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Al Maktoum Foundation

برنامج الأمم المتحدة الإنمائي  
United Nations Development Programme



# Arab Knowledge Report 2010/2011

Preparing Future Generations for the Knowledge Society





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# Foreword by the Chairman of the Board, Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation

“Undoubtedly, the Arab reality is thorny and problematic; this is our reality, and we know it well in detail. We have no way out but to work through this reality, with awareness and determination to overcome obstacles, and with recognition that human’s worthiness is not measured by the success to adapt with reality, whatever it may be, neither by the skills in managing the statuesque, but rather by the ability to develop this reality and change it for the better through serious, persistent, and well thought hard work that is driven by a spirit of optimism, selflessness, and devotion. By this, change will happen and development will be achieved”.

This is one of the fundamental basis in the vision of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, for achieving sustainable and fruitful Arab development through diagnosis of the status of knowledge in the Arab world, developing its infrastructure and improving its quality, in order to produce a reliable high-quality cognitive outputs that correspond with the requirements of the labour market.

The annual Arab Knowledge Report project; a joint initiative of the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation and the UNDP, provides an international Arab index for measuring the state of knowledge in the Arab countries. It is also considered a qualitative and accurate analysis and description, from several perspectives, that can assist officials in evaluating the performance and improving developmental plans for building knowledge societies that

are capable of confronting challenges and of contributing to comprehensive and sustainable development.

The first Arab Knowledge Report for 2009 expressed the structural relationship between the triad of community, knowledge, and development for establishing and supporting knowledge economy bases, and for achieving the welfare and pride of the Arab citizen. This involved a detailed analysis and description of the knowledge scene in the Arab world, and the formulation of a road map for achieving a “knowledge renaissance” along with identification of the relevant priorities.

The second Arab Knowledge Report sheds light on one of the most important recommendations of the previous Report by addressing the issue of preparing future generations for the knowledge society which is considered the cornerstone for building a sustainable human development. Relying on updated field surveys undertaken in various Arab countries, the Report provides practical solutions that can guide Arab countries in bridging the “cognitive gap” that was highlighted in the first report.

Using a detailed methodology, the report also reviews many pedagogic and educational theories that are related to preparing future generations for the knowledge society, as well as the associated problematic issues including those related to the political, economic, and social conditions and the impact of these challenges on building the desired knowledge society. Going beyond

theories and studies concerned with building knowledge societies, the scope of this Report extends to the investigation and collection of data and information from their original resources by going to the Arab streets to gather facts and conduct comprehensive field surveys using real and representative samples of the young Arabs, from north to south and from east to west. This Report, which is optimistic in nature, provides practical solutions derived from the Arab reality, that are based on theories and methodologies of sustainable human development, providing a guiding reference for the Arab decision-maker that can assist in building the knowledge society.

In this context, I would like to extend thanks and appreciation to the UNDP/Regional Office for the Arab States, especially the report team in Dubai, and to every person who contributed to the completion of the report, be they thinkers, authors, editors or technicians.

I am looking forward to continuing further fruitful cooperation between us in solidifying the pillars of the cognitive and intellectual structures in the region, and in consolidating the foundations of the aspired human development in the Arab world.

**Sheikh Ahmed bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum  
Chairman of the Board  
Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation**

# Foreword by the Regional Director, UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States

The partnership between the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation and the Regional Bureau for Arab States in UNDP to support the Arab and international efforts in building the knowledge society and economy, brings to fruition the Arab Knowledge Report for 2010/2011 which deals with one of the most important issues in the preparation of the future generations for the knowledge society.

The second Arab Knowledge Report for 2010/2011: “Preparing Future Generations for the Knowledge Society” builds on the main findings of the first Arab Knowledge Report launched in 2009, which showcased the deficits and gaps in the Arab knowledge scene and proposed ways to address these gaps, including political will and mobilization of required capabilities and resources. It relied on one of the most important recommendations calling for building “the necessary capacity” of qualified human capital to lead the processes of moving forward the knowledge society and economy.

Following these diagnoses, and based on the triad of “knowledge, development, and freedom” which was adopted in the previous Report, “the Arab Knowledge Report 2010/2011: Preparing Future Generations for the Knowledge Society” moves to the stage of “action”. This puts us at the core of building the knowledge society through preparing of the Arab society to actively participate in building the aspired knowledge society and to benefit from its fruits; and then utilize the gains in serving the objectives of sustainable human development.

According to the Report’s authors, the preparation of the future generations for the knowledge society requires providing them with a comprehensive set of skills

that are consistent with the requirements of the future era including cognitive, compassionate and social skills. The Report stresses that skills alone are not enough unless they are accompanied by a set of values that guide the youth in their work for the good of humanity and society. The vision of the Report emphasizes the importance of providing supportive and motivating enabling environments, including the provision and protection of freedoms in their broader sense, in order to nurture and maintain the value system, and embrace and develop the skills of the youth in order to optimize their investment in the processes of building the knowledge society.

The Report is characterized by its inclusion of field studies on the status of preparing future generations in four selected Arab countries; the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Morocco, and Yemen, as well as addressing issues of preparing the future generations for the knowledge society in the Arab region as a whole. The first part of the Report highlights the most important concepts and practices in the preparation of the future generations for the knowledge society in the Arab region, including an in-depth investigation on the status of education systems as being among the most significant approaches to the preparation processes along with the overall family and societal conditions.

The Report also provides an objective analysis of the status of enabling environments for the future generation, stressing the urgent need for effective intervention for the establishment of proper enabling environments stimulating the youth and their preparation for the knowledge society.

After a consolidated presentation of

the outcomes of the empirical studies that were conducted as case studies in the four selected Arab countries, the first part of the Report concludes by presenting a proposed model for the future practices towards the preparation of the future generations. The second part of the Report contains a comprehensive in-depth assessment of the status of the preparation of the future generations in each case study country. The case studies are based on: the available research and information; outcomes of the surveys and field activities that were conducted by the Report team including the students' and teachers' questionnaires; workshops held with the participation of experts and stakeholders in each of these countries; and results of tests and innovative tools specifically designed to measure the skills and orientations of students which were applied for the first time on pioneering bases in the Arab region.

The field results on the conditions of the future generations and their readiness to access the knowledge society showed many gaps that must be dealt with if we really want to move forward towards building the knowledge society. The challenge is big and we have to face it. We hope that the empirical results of this Report will help the decision makers and stakeholders in the four case study countries, and in the Arab region in general, in identifying and adopting the required policies and solutions. We hope that this Report, like its predecessor, will stimulate constructive discussions on these issues. Again, we do not claim ownership or monopoly of the truth, but we aspire to stimulate an Arab dialogue about the

most efficient and effective way to build the knowledge society as a first step towards achieving the aspired Arab renaissance.

A selection of Arab intellectuals and experts in related fields participated in the preparation of this Report to be a platform for views and aspirations and to provide theoretical and practical bases for the establishment of the desired knowledge society. For this outstanding effort, I would like to extend sincere thanks to all those who participated in the completion of this work, including the teams of authors, writers, coordinators, editors, and the work teams in both the UNDP and Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation. I would like also to thank all those who contributed and participated in building the tools of this Report, including the participants in the workshops held in the context of preparing the Report with a commendable participation by specialists and interested parties in the countries of the four case studies, as well as students and teachers who participated in the field study.

In conclusion, I have the honor to extend my deepest gratitude and appreciation to His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum for his support to the knowledge initiatives in the Arab world, which would not have continued without His Highness's ongoing sponsorship and patronage. We, at UNDP, are proud of the partnership with Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation, and we are keen to maintain it in the best benefit of the knowledge society in the region and in enhancing the prospects for sustainable human development in Arab countries and in the world at large.

**Amat Al Alim Alsoswa**  
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# ARAB KNOWLEDGE REPORT 2010/2011

## Part I: The General Report

### FUTURE GENERATIONS AND THE ARAB KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY: ANALYTICAL VIEW AND CASE STUDIES SUMMARY





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