disruptions.
- **Aligning early childhood education (ECD) strategies with overall education goals:** It has been at the top of the agenda in UAE not only to expand ECD programs and services but also to ensure alignment and harmonization of ECD policies to overall education strategy and goals. Although ECD strategies and programs have been expanded recently through the Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority and the Federal Authority for Early Childhood Education, there is a need to continue to align ECD departments and strategies with all government and private education goals.
- **Assuring equity in access to resources and infrastructure:** Providing equitable access to learning and instruction tools, especially internet connection and computer devices, to all

students and staff across diverse socioeconomic statuses, genders, nationalities, ages, and disability statuses.

2. Learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development

The UAE National Consultations examined the following areas of focus in relation to Action Track 2 on *Learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development*:

- **Enhancing opportunities for work in formal education:** As part of the UAE's higher education mandates (and possibly secondary education), the MOE with its partners is expanding and forging new opportunities for on-the-job training and work experience in fields relevant to the changing demands of labor market and expand already existing opportunities for technical and vocational education and training (TVET).
- **Promoting experiential and lifelong learning beyond formal education:** Assuring the continued promotion of cognitive and non-cognitive advanced skills for all. This can be done through the provision of technical and vocational education and training (TVET), work-based learning, and career counseling within schools, and other practices in multiple pathways of education beyond formal education.
- **Transforming curricula to adapt to changing conditions and work realities and enabling children and youth to fulfil their human potential:** Redesign curricula to focus on preparing children and youth for the future through viewing learning as the fundamental way in which children and youth acquire the four essential pillars that will allow them to become adults capable of living a life of dignity brought about by the empowerment that comes from the ability to make choices about their paths in life; values, skills, knowledge and experiences. This approach includes an emphasis on climate change, technology, innovative design, health sciences, career guidance, entrepreneurship, business management, and critical thinking skills.
- **Facilitating an expansion of spaces where learning takes place through alternative learning models that allow multiple entry points for learning:** Use and build on existing evidence and examples of good practices in alternative and accelerated education, and certification and accreditation, in order to support children and youth's entry into formal learning, training, or employment through a mapping of the availability of skills against current and projected future needs so that there is a foundation for new accreditation and certification routes that can serve as a lifeline for youth to have multiple pathways for earning livelihoods.

3. Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession

The UAE National Consultations examined the following areas of focus in relation to Action Track 3 on *Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession*:

- **Preserving teacher autonomy in teaching methods:** Embedding a strong focus on upgrading and upholding teacher's ability to design and use instructional resources that are adapted to the learning needs of each student and enabling them to use Artificial Intelligence to analyze data on student learning outcomes and utilize these outcomes to

make informed decisions about new instructional and teaching practices based on their students' needs.

- **Promoting teacher collaboration and exchange of best practices:** Encouraging and fostering the use of education professional learning communities (PLCs), including online learning communities, that allow educators to learn from each other. In doing so, involve subject specialists, special education teachers, librarians, guidance counselors, social workers, technology experts, and community organizations.
- **Advancing and diversifying teacher professional development opportunities:** Mobilizing partnerships in education, including those between higher education institutions and schools, to provide responsive and effective professional development opportunities that educate and retrain teachers on future transformations.
- **Improving the quality of teachers and the teaching profession in the UAE:** Ensuring that all teachers working in educational institutions in the UAE are licensed and supporting them through the provision of high quality pre-service and in-service professional development programs.

4. Digital learning and transformation

The UAE National Consultations examined the following areas of focus in relation to Action Track 4 on *Digital learning and transformation*:

- **Building an ecosystem of digital level at all education levels:** Developing and integrating policies, processes, and platforms to enable digital learning across all levels of education through government and private sector partnerships.
- **Building capacity of teachers and students in digital learning:** Supporting teachers and students to gain the necessary digital skills to utilize digital learning tools and platforms successfully while also promoting a common understanding of the ethical use of digital tools and technologies in teaching and learning.
- **Enhancing Artificial Intelligence curriculum:** Collaborating with AI experts to conduct assessments that review, re-evaluate, and update the AI curriculum and its content regularly to meet the faced-paced advancements in AI and its related ethics.

5. Financing of education

The UAE National Consultations examined the following areas of focus in relation to Action Track 5 on *Financing of education*:

- **Strengthening capacities in the field of education financing:** Building national capacities around how to review and measure education financing to ensure accountability and optimal resource allocation of government resources within the education sector to maximize return on investment.
- **Promoting the sustained financing of education:** Encouraging the continued and sustained funding of the education sector in line with the educational transformations. Beyond public funding, encourage public-private partnerships that fund educational priorities like research and development and doctoral programs.
- **Designing governing structures and frameworks for private sector investment:** Ensuring that the opportunities for private sector investment in the education sector are

governed by comprehensive frameworks covering needs, methods of engagement, monitoring and regulation, and key anticipated outcomes.

- **Encouraging individual social responsibility towards education:** Building a culture of individual contribution towards education that models after traditional modes of charity used in the UAE for the provision of aid outside the UAE.
- **Adopting a whole-of-society approach for investing in education to support mutually beneficial outcomes:** Moving away from passive stakeholder engagement among education actors and towards a true spirit of partnership to align thinking, acting and doing in the same direction and in the pursuit of mutually beneficial outcomes for the country as a whole for which education is both the fundamental vehicle and goal in order to enable a solid link between education investments, outcomes, and broader growth goals and aspirations of the country.

4. CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

1. Recovery from Covid-19 disruption

COVID-19 has had both positive and negative impacts on learning, teaching, student and teacher engagement, nutrition and health, and the well-being of learners and teachers.

In terms of learning, the national consultations indicated that the UAE's adoption of distance learning during the pandemic was swift and has accelerated the process of digital transformation in the education sector. Students experienced substantial gains in their digital literacy as they navigated online learning platforms and tools. Students also developed cognitive skills in research and critical thinking. The pandemic also accelerated students' independent learning skills (mostly non-cognitive) like time management and responsibility, since teachers were no longer physically available for guidance. On the reverse, educators of early grade students indicated that the pandemic led to a decline in reading and writing skills given the inability of teachers to deliver these skills face-to-face.

Teaching and the teaching profession experienced drastic changes as a result of the pandemic. Teachers were trained extensively on online teaching methods, which in turn, improved their digital literacy. Some stakeholders also reported that the pandemic demonstrated teachers' ability to be creative and innovative in how they deliver their lessons and the ability of the entire teaching and learning process to be delivered virtually, hence offering more flexibility to both teachers and students. On the downside, the national consultations revealed the need for improved job security for teachers who were tasked with adapting very quickly to unexpected changes in their profession due to the pandemic. They also noted difficulties teachers face in engaging students in virtual learning environments.

In terms of engagement, national consultations indicated mixed results from diverse groups of stakeholders. On the one hand, online learning diminished face-to-face social interaction among students and teachers, but it enhanced the use of online platforms and chats to promote peer-to-peer collaboration. The lack of physical contact and increased stresses caused by the pandemic contributed to some reductions in the socio-emotional well-being of students and teachers. For teachers, this came with the added stress of having to re-learn teaching methods for digital environments.

The pandemic similarly affected the nutrition and physical health of students and teachers. On the one hand, stakeholders in the national consultations reported that since students were learning from home, exposure to seasonal illnesses declined for a period of time. However, at the same time, stakeholders indicated that distance learning may have increased vitamin D deficiency and physical inactivity among teachers, parents, and students.

To ensure recovery from the pandemic, the UAE adopted a number of key measures that have proven to be successful. Among the main ones discussed by stakeholders during the national consultations are:

- [Mohamed bin Rashid Smart Learning Program](#) – Led by the MOE before the pandemic, this initiative contributed to easing the transition from in-person to online learning.
- [Alef Platform](#) – The initiative aims to provide the UAE's educational system with the latest innovations in digital education including AI and Big Data. It enables students and teachers to access learning and teaching resources digitally in core subjects including the Arabic Language, Mathematics, Science, Islamic Studies, Social Studies and English Language. These programs support students and teachers throughout their journey in self-learning.
- [Blue Schools Initiative](#) – This initiative was designed to support Abu Dhabi schools returning to normalcy following COVID-19 disruptions through the gradual relaxing of preventive measures. It aims to serve as a roadmap to bringing schools yet another step closer to a fully open and normal school environment by increasing the vaccination rate within the school community. It equally aims to provide the public with visibility and transparency on school vaccination rates. A central tenet of the initiative is to respect the personal choice of parents by encouraging, not requiring the vaccination of students.
- ['Rest assured' \(Itama'anu\) Initiative](#) – UAE government-led initiative to support students, caregivers, and school staff in improving their mental and physical well-being during COVID-19.
- [Operation of Educational Establishments during the Pandemic: Protocols & Procedures](#) – The UAE's MOE designed and developed a comprehensive manual to help guide educational establishments on safe and healthy return to in-person learning environments.
- [Madrasa.org](#) –Madrasa.org was launched by the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global Initiatives and provides 6,000 free Arabic high-quality educational videos in math, science and Arabic literacy for the UAE, Arab countries, and Arab-speaking students globally. Since October 2018, madrasa.org provided more than 70 million lessons. Madrasa was awarded by ESCWA in collaboration with "The World Summit Awards – WSA". The Award recognizes quality digital Arabic content products that have clear societal impact, and sheds light on the benefits of digital technologies for accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Award was first launched during the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development 2021 (AFSD-2021) and the winners of the first cycle were announced during AFSD-2022. Evaluation followed a rigorous process whereby a jury of regional experts evaluated submissions.
- [The Digital School Initiative](#) – The initiative was launched by the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global Initiatives in November 2020 to provide quality education for K-12 underserved communities using hybrid and digital learning. the digital school aim to enroll 1 million students by 2026. Currently, it operates in 6 countries with over 20,000 students enrolled with over 500 educators supporting these students in a hybrid and digital learning

environments. The digital school initiative also designed an innovative global educator's professional development program in digital education. The program was delivered in 4 languages (English, Arabic, French, and Spanish) in collaboration with Arizona State University and was designed as an online and self-paced program that considers different roles, levels of digital learning maturity, and growth for educators. The program offers educators micro-credentials as well as a certification for digital education in 5 different mastery levels. Over 500 educators from 3 countries have completed 3 levels of the program and there is an expectation to have over 1500 educators from 6 countries complete the program by 2023 and over 5000 educators to finish all 5 levels of the program by the year 2025.

- [Students' Behaviour Management - Distance Learning 2020](#) – The UAE's MOE launched a manual for schools to ensure students' compliance with the schools' values and systems through the distance learning.
- [The Campus of the Future](#) - University of Wollongong in Dubai led this initiative under the support of the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) in Dubai to provide an idea-generating space for students to learn independently or establish ad-hoc interdisciplinary project groups in a safe, stimulating, and engaging environment.
- [Social Stories Series](#) – An online initiative led by the MOE's Ministry of Community Development to promote learning among young children at home on daily social encounters
- [Digital training initiative](#) – Led by the UAE's MOE, this initiative offered a one-week remote professional training for more than 25,000 government school teachers and administrators, in addition to more than 9,200 private school teachers and principals on digital teaching and learning.
- [Online Professional Learning Communities \(PLCs\)](#) – Schools in the UAE worked jointly on developing online professional learning communities (PLCs) wherein they share best practices and discuss critical topics such as teacher mental health.
- [University-school partnerships](#) – Schools and universities in the UAE established partnerships wherein universities train teachers and offer recommendations on best practices to schools based on their research and universities have the opportunity to apply their research in real classroom settings.
- [New Days, New Ways Initiative](#) – The KHDA developed a collaborative learning platform that brings together educational apps, websites, services and other resources that organizations from the UAE and around the world are providing free of charge for students, teachers and parents to spark teaching and learning.

The UAE National Consultations also revealed a number of other future measures and initiatives that can be implemented to support further recovery:

- [Operational procedures for distance learning](#): Further develop and monitor the adoption of the National Framework for Operating Educational Establishments in the post-COVID 19 era which accounts for the development of protocols for safety, support services, transportation, human resources, parental engagement and responsibilities, student affairs, and curriculum delivery.
- [Experience sharing sessions and surveys](#) – Offer national-level experience sharing sessions that allow classes and schools to share lessons learned and best practices on distance learning and the new post-COVID transformations in the education sector across the UAE. Develop

surveys to register and collect information on the best practices among schools so that other schools can benefit from.

- Research initiatives investigating the impact of COVID-19 – Involve universities in conducting further research to measure the comprehensive impact of COVID-19 on teaching and learning in order to make informed decisions about new education initiatives.
- Classroom embedded psychosocial support -Embed psychosocial support within the classrooms, whether digitally or in-person, to help aid students and teachers on-the-spot.
- Teaching and learning plan for early learners – Establish a clear plan, including learning material, for how to teach pre-school and early grades students how to read and write from a distance.
- Training on developing digital learning material (for teachers): Teachers should be trained on how to design digital learning material that can be delivered in an online learning environment.

2. Transformation of education

The UAE National Consultations indicated that there is a priority by the UAE government to monitor annual progress of SDG goals across all areas, including education. The UAE has assembled a National SDG team to monitor and review outcomes of the UAE in achieving the SDGs and to draft National SDG Education plan as an integral part of its national education strategy. Additionally, in 2020, under the UAE Next50 Initiative, the country has led the largest national strategy of its kind to prepare for the next 50 years at both the federal and local levels, and as part of these national-level discussions and efforts, education was one of the main themes.

Reports released by the UAE Government indicate that the MOE and its strategic partners have laid out a strong strategy to harness the national human capital's full potential by maximizing participation in high-quality education, encouraging entrepreneurship, and nurturing public and private sector leaders. The 2016 merger between the Ministry of Education and Higher Education has enabled the UAE to focus on equity and quality from kindergarten to higher education to fill the gap between academic requirements and labour market demands. The MOE is accelerating progress toward the SDGs by infusing Information & Communication Technologies (ICT) (such as Artificial Intelligence) in the education systems through a smart learning program and a specialized data centre.

Progress on SDG 4 Benchmark Indicators

In reviewing the progress toward SDG 4 national targets, the UAE has made notable progress in transforming its education sector and successfully overcoming COVID-19 impacts. By embedding SDG 4 goals in related priority initiatives, the participation rate in general education reached 99% throughout the years (indicator 4.5). Additionally, all schools in the UAE now include basic facilities like electricity, water, internet, adapted infrastructure for people with disabilities, and sanitation, allowing the UAE to achieve 100% on this indicator (indicator 4.A.1). The gender equality ratio for enrollment in general education is approximately 96% (indicator 4.5.1). The proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills is 99% (indicator 4.4.1). All teachers, 100%, in general education have received at least the minimum organized teacher training relevant to the UAE (indicator 4.C.1). The participation rate in organized learning one year before the official primary entry age, also known as pre-primary education, is over 99.7% (indicator 4.2.2). Based on these indicators, the UAE continues to offer high-quality education for all its residents

equally and is working towards sustaining these results and further enhancing its global position as a major contributor to the SDG 4 fulfillment.

Policies and Initiatives

Since the adoption of the SDGs, the UAE has implemented a number of policies and initiatives to work toward meeting SDG 4, some of which were discussed in the National Consultations and others which were reported by the government through publicly available documents. Collectively, these policies support a learning environment that is safe and welcoming while placing heavy emphasis on individual learner differences. For learners who require additional support due to disabilities, the “Inclusive education for people of determination” policy is in place to fill any gaps. Additionally, for learners who are identified to have exceptional capabilities, the “Gifted and Talented” policy offers guidance on how to best identify and foster personal and academic growth. With that, the UAE goes beyond providing the minimum needed for learning, and excels at delivering a collective and individualized learning experience through its educational provision and learning spaces. Among these are:

Early Childhood Education (ECE)

- [Early Childhood Policy \(2018\)](#) and the [Federal Authority for Early Childhood Education \(2022\)](#) offer national frameworks and a comprehensive and integrated approach for the care and learning of children from the ages of birth until 8. The MOE incorporates educational games in the early childhood curriculum to simplify the delivery of information to the children and help them absorb it. The curriculum aims to stimulate the intellectual and mental capacities of children through adopting global inspection strategies and standards based on sharing and entertainment. Parents will take part in this process and will be familiarized with the importance of this stage for their children to gain knowledge.
- [Ministerial Decree 206 for the year 2020](#) and [Ministerial Decree 644 of the year 2020](#) present policies to governing the implementation of ECE provision in the UAE and related positive behavior management for education providers covering early childhood education. These policies aim to contribute to the promotion of positive learning environments for early childhood, build a framework for managing student behavior in early childhood, promote the integration of social and psychological well-being content in curriculum for early childhood education, and set institutional roles and responsibilities for positive behavior management in early childhood education.
- [Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority \(ECA\)](#): Established in 2019, the ECA aims to create a high-quality early childhood development system in the emirate of Abu Dhabi. It aims to include health and nutrition, child protection, family support, early care and education in its scope of work. Among its key priorities are developing and implementing a comprehensive strategy for early childhood development in the emirate of Abu Dhabi, reviewing and evaluating policies and programs related to early childhood in coordination with the relevant entities, proposing legislation, policies and regulations related to early childhood, conducting research and specialized studies in the field of early childhood development, reviewing best practices locally, regionally and internationally, and proposing strategic solutions and recommendations to be applied in the field.
- [The “Dubai Declaration on Early Childhood Development”](#): This declaration identifies the elements and approaches for a holistic package of services for young children and their caregivers, ranging from stimulation and play to nutrition to parental livelihoods. The declaration furthermore calls for these approaches to be backed by national policy, with

regulations and incentives that can guide private sector investment alongside state prioritization of early childhood development.

Child protection and well-being

- [National Program for Happiness and Well-being](#): This is a government-led program that has launched several initiatives and programs to promote a pleasant and healthy community within the UAE. One such initiative that was established in partnership with the MOE is the Well Schools Network which encourages public and private schools to implement well-being principles that yield positive benefits for the school community.
- [Child-friendly School Project](#) – This initiative was led by the Sharjah Private Education Authority to encourage schools to adhere to the comprehensive quality standards and deal with all elements of the educational environment that affect the child well-being and rights as a learner and primary beneficiary of education within five main components: (1) awareness of children rights, (2) student participation in school life, (3) support for community service initiatives, and (4) protection of students against all forms of violence and abuse and (5) integration all students of different abilities and needs in general education.
- [Al Manhal Portal's health database](#): The MOE has set up a health database for all UAE school students through the Al Manhal Portal to provide them with health care at every age. It also organizes field trips to schools to raise health awareness and maintain healthy lifestyles in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Community Protection throughout the academic year. It also provides awareness programs on gynecological diseases for female students.
- [Ministerial Decree 659 for the year 2020](#) presents child protection policies to help educational establishments in the UAE ensure every child is safe and secure. These policies include policies protecting against cyber-bullying, harassment, abuse, and related child protection concerns and put into place measures for receiving and processing complaints related to child protection from students.
- [Ministerial Decree 645 for the year 2020](#) raises awareness on the issue of bullying in schools and offers guidance on how educational establishments should deal with bullying across the UAE.

Inclusive education

- [Inclusive education for people of determination](#) and the [Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework](#) – The UAE has made tangible efforts to include people of determination (the UAE's term for "people with disabilities") in mainstream education. These efforts are reflected in the [Ministerial Decree 647 for the year 2020](#) on the policy of inclusive education, which directs government schools to adapt themselves to cater to the needs of people of determination and provide them with the best education services. It is also reflected in Dubai's framework which provides valuable information about the required standards of educational practice as well as offering clear guidance regarding the actions necessary to ensure the provision of quality inclusive services for students of determination.
- [The Emirati School Matrix \(2020-2021\)](#) defines an Emirati school model focused on providing quality education across *all* levels of education, from birth through its five tracks (Specialization track, General/Academic track, Professional track, Advanced track and Professional Advanced track).

- [Ministerial Decree 209 for the year 2020](#) presents a clear and comprehensive framework for how educational establishments should monitor and provide growth opportunities for gifted and talented students. The policy outlines the measures needed for the national gifted students program and details the conditions/criteria students must meet to fall under the category of gifted students.

Lifelong learning

- [Continuous lifelong learning](#): The UAE, under the National Qualifications Framework, aims to instill a culture of learning and acquisition of cognitive and life skills at different ages and levels through compulsory education. It provides equal opportunities of education for students of diverse communities, students living in difficult physical conditions, and people of determination. The ministry offers government and online scholarships where hundreds of students are annually sent abroad to study in the most reputable institutions.

Digital transformation

- [The Computing Creative Design and Innovation \(CCDI\) curriculum \(2022\)](#) which aims to create a first-rate STREAM educational experience promoting project-based learning in the fields of design, engineering, visual communication, sustainability, and computer science through an entrepreneurial outlook in preparation for higher education and beyond.
- [Digital Learning Health and Safety Policy within the Digital School Initiative](#): As part of the Digital School Initiative, Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global Initiatives launched the “Digital Learning Health and Safety Policy” which ensured contextualized standards of health and safety are taken into account when building a digital learning experience that guarantees students, their parents and guardians, are assured that when in a Digital School learning space, they are in a safe and healthy environment. Similarly, teachers and facilitators also need to be sure that pupils are protected during learning hours, too.

New frameworks for education transformation

- [The Framework for Global Education Transformation](#): This is a comprehensive and action-oriented guiding framework, launched by Dubai Cares, for a future-focused and human-centric education ecosystem that aims to serve as a catalyzing framework to support nations as they chart their way towards the transformation of education. The Framework calls for a transformation of curriculum and pedagogy rooted in a prioritization of children and youth acquiring the four core pillars of life (values, skills, knowledge, and experiences) that will be essential in their journey towards becoming humans of the future as they chart their way towards a future that will see them pursue a variety of paths including Higher Education, Technical and Vocational Education and Training, Employment or Entrepreneurship. Particularly when it comes to the UAE this supports the country’s vision for the transformation of education in a way that enables the fulfillment of its strategy for 2071 that speaks strongly to the importance of students learning in environments that enable them to discover their individual talents and where education institutions are incubators of entrepreneurship and innovation. The Framework is visualized in Annex D below.

Obstacles

The UAE National Consultations and pre-existing reports indicated a number of obstacles in the country's fulfillment of SDG 4.

- Quality as measured by students' learning outcomes: Although recent international assessment results (TIMSS and PISA) are showing improvements, learning outcomes are still not meeting national targets.
- Teacher quality: The UAE aims to place a higher emphasis on increasing the quality of teachers (with a shift from a supply-driven to a demand-driven focus of all professional development programs) to ensure that teachers adopt teaching and learning methodologies and assessment practices that reflect the intent of the curriculum, the need of students, and system expectations for effective teaching.
- Comprehensive and real-time data availability: Although many efforts are underway to develop a holistic monitoring framework for SDG 4 at the national level, regularly updated data remains a challenge for the country.
([SDGS.ae](https://sdgs.ae))

Future transformations, coalitions, and levers of change

The UAE National Consultations also presented a number of future measures and initiatives that can be implemented to support further recovery:

- A new school model for new transformations: Examine the potential for a new (business) model for education that dismantles the hierarchal structure of schools and promotes flexibility and agility in the process of learning.
- A new higher education governance structure: The UAE is reshaping the governance structure and providing increased autonomy for federal higher education institutions. This effort is envisioned to transform the education sector and empower it to deliver academic programs that would align more with building skills that match labor market needs.
- Strategic coalitions in education: Mobilize and activate collaborative strategic coalitions in education, including those between higher education institutions and schools to provide effective professional development opportunities and integrate digital innovation.
- Education Sector Strategic Plan 2023-2026: Develop, monitor, and regularly review the UAE's education sector plan for 2023-2026 which encompasses a number of key education priorities, including among those the priorities indicated in SDG 4
- National Strategy for Higher Education 2030: Monitor and regularly review the UAE's National Strategy for Higher Education 2030 which highlights, among its key priorities, a National Quality Framework that develops assessment-based standards for higher education, the Transparent Classification of Outputs that institutionalizes and ensures transparency of higher education reporting, and the Expanded Professional Experience initiative which will provide a variety of career training programmes to students such as on-campus work, job shadowing, joint ventures and vocational trainings.
- Other local and federal strategies that contribute directly and indirectly to achievement of the SDGs.

3. Review of national education targets and benchmarks

The UAE embarked on its Vision 2021 in 2010 at the closing of a senior cabinet meeting. Under this, the National Agenda emphasized the development of a first-rate education system, which required a complete transformation of the education system and teaching methods ([UAE Vision 2021](#)). The National Agenda laid the national effort for all schools, universities and students to be equipped with smart systems and devices as a basis for all teaching methods, projects and research. It also focused on increasing investments to promote and reinforce enrollment in preschools as this was determined to play an important role in shaping children's personalities and their future. Furthermore, the National Agenda set as a target that the UAE's students rank among the best in the world in reading, mathematics and science exams, and to have a strong knowledge of the Arabic language ([UAE Vision 2021](#)). Moreover, the Agenda outlined the need to elevate the rate of graduation from secondary schools consistent with international standards and for all schools to have exceptional leadership and internationally accredited teaching staff. Many of these national benchmarks and targets are consistent with SDG 4 as they work toward promoting inclusion, participation in early learning, completion of schooling, and learning outcomes.

In reviewing on these [national benchmarks and targets](#) set out by the UAE Vision 2021, the UAE has made notable progress. Some of the major achievements are noted below:

- Enrollment rate in preschools (public and private) - 95%
- Upper secondary graduation rate - 98%
- Average TIMSS Score – The UAE ranks 34th and 33rd in science achievement for grade 4, and 23rd and 25th in mathematics and science achievement respectively for grade 8
- Percentage of students with high skills in Arabic, according to national tests - 90%
- Percentage of schools with high-quality teachers - 100%
- Percentage of schools with highly effective school leadership - 100%
- Expenditure on research and development as a % of GDP - 1.5%
- Enrollment rate in foundation year (for higher education) – 0%

The UAE is currently working on its Education Sector Strategic Plan 2023-2026 which encompasses new national benchmarks and targets to be upheld by different government educational and non-educational partners, building on the key priority areas for the UAE's education sector in the coming years.

4. Ensuring sustainable public financing

In 2021, the UAE allocated **16.4%** of its federal budget to public, higher, and university education. This is very high in comparison to other sectors like health care and community protection, programs to guarantee social rights and social integration, infrastructure and economy, social benefits programs/pensions, and other services which account for 8.17%, 5.54%, 3.6%, 8%, and 3.06% of the federal social development budget of the country ([Ministry of Finance](#), 2021). This allocation was similar to previous years, thereby indicating the consistent emphasis that the UAE places on education. In 2021, one of the UAE Government's main outlooks for its federal budget was to utilize the budget to elevate the competitiveness of the UAE. In doing so, the UAE invested in high-level educational systems that work towards meeting the market needs and institutionalizing a rich

business and innovation culture. The UAE adopts a results-based budgeting methodology, allocating the biggest resources to the highest performing, or most effective activities.

In the medium to long term, education investment is likely to continue toward Further transformation of education in areas like science and technology and research and development. Resource allocation is deemed equitable as it stands in the UAE across general education levels, regions, and socioeconomic statuses, and this is demonstrated by the 99% participation rate of children and adolescents in general education. There are considerations to promote resource allocation toward early childhood education, higher education, and life-long learning.

Looking into the future, some mechanisms that the UAE may be expected to utilize to ensure adequate and sustainable domestic financing of education include:

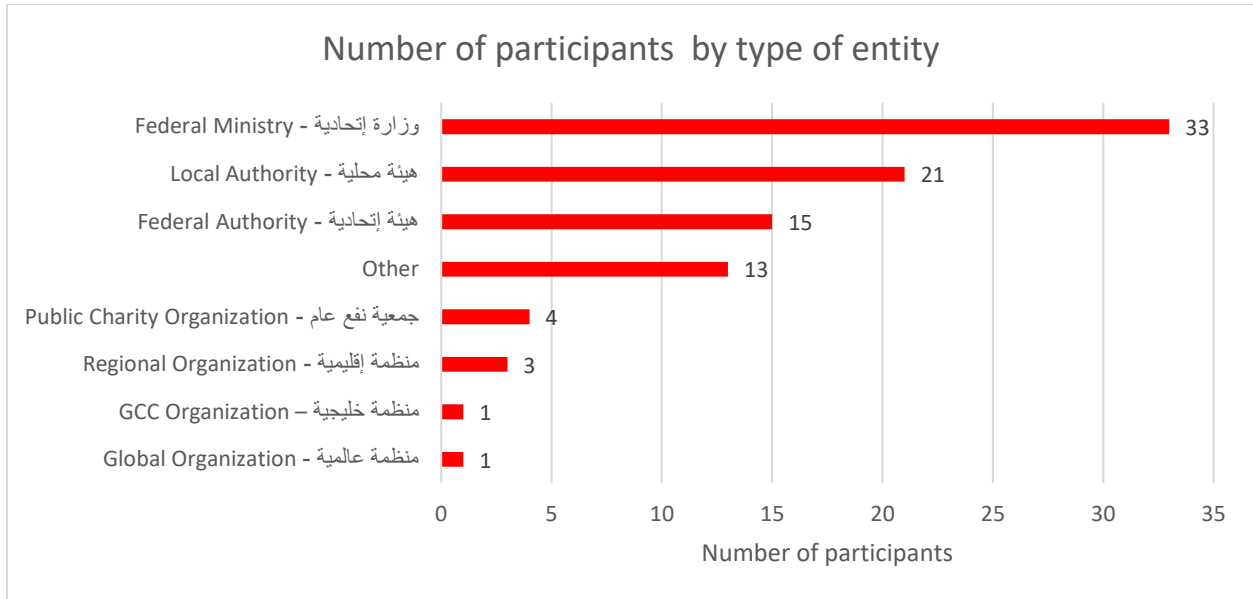
- Utilize partnerships with the private sector to mobilize more resources toward the key priorities of the education sector,
- Increase the availability of data on education financing and utilize this data in improving planning, budgeting, and accountability,
- Ensure local financing of education, at the Emirate level,
- Promoting autonomy through reshaping the governance policies for education financing.

5. ANNEXES

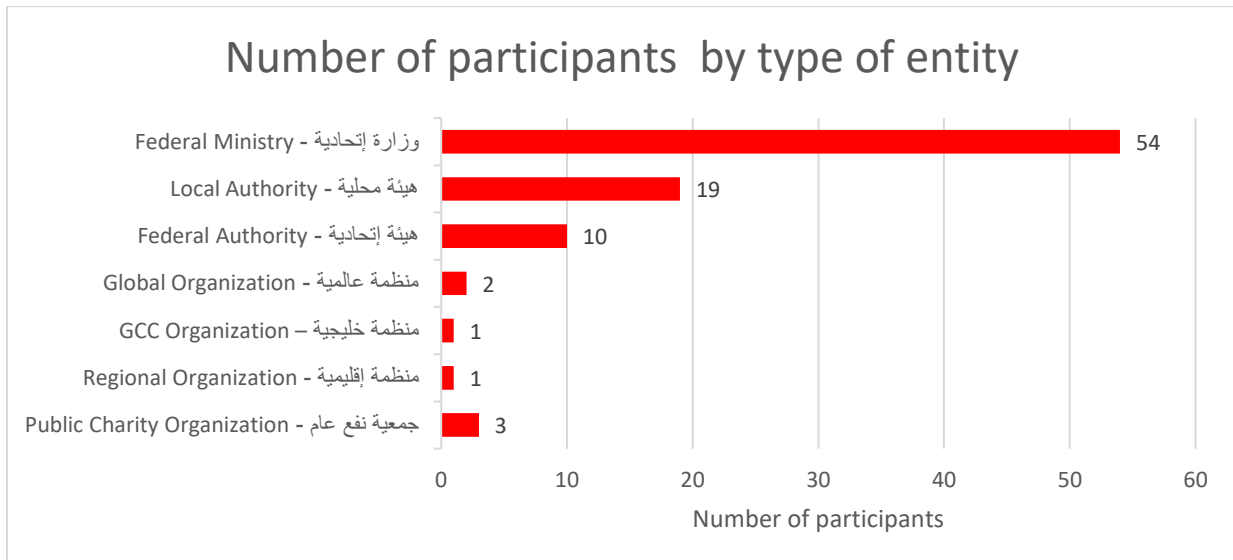
Annex A. Participation Graphs

The consultations were attended by representatives of the following groups:

Stage 1



Stage 2



Annex B. Media Coverage

The consultations received the following media coverage:

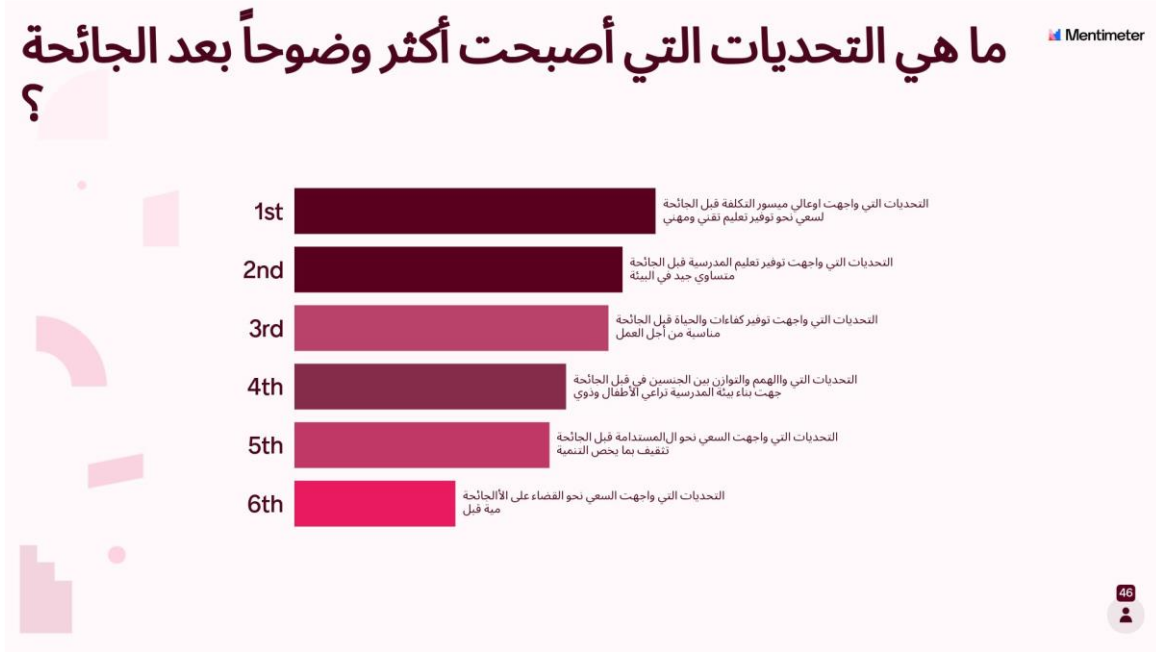
- https://twitter.com/forsan_uae/status/1554871465899503616?s=24&t=CDEHjD0d9y4khb8A8shFrw
- <https://youtu.be/lQXGUDUZpAU>
- <https://wam.ae/ar/details/1395303071715>
- <https://www.instagram.com/reel/CgzcOxfJJid/?igshid=MDJmNzVkMjY=>
- <https://twitter.com/oloumaldar/status/1554863384138600448?s=24&t=tOqoPRW8ZvbKLaCMucLUMA>
- <https://youtu.be/MyZxzmZbFiY>
- https://twitter.com/akhbar_alemarat/status/1554876513710923780?s=24&t=tOqoPRW8ZvbKLaCMucLUMA



Annex C. Mentimeter Results

Here are some (not all, since there are hundreds of pages) of the results from the Mentimeter questions posed as part of the national consultations.

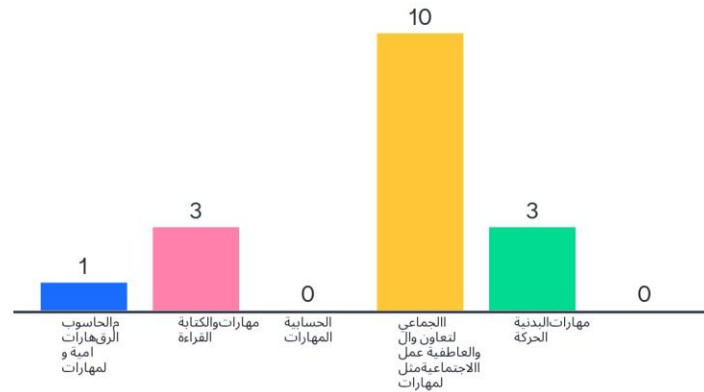
Stage 1



Stage 2

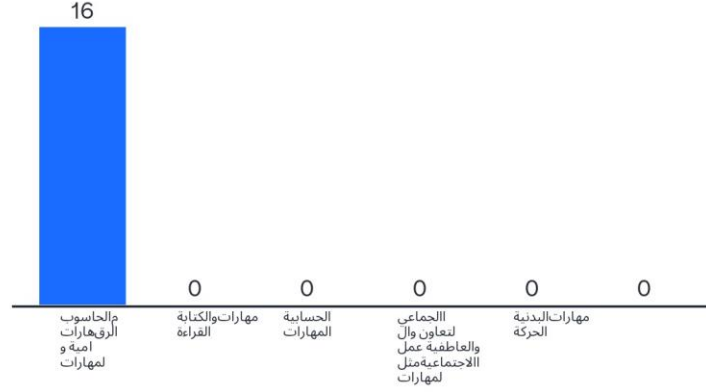
Group 1: Learning and skills

بناءً على خبرتك في قطاع التعليم، ما هي المهارات التي كانت أكثر تأثراً بشكل سلبي خلال و بعد الجائحة ؟





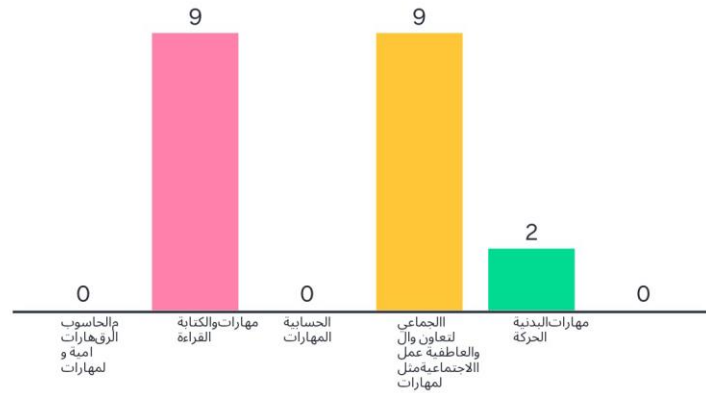
بناءً على خبرتك في قطاع التعليم، ما هي المهارات التي كانت أكثر تأثراً بشكل إيجابي خلال و بعد الجائحة؟



16

Group 2: Learning and skills

بناءً على خبرتك في قطاع التعليم، ما هي المهارات التي كانت أكثر تأثراً بشكل سلبي خلال و بعد الجائحة؟

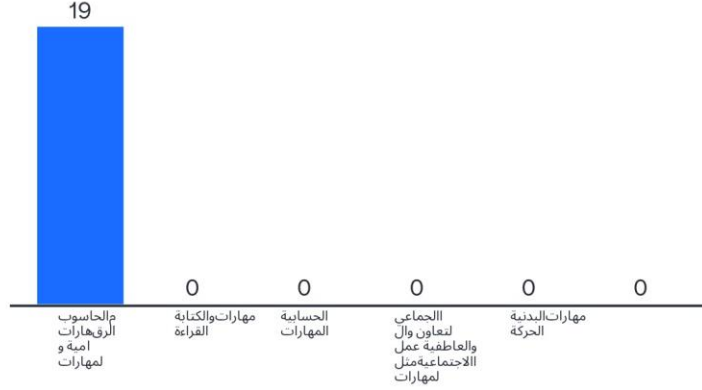


20



بناءً على خبرتك في قطاع التعليم، ما هي المهارات التي كانت أكثر تأثراً بشكل إيجابي خلال و بعد الجائحة؟

Mentimeter

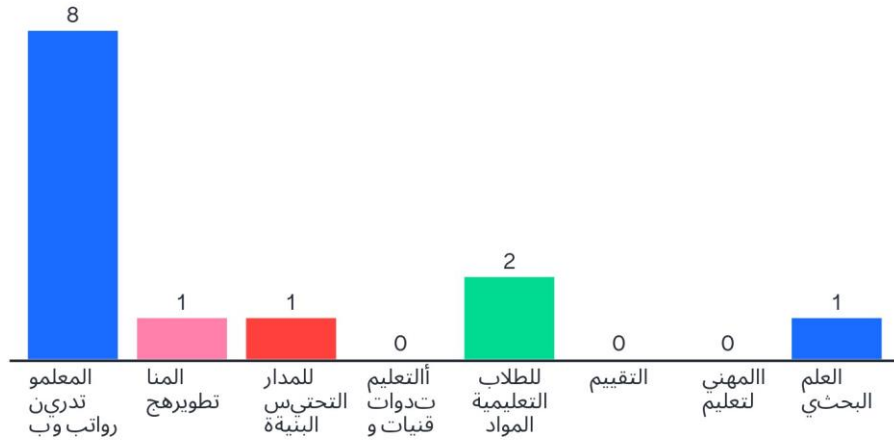


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Group 3: Financing education

بناءً على خبرتك، أي من التالي يجب أن يتلقى أعلى إنفاق حكومي في قطاع التعليم؟

Mentimeter

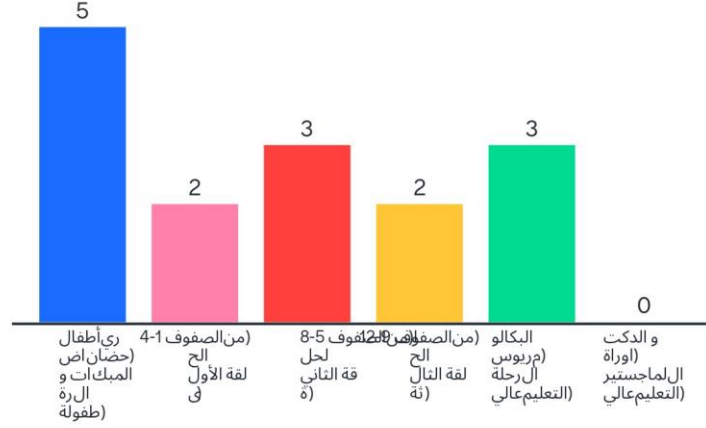


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بناءً على خبرتك، أي من المراحل التعليمية التالية يجب أن تحصل على أعلى ميزانية تعليمية من الحكومة؟

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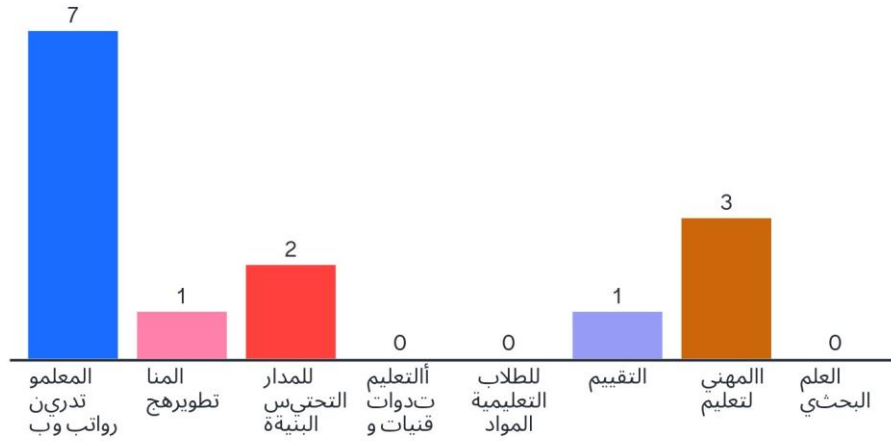


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Group 4: Financing education

بناءً على خبرتك، أي من التالي يجب أن يتلقى أعلى إنفاق حكومي في قطاع التعليم؟

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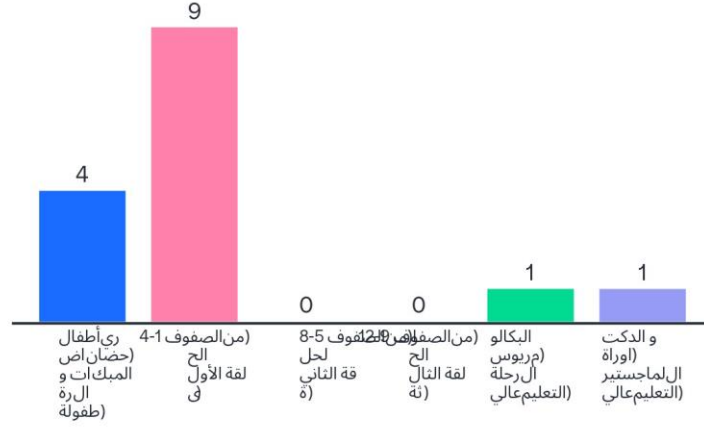


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بناءً على خبرتك، أي من المراحل التعليمية التالية يجب أن تحصل على أعلى ميزانية تعليمية من الحكومة؟

Mentimeter



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Annex D. The Framework for Global Education Transformation

