

# Evaluation Report on the Government of Oman- UNICEF Child Friendly Schools Initiative



EduEval Educational  
Consultancy

SEPTEMBER 23, 2016



## Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Object of evaluation</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Purpose of the evaluation</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Objectives of the evaluation</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Scope</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Audience of the report</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Methodology</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Limitations .....	7
<b>Findings and conclusions</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Main recommendations</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Team Members</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Evaluation Commissioner</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>List of Abbreviations</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Evaluation Object, Purpose, Objective(s) and Scope</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Object of evaluation</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Purpose</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Objectives</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Scope</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Evaluation Methodology</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Primary data</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>Qualitative data collection</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>Quantitative data collection (planned)</b> .....	<b>19</b>
Child protection .....	23
Participatory evaluation .....	23
<b>Limitations</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>Findings</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>Relevance</b> .....	<b>26</b>
Evaluation Questions 1.1: How relevant is the CFS initiative to Oman’s national and education sector priorities and policies? .....	26
Evaluation questions 1.2: How relevant is the CFS initiative for the achievement of Oman’s international commitments in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Education for All (EFA) goals? .....	27
<b>Efficiency</b> .....	<b>27</b>

Evaluation Questions 2.1: Were the results of the CFS initiative achieved at reasonably low cost and were resources used appropriately, with a minimum of waste and duplication?.....	27
<b>Effectiveness .....</b>	<b>29</b>
Evaluation Questions 3.1: What is the contribution of the CFS initiative in the 9 pilot schools as compared to reference schools? .....	29
Health, safety and protection .....	29
Inclusion.....	34
Gender-responsiveness .....	38
Child rights .....	39
Learning effectiveness .....	42
Societal participation .....	46
Evaluation Question 3.2: What new capacities were developed through the CFS initiative at the community, school, and ministry levels?.....	47
Evaluation Question 3.3: What major factors at both national and local levels enabled or created bottlenecks for the implementation of the CFS initiative?.....	47
<b>Sustainability .....</b>	<b>51</b>
Evaluation Questions 4.1-4.3: To what extent did the CFS initiative contribute to institutional or behavioural changes that can help to sustain programme results? Based on the achievements in the 9 pilot schools as compared to the reference schools, what are the anticipated benefits of expanding the CFS to all primary schools in Oman? What are the staffing, capacity development and training, supervisory, and budget implications of expanding the CFS initiative to all primary schools in Oman?.....	51
<b>Coordination &amp; Partnership.....</b>	<b>53</b>
Evaluation Questions 5.1-5.2: How effective were the coordination arrangements for the implementation of the CFS initiative? To what extent did the CFS initiative contribute to a greater sense of partnership in education between the programme stakeholders, including school principals, teachers, and parents and caregivers?.....	53
<b>Human Rights-Based Approach .....</b>	<b>53</b>
Evaluation Questions 6.1: To what extent did the CFS initiative apply and promote a human rights-based approach to programming?.....	53
Evaluation Question 6.2: How well did target groups of children and their families within the catchment areas of the 9 pilot schools AND identified as vulnerable or at-risk benefit from the CFS initiative? .....	54
<b>Results-Based Management .....</b>	<b>60</b>
Evaluation Questions 7.1-7.4: To what extent were the planned CFS results logical and SMART given the strategies, time, and resources employed? To what extent were the risks and assumptions made clear in the design of the CFS initiative? How well were the risks and assumptions considered during implementation? How effective were the management arrangements for the CFS initiative for joint annual work planning, monitoring, and reporting against expected results? .....	60
<b>Conclusions and Lessons Learned .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Relevance.....</b>	<b>62</b>

<b>Efficiency</b> .....	<b>62</b>
<b>Effectiveness</b> .....	<b>62</b>
<b>Sustainability</b> .....	<b>64</b>
<b>Coordination and Partnership</b> .....	<b>65</b>
<b>Human Rights-Based Approach</b> .....	<b>65</b>
<b>Results-Based Management</b> .....	<b>66</b>
<b>Recommendations</b> .....	<b>67</b>
<b>Appendices</b> .....	<b>70</b>
<b>1. The original Terms of Reference:</b> .....	<b>70</b>
<b>2. List of persons interviewed and sites visited</b> .....	<b>79</b>
<b>3. List of documents consulted</b> .....	<b>81</b>
<b>4. More details on methodology, such as data collection instruments, including details of their reliability and validity</b> .....	<b>82</b>
➤ Interview protocols .....	<b>82</b>
➤ Checklist .....	<b>89</b>
➤ Online Surveys .....	<b>90</b>
<b>5. List of abbreviations</b> .....	<b>104</b>
<b>6. Evaluators biodata and/or justification of team composition</b> .....	<b>105</b>
<b>7. Evaluation matrix</b> .....	<b>108</b>
<b>8. Code of Ethics</b> .....	<b>109</b>

## Executive Summary

The Sultanate of Oman is a high-income country that has been acknowledged regionally and globally for its rapid human development over the past forty years. The education system in Oman has faced many challenges that required strategic attention from the government. Upon reflection, the Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) initiative was developed and implemented to promote greater student success.

## Object of evaluation

The Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) initiative is a model that was co-constructed by the Government of Oman (GoO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2012 - 2015. With principles derived from the 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child and other human rights instruments and declarations such as Education For All (EFA), the CFS model aims to facilitate the access of all children in Oman to educational systems where the principles of child-centeredness, democratic participation and inclusiveness exist. Accordingly, six dimensions for CFS Oman were identified: (1) child rights promotion; (2) health, safety and protection; (3) inclusiveness; (4) learning effectiveness; (5) gender responsiveness; and (6) societal participation. These dimensions will serve as the guiding principles on which this independent, formative evaluation will be framed.

Upon launching in 2012, the CFS initiative was initially piloted in 9 public schools in 3 different governorates (Muscat, Dhofar and Musandam). In 2014, a four-phased plan was designed to facilitate the scaling up of the initiative. It is currently in the "Introduction phase" in 34 schools in 5 governorates.

## Purpose of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to inform the scaling-up potential of the CFS initiative to include all schools in Oman. Adopting a utilization-focused approach, this evaluation offers practical information to help the key stakeholders understand the extent to which the CFS initiative has positively influenced pilot schools (in terms of the learning environments and the learning outcomes for the children in these schools) and communities (in terms of level of engagement between the school and the community) in Oman, as compared to reference schools, since its inception in 2012.

## Objectives of the evaluation

The evaluation objectives are to:

- Assess the contribution of the CFS initiative to teaching and learning in the pilot schools;
- Understand the extent to which the CFS initiative developed new capacities at all levels;

- Identify the enabling factors and challenges that affected the implementation and performance of the CFS initiative;
- Make judgements about the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of the CFS initiative for expanding the CFS to all primary schools in Oman
- Provide actionable recommendations to:
  - Enable a policy decision about whether the Oman Ministry of Education should formally adopt the CFS approach and scale-up the initiative nationally;
  - Inform the on-going development of the 9th National Development Plan; and
  - Contribute to the on-going curriculum reform process in Oman

## Scope

The scope of this evaluation is limited to:

- The CFS initiative from 2012 in the nine (9) pilot schools and their communities;
- The interactions of the CFS initiative with the policy, teaching, and curriculum departments of the Ministry of Education, the National Centre for Statistics and Information, the Research Council, and National Human Rights Commission

The OECD/DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability), with their relevant focus, were adopted in this evaluation. In addition, three factors - (1) coordination and partnership; (2) human rights based approach; and (3) results-based management - were examined. This evaluation also addressed equity concerns related to gender, national identity, language, and special needs.

## Audience of the report

This evaluation report is mainly intended for:

- The Government of Oman, who will be working with UNICEF to prepare a new Country Programme (CP) for next year;
- The school/community-level implementers and beneficiaries of the CFS initiative (principals, teachers, parents and caregivers of children involved in CFS); and
- The UNICEF Oman Country Office (CO), Regional Office (RO), and Headquarters, particularly the education section, which are concerned with scaling the CFS initiative up to all schools in Oman, and in understanding how UNICEF can cooperate appropriately with high-income countries, especially in the GCC.

## Methodology

The evaluation employed a utilization-focused approach to answer the key questions of the evaluation. The data was collected from both pilot and reference schools in a quasi-experimental design in which the overall results from the pilot schools were compared to reference schools.

Both primary and secondary, as well as qualitative and quantitative, data was used. Qualitative data was collected from both groups of schools via focus groups and individual interviews with students, parents, teachers, national team members, school principals, and the CFS programme leadership. Quantitative data was to be collected via online surveys shared with the CFS programme leadership, principals and teachers in pilot and reference schools; however, none of the intended participants responded. To mitigate this challenge, secondary data was obtained from the MoE, but the secondary data received was incomplete for the purpose of this evaluation.

### Limitations

A number of limitations were associated with this evaluation. These limitations fall into three general categories. First, while EduEval developed the protocols for sampling and UNICEF and the MoE distributed these protocols to the schools included in the evaluation, it was the principals themselves who were required to select the focus group participants using these protocols. Though indirect sampling (by, for example, an implementing partner or donor) is a common approach in the region, there is a risk bias of the evaluation as there is no way to ensure whether the protocols are actually used. Second, the time frame of the evaluation created a situation whereby the inception report feedback and data collection were simultaneous. As a result, the methodology became less participatory and decisions about how to proceed with data collection in the face of challenges had to be made with little consultation of all relevant parties as initially planned. Finally, the quantitative data was insufficient.

### Findings and conclusions

- The CFS initiative is still not fully operational and requires more time for it to reach a practical stage for many stakeholders.
- **Relevance:** CFS' key areas – especially child rights – are moving along with the Ministry's key priorities. The Omani focus on child rights may result in duplication of efforts without greater coordination.
- **Efficiency:** Drawing a final conclusion regarding the budget allocated for the implementation of CFS was not possible.
- **Effectiveness** (addresses the six pillars of the CFS initiative): The health, safety and protection; child rights; and learning effectiveness pillars were found to be more successfully than others (inclusion, gender-responsiveness, and societal participation).
- **Sustainability:** Three factors were identified as sustainability drivers/hinderers; these are: (1) investment of material resources; (2) training of all stakeholders; and (3) the workload that the initiative requires.
- **Coordination and Partnership:** CFS would benefit from greater practical communication within schools and the Ministry, as well as across government agencies.

- **Human Rights-Based Approach:** CFS can advance Oman’s current national and international commitments to human rights by targeting the public school system. Specifically, focusing on inclusion and pedagogy would be well-received by the local authorities.
- **Results-Based Management:** Both CFS and the Ministry departments working with the initiative would benefit from more defined monitoring and evaluation structures, including streamlined indicators, regular data collection, and additional disaggregation of data. CFS is not yet ready to scale in its entirety at this time but has many opportunities for partnership across government agencies and should explore them to fully leverage all available resources in the expansion of CFS.

### Main recommendations

The evaluation resulted in thirteen main recommendations:

1. More time is needed for the implementation and institutionalization of CFS.
2. Inclusion needs greater emphasis at all levels.
3. Gender-responsiveness needs greater clarity and emphasis at all levels.
4. A shared logic model for a unified M&E strategy is needed.
5. Key indicators for results-based management need to be refined and standardized in a toolkit.
6. Results should be disaggregated by agreed-upon key inclusion factors.
7. A unified M&E toolkit for stakeholders is needed.
8. It is critical to continue to build capacity at all levels for CFS with scalability in mind.
9. Partnerships for CFS need to become more explicit and public.
10. The alignment of CFS to national strategies needs to be better communicated among both Ministry of Education departments and Omani government institutions as a whole.
11. A policy focus should be included in the initiative for sustainability and scalability.
12. Collaborative planning for phased replication of successful dimensions should be undertaken.
13. School-based and other MoE staff workload should be addressed for practical success and scalability.

## Team Members

Name	Organization
Dr. Sonia Ben Jaafar	EduEval Educational Consultancy
Ms. Sarah Capper	EduEval Educational Consultancy
Ms. Lorraine Charles	EduEval Educational Consultancy
Ms. Sarah Zantout	EduEval Educational Consultancy
Mr. Yazan Habash	EduEval Educational Consultancy

## Evaluation Commissioner

Name	Address
UNICEF Oman Country Office	Oman Regional Office: North Al Azaibah, Muscat, Oman

## List of Abbreviations

Acronym	Term
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>CFS</b>	Child-Friendly Schools
<b>CO</b>	UNICEF Oman Country Office
<b>CP</b>	Country Programme
<b>CRC</b>	Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>EFA</b>	Education for All
<b>GCC</b>	Gulf Cooperation Council
<b>GoO</b>	Government of Oman
<b>H.E.</b>	Her Excellency
<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>NWT</b>	National Working Team
<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>RO</b>	Regional Office
<b>SEN</b>	Special Educational Needs
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund

## Evaluation Object, Purpose, Objective(s) and Scope

### Object of evaluation

The Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) initiative in Oman is a model that evolved from a cooperative effort between the Government of Oman (GoO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2012-2015. The CFS model is a pathway to quality education through the application of inter-related principles derived from the 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child and other human rights instruments and declarations such as Education For All (EFA). These principles are (1) child-centeredness, which safeguards the interest of the child; (2) democratic participation, where children, and those who facilitate their rights, have a say in the form and substance of their education (3) inclusiveness, where all children are granted the right to education, not as a privilege, but as a duty that society fulfils to all children (Evaluation office, 2009).

In 2010, a Ministerial Decree by H.E. the Minister of Education established a National Working Team (NWT) on child-friendly schools. The NWT worked closely with international experts (Miske Witt & Associates Inc.) in developing the CFS initiative in Oman. In 2012, the Sultanate of Oman launched its CFS initiative with a Ministerial Decree by H.E. the Minister of Education. Oman adapted the three key principles set out by the UNICEF CFS model and identified six dimensions for the implementation of CFS for the Omani context. As presented in the figure below, these six dimensions are: (1) child rights promotion; (2) health, safety and protection; (3) inclusion; (4) learning effectiveness; (5) gender-responsiveness; and (6) societal participation (for descriptions of these dimensions, see Oman's Child-Friendly Schools Initiative Standards, 2013). In 2013, the CFS initiative's standards were published, underpinning the six dimensions of the CFS initiative and explaining in detail the expected roles and responsibilities of the schools and the MoE with regard to the implementation of the CFS initiative.

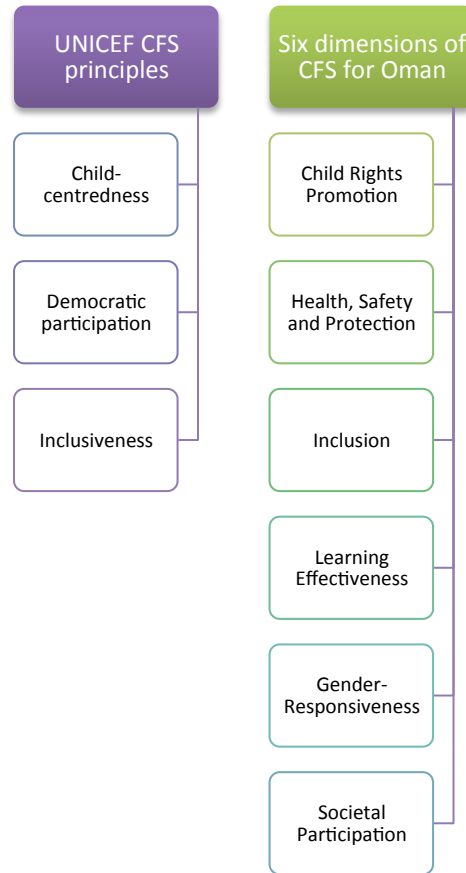


Figure 1: UNICEF's CFS principles and the dimensions adapted by Oman

The CFS initiative was initially piloted in nine schools in three governorates (Muscat, Dhofar and Musandam) in 2012. The nine pilot schools were selected to represent the different cycles (primary, middle and secondary).

In 2014, a five-year educational plan for the scaling up of the CFS initiative was designed to include all schools in Oman. The plan identified four phases across school, directorate and ministry levels: introduction, initiation, implementation and institutionalization. The four phases are based on systems thinking. Currently, scaling up is still in the *introduction* phase. As of the 2014-2015 academic year, the Child-Friendly Schools initiative in Oman has expanded to 34 schools, serving over 12,000 students in five governorates (Muscat, Dhofar, Musandam, Al Batinah South and Al-Dakhiliyah).

## Purpose

The purpose of this independent formative evaluation of Oman's CFS initiative commissioned by UNICEF is to inform the scaling-up potential of the CFS initiative to include all schools in Oman. The evaluation focused on understanding the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of the CFS initiative in Oman. It assesses the extent to which CFS has influenced school and learning environments. It identifies the aspects of

the initiative that are successful as measured against UNICEF benchmarks for the CFS initiative; highlights areas in which further development is necessary; and provides practical and useable recommendations to improve the project in light of the scaling of the initiative to other schools in Oman.

This evaluation was required at this point of time because the Government of Oman (GoO) will be working with UNICEF to prepare a new Country Programme (CP) for 2016. The 9th National Development Plan will target improvements and growth in Oman to be achieved by 2020. The conclusions drawn from this CFS evaluation will need to support valid inputs for policy discussions between the GoO and UNICEF about the scaling-up of the CFS to the national level and for the overall design and priorities in the next CP and the 9<sup>th</sup> National Development Plan.

This evaluation employs a utilization-focused approach. The general approach of utilization-focused evaluation stresses the process of conducting an evaluation is just as important as the final product<sup>1</sup>. Given that a key objective of this evaluation is to ensure there is a body of practical knowledge for the improvement of the current initiative and to inform a scalable national model, the utilization-focused approach promotes the use of information from the evaluation to contribute to learning for the continued expanded operation of the programme. As such, this evaluation seeks to inform the following parties:

- The Government of Oman, especially the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Development, the National Centre for Statistics and Information, the Research Council, and National Human Rights Commission;
- The principals, teachers, parents and caregivers of children involved in Child-Friendly Schools; and
- The UNICEF Oman Country Office (CO), Regional Office (RO), and Headquarters, particularly the education section.

The evaluation findings are especially relevant to UNICEF, as it continues to explore its strategy and positioning for on-going, effective cooperation in high-income countries, and in countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Other users of the evaluation include:

- The governments and education ministries of other Gulf states, as the status of the public education systems of the other GCC states bear resemblance to that of Oman;
- UNICEF country offices and other multi-lateral organisations, such as the OECD and World Bank, who are engaged in education policy and programming in middle- and high-income countries.

---

<sup>1</sup> Patton, M.Q. (2008). Utilization-focused evaluation, 4th edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Patton, M.Q. and Horton, D. (2009). Utilization-Focused Evaluation for Agricultural Innovation. Institute of Learning and Change (ILAC) Brief No. 22. ILAC, Bioversity, Rome.

This evaluation examines the successes, missed opportunities, constraints and sustainability of the CFS initiative implemented from 2012-2015 in selected schools and communities in Oman as compared to reference schools. Specifically, this report offers valid, reliable, and practical information and insight that will help the Government of Oman and UNICEF understand the extent to which CFS has positively affected schools, learning environments, and learning outcomes for the children involved in the programme. The evaluation provides insights on the current state for scalability of the initiative, as well as sustainability in the schools in which the initiative has already begun. Finally, this evaluation provides input into policy discussions between the Government of Oman and UNICEF about the scaling-up of CFS to the national level and for the overall design and priorities set in Oman's 9th National Development Plan.

## Objectives

The aim of the CFS model is to enable schools and education systems to move progressively towards quality standards by addressing all elements that influence the wellbeing and rights of the child as a learner and as the main beneficiary of teaching, while concurrently improving other school functions. The scope of the CFS models goes beyond the school setting for which educators have been traditionally responsible. While pedagogic excellence and performance outcomes are very important, a holistic concern for the child's needs is also important within the CFS model. The education system in Oman has faced many challenges over the years. These include a heavy focus on assessment with many more days spent on examinations than international best practice suggests; a lack of clear and realistic learning targets for students; an underdevelopment of critical thinking skills; curriculum issues such as poor English instruction and underdevelopment of soft skills; and the underachievement of male students<sup>2</sup>. As such, the Government of Oman (GoO) decided to integrate the CFS initiative into its education system to raise awareness of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) among children, parents, and the larger community, as well as support the integration of the CRC's principles into the national school curriculum and strengthen the partnerships among these interconnected groups. The GoO also sought to promote an effective and participatory educational system that would meet the global advancements of the 21st century and the challenges it poses. Moreover, the implementation of CFS would ensure that all children - including those children with special needs - have access to schools; stay in school; and complete a full course of schooling on time. Essentially, CFS would advocate the rights of the child within Omani society. As such, the objectives of this evaluation are to:

- Assess the contribution of the CFS initiative to teaching and learning in the pilot schools;
- Understand the extent to which the CFS initiative developed new capacities at the family and community level, the school level, and at the level of the Ministry of Education;
- Identify and explain CFS' critical enabling factors, as well as any bottlenecks;

---

<sup>2</sup>Jointly prepared by The Ministry of Education and The World Bank, *Education In Oman; The Drive For Quality*. Sultanate of Oman: The Ministry of Education, Sultanate of Oman, 2012. Web. 6 Oct. 2015.

- Make judgements about the overall relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of the CFS initiative;
- Provide actionable recommendations to:
  - Enable policy decisions about whether the Oman Ministry of Education should formally adopt the CFS approach and whether it should scale the initiative to the national level;
  - Inform the ongoing development of the national education strategy to be incorporated into the 9th National Development Plan; and
  - Contribute to the ongoing curriculum reform process in Oman.

## Scope

The scope of this evaluation is limited to:

- The CFS initiative from 2012 in the nine (9) pilot schools and their communities;
- The interactions of the CFS initiative with the policy, teaching, and curriculum departments of the Ministry of Education; the National Centre for Statistics and Information; the Research Council; and National Human Rights Commission.

The evaluation is based around a comparison of the implementation of initiatives in CFS schools and reference schools that did not participate in the CFS intervention. The difference between the intervention and the reference schools is considered to point to the value added of the CFS initiative.

The evaluation provides insight into the implementation of the CFS initiative in Oman based on the programme scope (Figure 1) at three levels: the school level; the community level; and the national authority level. The evaluation examined these levels to reflect the systems theory and the sustainability criteria of the initiative.

The OECD/DAC evaluation criteria<sup>3</sup> were used in this evaluation. Questions about the *relevance* of CFS focused on the alignment between the national education priorities and the CFS initiative. Questions about the *effectiveness* of the CFS initiative focused on the extent the implementation of the initiative influenced schools as compared to those schools in which the initiative did not exist, while questions about the *efficiency* of CFS focused on resources dedicated to the initiative. However, it is important to note that there were no financial statements examined and that the insights from CFS key stakeholders and participants did not allow for efficiency to be fully addressed. Finally, questions about the *sustainability* of CFS focused on institutionalization.

At the school and community levels, the effectiveness criterion was emphasized. The schools were studied to determine if the CFS intervention led to more favourable education environments in the Omani pilot schools as compared to the reference

---

<sup>3</sup> The DAC Principles for the Evaluation of Development Assistance, OECD (1991), Glossary of Terms Used in Evaluation, in 'Methods and Procedures in Aid Evaluation', OECD (1986), and the Glossary of Evaluation and Results Based Management (RBM) Terms, OECD (2000).

schools. The communities were studied to determine if they had greater engagement with the school for the benefit of the students. At the national level, the relevance and sustainability criteria were accentuated. The alignment to the national priorities and the extent of institutionalization of the initiative determine the feasibility of scaling up the initiative in Oman.

In addition, three factors were examined: coordination and partnership; the human rights-based approach; and results-based management. Evaluation questions about the coordination and partnership factor focused on organizational connections for implementation of the CFS initiative. The human rights-based approach questions focused on the application of the approach in the initiative. Finally, the results-based management questions focused on the extent of monitoring for better implementation.

Finally, this evaluation addresses equity concerns related to gender, national identity, language and special needs. The evaluation questions themselves ask about vulnerable and at-risk children; in some cases, children are at-risk because of the lack of sensitivity to differences borne out of the factors above. Data identifying such risk factors is covered in the Findings section below. The evaluation itself was also designed to capture data from a diverse group of respondents. EduEval established the criteria for sampling of focus group participants and shared it with UNICEF. UNICEF worked with the Ministry of Education staff to type it and share it with school officials as appropriate. The list below appears exactly as it was supplied to school officials.

#### **1- Students:**

- From 8<sup>th</sup> grade and above or for schools for cycle one: select from grades 3 and 4 grades only – even distribution for each grade ( Total 10 students) randomly from different classes الشعب - students that achieve different scores
- Select one student from the inclusion classes for grades 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, that student should be capable of participating in the focus group discussions  
طلبة الدمج او صعوبات التعلم

#### **2- Parents:**

- Parents of children from different grades
- Parents have different levels of Education/ diverse career/ house wives/ women that have careers

#### **3- Teachers:**

- Teaching years of experience / different years of experience
- Teachers for different subjects / science/English/Arabic/Art/math/Islamic studies/Social studies
- Teachers from different grade levels

## **Evaluation Methodology**

The evaluation methodology was designed as a mixed methods approach applied at the primary empirical study and synthesis levels<sup>4,5</sup>. The approach intended to collect qualitative and quantitative data directly from the participants. The primary data collection is presented in the figure below. The qualitative data was collected from intervention and reference schools with the intention to compare the results and determine if there was a difference between the two groups. The quantitative data was to be collected from program leaders through an online survey. It is noteworthy that although the online survey was sent to the identified participants, no participants responded to the online survey. In order to mitigate this lack of quantitative data, relevant secondary data was requested from the MoE, and while the MoE staff did provide its most recent published data, the secondary data received was insufficient for the purposes of the evaluation.

The approach was designed to address the following core evaluation questions:

- 1 **Relevance:** How aligned are the CFS objectives to Oman's national education priorities and its international commitment?
  - 1.1 How relevant is the CFS initiative to Oman's national and education sector priorities and policies?
  - 1.2 How relevant is the CFS initiative for the achievement of Oman's international commitments in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Education for All (EFA) goals?
- 2 **Efficiency:** To what extent were the expenditures of resources and transaction costs reasonable given the influence of the CFS?
  - 2.1 Were the results of the CFS initiative achieved at reasonably low cost and were resources used appropriately, with a minimum of waste and duplication?
- 3 **Effectiveness:** To what extent did the CFS initiative achieve its goals?
  - 3.1 What is the contribution of the CFS initiative in the 9 pilot schools as compared to reference schools?<sup>6</sup>
  - 3.2 What new capacities were developed through the CFS initiative at the community, school and ministry levels?
  - 3.3 What major factors at both national and local levels enabled or created bottlenecks for the implementation of the CFS initiative?
- 4 **Sustainability:** To what extent is the CFS initiative sustainable and scalable?

---

<sup>4</sup> Tashakkori, A., Creswell, J.W.: The new era of mixed methods. *J. Mix. Methods Res.* (2007)

<sup>5</sup> Tashakkori, A., Teddlie, C. (eds.): *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioural Research*. Sage, Thousand Oaks (2003)

<sup>6</sup> This question was modified by EduEval to include the comparative results with the reference schools

- 4.1 To what extent did the CFS initiative contribute to institutional or behavioural changes that can help to sustain programme results?
- 4.2 Based on the achievements in the 9 pilot schools as compared to the reference schools<sup>7</sup>, what are the anticipated benefits of expanding the CFS to all primary schools in Oman?
- 4.3 What are the staffing, capacity development and training, supervisory, and budget implications of expanding the CFS initiative to all primary schools in Oman?
- 5 Coordination & Partnership Factor**
  - 5.1 How effective were the coordination arrangements for the implementation of the CFS initiative?
  - 5.2 To what extent did the CFS initiative contribute to a greater sense of partnership in education between the programme stakeholders, including school principals, teachers, and parents and caregivers?
- 6 Human Rights Based Approach Factor**
  - 6.1 To what extent did the CFS initiative apply and promote a human rights-based approach to programming?
  - 6.2 How well did target groups of children and their families within the catchment areas of the 9 pilot schools AND identified as vulnerable or at-risk benefit from the CFS initiative?
- 7 Results-Based Management Factor**
  - 7.1 To what extent were the planned CFS results logical and SMART given the strategies, time, and resources employed?
  - 7.2 To what extent were the risks and assumptions made clear in the design of the CFS initiative?
  - 7.3 How well were the risks and assumptions considered during implementation?
  - 7.4 How effective were the management arrangements for the CFS initiative for joint annual work planning, monitoring, and reporting against expected results?

### Primary data

The data were collected in coordination with UNICEF Oman and the MoE Oman. Qualitative data collection in each school was undertaken rapidly and efficiently, allowing the participating schools to provide data and then return to the daily work of teaching and learning.

---

<sup>7</sup> This question was modified by EduEval to include the comparative results with the reference schools

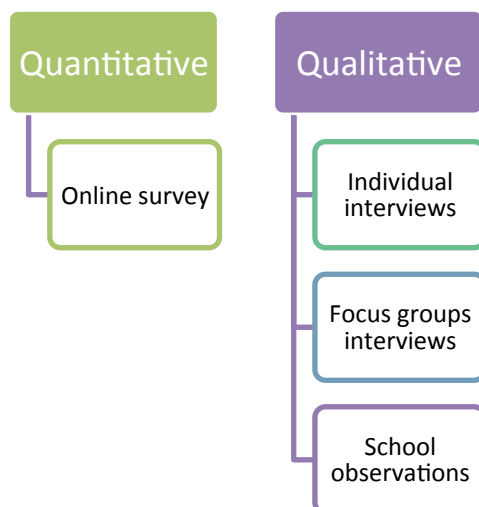


Figure 2: Primary data collection methods

## Qualitative data collection

Qualitative data was collected through individual interviews, focus groups and on-site school observations. The data was to be collected from nine intervention schools and five reference schools. However, it was only possible to collect data from eight pilot schools and three reference schools, as detailed in the *Limitations* section below. Specifically, the qualitative data was collected as follows:

1. **Interviews with key informants** who provide CFS programme leadership in Oman. The intention was to conduct nine interviews. A total of 20 interviews were conducted because the focus group planned for the principals was not logistically feasible in the timeline, and it was necessary to conduct 11 individual interviews with the principals of schools participating in the evaluation. In addition, there were ten interviews with key informants:
  - a. Four interviews with officials the Ministry of Education
  - b. One interview with officials from the National Centre for Statistics and Information
  - c. One interview with an official from the Research Council
  - d. One interview with officials from the National Human Rights Commission<sup>8</sup>
  - e. Three interviews with officials from the District Offices in Muscat, Dhofar and Musandam

UNICEF staff involved in the CFS programme selected the key informants.

2. **Focus groups with key stakeholders** (students, parents, teachers and national team members). Focus groups were conducted ensured a balance of gender, age,

<sup>8</sup>The selection of these key stakeholders are adopted from the ToR and the advice from UNICEF-Oman

educational background and wealth. The number of participants per focus group ranged between five and eleven participants. The table below shows the number of focus groups and focus group participants at each site:

Target Focus group	Sites	Number of Focus Groups	Number of Participants
Parents/caregivers in pilot schools	8	8	69
Parents/caregivers in reference schools	3	3	20
Students pilot schools	8	8	80
Students reference schools	3	3	31
Teachers in pilot schools	8	8	77
Teachers in reference schools	3	3	30
National team members	1	1	3
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>310</b>

Table 1: Focus group locations and participants

The principals of the schools selected the participants of the parent/caregiver, student and teacher focus groups. The criteria for selection was shared with UNICEF program staff as explained above.

3. **Observations.** The school environment in both pilot and reference schools was observed using a modified version of the observation checklist from the baseline study.

### Quantitative data collection (planned)

1. **Surveys for key stakeholders.** Three surveys were designed as follows:

- *Online survey for key officials addressing coordination and partnership*
- *Online survey for principals addressing implementation and sustainability*
- *Online survey for teachers addressing implementation*

Invitations were sent to a list of key stakeholders determined by UNICEF, the principals and teachers from the pilot schools. The survey for key stakeholders addressed coordination and partnership in the implementation of CFS and more generally within the education system. The principal and teacher surveys addressed implementation and sustainability of the CFS initiative and its effectiveness in pilot schools. Surveys were created on a cloud-based software<sup>9</sup>. The surveys were sent to potential respondents twice via email. The invitation contained a link directly to the survey. The surveys were first sent to two key informants and the school principals of the pilot schools visited in Muscat as per the list of emails sent to EduEval from the UNICEF office. The links were then shared with the UNICEF team to be sent through to the rest of the key informants

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.surveymonkey.com/>

and schools in Muscat, Dhofar and Musandam. There were no responses to any of the online surveys so there are no results included from the quantitative data.

### *Secondary data*

The secondary data was additional data requested from the MoE through UNICEF. The additional data requested was:

1. Graduation rates for schools broken down by:
  - a. Governorates (Ad Dakhiliyah, Ad Dhahirah, Al Batinah North, Al Batinah South, Al Buraimi, Al Wusta, Ash Sharqiyah North, Ash Sharqiyah South, Dhofar, Muscat and Musandam)
  - b. Student sex (by region)
2. Standardized (national) test results for schools broken down by:
  - a. Governorates (Ad Dakhiliyah, Ad Dhahirah, Al Batinah North, Al Batinah South, Al Buraimi, Al Wusta, Ash Sharqiyah North, Ash Sharqiyah South, Dhofar, Muscat and Musandam)
  - b. Student sex (by region)
3. Number of registered special needs students:
  - a. Governorates (Ad Dakhiliyah, Ad Dhahirah, Al Batinah North, Al Batinah South, Al Buraimi, Al Wusta, Ash Sharqiyah North, Ash Sharqiyah South, Dhofar, Muscat and Musandam)
  - b. Student sex (by region)
4. The EXACT same information as 1-3, for each of the pilot schools, broken down by sex
  - a. Graduation rates
  - b. Standardized (national) test results
  - c. Number of registered students with special needs (SEN)
5. The EXACT same information as 1-3, for each of the reference schools, broken down by sex
  - a. Graduation rates
  - b. Standardized (national) test results
  - c. Number of registered students with special needs

The data received from the MoE in response to the request was:

1. Grade 12 completion rates<sup>10</sup> for all schools broken by:
  - a. Governorates (Ad Dakhiliyah, Ad Dhahirah, Al Batinah North, Al Batinah South, Al Buraimi, Al Wusta, Ash Sharqiyah North, Ash Sharqiyah South, Dhofar, Muscat and Musandam)
  - b. Student sex for each of these regions

---

<sup>10</sup> Grade 12 completion rates are considered graduation rates in Oman. The graduation is from high school.

c. The completion rates for pilot schools in (Ad Dakhiliyah, Al Batinah South, Dhofar, Muscat and Musandam) broken by sex as well

2. Numbers of registered students with special needs in specialized centres in Muscat only

The data that EduEval received had the average Grade 12 completion rates for (1) public schools overall in Oman; (2) CFS pilot schools; and 3) private<sup>11</sup> schools in Oman.

The data on the number of students identified as SEN was examined for information on the SEN student population in schools overall and in pilot schools. The students identified as SEN were generally educated in specialized SEN centres and no data was shared on the number of students with special needs attending regular public, pilot or private schools. The SEN information is not included in this report because the secondary data was insufficient.

### *Data collection tools*

The interviews and focus group discussions used standardized protocols to assure reliability and the appropriate level of detail was collected to answer the evaluation questions. The interviews and focus group discussions were semi-structured with probes. Trained researchers used these protocols to encourage a high level of participation from the interviewees. These data were digitally audio-recorded after participants consented to the recording.

Notably, all data collection tools were designed in English and translated to Arabic. The data collected was translated back to English for analysis.

The respondents were purposefully selected, as explained above. The data was collected to directly respond to the evaluation questions. The list of instruments and the target audience for each instrument is presented in the table below. All instruments have been attached to this report. The section below (Sampling Framework) offers details on how the data was collected from the targets.

<b>Instruments</b>	<b>Target</b>
Interview protocol	Key informants
Interview protocol	Principals
Focus group protocol	Parents/caregivers
Focus group protocol	Students
Focus group protocol	Teachers
Online survey	Key officials
Online survey	School-based staff
Observation form	School environment

<sup>11</sup> "Private schools" refers to schools that adopt the curriculum of the Ministry of Education but are operated privately.

Table 2: Evaluation instruments

### Sampling Strategy

The evaluation approach compares the reported changes in the intervention schools with that of the reference schools. A quasi-experimental design was used, in which reference schools were matched to the pilot schools so that the results from both groups could be compared. In an ideal situation, the goal of matching is to identify observable characteristics in the intervention and reference groups to be able to assess the effect of the intervention reasonably. The UNICEF office in Oman confirmed the assumption that schools in the same or neighbouring areas host children with similar socio-economic and family educational levels are similar. There was no data available to compare the schools and select based on variables such as school size, student sex, or student achievement levels, so the reference schools were matched to the pilot schools based on location.

Given the nature of the intervention, the sampling framework was designed so as to be able to compare smaller group sizes. The intervention was examined at the school level for all indicators. The unit of analysis is the school. This unit of analysis necessarily means that it is impossible to control for the inherent variability of exposure within school. To mitigate this situation, data was collected from 10 teachers in each school and 10 children per school as presented in the figure below.

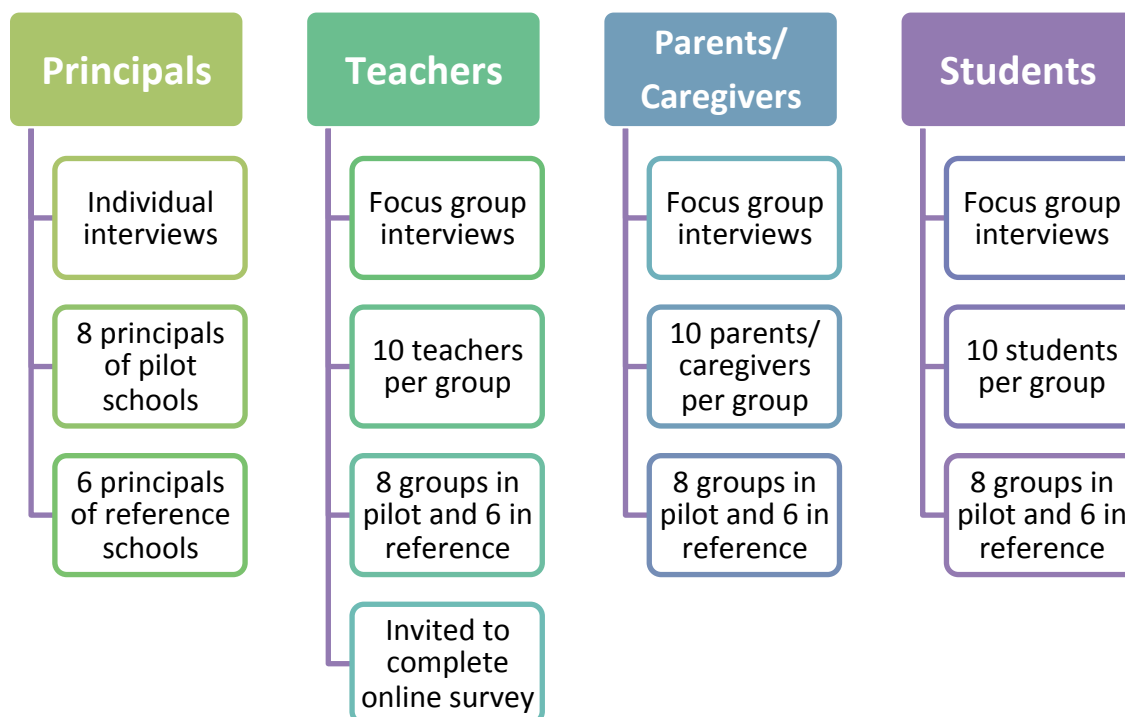


Figure 3: Data collection methods by stakeholder group

The original plan was that EduEval evaluators would select participants from the schools, including the teachers, parents, and students. The criteria for teacher, student and parent selection is presented in the section above.

Logistical and time restrictions prohibited EduEval from conducting the sample selection. UNICEF coordinated directly with the school leaders, sharing EduEval's criteria on participant selection for focus groups. EduEval shared the criteria with UNICEF and UNICEF shared it with the school leaders.

EduEval also did not disaggregate school-by-school data. Doing so in this case would have violated confidentiality protocols agreed under the CFS contract because disaggregating by school would allow for individual participants to be identified. For example, disaggregating data by school would breach the confidentiality of all of the principals in the sample. In addition, some teachers – for example, teachers who are the only teachers to whom a particularly demographic factor applies (eg, sex, subject taught) in their schools – could also be identified in this way.

### **Child protection**

EduEval abides by the International Development Evaluation Association's Code and Ethics (Appendix 8) and UK Aid's Child Protection Policy. The IDEAS policy covers ethics in development evaluation generally; the UK Aid policy covers consent; protocols for data collection and management; protocols for reporting recruitment and training of staff; management; media and communication; and reporting, all with specific regard to collecting data from children.

### **Participatory evaluation**

The evaluation was intended to be participatory in nature. However, several limitations in the implementation of the evaluation hindered the participatory process and made it difficult to call this evaluation truly participatory. These limitations have been detailed further in the Limitations section below.

### **Limitations**

Limitations the evaluation faced are listed below.

First, EduEval was unable to directly oversee the sampling for school-based focus groups. While it is sometimes impossible for the external evaluator to directly-select focus group participants, EduEval prefers to randomly select focus group participants directly whenever possible, because when principals, for example, are tasked with selecting teachers, parents and students for focus groups, they may select those adults who agree with them, and students at the top of the class, or select a sample of convenience. These practices reduce the odds of getting meaningful feedback about challenges to any initiative from the perspective of teachers, parents, and students. In this case, the tight timeline of the evaluation made it very difficult for EduEval to handle sampling directly.

The bigger problem with sampling, though, was that the timing made it very difficult to ensure better selection. UNICEF's staff did verbally acknowledge that some of the

criteria would likely not be following by the principals (particularly with regard to parent selection), but there were no actions for either UNICEF or EduEval to rectify the situation given the time frame and organizational structure.

There were also several other issues that created a restricted timeframe. The inception report and data collection were written and conducted at the same time, which was not the process originally intended. When EduEval arrived in Muscat, the first week was planned as strategic planning time with the UNICEF office for finalizing the logistics of the evaluation and the inception report. Upon arrival to Muscat, the Head of Evaluation for EduEval arrived in a key stakeholder interview and the data collection commenced immediately. As a result, the finalizing of the inception report and the data collection overlapped, and therefore limited the participatory nature of the evaluation. In order for an evaluation to be participatory, there must be input from key stakeholders beginning at the design phase. EduEval was not in a position to solicit and discuss stakeholder feedback about the design of the evaluation thoroughly, because data collection was already completed by the time such feedback was received, and so the participatory nature of the evaluation was limited to the analysis and reporting stages of the evaluation. EduEval found it challenging to incorporate all suggestions and direction into the data collection because the data collection phase was almost complete.

The timing issues were partly due to the fact that the starting date of the evaluation coincided with preparations for Oman's 45th National Day and the National Day itself, disrupting the data collection in numerous ways. For example, three schools cancelled data collection due to the National Day. Evaluators also had to rush interviews in some schools because the shortened timeline for fieldwork. Similarly, the shortened time in each school restricted the data collection team's ability to observe some items included in the observation checklist tool, such as teacher lesson plans and classroom activities. Finally, due to the National Day preparations, teachers at some schools felt that the evaluation competed with their other priorities and were not cooperative. Some noted that they were forced to meet with the data collection team. Principals were more cooperative, but some of the school principals were unable to dedicate sufficient time to meet with the data collection team during this busy time and with short notice.

Partially because of National Day, and partially because the late confirmation of the fieldwork dates, school-level arrangements for focus groups and interviews were conducted last minute. Several limitations resulted. First, the late date and/or time the data collection visits were announced to the schools also made it difficult for some principals to make the necessary arrangements to organize teacher, parent and student focus groups ahead of time. In addition, because of this short notice, many parents did not arrive on time for the focus groups, and in some schools, teachers who were also parents were included in the focus groups (against best practice) because they were some of the only parents available.

The changing timeline of the evaluation may also have put undue pressure on the UNICEF Oman office, as its staff welcomed a high-level delegation of international visitors at the same time as the first and second weeks of the evaluation. The evaluation was originally scheduled to begin one week earlier, but the aforementioned delays in communication made it impossible to start as originally planned, and the evaluation was postponed for one week. As a result, the UNICEF Oman staff were occupied with other priorities.

The final issue related to quantitative data. Quantitative data intended to be collected from online surveys was not used because no responses were recorded by any of the participants that the survey targeted. It was not possible to do hard copy surveys due to budgetary constraints indicated by UNICEF. In lieu of project-specific quantitative data, EduEval requested existing, secondary, quantitative data from the Ministry of Education, but it is reported by governorate, and EduEval therefore did not have access to school-by-school data that could have provided additional feedback about the state of the pilot schools.

Some of these limitations, or parts of them, were out of the control of either EduEval or the UNICEF Oman office. They are listed here so that those limitations that can be eliminated can be considered for future evaluations by the relevant parties, whether they be EduEval, UNICEF Oman, the UNICEF Regional Office, or other relevant stakeholders, in the commissioning and implementing of future evaluations.

## Findings

The findings in this section are presented in the categories of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, coordination and participation, and results-based management. The data from all participants were analysed and summarized into the various sections so that the findings would offer a holistic picture.

### Relevance

#### **Evaluation Questions 1.1: How relevant is the CFS initiative to Oman's national and education sector priorities and policies?**

The key stakeholders consistently agreed that the CFS initiative fits logically with Oman's education priorities. All stakeholders interviewed indicated that child-friendliness is, and has been, a priority for the Omani Ministry of Education and that in many ways, child-friendliness has already been included in various aspects of the national curriculum such as life skills and teacher training. The key stakeholders indicated that CFS provides additional resources to supplement a priority already identified by the Omani Ministry of Education. The following are three illustrative quotes from key informants.

*"CFS lies within the Sultanate's highest priorities to fulfil the strategies it opts to achieve."*

*"Child rights is within almost all of the [Ministry's] plans."*

*-Key MoE official*

*"Oman has focused a lot of universal education and building individual rights, so this initiative really fits."*

*-Key government official*

---

However, some key stakeholders also observed that because of Oman's attention to child-friendliness, CFS might duplicate existing Ministry efforts. In this regard, those planning for replication and scalability should consider how CFS could be integrated into existing Ministry policies and initiatives. As one key MoE official explained:

*"CFS should be viewed as an enhancement of what we already have. Take the context into account, and don't make assumptions about the system, either positive or negative."*

---

**Evaluation questions 1.2: How relevant is the CFS initiative for the achievement of Oman's international commitments in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Education for All (EFA) goals?**

Most stakeholders were less well versed on Oman's international commitments under conventions such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Education for All (EFA) goals. Of these, stakeholders were most familiar with the CRC; some stakeholders did recognize this convention's name and some of its provisions, and were able to speak, briefly, about its relationship to CFS, which they indicated is connected. Respondents were not sufficiently familiar with CEDAW and the EFA goals to offer a comment on them or CFS's connection to them. The only exception to this gap is with respect to the Human Rights Commission with representatives from that same commission. They noted that the Commission's pre-existing program of human rights lectures in all schools, as well as the presence of human rights trainers, and suggested future cooperation between CFS initiatives and the Commission, but were not familiar enough with CFS's work to comment on any links between CFS and these conventions and initiatives.

### Efficiency

**Evaluation Questions 2.1: Were the results of the CFS initiative achieved at reasonably low cost and were resources used appropriately, with a minimum of waste and duplication?**

The majority of the key stakeholders and the school principals indicated that they had insufficient knowledge of any budgetary information related to the initiative and declined to comment on CFS's use of resources and efficiency.

The key informants that did comment were in agreement that CFS reinforced and complemented existing Ministry efforts and that CFS could be integrated with Ministry efforts, instead of duplicating them. As one key official stated:

*"If we scale it as a separate project, something we don't already have a base for, it will be hard. The government will be reluctant to do this, especially now in this environment of cutting costs. We should develop it based on what we already have."*

However, stakeholders did not agree as to the potential cost ramifications of the initiative, especially because the cost of CFS can vary widely among components. The illustrative quotes below offer examples of this MoE official perspective.

*“It’s also costly - in safety, for example, we need to make infrastructure changes.”*

*-Key MoE official*

*“Inclusion, [for example], is not expensive.”*

*-Key MoE official*

---

Others guessed that scaling CFS up would result in financial savings and a conservation of effort, rather than waste and duplication. Although school-level respondents felt reserved in commenting on the efficiency of the initiative, they did report disappointment when talking about barriers to implementation. They claimed that there was insufficient financial support and that the additional work of the initiative would not be accompanied by any remuneration for the school staff. Below are two illustrative quotes from school-level stakeholders.

*“[CFS] needs a lot of things: like follow up from the Ministry and UNICEF, setting proper budgets, and including CFS principles in curricula.”*

*-School-level stakeholder*

*“The Ministry did not help with allocating a budget for the initiative.”*

*-School-level stakeholder*

---

It is noteworthy that the respondents indicated that if financial details were needed for the evaluation, that the “finance department” would have that information. EduEval did not have access to the financial statements or interviews scheduled with anyone from the “finance department.”

There seems to be a general impression that the budget for this initiative is the responsibility of “someone else” who is responsible for accounting. There is no evidence on the actual efficiency of the initiative and EduEval recommends a value-for-money analysis be conducted on the initiative if this is a priority for UNICEF and the Omani government. The scalability of the initiative will be contingent on appropriate funding and budgetary allocation.

## Effectiveness

### Evaluation Questions 3.1: What is the contribution of the CFS initiative in the 9 pilot schools as compared to reference schools?<sup>12</sup>

The CFS initiative targeted six key areas for intervention:

1. Health, safety, and protection;
2. Inclusion;
3. Gender-responsiveness;
4. Child rights;
5. Learning effectiveness; and
6. Societal participation.

This section presents the findings on each of these key areas below.

#### Health, safety and protection

Health, safety and protection formed a key pillar of the CFS initiative. This finding reflected the existing interest in this pillar by the Omani Ministry of Education, as well as by local schools.

In both CFS pilot schools and reference schools, interviewees discussed the presence of nurses in almost all schools. In some cases, these nurses were resident in the schools, and in others, they rotated among schools, but almost all schools had at least one nurse. Several respondents observed that the nurse had become resident (from visiting), or that a new nurse or other medical staff person had been hired for the first time in the last two – three years, but there was no discernible difference in the increase of resident nurses between CFS schools and the reference schools. Some respondents in both groups also reported improvements to the nurse’s facilities in their schools. In addition, both pilot and control groups reported that nurses conduct student checkups; administer vaccines; run health awareness campaigns; provide first aid and train others on first aid; and promote student hygiene in their schools. Below are two illustrative quotes below from pilot and reference school stakeholders:

*“After the [CFS] initiative, a nurse was dedicated for each school. Before, she only visited a certain school once or twice a week.”*

*-School-level stakeholder, pilot school*

*“The nurse has been resident in the school for two years.”*

---

<sup>12</sup>This question was modified by EduEval to include the comparative results with the reference schools

*-School-level stakeholder, reference school*

---

Respondents also highlighted school cafeterias/canteens when asked about school health, safety and protection. In pilot and reference schools, many respondents noted improvements in the nutrition, cleanliness and quality of cafeteria/canteen food, though not all schools saw improvements in the quality of food. In addition, a number of respondents in both the pilot and reference schools indicated that their schools emphasized the importance of a healthy breakfast, and provided their students with breakfast on school grounds - in some cases for a nominal fee. One reference school built a newer, nicer and bigger cafeteria over the last two years. However, some students from pilot group made negative comments about the food such as: “food is not healthy at all and sometimes is expired,” while a sizable minority of respondents in the reference group reported that the food at their schools was lacking in nutrition, cleanliness, or quality. The illustrative quotes below offer examples from the school-level stakeholders indicating a mixed review:

*“Chips and soda have been removed from the cafeteria.”*

*-School-level stakeholder, pilot school*

*“[The school has] healthier breakfasts, with students choosing their own food.”*

*-School-level stakeholder, pilot school*

*“Food is not healthy at all and sometimes it is expired.”*

*-School-level stakeholder, pilot school*

*“The school gives us lectures about healthy food, but the food in the canteen is not healthy at all.”*

*-School-level stakeholder, pilot school*

*“[There is] more focus on selling healthy food in the cafeteria.”*

*-School-level stakeholder, reference school*

*“The cafeteria sells junk food.”*

*-School-level stakeholder, reference school*

---

Crisis management and drills – especially related to fire safety - formed another emphasis for both pilot and reference schools. Key stakeholders and some respondents from both groups stressed the presence of crisis plans, evacuation drills, and crisis/emergency awareness in their schools. Fire evacuation plans, fire extinguishers and emergency evacuation drills were considered to be widespread in both pilot and reference schools.

*“Evacuation and contingency plans and exercises exist.”*

*-School-level stakeholder, pilot school*

*“Fire evacuation drills - we did two last year and the civil defence came.”*

*-School-level stakeholder, pilot school*

*“Every year we have a fire evacuation drill for all the school and the civil defence comes.”*

*-School-level stakeholder, reference school*

*“We have an ‘crisis management plan from the directorate.’”*

*-School-level stakeholder, reference school*

---

However, observational data showed that fire evacuation plans were mostly located in the entrance of the school; none were found in the classes or in hallways. In some pilot schools, the fire exits were either not marked or were locked, suggesting a gap between the knowledge and resources school officials have, and the capacity to apply and utilize that knowledge and those resources.

Some reference schools reported improvements in their schools’ safety processes, such as covering electrical wires. However, some reference schools reported gaps in planning and action, including a school had recently faced an emergency situation while the principal was outside the school, resulting in students and teachers trapped in the school with no real understanding of the crisis plan. Pilot schools also reported ongoing fire safety hazards, including exposed electrical wiring; areas with flammable material such as trees for which no proper safety mechanisms were in place; and lack of identified gathering points and/or emergency exits and evacuation routes inside the school and in the surrounding area.

Many adult respondents mentioned sanitation as one of their key concerns. In the pilot group, multiple schools noted that toilets at their schools have improved over the last

two years, though these improvements did not seem to take place at all schools, as illustrated in the quotes below.

*"[We have an] increase in the number of toilets so that there are enough for girls and boys. Each toilet is labelled and are always kept clean."*

*-School-level stakeholder, pilot school*

*"There are changes, like new toilets built."*

*- School-level stakeholder, pilot school*

*"Toilets have water outage problems. The walk to the toilet is long and the doors have no locks."*

*- School-level stakeholder, pilot school*

---

In addition, respondents in both groups observed an increase in the monitoring of water quality at their schools. The following are a list of illustrative quotes from school-level stakeholders.

*"Water tanks are checked every term. This started very recently."*

*-School-level stakeholder, pilot school*

*"Water is always tested for consumption suitability."*

*-School-level stakeholder, pilot school*

*"[We have] clean water, as we do checks on the tanks regularly."*

*-School level stakeholder, reference school*

---

Many respondents, including both students and adults, also mentioned harassment and bullying. Respondents in both pilot and reference groups noted that students face harassment at school, and highlighted that the school buses and bathrooms are two places where students are especially vulnerable. In the pilot group, one school has begun separating students by age for many aspects of school life to prevent such harassment. Both pilot and reference schools reported improved processes for dealing with bullying, especially on school buses. The following are a list of illustrative quotes from school-level stakeholders.

*"Installing cameras at the door of toilets because of harassment"*

---

*-School-level stakeholder, pilot school*

*“Students with different age groups are now separated”*

*-School-level stakeholder, pilot school*

*“Students ride the buses without any supervision and the students can hurt each other with bad words”*

*-School-level stakeholder, pilot school*

*“There is a new project for having supervisors ride on the bus with students on their way home.”*

*-School level stakeholder, reference school*

*“we have a project in the school called “Investing in my child” which raises awareness of parents and students about protection issues like: harassment”*

*-School level stakeholder, reference school*

---

Respondents indicated that the issues between students were coupled with adult-student issues. In both the pilot and reference groups, respondents reported teacher-on-student violence. In both groups, though, respondents reported improvements in this area, with teacher-on-student violence decreasing, and improvements in the reporting process for such violations. As one teacher stated: *“Teachers are more aware of child rights which reduced the level of violence”*. However, in both groups, some schools still reported teachers resorting to violence to manage students, as well as other unhealthy and coercive behaviour management techniques, such as denying students art and/or music classes.

Both pilot and reference schools focused significantly on play areas. However, some schools in both the pilot and reference groups reported changes and improvements to their playgrounds, while other schools in both groups reported no change. For this reason, changes to the playgrounds appear to be more connected to existing Ministry initiatives than specifically to CFS.

*“School is constructing a new play area (response to student demands). A shade has been constructed with comfortable seating, [too].”*

*– School-level stakeholder, pilot school*

*“We have an indoor gym with AC to play in during summer now.”*

---

– School-level stakeholder, pilot school

*“Students asked for more play area in the shade and/or with AC.”*

- School-level stakeholder, pilot school

*“We would like to improve playground quality but the lack of resources is stopping us. The ministry did not help with allocating a budget for the initiative.”*

– School-level stakeholder, pilot school

*“The school created an outdoor play area for the students to learn and play in it.”*

– School-level stakeholder, reference school

*“The Ministry is preparing schools so that they are not boring, like [with] spacious playgrounds, gyms, theatre, sport activities, and entertainment places.”*

- School-level stakeholder, reference school

---

Finally, many respondents from pilot and reference schools reported *no change* in the health, safety and protection processes and resources at their schools, possibly because the Ministry had already prioritized these areas for a long time. As one school-level stakeholder at a pilot school stated: *“I assure you that all schools in the Sultanate focus on safety, protection and health. This is not something new for schools.”*

Overall, it is difficult to point to major differences in health, safety and protection between the pilot and reference schools. However, while respondents from both groups were overwhelmingly positive about health, safety and protection in their schools, respondents from the reference schools also highlighted more negative conditions than their counterparts from the pilot schools did.

### Inclusion

“Inclusion” is a broad term that, in this context, most frequently refers to including students with special needs, but that can also refer to the needs of any student group that may be at-risk or left behind by the existing school structure and system. As per the illustrative quotes below, key officials identified inclusion as an important value-added component of the initiative. As one official stated:

*“Inclusion is a major way all the CFS schools have benefitted.”*

-Key MoE official

---

At the school level, the pilot group of respondents had more than twice as many comments on inclusion as the reference group respondents did, which suggests that they have a greater awareness of inclusion than their reference school counterparts. As one official stated:

*“[One benefit of CFS is] teacher acceptance of students with special needs.”*

*-Key MoE official*

---

Almost all of the pilot schools reported special services, including classes or facilities, targeting students with various special needs. One school reported a new toilet that serves students with physical special needs. One school has added accessible features such as ramps to accommodate a student in a wheelchair. The following quote offers examples of accommodations from school-level stakeholders.

*“Our school has one student on a wheel chair. We made ramps for her and moved her class to the ground floor of the school. We also dedicated a toilet for special needs, though it does not have any particular installations.”*

*-School-level stakeholder, pilot school*

---

Several respondents in the pilot group also reported that their schools intentionally mainstreamed special needs students into their regular classes for at least part of the school day. By contrast, several of the reference group schools reported that their schools did not have these features because students with special needs go to a “learning centre” or different school. Only one respondent in the reference group reported a special room or class for special needs students at the relevant school. As one school-level stakeholder explained:

*“The special needs students sometimes join mainstream students.”*

*-School-level stakeholder, pilot school*

---

Multiple respondents from the pilot schools pointed to the presence of a specialized social worker or specialized teachers to serve the needs of these students, but some noted that these services existed before CFS. Social specialists were generally well regarded by the respondents in the pilot group and teachers who that they had participated in the MoE’s training to qualify teachers to work with students with special needs. One respondent specifically noted that these trainings and CFS had improved the way the school deals with students with special needs, and another noted there was a particular improvement with regard to bullying and violence against these students, which has decreased. Only one respondent from the reference group mentioned

specialized teachers being available at his/her school. As one school-level stakeholder explained:

*“Teachers undergo training to be able to teach students with special needs.”*

*– School-level stakeholder, pilot school*

---

Some respondents in the pilot group sensed that additional school focus on inclusion had improved student interactions. One respondent noted that students seem to respect each other more, while two others noted that their schools had formed student CFS committees, or “inclusion friends,” that focused on inclusion, among other issues. One respondent in the reference group said that, at his/her school, students always treat each other equally. This school-level stakeholder explained:

*“We have in our school a group of students called ‘inclusion friends.’ This group is responsible for spending time with the inclusion students when they have free time.”*

*–School-level stakeholder, pilot school*

---

Most pilot schools and one of the reference schools reported that all of their school activities were accessible to students the special needs. One school also reported providing alternative activities in lieu of some of the all-school activities. Many pilot schools reported accommodating special needs students in a variety of ways, such as moving their classes to the ground level of the school for students in wheelchairs; seating students with special vision or hearing needs near the front of the class; or tailoring classes to the needs of those with special learning needs.

In the pilot schools, respondents also noted the importance of *identifying* students with special needs. They explained that the issue is that some students with special needs are not identified for years in large school populations, which means that they miss out on beneficial services that may facilitate their success. Other respondents from the pilot group (as well as one reference group respondent) also discussed how their schools have started to track students with special needs to ensure that the whole school staff is aware of the services they need and receive, as well as the students’ progress. Respondents also reported, in one case, improved procedures for the admittance, assessment and orientation of new students with special needs. However, several respondents in the pilot group reported that their schools had no special needs students, as did two of the reference schools.

Multiple respondents in both the pilot and reference schools mentioned that the program “Aqra wa Ufakkir” had strengthened the skills of students with special learning needs –

including gifted students - in their schools. One respondent from the pilot school group mentioned a “young teacher initiative,” which utilizes students to help teach the students with special needs in the school. Among the reference group, two respondents regarded “Aqra wa Ufakkir” or other, similar programs as positive developments for students with special needs in their schools; in addition, two respondents highlighted special tutoring or classes available for students with special needs at their schools.

Some respondents in the pilot group also pointed to other ways in which students with special needs may be disenfranchised by the system. For example, one respondent noted that students with special needs often start school late and subsequently miss age-appropriate vaccination campaigns run through the school. One school addressed this issue by including new students with special needs in vaccination drives even if when the students are older than the age specified for the vaccine. Another example highlighted by respondents was that students with special needs sometimes struggle financially and do not come to school with the required school supplies. This issue also exists for many families struggling financially, who are unable to purchase those supplies needed by their children as they attend school.

Several respondents identified additional groups of students disenfranchised by the education system. They indicated that students with different national and linguistic backgrounds and poor students did not receive sufficient attention to address their needs. However, there was an alternate perception from other respondents in the pilot group, who reported no differences between students from other Arab national backgrounds were noteworthy and that students with different native languages are fully included in the school. Several respondents also said that their schools provide various financial supports for low-income students, such as free breakfast and holiday gifts that include money.

Not all respondents were able to comment on changes regarding inclusion and some respondents indicated that the changes that had been made were the result of local school community efforts and did not attribute the change to the CFS initiative or the MoE efforts.

*“Money allocated for inclusion classes was not received; the school is moving money from other budgets to make them happen.”*

*-School-level stakeholder, pilot school*

---

Finally, one of the reference schools’ respondents reported the presence of special needs students and no additional services for them in the school. This may or may not be a by-product of a parallel structure within the system where students with special needs are in specialized centres.

The findings indicate that the positive steps pilot schools have taken toward greater inclusion of students with special needs are insufficient and is needed to achieve full inclusion in these schools. Below is a quote illustrating that key MoE officials are aware of this reality:

**“We have issues when we have students with multiple disabilities. We also need more training on how to deal with students with learning-related disabilities, like dyslexia, and more several learning disabilities. Autism, too. There are no facilities for autism, for example.”**

**-Key MoE official**

---

### Gender-responsiveness

The results of all the interview and focus group data indicate that respondents made fewer comments addressing gender-responsiveness than they did about most other focus areas within CFS. However, notwithstanding the reduced attention given by the respondents to gender issues, even when probed, it was evident that respondents from pilot schools showed a greater awareness of the CFS emphasis on gender-responsiveness than their reference school counterparts; there was a lack of consistency across respondents; and there was heightened sensitivity with respect to addressing gender in schools.

In the pilot schools, there was an overwhelming consensus that boys and girls were treated equally and had access to all school activities, while fewer respondents in the reference group made this claim. However, there was no agreement in either group on how “access to all activities” is characterized. Some respondents in the pilot group said that all students could participate in all school activities, curricular and extracurricular. Others, in both groups, noted that there is an equal number of activities for boys and girls, but that the activities might be different for the two groups. For example, in one pilot school, a new girls’ football team was being considered and there was disagreement about whether the team would actually come to fruition or had even been announced to students. Several respondents in both groups observed that girls do not have equal access to all sports; as one key-level stakeholder explained: **“...there are some sports girls don’t play, like football.”** In the reference group, students argued that there should be different sports for boys and girls; as one student explained: **“girls shouldn’t play sports.”** At one school from the pilot group, both the principal and a teacher, in separate interviews, expressed concern about a gender-non-conforming student at their school: **“I have one girl who acts like a tomboy. I am working on her to understand and appreciate her femininity. I want her to change her hairdo. She really believes she is a boy. Teachers treat her like a gender-confused person. She has started participating in the feminine activities.”** Statements like this illustrative quote indicate that there is a need for principal and teacher training on

how to address students who do not conform to traditional gender roles while respecting the present-day local culture.

Not all respondents agreed on the national curricula. Different respondents in the pilot group used the segregated life skills courses as evidence that their school was gender-responsive or that it was not gender-responsive. There was disagreement amongst the students about the best course of action: female students in the pilot group suggested that it would be *“better if these sections were removed from the curriculum entirely”*, while boys in the pilot group reported that they *“didn’t want to learn about women’s bodies.”* In the reference group, everyone who mentioned the life skills curriculum agreed with its content and that the boys and girls should be segregated. One group of students in the reference group reported that their school *“omitted the chapter on the female body.”*

Some respondents from the pilot group reported seeing no change in gender-responsiveness in their schools as a result of CFS or any other intervention over the last two years, and another pilot group respondent claimed that *“there is no difference between CFS schools and other schools”* with regard to gender-responsiveness. In addition, key stakeholders involved in CFS reported that the entire gender-responsiveness pillar of the initiative had to be cut in Salalah, because of “local sensitivities.”

It is also worth noting that the Arabic rendering of “gender-responsiveness” used under CFS translated roughly to “recognizing the differences between boys and girls;”; the meaning of the English and Arabic terms could be interpreted differently. Greater definition of the terms may be necessary should CFS increase focus on this key area in the future, especially if the initiative will be scaled into different governorates.

#### Child rights

Among key stakeholders, the expansion of the child rights narrative was viewed as one of the key successes of the CFS initiative. As one stakeholder noted, *“CFS schools played an important role in raising awareness and spreading information about child rights in the society.”* Other key stakeholders named the expansion of child rights as the key *benefit of CFS*, while others noted that the teacher and principal workshops on child rights were practical and beneficial because they included specific metrics. Other said they were proud when they learned that Omani schools – and not only in Muscat – were not starting from zero, and that the narrative of child rights spelled out in international conventions was already present to some degree in Omani schools: *“The schools are better than we expected, and the tools to implement are already present.”* Some highlighted the need for society to understand education in terms of a right, not a luxury:

*“They need to know that education is a child right.”*

*-Key MoE official*

---

*“Child rights are crucial - children need to know about them. Even parents don't know about them. In other countries (in the GCC and in general), it's clearer. But here, the culture is missing. It's really obvious in Europe, where they have the concept of citizenship. I don't even know if printed documents about this exist here.”*

*-Key MoE official*

---

At the school level, staff at both pilot and reference group schools seemed aware of child rights issues. However, in the reference group, very few parents or students had any comments at all on child rights, while the principals and teachers gave more general comments than did principals and teachers in the pilot group. For example, the only parents from the reference group to comment on this topic stated: *“Child rights are observed. Our kids have never complained.”* When asked about child rights, one of the reference group principals responded, *“I have information about this topic,”* without elaborating further, even with probing, while another reported that child rights is *“a part of MoE plans.”*

Many respondents among the pilot school group – including both school staff and students - mentioned an increase in awareness of child rights among school communities. Several respondents, including students and parents, contended that child rights have been safeguarded by principals, teachers, and parents in many ways for a long time in their schools – some even linking narratives of child rights to Islam – *“There is nothing new in this area. As Muslims, we are aware of a child's rights before he or she is born”*– but respondents generally agreed that students' awareness of their own rights has increased. Students reported participating in drama performances about child rights, and teachers pointed to pamphlets, posters and skits aimed at raising awareness of the issue. In the reference group, some teachers and principals reported that their own awareness has increased over the last two years.

Definitions of child rights, however, varied greatly among respondents. Respondents in the pilot group listed student voice and expression, student participation in school activities, teachers fostering of student talents, student health, safety and protection, and child-friendly school facilities as forming the basis for claiming that child rights had been implemented in their schools. One teacher noted that student voice was now effective as principals would respond to improve if: *“students ... protest against the way a teacher is teaching if they don't like it,”* or against *“inappropriate goods in the school canteen.”* Students also reported that their school *“takes [their] suggestions.”* Students mentioned new lockers, and one teacher pointed to a new play area. In the reference group, facilities were also frequently mentioned: two teachers talked about improvements to the school play area (a shade for an outdoor area and an air-conditioned gym), while

another two mentioned the quality of their school canteens. Reference group respondents also mentioned health, safety and protection; the right to education; the importance of fostering student talents; and student-centeredness. Among reference group respondents, the most frequently-mentioned focus of child rights was fostering talent, but principals in the reference group, like in the pilot group, also mentioned student participation (especially with regard to new extracurricular activities); and student choice. Below are illustrative quotes from school level stakeholders.

*“We involve all students as much as possible in a lot of activities like: broadcast, theatre, etc....”*

*-School-level stakeholder, reference school*

*“Now students have the freedom to choose the subjects they want to study.”*

*-School-level stakeholder, pilot school*

---

There were far more definitions of child rights beyond the agreed-upon examples above. One principal from the pilot group said that teachers had begun a process for better follow-up with at-risk students' living situations outside of school. Other teachers listed children's rights to education, play, and clean water as critical in their schools. Students at one school said that they had heard about an upcoming trip to a conference on child rights sponsored by UNICEF. In the reference group, one principal argued that child rights were about *“attention to the whole child.”* Students from one school described greater attention to both student and parent voices in their schools.

Several teachers in the pilot group commented on the existence of teacher training in child rights; these teachers believed such training was helpful. However, one principal observed that the *“MoE training was not helpful, but we looked online and continued on our own.”* It is unclear if this principal was referring to CFS training or another MoE training on child rights, as the principal did not know who funded the training.

Many respondents in the pilot group perceived expanded child rights in their schools as improving other aspects of school life. One teacher reported that improvements in both student commitment and achievement had coincided with the focus on child rights in the school. The teacher stated: *“The school day is so long. Once we introduced child rights, we saw increased in commitment and achievement.”* Another principal noted that students formed a club to raise money for their favourite causes after learning about child rights. In the reference group, one principal claimed that “a big change” occurred in the last two years, but when probed, could only point to student choice in course enrolments as an example. One other principal, though, did report that *“Schools are more attractive – students like them more.”*

However, not all respondents in the pilot group were entirely pleased with the outcomes of CFS' child rights focus. One teacher believed that the initiative was too broad: *"it's vague what it means."* One teacher noted that though the idea behind a child rights focus is good, the physical environment of the school constrains how child-friendly teachers can be: *"There's not enough space for play."* A principal argued that with rights come responsibilities: *"Yes, it's your right to a clean school. But it's also your responsibility to keep it clean."* Others, especially students in several schools, said they did not see the effects of the initiative. They made comments such as:

*"There is discrimination between the students, those who are the children of teachers or high achievers, and those who are not."*

*– Student, pilot school*

*"The only rights we know are from the poster on the front of the school."*

*– Student, pilot school*

*"The teacher prepped us for this interview. It was the first time we'd heard about child rights."*

*– Student, pilot school*

*"We don't feel welcome. Teachers say they are here to teach us and that's their only job."*

*– Student, pilot school*

*"Some teachers do not respect us and the administration always supports the teachers even if they are wrong."*

*– Student, pilot school*

---

Several other teachers and students also reported no, or only minor, changes in this area of focus. In the reference group, one principal reported: *"The MoE has decreased its interest in things that are not academic, so that they do not affect the students' learning."* Another principal said, *"We try to uphold child rights but the school day is very long and there are no recreational resources."*

#### Learning effectiveness

Several key stakeholders noted that CFS had chosen relatively successful schools for participation in the pilot program. These comments are further supported by the Grade 12 graduation rates for academic year 2013-2014 for each governorate. The average

for schools in general and CFS pilot schools are presented in the graphs below. The Grade 12 graduation rates of CFS schools are higher than average in every governorate, and given the timeline of the initiative, it is not realistic to attribute the higher rate to the implementation of CFS. These results suggest that indeed the schools were already performing with greater success.

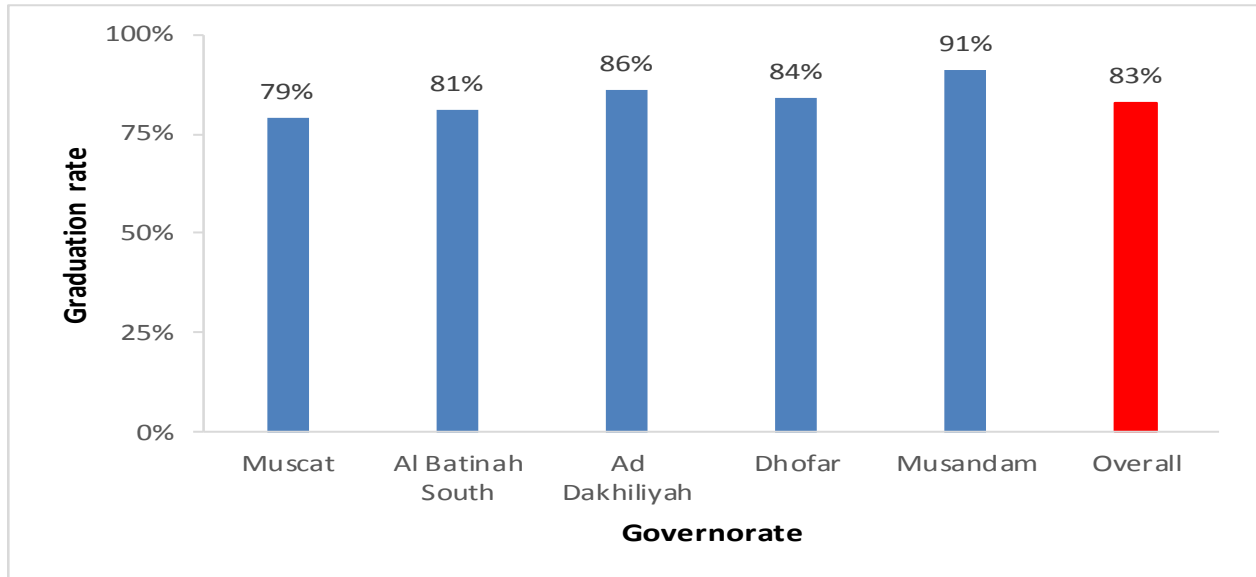


Figure 4: Overall 12<sup>th</sup> grade graduation rate, all schools in Oman, 2013-2014

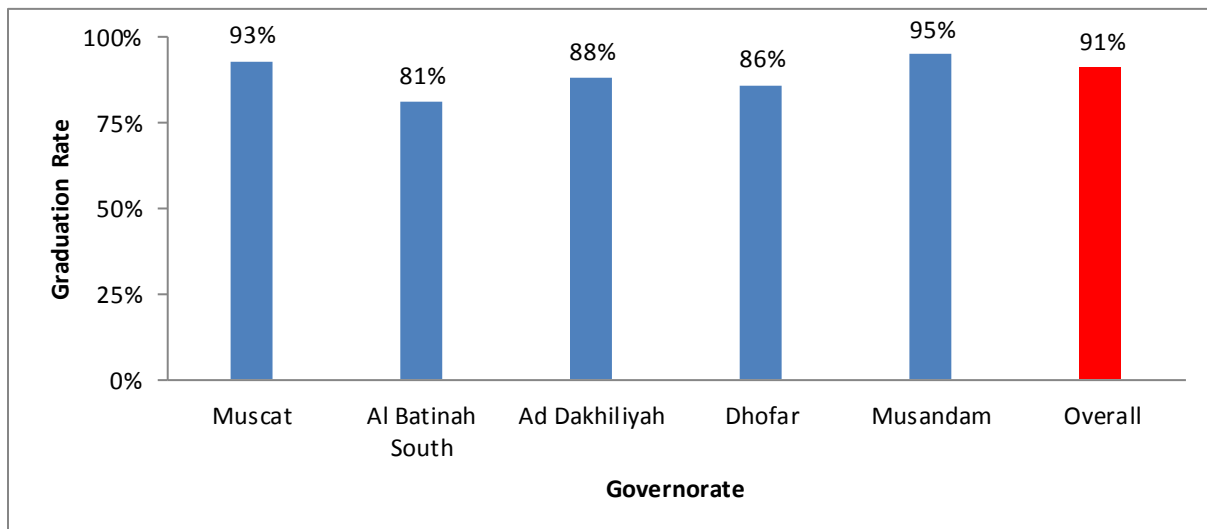


Figure 5: Overall 12<sup>th</sup> grade graduation rate, pilot schools serving grade 12, by governorate, 2013-2014

Teaching methods featured prominently in focus group data on learning effectiveness. But, over the last two years, not all schools and classes saw clear pedagogical change. A significant minority of respondents from the pilot group could not see any change in their schools. In the pilot group, students in particular, claimed that in some schools, many classes remained teacher-centred. Students reported that: *"We only do group work if*

*it says to in the book;” “There is no practical application, especially in English class;” and “Teachers rely on private tutoring, then discriminate in class in favour of their private tutoring students.”*

Several students from the pilot group also said that teachers “punished” them for wrong answers. In some cases, there were changes in teaching methods, but parents were not convinced of their merits, believing that the increased emphasis on skills, such as writing, narrowed the curriculum and decreased students’ exposure to different information.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned reservations, most principals, teachers, students and parents in both pilot and reference believed that new teaching methods created more effective learning in their schools. Respondents from both groups repeatedly mentioned student-centred, practical methodology that included strategies and tools such as group work; student performance assessment; independent learning; academic competitions/games; student choice; focus on student diversity; extra support for struggling students and extra challenge for high performers; and student participation. A large number of respondents in the both also mentioned the popularity of peer teaching/tutoring through the “Little Teacher Initiative.” One parent in the pilot group attributed improved learning to decreasing amounts of homework at the school, while another reported that non-academic curriculum, such as music, art, life skills and sports, are taken more seriously. Students indicated that teachers explain and encourage more than they did in the past. In both the pilot and reference groups, students also reported better relationships with their teachers. In the reference group, parents noticed that classroom setup had changed to facilitate more student-centred learning. The changes taking place at the reference schools suggest that either the Ministry is already implementing other student-centred learning models and initiatives, or that the Ministry has begun to informally replicate CFS learning effectiveness strategies in other schools.

Data from the pilot group indicated that students have become more aware of student-centred methods, and school staff noted that CFS is easy to implement because the majority of school communities see the changes as common sense with focus on student-centred methods, child rights, and technology. Moreover, respondents credited many new rules and systemic changes over the last two years with helping improve learning effectiveness in their schools. Some changes were attributed to CFS and some were not. For example, parents reported that they were no longer free to interrupt classes looking for their children or wishing to speak with teachers, but were required to follow a standard procedure with the administration. Principals and students pointed to friendlier books in the national curriculum, and teachers and principals praised each other for implementing new classroom observations, followed by joint debriefs. The Ministry instituted new rules governing absences that parents considered helpful in boosting student commitment to school; in the words of one teacher: *“Students are no longer allowed to run away from the school.”* Principals, teachers and students were pleased

with expanded student choice in courses, and one teacher said that the school had recently begun to offer career guidance, as well.

Respondents from the reference group reported similar institutional changes. In the reference group, students reported new books and resources in the school resource room. A principal observed that the new curriculum better fosters individual student needs, and another praised new assessment standards that are not set at the Ministry level. Students from the reference group were happy to see the end of automatic passing of students from grade to grade. Notably, parents in the reference group attributed positive changes at their school to Ministry initiatives such as: *“Improvements are due to changes in the Cycle 1 curriculum, not CFS.”*

Although there was a lot of positive feedback, both groups complained about systemic changes or continuing systemic problems in schools. Some parents reported that the class sizes had been reduced, and other complained that class sizes had increased. Similarly, teachers lamented the lack of teachers for some subjects, larger classes, more work on individual teachers, and small physical class space. Students complained that their school-level exams did not adequately prepare them for the MoE exams. Finally, several reference group respondents criticized the density of the new curriculum, claiming that there is insufficient time to address it all using student-centred teaching methods.

Respondents in both the pilot and reference groups enthusiastically praised new technology that appeared in their schools in the last two years. Principals, teachers, students and parents in both groups mentioned new interactive whiteboards; additional computers; and new projectors. In the pilot group, teachers also mentioned audio-visuals and an online portal teachers can use to share lessons and ideas, while in the reference group, teachers and students mentioned WhatsApp groups for students and a new internet connection and TV. In addition, pilot schoolteachers reported that new technology had served students with special needs. The only negative comment regarding technology in a pilot school came from a student who observed that resources needed to use the interactive whiteboard were sometimes missing, while in one reference school, a student complained that the computers available for students were located in a room that not all students could use frequently.

Teacher training for effective learning was repeatedly reported in pilot schools. There were some differences in perception on degree of training; some school staff claimed the MoE provided obligatory training at the beginning and end of the term, and others claimed that MoE training only targets new teachers, and that suggestions from schools regarding teacher training needs are disregarded by the MoE.

Interestingly, the data from key stakeholders proved to be less focused on the learning effectiveness pillar of CFS. In the cases in which they mentioned it, they often did so to

compare it with the focus on child rights, which they clearly felt to be a more important aspect of the initiative. They made comments such as: *“Learning effectiveness is already present, but students and everyone in the system need(s) to understand that education is part of child rights,”* and *“There's also active learning - this is one of the rights of the child.”*

#### Societal participation

Key stakeholders and both reference and pilot school participants all characterized societal participation as the awareness campaigns, activities and parental engagement that take place in schools. Throughout the year, pilot and reference schools conducted a number of awareness campaigns in partnership with health authorities, civil defence, police and other community partners to enlighten students on recent social issues. Key stakeholders attributed the joint work for these campaigns to the interdependence of schools and community. There were no major discernible differences in societal participation between the pilot and reference schools.

As for the activities, both reference and pilot schools reported taking students on educational trips to libraries, fire departments and factories. In addition, students were taken to hospitals to *“visit sick children”* and special needs centres. Both school groups also reported raising money for poor families and organizing campaigns to donate new clothes, especially around the annual period of Islamic occasions such as Ramadan, Eid Al Fitr and Eid Al Adha.

Pilot schools generally spoke of engaging parents through the parents' committee to help them plan activities and external visits in addition to including them in the awareness campaigns organized by the school. Pilot schools also reported participating in community service projects like *“removing harm from the road”*; community-based initiatives like *“walking initiatives”* and in voluntary work or assisting voluntary groups in the community, which was not part of the reference school community engagement.

In comparison, reference schools reported engaging parents only in organizing in-house events and activities. In both pilot and reference schools, neither the parents nor the students participate in the decision-making process regarding the curriculum, teaching strategies or assessments, despite being invited to do so by the school: *“Parents are not included in the school plans and curriculum designs. We always ask them to be part of it, but no response.”*

Finally, both reference schools and pilot schools reported celebrating occasions such as National Day, Tree Day, Teachers' Day and Omani Woman's Day. Pilot schools reported that they celebrate Mothers' Day, but on a small scale, to respect the feelings of orphan children: *“We celebrate ... Mothers' Day briefly in consideration of the students who [have] lost their mothers”.* It is important to note that neither the pilot nor the reference schools included the celebration of the International Day of the Child, which is an activity included in the standards of the initiative for schools.

### Evaluation Question 3.2: What new capacities were developed through the CFS initiative at the community, school, and ministry levels?

Capacity development was addressed as the training that the key officials and the different school community members received about the CFS initiative. Key officials and principals of pilot schools reported attending workshops organized by the MoE about the CFS initiative. A group of stakeholders said that they are now very familiar with the initiative to an extent that they are developing their skills through self-guided study and learning from others within their group. Some principals in pilot schools reported that they benefitted tremendously from the workshops done and that they are able to pass-on this knowledge in their schools and the community; however, others agreed that more workshops are needed to help them better conceptualize the initiative which as a result rendered them unable to help others in the school or the community in understanding CFS initiative: *“The CFS is not very clear to us as an administration and hence we are not able to share information clearly with parents, students and teachers”*

Both teachers in pilot schools and reference schools reported attending capacity building workshops organized by the MoE mainly in teaching methods and special needs education. Some teachers reported that these workshops are obligatory. It is worth mentioning that teachers in some pilot schools reported that their schools organize training for them whenever it is possible: *“The school makes effort to give us training”*. None of the teachers in the pilot schools reported attending workshops about CFS: *“No training from UNICEF or the ministry was done.”* These statements support the reports that some pilot schools also organized lectures for parents to introduce them to the CFS initiative: *“I prepared a lecture for parents about CFS”*. However, others preferred using brochures to inform parents about CFS.

The data offered in the capacity building section indicates that schools considered the capacity building experience to be either an enabler to the implementation of the CFS initiative or a barrier. Those who reported insufficient capacity building felt it was a barrier, and those who felt it was helpful reported it to be an enabler. What is evident from the data is that the experience is variable across schools.

### Evaluation Question 3.3: What major factors at both national and local levels enabled or created bottlenecks for the implementation of the CFS initiative?

In addition to capacity building, stakeholders identified an additional number of both enablers and barriers to the implementation of CFS. Unsurprisingly, key officials focused on macro-level factors, while school-level stakeholders focused on micro-level factors. In addition, the responses from many key officials remained within the realm of the hypothetical and general, given that so few of them were familiar with the CFS

initiative. In many cases, their responses reflect their educated guesses, based on their knowledge of the Omani public school system, at the key factors that enable or impede initiatives like CFS in Oman. Some officials have been directly involved, and their comments reflect that involvement.

Stakeholders identified several factors that could support or impede the success of the CFS initiative in Oman. First, several officials named the importance of stakeholder acceptance of and commitment to CFS as a critical factor required for the success of the initiative. They recommended cultivating buy-in at all levels and among all people. As one key stakeholder said: *"...Get a diversity of people on board. It will be easier in some governorates than others."* Officials believed that all the adult stakeholders at the school level were essential; they listed *"principal acceptance"*; *"belief in the initiative's importance"*; *"parents and their understanding of child rights"*; and *"teachers and their desire to change"* as the various dimensions of this factor. Like at the official level, at the school level, there was a general consensus that teachers were key enablers of the initiative. As one respondent explained, teachers are regarded as *"the basis for any change to happen."* One Ministry official also observed that *"Parents won't reject it all totally, but it will take time. It will take the right timing, and patience - don't give up too easily. Focus on easy steps first."* Another Ministry official warned: *"Will parents and teachers welcome it? Most will, but some might have reservations about empowering students and view it as threatening. Campaigns will eventually convince them, but this will happen at an early stage."* School-level stakeholders also focused on buy-in and the role played by school and community members: *"Parents', teachers' and principals' acceptance of the initiative"*; and *"the school administration needs to be more caring, the teachers need to be more cooperative, and the parents need to be more involved"*. Despite concern about school-level stakeholder buy-in, however, student acceptance was notably absent from the above list.

Teacher – and, to a lesser extent, principal and district-level staff - workload comprised a vital concern for key officials. Some officials, including those with direct involvement with CFS, worried that CFS would and does overburden teachers, principals and district staff, and that UNICEF and the Ministry should consider how to address teacher workload, particularly, before expanding the initiative. As Ministry officials observed:

*"Teachers are afraid it will be more work with no pay. We can't fix this without a decision from higher-ups. The dimensions of the initiative are not difficult on teachers, but they think it is - they think they're already doing this, but we want to be the best [to do what they're already doing better]."*

*– Ministry Official*

*"Each school also needs a teacher coordinator and this should be a full-time job."*

---

- Ministry Official

---

However, one other official also noted, *“Acceptance was a problem at first but after application, they [school officials] loved it. Teachers were afraid during piloting - now they welcome it.”* Ministry officials involved also noted the workload on technical-level staff: *“It’s exhausting at first - we worked all the time.”*

At the school level, respondents worried about the same issue: In addition, the availability of only one initiative coordinator within a jurisdiction was reported as problematic at both the governorate and school levels. Below are illustrative school-level stakeholder quotes.

*“The only challenge was the presence of only one initiative coordinator in the whole governorate and who has duties that need his attention in addition to supervising the implementation of CFS initiative.”*

- School-level stakeholder

*“The CFS coordinator in the school is a teacher as well, so this increased her duties.”*

- School-level stakeholder

---

Officials were also concerned that school-level staff needed more material support in the implementation of the initiative. Teachers became disenchanted when they realized that their expectations for the purchase of new resources under CFS were unrealistic, and one group of officials suggested incentivizing the initiative by creating a Ministry-recognized certificate program for teachers who completed additional training under CFS. *“Schools thought UNICEF would make all their dreams come true, but the initiative focused on child rights - it’s not about material support or facilities. Schools view the initiative as an opportunity to ‘buy stuff.’ When we told them this wasn’t the point, they lost of a bit of interest, and we compromised by giving certificates.”*

School-level stakeholder buy-in was not the only factor officials named, though. Officials also emphasized the importance of funding at least some support for material resources, both to cultivate interest in the initiative and to create physical environments that could support the other, intangible changes in school environments as a whole. As one official noted: *“Schools ask, ‘How much will you give us?’ Schools are concerned with material issues. How much money do you have?”* School-level respondents confirmed this disagreement in spending priorities between key officials and those working at the school level. Schools reported disappointment about the key focus areas of the

initiative. As one school-level stakeholder stated: *"We expected more support from the Ministry/UNICEF in implementing, including financial support."*

In addition, multiple stakeholders both inside and outside the Ministry of Education recommended close coordination with the Ministry and the integration of all CFS-related curriculum into the Omani national curriculum, possibly in life skills and teacher training. As one key official inside the Ministry said, *"We can integrate it [into the teacher training curriculum]"*. Others mentioned that *"The life skills curriculum includes knowing their rights and 'dealing with life'-type themes: health, safety, culture, citizenship, flexibility and coping, multiculturalism and tolerance. Already, the curriculum has themes on student protection, learning, active participation in society, safety, the environment, and gender equity"* and *"We need to incorporate CFS principles into curriculum at an early stage - otherwise it will be a separate thing. If it continues like that, people will view it as a supplement, not part of the core, and this is important."* Even non-Ministry officials noted that Ministry integration would be critical for the long-term viability of the CFS goals. As one school-level stakeholder stated:

*"Frame it with Ministry backing - it should be clear who's in charge, what the budget is, the capacity/skill of the implementers, how to manage. It will require a longer term to see results, and need additional human resources to expand [that are only possible with Ministry integration]."*

– School-level stakeholder

---

Several stakeholders underlined the importance of geography and its considerations to the success of CFS. As one Ministry official recommended, *"Regional differences - trainers have to take them into account. Systems of education can advantage or disadvantage [particular] students. But talent [among students] does exist in rural areas."* Another district-level Ministry employee noted, *"Our geographical location may play a role, being far from the capital."* School-level respondents also considered the geographical location of the school to play a role in hindering the implementation process: *"The geographical location of the area. It being far - plays a major role in the ability of teachers to fulfil the CFS dimensions."*

Key stakeholders and participants in pilot schools also reported other major enablers for the CFS initiative to include the number of students in the class: *"The lower the number the better"*; the support from CFS initiative officials: *"Proper follow up from ministry and UNICEF"*; the acceptance of the initiative: *"Parents, teachers and principals acceptance of the initiative"*; and the role played by the school and community members *"the school administration need to be more caring, the teachers need to be more cooperative, and the parents need to be more involved"*. It is noteworthy that there was a general consensus that teachers were key enablers of the initiative. As one respondent explained: teachers are regarded as *"the basis for any change to happen."*

Key stakeholders and school-level respondents considered the geographical location of the school to play a role in hindering the implementation process: *“The geographical location of the area. It being far - plays a major role in the ability of teachers to fulfil the CFS dimensions.”* In addition, the availability of only one initiative coordinator within a jurisdiction was problematic at both the governorate and school levels: *“The only challenge was the presence of only one initiative coordinator in the whole governorate and who has duties that need his attention in addition to supervising the implementation of CFS initiative,”* and *“The CFS coordinator in the school is a teacher as well, so this increased her duties.”*

Key stakeholders, on the other hand, argued that schools were too focused on material and financial support, and didn't care enough about changing practices. *“Schools thought UNICEF would make all their dreams come true, but when we informed them that this was a child-friendly schools initiative, they lost interest.”* Stakeholders at all levels also postulated that CFS may have placed too much demand on teachers without workload reduction in other areas and/or additional compensation. Key stakeholders noted: *“Teachers were afraid it would be more work with no pay,”* while some teachers from the pilot schools confirmed that the initiative pressured them with *“paper and administrative work.”* Respondents from pilot schools also considered the length of the curriculum, the low number of teachers, parents' cooperation and the educational background of students as challenges to the implementation of the CFS initiative. There was one exception, in one pilot school, and one of the key stakeholders also reported that no barriers existed in the implementation of the CFS initiative, because *“it came as a support for what is already included in the educational curriculums and ministerial plans.”*

## Sustainability

**Evaluation Questions 4.1-4.3: To what extent did the CFS initiative contribute to institutional or behavioural changes that can help to sustain programme results? Based on the achievements in the 9 pilot schools as compared to the reference schools, what are the anticipated benefits of expanding the CFS to all primary schools in Oman? What are the staffing, capacity development and training, supervisory, and budget implications of expanding the CFS initiative to all primary schools in Oman?**

The majority of stakeholders and principals in pilot schools agreed that the CFS initiative allowed schools to organize their efforts and build a better understanding of the child rights and the mode of application of the initiative in their schools. Both key stakeholders and respondents in many pilot schools acknowledged the great benefit that the CFS initiative has had on children's awareness of their rights. Key stakeholders also highlighted that the acceptance of students with special needs by teachers and fellow students was a major benefit for the pilot schools. These strong statements of support for changes that took place under CFS suggest that in these schools,

participants - principals, teachers, parents, and students - have bought into the initiative and will continue to teach and learn according to its principles. In addition, key stakeholders, whose influence at the Ministry level is critical in sustaining the practice of child-friendly principles in pilot schools and scaling it to other schools, also generally acknowledged the importance of such an initiative.

By comparison, not all respondents from reference schools reported in any detail on changes that took place in their schools over the time period in consideration. In the cases in which the reference school participants made comments on this point, their comments are vague: *“there is development”*. Such comments seem to point to a difference between the pilot and reference schools, and support the notion that CFS has made some change, with regard to awareness of child rights and the inclusion of students with special needs, that participants and key stakeholders view as long-term shifts in perspective in the pilot schools.

Different stakeholders noted that there was an increase in communication between the schools and parents/society and the Ministry, a change that supports more sustainable programming at the Ministry, not only with regard to CFS, but more broadly. Principals of pilot schools confirmed this improvement as they reported a sense of increased attention from Ministry.

Respondents in both in pilot schools and reference schools agreed that financial support and proper training are two factors that play a major role in the sustainability of any activities in schools. At an official level, respondents focused on cost and workload for both teachers and students. Key government officials, both in the Ministry and in other agencies, listed “cost” as a major concern, especially in light of the drop in oil prices, though not all agreed, as referenced in the “Efficiency” section above, that CFS would necessarily be an expensive initiative to scale. In addition, several key stakeholders expressed concern over the additional burden (or perception of burden) “one more initiative” would have on teachers and/or students: *“Such an initiative could be a burden on teachers”*; and *“There is a burden on teachers – or at least they will perceive it this way in the beginning”*; and *“I hope it's not too much on the children - is this the only way to get to the rights of children? Is there some other way outside of the curriculum [classroom]?”* One official also noted he believed that hiring *“a dedicated coordinator for the initiative”* was necessary at the level of each directorate.

## Coordination & Partnership

**Evaluation Questions 5.1-5.2: How effective were the coordination arrangements for the implementation of the CFS initiative? To what extent did the CFS initiative contribute to a greater sense of partnership in education between the programme stakeholders, including school principals, teachers, and parents and caregivers?**

Despite the enthusiasm for CFS as a concept, stakeholders identified several problems with the implementation of CFS as an independent initiative in the Omani context. Most importantly, several stakeholders wished for better communication about CFS and the Ministry's child-friendliness program in general, so that all departments under the Ministry's arm, as well as partner institutions within the Omani government, are more aware of the Ministry's child-friendliness programs and its goals.

Respondents in pilot schools and reference schools reported on different forms of communication with the different stakeholders of the initiative. Both reported the continuous participation in the community in the form of celebrations, awareness campaigns, hospital visits, and special learning centres with pilot schools reporting on more activities than reference schools. Stakeholders who reported confirmed this understanding: *"The society actually depends on schools to help activating their events like awareness campaigns."* More is reported on this particular collaboration in the *Societal Participation* section.

In general, principals and teachers in both pilot and reference schools have good relationships with each other and with the students. They all reported that they use various means to communicate with the parents, but that they still find it challenging to get parents to visit the school. One pilot school shared that to encourage parent visits to their school, they developed the program "Al Umm Al Za'ira" (The Visitor Mother), which aims to encourage mothers to visit the school, attend classes, and follow up on their children's performance.

## Human Rights-Based Approach

**Evaluation Questions 6.1: To what extent did the CFS initiative apply and promote a human rights-based approach to programming?**

Almost all of the comments on CFS' human rights-based approach at the school level focused on two areas: 1) the right to education and student-centred teaching methods; and 2) inclusion and the rights of students with special needs. These comments have been detailed in the *Effectiveness* section of the report, under *Learning Effectiveness* and *Inclusion*, and will not be repeated here.

Key stakeholders widely reported that not only the Omani Ministry of Education, but the Government of Oman in general, prioritizes child rights: *“Oman has focused a lot of universal education and building individual rights, so this initiative really fits.”* According to one interviewee, *“Child rights is within almost all of its plans.”* However, some stakeholders were concerned that signatures on treaties need some assistance to become realities of everyday life: *“Oman is very keen in the area of child rights, and the government is serious - it has signed many agreements. But I'm not sure if policies are being implemented. There is a gap - people are not translating down from the national level. Is this because of lack of communication? It needs translation from signing to implementation.”* These stakeholders also reported that raising awareness of child rights was one of the key benefits of CFS. However, most of these comments focused on the conceptual premise behind CFS, not its actual implementation, because they were not familiar enough with the initiative to make any detailed comments about the human rights-based approach of CFS as it was actually implemented in schools. There seems to be a gap in the way that key stakeholders viewed this issue – as encompassing child rights, broadly and in society in general, not only the child’s right to education – and the way local school communities thought of it more narrowly in terms of the right to education.

It is noteworthy that some child rights activities conducted by the Human Rights Commission are already in place in schools in Oman. The Commission suggested cooperation on child rights issues in schools: *“There was a special discussion on child rights in schools. There are trainers in child rights, and lectures in all schools for the 3rd year in 2015. We want to intensify this lecture program - maybe there is a potential partnership with UNICEF?”*

Other key stakeholders, as well as a principal of a pilot school, observed that the child rights discourse of CFS is missing an accompanying piece on civic responsibilities. According to the key stakeholder: *“We need to talk about rights, but also about responsibilities.”* This stakeholder, as well as the principal, who observed that students in her school wanted to demand a clean school, but did not want to clean up after themselves, was concerned that a focus on rights without a focus on responsibilities would create a sort of “entitled” generation unwilling to contribute to its society at large.

**Evaluation Question 6.2: How well did target groups of children and their families within the catchment areas of the 9 pilot schools AND identified as vulnerable or at-risk benefit from the CFS initiative?**

The UNICEF Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI) examines five different dimensions of school exclusion children may experience. Dimensions 1-3 deal with dimensions of exclusion children who are already out of school face, while Dimensions 4-5 cover dimensions of exclusion that children currently in school may face in the

future.<sup>13</sup> As CFS in Oman focused on children currently enrolled in school, Dimension 4 (primary students at risk of dropping out of school) and Dimension 5 (lower secondary students at risk of dropping out of school) cover the types of exclusion of most interest to this evaluation. In order to address specific context of Oman, it is necessary to examine Ministry of Education data on secondary cycle (12<sup>th</sup> grade) completion/graduation rates, shown in the table below:

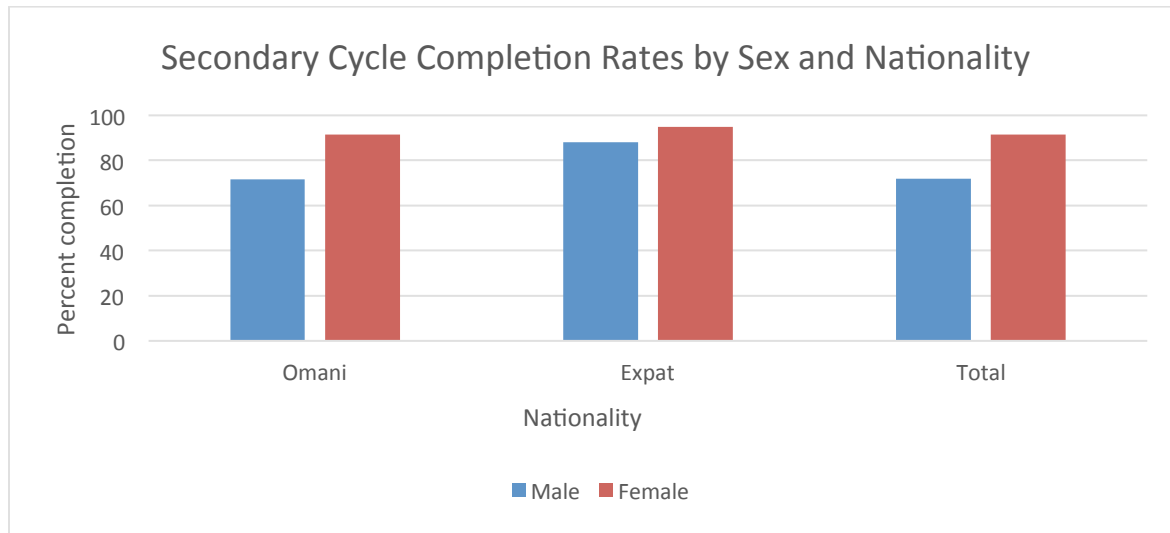


Figure 6: Secondary cycle completion rates, by nationality and sex, 2013-2014

In the context of Oman, the most recent Ministry of Education data (2013-2014) show that overall secondary cycle (12<sup>th</sup> grade) completion/graduation rates are high for girls in Oman (91.5%), in comparison to much lower rates for boys (71.9%). In addition, Omanis actually complete secondary education at lower rates than expats do, for both girls (91.5% vs. 94.8%) and boys (71.6% vs. 88.0%).<sup>14</sup>

Further data indicate that girls complete lower secondary education, which begins in grade 5, at higher rates than boys, as illustrated below:

<sup>13</sup> UNICEF and UNESCO Institute for Statistics, MENA Regional Out-of-School Children Initiative, Regional Fact Sheet, [http://allinschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/150302\\_Regional\\_factsheet\\_English\\_Preview.pdf](http://allinschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/150302_Regional_factsheet_English_Preview.pdf), 3/16/2016.

<sup>14</sup> The Annual Educational Statistics Book, 2013-2014, Sultanate of Oman Ministry of Education, Issue 44, p. 214.

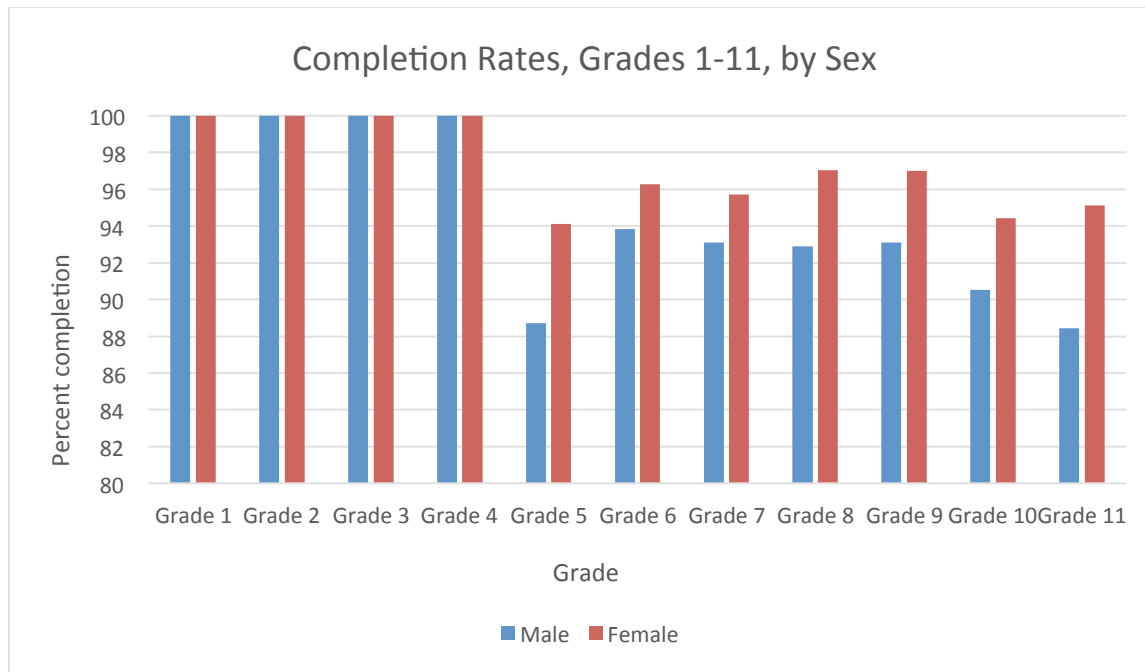


Figure 7: Completion rates, grades 1-11, by sex<sup>15</sup>, 2013-2014

In light of this data, factors determining risk for students include both sex (for boys) and nationality (for Omanis).

However, data collected from schools and key stakeholders did not reflect the official data in critical ways. First, school communities and key stakeholders conceptualized risk factors differently from not only the official data, but also from each other. At the school level, possibly because the majority of schools in the sample were single-sex, most respondents thought of at-risk students as individual students who were performing poorly at school; in cases in which demographic considerations entered into this conversation, many respondents mentioned students with special needs. Considerations such as gender were not raised at all at the school level when discussing at-risk students. Those comments on inclusion of students with special needs can be found under *Inclusion*, in the *Effectiveness* section above.

Key stakeholders however, took a macro view of the term “at-risk,” and considered demographic or other factors that may put students at risk. In addition to special needs students, key stakeholders also named gender, poverty and geographical location as key factors that could affect students’ academic performance. However, key stakeholders eluded to risk for girls more frequently than risk for boys, citing early marriage and childbirth, as well as pressure on girls to help with household tasks such as cooking and childcare. Concerns about girls’ completion were often tied to issues of

<sup>15</sup> The Annual Educational Statistics Book, 2013-2014, Sultanate of Oman Ministry of Education, Issue 44, p. 216-217.

geographical diversity in Oman, and pointed to perceptions of rural regions of Oman such as Dhofar, where CFS has piloted, or Wusta, where CFS would need to replicate if planning to scale nationwide:

*“Girls who live in remote areas attend the 6th grade and then may be kept at home because they have ‘grown-up.’”*

*-Key Ministry stakeholder*

*“[In Wusta], there are issues of gender/girls.”*

*- Key Ministry stakeholder*

Official data, however, show that Dhofar’s secondary cycle completion rates are similar to both Muscat’s and the national average for both boys and girls:

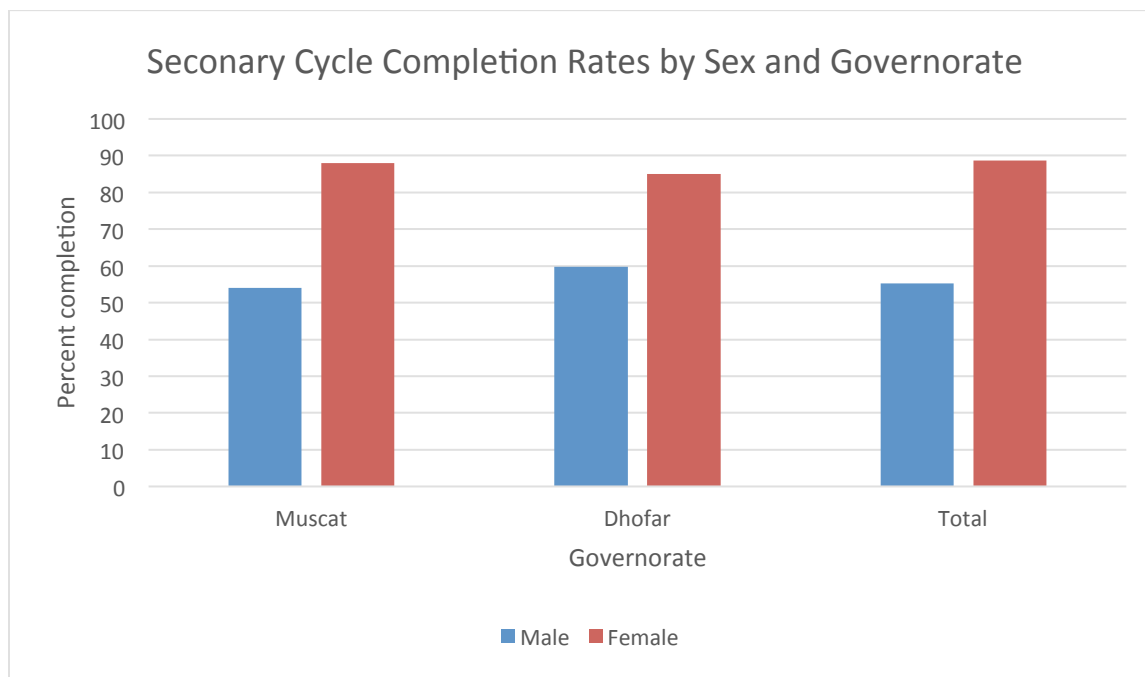


Figure 8: Secondary cycle completion rates, by sex and governorate, 2013-2014

However, some Ministry stakeholders did note the disparities, not only in completion, but in the system as a whole, between the quality of education to which girls and boys have access:

*“Girls' schools are much better than boys' schools. The boys [are the ones at risk]. Boys' education is key for both economic prosperity and social and political stability. Right now 80% of the officials in the Ministry in the male, but in 20 years, they will be 80% female, because women's leadership is no longer an issue,*

*and because men are not becoming teachers. Education reduces crime, and we need to think about how to empower boys in the education system. Even at the university, boys go into engineering, the military, commerce. They don't become teachers."*

*– Key Ministry stakeholder*

---

As the data above show, even stakeholders within the Ministry of Education are often unaware of what the data actually show with regard to gender and risk.

Despite Oman's large foreign population, including a large number of non-native Arabic speakers, almost no one considered this population at-risk. *"We don't have discrimination in Oman (in schools) - they have equal access."* Only one focus group of all those that participated believed that the foreign population could be at-risk, educationally: *"[One factor is] nationality e.g. Pakistanis - students who don't speak Arabic well or at all can't all be together in a special class because they are at different grade levels. We also need to know how to assess new students who don't speak Arabic."*

Like for school communities, though, key stakeholders identified special needs students as the most at-risk: *"We have issues when we have students with multiple disabilities. We also need more training on how to deal with students with learning-related disabilities, like dyslexia, and more several learning disabilities. Autism, too. There are no facilities for autism, for example. There are some schools or centres run by NGOs for students like these, but they're not run by professional educators. There are specialized schools in Muscat [only Muscat] for students who are deaf or blind or who have mental health issues."*

Geography constituted one reason many key stakeholders believed students could be at-risk. *"For example: The local dialect in Dhofar - they speak this, not Arabic, really, there and [it causes educational difficulty for the students]."* They observed that rural areas are disadvantaged in terms of resources: *"In rural areas, teachers are often not stable [there is high turnover]. This especially happens when teachers are not from the area in which they're working."* According to the key stakeholders, geography also influences other risk factors. When discussing the potential scaling of the CFS initiative, one interviewee noted: *"In Wusta, students use their own desert-influenced dialect - make sure you address their issues. There are issues with commitment. There are issues of gender/girls. There are also cultural issues that are different."*

In the case of at-risk students, key stakeholders alluded to girls being at-risk for drop-out due to traditional values about the role of women in society and the importance of early marriage. The graduation data for Oman, and for the governorates in which CFS operates suggest that girls who make it to secondary school graduate for the most part, unlike their male peers. The graphs below show a comparison of the average graduation rates of boys and girls a) nationally; and b) in the pilot schools.

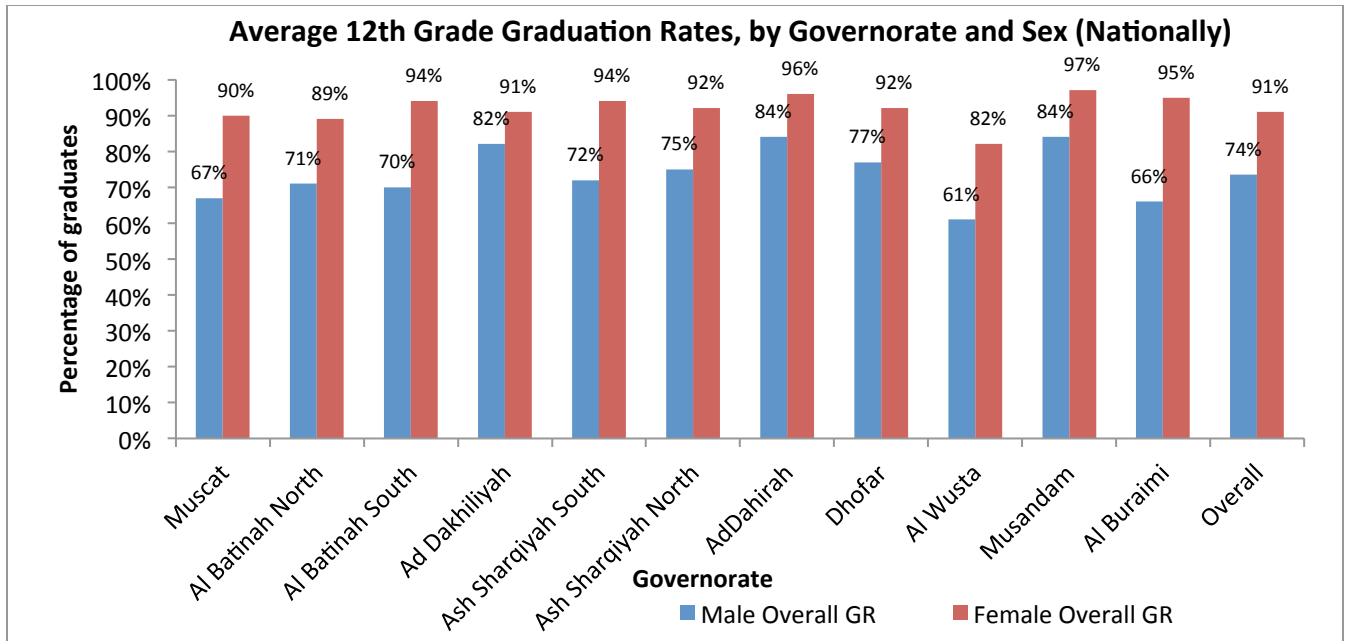


Figure 9. Average 12<sup>th</sup> grade graduation rates, for boys and girls, in all schools in Oman, by governorate, 2013-2014

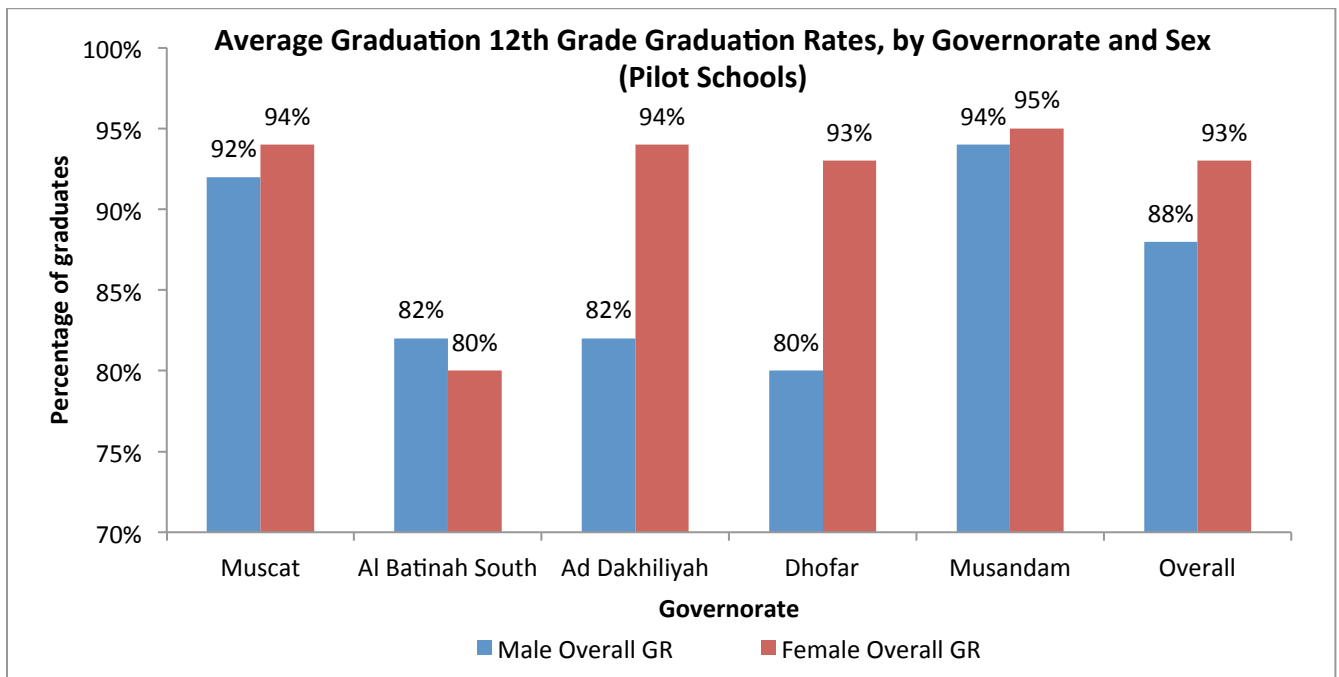


Figure 10. Average 12<sup>th</sup> grade graduation rates, for boys and girls, in pilot schools serving grade 12, by governorate, 2013-2014

It is critical to note that this data excludes the male/female transition from the primary to secondary cycle of education. This is exclusively the graduation rates for girls who have made it to secondary. Additional data, unavailable to the writers of this report, would be necessary to make a determination that girls are not at-risk at this stage.

However, the graphs do clearly illustrate that, as the respondents pointed out, boys are more at-risk in the formal education system than girls when this data alone is examined. One group of male students from the reference group observed that girls' schools get more attention; the students argued that girls' schools benefit from better facilities and more focus on the curriculum. Another key stakeholder reported that: *"Girls' schools are much better than boys' schools... Boys' education is key for both economic prosperity and social and political stability. Right now 80% of the officials in the Ministry in the male, but in 20 years, they will be 80% female, because women's leadership is no longer an issue, and because men are not becoming teachers. Education reduces crime, and we need to think about how to empower boys in the education system. Even at the university, boys go into engineering, the military, commerce. They don't become teachers."* None of the respondents mentioned any programming, by any initiative, focused on improving the quality of boys' education or closing the achievement gap between male and female students.

## Results-Based Management

**Evaluation Questions 7.1-7.4: To what extent were the planned CFS results logical and SMART given the strategies, time, and resources employed? To what extent were the risks and assumptions made clear in the design of the CFS initiative? How well were the risks and assumptions considered during implementation? How effective were the management arrangements for the CFS initiative for joint annual work planning, monitoring, and reporting against expected results?**

Key officials and principals in pilot schools shared that there is a hierarchical relationship dictating the process by which planning, monitoring and reporting took place between the schools, directorates and UNICEF. They explained that in each of the governorates there is a coordinator for the initiative, who is responsible for following up with the pilot schools and reviewing the CFS initiative section in the reports that schools prepare at the end of each academic year. The report is then sent to the directorate through the coordinator, then the directorate sends it in turn to the Ministry and then to UNICEF. *"We communicate with the coordinator of the CFS initiative, who in turn communicates with the directorate and Ministry."*

Key officials and school-level respondents both feared that the other misunderstood the initiative and its benefits. Key officials reported concern that school-level participants would misunderstand the initiative and regard it as extra work, while respondents in pilot schools consistently reported that key officials needed a deeper understanding of the initiative and should support the organizing committee. Indeed, teachers in one school did complain about extra reporting. As one teacher stated: *"Concentrating on paper work and superficial things and forgetting about the core..."*

In general, pilot schools reported being disappointed mainly in term of the resources employed for the implementation of the initiative. As one school-level stakeholder stated: *“When I first heard about CFS schools I imagined that in two years our school will be fully equipped in such a way it would foster an attractive environment for the students.”* School-level stakeholders reported that the reality of implementation was challenging.

From what has been presented in this section, it is obvious that a gap exists in the understanding of the CFS initiative between the stakeholders and pilot schools.

It is critical to note that questions were asked directly about the collection and use of data for decision-making at all levels. There was a marked lack of responsiveness from the participants, as they did not have data to share directly related to the initiative or any discussions around indicators of success and targets. The lack of responses on this topic does not necessarily mean that there is no data available, but it does indicate that there is a lack of data-related habits of mind when making decisions in schools.

CFS’ monitoring and evaluation plan also drew questions from high-level officials. At least one government official characterized CFS as lacking a plan for the monitoring and evaluation of the initiative; others assumed that metrics exist, but said they were unaware of their specifics. One stakeholder recommended publishing the Ministry’s indicators and metrics for CFS and its child-friendliness program in general so that all departments and external partners could see it and help manage their own data.

*“But when you make a plan, it needs M&E and indicators. My question is: the idea is good; are there indicators and ongoing monitoring?”*

*-Key government official*

---

Finally, the evaluator’s inability to access data - from UNICEF, the Ministry, and the schools participating in the initiative; comments from high-level stakeholders familiar with evaluation methodology; and the evaluator’s review of the “indicators” for the initiative all indicate that the initiative has not set up sufficient monitoring and evaluation systems, making it difficult for initiative decision-makers to make informed decisions about the progress of the initiative.

## **Conclusions and Lessons Learned**

The CFS initiative is still not fully operational and requires more time for it to reach a practical stage for many stakeholders. Some pillars of CFS appear to be more successful than others. For the initiative to be fully implemented, greater focus, resources and time in those areas with less implementation is needed. Given the nature

of CFS, which seeks to change human behaviour and beliefs in sensitive areas of child rights and education, this is a normal phenomenon.

### **Relevance**

Stakeholders interviewed agreed that CFS' key areas - especially child rights - constitute key priorities for the Ministry of Education, and that Oman more generally has undertaken important commitments with regard to human rights and child protection. As a result, strong possibilities for CFS to partner across different agencies of the Omani government exist. Several human rights frameworks already exist in the country, and could provide a basis for a broader emphasis on child rights in the public school system.

However, Oman's existing focus on human rights, and especially child rights, as addressed by the Ministry of Education, presents the possibility of duplication with the CFS efforts. In addition, other agencies, such as the Human Rights Commission, have already developed printed materials on child rights, and such efforts do not need to be duplicated.

### **Efficiency**

It has been impossible to draw clear conclusions about the efficiency of the CFS initiative. The evaluators were not given any budgetary information. Moreover, stakeholders held differing views about the cost of the initiative – some believing it to be costly, while others conceptualized it as inexpensive. The absence of quantitative, Ministry-collected data on cost and different stakeholders' perceptions precludes a conclusion about the CFS' initiative's value for money.

### **Effectiveness**

#### ***Health, Safety, and Protection***

Health, safety, and protection constituted one of the more effective pillars of the program, with many pilot schools reporting both infrastructure and procedure changes in this area over the last three years. Health, safety, and protection enjoy clear links with child-friendliness, and can indeed be said to form the most basic element of a child-friendly school: a comfortable, safe environment for learning. However, because many of the reference group schools also reported changes in the area of health, safety, and protection, it is unclear if all changes at pilot schools could be directly attributed to the CFS initiative. The Ministry's existing emphasis on health, safety, and protection makes it likely that CFS' effectiveness in this area results from its position as, essentially, a supplement to Ministry efforts.

#### ***Inclusion***

CFS has garnered both enthusiasm and concrete steps toward fuller inclusion of all students in school life. Pilot schools have taken clear steps to accommodate students with special needs, such as providing additional test time and moving classes to

ground-floor classrooms. These schools have also utilized CFS support to prioritize infrastructure changes that will provide higher-quality facilities to accommodate students with special needs, such as accessible bathrooms and ramps. In addition, CFS teachers have participated in additional training on how to best serve special needs students in larger numbers than teachers in the reference group. In this pillar, CFS has made a tangible change.

However, while the initiative has made good progress in this area, the changes are still small in comparison to the still-unmet need that exists in Oman. Many public schools, including some in the pilot group, still cannot reliably serve students with special needs due to gaps in accessible infrastructure and/or teacher training. In addition, even at the schools that have made significant change, there are still many types of special needs – varying from school to school – that each of these schools cannot appropriately accommodate. This reality makes it difficult for these schools to serve students with certain types of special needs. In most of the pilot's towns and villages, these students still need to attend special schools, and for this reason, are sometimes not enrolled at all.

#### *Gender-responsiveness*

The gender-responsiveness pillar has made the least progress of all six of the focus areas of the CFS initiative. In some cases, this lack of progress resulted from challenges encountered during specific implementation activities, while in others, it resulted from modifying and/or slowing the roll-out in anticipation of such challenges, such as in Salalah. Stakeholders were explicit and direct stating gender-responsiveness would move slowly and take time. Stakeholders also drew attention to regional differences in Oman that may need further consideration in the design of activities for this pillar. Key stakeholders at the Ministry, directorate, and school levels, as well as UNICEF, may face cultural resistance if gender-related curriculum and activities are not designed with these regional differences in mind.

The difference in terminology in the English and Arabic versions of this pillar's name may also be confusing the issue between UNICEF's regional offices, where there are non-Arabic speakers, and the Ministry of Education.

#### *Child rights*

Stakeholders agree that the child rights pillar has made the most change since the beginning of the CFS initiative. Citing the pillar's strong fit with Omani national priorities in human rights that extend even beyond the Ministry of Education, stakeholders repeatedly praised this pillar for the nobility of its goals and its potential to increase child-friendliness in schools. Multiple stakeholders mentioned the empowerment of children themselves under this pillar, and this empowerment constitutes one of the most promising results of the initiative to date.

However, there is a need to move local communities' knowledge of child rights into practice of child rights, which has begun but is incomplete. This gap illustrates the lag between the theoretical (the knowledge to which participants have been exposed and comprehend during training) and practical (the participants being able to utilize that knowledge by applying it when it is appropriate and necessary to do so).

### *Learning effectiveness*

The learning effectiveness pillar has been another one of the more successful pillars of the CFS initiative in Oman. It enjoyed a relatively seamless introduction into the pilot schools. In addition, developments in the reference schools illustrate that the Ministry has also focused on learning effectiveness across all schools. The learning effectiveness pillar could be ready for further steps toward integration with Ministry curricula and replication in other schools than other pillars of the CFS initiative. It is a focus area in which at least some level of success can be guaranteed due to existing Ministry familiarity, emphasis and support.

It is, however, important to consider that the Ministry may have the comparative advantage in implementing this pillar. Responses from many respondents hinted that in learning effectiveness, CFS was not engaged in any work that schools viewed as particularly new. In some ways, CFS activities supplemented existing Ministry efforts, but, as some respondents implied, these activities were not necessarily better run or even as good as some pre-existing Ministry work in this area. In some cases, respondents implied that they were unsure that UNICEF had anything to teach the Omani Ministry of Education with regard to pedagogy in the context of Oman.

### *Societal participation*

There were no major differences between the pilot and reference group schools with regard to societal participation. Both groups reported a variety of community-building activities that the parents either sponsored or attended, such as holiday celebrations, field trips, and community service. However, neither pilot nor reference schools reported engaging either parents or students in school planning and decision-making in appropriate areas. On the whole, respondents from both groups made few specific comments about the effect CFS had on their schools in this regard, and when they were able to comment, most of the comments were vague and theoretical.

### *Sustainability*

Stakeholders at both the official level and the school level were remarkably consistent in identifying three key factors that would contribute to (or erode) sustainability for the integration of CFS goals into every school's practice. The first factor was the investment of material resources, though stakeholders differed in their perceptions of the cost of the initiative, as well as the importance of support for material resources and infrastructure at the school level. The second factor was the training of all stakeholders

from students to Ministry of Education and other government officials on the importance of child-friendliness, and CFS' various pillars. Finally, stakeholders were almost universally concerned about the workload such an initiative would require, especially of teachers, over the long-term, if it were not integrated into existing Ministry policies, practices and curricula.

### **Coordination and Partnership**

CFS would benefit from more communication within schools and the Ministry, as well as across government agencies. Many of the individuals UNICEF listed as “key stakeholders” had indicated that they were not familiar with the initiative and could only answer evaluation-related questions from a broad and conceptual point of view. In addition, many of the key stakeholders at the executive levels mentioned communication as a key area for focus in the future. Agency staff at the highest level often indicated that communication is a general problem in Oman and that no one knows what anyone else is doing. As a result, the government is already working to improve in this area, and CFS should be no exception.

CFS has many opportunities for partnership across government agencies and should explore them to fully leverage all available resources in the expansion of CFS. Other government agencies were enthusiastic about the idea of a child-friendly schools initiative and many volunteered ways in which they could work with the MoE to support such an initiative. As such, partnerships, in defined areas with defined roles for each agency, could increase both the effect and the reach of the CFS initiative.

### **Human Rights-Based Approach**

Stakeholders repeatedly noted that Oman – not just the Ministry of Education - has prioritized human rights over the last several years, becoming a signatory to several conventions, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). As a part of this broader government initiative, respondents universally agreed that CFS fits well into Oman's current national and international commitments to human rights, and that CFS can advance this national priority well by targeting the public school system.

When asked to elaborate on the specific human rights priorities that CFS best support, stakeholders consistently identified student-centred teaching and learning methods and the inclusion of students with special needs in the school system as closely aligned with Omani human rights priorities. Stakeholders viewed these two issues – inclusion and pedagogy – as fundamental to the human rights discourse in Oman.

The topic of students at-risk of dropping out of school drew many and varied comments from stakeholders, and enabled this evaluation to make somewhat surprising comparisons between these comments and official data. First, stakeholders almost unanimously (with one key exception) believed that girls and foreign nationals were more at-risk of dropout than boys and Omanis, respectively. The Ministry of Education

data does not support these perceptions. Almost all of the Ministry of Education officials themselves were not aware of the Ministry's data showing these risks. Other officials believed that geographically outlying areas, such as Dhofar, demonstrated lower student achievement results than centrally located areas such as Muscat; again, a perception that was not supported by the Ministry data.

The other finding of note with regard to at-risk students is the claim made by several officials and school-level stakeholders that there are no equity gaps, even unintentional, in schools in Oman. While it is plausible and indeed, expected, that there are no overtly-discriminatory laws targeting various groups of students (eg, girls, or non-native Arabic speakers) in Omani schools, without much disaggregation of official data, it is difficult to determine whether there are actually gaps in equity or not in terms of results or day-to-day practice.

### **Results-Based Management**

Both CFS and the Ministry departments working with the initiative would benefit from more defined monitoring and evaluation structures, including streamlined indicators, regular data collection, and additional disaggregation of data. While there are indicators that were written for the initiative, there are too many to be practical, and many of them are not written as measurable indicators. As a result, the initiative currently does not have a workable framework for results-based monitoring. This lack of a framework means proving success has occurred or that change is needed with the initiative is problematic. The initiative would strongly benefit from a more rigorous monitoring and evaluation plan.

Based on the above conclusions, CFS is not yet ready to scale in its entirety at this time. While some parts of the initiative may be ready for some steps toward replication, such as the child rights and learning effectiveness pillars, most of the others need additional pilot time, and, in some cases (such as gender-responsiveness, inclusion, and societal participation), expansions of the related activities in the pilot schools. This conclusion does not mean that it will not be ready for replication and scaling in the future. There are some clear positive effects of the initiative at the school level, and it is worth continuing to explore the initiative's benefits. However, at this point, too many actors who need to be involved are not yet aware of the intent or realities of the initiative, and UNICEF has not laid the groundwork for systems that will ensure the smooth operation of the initiative over a larger number of schools. In order to replicate and scale, further outreach to key stakeholders, at both the government and school levels, and systems planning, such as the creation of a CFS Oman-specific monitoring and evaluation system, need to take place.

## Recommendations

There are thirteen recommendations.

- 1. Allow more time for the implementation and institutionalization of CFS.**

Given that CFS requires a system change approach that involves several key agents and is not a simple program, more time is required to ensure that the initiative is well understood by all required parties in terms of its theory and how to make it operational in schools. UNICEF should continue to pilot the initiative in the schools where it is currently taking place, focusing on program corrections, given the results of this evaluation. The Ministry of Education should make use of its routine monitoring processes to collect data on the CFS initiative and share that data with UNICEF.
- 2. Place greater emphasis on inclusion.**

Greater efforts to promote awareness regarding inclusion are necessary. The characterization of inclusion is somewhat limited. Populations who are disenfranchised by the education system are not necessarily being recognized. UNICEF and MoE should work together to develop contextually-appropriate teacher training materials on inclusion, and should consider aligning facilities upgrades under the health, safety, and protection pillar with the inclusion pillar so as to make schools more accessible. They should also work together and begin to plan for the integration of this inclusion-related curriculum into the Omani national curriculum.
- 3. Place greater emphasis on gender-responsiveness.**

Greater attention and efforts to promote awareness of gender-responsiveness are also necessary. The terminology around this pillar should also be clarified to ensure that UNICEF and the MoE have a shared understanding of this pillar, and the two institutions should work together to ensure that the gender-responsiveness priorities under CFS suit the national Omani context, as well as different regional contexts in Oman.
- 4. Develop a shared logic model.**

There are multiple components to the initiative with varying inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes. A single logic model that characterizes the program for key stakeholders will support a shared understanding of the initiative, monitoring, and scalability. UNICEF should develop a logic model of this nature, based on input from the MoE. The MoE should work with UNICEF to align the CFS initiative's logic model with existing MoE goals, priorities and data schemes.
- 5. Develop and monitor key indicators for results based management.**

A set of measurable standardized key indicators tied directly to the logic model (see point 2) will facilitate determining the progress of the initiative at the level of the school, governorate and Ministry. UNICEF, in cooperation with the national team, should revise the existing indicators to meet this need and reflect the

shared logic model (see point 4). The MoE should work with UNICEF and the national team to ensure that any indicators already in use by the Ministry are not duplicated, especially in the data collection process, under CFS.

**6. Disaggregate results by key inclusion factors.**

There should be a core set of data that is disaggregated by key factors (e.g., native language or dialect, geography, and sex) to be able to address issues of inclusion with evidence rather than opinion. UNICEF and the MoE should work together to determine which variables should be included in such disaggregation of data, and should, as soon as possible, include disaggregated data in their routine monitoring reports.

**7. Develop and disseminate a shared M&E toolkit for stakeholders.**

CFS empowers local authorities and schools to strengthen local community work and ensure that they are part of the decision-making process. A set of shared tools to support school examine their gaps would support evidence-informed decision making without placing undue demands on local capacity. UNICEF should work with the MoE to develop a toolkit that is directly aligned to the key indicators (see point 5). The MoE should ensure that UNICEF does not duplicate existing MoE tools or items.

**8. Continue to build capacity at all levels.**

Capacity building at multiple levels is critical to ensure that the system improves as a whole and that some individuals who receive training remain in the system. The transition of professionals in the education system as well as the scaling up of the initiative will require a greater emphasis on continuous professional development rather than simple training session. UNICEF, in partnership with the Ministry, should continue to provide training to stakeholders at all levels. The MoE should work with UNICEF to ensure a high quality of training for all stakeholders, and to ensure that training is contextually appropriate to Oman.

**9. Make partnerships for CFS more explicit and public.**

Partnerships with national and regional organizations will reinforce the potential and promote CFS as part of the national strategy in operations. The Research Council, National Centre for Statistics and Information, and Human Rights Commission all have capacity and a mandate that would suggest readily supporting the CFS initiative. UNICEF should work with the Ministry to provide information about CFS to these potential partners, and cooperate with these institutions to delineate roles for each of them. The MoE should take the lead liaison role in cultivating partnerships with other Omani government institutions.

**10. Better communicate the alignment of CFS to national strategies among both Ministry of Education departments and Omani government institutions as a whole.**

The perception of alignment between CFS and the national strategies is very high. At the school level, the attribution of certain school-level improvements is

not being made to CFS because of the integration of CFS with national programs. Generating greater awareness of CFS would help generate greater appreciation for the initiative. UNICEF should provide the MoE with high-quality and timely material, in Arabic, on the CFS initiative. As a part of the Omani government, the Ministry should take the lead role in information sharing and partnership, as part of the Omani government.

**11. Include a policy focus in the initiative.**

Sustainability is unlikely to be possible with an integration of key CFS principles and practices into Ministry of Education policy and curricula. UNICEF and the MoE should work together to task a specific team with holding semi-regular and ongoing discussions aimed at the integration of successful pillars or elements of CFS into the Omani national curricula, as well as policy.

**12. Undertake collaborative planning for phased replication.**

Despite the recommendation that CFS is not yet ready to scale, if the initiative is to become ready in the coming period, key implementers must undertake more collaborative planning with the goal of taking CFS to scale. UNICEF and the MoE should strengthen their practical relationship, and should consider a phased roll-out, with more successful elements of the initiative (health, safety, and protection; learning effectiveness; child rights; and a first phase of inclusion) coming first to build trust at the school level, followed by the more challenging elements of the initiative (a second phase of inclusion; gender-responsiveness; and societal participation) in a second phase.

**13. Address school-based and other MoE staff workload challenges.**

Given the critical importance of principals, teachers and district-level staff to the initiative, CFS must make a plan to address potential problems that can arise from overburdening educators. UNICEF and the MoE should work together to identify potential ways to ensure the workloads are reasonable for educators. Efforts should be made to streamline and integrate as many of CFS' activities as possible into the normal school day. The MoE should also provide coordinators at the school and district levels where possible, and if necessary, should consider incentivizing some aspects of CFS coordination work for educators.

## Appendices

### 1. The original Terms of Reference:

## Evaluation Terms of Reference:

### The Government of Oman-UNICEF Child Friendly Schools Initiative

#### 1. Purpose

The Child-friendly schools (CFS) initiative is a major focus of programme cooperation between the Government of Oman (GoO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), 2012-2015. The purpose of the evaluation is to understand the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of the CFS initiative. The evaluation will make a judgement about the extent to which the CFS has positively affected learning outcomes for the children involved and both the tangible and intangible improvements that were made to school and learning environments.

The evaluation and report will be user-focused. The GoO and UNICEF will begin preparation of a new Country Programme (CP) in 2016. The GoO is in the process of preparing a 9th National Development Plan for the period 2016-2020. Evidence about the results of the CFS initiative will be a major input into policy discussions between the GoO and UNICEF about the scaling-up of the CFS to the national level and for the overall design and priorities in the next CP and the 9th National Development Plan.

The evaluation is being commissioned by UNICEF and the main intended **users of the evaluation** findings are:

- » The Government of Oman, especially the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Development, the National Centre for Statistics and Information, the Research Council, and National Human Rights Commission;
- » The principals and teachers and parents and caregivers of children involved in Child-Friendly Schools; and
- » The UNICEF Oman Country Office (CO), Regional Office (RO), and Headquarters, particularly the education section.

The evaluation findings are especially relevant to UNICEF corporately, as it continues to explore its strategy and positioning for ongoing, effective cooperation in high income countries and in countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Secondary, potential users of the evaluation include:

- » The governments and education ministries of other Gulf states
- » UNICEF country offices and other multi-lateral organisations engaged in education policy and programming in middle and high income countries, such as the OECD and World Bank.

- » The conduct of the evaluation will adhere to the norms, standards, and ethical guidelines of the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG)<sup>16</sup>.

## 2. Context

Development cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is unique. The Sultanate of Oman is a high income country that has been acknowledged regionally and globally for its rapid human development over the past forty years. Economic stability and income growth went hand-in-hand with steep reductions in child and maternal mortality, universal child immunization, universal primary education, and strong political will and action to address the rights of women and girls. Despite the rapid pace of growth with a high degree of equity, there are still pockets of disparities with chronic and emerging vulnerabilities that affect the rights of children and women.

The Mid-Term Review<sup>17</sup> conducted between late 2013 and early 2014 called for a renewed focus on two strategic programme priorities:

- Early childhood learning, care and development, and
- Child-centred, inclusive strategies and plans.

The subsequent Mid-Term Management Review (MTMR)<sup>18</sup>, conducted from early to mid-2014 showed that programme and operations management processes and mechanisms are in conformity with UNICEF programming policies and procedures. The revised CP results matrix responds clearly to the priorities and strategies agreed at the MTR, and the management performance indicators are now more measurable and relevant to the country situation and will enable outcome level performance monitoring.

The current programme of cooperation is from 2012-2015. Given fiscal and programmatic uncertainties, the UNICEF country office has requested a one-year extension to the end of 2016 for the current country programme. The extension will enable the GoO and UNICEF CO to consolidate programmatic strategy and results following the MTR and undertake an evaluation of the CFS initiative which was a major focus of UNICEF programme cooperation in Oman from 2012-2014.

Results of the initiative can be seen on multiple levels including for education policy and standards, curriculum design and delivery, school management and teacher capacities, and in the performance of children and the behaviour of parents and caregivers. Major results include<sup>19</sup>:

- » **CFS were piloted in 9 schools in 3 governorates.** These offered a more structured approach to teaching and learning and quality monitoring. Parents and communities participate actively in school management.

<sup>16</sup> See: <http://www.uneval.org/document/foundation-documents>

<sup>17</sup> The Mid-Term Review Report, Government of Oman-UNICEF Country Programme 2012-2015, July 2014.

<sup>18</sup> Mid-Term Management Review: UNICEF Oman Country Programme 2012-2015, 30 July, 2014.

<sup>19</sup> UNICEF Oman, Standard Progress Report No. 1: Support to the joint Government-UNICEF Country Programme in the Sultanate of Oman for the period 2012-2015, 01 January 2012 to 31 December 2013, 5-6.

- » Approved in 2012, **13 standards for CFS are now being integrated into the national education system**. Education sector performance indicators have been aligned with the CFS standards.
- » A national working team has the capacity to sustain the CFS approach and provide feedback to the central level about progress and challenges.
- » The MoE was supported to develop capacity to collect data for equity, quality and learning, and to conduct barriers and bottlenecks analysis.
- » Mainstreaming of the CRC into the Child Friendly Schools initiative enabled teachers and students in 3 pilot governorates to strengthen their knowledge and awareness of the CRC. The CRC is actively discussed in classroom settings and during meetings of parent- teacher association (PTAs).

### 3. Objectives and Scope

The **objectives** of the evaluation are to:

1. Assess the contribution of the CFS initiative to the learning outcomes of children and to the teaching and learning methods in the pilot areas (9 schools in 3 Governorates);
2. Understand the extent to which the CFS initiative developed new capacities at the family and community level, the school level, and at the level of the Ministry of Education;
3. Identify the factors that affected the implementation and performance of the CFS initiative to identify and explain critical enabling factors and any bottlenecks;
4. Make a judgement about the overall relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of the CFS initiative, including the budget, staffing, and supervisory implications of expanding the CFS to all primary schools in Oman,
5. Provide actionable recommendations to:
  - » Enable a policy decision about whether the Ministry of Education should formally adopt the CFS approach in Oman and whether or not it should scale-up to the national level;
  - » Inform the ongoing development of the national education strategy which will be incorporated in the 9<sup>th</sup> National Development Plan; and
  - » Contribute to the ongoing curriculum reform process.

The **scope** of the evaluation is limited to:

- » The implementation of the CFS initiative from 2012 in the nine (9) pilot schools and their communities in 3 Governorates; and
- » The interactions of the CFS initiative with the policy, teaching, and curriculum departments of the Ministry of Education, the National Centre for Statistics and Information, the Research Council, and National Human Rights Commission.

A judgment about the extent to which the CFS initiative made a difference to the learning environment and outcomes for children will also require an objective comparison with schools that did not benefit from the initiative. A random, limited group of **reference schools** from the 3 Governorates will be selected in consultation with the UNICEF CO and the Ministry of Education.

### 4. Criteria

The evaluation will use the following criteria:

- » **Relevance.** The extent to which the objectives of the CFS initiative are consistent with Oman’s national education priorities and its international commitments, such as those in the CRC, CEDAW, and EFA.
- » **Effectiveness.** The extent to which the CFS initiative contributed to an improved learning environment and educational outcomes for children in the pilot schools, and how these were different from changes over the same period in educational performance in schools that did not benefit from the initiative.
- » **Efficiency.** The extent to which the changes in the learning environment in CFS and the educational outcomes of children were achieved with a reasonable expenditure of resources and transaction costs for the education system and avoided any undue waste and duplication.
- » **Sustainability.**
  - The extent to which the CFS standards and procedures have been incorporated into education policy and planning and whether the benefits from the CFS are likely to continue after the end of the pilot initiative;
  - The budget, staffing, and supervisory implications of expanding the CFS to all primary schools in Oman.

In addition, the evaluation will examine the major enabling or explanatory factors that went into programme cooperation that can help to explain the progress or lack thereof. These are: coordination and partnership, and the use of a human rights-based approach and results based management.

The evaluation will also note any unintended results, if any, of the CFS initiative and how these have affected learning outcomes, and education policy and services.

## 5. Key questions

Based on the objectives and criteria described above, the key evaluation questions are provided below.

As a part of its inception report, the evaluation team is expected to elaborate on the key questions and to prepare a full **evaluation matrix**. This will make the evaluation process as transparent as possible and it will assist the evaluation team, the evaluation management group, and steering committee to develop and understand the main evaluative arguments. The matrix must show the evaluation objectives and criteria, the related key questions and sub-questions for investigation, the data collection methods, the sources of information, and the indicators or standards of success.

Criteria	Key questions:
Relevance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How relevant is the CFS initiative to Oman’s national and education sector priorities and policies?</li> <li>2. How relevant is the CFS initiative for the achievement of Oman’s international commitments in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention for the</li> </ol>

Criteria	Key questions:
	Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Education for All (EFA) goals <sup>20</sup> ?
Effectiveness	<p>3. What is the contribution of the CFS initiative in the 9 pilot schools in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. An improved learning environment;</li> <li>ii. Improved education outcomes for children;<u>and</u>,</li> <li>iii. Improved engagement of parents and caregivers in the education of children</li> </ul> <p>4. What new capacities were developed through the CFS initiative at three levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Community and family level related to engagement in children’s education and the school system;</li> <li>ii. School level, related to teaching methods and management; and</li> <li>iii. Ministry level, related to processes for the development of education policies, standards, and procedures, including the collection of data about educational equity, quality and learning</li> </ul> <p>5. What major factors at both national and local levels either enabled or created bottlenecks for the implementation of the CFS initiative?</p>
Efficiency	6. Were the results of the CFS initiative achieved at reasonably low cost and were resources used appropriately, with a minimum of waste and duplication?
Sustainability	<p>7. To what extent did the CFS initiative contribute to institutional or behavioural changes that can help to sustain programme results?</p> <p>8. Based on the achievements in the 9 pilot schools, what are the anticipated benefits of expanding the CFS to all primary schools in Oman?</p> <p>9. What are the staffing, capacity development and training, supervisory, and budget implications of expanding the CFS initiative to all primary schools in Oman?</p>

The following questions should also be used to examine the major enabling or explanatory factors that went into programme cooperation that can help to explain the progress or lack thereof:

Factors	Key questions:
Coordination and Partnership	<p>10. How effective were the coordination arrangements for the implementation of the CFS initiative?</p> <p>11. To what extent did the CFS initiative contribute to a greater sense of partnership in education between the programme stakeholders, including school principals, teachers, and parents and caregivers?</p>
Human Rights-Based Approach	<p>12. To what extent did the CFS initiative apply and promote a human rights-based approach to programming?</p> <p>13. How well did target groups of children and their families within the catchment areas of the 9 pilot schools AND identified as vulnerable or at-risk benefit from the CFS initiative?</p>
Results-based management	14. To what extent were the planned CFS results logical and SMART given the strategies, time, and resources employed?

<sup>20</sup> See: (1) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and most recent Treaty Body report for Oman; (2) Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and most recent Treaty Body report for Oman; (3) EFA Dakar Framework.

Factors	Key questions:
	<p>15. To what extent were the risks and assumptions made clear in the design of the CFS initiative and how well were they considered during implementation?</p> <p>16. How effective were the management arrangements for the CFS initiative for joint annual work planning, monitoring, and reporting against expected results?</p>

## 6. Methodology

### Evaluation approach

The evaluation approach is utilization-focused. It is based on a quasi-experimental design that will rely on observation and interaction with CFS stakeholders and interpretation and triangulation of findings to arrive at informed, objective conclusions about the relevance and effectiveness of the CFS initiative in Oman. As noted above, a comparison between the 9 CFS schools and a sample of non-pilot reference schools will be essential to make a judgement about the extent to which the CFS initiative made a difference to the learning environment and outcomes for children

### Data collection and analysis methods

The evaluation will employ several data collection methods, including but not limited to:

- » Document review focusing on CFS policy and planning documents, school performance reports, national and local education reports and performance indicators, and past studies;
- » Semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders at the national ministry level responsible for policy and planning, and in the **9 CFS schools and other reference schools**, including principals, teachers, children and their parents and caregivers; and
- » Concise surveys with stakeholders.

The analysis will be both quantitative and qualitative, as follows:

- » Quantitative: Comparison of performance and trends for students, teachers, and schools in both CFS and reference schools, using available data from MoE and schools. Quantitative data on education performance must be disaggregated, as far as possible, by sex, age, geographical location, and income status.
- » Qualitative: Building on the quantitative results use logical analysis and triangulation of interview and survey results to understand the range of factors, including knowledge, attitudes, and practices that contributed to the observed performance and trends. As noted above, this analysis should also consider the major enabling or explanatory factors that can help to explain the progress or lack thereof. These are: coordination and partnership, and the use of a human rights-based approach and results based management.

Interested bidders are invited to improve on the methodology describe above.

## 7. Evaluation management bodies and responsibilities

The aim of the management structure is to:

- » Engage all key stakeholders
- » Enhance the quality of the evaluation.
- » Bolster ownership and, consequently, use of evaluation findings
- » Establish clear reporting lines, ensuring transparent selection of the evaluation team, review of the inception and draft reports and quality assurance at all key milestones.

The main bodies and responsibilities for management of evaluations are as follows:

Body	Responsibility
Steering Committee	Evaluation commissioners and decision-making body. The Steering Committee is composed of senior partners in the Ministry of Education and the coordinating Ministry and UNICEF. It will approve the evaluation TOR, the report, and the management response.
Evaluation Reference Group	<p>The Evaluation Reference Group is co-chaired by MoE and UNICEF and includes other stakeholders such as national civil society organizations (as appropriate). The Reference Group ensures that adequate support is provided in each phase of the evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assist in the selection of the consulting firm (or team of external consultants) to undertake the Evaluation;</li> <li>- Facilitate access to key documents and provide lists of key informants;</li> <li>- Review and provide comments on the main evaluation outputs (i.e., Terms of Reference, Inception Report and Data Collection Tool-kit, participatory workshops on the preliminary findings, Draft Report and Final Report);</li> <li>- Facilitate the extension of invitations to stakeholder debriefing sessions, which will take place in the form of participatory workshops to allow validation of preliminary findings and conclusions;</li> <li>- Participate in the debriefing sessions;</li> <li>- Support in framing key messages as results of the preliminary and final findings of the Evaluation;</li> <li>- Review and support the communication/dissemination plan;</li> <li>- Facilitate the management response process at their respective country/regional/global levels.</li> </ul>
Evaluation Management Team	<p>Day to day management will be implemented by UNICEF. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Issues contract</li> <li>- Supervises the evaluation team through established mechanism (e.g. through regular communication with the team leader, which would be specified in the TOR and in the contract)</li> <li>- Shares all evaluation-relevant documents with the Reference Group, collates and consolidates feedback</li> <li>- Calls for consultation meetings when and as necessary</li> </ul>

Body	Responsibility
Evaluation Team	<p>The evaluation team will normally consist of a team leader and one or more team members. The Evaluation Team is expected to work independently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The team leader will lead the evaluation process, working closely with all team members. He/she will conduct the evaluation process in a timely manner and communicate with the Evaluation Management Team on a regular basis to highlight progress made and challenges encountered. The team leader is responsible for producing the inception, draft, and final reports.</li> <li>- The team members will contribute to the evaluation process substantively through data collection and analysis.</li> </ul>

## 8. Implementation arrangements

### Stages of the evaluation

#### 1. Preparation

The preparation stage will include reflection on the evaluation purpose and objectives with stakeholders, establishment of the evaluation management structure and the Evaluation Management Group, and the collection of evaluation reference materials. The ToR will be prepared and the evaluation team will be recruited

#### 2. Implementation

The evaluation team will undertake a literature review and prepare an inception report, including a detailed evaluation matrix that will operationalize the design elements described in this ToR. The team will then undertake data collection and analysis, including field visits to the pilot CFS schools. Preliminary findings will be presented to the evaluation management bodies and, based on their feedback, a final report will be produced.

#### 3. Follow-up and use

Once the evaluation is completed, the GoO and UNICEF will prepare a management response. This will include follow-up actions to implement accepted recommendations, including the potential scaling-up of the CFS initiative at the national level.

### Work plan

A preliminary work plan is provided below. This will be finalized in consultation between the evaluation management bodies and the evaluation team.

Stage 1. Preparation	Responsible body	Timeframe
1. Evaluation steering committee (ESC) and management team (EMT) established	MoE, UNICEF	To end July 2015
2. Review and approval of TOR	ESC and EMT	
3. Selection of Evaluation Team:	ESC and EMT	

5. Contracting of Evaluation Team: UNICEF will prepare and sign a contract on behalf of the ESC	UNICEF	To end August 2015
<b>Stage 2. Implementation</b>	<b>Responsible body</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
1. Briefing of the Evaluation Team:	EMT	To mid-September 2015
2. Preparation of Inception Report	Evaluation Team	To end September 2015
3. Data collection and analysis and presentation of preliminary findings to EMT and ESC	Evaluation Team	To mid-October 2015
2. Preparation of draft Evaluation Report	Evaluation Team	To mid-November 2015
2. Comments on draft report	ESC and EMT	To end November 2015
2. Preparation of final report, based on comments	Evaluation Team	To mid-December 2015
<b>Stage 3. Follow-up and use</b>	<b>Responsible body</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
1. Preparation of management response	EMT and ESC	January 2016
2. Dissemination of report and findings	EMT	From January 2016

## Deliverables

The deliverables include:

1. An **inception report** outlining the evaluation team's understanding of the issues to be evaluated. It elaborates the overall evaluation approach, design and timeframe, it provides a detailed evaluation methodology and includes an evaluation matrix;
2. A **presentation of preliminary findings** to the evaluation management bodies
3. A first **draft report** for circulation and comments from stakeholders;
4. A **final evaluation report** and **concise presentation**.

## Outline of the evaluation report<sup>21</sup>

The report should include the following sections:

- » Title page and opening pages
- » Executive summary
- » Introduction and context of the CFS initiative in Oman
- » Evaluation purpose, objectives, and scope
- » Evaluation methodology
- » Findings
- » Conclusions, lessons learned, and recommendations

## Team composition and competencies

<sup>21</sup> This is based on UNICEF-Adapted UNEG Evaluation Reports Standards, July 2010.

The evaluation will be undertaken by a team of two international consultants. The consultants must have 10 to 15 years of demonstrated experience with programme evaluations in a multi-stakeholder environment and an understanding of the dynamics of development cooperation in the GCC region generally. Specific knowledge of the UNICEF CP in Oman and Arabic language skills are assets.

### Duration of evaluation

The evaluation has an indicative time frame of 25 working days per team member.

## 2. List of persons interviewed and sites visited

### A. Visits completed

Governorate	Group	Type	Name	Participants
Muscat	Schools	Pilot	◆ AlSarooj Basic Education grades 1-4	Principal Teachers (10) Students (10) Parents (10)

			◆ AlQurum School for Girls grades 5-10	Principal Teachers (10) Students (10) Parents (10) <sup>22</sup>
			◆ Jabber Bin Zaid School for boys grades 11-12	Principal Teachers (7) Students (10) Parents (5)
		Control	◆ Sultan Faysal Bin Turkey School for boys 11-12	Principal Teachers (10) Students (10) Parents (deleted)
Dhofar	Schools		◆ AlAjyal basic Education school grades 1-4	Vice Principal and Math HOD Teachers (10) Students (10) Parents (7)
		Pilot	◆ Hateen School for boys grades 5-12	Principal Teachers (10) Students (10) Parents (6)
			◆ Al Raya School for girls grades 5 - 10	Principal Teachers (10) Students (10) Parents (11)
		Control	◆ ShehitSchool for boys grades 5 - 12	Principal Teachers (10) Students (10) Parents (10)
		The Director General of Education	N/A	N/A
Musandam	Schools		◆ Qada basic Education school grades 1-4	Principal Teachers (10) Students (10) Parents (10)
		Pilot	◆ AminaBintWahab school for girls grades 5-10	Principal Teachers (10) Students (10) Parents (10)
			◆ Khasab Basic education school grades 1-4	Principal Teachers (10) Students (11) Parents (10)
		Control		
The Director	N/A	N/A	N/A	

<sup>22</sup> Three of the teachers were parents in the school.

General of  
Education  
Assistant

**B. Visits canceled**

Governorate	School	Type
Muscat	The control school for girls	Control
Dhofar	The control school for girls	Control
Musandam	AbubakerAlsidiq for boys grades 5-10	Pilot

### 3. List of documents consulted

1. World Bank and Ministry of Education Oman (2013) "Education in Oman; The Drive for Quality"  
[http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2013/03/04/000356161\\_201304124223/Rendered/PDF/757190ESW0v20W0ector0Report0English.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2013/03/04/000356161_201304124223/Rendered/PDF/757190ESW0v20W0ector0Report0English.pdf)
2. [Convention on the Rights of the Child \(CRC\)](#) and most recent [Treaty Body report for Oman](#)
3. [Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW\)](#) and most recent [Treaty Body report for Oman](#)
4. [EFA Dakar Framework](#)

5. An Analysis of Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) Standards for Oman, January 2012, Miske Witt & Associates Inc. trip report
6. Oman's Child-Friendly Schools Initiative Standards, June 2013
7. CFS School Development Process Data Analysis Workshop: Improving Education in Oman, April 2013, Miske Witt & Associates Inc. trip report
8. Insaf Data Analysis Workshop, June 2014, Miske Witt & Associates Inc. trip report
9. Achieving Oman's Child Friendly Schools' Approach, September 2014, Miske Witt & Associates Inc. trip report
10. Achieving the Child Friendly Schools Approach in Oman, November 2014, Miske Witt & Associates Inc. trip report
11. Achieving the Child Friendly Schools Approach in Oman, June 2015, Miske Witt & Associates Inc. trip report
12. Child-friendly Schools – Life Skills, [http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index\\_7260.html?p=printme](http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_7260.html?p=printme)
13. Child-friendly Schools Manual, May 2009, [http://www.unicef.org/publications/index\\_49574.html](http://www.unicef.org/publications/index_49574.html)

#### **4. More details on methodology, such as data collection instruments, including details of their reliability and validity**

##### **➤ Interview protocols**

##### ***a. Directorates***

UNICEF Child-Friendly Schools – Oman

Good morning/afternoon. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm a researcher with EduEval. We are undertaking a research study with the Ministry of Education and UNICEF about the Child-Friendly Schools initiative. I'd like to record our interview with your permission. The answers you give will be

used only for the purposes of this study. No one outside of the EduEval research team will hear the recording, and your responses are confidential, so please be honest and sincere in your answers. (Confirm permission.)

I am going to ask you some questions about your district's participation in the CFS initiative.

1. How does the CFS initiative fit into Oman's education sector priorities?
2. Did CFS develop new capacities, either at the school or directorate levels? If so, what were they?
3. What factors enabled implementation of the initiative? What challenges did you face?
4. Were there any institutional changes?
5. What would have to happen to make this initiative sustainable?
6. What are the benefits of CFS? And what are the benefits of scaling up?
7. What are the implications of scaling up to all schools in Oman? (Staffing, capacity development, budget, supervision)
8. How did coordination work between the schools and the directorate?
9. Can you describe the relationships between schools and the communities around them? How do CFS schools work with the parents? The students?
10. What about students who are considered at-risk? Who are they? Does CFS do anything to promote their access to or quality of education? How?
11. Can you describe the way planning, monitoring and reporting worked, from the school to the directorate, and from the directorate to the Ministry, as well as between the schools/Ministry and UNICEF?
12. How reasonable were the costs of implementing CFS per school? Did you find anything in the initiative duplicative?
13. Is there anything else you'd like to say about CFS? Anything I haven't asked you about?

That's all the questions I have. We expect the findings of our research to be published in late January, and the report should be available through the Ministry around that time if you are interested in seeing it. Thank you for your time today.

### *b. Principals*

UNICEF Child-Friendly Schools – Oman

Good morning/afternoon. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm a researcher with EduEval. We are undertaking a research study with the Ministry of Education and UNICEF about the Child-Friendly Schools initiative. I'd like to record our interview with your permission. The answers you give will be used only for the purposes of this study. No one outside of the EduEval research team will hear the recording, and your responses are confidential, so please be honest and sincere in your answers. (Confirm permission.)

I am going to ask you some questions about your participation in the CFS initiative. [Note to researcher: for control schools, ask respondents to contrast between 2013 and now for each question.]

1. [Skip for control schools.] Tell me, generally, about your experiences with the CFS initiative.
2. [Probe six areas of initiative if any one or more is not mentioned in at least some detail of activities in Q.1. For control schools, say, Tell me about your experiences with \_\_\_\_\_ at school.]
  - a. Health, safety and protection
  - b. Inclusion
  - c. Child rights
  - d. Gender responsiveness
  - e. Learning effectiveness
  - f. Societal participation]
3. [Omit any of the three levels in Q.3 if mentioned above in Q.1 or Q.2. Skip for control schools.] Has anything changed, at the school level, at the directorate level, or at the Ministry level, as a part of the implementation of the CFS initiative? If yes, what?
4. What major factors enabled or impeded the implementation of [pilot schools: the CFS initiative; control schools: any changes in these areas]?
5. [Pilot: How has CFS affected the way you work with teachers? With students? With parents? ] [Control: What has changed about the way you work with teachers? With students? With parents? In the period since 2013?]
6. [Pilot: Did all students/families benefit equally from this initiative?] [Pilot and control: Were there any students that you noticed benefitted more from any of the changes noted above, or any that it was harder to reach/benefit? If yes, why? If no, what factors contributed to this equity?]
7. How did communication work [control: in the period from 2013-present], both between the school and the directorate/Ministry, and between the school/community? Would you suggest any changes to the process? If yes, what?
8. [Skip for control schools.] Were the risks and assumptions of the initiative made clear in the planning/initial phases of the implementation? Elaborate.
9. [Skip for control schools.] What surprises (good or bad) did you face in implementing this initiative?
10. Has your vision for [pilot: this initiative; control: your school] at this point in time been realized? Why/why not? What will it take for it to continue on this path?
11. What would you say to other schools thinking about participating in [pilot: this initiative; control: a child-friendly schools initiative] about the benefits and challenges of this initiative?
12. Is there anything else I haven't asked you about that you'd like to say about the CFS initiative?

That's all the questions I have. We expect the findings of our research to be published in late January, and the report should be available through the Ministry around that time if you are interested in seeing it. Thank you for your time today.

### *c. Teachers*

Good morning/afternoon. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm a researcher with EduEval. We are undertaking a research study with the Ministry of Education and UNICEF about the Child-Friendly Schools initiative. I'd like to record our interview with your permission. The answers you give will be used only for the purposes of this study. No one outside of the EduEval research team will hear the recording, and your responses are confidential, so please be honest and sincere in your answers. (Confirm permission.)

I am going to ask you some questions about your participation in the CFS initiative. [Note to researcher: for control schools, ask respondents to contrast between 2013 and now for each question.]

1. [Omit any of the three levels in Q.3 if mentioned above in Q.1 or Q.2. Skip for control schools.] Has anything changed, at the school level, as a part of the implementation of the CFS initiative? If yes, what?
2. [Probe six areas of initiative if any one or more is not mentioned in at least some detail of activities in Q.1. For control schools, say, Tell me about your experiences with \_\_\_\_\_ at school.]
  - a. Health, safety and protection
  - b. Inclusion
  - c. Child rights
  - d. Gender responsiveness
  - e. Learning effectiveness
  - f. Societal participation]
3. What major factors enabled or impeded the implementation of [pilot schools: the CFS initiative; control schools: any changes in these areas]?
4. [Pilot: How has CFS affected the way you work with principals? With students? With parents? ] [Control: What has changed about the way you work with principals? With students? With parents? In the period since 2013?]
5. [Pilot: Did all students/families benefit equally from this initiative?] [Pilot and control: Were there any students that you noticed benefitted more from any of the changes noted above, or any that it was harder to reach/benefit? If yes, why? If no, what factors contributed to this equity?]
6. How did communication work [control: in the period from 2013-present], between teachers/principal, and between the school/community? Would you suggest any changes to the process? If yes, what?
7. [Skip for control schools.] What surprises (good or bad) did you face in implementing this initiative?
8. Has your vision for [pilot: this initiative; control: your school] at this point in time been realized? Why/why not? What will it take for it to continue on this path?
9. What would you say to other schools and teachers thinking about participating in [pilot: this initiative; control: a child-friendly schools initiative] about the benefits and challenges of this initiative?
10. [Omit Q.9 if interview time has finished.] Is there anything else I haven't asked you about that you'd like to say about the CFS initiative?

That's all the questions I have. We expect the findings of our research to be published in late January, and the report should be available through the Ministry around that time if you are interested in seeing it. Thank you for your time today.

#### *d. Students 1-4*

UNICEF Child-Friendly Schools – Oman

Good morning/afternoon. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm a researcher with EduEval. We are undertaking a research study with the Ministry of Education and UNICEF about the Child-Friendly Schools initiative. The answers you give will be used only for the purposes of this study. I will record the interview with your and your parents' permission. No one outside of the EduEval research team will hear the recording, and your responses are confidential, so please be honest and sincere in your answers. (Confirm permission.)

I am going to ask you some questions about your participation in the CFS initiative. [Note to researcher: for control schools, ask respondents to contrast between 2013 and now for each question.]

1. [Skip this question for control.] Have you heard anything about the Child-Friendly Schools initiative before you were invited to this group today? If yes, what?
2. [Omit any of the three levels in Q.3 if mentioned above in Q.1 or Q.2. Skip for control schools.] Have you noticed any changes at your school over the last two years? If yes, what are they?
3. [Probe six areas of initiative if any one or more is not mentioned in at least some detail of activities in Q.1. For control schools, say, Tell me about your experiences with \_\_\_\_\_ at school.]
  - a. Health, safety and protection
  - b. Inclusion
  - c. Child rights
  - d. Gender responsiveness
  - e. Learning effectiveness
  - f. Societal participation]
4. How do your teachers and the principal deal with you? Has anything changed about the way your principal/teachers they deal with you in the last two years? If yes, what?
5. What do your parents do to help you learn? Is this the same as it was two years ago?
6. Do all the students in your class benefit equally from the environment and ways of teaching in this school? Are there any students that benefit more from the school's system, or any that don't benefit as much? Why?
7. What would it take to make your school the best school it could be?
8. [Omit Q.9 if interview time has finished.] Is there anything else I haven't asked you about that you'd like to say about your school?

That's all the questions I have. We expect the findings of our research to be published in late January, and the report should be available through the Ministry around that time if you are interested in seeing it. Thank you for your time today.

### *e. Students 5-12*

#### UNICEF Child-Friendly Schools – Oman

Good morning/afternoon. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm a researcher with EduEval. We are undertaking a research study with the Ministry of Education and UNICEF about the Child-Friendly Schools initiative. The answers you give will be used only for the purposes of this study. I will record the interview with your and your parents' permission. No one outside of the EduEval research team will hear the recording, and your responses are confidential, so please be honest and sincere in your answers. (Confirm permission.)

I am going to ask you some questions about your participation in the CFS initiative. [Note to researcher: for control schools, ask respondents to contrast between 2013 and now for each question.]

1. What do you think your role is, as students, in making decisions about your own education?
2. [Skip this question for control.] Have you heard anything about the Child-Friendly Schools initiative before you were invited to this group today? If yes, what?
3. [Omit any of the three levels in Q.3 if mentioned above in Q.1 or Q.2. Skip for control schools.] Have you noticed any changes at your school over the last two years? If yes, what are they?
4. [Probe six areas of initiative if any one or more is not mentioned in at least some detail of activities in Q.1. For control schools, say, Tell me about your experiences with \_\_\_\_\_ at school.]
  - a. Health, safety and protection
  - b. Inclusion
  - c. Child rights
  - d. Gender responsiveness
  - e. Learning effectiveness
  - f. Societal participation]
5. Has anything changed about the way your principal/teachers deal with you in the last two years? If yes, what?
6. What do your parents do to support your education/learning? Is this the same as it was two years ago?
7. Do all students benefit equally from the environment and way of teaching in this school? Are there any students that you have noticed benefit more from the school's system, or any that don't benefit as much? Why?
8. What would it take to make your school the best school it could be?
9. What would you say to other schools and teachers thinking about participating in a child-friendly schools initiative?
10. [Omit Q.9 if interview time has finished.] Is there anything else I haven't asked you about that you'd like to say about your school?

That's all the questions I have. We expect the findings of our research to be published in late January, and the report should be available through the Ministry around that time if you are interested in seeing it. Thank you for your time today.

### *f. Parents*

UNICEF Child-Friendly Schools – Oman

Good morning/afternoon. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm a researcher with EduEval. We are undertaking a research study with the Ministry of Education and UNICEF about the Child-Friendly Schools initiative. The answers you give will be used only for the purposes of this study. No one outside of the EduEval research team will hear the recording, and your responses are confidential, so please be honest and sincere in your answers. (Confirm permission.)

I am going to ask you some questions about your children's experiences at *this school* over the last three years: AY2013-2014, AY2014-2015 and AY2015-2016 (this year). If your children attended any other schools during that time period, please respond *only* about your experiences with this school. [Note to researcher: for control schools, ask respondents to contrast between 2013 and now for each question.]

1. What do you think your role is, as parents, in your children's schooling?
2. [Skip this question for control.] Have you heard anything about the Child-Friendly Schools initiative before you were invited to this group today? If yes, what?
3. Have you noticed any institutional changes at the school your children attend over the time period I mentioned? If yes, what are they?
4. [Probe six areas of initiative if any one or more is not mentioned in at least some detail of activities in Q.3:
  - a. Health, safety and protection
  - b. Inclusion
  - c. Child rights
  - d. Gender responsiveness
  - e. Learning effectiveness
  - f. Societal participation]
5. What major factors enabled or impeded these changes, from your perspective as parents?
6. Do all students benefit equally from the school's approach? If yes, why? If no, what factors contribute to this equity? Has anything changed with regard to equity over the last three years?
7. How does communication work between the school and community? Have you witnessed any changes to this process over the last three years? Would you suggest other changes?
8. What would you say to schools thinking about participating in a Child-Friendly Schools initiative?
9. [Skip this question for control.] Is there anything else I haven't asked you about that you'd like to say about the CFS initiative?

That's all the questions I have. We expect the findings of our research to be published in late January, and the report should be available through the Ministry around that time if you are interested in seeing it. Thank you for your time today.

➤ Checklist

**CFS School Observation Tool**

No.	CFS Indicator	Observation	Yes	No	Not observed	Explain all “No” answers
1.	1.1.10	There are clean toilets for both boys and girls				
2.	1.1.10	There are safe play spaces for all children				
3.	2.2.1	The school has a library with good resources for students				
4.	2.2.3	All children are involved in classroom activities				
5.	2.2.3	Students share their ideas and opinions in classrooms				
6.	3.1.6	The school provides a way for children to express their complaints or suggestions (e.g., a suggestion box that is visible and accessible)				
7.	3.1.10	Materials and information about child rights are visible in classrooms				
8.	3.1.10	Teachers’ lesson plans include activities related to child rights in the classroom				
9.	3.1.5	Children are sometimes allowed to choose their own activities in classrooms				
10.	4.1.6	The school and classrooms have posters (e.g., pictures, student drawings) with relatively equal numbers of females and males represented				
11.	4.1.6	The pictures in student textbooks have relatively equal numbers of females and males represented				
12.	4.2.1	The school provides equal opportunities for boys and girls to participate in extra-curricular activities				

13.	4.2.1	Girls and boys share play spaces equally				
14.	5.3.6	Children are using modern technologies for learning in their classroom lessons				
15.	5.3.10	Teachers encourage all children to express their views during a lesson				
16.	5.1.8	Teachers actively involve children in learning (e.g., discussion, role play, problem solving)				
17.	6.2.7	Children are involved in planning and carrying out educational Activities				
<b>Additional observation (please describe what you saw):</b>						
<b>Pictures:</b>						

➤ **Online Surveys**

*a. Key Stakeholders Survey*

**Section 1: Introduction**

Good day,

Thank you for agreeing to complete this questionnaire as a part of your participation in the Child-Friendly Schools Initiative (2012 – 2015), a partnership between UNICEF and the Ministry of Education. This questionnaire is part of a larger evaluation of the initiative.

We Realize that you are busy, the questionnaire should take 10 – 15 minutes to be completed. It was designed to ask professional questions to help us understand the implementation of the Child-Friendly Schools initiative in Omani Schools. Your individual response will not be shared and will be treated as confidential. All the responses together will be used for the purpose of improving the initiative. Please feel free to be completely honest and open in your responses.

We are grateful for your commitment and effort.

Thank you,  
Dr. Sonia Ben Jaafar  
Managing Director  
EduEval Educational Consultancy

**Section 2: Professional Information**

The questions in this section ask about your experience with and beliefs about the CFS initiative. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements:

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The CFS initiative is closely aligned with Oman's broader education priorities	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative has promoted discussions of child rights among my colleagues	€	€	€	€	€	€
As a result of CFS, our department/organization has made a better policy to better uphold child rights	€	€	€	€	€	€
As a result of CFS, our department/organization has made a better policy to better uphold Women rights	€	€	€	€	€	€
As a result of CFS, our department/organization has made a better policy to better meet the Education For All (EFA) goals	€	€	€	€	€	€
A specific budget was allocated for the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
The outcomes of this initiative were worth the cost of the initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative wasted money	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative is too expensive	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative had a reasonable cost	€	€	€	€	€	€
The resources allocated for CFS initiative were all used with no waste	€	€	€	€	€	€
The resources allocated for CFS initiative were all used with no duplication	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CSF initiative wasted al lot of time	€	€	€	€	€	€
As a result of the CFS initiative, I am better at my job	€	€	€	€	€	€
As a result of the CFS initiative, schools performance is better than	€	€	€	€	€	€

before the initiative started						
Our department/organization received training regarding the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
Schools received training on how to be child-friendly	€	€	€	€	€	€
Our department/organization has an adequate budget to be child-friendly	€	€	€	€	€	€
Schools have an adequate budget to be child-friendly	€	€	€	€	€	€
Our department/organization receives the support it needs from the Ministry of Education to be child-friendly	€	€	€	€	€	€
Schools receive the support it needs from the Ministry of Education to be child-friendly	€	€	€	€	€	€
The human resources allocated to guide the different stakeholders affects the implementation of CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
The <b>attitudes</b> of the CFS stakeholders affects its implementation	€	€	€	€	€	€
The <b>knowledge</b> of the CFS stakeholders affects its implementation	€	€	€	€	€	€
The geographical location affects the implementation of CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
The schools that participated in the CFS initiative will still benefit from it after the funding from UNICEF has ended	€	€	€	€	€	€
I would recommend expanding the CFS initiative to other schools	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative did not place too many additional demands on my colleagues and me	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative did not place too many additional demands on the administrators of participating schools	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative did not place too many additional demands on the teachers of participating schools	€	€	€	€	€	€
Our department/organization needs more training regarding the	€	€	€	€	€	€

CFS initiative						
Schools needs more training on how to be child-friendly	€	€	€	€	€	€
Our department/organization needs more money to sustain the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
Schools needs more money to sustain the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
Our department/organization needs more support from the Ministry of Education to sustain CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
More human resources are needed to sustain CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
More physical resources are needed to sustain CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
As a result of the coordination arrangement, the implementation of CFS was effective	€	€	€	€	€	€
The coordination between the initiative's stakeholders is hierarchical	€	€	€	€	€	€
The implementation of the CFS initiative was slow because there is limited capacity in schools	€	€	€	€	€	€
As a result of the CFS initiative, our department/organization has increased its communication with the UNICEF	€	€	€	€	€	€
As a result of the CFS initiative, our department/organization has increased its communication with the Ministry of Education	€	€	€	€	€	€
As a result of the CFS initiative, our department/organization has increased its communication with schools	€	€	€	€	€	€
As a result of the CFS initiative, our department/organization has increased its communication with the community	€	€	€	€	€	€
Schools are well equipped to implement the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative has helped make the difference between girls and boys performance in schools smaller	€	€	€	€	€	€

The target groups of children in the pilot schools benefited from the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative has helped kids with special needs in schools	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative has helped kids in rural areas	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative has helped kids in poorer areas	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative has helped kids with social problems (divorce, orphans,...)	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative did not make any difference to marginalized families	€	€	€	€	€	€
We work with SMART goals in the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative goals were logical for our context	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative met its goals	€	€	€	€	€	€
I am not aware of the goals of the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
I know what is being monitored for the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
When CFS was designed, the risks were clear	€	€	€	€	€	€
When the CFS was implemented the risks were carefully addressed	€	€	€	€	€	€
I know who to call to speak to regarding CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
I know who is in charge of the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
The collaboration to plan the work with other organizations and departments was well done for the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€

### Section 3: Personal Information

The questions in this section ask general questions about you and your background.

For how many years have you been working on the CSF initiative?	€	Less than 1 year
	€	1 – 5 years
	€	6 – 10 years
	€	Over 10 years
How familiar are you with the CSF initiative?	€	Not at all
	€	A little
	€	A lot
	€	Very familiar

By the end of this school year, how many years of experience will you have OVERALL?

- € Less than 1 year
- € 1 – 5 years
- € 6 – 10 years
- € Over 10 years

By the end of this school year, how many years of experience will you have IN THIS POSITION?

- € Less than 1 year
- € 1 – 5 years
- € 6 – 10 years
- € Over 10 years

What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- € High school degree or equivalent
- € Teaching diploma
- € Bachelor degree
- € Masters/ doctorate

**Sex**

- € Male
- € Female

**Age**

- € 20 – 29
- € 30 – 39
- € 40 – 49
- € 50 – 59
- € 60 – 69

**Please write whatever you want us to know in the text box below**

*b. Principals survey*

**Section 1: Introduction**

Good day,

Thank you for agreeing to complete this questionnaire as a part of your participation in the Child-Friendly Schools Initiative (2012 – 2015), a partnership between UNICEF and the Ministry of Education. This questionnaire is part of a larger evaluation of the initiative.

We Realize that you are busy, the questionnaire should take 10 – 15 minutes to be completed. It was designed to ask professional questions to help us understand the implementation of the Child-Friendly Schools initiative in Omani Schools. Your individual response will not be shared and will be treated as confidential. All the responses together will be used for the purpose of improving the initiative. Please feel free to be completely honest and open in your responses.

We are grateful for your commitment and effort.

Thank you,  
 Dr. Sonia Ben Jaafar  
 Managing Director  
 EduEval Educational Consultancy

**Section 2: Professional Information**

The questions in this section ask about your experience with and beliefs about the CFS initiative. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements:

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My school received a specific budget to implement the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
The outcomes of this initiative were worth the cost of the initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative wasted money	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative is too expensive	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative had a reasonable cost	€	€	€	€	€	€
The resources allocated for CFS initiative were all used with no waste	€	€	€	€	€	€
The resources allocated for CFS initiative were all used with no duplication	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CSF initiative wasted al lot of	€	€	€	€	€	€

time						
As a result of the CFS initiative, I am better at my job	€	€	€	€	€	€
As a result of the CFS initiative, the performance of my school is better than before the initiative started	€	€	€	€	€	€
My school received training on how to be child-friendly	€	€	€	€	€	€
I received training on how to be child-friendly	€	€	€	€	€	€
My school has an adequate budget to be child-friendly	€	€	€	€	€	€
My school receives the support it needs from the Ministry of Education to be child-friendly	€	€	€	€	€	€
The human resources allocated to guide the different stakeholders affects the implementation of CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
The <b>attitudes</b> of the initiative's stakeholders affects its implementation	€	€	€	€	€	€
The <b>knowledge</b> of the initiative's stakeholders affects its implementation	€	€	€	€	€	€
The geographical location affects the implementation of CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
My school will still benefit from the CFS initiative after the funding from UNICEF has ended	€	€	€	€	€	€
I would recommend expanding the CFS initiative to other schools	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative did not place too many additional demands on me	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative did not place too many additional demands on the administration in my school	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative did not place too many additional demands on the teachers in my school	€	€	€	€	€	€
My school needs more training on how to be child-friendly	€	€	€	€	€	€
I need more training on how to be child-friendly	€	€	€	€	€	€
My school needs more money to sustain the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€

More human resources are needed to sustain CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
More physical resources are needed to sustain CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
As a result of the coordination arrangement, the implementation of CFS was effective	€	€	€	€	€	€
The coordination between the initiative's stakeholders is hierarchical	€	€	€	€	€	€
The implementation of the CFS initiative was slow because there is limited capacity in schools	€	€	€	€	€	€
As a result of the CFS initiative, my school has increased its communication with the UNICEF	€	€	€	€	€	€
As a result of the CFS initiative, my school has increased its communication with the Ministry of Education	€	€	€	€	€	€
As a result of the CFS initiative, my school has increased its communication with the directorate	€	€	€	€	€	€
As a result of the CFS initiative, my school has increased its communication with the community	€	€	€	€	€	€
My school is well equipped to implement the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative has helped make the difference between girls and boys performance in my school smaller	€	€	€	€	€	€
The target groups of children in my school benefited from the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative has helped kids with special needs in my school	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative has helped kids in rural areas around my school	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative has helped kids in poorer areas around my school	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative has helped kids with social problems (divorce, orphans,....) in my school	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative did not make any difference to marginalized families in my school	€	€	€	€	€	€

We work with SMART goals in the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative goals were logical for our context	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative met its goals	€	€	€	€	€	€
I am not aware of the goals of the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
I know what is being monitored for the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
When CFS was designed, the risks were clear to me	€	€	€	€	€	€
When the CFS was implemented the risks were carefully addressed	€	€	€	€	€	€
I know who to call to speak to regarding the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
I know who is in charge of the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
The collaboration to plan the work with other organizations and departments was well done for the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€

### Section 3: Personal Information

The questions in this section ask general questions about you and your background.

For how many years have you been working on the CSF initiative?	€	Less than 1 year
	€	1 – 5 years
	€	6 – 10 years
	€	Over 10 years
How familiar are you with the CSF initiative?	€	Not at all
	€	A little
	€	A lot
	€	Very familiar
By the end of this school year, how many years of experience will you have <u>OVERALL</u> ?	€	Less than 1 year
	€	1 – 5 years
	€	6 – 10 years
	€	Over 10 years
By the end of this school year, how many years of experience will you have <u>IN THIS POSITION</u> ?	€	Less than 1 year
	€	1 – 5 years
	€	6 – 10 years
	€	Over 10 years
What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?	€	High school degree or equivalent
	€	Teaching diploma
	€	Bachelor degree
	€	Masters/ doctorate
<b>Sex</b>	€	Male
	€	Female

Age	€ 20 – 29
	€ 30 – 39
	€ 40 – 49
	€ 50 – 59
	€ 60 – 69

**Please write whatever you want us to know in the text box below**

*c. Teachers survey*

**Section 1: Introduction**

Good day,

Thank you for agreeing to complete this questionnaire as a part of your participation in the Child-Friendly Schools Initiative (2012 – 2015), a partnership between UNICEF and the Ministry of Education. This questionnaire is part of a larger evaluation of the initiative.

We realize that you are busy, the questionnaire should take 10 – 15 minutes to be completed. It was designed to ask professional questions to help us understand the implementation of the Child-Friendly Schools initiative in Omani Schools. Your individual response will not be shared and will be treated as confidential. All the responses together will be used for the purpose of improving the initiative. Please feel free to be completely honest and open in your responses.

We are grateful for your commitment and effort.

Thank you,  
 Dr. Sonia Ben Jaafar  
 Managing Director  
 EduEval Educational Consultancy

**Section 2: Professional Information**

The questions in this section ask about your experience with and beliefs about the CFS initiative. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements:

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
As a result of the CFS initiative, I am better at my job	€	€	€	€	€	€
As a result of the CFS initiative, the performance of my school is better than before the initiative started	€	€	€	€	€	€

My school received training on how to be child-friendly	€	€	€	€	€	€
I received training on how to be child-friendly	€	€	€	€	€	€
My school has an adequate budget to be child-friendly	€	€	€	€	€	€
My school receives the support it needs from the Ministry of Education to be child-friendly	€	€	€	€	€	€
My school will still benefit from the CFS initiative after the funding from UNICEF has ended	€	€	€	€	€	€
I would recommend expanding the CFS initiative to other schools	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative did not place too many additional demands on the teachers in the school	€	€	€	€	€	€
I need more training on how to be child-friendly	€	€	€	€	€	€
My school needs more money to sustain the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
More human resources are needed to sustain CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
More physical resources are needed to sustain CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
As a result of the coordination arrangement, the implementation of CFS was effective	€	€	€	€	€	€
The coordination between the initiative's stakeholders is hierarchical	€	€	€	€	€	€
The implementation of the CFS initiative was slow because there is limited capacity in schools	€	€	€	€	€	€
As a result of the CFS initiative, my school has increased its communication with the UNICEF	€	€	€	€	€	€
As a result of the CFS initiative, my school has increased its communication with the Ministry of Education	€	€	€	€	€	€
As a result of the CFS initiative, my school has increased its communication with the directorate	€	€	€	€	€	€
As a result of the CFS initiative, my school has increased its communication with the community	€	€	€	€	€	€

My school is well equipped to implement the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative has helped make the difference between girls and boys performance in my school smaller	€	€	€	€	€	€
The target groups of children in my school benefited from the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative has helped kids with special needs in my school	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative has helped kids in rural areas around my school	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative has helped kids in poorer areas around my school	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative has helped kids with social problems (divorce, orphans,...) in my school	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative did not make any difference to marginalized families in my school	€	€	€	€	€	€
We work with SMART goals in the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative goals were logical for our context	€	€	€	€	€	€
The CFS initiative met its goals	€	€	€	€	€	€
I am not aware of the goals of the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
I know what is being monitored for the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
When CFS was designed, the risks were clear to me	€	€	€	€	€	€
When the CFS was implemented the risks were carefully addressed	€	€	€	€	€	€
I know who to call to speak to regarding the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
I know who is in charge of the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€
The collaboration to plan the work with other organizations and departments was well done for the CFS initiative	€	€	€	€	€	€

### **Section 3: Personal Information**

The questions in this section ask general questions about you and your background.

For how many years have you been working on the CSF initiative?	€	Less than 1 year
	€	1 - 5 years

	€ 6 – 10 years
	€ Over 10 years
How familiar are you with the CSF initiative?	€ Not at all
	€ A little
	€ A lot
	€ Very familiar
By the end of this school year, how many years of experience will you have <u>OVERALL</u> ?	€ Less than 1 year
	€ 1 – 5 years
	€ 6 – 10 years
	€ Over 10 years
By the end of this school year, how many years of experience will you have <u>IN THIS POSITION</u> ?	€ Less than 1 year
	€ 1 – 5 years
	€ 6 – 10 years
	€ Over 10 years
What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?	€ High school degree or equivalent
	€ Teaching diploma
	€ Bachelor degree
	€ Masters/ doctorate
<b>Sex</b>	€ Male
	€ Female
<b>Age</b>	€ 20 – 29
	€ 30 – 39
	€ 40 – 49
	€ 50 – 59
	€ 60 – 69

**Please write whatever you want us to know in the text box below**

## 5. List of abbreviations

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Term</b>
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>CFS</b>	Child-friendly Schools
<b>CO</b>	UNICEF Oman Country Office
<b>CP</b>	Country Programme
<b>CRC</b>	Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>EFA</b>	Education for All
<b>GCC</b>	Gulf Cooperation Council
<b>GoO</b>	Government of Oman
<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of education
<b>NWT</b>	National Working Team
<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>RO</b>	Regional Office
<b>SEN</b>	Special Educational Needs
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children’s Fund

## 6. Evaluators biodata and/or justification of team composition

### a. Dr. Sonia Ben Jaafar, Managing Director

Sonia Ben Jaafar has extensive experience in educational evaluations in various contexts. She has a deep understanding of educational development and how to measure effect within complex systems. Dr. Ben Jaafar has developed expertise in designing and conducting mixed- methods educational evaluations that examine the difference in difference impact of given programmes on disenfranchised populations with special consideration to gender analysis. She has recently designed the monitoring and evaluation plan for the Girls' Education Challenge in Myanmar for the Department approved by PricewaterhouseCoopers for the UK Department for International Development. Prior to joining EduEval, Dr. Ben Jaafar was an independent evaluator who was responsible for supporting and conducting educational evaluations for development programmes such as the pan-African evaluation of the Gender-Responsive Pedagogy Model for the Forum for African Women Educationalists and the Evaluation of British Council's Connecting Classrooms for the Institute of Education, University of London. She also supported the Aga Khan Foundation in Geneva to build a central systematic program monitoring and evaluation across EEC programs in African and Asia. Dr. Ben Jaafar is an advocate for rigorous monitoring and evaluation in educational development. She is an active member of the MENA Evaluation Association (EvalMENA) representing it in the GCC and in 2013, she was elected for a 3 years term at the Executive Board of the International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS). In addition to her community work, Dr. Ben Jaafar teaches assessment and evaluation courses at Hamdan Bin Mohammed Smart University in Dubai, writes a [blog](#) with a readership of approximately 16,000 and offers several workshops on how to conduct M&E in the education field.

### b. Ms. Sarah Capper, Head of Evaluation & Learning, EduEval Educational Consultancy

Sarah Capper has more than 10 years of experience monitoring and evaluating education programs based in the Arab countries. She has particularly focused on the evaluation of school reform and educational leadership; teacher training and certification; co- and extracurricular activities; parental and community engagement in schools; education technology; instruction in English as a foreign language. She has most recently served as the technical lead on evaluation of the Girls' Education Challenge in Myanmar for the UK Department for International Development. Prior to joining EduEval, Ms. Capper served in various capacities for AMIDEAST for twelve years. From 2008-2014, she was the head of the monitoring and evaluation departments for the Model Schools Network Program, the Leadership and Teacher Development Program and the School Support Program, a series of U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)- funded projects working in close cooperation with the Palestinian

Ministry of Education to pilot and scale a comprehensive school reform model in the West Bank. In addition to her evaluation work, Ms. Capper has served as a consultant for the Treatment Center for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture and the Civic Forum Institute, both in Ramallah, and has worked with the Education for Peace in Iraq Center in Washington, DC. She is a member of EvalMENA, IDEAS and the American Evaluation Association.

c. Ms. Lorraine Charles, Research Associate

Lorraine Charles is an experienced researcher who has focused on development in the Middle East. She has been working with EduEval supporting projects such as monitoring the Summer Challenge Program 2014 for the Abu Dhabi Education Council and the Gap analysis for the Development of a Unified National Learning Standards Framework for the United Arab Emirates Ministry of Education. In addition, Lorraine has conducted research on education, which highlights the extent to which Syrian women's capacity acquired from formal education evolves into economic achievements, the barriers that they face, the impact of the current Syrian crisis on their agency with a focus on girls' education. Mrs. Charles is currently pursuing her PhD at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at Exeter University, where her research examines the political economy of the UAE with regards to social and cultural forces.

d. Ms. Sarah Zantout, Educational Development Researcher

Sarah Zantout is an Educational Development Researcher at EduEval Educational Consultancy. Since she joined EduEval, Mrs. Zantout has worked on several monitoring and evaluation projects in the MENA region and Asia. For example, she worked on the study of the perception of Acceptable schools for the Knowledge and Human Development Authority of Dubai. She was responsible for collecting data qualitatively through conducting individual and focus group interviews in schools; data analysis and finally, assisted in writing the final report. In addition, she attended and supported the preparation and evaluation process of the What Works professional knowledge sharing series through contacting presenters, monitoring content, attending meetings and analysing and reporting data. Mrs. Zantout is currently working on supporting the monitoring and evaluation of the Connect To Learn initiative of the Girls' Education Challenge in Myanmar and conducting a study to measure the importance of EvalMENA on professionalization of evaluation in the MENA region for the association. She is due to present the results at the International Development Evaluation Association in Thailand this year. Mrs. Zantout holds an MA in Education: Leadership, Management and Change from Middlesex University. Her graduate work focused on the extent that technology integration has on supporting student-centered learning. She has also been admitted to the EPDET European Program for Development Evaluation Training for 2015 and plans to pursue her PhD in Monitoring and Evaluation.

e. Mr. Yazan Habash, Research Associate

Yazan Habash has almost seven years of experience working with projects that involve refugee issues and solutions. He worked for several years with the International Organization for Migration in refugee resettlements and is deeply familiar with the refugee populations in the Middle East and North Africa region. His most recent work with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency was managing the Humanitarian Portfolio for the Syria crisis response. Amongst his responsibilities was to conduct field visits in Jordan and Lebanon with all agencies working in Syria crisis response. His duties included the analysis of periodic reports received from implementing partners and building a bigger picture of the performance of the response with special attention to the role of funding, the state of the refugees, and the gaps. His research supported the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and SIDA in their decision making of where to focus the resources in the crisis.



Target	Key informa nts	Principal s	Par ent s/ car egi ver s	Stu den ts	Teachers	Sch ool env iro nm ent			
Instrument	Int erv ie ws	O nl in e s u rv e y	O nl in e s u rv e y	Foc us gro ups	Foc us gro ups	Fo cu s gro ups	Fo cu s gro ups	Onli ne surv eys	Obs erv atio n for m
7.1: To what extent were the planned CFS results logical and SMART given the strategies, time, and resources employed?	X	X	X	X			X	X	X
7.2: To what extent were the risks and assumptions made clear in the design of the CFS initiative?	X	X	X	X			X	X	
7.3: How well were the risks and assumptions considered during implementation?	X	X	X	X			X	X	
7.4: How effective were the management arrangements for the CFS initiative for joint annual work planning, monitoring, and reporting against expected results?	X	X	X	X			X	X	

## 8. Code of Ethics

### I. ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

#### P1. Excellence, knowledge and competence

Members shall exhibit integrity, honesty, and respect in the practice of evaluation while continually seeking to uphold and raise the standards of evaluation education, research, training, and practice, at the same time contributing to the enhancement of conceptual thinking in development monitoring and evaluation, promoting monitoring and evaluation as a useful tool for learning and accountability, and using it as a means to effectively and positively contribute to the improvement of the interventions and the issues they address.

P1.1 Members shall strive to attain IDEAS core competencies, to continuously work to raise their own level of competency, and to keep themselves abreast of professional advances in their field.

P1.2 Members shall apply the technical knowledge and skills gained through education and through hands-on experiences in the evaluation field to improve their own practice.

P1.3 Members shall participate in networks of evaluators, researchers and practitioners, sharing experiences and seeking opportunities for learning.

P1.4 Members shall demonstrate a consistent pattern of care, balance, competence and objectivity in practising development monitoring and evaluation, guaranteeing the integrity of the processes in which they are engaged.

P1.5 Members shall ensure they are knowledgeable and competent to carry out the tasks for which they are being engaged, accurately representing their level of skills and knowledge, and providing a professional level of service akin to IDEAS competency standards.

## P2. Respect for individuals, societies and the environment

Members shall exhibit integrity, honesty, and respecting their professional relations, clearly acknowledging the value of individuals, displaying sensitivity to the diversity of cultural expressions and manifestations, respecting social norms and laws while promoting human rights, and working collaboratively to contribute to sustainable development.

P2.1 Members shall act to respect human rights in their evaluations, and shall be aware of the diversity of cultures, beliefs and practices, and consider these in designing and conducting evaluations.

P2.2 Members shall not discriminate when designing and carrying out an evaluation on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, political affiliation, national origin, ethnicity, language, age, or disability, nor engage in any practice that may violate these principles unless the nature of the project or programme under evaluation (e.g. program for girls only), and of the evaluation itself requires selectivity.

P2.3 Members shall display courtesy and consideration for any individuals with whom they relate as development evaluator professionals, be they clients, respondents, colleagues, stakeholders, or the general public.

P2.4 Members shall strive to be culturally knowledgeable, sensitive and respectful, and be fully aware of their own biases, cultural and other, in the course of their professional work.

P2.5 Members shall not knowingly violate the Constitution and the laws of the country in which they are carrying out their work, or international covenants.

P2.6 Members shall seek to identify the potential and actual social and environmental impacts of policies, projects and programmes under evaluation and be mindful of possible environmental impacts of projects, noting them in written reports, and recommending environmental assessments as appropriate.

## P3. Partnership and collaboration across professions and practices

Members shall espouse integrity, honesty, and respect, and promote partnership and collaboration among evaluators and related professionals with whom they work.

P3.1 Members shall strive to broaden knowledge of the context of an intervention, and thereby enhance the quality of the evaluation, listening to various stakeholders' points of view and collaboratively working in multi-professional settings.

P3.2 Members shall help build the evaluation capacity of colleagues and of stakeholders sharing knowledge and experience.

P3.3 Members shall champion joint evaluations to enhance the quality of the evaluations and reduce the burden on those who provide the necessary data.

#### CC1. Regarding the profession embraced

CC1.1 Members will offer clear and justified comments on the Terms of Reference (TOR) for an evaluation, whenever the quality of the evaluation could thereby be significantly improved.

CC1.2 Members are responsible for honestly negotiating the terms of an evaluation with clients, for completion of the evaluation within the conditions negotiated and agreed in the Terms of Reference, including the timeframe, the necessary human and logistical resources to carry out the task, and implementation of the methodology and data collection procedures that will yield reliable evaluation results, and for negotiating in good faith should unforeseen circumstances arise.

CC1.3 Members shall decline evaluations when development evaluation professional standards, principles, values and concerns cannot be resolved, and integrity would be compromised.

CC1.4 Members shall make appropriate acknowledgments of published or unpublished sources, of colleagues' works, ideas, and collaboration, either written or oral, and of the guidance and support received from others.

CC1.5 Members shall design and conduct evaluations with technical rigour and internationally recognized standards and norms, and make use of reasonable criticism to improve the evaluation.

CC1.6 Members shall seek to make evaluation data and analysis, findings, limitations and conclusions, and evaluation reports themselves, publically available, unless doing so would violate legal and propriety obligations or assurances of confidentiality or anonymity.

CC1.7 Members shall seek to organize and document data gathered or otherwise produced in the course of an evaluation to enable its future use by others.

CC1.8 Members shall seek to prevent or correct misuse of the work by others, within reasonable limits.

CC1.9 Members shall not knowingly make or prepare or certify as true any oral or written statement that is false, incorrect, misleading, or incomplete.

CC1.10 Members shall report to the proper authority for further action any evidence or reasonable suspicion of fraudulent, corrupt, illicit, or illegal practices that they encounter in the course of the evaluation work.

#### CC2. Regarding the client, the public and stakeholders

CC2.1 Members shall not accept any gift or payment from any person or institution that is intended to influence evaluative judgment in relation to an existing or prospective programmes or projects or gives the appearance of seeking to influence an evaluation.

CC2.2 Members shall not make any payment nor offer gifts to any public official with the intent of influencing their judgment in relation to an existing or prospective evaluative activity in which the members are interested.

CC2.3 Members shall decline to carry out evaluations of any programmes or projects intended to promote unethical activities.

CC2.4 Members shall withdraw from any evaluation where potential conflicts of interest are identified.

CC2.5 Members shall not succumb to pressures of any kind to omit or downplay reliable information gathered during the evaluation process, considered necessary to answer a main evaluation question.

CC2.6 Members shall record all changes made in the originally negotiated terms of reference for an evaluation and the reasons why the changes were made and include these in the evaluation report.

CC2.7 Members shall explore with the client(s) and stakeholders the various evaluation questions, raising potential issues, identifying implications for evaluation approaches, strengths and shortcomings.

CC2.8 Members shall obtain informed consent from respondents before beginning data collection, clearly describing their task, identifying the financing institution, the purpose of the evaluation, the potential users of the findings and uses to which the findings will be put, and the need for the respondent's collaboration, and shall explicitly indicate whether anonymity or confidentiality will be offered.

CC2.9 Members shall make clear in reporting of the evaluation who commissioned it, its general purpose, the source(s) of financing, the scope, methodology, and limitations of the evaluation, the potential users and uses of the findings, and provide whenever possible the opportunity for the entities evaluated to comment on evaluation reports, before and after they are finalized.

CC2.10 Members shall uphold professional objectivity at all times, being fair and explicit when making judgments, giving adequate weight to opinions expressed by respondents, and avoiding preconceived notions and conclusions.

CC2.11 Members shall seek to empower stakeholders by involving them in the evaluation to the maximum extent feasible and shall present evaluation findings, strengths, limitations and conclusions with the appropriate level of simplicity, conciseness, and clarity to make them understandable to varied audiences.

### CC3. Regarding the Development field

CC3.1 Members shall exhibit awareness and consideration for the inherent complexity and diversity of situations, practices and beliefs faced by professionals who work in the field of Development.

CC3.1.1 Members shall strive to broaden their perspective of the subject of the evaluation, listening to various parties, and appropriately incorporating their perspectives.

CC3.1.2 Members shall use reasonable criticism, limiting personal judgements, and avoiding unnecessary debate over differing viewpoints.

CC3.1.3 Members shall take into consideration judgments, interpretations, and rationales that differ from their own but are consistent with evidence gathered.

CC3.2 Members shall promote equity in all domains, and identify impacts that may result in inequalities of any kind in reporting evaluation results.

CC3.3 Members shall seek to promote evaluation processes as key tools for development effectiveness, transparency and accountability in policy-making and in social and organisational learning.

CC3.3.1 Members shall seek to promote the use of evaluation findings as a means to improve the effectiveness of development interventions and of the development field as a whole.

CC3.3.2 Members shall seek to design and implement and report evaluations in a way that makes the results useable for development.

### III. APPLICATION

A1. IDEAS will encourage the use of this Code of Ethics as a good practice in development evaluation, and will offer support for its members to deal with particular situations that may arise in the practise of evaluation, be they explicitly stated in this document or not.

A2. Members will seek advice from IDEAS as represented by its board, or its designees, whenever ambiguous or unclear cases emerge or when the current Code of Ethics does not address particular situations.

A3. Members shall be prepared to explain breaches of these ethical guidelines to IDEAS as represented by its board, and to colleagues, should the board so request.