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Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة



Regional Centre
for Information and Communication
Technology

المركز الإقليمي
لتكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصال



Kingdom of
Bahrain

ملكة
البحرين

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RCICT NEWSLETTER

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MINISTER PARTICIPATES IN PANEL DISCUSSION

Education Minister Dr. Majid bin Ali Al Nuaimi participated in a panel discussion entitled "Information Technology and the Future of Education," on the sidelines of the International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and Post-2015 Education, held in cooperation with UNESCO in Qingdao, China. Senior officials in private sector companies specialized in Education Technology attended the panel, which addressed a number of topics, including visualization of digital education in 2030, expectations about future trends in the field of information technology and its impact on educational sector and transformation of the participants' visions and findings into policies. Addressing topics related to the future of education in the light of modern developments and wide utilization of ICT in all vital sectors, especially in education the Minister shed light on economic crises and their

repercussions on education and technological changes, underlining the need to use appropriate teaching methods that will better students' academic achievement and improve graduates' skills. He also stressed the need to shift from a simple technological educational framework into a human context that augments communication and cooperation opportunities.

In addition, the Minister laid the emphasis on the importance of providing technology as a support for the curriculum to make it easy to master expertise, reinforce the school's role in the world of technology, empower it digitally, and reflect positively on training and values within the school community.

The Minister highlighted the reality of e-learning in the Kingdom of Bahrain, remarkable achievements of King Hamad's Schools of the Future project and the forthcoming strides in the educational system, in line

with His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's directives regarding the implementation of digital empowerment in education. He pointed out UNESCO King Hamad Award for the Use of ICT in Education, which had a pivotal role in promoting e-learning initiatives worldwide by honouring relevant outstanding initiatives and developed projects. The private sector's speakers underscored the developments in the field of Technology in Education, which will contribute to raising its quality, available opportunities to achieve more developments and affirmed the role played by the private sector in the technical field, according to standards that must be unified in the light of the technological innovations.



RCICT WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

Design, Deploy and Transform Workshop for Educational Leaders

In preparation for the implementation of the "Digital Empowerment in Education" National Project, the Regional Centre for Information and Communication Technology (RCICT) organized and hosted two workshops entitled "MOE ICT in Education Strategy" in collaboration with Microsoft Corporation. These workshops were attended by senior officials from the Ministry of Education and its directorates.

During the first workshop, Ms. Nawal Al Khater, Assistant Undersecretary for Planning and Information gave a presentation about the Ministry of Education's experience in using Information and Communication Technology in education, affirming that the Digital Empowerment Project in the field of education, is our next phase in this respect.

Over the course of the first workshop, several topics were highlighted and discussed including: Bahrain's vision and strategy in the upcoming years, as well as the contemporary

teaching and learning's new prospects which the ever-advancing technologies have to offer. Participants discussed the changing role of the teacher in the 21st century learning environment. In the session, strategies were reviewed and developed for stakeholder engagement, financial models and equity of access. Some case studies and the latest internet trends from around the world were studied to create a strong foundation for all subsequent developmental stages of the local and regional Educational Vision.

The second workshop focused on training, development and leadership readiness. The attendees were given time to discuss issues like establishing working groups and sharing examples, making a project timeline, determining milestones and critical paths as well as implementing and evaluating effective ICT in Education Policy Framework.

RCICT WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

RCICT Organizes DigiGirlz Camp

In collaboration with Microsoft, Bahrain Technology Companies Society and ThinkSmart, the Regional Centre for Information and Communication Technology organized The DigiGirlz Camp. The event was held at the Ministry of Education Hall in Isa Town from 23 to 24 December 2014, with the participation of over 30 students representing various Secondary Girls Schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The DigiGirlz Camp included a panel discussion between a number of pioneering women working in the field of Information Technology in Bahrain. The students were also given the opportunity to converse with a group of experts from Microsoft to explore employment prospects in the fields of Science, Mathematics and Information Technology. In addition, participants received practical training on the latest technological tools.

The DigiGirlz Camps comes as part of Microsoft's initiative: YouthSpark, a global project that targets creating opportunities for young people in the fields of: Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship where the company endeavored to encourage students to obtain higher degrees in Computer Science and Engineering and to seek jobs pertaining to these areas.



RCICT Participates in Bahrain International eGovernment Forum 2015

Based on the importance of sharing expertise and experiences in the field of information and communication technology, identifying the latest solutions in the area of eGovernment and recognizing the most up-to-date international practices, the Regional Centre for Information and Communication Technology (RCICT) participated in Bahrain International eGovernment Forum 2015. Four employees from the centre have been nominated to take part in the forum. Two of them briefed the attendees on RCICT, highlighting its objectives, programs and activities and distributed a number of publications issued by the centre, such as the newsletter, brochures, the annual calendar as well as some various giveaways. Meanwhile, the other two employees attended the specialized workshops held on the sidelines of the forum, in which some different issues were discussed. The outputs of those workshops were shared by the Centre's staff members so that everyone could draw benefit from them.



RCICT WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

Reading Strategies: Food for Faculties

Under the Patronage of His Excellency Dr. Majid bin Ali Al-Nuaimi, Minister of Education, a training workshop, entitled "Reading Strategies: Food for Faculties" and organized by the Regional Centre for Information and Communication Technology (RCICT) in conjunction with the Directorate of Curricula, was held at the centre's premises.

The workshop, which was conducted by Dr. Mohamed Jaber Qassim, Professor of Curriculum, Methods of Teaching Arabic and Islamic Education at the Education Department in the United Arab Emirates University, was attended by 52 senior teachers and Arabic language coordinators as well as semester-system teachers.



The event was also attended by Dr. Abdullah Yusuf Al-Mutawa, Undersecretary for Education and Curricula Affairs, Dr. Noora Ahmed Al-Ghatam, Assistant Undersecretary for Curricula and Educational Supervision and a number of officials from the Ministry of Education.

The Minister delivered a speech in which he emphasized the importance of curricula in today's educational process and lauded this particular workshop aiming to develop methods of teaching Arabic language by employing modern technologies provided by the Ministry of Education, such as Smart Boards as well as various advanced technological mediums which assist in teaching the curriculum. This step comes in line with developments on the educational level locally, regionally and worldwide.

The Reading Strategies Workshop featured a number of themes, such as familiarizing the participants with the concept of reading and the important skills involved as a foundation of learning for children, using different teaching strategies, and employing activities and games that involve language in the education of children. By the end of the workshop, the attendees were divided into groups performing a number of tasks on the topics that were discussed.

RCICT WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

The RCICT hosts the 25th Meeting of the GCC Skills Authority

The Regional Centre for Information and Communication Technology hosted the Twenty-Fifth Meeting of the GCC Skills Authority in the presence of Mrs. Latifa Isa Al- Bunoodha, Assistant Undersecretary for General and Technical Education, Dr. Mohammed Abdulrazzaq Al-Siddiqi, Director of Technical and Vocational Education, and Mr Mohamed Abdulrahman Khamees, President of the GCC Skills Authority, as well as a number of officials from the boards of the authority's member states including: Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Kuwait and Bahrain.

The agenda of the meeting included a number of topics related to the Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) common interests, including the study of a proposal to establish a club for GCC participants, in order to strengthen the links between the GCC's youth. In addition to a suggested launch of a "Market for Skills of the Gulf", which aims to introduce the latest innovative activities and programs set up by GCC youths and connected to the largest possible audience. The final proposal of an online magazine for the Authority was also discussed, in order to agree on a periodic publication and expand its media exposure.

Members also discussed the move towards increasing the number of skills in the next version of the GCC contest, which will be organized in Saudi Arabia next year, and more precisely in the month of April.

It is noteworthy to mention that the GCC Skills Authority was established in 2007 by the Council of Ministers of Labour and Ministry of Social Affairs in GCC States, in order to cater for the GCC's youth interest in technical education and vocational training, and to exchange experiences and expertise between the sons of the Arab Gulf States, through the establishment of competitions in all technical and professional disciplines.



UNESCO NEWS

Minister discusses preparations for King Hamad Prize with UNESCO official

Education Minister Dr. Majid bin Ali Al-Nuami received Dr. Fengchun Miao, who heads up the ICT in Education team within the section for Teacher Development and Education Policies at UNESCO, and discussed final preparations prior to the announcement of The UNESCO-King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa Prize for the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Education next month. The UNESCO will name the jury panel, which will be composed of international specialists in the field of ICT, to study and evaluate the submitted projects. The UNESCO has decided to extend the Prize for another six years thanks to the success it has achieved at the international level.



Bahrain's recommendations approved

Experts at a major educational conference in China approved Bahrain's recommendations. Education Minister Dr. Majid bin Ali Al-Nuami attended the International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies and Post-2015 Education, which was held in Qingdao. The first recommendation calls for protection of schools and institutions of higher education and information and communication technology from any action that threatens their safety. The second urges ICT institutions to achieve greater co-operation with UNESCO institutes and centres. Ministers, international figures and representatives of private sector firms were present.



UNESCO Regional Seminar to promote OER in GCC States and Yemen

Within the framework of UNESCO's efforts to promote Open Educational Resources (OER) in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Yemen, UNESCO Doha Office, in conjunction with UNESCO Headquarters, organized a regional seminar to discuss the implementation of policies and strategies aimed at integrating OER in education in the GCC and Yemen region from 18 to 19 March 2015 in Doha, Qatar.

During the opening ceremony, Dr. Anna Paolini, Director of UNESCO Doha Office and UNESCO Representative in the GCC and Yemen, reminded participants that universal access to high quality education is key to the building of peace, sustainable social, economic development and intercultural dialogue. She also added that "OERs make it possible for people of all ages and with different backgrounds to learn more about the world around them and have access to the tools they need to improve their lives and livelihoods".



She also said that, "even though the concept remains relatively new in the region, we are very proud to see that several member states, including the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Sultanate of Oman, have taken the lead in developing policies to release educational resources on open license, and we hope that today's seminar will encourage more member states in the region to implement similar policies".

Ms. Hessa Al Dosari, Chief of the UNESCO Department at Qatar National Commission to UNESCO, thanked UNESCO Doha Office for gathering representatives from Ministries of Education in the GCC region to discuss cooperation and learn from each other's experience in developing education-related policies.

Ms. Hala Amer, Acting Director of the Regional Centre for Information and Communication Technology (RCICT) in Bahrain, a Category 2 Centre affiliated with UNESCO, underscored the Centre's commitment to promoting high quality education and access to ICTs and emphasised the role of the RCICT in bringing together experts and policy-makers from the region to cooperate on education and ICT-related activities and projects.

Ms. Nawal Al khater, Assistant Undersecretary for Planning and Information, the OER leader in the Kingdom of Bahrain, and a delegation from the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman presented their newly developed National OER Policies to participants.

The workshop was attended by delegations from GCC Ministries of Education and Yemen as well as experts and professors from universities and institutions in the Arab region.

GCC & YEMEN TECHNOLOGY UPDATES



Today, with the worldwide digital technology's quantum leap that has a huge impact on education, and the great progress in the technological resources and tools, the State of Qatar adopted a vision and an integrated program to invest it as a useful technology that will serve and bolster the educational process, improve our teachers' skills and enhance our students' abilities. In line with this assumption, the E-Learning program came as a result of the new vision which reinforces the belief that the modern technology is able to make a significant difference in educational progress.

E Learning is an initiative launched by SEC in order to develop the educational sector and better the quality of teaching and learning by providing advanced and high quality technological services to achieve Qatar 2030 Vision pertaining to human resources development.

The Program consists of four major projects, which are learning management system, e-bag, e-library system and electronic content.

Learning Management System (LMS)

It is a comprehensive educational portal designed to enhance communication between the different educational partners who constitute the stakeholders in the educational process (teacher, student, parent, school's administrative staff, decision makers) in order to improve the quality of the teaching-learning process through a range of technological services such as:

E-Library:

The E-library system aims to help the learning resources administrators to manage the school library in an electronic way. The project also provides a portal for patrons to reserve resources as well as a variety of additional features.

E-Bag:

It is one of the most significant E-Learning projects which can be considered as a qualitative leap forward in making the traditional educational system more modern and sophisticated. This project, indeed, aims to provide a personal tablet for every student to use it inside and outside the school with a permanent access to all electronic applications.

E-Content:

The enormous technological development in the educational field created an urgent need for digital content that is compatible with Qatari Curriculum Standards and to adopt the Arabic Culture, by providing e-resources on a global level for all educational curriculums in Arabic and English, leading thus to an amelioration in the quality of education provided for students.



We would like to thank the GCC States and Yemen who have collaborated with RCICT and briefed us on their latest uses of technology in education; and we promise to cover other States' news in our future editions.



It is hard nowadays to find a person who does not have a tablet. Actually, this device, which is ideal and amazing for productivity increase, has an immense potential to provide electronic learning in a very useful way for organizations and ministries. Therefore, the State of Kuwait was keen to implement electronic education initially in the secondary stage, which will be followed by the earlier primary and intermediate stages, putting into account that Kuwait enjoys an infrastructure, which is unmatched in the world.

This will allow the student to benefit from the information sources whether they are on the website or the electronic gate of the Ministry of Education. What is more, students can share and discuss such information with their classmates and teachers through the smart board. They can also show the information to everybody, drawing consequently great benefit from the available information sources and allowing the student to interact positively

with his / her teachers. The implementation of this project aims to reduce the weight of the school bag for the students by providing tablets and chrome books that will be used in all the school subjects (English, math, science, history and so on and so forth).



The Sultanate of Oman is among the countries that consider the implementation of technology as a key priority mission for the government. On various occasions, His Majesty the Sultan, emphasizes in His speeches the use of technology to streamline and simplify administrative work in both public and private sectors. He always directs His people and government to take immediate steps to put plans in action to manipulate the E-Government services and put them into practice in order to meet people's demands. The Ministry of Education, as a part of the government, leads a distinguished project in serving schools online, which is MoE portal. This project is locally and internationally recognized with its prizes and awards won through the participation in local and international events. With the initiation of E-portal and ICT in the field of education, the ministry has overridden other ministries in providing plenty of online services for teachers, students and parents.

For instance, parents can transfer their students online using the provided links services. In addition, supervisors can record their site visits via electronic forms to be later seen by teachers. Moreover, community can interact with schools using emails and various social networks so as to enhance communication and bridge the gap between schools and the outside community and be aware of the various activities held in schools. Furthermore, teachers can interact using different online forums and discussion boards for any ambiguity in their subjects or when they need any pedagogical support.

The E-Learning and E-content Department in the ministry is focusing on equipping teachers and students with the required skills to integrate technology in the teaching learning process. The department has skillful central teams who create interactive activities and learning aids, which not only contribute to the curricula and complement them inside and outside the class but also make effective use of social networks in education.





INTERVIEWS:

On “Technology for HR” Workshop With a Trainer:

The Regional Centre for Information and Communication Technology (RCICT) regularly hosts and organizes continuing workshops and training courses in collaboration with the University of Bahrain. One of the workshops, which was held twice due to the positive feedback received from participants, was “Information Technology for Human Resources” (IT for HR).

RCICT had an interview with **Dr. Jafiah Hassan Alammary**, Head of Information Systems, at the University of Bahrain, who prepared and presented the above-mentioned workshop to figure out some details about the content and outcomes of this subject. Dr. Al-Ammary gave us an overall summary about the workshop and what it entails. She explained that it has been planned to enable participants to utilize IT to enhance the productivity of the HR system and streamline recruitment and human development processes. The first part of the subject deals with the impact of Information Technology on HR regarding aspects such as: Efficiency, planning and Strategic. The main function of the workshop is to explain the operational, technical and strategic levels involved.

The second part of this workshop mainly focuses on addressing areas where the Internet has contributed in making HR smarter with the creation of Internet Portals, the use of Virtual Meetings, Business Intelligence and Resource Analysis. Whereas, the third part lays the emphasis on how Social Networks can be used as supportive tools for HR in various functions.

When asked about the target audience and required qualifications to participate to attend the workshop sessions, Dr. Alammary stated that the subject matter had primarily been designed for participants with a background in HR. She added that the outcomes of the workshop would be beneficial if the participants were involved in decision making, and were able to adapt some of the course materials to their work. With reference to the qualifications required to optimize benefits, she stressed that besides having a good background in using Excel and Access applications, trainees with traits such as critical thinking, problem solving and positive mind-sets would ultimately get advantage of the subject presented. Dr. Alammary noted that her current group was ideal as they were all involved in the HR fields at the Ministry of Education.

When asked about the main challenges that might be encountered during the teaching-learning process, Dr. Alammary made it clear that one of them was concerned with the number of hours to cover the material, as participants are expected to grasp many skills and practise them within the same sessions. To conclude, we asked Dr. Alammary to give some pieces of advice to participants in order to optimize the benefits they gain. She underscored the importance of carrying on practice to help master the skills they have attained. Implementation of new knowledge is also crucial, as trainees should always take the initiative and suggest new ideas to their managers in order to update them on the new technology in HR methods and tools.

With Trainees:

Based on the importance of selecting workshops and training courses, which contribute to achieving the objectives of RCICT, we had an interview with two trainees who participated in “IT for HR”. The interviewees were Mr. Khalid Saleh Alsabahi, an educational specialist at the Directorate of Secondary Education and Ms. Latifa Yousif Alrowaiee, a specialist at the Directorate of Human Resources. When they were asked to give feedback on the workshop, Ms. Latifa started by making it clear that it was beneficial as the materials introduced highlighted the solutions and methods that can help develop HR practices. Both Ms. Latifa and Mr. Khalid were overly satisfied with the workshop material and teaching techniques as a whole. Mr. Khalid stated that he was extremely enthusiastic to learn more about the applications involved in Information Technology for Human Resources such as Microsoft Excel and Access and to apply them in his work. He also added that this workshop would help enrich his previous knowledge and experiences. They both agreed that the workshop helped them get acquainted with the most up-to-date practices in the field of ICT and would surely help enhance their skills regarding HR since the content was both new and useful. When the trainees were asked if they have encountered any challenges during the workshop sessions, they both responded that time constraints was the main challenge; they needed more time to practise the new systems introduced and optimize their benefits and successful implementation of the tools involved. They also stated that they would highly recommend this workshop to Managers and Heads of HR Departments, as it would not only help them with issues related to decision making but also promote the work processes. Finally, we asked Mr. Khalid and Ms. Latifa about what they would do in order to improve the skills and information they have acquired from the workshop. While Ms. Latifa answered by emphasizing the importance of utilizing what they learned in the workplace, especially applications introduced to prepare monthly reports, which help keep track of all the details needed to be included, Mr. Khalid noted that the acquired skills would help in compiling absences in administrative bodies in the Ministry of Education as well as transferring teachers and other employees following the needs of departments in the field of Education. At the end of the interview, we thanked Mr. Khalid and Ms. Latifa for their time and wished them success in their future plans.

TECHNOLOGY UPDATES

Pinch VR – Smartphone & Virtual Reality Are One



Pinch is a smartphone case for IOS and Android that converts into a wearable virtual reality experience. This case, combined with a free companion app, brings what you are seeing to life. Pinch is the first VR platform that fits in your pocket, allowing you to use your phone traditionally or as a virtual reality headset with integrated controls.

This technology can serve many fields in education; some of them are the following:

- **Engineering:** Engineers could use VR technology to create and design in 3D.
- **Geography:** This technology provides a better view of maps and directions.
- **Science:** It can be used in scientific subjects in schools to identify the human body's organs as an example.
- This technology also provides better teaching environment for students, which can help them imagine and improve their creativity.
- This case is available for iPhone 6 and Android 4.1 or later devices.

Source: <https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/pinch-vr#/story>

New Updating Operating System: Windows 10

Microsoft Windows 10 will be released in July 2015. It aims to provide users with an operating system optimized for PCs, tablets and phones in unique ways.

The Main Features of Windows 10 include:

- The Start Menu is back in an expanded form: Windows 10 adds a revision of the desktop start menu, due to popular demand, similar to that of Windows 7.
- Cortana on Desktop: Windows 10 will see the return of Microsoft's voice-controlled digital assistant Cortana to desktop computers, making it easier for users to interact with their device without lifting a finger.
- The New Default Web Browser "Microsoft Edge": Windows 10 comes with Microsoft Edge, an all-new browser that is built to give the user a better web experience, write or type notes directly on webpages, share them with others, read online articles free of distraction, and save the favorite texts for later access.
- Xbox: A user will soon be able to play any Xbox One game on his/her PC or tablet, with the Xbox app for Windows 10. The new operating system will support Xbox game streaming, with improved speed and graphics performance thanks to DirectX 12 support.
- Windows Store is your one-stop shop: A new Windows Store is set to be introduced and will serve as a unified shopping experience across every Windows 10 device. The user will be able to browse the store on his/her PC, tablet, or phone and easily purchase great digital content including apps, games, music, movies and TV shows.

Source: <http://www.microsoft.com>



New Technology Device in RCICT



The Virtual Laser Projection Keyboard and Touchpad is a portable device, which emits laser projection and motion detection technology, and is considered your great companion for tablets. It can be connected via Bluetooth to your iPhone, iPad or any other Android devices and can be used for Windows or Mac OS computer via USB connection. All what you have to do is to click the switch to enable the device to pair wirelessly with your smart mobile. It is smaller than a pack of cards, and it fits easily into your pocket. The Laser Projection Keyboard runs up to 2 hours continuously when wireless and you can recharge it again via wired USB.

Source: <http://www.tuvie.com>

Upcoming Events & Meetings



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