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Report on the Activities of

"The Fourth Arab Meeting of the

Arab Academy for Adult Learning and Development"

30 October-6 November, 2018

Hotel Le Crillon - Broummana – Lebanon

Presented to:

The German Adult Education Association

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Adult Education and Arab Academy:

Statistics on illiteracy has always been the main indicator that reflects the reality of adult learning in the world and in the Arab world. According to information provided by the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) on the rate of illiteracy in the Arab countries in 2018, illiteracy still represents one of the first issues of the Arab National Security. While the data indicated a gradual decline in the illiteracy rates, which decreased from 73% in the age group of "15 years and above" in 1970 to 48.8% in 1990 and 38.8% in 2000, the statistics of the ALECSO states that the illiteracy rate in the Arab countries is 21% in 2018, compared to 13.6% to the global average, a rate that is likely to rise further in the light of the educational conditions that some of the Arab countries are experiencing because of the crises and armed conflicts that, so far, resulted in the non-enrollment of approximately 13.5 million children (dropouts and not enrolled) in formal education in the Arab region.

Statistics also indicate that illiteracy rate among males in the Arab world is 14.6%, while illiteracy rate among females is 25.9%.

The percentage of illiterate females in some countries of the region ranges between 60 and 80%. This percentage which is considered the highest in the world is due to complex factors that the cultural factor (traditions and customs, conservative patriarchal family culture, etc.) intermingles with the social factor (family disintegration, early marriage and divorce, etc…) and the economic factor (the local economic pattern, poverty, unemployment, life conditions, low educational level of the parents and the environment in general).

Those who work in the field of adult education observe that there is a general tendency in the Arab world to confuse the concept of "literacy" with the concept of "adult learning", where the majority of the Arab countries have adopted at the official level multiple definitions that give the top, or maybe the only, priority to literacy and the basic skills of the learners, especially since literacy has been the primary objective of the governments of these countries since the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century.

In spite of this, the scope and content of adult education vary from country to country in the Arab world. Some countries, such as the Kingdom of Morocco and Oman, have narrowly restricted it only to adult literacy. While other countries like Algeria, Bahrain, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates adopted a broader concept of the adult education and considered it as an opportunity that must be benefited from and encourage the young people to complete the process of education in the formal and non-formal educational institutions, in addition to non-governmental education institutions.

This confusion of concepts has often led to deficiencies in the public policies related to adult education in the Arab world, and to the absence of holistic interventions and limitations at the level of the Arab countries.

The concept of education as the basis for development is no longer a subject of dispute. The reports and the strategic papers in the development sector have confirmed a positive correlation between the level of education and the level of development. This correlation clearly is evident in the low level of the development indicators in the areas that suffers from low levels of education.

Several educational departments and institutions have applied the concept of non-formal education in programs for adults and youths, where the non-formal education has become a widely used principle in developmental activities in the Arab region. On the other hand, the proliferation of the non-formal education programs has led to a variety of methodologies and concepts in this field, which also led to the absence of a system that unifies these differences and brings the points of views closer. This has a clear impact on the variance of the expectations for the learning outcomes, and therefore, differences in methodology.

The Arab Academy for Adult Education comes as an academic-intellectual-dialogical frame that comprises a series of conferences on the topics of participatory learning in the Arab world. The results are framed as publications and serve as the basis for the next conference. These conferences include combining participants for exchange of experiences, e-learning, online seminars, collecting of publications and resources, and networking.

The Academy helped in the understanding of the need to renew the educational approach in the field of non-formal learning in the region. The main elements of this renewal are discussed and assembled, and the participants' ability to integrate these renewal elements into their daily work has been increased.

This year, 2018, with the participation of the Arab Network for Popular Education, the Arab Network for Literacy and Adult Education, the Arab Campaign for Education for All, the Arab Network for Civil Education (Anhre), and the Arab Civil Society Organizations, the fourth Arab meeting of the Arab Academy for Adult Learning and Development was held in Broumana, Lebanon, from the 30th of October to the 6th of November.

The meeting was under the title: "Building Renewal in Adult Education Approaches in the Arab World", with the objective of discussing the reality of adult education in the Arab world that has been undergoing a period of social, economic, political and dramatic transformation since the beginning of the second decade of this millennium. This is what imposed a series of challenges that can be summed up in the population growth, poverty, increased unemployment, political conflict, refugee crisis, gender issues, and their repercussions in the Arab cultural space. It also imposed other challenges that had the greatest impact on the reality of education in the region.

The Participating Countries:
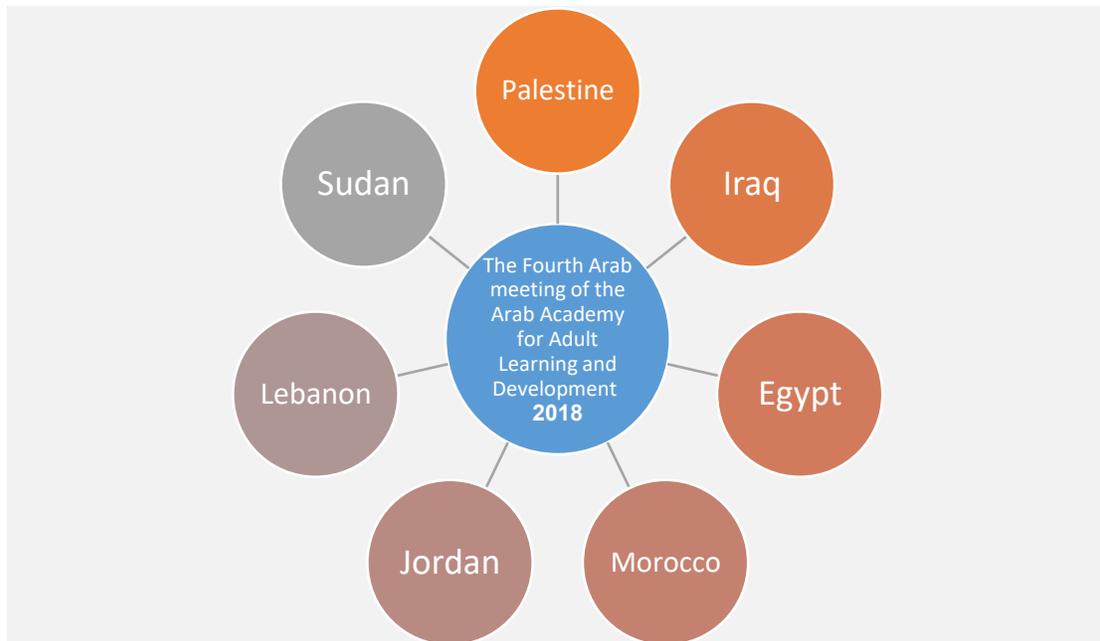
The Attendees:

Please refer to (Annex 1)

The Arab Academy for Adult Learning and Development

30 October-6 November, 2018
Hotel Le Crillon - Broummana – Lebanon
Program of the
Building Renewal in Adult Learning Approaches in the Arab World

Time	Tuesday 30/10/2018	Wednesday 31/10/2018	Thursday 1/11/2018	Friday 2/11/2018	Saturday 3/11/2018	Sunday 4/11/2018	Monday 5/11/2018	Tuesday 6/11/2018
9:00-9:15		Meditation	Meditation		Meditation	Meditation	Meditation	
9:15-10:30	Arrival and Registration	The challenges of adult learning in the contemporary Arab world (Academic backgrounds) Dr. Zahi Azar	Why Paulo Freire? What approach and what kind of interaction? Mr. Mohamed Madiouni	Trip	The DVV and It's Role Today Mr. Nazaret Naztian	- Presentation of the Supreme Council for Adult Learning - Is there a maturity in the adult learning visions? Ms. Katarina Popovik	Between teaching and learning ... What developmental challenges? Mr. Tayseer Moheisen	What comes out from the work of the work report secretariat
10:30-11:00		Break	Break		Break	Break	Break	Break
11:00-12:30		Working groups	Presentation ANLAE the new of the International organizations in adult education? Dr. Iqbal Samalouti		Between education and development A critical reading of the fourth goal Dr. Adeeb Nehemah	Building Renewal in Adult Learning Approaches Dr. Zahi Azar	Working groups	Closing Session -Evaluation - Distribution of statements Follow-up Forms
12:30-1:00		Talents Show	Talents Show		Talents Show	Talents Show	Talents Show	
1:00-2:30		Lunch	Lunch		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
2:30-4:00		- Presentation						

		ACEA - "Networking" and the reality of the Arab civil society? Mr. Rifaat Al-Sabah	Presentation ANHRE and Presentation ANPE		Working groups	Lessons learned from adult learning experiences Mr. Jawad Al-Qusous	Working groups	
4:00-4:30	Break	Break	Break		Break	Break	Break	
4:30-6:00	Opening session Acquaintance	Working groups	Working groups		The Arab Academy for Adult Learning and Development - A reading of the progress - Alumni association - General dialogue	Working groups	Working groups and the secretariat	Departure
7:00	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	A festive meeting Best Teacher Award+Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	

The Events of the Fourth Arab Meeting of the Arab Academy for Adult Learning and Development:

Day 1: Tuesday 30/10/2018

The first day focused on the arrival of the participants from their different countries. In the evening, the participants got acquainted to each other and the Fourth Academic Meeting was opened with the words of the representatives of the four networks, Dr. Zahi Azar, Ms. Elsy Wakil, Mr. Refaat Al-Sabah, and Dr. Iqbal Al-Samalouti. The participants presented themselves, their impressions and their expectations from this meeting. The program schedule of the fourth meeting, its various activities, and its objectives were introduced, and everyone's remarks about it were taken into consideration.

Day 2: Wednesday 31/10/2018

The second day began with a reflecting session on the concept of "adult learning" during which Dr. Zahi Azar presented a series of information related to this concept in the Arab world. The slogan "Building Renewal in Adult Learning Approaches in the Arab World" requires constant dialogue among all workers in this field in order to present all the approaches at the local, national and international levels, and to attain approved approaches and models by the Arabs, through which it would be possible to build and create clear practical working mechanisms in the field.

Then, Dr. Zahi presented the challenges of the adult education in the contemporary Arab world by introducing a range of academic backgrounds. To enrich the discussion, participants were divided into working groups to present their experiences in this area.

After the lunch break, Mr. Rifaat Al-Sabah presented a detailed presentation on the Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA), which he defined it as a multi-independent, non-profit coalition composed of networks, coalitions, NGOs, community organizations, teachers' unions and federations, and other education-related activities within the Arab countries. ACEA seeks to unify and organize civil society efforts to ensure that the goals of education for all are met.

Mr. Refaat stressed that the establishment of the Arab Campaign for Education that comes within the framework of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), which proceeds from the two Gomti Conferences in 1990 and Dakar in April 2000, and based on Sana'a Declaration of the Sana'a Conference which was held on the 27th of May, 2009, which is responsible in promoting education as a fundamental human right, and mobilizing efforts to pressure the governments and the international community to fulfill their general promises that is related

to ensure free, mandatory and high quality basic education for all, especially for children, women and the disadvantaged.

Rifaat Al-Sabah noted that the Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA) is committed to achieve its mission within the framework of objectivity, transparency, accountability, equality and democratic standards in all the plans and procedures. And it adopts all what the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) committed to at the World Conference in 2001 for the sake of building an international movement based on wise governance principles.

Mr. Rifaat Al-Sabah also presented examples of "networking" stories between Arab educational coalitions and the reality of Arab civil society and its efforts in the field of education in general and adult education in particular.

After this presentation, the participants were divided into working groups, during which they discussed the reality of the civil society and its various experiences in the field of adult education.

Day 3: Thursday 1/11/2018

At the beginning of the third day, the meeting was opened by Mr. Mohammad Madiouni with an important question: why is Paulo Freire? And: what approach and what interaction are we talking about? Mr. Mohammad introduced Paulo Freire's approach to adult education and his own experience in this field. The participants made a series of interpositions on the experience of Paulo, and its pros and cons. The discussion ended with an essential question: Is it possible to adopt Paulo Freire's approach?

In the afternoon, Dr. Iqbal Al-Samlouti presented about the Arab Network for Literacy and Adult Education (ANLAE), which was established on May 25, 1999, at the invitation and sponsorship of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, responding to the principle "The role of popular efforts in the field of literacy and adult education" which was included in the Arab Literacy Strategy of 1976, and crowning the efforts made by the Arab Organization for Education, Culture and Science, and in response to the call of the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education held in Hamburg in 1997. It has been prepared for The Arab Network for Literacy and Education to be established under the patronage of the Labors University in Cairo and the generous hosting of the Arab Republic of Egypt. 56 non-governmental organizations, the Arab Society, and governmental institutions from 15 Arab countries participated in the founding meeting of the Network.

Dr. Iqbal also presented the updates of the international organizations in adult education. There was an open discussion about this topic by the participants, and sharing of experiences on adult education.

Then, a presentation was made on the Arab Network for Civil Education (ANHRE) and another one about the Arab Network for Popular Education ANPE. The participants were then divided into working groups to discuss about approaches in adult education.

Day 4: Friday 2/11/2018

This day was dedicated to organize a trip for the participants to get acquainted with Lebanon. During this trip the participants visited the museum of Gibran Khalil Gibran, Cedar Mount area, Byblos, and the capital, Beirut.

Day 5: Saturday 3/11/2018

The fifth day was opened with a detailed interposition by Mr. Nazaret Naztian about the German Association for Adult Education (DVV) and its role in supporting adult education programs worldwide and in the Middle East. During the interposition, a discussion was held with the participants where they discussed about the experience of working with the German Society and the philosophy of fighting poverty through education and supporting development.

In the afternoon, Dr. Adeeb Nehmeh, who is an Arab-Lebanese expert at the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), delivered a presentation under the title of "Between Education and Development". This presentation was a critical reading of the fourth objective of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Dr. Nehmeh explained the beginnings of the 2030 agenda, its development and objectives, and its achievements scenarios in light of the different national contexts in the Arab world, and the recent Arab crises. In the context of the presentation, the participants shared their experiences in the implementation of the fourth objective and the lessons learned from it.

During the day, participants were divided into working groups, besides Dr. Zahi Azar's discussion about the paths of the Arab Academy for Adult Education and Development, and the idea of forming the Academic Alumni Association and how to activate it through several mechanisms.

In the evening, a festive meeting was organized for the best teacher award in Lebanon. The participants, honor guests, teachers, government officials and representatives of Arab networks attended this ceremony, during which the award was presented, the winners were introduced, and the stages to the award and its importance in supporting the Arab education sector were explained.

Day 6: Sunday 4/11/2018

The sixth day began with a presentation by Ms. Katarina Popovik on the Supreme Council for Adult Education, and the experience of maturation in the visions of adult education in the world, during which she stressed on the importance of partnerships with the Arab networks and the Arab Campaign for Education for All, and the lessons learned from these partnerships.

Then, Dr. Zahi Azar presented a lecture on "Building Renewal in Adult Education Approaches", during which the participants were given the opportunity to share their views on the concept of the renewal in adult education

approaches, where it was agreed on the importance of the process of renewal and its necessity in the light of globalization and the development of technological means.

Mr. Jawad Al-Qussous, the Director of the Middle East Office at DVV, presented a lecture entitled "Lessons Learned from Adult Education Experience". An extensive discussion was held among the participants on the Arab and international experiences and the lessons learned from them, and ways of building new approaches through these lessons.

Day 7: Monday 5/11/2018

The seventh day began with presentation by Mr. Tayseer Muheisen from Palestine under the title of "Between Teaching and Learning ... Any Developmental Challenges?" During this presentation he talked about the Palestinian experience in development, and its implications for the educational sector and adult education projects in Palestine. The participants were given the opportunity to discuss this issue, where they commented on the Palestinian experience as a special, unique and exceptional experience in the world.

During the day, the participants were divided into working groups in order to attain a common vision for a set of terms and concepts that form the basis of the desired renewal process. The different groups presented the results of their knowledge, and its discussion, and agreed on a set of commonalities.

Day 8: Tuesday 6/11

During this day, Mr. Moatasem Zayed from Palestine and the Palestinian Educational Coalition were assigned to formulate a position paper reflecting the position of the Academy and the Arab networks in the field of "Renewing Adult Education Approaches". The paper was formulated and presented to the participants, under the title of "For One hundred million Arab ... Renewal in Adult Education Is Imperative for Advancement and Development". Throughout the day, the participants' comments, proposed suggestions and a final copy of the position paper were taken, and these will be published later by the Arab organizers and networks.

In this day, participants were graduated and certificates were distributed to them. Also, a quick evaluation was done for the academic meeting, and suggestions were proposed for the development of the Academy in the coming years.

Key Conclusions: Problems of Adult Education in the Arab World

Through the discussions and dialogues that took place, the participants realize that the experience of adult education in the Arab world has gone and is still going through a number of fundamental problems that require a real review and evaluation that address the causes of these problems drastically without going to temporary and partial solutions. The most important of these problems are:

1) Not attaining a unified reference conceptual educational framework in the Arab world for the concept of "adult education", in which methods, methodologies, premises and values are associated. In addition to the confusion between the term "illiteracy" and "adult education", this led to significant variations in defining the terminologies, particularly, defining the concept of "adult education". This has led to direct the majority of government and civil efforts to fight only the illiteracy, and poorly focus on interventions associated with the overall concept of adult education.

2) The continuous rise in the illiteracy rate in the Arab world compared to the global indicators, which is a challenge for the workers in the field of adult education, and this percentage is likely to rise in light of what is going on in many of the Arab countries from political and economic crises, conflicts and wars that are threatening the educational process as a whole. The destruction of thousands of schools and educational institutions in a number of Arab countries is the biggest evidence of the seriousness of our pessimism towards the future of illiteracy in the Arab world.

3) Focusing on the area of planning the formal education and setting policies, trends and public budgets regarding the large numbers of individuals who are outside of this scope, and are deprived of the right to education which is set as one of the basic rights in the national laws and international convention, and is confirmed by the Sustainable Development Goals 2030.

4) Adult education programs in the Arab world do not meet the level of needs and challenges that the Arab societies are facing.

5) Typical adult education programs, their traditionalism, and, too often, the absence of creativity and innovation, made them incompatible with the technological development and the revolution of knowledge in the world, and what resulted from them in the development of the communications and information sector in particular. Also, research and academic Arab institutions have not yet been able to provide the "adult education" staff with the methodologies, methods and models through which this concept can be developed.

6) Lack and limitedness of the funding sources for "adult education" programs, and the poor interest of the donors and the international funding agencies in supporting "adult education". The majority of the funds are allocated in this field has been invested in "illiteracy" programs only, which led to confuse the efforts of the operating institutions in the area of "adult education" and limit their ability to meet the needs of their local communities in this frame; this is in addition to leaving many marginalized and vulnerable groups outside the "adult education" programs.

7) The global neoliberal economic trends to control the process of educational inputs and outputs, as it seeks to adopt an economic policy that reduces the role of the state and increases the role of the private sector as much as possible. The neoliberalism seeks to shift the control of the economy from the government to the private sector, hoping that this shift will increase the efficiency of the government and improve the economic

situation of the country, and this means, supporting the privatization of education, directing the process of teaching and learning to meet the needs of the market, and building the human who has the fitting skills and experiences.

Common denominators among all: the starting point of the renewal process

The participants in the Academy realize that the above-mentioned problems pose a great challenge, emphasizing the necessity and inevitability of the renewal in order to promote and contribute to the achievement of development in its comprehensive concept in our Arab homeland. The networks, civil society organizations and various components of the society, including those who are active in the field of pedagogy and education, should join forces to build an Arab social and educational movement that will contribute to the process of renaissance in teaching and learning in the Arab world. It has been agreed to adopt a set of basic principles that form the basis of the renewal process, the most important of which are:

▪ Adopting non-traditional pedagogical approaches is essential for renewal in the field of adult education, even if these approaches are empirical rather than based on a philosophical-intellectual framework.

▪ Comprehensive, in-depth and continuous assessment to enrich the adult education programs and projects, and revision of these programs and projects at the official level, or at the level of civil society organizations in the Arab world. Also, the use of the past experiences, and sometimes when it necessitates, the importance of admitting failure.

▪ Launching of educational-social initiatives inspired by all what is new and from worldwide successful experiences, provided that they are in line with the human rights approach in all its ramifications and dimensions.

▪ Building concepts and terms in a participatory manner, especially in the field of pedagogy and education, in order to reach to a new conceptual structure that can help us change the field and practical realities in the society, and this is the essence of change and true renewal.

▪ Flexibility and gradation in the steps of renewal, and adoption of various options such as change, development or modernization, in improving the status of the current adult education, in relation to the used methodology, methods and approaches.

Recommendations and Claims:

In light of the activities of the fourth meeting of the Academy, and to achieve the Academy's slogan of this year for building renewal in adult education approaches in the Arab world, the participants recommended and claimed the following:

First: To work hard to establish a clear Arab educational vision for adult education, in which the relevant bodies will take the following points as prerequisite to reach the desired goal in the Arab world (governments,

networks, civil society organizations, international institutions, etc.): to open a <u>multilateral dialogue</u> to attain a clear philosophy that is linked to a comprehensive Arab plan or multi-national contexts plans for adult education, specific in time and dates; to benefit everyone from the Arab strategies in this area, such as the strategy of literacy in the Arab countries, and the strategy of adult education in the Arab world; and, to base it/them on the philosophy of lifelong learning and self-learning.

Second: To work on building mechanisms to enhance the networking, cooperation and exchange of knowledge, skills, experiences and resources at the Arab level, and to give the opportunity to the existing civil networks and civil society organizations to effectively participate in all the national, Arab regional, and international platforms, in order to communicate their voice, vision, skills, and experience in the field of adult education.

Third: To invite the institutions and the international bodies that support and implement adult education programs and projects in the Arab world, and include them in their directions and plans according to the needs of the local communities and their different contexts.

Fourth: To call on the Arab governments to give the fourth objective of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 and its purposes and objectives the importance and priority in their national plans and governmental agendas.