

Fatma Al Marri

CEO, Dubai Schools Agency

From former school teacher and principal to current policy maker and thought leader, Ms. Fatma Al Marri has been involved in all facets of education.

As CEO, Dubai School Agency, Ms. Al Marri played a major role in innovative teaching and learning in Dubai's public schools from 2007 to 2011. "We have seen great improvement over this time period," she said. "The main change we saw was the acceptance of change."

Using evidence-based indicators to achieve holistic, community-minded goals, Ms. Al Marri helped change the culture of education in schools. "For the first time, strategic plans were not just pieces of paper. People really started thinking about how they would implement them."

One of her main objectives is supporting students enrolled in private education in Dubai. Her priorities lie in helping Emirati parents make confident, informed choices for their children's schools, promoting Emirati national identity in private schools and recruiting more Emirati teachers to the private education sector.

"National identity is not only about celebrating national days," she said. "It's in daily life; it's in the exposure Emirati students have to a teacher, to a curriculum. It's how we interact with each other, with the world."

From 2007 to 2011, Ms. Al Marri was one of nine women appointed as a member of the Federal National Council (FNC). "It was a very enlightening experience," she said, "because it gave me the opportunity to look at education issues from another angle – I was able to understand them more clearly."

Since 2010, Ms. Al Marri has been a member of the Board of Trustee of Hamdan bin Mohammed e-University as well as a member of the Dubai Government Traffic Safety Committee. She is also a member of the Dubai Appreciation Award for Community Services committee - this award honours those people who have made a positive impact in community service in medicine, education, social welfare and other fields.

Ms. Al Marri envisions an education landscape where all schools in Dubai work together. "It's true that techniques and approaches are different," she said, "but this is something we should take advantage of. We all have the same objectives, after all."