

## A Position Paper

### Arab House for Adult Education and Development (AHAED)

The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in severe global repercussions on all aspects of life. It has affected and threatened daily life and health of people around the world; causing hundreds of thousands of deaths. At the same time, the crisis has caused grave damage to economies, jobs, ability of individuals to maintain employment and sustain businesses; in addition to risking sustainability of the work of different types of organizations and institutions, including most importantly, those concerned with learning and education for children and adults.

In light of this reality, it is imperative for institutions, networks and workers in the field of Adult Education and Learning (ALE) to emphasize the important role ALE can take in reducing effects of the crisis, and to advocate for prioritizing ALE efforts within pandemic-response plans on country and global levels.

It is important to realize that the impact of the crisis will affect many fields and sectors related to adult learning and education, due to the expected increase in school dropout rates; as more individuals and family members will need to leave education to search for jobs. Thus, this crisis will add to the already existing rates of illiteracy and growing rates of the unemployment, which are expected to reach unprecedented numbers, not only at the level of our Arab countries but also, on the international level.

Therefore, governments and international bodies must assume their responsibilities; we urge them to immediately support providers of educational services, including adult education institutions and their employees, with the facilities and the necessary resources to deal with this new situation. At the same time, civil society organizations are required to assume their responsibilities towards this sector.

It is within this context that the Arab House for Adult Education and Development (AHAED) emphasizes the following:

- the importance of including Adult Learning and Education in the emergency plans of education by the ministries of education and related institutions;
- the need for effective initiatives by media and digital media agencies, especially television channels, aiming at raising health awareness and education, specifically in relation to the and prevention of Coronavirus-related Covid-19 disease;
- the importance of developing and presenting higher education institutions led initiatives for alternative learning opportunities based on distance learning and education in pandemic times, with clearly defined mechanisms and methodologies;
- the importance of revising all that is necessary to provide educational resources that can be used in emergency situations, while recalling the importance of reviewing the whole system in relation to adult education;

- the importance of strengthening partnerships among civil society organizations to integrate and advance efforts in the field of Adult Learning and Education, especially since there are imperatives dictated by the current crisis.
- the necessity of a comprehensive review of all plans and policies that were adopted for adult learning and education; taking current and future challenges and conditions into consideration; the urgent need to review government budgets allocated to adult education, taking into consideration that current budgets do not suffice actual needs;
- Importance of highlighting creative initiatives and their approaches and practical mechanisms that are being implemented successfully, to publicize and circulate specific good practices within a vision that promotes transformational impact.

It is time to recognize that the reality of adult education as a whole requires careful review and interventions that ensure harmony between this sector and the successive technological developments. In this framework, we find that international and UN organizations are required to assume a greater responsibility, specifically UNESCO.

The need to develop the reality of adult education beyond "Corona" stems from the data generated by the crisis and from the evident observations before the Corona crisis. The Adult Education question must be subject to serious and in-depth discussion, in order to achieve a vision that goes beyond the stereotypes that disrupted the possibility of renewal for many years.

AHAED emphasizes the challenge of minimizing the educational process into teaching; and thus, eradicating everything that has been achieved so far at the level of educational and cultural non-academic outcomes such as human rights, citizenship, etc. from the educational process in the pandemic times. This is a challenge to the efforts of facing processes that aim at a linear and simplistic type of education. If not countered, this challenge would lead to risking real development of individuals, communities and societies. In the same context, we believe that post-corona, the people themselves are the ones who will be able to face the next globalization, and to build their own globalization with all the partners in the world. This is a challenge for all Peoples; and they must succeed through self-generated awareness that qualifies them to reach to the realization that education is the starting point for a new society capable of facing challenges and crises.

We call for holistic and comprehensive emergency education plans during the pandemic times;  
We call for collective efforts to enhance the comprehensive response to all implications of the crisis from the perspective of educational;

And may the post-Corona era bear witness to the lessons, learned well.

**Arab House of Adult Education and Development (AHAED)**

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The Arab House for Adult Education and Development "AHAED" is an initiative of four regional educational networks: Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA), Arab Network for Popular Education (ANPE), Arab Network for Civic Education (ANHRE) and Arab Network for Literacy and Adult Education (ANLAE) and in partnership with DVV International.