



United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Beirut Office  
Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States



World Day for Cultural Diversity

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# Foreword

## Establishing a Regional Early Childhood Care and Education Training Centre

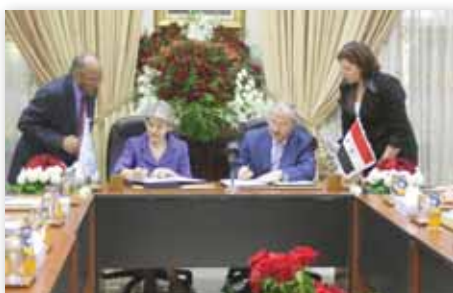
The Director General of UNESCO, Ms. Irina Bokova signed an agreement with the Syrian Arab Republic for establishing a regional training centre ( UNESCO Category II Centre) in the field of early childhood care and education. This agreement was officially signed during Bokova's recent visit to the Syrian Arab Republic (22 - 25 April 2010) whereupon the latter was represented by its Minister of Education Mr. Ali Saad. This centre aims to strengthen national and regional capacity building initiatives for developing and improving the field of early childhood care and education (ECCE) in the Arab Region. It is also noteworthy that this training centre is the first of its kind in the Arab States, and it targets regional influential policy makers in different relevant ministries as well as teachers, trainers and practitioners who work in this field. The total population in the Arab Region is approximately 312 millions and the average growth rate is 2% as compared to a global rate of 1.1% annually. Significantly, the number of children under five years of age constitutes 14% of the total population. Thus, specialized experts pinpointed that there is an imperative need for initiating ECCE programmes in the region to respond to the various needs of children who are still under the age of schooling and who represent a large segment of Arab countries. Regional Statistics illustrate that thirteen Arab countries provide available data pertaining to ECCE, and only seven out of these countries have ECCE programmes that target children who are less than 3 years of age. The "Dakar Framework for Education for All" (2000) accentuated the importance of ECCE in national and regional educational policies and plans. It also stressed the objective of "spreading and improving ECCE programmes so that they especially reach marginalized and vulnerable children", knowing that this objective was the first among the six Education for All (EFA) objectives.

This regional training centre will offer four kinds of activities:

- Training on policy making in a way that facilitates in-service training opportunities and awareness about developmental issues.
- Teacher training that aims to fortify the capacity-building skills of ECCE teachers and practitioners while prioritizing teachers who are specialized in early childhood education for the upcoming two or three years (other beneficiaries will be targeted at later phases).
- Facilitating the acquisition of technical and professional skills pertaining to educational policies and issues (in Arabic) in addition to building and strengthening the capacities of ECCE teachers in the Arab Region.
- Training on practical research via evidence-based and critical-thinking analytical activities, with emphasis on the special needs of the Arab States.

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Bokova and Saad signed agreement for Regional Early Childhood Care and Education Centre in Syria

**Abdel Moneim Osman**  
Director - UNESCO Beirut Office

## **Launching the Arab Autism Network**

*Beirut, 28 April 2010*

UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States – Beirut launched the “Arab Autism Network” in collaboration with the Lebanese Autism Society. This Network includes 15 Arab countries so far which demonstrated keen and serious commitment to spread more awareness about this disorder and to tackle its accompanying obstacles proficiently. It also aims to spread awareness about the importance of inclusive education in this regard so that a fair opportunity is provided to autistic children to join the education system.

The president of the Lebanese Autism Society and the UNESCO programme specialist who is in charge of this initiative both accentuated the essentiality of early diagnosis of this disorder, prompt treatment and appropriate rehabilitation in order to avoid alienating autistic children. Further, the core objective of this network is to facilitate exchanging information and experiences pertaining to autism among parents, policy-makers, educators, care-givers and autistic children themselves as an attempt to blend and intensify regional efforts. To facilitate this exchange and engender efficient outcomes, the network held three regional meetings so far in Egypt, Kuwait, and Bahrain respectively.

UNESCO Beirut Office reiterated its commitment to exert vigorous efforts to spread awareness about autism and to encourage inclusion of autistic children into the education system so that they adapt to their disorder and surmount its limitations with the help of assiduous educators and parents. Besides, UNESCO assisted the Network in establishing a website for autism ([www.arabnetworkautism.org](http://www.arabnetworkautism.org)) as part of the pungent efforts that are being implemented cooperatively to help parents and educators of autistic children in the Arab Region. These various strategies of intensifying awareness are expected to yield better ways of dealing with autistic children and providing them with their stipulated “Education for All – (EFA)” right.

**Contact: Hegazi Idris**

## **"Creating Tools for Inclusive Education in the Arab States" - Experts' Meeting**

UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States – Beirut organized an experts' meeting entitled: “Creating Tools for Inclusive Education in the Arab States” in collaboration with the International Bureau for Education (UNESCO-IBE). This specialized meeting was attended by regional and international inclusive education experts from UNESCO, UNESCO-IBE, academic institutions and various UNESCO field offices (e.g. Moscow, Jakarta, Santiago and Bangkok). These experts shared their sundry experiences pertaining to design, organization and miscellaneous inclusive education tools and curricula. Ultimately, they reached a unanimous agreement on a mutual inclusive education conceptual framework for tools and curricula that can be collectively utilized in the Arab Region and in various UNESCO Regional Offices. Besides, this meeting served as a starting point for developing and validating precise inclusive education tools that can guarantee inclusive policies and curricula across the Arab Region.

This regional meeting was preceded by preparatory meetings which were held in UAE and Lebanon (2008) as a preparation for the 48<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Education (ICE) which focussed on IE (November, 2008). The core objective of this meeting was to ameliorate the quality of inclusive education in the Arab Region and on a global level as well while establishing stipulated translucent tools that can serve as a unanimous syllabus for inclusive education. Another objective was to conduct a fastidious scrutiny of the prevalent priorities and challenges in the Arab Region so that the established tools can respond to them accordingly.

This meeting served as a capacity-building activity for regional education experts who will benefited from the opportunity of exchanging experiences with international specialists. It also supported international and inter-regional linkages between experts and practitioners, which are, in turn, expected to yield better outcomes. The most significant expected outcome of this meeting was finalizing a clear-cut work-plan with a precise timeline for establishing an inclusive education manual in the Arab States, hoping to engender imperative impacts in the Arab educational systems.

**Contact: Hegazi Idris**

## ***National Education for All (EFA) Celebration "Financing Education to Reach the Marginalized"***

UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States-Beirut organized an Education for All (EFA) celebration in its premises in Beirut in observance of the annual EFA Global Week (23 - 28 April 2010). This annual celebration was inaugurated by the Lebanese Minister of Education and Higher Education, under the patronage of the Minister of Social Affairs, and was attended by EFA advocates, education experts and practitioners from several sectors. Most significantly, the celebration included musical shows and testimonials from members of AL-FAYHA Acapylla choir which has been performing outstanding shows in different Lebanese areas and abroad, and which has been eminent lately for its spectacular performances in post-conflict areas in Lebanon, in collaboration with UNESCO Beirut. It is worth pinpointing that these musical performances were being implemented as an attempt to foster conflict resolution, communication skills and dialogue between children and youth, especially those who come from marginalized, underprivileged and vulnerable groups. This EFA creative initiative has manifested a strong fervor among marginalized children and youth to benefit from their right to education and to demonstrate creative performances which are interesting and educational. Children and youth from different areas in Lebanon (some of which are post-conflict regions) performed together and relished the opportunity to strengthen their communication skills via extra-curricular musical performances.

Further, a new EFA initiative pertaining to the reintegration of school drop-outs was launched during this ceremony, namely the "Back-to-School Initiative: Strengthening the Synergy between Formal and Non-Formal Education in Lebanon" project which will be implemented in collaboration with the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the Ministry of Social Affairs in addition to other local implementers and partners who will cooperate with UNESCO so that this project yields the best expected outcomes.

These two EFA initiatives are sample manifestations of UNESCO's resilient and pungent dedication to good-quality education for all, in the Arab States, leaving "no child behind". UNESCO Beirut has always exerted vigorous and invincible efforts to spread more equal EFA opportunities in the Arab States, especially reaching marginalized and vulnerable groups.

**Contact: Hegazi Idris**



### **UNESCO Friendly School Project Selected as UN Global Good Practice**

The UNESCO Beirut School Project: “ Mobile schools to reach out to street and working children (Phase 2)” was selected among 200 global good practices chosen by the United Nations as projects that represent good practices in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The selection covered 75 countries and some 40 regional and global programmes. The project which covers several Arab States, Egypt, Sudan, Lebanon and Yemen was also included in the recently published 2010 UNDG MDG Good Practices publication which covered cases from fifteen UN agencies, national governments, civil societies and private sector partners.

Knowing that the number of street and working children is drastically increasing, several regional initiatives have been taken by Arab States to combat this Phenomenon and to reintegrate these children in formal education. Egypt’s Friendly School Project (Phase 2) was among these initiatives and brisk collaborative efforts to respond to this gruesome situation.

This project was initially established in Egypt in 2005 upon an agreement between the Egyptian Ministry of Education, UNESCO and the World Food Programme (WFP), and it has expanded twice since its original inception. In 2005, the Japanese Fund-in-Trust, in direct cooperation with the Ministry for Education in Egypt, funded the addition of 25 Friendly Schools so that there are currently 50 fully operational Friendly Schools functioning across Egypt. In this agreement, UNESCO was committed to provide teacher training, educational materials, textbooks and furniture as well as to support the design and development of the adapted and accelerated curriculum.

The core objective of this collaborative initiative is to broaden access and to reintegrate out-of-school and dropout children into formal education. It also aims to address the specific psycho-social and educational needs of street and working children via a flexible learning mechanism and curriculum.



# Education in the Arab States

Through its collaborative mode of action between different partners, this project encouraged partnership between the Ministry of Education, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and small company/workshop owners in helping street and working children. Further, this project supported the advancement of Education for All (EFA) in Egypt via diversifying the delivery of basic education.

This global good practice created a replicable, innovative and flexible educational model for providing education to a specific target group of children living in difficult circumstance; it has done so by developing and piloting an educational programme with relevant educational contents and an innovative teaching/learning methodology. Moreover, this project assisted the Ministry of Education in developing related educational policies and revising a national law that facilitates the inclusion of the aforementioned target group in formal schooling. Basically, this project engendered various positive results that yielded significant improvements in the educational system of the country where it was implemented. For instance, it enabled 100 teachers and reached an estimated 320 children per year (i.e. an average of 42 %) and reached out vulnerable marginalized children and their families. It also raised awareness about the issue of out-of-school children through the accompanying media campaign and the project's profile in several TV programmes. Further, it emanated key elements of success such as the commitment of the Ministry of Education and the Government to diversify the education delivery mechanisms in addition to fortifying cooperation between various UN agencies. Teachers are the key to success. It also highlighted the importance of vital factors that can ameliorate education such as investing in teachers and providing motivating incentives to the learners.

This globally selected good practice case has significantly paved the way for better educational opportunities to children who live in the host country where it was implemented, and it kindled a torch of aspiration in their marginalized lives, hoping that they can enjoy their stipulated right to education under normal circumstances. It also intensified the team spirit among partners in order to achieve better results and to encourage other stakeholders to take part in this crucial initiative. It is worth pinpointing that the tremendously positive results that this project yielded encouraged further similar initiatives. Specifically, in 2006, the Japanese Fund-in-Trust funded the development of a Mobile Friendly School that travels across two governorates in Egypt as an extension of the fixed Friendly School.

**Contact: Hegazi Idris**



## ***International Perspectives on University Organization and Management***

Since the formation of the new Lebanese Government in November 2009, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) has been working on reforming the Lebanese university (LU). Out of some 30 recognized universities, LU is the only public university, accounting for 50% of the student population. The legislation governing LU dates back to the 1960's and is generally deemed inadequate for the 21<sup>st</sup> century as the Higher Education scene has radically changed both in Lebanon and worldwide.

A Committee was set up within MEHE, comprised of academics and senior Ministry officials. As part of the thinking process, the Committee needed expert input on a number of issues related to the structuring of a modern university. UBO responded by commissioning a number of experts, from Lebanon and a number of Arab countries, to prepare papers on the following topics:

1. University organization and academic functions (Shehade Naife)
2. Doctoral Schools (Noureddine Dougoui, Tunisia)
3. Innovations: Incubators as a model (George Aoun)
4. Faculty (Ramzi Salame)
5. Organizational structure and administrative functions (Yousif Saidani)
6. Support services in universities (Ayman Al Omari, Jordan)

All the above papers were designed to give an overview of international experiences and to highlight the advantages and disadvantages of each model.

Two workshops were held: the first, on Friday 28 May 2010, to discuss papers 1 to 3; and the second, on Thursday 3 June to discuss papers 4 and 5.

**Contact: *Bechir Lamine***

## ***Entrepreneurship Education in the Arab States***

UNESCO Beirut and UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training-Bonn have launched a joint project funded by STARTREAL Foundation on Entrepreneurship Education (EPE) in the Arab States.

The project aims to collect, systemize and disseminate innovative and successful experiences of Entrepreneurship Education (EPE) from different countries of the region (2009 - 2010), and to provide technical support to the development of strategic plans to facilitate the incorporation of the concept of EPE in the educational systems (2010 - 2012).

UNESCO-UNEVOC International Center for TVET- Bonn is taking the lead in the implementation of the project, in cooperation with UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States – Beirut. Other UNESCO Field Offices in the Arab region are also involved in the project.

The National Centre for Human Resources Development (a UNEVOC Centre in Jordan) had been commissioned for the implementation of component one (2009 - 2010). Education experts from four countries (Egypt, Jordan, Oman, and Tunisia) prepared case studies on the current situation of entrepreneurship education. Based on the four country case studies, a regional synthesis report was prepared, which highlights the national and regional contexts and expectations of EPE in the Arab region. The document will be disseminated in Arabic and English to promote EPE in the education systems of Member States in the region.

**Contact: *Sulieman Sulieman***  
***Link to documents***

## Experts Meeting on Monitoring and Evaluation of Literacy and NFE Policies and Plans

UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States - Beirut organized an experts meeting entitled: "Monitoring and Evaluation of Literacy and Non-Formal Education (NFE) Policies and Plans" (Beirut, 24 – 25 May 2010) within the framework of the South-South Cooperation Programme/Fund. This meeting was attended by regional senior monitoring and evaluation experts from various Middle Eastern and North African Arab States in addition to specialists in this field from Asia-Pacific and Africa regions. This meeting was convened in order to promote cooperation among countries in the Arab region in monitoring and evaluation of literacy and NFE policies and plans. Its core objective was to provide regional experts with the opportunity to exchange experiences and to scrutinize the pros and cons of their currently used monitoring and evaluation tools. Specifically, the experts analyzed current concepts, criteria, indicators and information systems used for monitoring and evaluation of literacy and NFE policies and plans in addition to tools and processes available for the planning, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of literacy and NFE policies and plans.

This meeting was conducted in an effort to reach a common understanding of the concepts and definitions in monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of literacy and NFE policies and plans. It also aimed to strengthen the exchange of experiences and expertise in this field. The experts also reviewed and discussed a draft regional reference guide for the monitoring and evaluation of literacy and NFE policies and plans.

This event is part of UNESCO's efforts to encourage and strengthen exchanging regional experiences in the field of monitoring and evaluation of literacy and NFE policies and plans in the Arab States. It is also expected that it will pave the way for further exchange of information and experience between regional as well as international experts.

**Contact: Min Jeong Kim**



# **Steering Committee Meeting to Prepare for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Arab Ministerial Meeting on "Social Protection"**

UNESCO Beirut organized, within the framework of the Management of Social Transformation Programme (MOST), on June 9<sup>th</sup> 2010, a steering committee meeting in Cairo, for the purpose of preparing for the upcoming third Arab Forum of Ministers in charge of Social Development in Cairo in December 2010 on "Social Protection in response to Economic Crises in the Arab region". The forum will hold a regional expert meeting and a ministerial meeting, jointly with the Ministry of Social Solidarity in Egypt and in close coordination with the League of Arab States.

The Steering committee meeting was attended by representatives from the Ministry of Social Solidarity in Egypt and the League of Arab States, regional researchers on social protection and social policy, and international experts on Social Protection from UNICEF, UNESCWA, UNDP and ILO. The lively debate identified regional challenges and needed policy research on social protection policies and mechanism in the region based on the discussion paper presented by Dr. Hania Sholkamy and Ms Kristina Hellez, (Social Research Center, American University of Cairo). The outcome of the steering committee meeting, was a draft proposal prepared on policy research and dialogue for the expert meeting and the ministerial meeting within the 3<sup>rd</sup> Arab Forum, which will bring together Arab ministers of social development, policy makers, researchers and experts from UN agencies and NGOs and private sector from 19 Arab States.

**Contact: Seiko Sugita**



## Cultural Reconciliation of Lebanese Youth

UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States - Beirut launched a series of training workshops in collaboration with the Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO. These workshops were held in several Lebanese districts as part of the first phase of the "Cultural Reconciliation of Lebanese Youth" project.

The core objective of these workshops was to introduce cultural reconciliation concepts and to train teachers on the approaches and methodologies of integrating them and raising awareness about religious diversity. Besides, the workshops also highlighted the importance of various creative activities that strengthen tolerant attitudes and dialogue skills among students in addition to acceptance of cultural diversity; these activities also fortify their national identity and cooperative ideologies.

Each training workshop was attended by more than thirty teachers from public and private schools in Lebanon according to the following schedule:

1. 27 April 2010 in Tripoli for the schools of the North of Lebanon
2. 29 April 2010 in Zahle for schools of Bekaa
3. 7 May 2010 in Tyre for the schools of the South of Lebanon
4. 14 May 2010 for schools of Beirut
5. 8 June 2010 for the schools of Mount Lebanon
6. 15 June 2010 in Nabatieh

**Contact: Joseph Kreidi**

## Celebration of Cultural Diversity Day 2010

On the Occasion of the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, which is celebrated every year on the 21 of May, UNESCO Beirut celebrated this year by placing a large street banner on the crossing bridge near the UNESCO Beirut premises. The banner promotes cultural diversity in Lebanon, which features many Lebanese people and includes the statement "*we are proud of our diversity*".

**Contact: Joseph Kreidi**



# *UNESCO Beirut and Cairo Training on Biosphere Reserves*

UNESCO Beirut and UNESCO Cairo organized a three-day training workshop on biosphere reserves and the implementation of Madrid Action Plan and Nomination File to help countries establish and file nominations for biosphere reserves in their respective countries. Once nominated and chosen, these reserves become part of the UNESCO world list of protected biosphere reserves. The workshop was held at Arz el-Chouf reserve in Lebanon 11 - 13 May 2010.

The objectives of the workshop was to review the status of the existing Biosphere Reserves in the region, and to assess and train on the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP) in the region, to train on how to fill and submit a nomination file for establishing Biosphere Reserves, to promote for the establishment of new Biosphere Reserves in the Region, and to assess approaches being used to encourage multisectoral involvement in ecosystem management and provide appropriate recommendations and guidance to biosphere reserves.

The Man and the Biosphere Program (MAB) is based on the concept that it is possible to achieve a sustainable balance between the conservation of biological diversity, economic development, and maintenance of associated cultural values. The validity of this concept is tested, refined, demonstrated, and implemented in the biosphere reserves.

The biosphere reserves concept goes beyond the classical protection concept of establishing protected area and national parks areas. It combines conservation and sustainable use of natural resources based on human interaction and ecosystem functioning research. It also serves as a model for land management and as an approach to sustainable development. The biosphere reserve approach links ecology with economic, sociology, and politics, and ensure that good policy intention do not yield in appropriate results. Although biosphere reserves have different geographical, economic and cultural contexts, they have a common interest seeking concrete solutions to reconcile the conservation of biodiversity with the sustainable use of natural resources for the benefit of local people.

**Contact: George Awad**



## ***Press Freedom Day Celebration at UNESCO Beirut***

On the occasion of the World Press Freedom Day, UNESCO Beirut and Maharat Foundation (a media NGO) launched the annual report on press freedom in Lebanon in a press conference that included the Lebanese Minister of Information Tarek Mitri.

The press conference took place on Wednesday 5th of May 2010 on the occasion of the World Press Freedom Day that is celebrated on 3 May every year. The report highlights abuses or violence against journalists and oppression of free speech, the situation in Lebanon has noticed a slight improvement since last year, but still the overall freedom of expression is measured as 51%. This means that the media in the country is Partially Free.

This year the report highlights more abuse and incidents of assault on journalists and many journalists were laid off with no prior notice and without receiving any benefits from their employers. The report highlights pressure being practiced against journalists in some cases, and the fact that their sense of job security is lacking. In the year 2007 UNESCO and Maharat launched the national observatory for the freedom of expression in Lebanon, and every year this observatory releases a national report on the situation in Lebanon.

**Contact: George Awad**



### ***UNESCO Beirut organized two training workshops for teachers of UNESCO Associated Schools in Lebanon on Media Literacy***

The training was held in cooperation with the Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO on 7 - 8 May 2010 and 21 - 22 May 2010. The objectives of UNESCO are to develop an awareness of, and a debate about, the role of media in society, not only for communication but also for information and transmission of knowledge. This is a newly published collection of documents for Media Education. A Kit for Teachers, Students, Parents and Professionals, includes five manuals and provides a broad set of guidelines and insights on how to introduce media education as a subject and topic of the curriculum at the school level. The kit has been developed to cater to a wide variety of people involved in media education, both directly and indirectly. Composed of nine sections, with a variety of entries and learning styles, it is useful not only to teachers but also to students, parents and professionals alike.

The training kit provides a complex and comprehensive view of media education, encompassing all media, old and new. It seeks new ways in which people can enhance their participation in the political and cultural life of the general community through the media. In particular, it promotes young people's access to the media, while also increasing their critical appreciation of its activities. Taken as a whole, the kit offers to each actor the possibility of getting acquainted with the culture of the others, the media culture, the family culture, the school culture – in a spirit of dialogue.

**Contact: George Awad**

# Upcoming Events

## July

### 1 - 2 July 2010

Regional Workshop of the Quality Assurance of two Higher Education Programmes, Beirut

### 6 - 9 July 2010

Training of Trainers workshop supporting gender equality in education in Lebanon, Beirut

### 15 - 17 July 2010

Training of Trainers on "World Heritage and National Heritage", Lebanon

### 28 July 2010

Training workshop for public librarians on "Human Rights Education", Beirut.

## August

### 3 - 5 August 2010

Workshop on "Creative Methods for Environmental Education (Dryland Countries), Damascus - Syria

### 12 August 2010

International Youth Day

## September

### 20 - 22 September 2010

High Level Arab Regional Early Childhood Care and Education Conference, Damascus- Syria

### 21 September 2010

International Day of Peace

### 27 - 29 September 2010

Training workshop "Safety of Journalists", Beirut/ Tyre



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