

## Education system in the Gulf needs to tailor curricula and teaching methods to suit changed scenario, says research report

ICDL GCC Foundation chief says the prime need is to integrate IT into the education system

December 27, 2004

recent study has stressed the need for urgent reforms in the Gulf's education sector, with a particular focus on updating curricula and teaching methods. Among the ills affecting the education system were outdated theoretical studies and lack of correlation with today's job market, according to the study conducted by Dubai-based Madar Research Group.

The report highlights that while some of the countries in the Gulf region had record admission levels to higher education with the majority of secondary school graduates moving into college and university, the quality of education fell short of the levels of the developed world.

The report points out that the authorities were aware of the shortcomings and some of them have initiated long term plans to overhaul the education system. Among the major recommendations were the development of teaching methodologies and programs that adhere to contemporary international standards, with a particular focus on introducing the latest IT resources at all levels.

This view is shared by ICDL GCC Foundation, the regional office of the ECDL Foundation and the governing body of the International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL) programme in the Gulf States. "Evidently, there is an obvious gap between the education standards and the job market in the Arab world. This is because the dynamics of modern business have altered dramatically over the past few years," said Jamil Ezzo, Director General of ICDL GCC Foundation. "The need of the hour is to customize education to suit the requirements of the modern world."

"All over the world, there has been a paradigm shift in education systems, with the major emphasis being laid on computer literacy. Computer skills have become as essential as reading and writing in today's society. The International Computer Driving License around the world has been helping governments further IT literacy and improving people's chances of achieving greater success in the workplace through basic and advanced computer courses attuned to the needs of today's business. The Gulf was among the first regions to widely adopt the ICDL as part of government public awareness and e-Citizen programs, and several countries are either implementing it or supporting its integration into their education system. This is a highly encouraging sign," added Ezzo.

A UNICEF study recently revealed that there is a high rate of dropouts at the school level in the Gulf. It showed that nearly 20 per cent of children in primary schools were either not attending regularly or had dropped out.

## **In the news**

### **About ICDL**

International Computer Driving License (ICDL), is an internationally recognized computer proficiency standard that is owned by the European Computer Driving License (ECDL) and introduced by the UNESCO's Cairo Office (UCO) for Arab states in 2001. ICDL is gaining increasing acceptance in the Middle East, with several governments adopting as a requirement to their employees. The ICDL program exists in over 132 countries, and is offered in 32 languages, including Arabic. The programs offered are all based on one standard syllabus and question set. There are more than 15,000 centres worldwide, and over 10 million exams have been taken globally since the launch of the program.

### **About ICDL GCC Foundation**

ICDL GCC Foundation was created by the ECDL Foundation, the not-for-profit global governing body of the ECDL and ICDL member countries dedicated to helping raise the general level of computer skills in societies and providing access for all to the information society, to serve the to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States with their implementation of ICDL and for providing them with localised support to ensure quality of ICDL programs. The ICDL-GCC Foundation is the sole ICDL licensee and accreditation body that is responsible to support ICDL accredited training and testing centres in the GCC. It also acts as the reviewing and approving body for the local adaptation of ICDL programs, including authorizing the sale of Arabic ICDL content and testing material in the region.

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