

CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS
OF EDUCATION AND MINISTERS
RESPONSIBLE FOR ECONOMIC PLANNING
IN THE ARAB STATES

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CHAPTER III

RESOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL RECOMMENDATION ON THE OVERALL DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE ARAB STATES

The Conference,

After reviews the progress made by the Arab States in the field of education since the first Conference of Arab Ministers of Education held in Beirut in 1960,

1. Stresses the strong desire of the Arab States to extend and improve further their educational systems, both as an instrument of their common cultural aims and in order to achieve a better balance between their educational expansion and the economic and social needs of their countries in the modern world;
2. Takes note with satisfaction of the progress achieved in the expansion and organization of education, particularly at the primary level;
3. Realizes, however, that the present development of education does not meet all the urgent needs of Arab countries, nor does it result in training a sufficient number of the senior staff and skilled labour which economic and social development requires;
4. Registers its concern about the persisting lack of adequate building facilities and of suitable educational material, as well as the defects shown in the working of the systems of education, as demonstrated by the excessive percentage of repetition and drop-out among children attending school;
5. Notes that new attempts are being made in the Arab States, through the introduction of modern methods and techniques, to plan the expansion and improvement of education so as to make it a driving force for economic growth and social progress;
6. Draws the attention of the Arab States to the need for intensifying their efforts with a view to:
 - (a) planning education in the light of the general objectives of the Arab world, which aspires, on the one hand, to adhere to its ideals and preserve its national and spiritual heritage and seeks, on the other, to achieve the maximum social and economic development. Such planning should form an integral part of overall development planning, while due attention should also be given in educational plans to the quantitative and qualitative aspects of education;
 - (b) urging Arab States in which universal compulsory primary education is not yet planned to take the necessary steps to attain the objective of enrolling all children of primary school age by 1980, and to make special efforts to ensure that boys and girls have equal access to education;
 - (c) diversifying education, particularly at the secondary and higher levels, while taking the necessary steps to encourage able students to continue their education, in branches in

Resolutions and recommendations

keeping with their interests and abilities and the requirements of their society, up to the highest level required;

- (d) integrating adult education and literacy plans, within not more than 15 years, in general educational planning and in programmes for developing the educational systems;
 - (e) promoting, consolidating, diversifying and expanding women's education in all Arab States in order to eliminate the present disparities in educational opportunities;
 - (f) establishing in the general development of education a proper balance between general and vocational and technical education, between urban and rural education, between theoretical teaching and practical instruction, between literary and scientific education and between school and out-of-school education;
 - (g) giving attention to the education of the handicapped and providing them with the means and opportunities for development;
7. Stresses the cultural bonds between Arab countries, and the necessity for them to co-operate in the fields of education and the development of their educational systems;
 8. Appreciates the aid furnished or made available by Unesco to the Arab States in the planning, development and improvement of their educational systems, and thanks the Organization for convening the present Conference and the League of Arab States for its contribution to it;
 9. Invites the Director-General of Unesco to bear in mind the information provided and the views expressed by the delegations at the Conference in the planning and execution of Unesco's programme, so as to meet as fully as possible the needs of Arab States as well as their desire for regional and international co-operation in the field of education.

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES,
LITERACY AND DEVELOPMENT, QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND
PLANNING FOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Conference,

I

Considering the endeavours of the Arab countries to raise the general standards and to achieve prosperity for their peoples through social and economic development,

Considering the demographic problems, the spread of enlightenment and the fact that education has come to be regarded as a means for mobilizing manpower and providing it with the experience and skills required to enable it to play an effective role in bringing about these overall changes in the Arab countries,

Considering, furthermore, the deep desire of the Arab peoples to shape their lives in a spirit of reverence for the age-old Islamic and Arab traditions, while bringing them into line with new patterns of civilization based on science for the exploitation of natural resources and potentialities,

Considering the urgent need to increase production, raise the standard of living and develop social and cultural life in the shortest possible time,

Considering the demands and responsibilities imposed by this development and these aspirations on educational systems, programmes and planning,

Aware of the great influence of education on economic and social progress and the need of the Arab States to plan and improve education, including both school and out-of-school education, in order to enable education to make the maximum contribution to their development plans,

Gratified at the progress made during the past few years in a number of Arab States in planning education in relation to development needs, together with the growing recognition in all Arab States of the necessity of extending and improving educational planning,

Considering the desire of the Arab States to strengthen their cultural unity, and at the same time to foster international co-operation,

II

EDUCATIONAL TARGETS AND PRIORITIES IN RELATION TO ECONOMIC,
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Notes that a number of difficult problems still await solution if education is to be enabled to make its maximum contribution to development;

Recommendations

Recommends that the Arab States pay special attention to:

1. improving the balance in the educational system between academic learning and practical education; and undertaking curriculum revision, so as to obtain the maximum benefit from education at all levels;
2. controlling the enrolment of pupils and their distribution between the different branches and levels of secondary and higher education so as to conform more closely with investment requirements in the Arab world, and with the need for increased productivity both in agriculture and in industry;
3. overcoming the present shortage of technicians in the various professions - and especially in engineering - who are needed to work with the top-level specialists, and thus preventing the serious effect on production consequent on insufficient technically trained middle-level manpower;

Notes that the Arab States are devoting an increasing share of their budgets to education;

Recommends that the Arab States make an economic analysis of the cost of education and its equipment, including annual recurrent and non-recurrent capital expenditure, in order to achieve maximum economy in the cost of education;

Recommends that ways be studied of deriving maximum benefit from each educational investment by reducing wastage;

Draws attention to the need for exchanges of experience and technical consultations in this field at the regional and international levels;

Recommends that Unesco provide the Arab States with experts to assist them in carrying out these studies;

III

LITERACY AND DEVELOPMENT

Considering that illiteracy is an obstacle to economic, social and cultural development,

Considering that the eradication of illiteracy necessitates the simultaneous undertaking of two separate but complementary operations, namely, the spread of primary education among children and the promotion of literacy among adults in an orderly and planned form,

Considering that educational planning cannot be a coherent, balanced and integral part of general planning unless it covers all types of education at the various levels, including the eradication of illiteracy and the education of adults,

In conformity with Resolution 1937 adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 1963 concerning the World Campaign for the Eradication of Illiteracy, the Experimental World Literacy Programme approved by the General Conference of Unesco at its thirteenth session in 1964 (13 C/Resolutions, 1.271), the recommendations of the two Conferences in Alexandria (October 1964 and April 1965) concerning the planning and organization of literacy programmes in the Arab States and of the World Congress of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy, held in Teheran in September 1965, and Resolution 2043 adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 5 December 1965, and pursuant to decision No. 2174 of the Council of the League of Arab States dated 8 January 1966 and the recommendations adopted by the Arab States National Commissions for Unesco, meeting in Algeria in 1964 and in Kuwait in 1966,

Recommends

1. that adult education be given due importance in the planning of education and of social and economic development, so that adult education proceeds side by side with children's education in an integral plan;
2. that every Arab State give due priority to the eradication of illiteracy and allot it a budget within its educational planning programmes;
3. that the financing of the campaign for the eradication of illiteracy should not be confined to government resources but that private organizations and institutions should also contribute the necessary technical assistance, every investment in the eradication of illiteracy being to the benefit of all and helping to develop the Arab economies;
4. that efforts be made to set up literacy centres at institutions and in industrial and agricultural concerns, and employers should be urged to encourage their workers to seek education themselves by offering them wage increases, bonuses or shorter working hours;
5. that an effective publicity campaign be waged through the radio, television and other information media to encourage illiterates to attend literacy classes;
6. that literacy experts preparing literacy books and other materials in the Arab States co-operate and exchange experience on the most successful means in this respect;
7. that the Arab States Training Centre for Education for Community Development at Sirs-el-Layyan and the Regional Centre for Educational Planning in Beirut collect documentation on the different ways and means of eradicating illiteracy applied throughout the world, in respect of the curriculum, study plans and reading materials for literacy, of the teaching methods which experience has shown to be successful, and of methods of planning literacy programmes and the continuing education of adults; and that the two Centres undertake, with the collaboration of other centres which may be set up for that purpose, the dissemination of this documentation in the countries affected by the problem of illiteracy, at the cost of their preparation, printing and publication;
8. that the Arab States expedite the implementation of the resolution adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its meeting on 8 January 1966 concerning the establishment of an Arab Literacy Fund within the framework of the League of Arab States; and that Unesco effectively co-operate with the Fund once it has been created (the delegations of Tunisia and Saudi Arabia expressed reservations concerning this recommendation);
9. that Unesco, the Special Fund and other United Nations bodies increase their assistance to the Arab States as a contribution to the success of the Experimental World Literacy Programme sponsored by Unesco and towards the development of adult education.

IV

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Conference recommends:

(a) General aims of education

that the aims of education be reconsidered in the light of studies made in the course of previous Arab meetings on education and taking into account the following considerations:

Recommendations

1. The philosophical considerations inherent in the fact that the Arab nation believes in God, reveres religion and adheres to lofty spiritual and moral values and to Arab and human ideals.
2. Considerations aiming at the raising of generations fully developed in soul, mind and body;
3. The social and economic considerations arising from the fact that the Arab nation is a developing one, seeking to attain the highest levels of social and economic development, and the consequent need to educate the new generation in various skills, a healthy outlook, different cultures and the technological sciences, contributing to the achievement of these aims;
4. The national considerations inherent in the need to instil in the rising generations a positive attitude which would enable them to play their role in the realization of freedom and unity, in the progress of human civilization and in the preservation of peace.

Recommends that the Arab States, in their desire to achieve the maximum equivalency between their educational systems, should do so at the highest level of quality and should also promote the teaching of foreign languages and strengthen international understanding.

(b) The teacher, his training and development

1. Every attention should be given to the question of providing teachers with suitable academic and professional training adapted to the needs of each country. Countries which have attained self-sufficiency should establish a university degree as the minimum requirement for teaching at all levels.
2. Equal attention should be given to the in-service training of teachers and to their further development by means of seminars, lecture tours and guidance and supervision visits; material and moral incentives should be given to teachers who participate in such programmes.
3. The social and economic standard of teachers should be taken into consideration, and they should be encouraged to take up and remain in the profession.
4. Due care should be taken to reduce the teachers' work-load, and the hours of elderly teachers should be reduced. Women teachers, particularly married ones, should be provided with health and social services according to the possibilities of each country.

(c) Curricula, textbooks and educational aids

1. The curricula should be comprehensive and should cover not only the content in terms of knowledge and experience, but also objectives and methods in accordance with the levels and subjects of study.
2. Ministries of Education should have a special department entrusted with the task of revising and developing curricula and textbooks. Such departments should seek the advice of as many as possible of those concerned with the educational process, such as teachers, inspectors and parents. The advice of specialists and technicians in agriculture, industry and other related fields should be sought when curricula for technical subjects are prepared.
3. Since textbooks are among the most important educational media great attention should be given to the writing, production and revision of textbooks in order to obtain the best

educational results by ensuring that they are adapted to the understanding ability and level of the students, present the latest information in the most suitable form, are given the best possible presentation, and are in harmony with the various Arab environments.

4. Emphasis should be placed on the most suitable subjects for the development of modern Arab society, particularly religion, Arabic, social studies, technological sciences, mathematics, pure and applied physical sciences and foreign languages. It is also recommended that vocational and practical training be incorporated in the curricula of schools for general education and that the Secretariat of the League of Arab States organize a seminar on religious education in view of the importance of this subject.
5. Curricula and textbooks in the Arab world should be standardized as much as possible in order to ensure unity of orientation and language, and to facilitate students' and teachers' movement from one Arab country to another.
6. Education should be diversified and the establishment of a variety of schools and institutes should be encouraged in line with the social and economic development.
7. The curricula and systems of higher education in the Arab world should be developed and geared to the planning of manpower requirements in the different fields of economic, social and cultural development, since it is at the universities that higher scientific research is conducted and specialists and research workers are trained.
8. Students should be given the necessary guidance, based on well-developed tests and measurements, in order that they may benefit to the full from the diversified curricula in accordance with their interests and abilities and with the requirements of the overall development plan.
9. Special attention should be paid to the development of curricula and textbooks for adults who form a high proportion of the population with an important role to play in the overall development plan.
10. In view of the fact that experience and practical training are needed before such modern educational media as television, films and audio-visual aids can be used, specialists should be trained in this field.
11. In view of the importance of equipment for improving the quality of education, particularly in the field of technology and the physical sciences, each country should acquire the equipment required for effective student participation in the conduct of experiments related to scientific theories.
12. Teaching methods should be so developed as to train students to adopt scientific methods in their thinking and to stimulate their desire for research, discovery and productive work. This would lead to their greater participation after graduation in the field of their specialization and would increase the value of their work in the field of social and economic development.

(d) School buildings

1. Educationalists must participate in the drafting of specifications for school buildings.
2. School buildings should be standardized and simplified and the premises reduced to the minimum required to maintain the quality of education.
3. Educational methods and the allocation of classroom space should be so developed as to economize in the use of school buildings.

Recommendations

(e) Social welfare, medical care and nutrition

1. The hygienic conditions of the school environment should be such as to ensure the sound physical, mental, social and emotional development of the students.
2. Schools and educational institutes should provide the preventative and curative medical services needed to maintain the health of students and teachers.
3. Health education should be given its proper place in school curricula at all levels, as well as in the curricula of the teacher-training institutes and in literacy programmes.
4. Special schools should be established for the education and training of handicapped children within the limits of their abilities, so that they may not be denied their right to education and their citizenship rights. Unesco should be requested to make available to the Arab States the experience needed for this type of education.
5. Gifted students should be given the chance to develop their talents through all possible means e

(f) Educational administration and the awakening of public opinion to the importance of quality in education

Considering that the educational administration machinery embraces supervision as well as the preparation, implementation and follow-up of educational plans,

Considering that the educational objectives, systems, curricula and methods in the Arab States need to be developed and adapted to meet the requirements of economic and social development,

The following is required:

1. The selection of efficient, enlightened and able educational personnel, who should be given the chance to direct this machinery and supplied with all that is new in educational thought to help them acquire new inspiration and vitality, through attendance at regional and international conferences and seminars and through the supply of the periodical publications on education.
2. This machinery should be given the task of stimulating public opinion in regard to educational systems and the qualitative development of education and the improvement of its standards. The methods resorted to in this connexion should be expanded to cover teachers and pupils and their parents.
3. Attention should be given to the economic and social conditions of educational administration personnel in order to encourage individuals to take up and continue such work.

(g) Evaluation and follow-up

1. Education being regarded today as an investment and an effective factor in enhancing economic and social development, the evaluation of education should cover not only conventional examinations and tests, pupils' attendance and school reports, but should also be expanded to follow up school-leavers in their fields of work and assess their efficiency and the suitability of their education for the execution of the work they are doing. Evaluation should also cover the effectiveness of the educational facilities in producing sufficient trained manpower at the different levels to meet the work requirements in the various development sectors.

2. Steps should also be taken to develop educational testing and guidance methods, which guarantee an adequate evaluation of all these aspects and thereby help to direct pupils towards the types of studies suited to their interests and abilities, thus enabling education to produce the desired results without wastage.
3. The results of educational evaluation and follow-up operations must be used to develop and modify educational plans in such a way as to avoid gaps and ensure constant improvement of the quality of education.
4. Unesco should be asked to carry out - in co-operation with the Arab Member States the necessary studies and experiments for the establishment of accurate and objective criteria for evaluating the quality of education and the effectiveness of curricula and methods in the achievement of the planned objectives.

(h) Educational research

Considering the importance of educational research in improving the quality of education, studying its problems and preparing and developing educational plans on a scientific basis, the following is necessary:

1. Every Arab country should conduct educational research with a view to solving local problems, train the necessary specialists for this and make available to them the necessary facilities and time to enable them to carry out such research and publish its findings. Specialized services for educational research should also be established in the Arab Ministries of Education and Arab universities.
2. Unesco should be requested to assist in the establishment of a regional centre for educational research to study common educational issues at the Arab level, promote the exchange of research among the Arab States and benefit from the findings of research conducted in other countries.
3. Unesco should be invited to devote more attention to the Educational Documentation Centre in Cairo, with a view to making it an effective regional centre in this field.
4. Arab educational experts should be exchanged among the Arab States, since their qualifications and experience would help them to understand the nature of the factors affecting educational operations in the Arab world and to guide these operations and tackle their problems.

V

PLANNING FOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Conference,

Notes with appreciation the spread of both educational planning methods in the Arab States as well as the work done both by Unesco and by the Arab States Centre for the Advanced Training of Educational Personnel in developing knowledge in this branch of study;

Recommends that the Arab States give special attention to:

1. improving and extending the collection and analysis of educational statistics and obtaining better estimates of future employment needs;
2. enlarging the scope of the educational plan to cover all the educational sectors, both governmental and non-governmental, so as to ensure their integration within the overall plan;

Recommendations

3. creating or improving the government services concerned with educational planning, including the improvement of educational administration;
4. associating educational planners with overall national planning bodies;
5. training the requisite number of Arab educators, administrators, economists and statisticians needed for collaboration in educational planning with a view to service in Ministries of Education and Planning Ministries or organizations, and the improvement of educational administration;
6. strengthening the Beirut Regional Centre in line with the Arab States' determination to develop educational planning so that the Centre may provide the necessary experience and increase the number of fellowships offered to the Arab States. The Conference also recommends that full co-operation be established between the Beirut Centre and the Economic and Social Planning Institute scheduled to start operations in Kuwait shortly;
7. preparing educational plans, both short and long-term, as part of the overall plan. Unesco and other United Nations agencies should be asked to help in training specialists, conducting surveys and preparing plans;
8. the development of the educational administrative machinery in each Arab country and its reorganization to endow it with the effectiveness and power to perform these duties to the full;
9. the establishment of the necessary units and sections for such development and for the conduct of research, planning, evaluation, supervision and control.
10. the establishment of systems ensuring the effectiveness of planning and guidance. These should be based on the central machinery, but there should be sufficient flexibility through decentralization, which in turn liberates the local educational machinery, makes use of its energies and experience within the local framework, and realizes the educational operation at the general level.
11. the Ministry of Education together with all other services connected with the school building programme within the framework of the development plans, must co-operate in planning the distribution of school buildings according to the needs.
12. local raw materials should be used in the construction of school buildings, which should be adapted to the local environment;
13. Unesco should be invited to assist in the establishment of a regional Arab educational building centre to guide the Arab States to identify the best methods of preparing specifications and plans for school buildings and of reducing their cost;
14. the League of Arab States should be requested to persuade the high-income Arab States to establish a special school building fund which could extend long-term loans to enable Arab States with limited resources to implement their plans;
15. the utmost use should be made of school buildings by introducing the double-shift system and using them for more than one purpose, educational, cultural or social.

VI

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION FOR EDUCATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARAB MEMBER STATES

The Conference,

Expresses appreciation of the educational aid which has been given to Arab States by Unesco and other multilateral and bilateral sources;

Requests Unesco, in addition to the aid it has already furnished, to help resolve such problems as:

- (a) the planning and administration of education and the training of educational staff for both;
- (b) the improvement of statistical machinery in education;
- (c) the determination of priorities, with particular reference to the joint Unesco-IBRD and IDA programme relating to the financing of education;
- (d) the current projects carried out jointly within the framework of the Experimental Literacy Programme by the United Nations Special Fund and Unesco;
- (e) the study of unit costs and the establishment of systems of cost analysis;
- (f) the study of building costs and the planning of school building programmes.

Recommends that Unesco assist in the establishment of regional and national centres and institutes for the training of teachers and technicians, and in the organization of seminars for Arab specialists in educational financing problems, and

Invites other interested agencies to give all possible assistance in the educational field, integrated with the countries' educational plans, in full harmony with their development objectives and without political conditions.

VII

JOINT UNRWA/UNESCO PROGRAMME FOR THE EDUCATION OF
PALESTINE REFUGEES*

The Conference,

1. Stressing the importance of the responsibility incumbent on the Arab States to provide more opportunities for training and education, in both secondary and higher schools, for the children of the refugees

Recommends:

- (a) that the Arab States make the utmost effort, both severally and collectively, in the international field and at all levels, to secure the provision of the necessary funds by UNRWA;
- (b) that Unesco and UNRWA intensify their work in providing the refugees with secondary and higher education by increasing the number of grants so far allocated to Arab host States where refugees obtain education;

* The Arabic text as adopted by the Conference uses the word " 'aideen"; there is no equivalent in English for this word, the literal meaning of which is " those who have the intention of returning".

Recommendations

- (c) that the League of Arab States accord special attention to adult education for this category of Palestinian citizen and try to get the United Nations bodies concerned to assume responsibility for financing those efforts, in implementation of the resolutions of the World Literacy Congress held in Teheran in September 1965. The Conference stresses the importance attached to this matter by the Arab Governments, and their willingness to contribute effectively towards it;
- 2. The Conference decides that the Palestine case should be stressed in educational curricula at all stages.
- 3. The Conference recommends that Unesco and UNRWA intensify their efforts to improve the quality of education in the schools and institutes which they have established for the children of the refugees and provide increased financial and technical facilities towards that end. The Conference also recommends that the Arab States grant more scholarships to the children of refugees for study at their own universities and higher technical institutes.