EIGHTH BIANNUAL GCES SYMPOSIUM

PUBLIC, PRIVATE, AND PHILANTHROPY: EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF NEW ACTORS ON EDUCATION IN THE GCC

April 7-9th, 2018
Hilton Garden Inn Ras Al Khaimah
Ras Al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates

Hosted and Sponsored by

Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research
Welcome to the Gulf Comparative Education Society!

Dear GCES Delegates,

On behalf of the Gulf Comparative Education Society (GCES), it is my pleasure to welcome all participants and presenters to the Eighth Biannual GCES Symposium. I am proud to celebrate the Society’s tenth anniversary with you this year, as it marks one decade since GCES was formed as an academic and professional society in 2008. Since then, GCES has pursued its mission to enable academic, professional, and educational discourse from a comparative stance with a focus on the Arab Gulf region.

Through organizing seven successful symposia across different Gulf countries (United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Oman, and Kuwait), the GCES has connected educators, researchers, and policymakers across the GCC and beyond. In 2010, the GCES formally became a member of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies and has since then established itself as a forum for the exchange of ideas, education research, and best practices locally, regionally, and internationally. Over the last ten years, we have been able to build an active community of members who are engaged in policy, research, and teaching projects in education. I am excited to see this community expand with every symposium and grow together in the years to come. The theme of the eighth biannual symposium is *Public, Private, and Philanthropy: Exploring the Impact of New Actors on Education in the GCC*. Inspired by the increasing popularity of international and transnational education, public-private partnerships, and technological innovation, this year’s presenters provide nuanced and critical analyses of the current trends in Gulf education. The symposium will explore how the effects of these developments and its implications can be conceptualized by scholars and policymakers alike. I am looking forward to insightful presentations and open discussions about the effects of private and international actors and how to create inclusive, sustainable best practices in the field of philanthropy in education in the Arab Gulf region. This year’s symposium takes place in Ras Al Khaimah in the UAE, the home of the Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research, whose support and sponsorship have made this symposium possible. The constant dedication and support of the Foundation have played a pivotal role in the organization of past events and continue to play an important role in shaping educational policy in the UAE and the greater Arab Gulf region.

There is a growing interest in the field of comparative and international education research worldwide, and GCES is no exception to this. Since its inception, GCES has strived to encourage the involvement of educators, academics, and policymakers in making education a tool for sustainable development and social progress. We hope that this symposium will contribute to that impact.

Thank you all for coming to our event. I am sure you will find the sessions we have planned for you informative, stimulating, and inspiring.

**Dr. Abdullah Alajmi**
President, GCES
Assistant Rector of Administrative and Financial Affairs, Arab Open University-Kuwait


This keynote address will begin by considering the ways globalization has catalyzed new spatialities that now reconstitute the work of nation states, their governance structures, and policy in education. In documenting these new spatialities, attention will be paid to processes of rescaling and also to topological relations that cut across national borders. Additionally, analysis will be proffered of emergent regional and global policy fields that have cross-field effects in national and sub-national educational policy fields with impact on policy processes. The impact of these changes for the organization and functioning of the education state will be analyzed, as will the impact on policy production and policy content. Broadly, there has been a move from classic bureaucratic state structures in education to a restructured education state, reframed initially according to new public management, and more recently a transition to network governance. Network governance witnesses new and influential public-private relationships in education. This restructured education state has been simultaneously affected by the new spatialities of globalization and an expression of them. It is also imbricated with a seeming neo-liberal political and policy hegemony. In this setting, new policy actors in education (e.g., international and regional organizations, edu-businesses, philanthropists, philanthro-capitalists, edupreneurs, consultants) are now intimately involved in the production of education policy alongside state actors. A critical documentation and analysis of this situation and its implications will be provided.

At the Ford School, she teaches courses on public and nonprofit management, qualitative research methods, values and ethics, and philanthropy in a democratic society, and is an affiliate of the Youth Policy Lab, Education Policy Initiative, and Poverty Solutions at the University of Michigan. She received her Ph.D. (in Organization Studies and Education Policy) from Stanford University, her Ed.M. from Harvard University, and her B.A.H. from Stanford University.

**“Policy Patrons”: Private Philanthropic Foundations as Political Entrepreneurs in U.S. Public Education**

American philanthropic foundations possess a unique combination of financial and political resources that confer social prestige and legitimacy on their actions, lending them power and influence in the public sphere, but outside of democratic processes or accountability mechanisms. This is evident within the case of K-12 public education in the U.S., where philanthropic resources have had amplified impact in under-capitalized districts and schools. Since 2000, foundation funding of public education policy has grown exponentially, and new foundation entrants to the field, particularly those with living benefactors from high-technology, have received renewed attention and critique. The presentation explores these dynamics via a cross-case comparative analysis of four of the largest and most influential foundations active in the education sector: the Gates, Broad, Kellogg, and Ford Foundations. It draws on 60 interviews with foundation insiders and national leaders for a rare view into the closed world of elite private philanthropy, providing a new framework for considering philanthropic strategy and reflections on the implications of foundation influence within a liberal democracy.
Antoni Verger is an Associate Professor at the Department of Sociology of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and General Deputy of the European Master program Education Policies for Global Development. A former post-doctoral fellow at the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research, Dr. Verger’s research analyzes the relationship between global governance institutions and education policy. He has specialized in the study of public-private partnerships, quasi-markets, and accountability policies in education. Currently, he coordinates the ERC-funded project REFORMED - Reforming Schools Globally: A Multiscalar Analysis of Autonomy and Accountability Policies in the Education Sector. He is also one of the lead editors of the *Journal of Education Policy* and of the *World Yearbook of Education*.

**Public-Private Partnerships in Education: Critical Reflections from a Global Governance Perspective**

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) - i.e., policy frameworks that involve collaboration between the public and the private sector in the provision of public services - have acquired iconic status in global education agendas. Currently, PPPs are highly present in the discussions on educational reform in both industrialized and developing countries and are associated with the promotion of higher levels of private participation, school choice, and schools’ competition in the governance of educational systems. Some of the most well-known PPP policies in education are voucher schemes and charter schools, but there are many more other related policy options.

The presentation will explore the origins of the PPPs idea in the educational field and, specifically, what international actors (including international organizations, private foundations, and corporate actors) are promoting its implementation at different scales, and through which mechanisms. It will also highlight what are the main omissions (or elements lost in translation) in the transposition of the PPP policy program from the public administration field to the educational policy field. Finally, the presentation will refer to the main shortcomings of PPPs as a global “magic bullet” solution in the field of education. Here, on the basis of existing evidence on the topic, it will reflect on what are the main fallacies and weaknesses in the arguments that underpin the policy prescriptions of the advocates of PPPs in education.
Alexandra Draxler is an education specialist who spent most of her career at UNESCO where she worked on international collaboration on the recognition of higher education qualifications, HIV and AIDS prevention, and sector-wide planning. She was convener of several related interagency task forces. She was also Executive Secretary of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, of which the President was Jacques Delors. Its report, *Learning: the Treasure Within*, was translated into more than thirty languages.

In recent years she has worked for private and public entities as a consultant and researcher. Her main interests and writings concern technologies in education, the impact of private actors on education, and public policies and planning. She is a Senior Advisor to NORRAG and Associate Editor of the *International Journal for Educational Development*.

**New Education Landscapes: The Technology Trap**

With worldwide increases in the variety and scale of private finance in education, we see increased motivation and pressure for competitive experimentation, often perceived as a healthy force for improving quality. There is concurrent belief that expanding the role of technology for delivery can enhance both geographic reach and better control over content and quality. With these trends, it is important for policy actors to keep in mind that there is no strong education system that is not adequately based on a supply of well-trained, well-supported, and motivated teachers.

Private actors’ motivations frequently differ from those of governments. The former often are principally interested in innovating in terms of methods, materials, and tools, often technology-based. Quite naturally, they typically focus on parts of education systems through projects, a single or group of institutions, and innovative delivery. They may train teachers as part of their own focus, but overall teacher training and certification remains government responsibility. Governments on the other hand are responsible for overall coherence, equity, quality, and sustainability of systems, including wise and informed use of public funds.

While no one doubts that technology has important roles to play in both delivery and as part of the curriculum in education, some caution is required. The technology trap is one of the unintended consequences of favoring technological innovation
over investment in people for teaching and learning. Capture of public funds for insufficiently thought out or proven technological innovations can retard or weaken support for the teaching profession, the pillar of any education system.

This presentation will be an overview of some of the promises and pitfalls of massive use of technology, lessons learned elsewhere, and the role of researchers in the creation of knowledge for collaboration and decision-making. In GCC countries the role of private actors is expanding very rapidly. The need to strengthen culturally and economically relevant education means maintaining adequate emphasis on training, retention, and support for teachers. Failed experiments in education always have consequences for learners and their families. Ensuring that technology for learning is conceived and used with the input and participation of excellent teachers is fundamental.
### GCES 2018 Symposium Program

**Public, Private, and Philanthropy: Exploring the Impact of New Actors on Education in the GCC**

**Day One: Saturday, April 7, 2018**

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<td><strong>Registration Open</strong></td>
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<td><em>Workshop Participants:</em> Please go directly to the Al Qasimi Foundation Training Room (RAK Gas Building, 3rd Floor).</td>
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<td><em>All Other Participants:</em> Please register in the lobby of the Hilton Garden Inn.</td>
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<td>11:00-12:30</td>
<td><strong>Workshop: Using International Assessments to Achieve Your Education Goals (Part 2)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Lunch</strong></td>
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<td>13:30-13:45</td>
<td><strong>Welcome to Ras Al Khaimah</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Natasha Ridge,</strong> Al Qasimi Foundation</td>
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<td>13:45-14:00</td>
<td><strong>Introduction to GCES</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Abdullah Alajmi,</strong> GCES President; Arab Open University – Kuwait</td>
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| 14:00-15:00 | **Keynote 1: Globalization and Changing Spatialities: Emergent Policy Fields and New Policy Actors in Education**  
**Chair:** Abdullah Alajmi  
**Bob Lingard,** School of Education, The University of Queensland, Australia |                                      | Hilton Garden Inn - Main Hall (Khuzam) |
| 15:00-16:15 | **Featured Panel 1: Growth Beyond the Numbers: Higher Education in the GCC**  
**Chair:** Soohyun Jeon  
**Hayfa Jafar,** University of Toronto  
*Higher Education in the GCC: The Realities and Challenges of Regionalization*  
**Marvin Erfurth,** University of Münster  
*Education Hubs in the GCC Region - Exploring Interplays of Local Visions and Global Influences for Higher Education Policy and Economic Geographies*  
**Woohyang Sim,** Waseda University  
*What is Higher Education for? A Comparative Study Between the United Arab Emirates and Other Gulf Countries*  
**Aisha Salim Ali Al Harthi,** Sultan Qaboos University  
**Fatma Al Hajri,** Ministry of Higher Education, Oman  
*Private Higher Education in Oman: Vivid Opportunities but Vague Impact?* |                                      | Hilton Garden Inn - Main Hall (Khuzam) |
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<td>**Keynote 2: &quot;Policy Patrons:&quot; Private Philanthropic Foundations as</td>
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<td>Political Entrepreneurs in U.S. Public Education**</td>
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<td><strong>Chair: Antoni Verger</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Megan Tompkins-Stange, University of Michigan</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Systems through Evidence</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Chair: Bob Lingard</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Helen Abadzi, University of Texas at Arlington</strong></td>
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<td>*How to Encourage Education Ministries to Adopt Effective Research-</td>
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<td><em>Based Policies? An Example for Arabic</em></td>
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<td><strong>Luke Naismith, Knowledge and Human Development Authority</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Nada Salha, Knowledge and Human Development Authority</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Kaltham Kenaid, Knowledge and Human Development Authority</strong></td>
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<td><em>Action Research to Improve Arabic in Dubai Private Schools</em></td>
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### Breakout Session 1.1: Education Research in Arabic (Arabic Session)
**Chair:** Khalaf Al’Abri

**Ali Al Matari,** Ministry of Education, Oman  
Obstacles to Teachers’ Implementation of Intel's Education Program in the Sultanate of Oman

**Azzam Mohamed,** Sultan Qaboos University  
Corporate University: An Approach to Developing Partnerships Between Universities and Societies (A Proposed Vision)

**Ibrahim Al Ateeqi,** Sultan Qaboos University  
The Role of the World Bank in Developing Educational Policy and Improving the Quality of Learning in the GCC Countries

#### Hilton Garden Inn - Breakout Room 1

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| 11:15-12:30 | Breakout Session 1.1: Education Research in Arabic (Arabic Session)  
- **Chair:** Khalaf Al’Abri  
- **Ali Al Matari,** Ministry of Education, Oman  
  Obstacles to Teachers’ Implementation of Intel's Education Program in the Sultanate of Oman  
- **Azzam Mohamed,** Sultan Qaboos University  
  Corporate University: An Approach to Developing Partnerships Between Universities and Societies (A Proposed Vision)  
- **Ibrahim Al Ateeqi,** Sultan Qaboos University  
  The Role of the World Bank in Developing Educational Policy and Improving the Quality of Learning in the GCC Countries |

### Breakout Session 1.2: Motivation, Attainment, and Alternative Approaches to Learning
**Chair:** Max Eckert

**Nour Al Okla,** Al Ghurair University  
Learner Motivation: The Dynamic and Diverse Construct

**Linda Bradley,** University of Gothenburg  
**Lorna Bartram,** Chalmers University of Technology  
**Khaled Al-Sabbagh,** Chalmers University of Technology  
Mobile Learning with Arabic Speakers in Sweden

**Baha Makhoul,** Hebrew University of Jerusalem  
Predicting Reading Comprehension Difficulties Amongst Arab Children from Kindergarten to Fourth Grade

**Sosil Somokian,** Box Hill College Kuwait  
Projects That Work

**Katherine Hall,** Khalifa University  
Educating on Cultural Concerns via Public Service Announcements

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| 11:15-12:30 | Breakout Session 1.2: Motivation, Attainment, and Alternative Approaches to Learning  
- **Chair:** Max Eckert  
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<td><strong>Breakout Session 1.3: Who Benefits?</strong> Evaluating the Emergence of Private Actors in Education</td>
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<td><strong>Chair:</strong> Elizabeth Bruce</td>
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<td><strong>Emily Winchip,</strong> University of Nottingham</td>
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<td><em>The Interaction of Education and Business for Teachers in For-Profit Schools</em></td>
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<td><strong>Karim Colin Easterbrook,</strong> Private School in Oman</td>
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<td><em>Private Education: Public Harm? A Review of the Current Educational System in Oman and Proposals for the Future</em></td>
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<td><strong>Ziad Shaker ElJishi,</strong> Effat University</td>
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<td><em>A Case Study on Student Preferences for Public, Private, or Community College Education at a Private University in Saudi Arabia</em></td>
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<td><strong>Moneer Moukaddem,</strong> University of Nottingham</td>
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<td><em>It’s Useless They’re Emirati: Exploring Teacher Perceptions of Emirati Student Attainment in UAE Private Schools</em></td>
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<td><strong>Keynote 3: Public-Private Partnerships in Education: Critical Reflections from a Global Governance Perspective</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Antoni Verger,</strong> Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona</td>
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| 14:45-15:45  | Featured Panel 3: Philanthropy in Education in the GCC and Beyond: Challenges and Prospects | Marvin Erfurth | **Catherine Hill**, American University in Dubai  
**Nadera Al Borno**, American University in Dubai
*Philanthropy for Education: Challenges and Opportunities in the Middle East*  
**Khalaf Al'Abri**, Sultan Qaboos University  
**Waheed Hammad**, Sultan Qaboos University
*The Impact of International Actors on the GCC’s Education Systems: the Case of the UNESCO Involvement in the Education System in Oman*  
**Nina Abdul Razzak**, Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA), Kingdom of Bahrain
*Giving Back: Alumni as Assets for Generating Philanthropic Support for Higher Education in Bahrain* | Hilton Garden Inn - Main Hall (Khuzam) |
| 15:45-17:00  | Breakout Session 2.1: Globalization in Philanthropy and Human Resources | David Dingus | **Obed Mfum-Mensah**, Messiah College
*Philanthropy and Education of Muslim Youth in Sub-Saharan Africa in the Contexts of the Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals: A Case of Rural Ghana*  
**Zahid Ali**, Consultant
*Role of Philanthropy in Technical and Vocational Education as Investment for Future*  
**Fahdia Khalid**, University of Bath
*The Choreography of Talent Development in Higher Education*  
**Katariina Juusola**, The British University in Dubai
*Exploring CSR Initiatives of International Branch Campuses: A Stakeholder and Institutional Perspective* | Hilton Garden Inn - Breakout Room 1 |
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<tr>
<td>15:45-17:00</td>
<td><strong>Breakout Session 2.2: Helping Teachers Teach: The Effects of Teacher Training and Professional Development</strong>&lt;br&gt;Chair: Emily Winchip</td>
<td><strong>Afaf Bataineh,</strong> Zayed University&lt;br&gt;<strong>Kay Gallagher,</strong> Zayed University&lt;br&gt;<em>An Exploratory Investigation into the Use of Translanguaging in Teacher Education</em>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Irene Therese Skuballa,</strong> Open University of the Netherlands&lt;br&gt;<em>The Impact of Teacher Stress and Cultural Diversity on Teacher-Student Interactions in UAE Science Classrooms</em>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Max B. Eckert,</strong> New York University Abu Dhabi&lt;br&gt;<em>It Takes Two (to Make a Thing Go Right): The Effects of Self-Efficacy and Motivation on German Teachers Teaching Refugees</em>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Nayyer Chandella,</strong> Lahore College for Women University&lt;br&gt;<em>When the Mirror Speaks: Sharing Learning through Dissemination</em></td>
<td>Hilton Garden Inn - Breakout Room 2</td>
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<td>15:45-17:00</td>
<td><strong>Breakout Session 2.3: Innovating Curricula and Enhancing Learning</strong>&lt;br&gt;Chair: Catherine Hill</td>
<td><strong>Glenda El Gamal,</strong> Khalifa University&lt;br&gt;<em>Teacher Perceptions of Curriculum Change in the Bilingual Reform Programs in Government Schools in the United Arab Emirates: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis</em>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Reem Thani,</strong> British University in Dubai&lt;br&gt;<em>Infusing Entrepreneurship in Higher Education: A Content Analysis of Three Undergraduate Business Programmes in the UAE</em>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Solomon Arulraj David,</strong> British University in Dubai&lt;br&gt;<em>Curriculum Innovation for Postgraduate Programmes: Perspectives of Postgraduate Learners in the UAE</em>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Naved Bakali,</strong> Tabah Foundation&lt;br&gt;<strong>Mariam Al Hashmi,</strong> Zayed University&lt;br&gt;<em>Islamic Education in UAE Schools: Challenges and Opportunities</em></td>
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<td><strong>Featured Panel 4: The Internationalization of Education: Effects on Students, Educators, and Institutions</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<em>Chair:</em> David Dingus&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<em>Alexandra Draxler,</em> NORRAG&lt;br&gt;<em>New Education Landscapes: The Technology Trap</em>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<em>Elizabeth Bruce,</em> Al Qasimi Foundation&lt;br&gt;<em>Empowered but not Equal: Challenging the Traditional Gender Roles as Seen by University Students in Saudi Arabia Geographies</em>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<em>Hayfa Jafar,</em> University of Toronto&lt;br&gt;<em>Emma Sabzalieva,</em> University of Toronto&lt;br&gt;<em>Internationalization as an Emerging Approach in Higher Education in Iraq and Tajikistan</em>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<em>Mary Ellen Kelly,</em> University of Toronto&lt;br&gt;<em>School Leaders Navigating the &quot;Coercive Power of Best Practices&quot; to Support Instructional Practice and Student Learning on the Ground</em></td>
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<td>10:45-11:00</td>
<td><strong>Break</strong></td>
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<td>11:20-12:20</td>
<td><strong>Special Panel 1: NORRAG Special Edition Arabic Report Launch</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<em>Chair:</em> Soohyun Jeon&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<em>Alexandra Draxler,</em> NORRAG&lt;br&gt;<em>Soohyun Jeon,</em> Al Qasimi Foundation&lt;br&gt;<em>Rasha Mohsen,</em> Al Qasimi Foundation&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<em>Launch of the NORRAG Special Issue 01 in Arabic: The Right to Education Movements and Policies: Promises and Realities (Translated and sponsored by Al Qasimi Foundation)</em></td>
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| 11:20-12:20 | **Special Panel 2: Partnerships and Accountability for Sustainable Development Goal 4 in the Gulf States**  
Chair: Faryal Khan  
Faryal Khan, UNESCO  
Frode Mauring, UNDP  
Natasha Ridge, Al Qasimi Foundation  
Jebrin Aljebrin, AGFUND  
Maricel Fernandez, UNESCO  
Panelist Discussions | Hilton Garden Inn - Main Hall (Khuzam) |
| 12:20-12:50 | **Concluding Remarks and Group Photo** | Hilton Garden Inn - Main Hall (Khuzam) |
| 12:50-13:50 | **Lunch** | Hilton Garden Inn - Main Restaurant |
Background

Education is recognized across the GCC as a moral imperative and a strategic priority to secure future prosperity and human flourishing. Policymakers have set ambitious targets to join the ranks of the best performing education systems in the world in order to deliver economic success and secure a place on the world stage for their citizens.

International Large Scale Assessments play an important role in these developments. The GCC nations have demonstrated their commitment to measuring progress against international standards and to play an active role in the global education community by gathering and sharing data that can be used to inform future improvement.

Coordinated by the IEA and OECD, but delivered separately in each country, studies such as TIMSS, PIRLS, and PISA focus on students’ achievement in reading, mathematics, and science, but they are increasingly branching out into other outcome measures as well. These studies also gather a rich array of additional data on students, schools, and the home environment.

Despite the high profile of the international studies, among the education and academic communities they remain an under-utilized resource. Headline findings such as countries’ international rankings and the practices of the highest performing countries, receive significant but often superficial attention. The greatest value from the studies remains untapped: the opportunity to conduct in-depth analysis of particular education topics and to draw more sophisticated lessons from a wider range of countries.
Workshop Outline

In this workshop, you will have the opportunity to learn more about International Large Scale Assessments, how they are designed and delivered, and what they have to say about education in the Gulf. Most importantly, the workshop will enable you to explore how you can use insights from these studies to support your role – as a policymaker, school administrator, or academic.

Experts from the United Kingdom’s National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) will provide an introduction to International Large Scale Assessments and summarize the most important findings for the GCC nations. They will then introduce the datasets and questionnaires and support you to identify your own topics of interest and to establish how you could use the international studies to provide new insights.

NFER is the leading provider of educational evidence, assessments, and program evaluation in the UK. It was established in 1946 and provides insights to inform policy and practice for governments and organizations around the world.

Presenters:

The workshop will be delivered by Ben Durbin and Juliet Sizmur. Ben is Head of International Education at NFER and is responsible for leading NFER’s program of international assessment, research, and evaluation. Juliet is a Senior Research Manager at NFER and has delivered several major international surveys, including PISA, PIRLS, and TIMSS. She is currently the National Project Manager for PISA 2018 in all four nations of the UK and National Research Coordinator for PIRLS in Northern Ireland.
Regionalization is a new reality of the current environment in higher education besides the emergence of the knowledge economy, lifelong learning, and the growth in the numbers and diversity of actors. This environment marks both competition and collaboration as two dimensions of the globalized higher education (HE). Many regions of the world are building stronger regional networks and partnerships particularly related to student mobility, study abroad programs, and research collaboration among regional universities, industries, and government bodies. The GCC’s directions for their HE systems reflect this wider global trend. While these strategies create a competitive environment, it collectively contributes to an emerging region for HE. This study investigates the challenges and the opportunities of developing integrated HE systems in the GCC region within the context of competition and a long dependency on Western Higher Education.

Drawing on the experiences and data from different international, regional, and national organizations, this study utilizes the Functional, Organizational, and Political Approaches framework to analyze the data considering the region’s unique contexts. The initial findings indicate that there has been little collaboration between universities, the education cities or ministries of HE in the region. Yet, the GCC countries together present an exceptional opportunity for growth in HE.

This study fits the GCES Symposium’s theme as it explores the dynamics of collaboration and competition among the HE systems in the region and the involvement of many actors to build an integrated regional Higher Education space.

Hayfa Jafar is a Ph.D. Candidate at the University of Toronto.

International Education Hubs are regional magnets of talent and academic excellence. By embedding higher education policy in major political projects, Hubs are thought to contribute to innovative entrepreneurialism, economic competitiveness, and social progressiveness in their host regions (such as several GCC member states). The UAE’s Vision 2021 is a current example of an implementation in which local visions for the construction of a Hub are, however, impacted by global influences. Despite some
programmatic work on such politico-economic projects, empirical research about their implications for higher education policy and governance are insufficient. In this ongoing international-comparative educational research project, such implications for policy and practice are studied in the light of public, private, and philanthropic (national and international) stakeholders in education.

To research the implications of Hubs on higher education policy and governance, the comparative study between the UAE and Singapore reflects the aforementioned contextual conditions by adopting the Comparative Case Study approach. This methodology enables researching “Global Education Policy” throughout scale, time, and space while offering context- and culture-sensitive lenses, conceptualizing policy as a socio-cultural practice. Critical Discourse Analysis complements this theoretical-methodological approach for data collection, treatment, and analysis while two main sources are policies from database research and semi-structured interviews on-site (planned for 2018).

First findings of this study address issues such as the effects of Hubs for the interplay between private, public, and philanthropic actors and impacts of such politico-economic Hub infrastructures for governments’ valuable findings for GCC member states concerning current or future implementations of Education Hub strategies.

*Marvin Erfurth* is a Ph.D. Candidate at the University of Münster.

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**What is Higher Education for? A Comparative Study Between the United Arab Emirates and Other Gulf Countries**

*Woohyang Sim*

This study aims to explain the social changes taking place in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries due to the increasing emphasis on higher education by governments. In the past several decades, the GCC has witnessed an enormous growth in its higher education sector, with the help of massive investments from the respective governments. However, despite the large number of universities producing graduates of all levels and skills on a yearly basis, there is still a blockage of the university-to-labor-market pipeline in the GCC countries. The labor participation rate of GCC youth, especially among females, remains low despite the fact that active employment policies at the national level have created enough capacity in both public and private sectors to absorb university graduates of both genders.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to answer the question “What is Higher Education for?,” through lighting up the inside of dynamic expansion of higher education of women in the United Arab Emirates and other Gulf countries. This study clarifies the awareness and behavior regarding higher education of females in the GCC through a questionnaire survey. Data collected from 1633 female respondents was analyzed using SPSS.
The findings of this study delineate the consciousness and behavior in the whole process from the entrance to the exit of higher education, following the Input - Process - Output (I-P-O) model. As a conclusion, the findings indicate the role of higher education and academic degrees for females in the region.

Woohyang Sim is a Ph.D. Candidate at Waseda University.

Private Higher Education in Oman: Vivid Opportunities but Vague Impact?

Aisha Salim Ali Al Harthi & Fatma Al Hajri

Without the generous financial endowments and support from the GCC governments, the private higher education in the GCC countries will stumble to survive. This paper discusses the impact of the Omani private higher education as evidenced from a comparison between the private and public higher education institutions. These variables are: (1) type of student funding (the number of government-funded grants awarded to the private universities and colleges versus the number of students on personal funding), (2) type of research funding, (3) the employability/employment of graduates, and (4) dropout rate.

The paper draws on data from three sources: the Omani Ministry of Education, the Omani United Acceptance System and the Omani Academic Accreditation Authority. Analysis includes descriptive and inferential statistics on institutions and students in the private and government higher education in Oman on the selected variables.

It is expected that the results from this paper will provide some evidence for policy makers on the “return on investment” for the Omani private higher education. It will highlight weaknesses and strengths as well as possible opportunities and threats.

The study will conclude with some recommendations to strengthen the role of the Omani private higher education institutions, their social responsibility, and economic impact. Results from the Omani situation might be beneficial to other GCC countries, so recommendations might be of interest to the region.

Aisha Salim Ali Al Harthi is an Assistant Professor at Sultan Qaboos University.
Fatma Al Hajri is a Graduate Survey Director at the Ministry of Higher Education, Oman.
How to Encourage Education Ministries to Adopt Effective Research-Based Policies? An Example for Arabic

Helen Abadzi

Learning outcomes worldwide, and in the Arab world particularly, have been less than satisfactory, and intensive searches go on for answers. Most memory functions are unconscious, so staff from governments and NGOs are biased towards their personal memories of learning. It becomes difficult, therefore, to fund research on the early-grade reading and math, where millions of poorer children fail. These skills are considered trivia that all students will somehow master. It is possible, however, to use the power of philanthropic and international organizations to develop a strategy based on neurocognitive research, particularly for Arabic.

The model suggests that Arab students must learn standard Arabic grammar orally, separately from reading, in grade 1 and continue reading ever-longer texts in order to score satisfactorily in 4th grade international tests. To test this, the Al Qasimi Foundation of Ras Al Khaimah developed a reading textbook based on cognitive science research, along with an oral interactive grammar instruction method that used analogical patterns and explicitly taught the differences between vernacular and standard Arabic. The methods were piloted over two years in the first grades of a boys’ school in Ras Al Khaimah. Reading results were impressive. Students using this reading method by far surpassed control classes. (Language methodology was still piloted while this proposal was written.) The challenge thereafter is how to gain the attention of education ministries, so that they carry out further testing and potential adoption of the methodology.

The presentation will discuss the evolution of policy options in a collaborative model between UNESCO initiatives on systemic and policy reform, along with the Al Qasimi initiative in reading. The presentation will focus on a policy model that is being promoted for the Arab countries in the early grades as well as on other countries where official languages differ from vernaculars.

Helen Abadzi is a Researcher at the University of Texas at Arlington.

Student Wellbeing in Dubai

Luke Naismith & Nada Salha

Late in 2017, about 65,000 students from Grades 6 to 9 in private schools in Dubai participated in the first ever Dubai Student Wellbeing Census. All eligible schools participated and more than 90% of students. This fantastic achievement highlights the interest in the wellbeing of students across schools in Dubai.
This presentation will outline the journey of the Knowledge and Human Development Authority and private schools towards undertaking the census. It will also showcase the key results from the census and how Dubai's students feel about their schools, their relationships with peers and adults, and about their own wellbeing. The Dubai Student Wellbeing Census will be repeated over the next four years across private schools with the aim of highlighting improvements in student wellbeing and demonstrating links between wellbeing and academic attainment.

**Luke Naismith** is the Director of Research at the Knowledge and Human Development Authority in Dubai.

**Nada Salha** is the Head of Connect at the Knowledge and Human Development Authority in Dubai.

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**Action Research to Improve Arabic in Dubai Private Schools**

Amal Mousa & Kaltham Kenaid

Over the past 3 years, the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) has been facilitating a series of collaborative Living Arabic events, which bring together Arabic and Islamic studies educators from private schools in Dubai with education professionals to share and reflect on their good practices. These structured events provide guidance and support to teachers and educators. The need for these specific events that focus on Arabic arose from KHDA's inspections, which identified that improvements in student progress and attainment in Arabic were significantly lower than those of other core subjects.

The initiative on action research emerged from the Living Arabic events. A framework of collaboration was established using the principle of appreciative inquiry that recognizes current strengths and builds upon them for the future. Each action research project lasts 9 months. During this period, Arabic teachers are introduced to the concept of action research, choose their area of interest, identify the classroom strategy, and decide on the measurement and assessment tool. Literature reviews are conducted and reports produced on key findings.

The action research initiative started in 2016 with 24 potential proposals. At the end of the 2016 -17 academic year, 13 complete action research reports have been published on KHDA's WhatWorks website so that other Arabic teachers can benefit. Action research projects have been led by five private schools, whose main roles have been to support the project and give guidance to teachers conducting action research in their classrooms.

**Amal Mousa** is a Senior Research Analyst at the Knowledge and Human Development Authority in Dubai.

**Kaltham Kenaid** is the Director of Research at the Knowledge and Human Development Authority in Dubai.
معوقات تطبيق المعلمين لبرنامج إنتل للتعليم في العملية التعليمية بسلطنة عمان

Obstacles to Teachers’ Implementation of Intel’s Education Program in the Sultanate of Oman

Ali Al Matari

الدراسة targeting معوقات تطبيق برنامج إنتل للتعليم في العملية التعليمية بسلطنة عمان، وتكون مجتمع

الدراسة من جميع المعلمين الخاضعين لدورة إنتل للتعليم بالبالغ عددهم (408) معًا ومعملة، تم اختيار عينة عشوائية يواقيع

(117) معألا ومعملة من مختلف محافظات السلطنة، لتحقيق أهداف الدراسة قدر الفريق البحث يتراقب استبانة تكون من(0) محاور

تحوي معوقات متعلقة بالإدارة المدرسية، تطبيق المعلم للبرنامج، الإشراف التربوي، الفندق، البيت المدرسية) وتم التحقق من

دلالات صدقتها وثباتها حيث بلغ معامل الثبات (96).

وخلصت الدراسة إلى النتائج الآتية:

1. أن معوقات تطبيق المعلمين لبرنامج إنتل للتعليم في العملية التعليمية بسلطنة عمان كانت عالية، حيث جاءت المعوقات

 المتعلقة بالبيئة المدرسية في المرتبة الأولى بينما جاءت المعوقات المتعلقة بالإدارة المدرسية في المرتبة الأخيرة.

2. وجود فروق ذات دالة إحصائية عند مستوى الدلالة ( أقل من مستوى 0.05) على مقاس معوقات تطبيق برنامج إنتل بطاً

 للجنس في المحور الأول " معوقات متعلقة بالإدارة المدرسية " لصالح المعلمين، بينما بات المحاور لا توجد فروق ذات

دالة إحصائية.

3. لا توجد فروق ذات دالة إحصائية عند مستوى الدلالة ( أقل من مستوى 0.05) بين استجابات أفراد عينة الدراسة تعزى لمرتب

 المرحلة الدراسية، سنوات الخبرة على جميع أبعاد الدراسة.

وأوصت الدراسة بما يلي:

1. عقد دورات لمدربة المدرسة والمشرفين التربويين لوعدهم بأهمية برنامج إنتل التدريبي ليشجعوا ويساعدوا ويساندوا

 المعلمين في توظيف المهارات التي تم تدريبهم عليها في خدمة العملية التعليمية التعليمية.

2. توفير الدعم المادي والمعنوي من قبل إدارات المدارس للمعلم المطبق للمهارات المكتسبة من برنامج إنتل للتعليم.

3. متابعة العائد من أثر تطبيق المعلمين لبرنامج إنتل للتعليم.

Ali Al Matari is the Head of Department of Educational Technology and Department of Human Resources at the Ministry of Education, Sultanate of Oman.
تعتبر جامعة الشركات منظومة استراتيجية شاملة لتطوير وتعليم الموظفين، من أجل الوفاء بأغراض الشركة؛ وهي الوسيلة الأولى للتنمية المهنية للموظفين في الشركة، فضلاً عن قيامها بتقديم كل من فرض التعليم الرسمي وغير الرسمي التي تعمل على دعم النمو الشخصي وكذلك النمو المهني للأفراد في المؤسسة، وذلك داخل مناخ تنظيمي إيجابي داعم يسوده الاحترام.

وبالنظر لما تواجهه الجامعات في الوطن العربي بصفة عامة ودول الخليج بصفة خاصة من مشكلات وتحديات توقّع تحقيقها لأهدافها، والقيام بوظائفها كما هو متوقع منها؛ ومن أهمها: نقص التمويل اللازم للجامعة ليقوام بها كما يتوقع المجتمع منها، بالإضافة إلى انسداد البحث العلمي عن أهداف المجتمع ومشكلاته، وضعف مستوى خريجيها وإعدادهم وفقًا لاحتياجات سوق العمل ومظلات العصر، مما يؤدي ضرورة البحث عن حل لمواجهة هذه المشكلات، كما أن مؤسسات المجتمع (الإنترنت والخدمية) تعاني من قلة كفاءة العمليون بها ونقص البرامج التي تؤهلهن للعمل بها، وتقص في البحث التي تهم في تطويرها وتحديثها وتساعد في حل مشكلاتها، وتتأه الشريان بين الجامعة ومجلس الجامعة في مقدمة الطرق التي تساعد على مواجهة هذه المشكلات، والتكيف مع متغيرات العمر واحتياجاتسوق العمل ومتطلباته.

وفي ضوء ذلك تتخلص مشكلة الدراسة في السؤال الرئيس التالي: كيف يمكن تفعيل الشراكة بين الجامعة والمجتمع في ضوء النهج نحو جامعة الشركات ؟ وترعرع من السؤال الرئيس الأسئلة الفرعية التالية:

ما هي صفة الشركة وأهدافها، مراحل بنائها، مواكبتها؟

ما هي جامعة الشركات وماجات الاستفادة منها؟

ما هي الرؤية المقترحة لتفعيل الشراكة بين الجامعة والمجتمع في ضوء جامعة الشركات؟

أهداف الدراسة: تستعراض الدراسة التعرف على:

• ماهية الشركة وأهدافها، مراحل بنائها، وأهدافها.
• جامعة الشركات ومجالات الاستفادة منها.
• وضع مقتراحات لتفعيل الشراكة بين الجامعة والمجتمع.

منهج الدراسة: استخدمت الدراسة النهج الوصفي من خلال تحليل الادب النظري المتعلق بالشراكة وجامعة الشركات.

نتائج الدراسة: وتوصلت الدراسة إلى وضع رؤية مقترحة يمكن من خلالها تفعيل الشراكة بين الجامعة والمجتمع تتضمن (الأسس والمنطقات، الفلسفية والأهداف، آليات التطبيق).

Azzam Mohamed is an Assistant Professor at Sultan Qaboos University.
**The Role of the World Bank in Developing Educational Policy and Improving the Quality of Learning in the GCC Countries**

*Ibrahim Al Ateeqi*

The governments of the GCC countries have worked together for more than five decades to benefit from the services available to them in the GCC countries, to develop education and training services, and to support the development of the private sector in the GCC countries, to strengthen the social and educational policies, and to improve the quality of learning in the GCC countries. This is in line with the government’s policies in the education sector, and to address the challenges faced by countries in the GCC countries.

Ibrahim Al Ateeqi is an Assistant Professor at Sultan Qaboos University.

**Breakout Session 1.2: Motivation, Attainment, and Alternative Approaches to Learning**

**Learner Motivation: The Dynamic and Diverse Construct**

*Nour Al Okla*

Motivational influences have been acknowledged to play an important role in the process of second language learning. However, the construct of learner motivation is rarely explored as a diverse and dynamic construct. The study explores the motivational influences that impact 37 Arab undergraduate learners of English in the UAE as they pursue two semesters of study.

During a sixteen-week period, three rounds of interviews with the participants were conducted and participants' written responses to four written prompts and a self-portrait were collected to obtain data on the participants' beliefs, emotions, and expectations of learning English.

The findings of the study highlighted the diversity, dynamicity and complexity of the construct of learner motivation in the learners' learning experiences. Despite apparent similarities among the study participants, the data revealed significant differences in the ways they responded to the learning setting, the extent to which they used English outside of class, and their perception of the role of English in their lives.
The data also reflected change over time in participants' emotions, preferences, and investment in the language. Analysis of the data revealed complex interactions among the unique characteristics of individual learners and aspects of their motivation resulting in the complex, dynamic system known as the L2 motivational self-system.

The study calls for raising learners' awareness of the factors which influence their motivation and strategies which enable them to manage their emotions during the ongoing learning process.

*Nour Al Okla* is an English Language Instructor at Al Ghurair University.

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**Mobile Learning with Arabic Speakers in Sweden**

(التعلم عبر الجوال للناطقين باللغة العربية في السويد)

*Linda Bradley, Lorna Bartram, & Khaled Al-Sabbagh*

The purpose of this research is to investigate the pedagogical implications in mobile learning on the integration of Arabic speaking migrants to Sweden. The outcomes are transferable also to other groups of learners.

The Minclusion project is a research project developing language learning applications for Arabic speaking persons in Sweden, by far the largest language group of newly arrived migrants. The target group owns smartphones to a large extent to stay in touch with friends and family. However, these could also be used as a means of learning a new language which we are exploring in field studies.

The project uses a sociocultural approach to learning, focusing on ideas of collaborative and interactive learning. Through quantitative and qualitative methods of investigation, the smartphone as a learning tool is explored through a design based bottom-up approach. Over 40 persons were followed over a period of using the app. They were recorded to compare their language development. In addition, interviews, surveys, logging of screen movements, and observations were performed. We developed a model for evaluation of app usability as well as for mapping language progression.

Results show that pedagogical aspects in existing apps focus on traditional pedagogical approaches with basic vocabulary training, while more active learning such as pronunciation and speaking activities are less common. This resulted in the first development of a module in the app targeting pronunciation and everyday phrases, having an impact on language development, where users can target specific weak spots in their own learning.

*Linda Bradley* is a Researcher at the University of Gothenburg.
*Lorna Bartram* is a Project Assistant at the Chalmers University of Technology.
*Khaled Al-Sabbagh* is a Research Assistant at the Chalmers University of Technology.
Predicting Reading Comprehension Difficulties Amongst Arab Children from Kindergarten to Fourth Grade

Baha Makhoul

The current longitudinal study examines the development of literacy skills of 79 Arabic native speaking pupils from kindergarten to fourth grade. For this purpose, baseline testing was conducted in both kindergarten and second grade, evaluating the different literacy knowledge and skills (vocabulary, phonological and morphological awareness, and writing, syntax, and oral skills) in addition to grapho-motoric abilities and concepts of print knowledge. Furthermore, in kindergarten, alphabetic code knowledge was tested while in second grade a reading comprehension test was also administered. In fourth grade, reading comprehension abilities were evaluated where two groups of readers were identified as poor readers (13 pupils) and skilled readers (66 pupils).

Hierarchical regression analysis was then carried out to identify the emergent literacy skills in kindergarten and second grade that best predicts reading performance in fourth grade. Alphabetic code knowledge and morphological awareness skills in kindergarten contributed to 28% of the variance in reading performance in fourth grade while syntax, writing, and alphabetic code knowledge explained 27.3% of reading comprehension performance in second grade. Reading comprehension skills in second grade explained 15.6% of the variance in reading comprehension in fourth grade. Additionally, two-way analysis of variance was performed across time.

The results pointed to progress on the different assessed literacy domains between both groups, except for phonological and morphological awareness, concepts of print and alphabetic code knowledge, where skilled readers showed significantly higher performance when compared to the poor readers on the latter. The results emphasize the prominent role of different emergent literacy skills on reading performance in Arabic, necessitating early interventional programs that move beyond phonological awareness training. The implication of the study to the educational field is further discussed.

Baha Makhoul is a Researcher at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Projects That Work

Sosil Somokian

Studies show the positive impact of active learning on learners' level of confidence, motivation, and development of interpersonal-intrapersonal skills. Through active learning, students become reflective learners, develop strategies that help overcome personal challenges, and learn at greater depth.

Aiming to prepare “lifelong learners” and skilled workers who are capable of
applying knowledge to solve real life problems, higher education institutions in GCC implement inquiry-based, project-based, problem-based approaches, so that their graduates are ready to manage their career path in GCC’s ever evolving job market. For most learners though, the transition from highly structured learning environments (schools) to autonomous ones (foundation programs at colleges) poses a huge challenge. Students from governmental schools in Kuwait are rarely required to work on projects, practice critical thinking, engage in collaborative learning, or apply their knowledge to real life situations.

To better understand the challenges of this transition and measure the efficiency of project-based learning initiatives at universities in Kuwait, a study was done on 196 learners, participating in eight different projects designed by faculty members and experts in the industry. Qualitative data from teacher and student interviews and quantitative data from students’ assignments were analyzed to measure the achievements, map the challenges, and understand how teachers and learners experienced learning throughout the project. The aim was to identify areas where further support, scaffolding, or adjustments were needed to make project-based learning more productive. Interesting patterns emerged. This presentation will summarize those findings and provide suggestions for designing and implementing projects that work.

*Sosil Somokian* is a Senior Lecturer at the Box Hill College of Kuwait.

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**Educating on Cultural Concerns via Public Service Announcements**

*Katherine Hall*

For the past five years, Katherine Hall has taught junior and senior level Emirati and other Arab students in a public speaking course at Khalifa University in Abu Dhabi. During this course, students create a public service announcement (PSA) video to highlight concerns and issues that they feel need to be brought to the University community’s attention. Progressively, the videos are beginning to be more focused on issues that culturally impact the UAE society and are more far-reaching than just the University community.

This study will analyze the changes in the video presentations as they situate young Emiratis as actors in the issues facing Emirati culture and education. The analysis will include textual evidence and analysis from the actual PSA videos and interviews with the creators (the students) of these visual messages to the community. The results will show how the Emirati students are beginning to represent their concerns and issues within their culture through their use of video media in both creative and interesting ways. The evolution of the videos’ messages becoming more serious in terms of content will also be shown through the results and students’ voices as to why
they believe this change has happened, and these results will be represented in the study and presentation.

The main impact of the study will be how young Emiratis are voicing their cultural and social concerns via this social media platform and how film as a social media platform is affecting education within the classroom and beyond in the UAE.

*Katherine Hall* is a Senior Lecturer at Khalifa University.

### Breakout Session 1.3: Who Benefits? Evaluating the Emergence of Private Actors in Education

**The Interaction of Education and Business for Teachers in For-Profit Schools**

*Emily Winchip*

This study investigates the experiences of teachers working in for-profit schools with the aim of understanding the ways that business practices affect teachers. Schools are increasingly being judged on principles of business including accountability, competitiveness, and efficiency. This research was conducted at the intersection of business and education: for-profit international schools run by large, multi-national education management organizations (EMOs).

While most of what is known about for-profit schools is accessed through advertisement and official publicity by EMOs, the focus of this inquiry was to understand the nature of teachers’ experiences by speaking directly to teachers. Hearing the voices of teachers and their experiences within schools was integral to gaining a more complete understanding of for-profit schools. Twenty-two participants from four of the EMOs in three countries participated through interviews.

The findings fit Lazzarato's (2009) claim that the financialization of social services leads to inequality and insecurity. Across contexts, the position of teachers in the schools, and their satisfaction with their work, this inequality and insecurity was evident in multiple ways as affecting teachers’ experiences of their work.

In the latest OECD PISA report, the UAE and Qatar have remarkably large percentages of students attending private schools, especially for-profit, private institutions (OECD PISA, 2016 PISA Volume II). Across the Gulf region, for-profit education corporations are providing not only education, but also increasing amounts of teacher training and development. This makes understanding the interaction of business and education vital to the continuing development of education policy in the region.

*Emily Winchip* is a Ph.D. Researcher at the University of Nottingham.

Karim Colin Easterbrook

Since 1970, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos has been instrumental in developing both private and State education to a standard which is much higher than could have been expected or hoped for pre-1970. The aim of this paper is not to decry the progress made to date but rather to look to the future and build upon the good work carried out by His Majesty.

Oman is at a crossroads. The Omanization program has improved the ability of the Sultanate to compete at an international level by training more of its citizens to be employed by both foreign and home companies. Unfortunately, Oman is still at the point where, in terms of education, Omani students are not being educated or trained sufficiently to take full advantage of the Omanization program.

This paper will study the current system of education in Oman without prejudice but equally will not shy away from criticizing in a constructive manner those aspects of Omani education which are failing Omani students. Oman together with all Gulf States should develop its own system of education suited to its own culture, traditions, and religion.

The author will, for comparison, discuss systems of education which may help the Gulf States to provide the best education and to avoid the pitfalls experienced by other countries. In particular the presentation will compare the systems of education used in the UK, the USA, and Finland. This is a complex but highly important issue. It has political, religious, psychological, and philosophical impacts.

The system of education used by any country will impact society in a way which no other aspect of that society can. Education at all levels is not simply a preparation for society: it is society. Or it is what makes a society what it is. If Oman is to become a country which remains peaceful and socially harmonious and which at the same time is able to compete globally with other developing countries, it is essential that changes are made. Oman must recognize that at the current time schools and universities in Oman are failing to educate citizens to allow them to compete on the international stage. Without dismissing all the good things that His Majesty has introduced to date, if Oman is to move forward, there has to be an acceptance that we need to introduce new ideas and bring about a transformation of the current educational system.

Karim Colin Easterbrook is a School Principal.
A Case Study on Student Preferences for Public, Private, or Community College Education at a Private University in Saudi Arabia

Ziad Shaker El Jishi & Heba Shehata

In today’s globalized economies of the Arab Gulf, choices for study in higher education available to students come in the form of three options: public, private, and non-profit colleges. What institution to choose may depend on financial considerations, availability of programs of study, and language of instruction.

This study presents the results of a survey done with over a 100 undergraduate female students at a private university in Saudi Arabia to uncover their preferences in educational institution and the reasons behind their chosen preference. The implications of this study will help inform those interested in the development of institutions of higher education in the Arab Gulf on the general trend that exists today with regards to the preference for public, private, or non-profit colleges from a student's perspective.

Ziad Shaker El Jishi is an Assistant Professor at Effat University.
Heba Shehata is an Undergraduate Student at Effat University.

It's Useless They're Emirati: Exploring Teacher Perceptions of Emirati Student Attainment in UAE Private Schools

Moneer Moukaddem

Underperforming minority ethnic and cultural groups in schools are a challenge in several countries (e.g., US, UK, and Australia). In the UAE, despite highly ambitious educational reforms, historical and contemporary factors leave the Emirati student population in private schools marginalized and noticeably underachieving in comparison to their expatriate counterparts. Culturally competent education has been shown to improve academic and behavioral outcomes of minority students.

This paper introduces a cultural competency framework to explore how teachers in the UAE perceive Emirati student attainment in private schools. A questionnaire and focus group were conducted with teachers at a private school in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

The data reveals three main findings:
(1) teachers generally hold a static, behavior-based understanding of culture,
(2) teachers perceive school-level factors (e.g., school policy) to be more important in affecting Emirati student attainment than teacher-level factors (e.g., culturally sensitive pedagogy), and
(3) teachers perceive macro-level factors, which lay outside of the cultural competency framework (e.g., Emiratization policies and Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) regulations), as important in affecting Emirati student attainment.
Implications include the need for a modified cultural competency framework that accounts for macro-level factors particular to the Gulf region. Findings further emphasize the responsibility of educational actors to develop culturally competent teachers and schools.

Moreover, as findings challenge the pre-eminence of teaching on student attainment, the growing influence of educational actors outside of the classroom requires critical examination under the pretext of placing students back at the center of educational policies, regulation, and partnerships.

Moneer Moukaddem is a Researcher at the University of Nottingham.

**Featured Panel 3: Philanthropy in Education in the GCC and Beyond: Challenges and Prospects**

**Philanthropy for Education: Challenges and Opportunities in the Middle East**

_Catherine Hill & Nadera Al Borno_

The philanthropic sector in the Middle East is in its infancy. Despite the accumulation of great wealth, the practice of giving for social purposes has been largely defined by religion and the requirements of Islam, especially during Ramadan. Currently, however, more profitable organizations have been giving thought to social justice causes in systematic and structural ways, especially in the field of education. It is becoming increasingly common to identify offices within such corporations to address the needs of society. Thus, philanthropy for education, in particular, is emerging in this part of the world. As a result, learning lessons from the successes and failures of other nations is essential to understanding the pertinent challenges and opportunities that are taking shape in the region.

An interview-based qualitative study revealed that corporate entities in the Middle East are currently grappling with aspects of philanthropy. As the practice of corporate giving grows in the Middle East, it is also important to identify safeguards regarding the flow of money and the creation of socially responsive partnerships. At present, philanthropic gifts tend to be focused on material needs and student scholarships. In contrast, this study explores how investment in human capital, specifically teacher education, can yield long-term benefits for society including innovation and economic growth.

In conclusion, the study points to the challenge that philanthropic entities need to identify grant recipients without the assumption that command and control will follow each gift. Instead, socially responsive giving requires that policy, innovation, and ideas remain the domain of relevant experts.

_Catherine Hill_ is the Dean of the School of Education and Associate Professor at American University in Dubai.

_Nadera Al Borno_ is an Associate Professor at American University in Dubai.
The Impact of International Actors on the GCC’s Education Systems: the Case of the UNESCO Involvement in the Education System in Oman

Khalaf Al’Abri & Waheed Hammad

There is no doubt that globalization has been accompanied by increased involvement of regional and global actors (e.g., UN, the World Bank and WTO) in the education systems of nations. These actors influence in different ways how national governments develop and evaluate their education policies.

This raises concerns about the negative implications that such involvement might have for national education systems. This is particularly the case when financial aid is involved. In most cases, loans given by international agencies to developing countries are tied with particular types of educational reforms that are consistent with their own agendas. However, this is not the case in the GCC states. Being gas and oil producing states, these countries do not receive loans from any international organization concerned with education. It is therefore plausible to argue that the nature of involvement of international actors in the education systems of the GCC states is different from that observed in other developing countries.

The purpose of this paper is to explore this issue, taking as a case the involvement of UNESCO in the Omani education system. Drawing on data from document analysis, the paper will specifically examine the nature and extent of such involvement and consider its implications for educational policy making. It is expected that, as the GCC states share similar cultural and economic backgrounds, this paper will further our understanding of how international organizations are impacting education systems in the region.

Khalaf Al’Abri is an Assistant Professor at Sultan Qaboos University.
Waheed Hammad is an Assistant Professor at Sultan Qaboos University.

Giving Back: Alumni as Assets for Generating Philanthropic Support for Higher Education in Bahrain

Nina Abdul Razzak

Several regional and global factors are posing various challenges for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), among them Bahrain. These factors include a global financial crisis; a major shift in economy, and an increase in the number of students entering higher education. Collectively, factors like these are creating a greater need in HEIs for new sources of financial support that are less contentious than increasing the tuition fees, which are already on the rise, at least in the private HEIs.
One such potential source could be in the form of philanthropic initiatives on the part of alumni, who would be willing to give back to their alma mater in a sustainable manner. However, are HEIs in Bahrain operating in ways that help in creating philanthropic cultures that can result in such committed and enduring philanthropic alumni? And if not, what is needed and what forms of alumni philanthropy would be most effective in the Bahraini context?

The results of the qualitative study at hand, which explored these questions, were arrived at through an analysis of literature review results, published quality assurance reports, and researchers' field experiences with HEIs in Bahrain. These results indicate big steps yet to be taken by HEIs to create the needed philanthropic culture, as well as a need for alumni venture or high-engagement philanthropy. The study concludes, however, that for such philanthropy to serve as an effective vehicle of change, it should support those who are most capable of innovating within their communities, rather than itself attempting to set the agenda for change.

Nina Abdul Razzak, is an Academic Consultant at the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA), Kingdom of Bahrain.

Breakout Session 2.1: Globalization in Philanthropy and Human Resources

Philanthropy and Education of Muslim Youth in Sub-Saharan Africa in the Contexts of the Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals: A Case of Rural Ghana

Obed Mfum-Mensah

Governments and Islamic communities in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) have been implementing initiatives to promote education in Islamic communities with the goal of addressing Muslim youth's low participation in education, civic engagement, and national economic processes. The 2016 Pew Research Center reports a wide margin in Muslim-Christian educational participation in SSA. The low participation in education in Muslim communities in SSA was due to Islamic communities' resistance to European social structures and arrangements during the colonial era. The early Europeans promoted education in indigenous Africa through the support of European Christian philanthropies and charitable entities.

While Islamic education (Koranic and Madrassas) served as an important socializing process in pre-colonial Muslim communities in SSA, Western/Christian education attempted to undermine the strong Islamic identity in the region by promoting Christian teachings which made many Islamic communities develop apathy toward Western education. This situation has nonetheless served to marginalize many Islamic communities in SSA from civic engagement and participating in the national economic process. Recent initiatives to promote Muslim youth's school participation have been...
supported by Western donor agencies and global governance groups and a few Gulf States' philanthropies even though Gulf States are economically positioned to provide more support for education initiatives.

This paper outlines how a Gulf State educational philanthropic initiative in rural Ghana has promoted strong Muslim youth's school enrollment and the Islamic community members' strong participation in education. The paper argues for stronger philanthropic support for educational initiatives in marginalized communities to meet the global initiative of Education for All.

Obed Mfum-Mensah is an Associate Professor at Messiah College.

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**Role of Philanthropy in Technical and Vocational Education as Investment for Future**

*Zahid Ali*

In the future, the most important factor will be the brain of human resources. We need to invest in engineering and technical education for the development of human resources and industry. The technology is changing at a very fast pace and industries’ and projects’ smooth functioning depends on engineers, technicians, and a skilled work force. Philanthropy plays a major role in supplementing the public sector through its contribution in technical and vocational education. Instead of supporting lower income groups through donations, the better option is to provide a skill with which he/she can earn and become a productive person.

Technical education in the UAE dates back to 1958 when the first technical school was opened in Sharjah. A similar school was established in Dubai in 1964 and in Ras Al Khaimah in 1969. Afterwards, the UAE's attention to technical education experienced ups and down but, presently, one can see a continued effort and interest in TVET.

An Educational Welfare Organization in Lahore, Pakistan, has decided as a policy that the dependence of educational, vocational undertakings shall have a minimum dependence on the donations and shall have an income-generating not-for-profit venture to support all the present and future projects. Solid Waste Management Initiative is a success story. The initiative was launched in 2007 with a dual mission: to raise funds for educational schools that provide free education to poor children and to educate the general public and create a widespread awareness regarding 3Rs (Reduce-Reuse-Recycle) for Environment Protection. The paper deliberates over technical/vocational education and the role of philanthropy as an investment for the future.

*Zahid Ali* is a Consultant in the areas of sustainable development, engineering, and technical education.
The Choreography of Talent Development in Higher Education

Fahdia Khalid

In today’s time, though the Higher Education (HE) industry is growing in the GCC, accountability and competition is rising in parallel. Managerialism and marketization have penetrated the systems. Teaching and learning have become value creation services, curriculum development is done on product innovation ideas, students are perceived as customers, and the “war for talent” has brought a seismic shift. With the changing context, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are also adapting competitive operating models. Talent identification, development, and deployment is the way to sustain in this intensely skill dependent industry.

This paper unpacks the idea of talent and talent needs for the HEIs. Through analyzing human resources management literature on the topic, the paper recommends adaptation to the development functions of HEIs. The paper also discusses the talent development interventions that are conducive for the fulfillment of academics’ and institutions’ talent needs.

Fahdia Khalid is a Researcher at the University of Bath.

Exploring CSR Initiatives of International Branch Campuses: A Stakeholder and Institutional Perspective

Katariina Juusola

This study focuses on exploring corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives of international branch campuses (IBCs), which have become a notable provision of transnational higher education. IBCs are physical branches of universities in foreign countries that award degrees of the home institution, and currently there are 33 IBCs in the UAE (Garrett et al., 2017). While there is a plethora of research published on IBCs, there is a dearth of studies on how CSR is practiced in the host country and how IBCs identify and address the needs of diverse sets of stakeholders to gain legitimacy and build their social impact in the host country. Because IBCs operate in complex global-local setting, it is crucial to understand how IBCs build their social impact through CSR and how they manage diverse stakeholder demands while striving to obtain external legitimacy in the host country and simultaneously conforming to the expectations of the home country to retain internal legitimacy.

The research is driven by the following research questions: 1. How do IBCs build their social impact in the host country through CSR? 2. How are stakeholder expectations identified and addressed in CSR initiatives?

The forthcoming full paper will use a qualitative case study method to explore how the New York University Abu Dhabi branch has initiated various CSR initiatives to build its social impact and address stakeholder concerns. The findings of the paper will contribute to
an increasing number of recent studies on political motives and social impact of CSR (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; Kourula & Delalieux, 2016).

Katariina Juusola is an Assistant Professor at The British University in Dubai.

Breakout Session 2.2: Helping Teachers Teach: The Effects of Teacher Training and Professional Development

An Exploratory Investigation into the Use of Translanguaging in Teacher Education

Afaf Bataineh & Kay Gallagher

This paper reports on an exploratory, qualitative study into the use of translanguaging in a Children’s Literature course for Arabic-speaking future school teachers in an English-medium university in the UAE. Arabic has been excluded from higher education classrooms in the UAE in favor of an English-only approach, despite evidence to suggest that there are linguistic and cognitive benefits for bilingual learners when their first language is intentionally engaged. We examined the linguistic and sociolinguistic challenges and successes that arose for the Emirati teachers of the future as they blended Arabic and English together to create contemporary story books for young emergent bilingual Emirati children, as a course assignment.

The study was ethnographic in design, and data collection methods included direct classroom observations of the student teachers, individual and focus group interviews with them, online course discussion boards, and textual analysis of the resultant story books. We found that the student teachers were challenged by the linguistic distances between both languages and sociolinguistic questions surrounding their relative roles in the UAE. Still, student teachers creatively managed these challenges and produced engaging bilingual story books that blended not only languages but also cultures. By incorporating translanguaging into the teacher education curriculum, student teachers were enabled to develop a deeper understanding of the relative linguistic features and sociolinguistic roles of Arabic and English. Our conclusion is that there is a valuable role for translanguaging in the preparation of bilingual teachers in the region.

Afaf Bataineh, is an Associate Professor at Zayed University.
Kay Gallagher is an Associate Professor and the Associate Dean of the College of Education at Zayed University.
The Impact of Teacher Stress and Cultural Diversity on Teacher-Student Interactions in UAE Science-Classrooms

Irene Therese Skuballa, Fiona Baker, Lydia Barza, & Antje von Suchodoletz

This contribution comprises the investigation of cultural diversity and teachers’ experienced stress in the classroom as influencing factors on teacher-student interactions during science lessons in secondary schools in Abu Dhabi. Although cultural diversity can enrich teaching and learning in the classroom, high cultural diversity can be challenging for both teachers and students.

In an exploratory approach, 56 science teachers (59% female) from public and private schools provided information on their experienced stress and were observed during teaching. Teachers were from diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds (Age = 37 years, SD = 8.92). Results indicate that, in general, teachers from public schools reported higher levels of stress, p = .018, and that the cultural match between teacher and students was higher in private schools, p = .001. However, experienced stress levels were not associated with cultural match between teachers and students. But, cultural diversity had an impact on the quality of interactions: teacher-student interactions were more supportive, positive, and effective the higher the cultural background match of students and teacher.

In sum, stress was not associated with teaching quality. The subscale student discipline makes an exception. Teachers who reported a lack of student discipline or motivation scored lower on student engagement and instructional support in teaching. We conclude that trainings addressing culturally responsive strategies should be beneficial for teachers in highly diverse classrooms and increase their effectiveness in promoting classroom organization, instructional support, and student engagement. In addition, teachers from public schools in particular could benefit from interventions focusing on coping with stress.

Irene Therese Skuballa is an Assistant Professor at the Open University of the Netherlands.
Fiona Baker is an Independent Researcher.
Lydia Barza is an Independent Researcher.
Antje von Suchodoletz is an Assistant Professor at New York University Abu Dhabi.

It Takes Two (to Make a Thing Go Right): The Effects of Self-Efficacy and Motivation on German Teachers Teaching Refugees

Max B. Eckert

Uncooperative, unpredictable, and unmotivated. And that’s not even talking about the students. From colleagues to administrators, to parents and students themselves, teachers face a variety of stress factors. While levels of teacher stress have increased internationally in recent years (McIntyre, 2015), factors such as motivation, behavioral regulation,
and self-efficacy can be factors moderating the ramifications of psychological stress, physiological illness, and job satisfaction (Kyriacou, 1987), making teachers more effective and resilient.

In my Capstone project at New York University Abu Dhabi, which I will complete in May 2018, I present findings from my field work and semi-structured interviews with teachers and administrators at a German vocational school, as well as data gathered through a teacher survey in one German state. I am focusing on teachers teaching refugee students, which presents a demanding work environment with a variety of sources of stress. Since the arrival of large refugee populations, predominantly unaccompanied minor refugees (approximately 60,000+), public (vocational) schools and society at large are faced with the challenge of social and labor market integration.

While teacher quality has been identified as a key predictor of determining student achievement (Hanuschek & Woessmann, 2007), I am using linear and multivariable regressions to identify the effect of state (Ministry of Education) interventions, such as professional development and on-the-job training in areas like trauma-informed pedagogy and DaF/DaZ (German as a foreign/second language), on motivation and self-efficacy. While motivation and specialized training are anticipated to increase self-efficacy, I anticipate teachers with high levels of motivation and self-efficacy to report lower levels of stress. And low levels of teacher stress increase the likelihood of big successes for refugee integration.

Max B. Eckert is an Undergraduate Student at New York University Abu Dhabi.

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**When the Mirror Speaks: Sharing Learning through Dissemination**

_Nayyer Chandella_

Writing and presenting research at conferences is an opportunity for learning as well as self-transformation. Dissemination means much more than presenting research. For Smith and Deemer (2003) "truth" is filtered through the context, purpose of inquiry, and the audience. I understand dissemination as an on-going conversation that one has with others as we make contributions to new knowledge. Through discourse, new understanding is developed for both presenter and participants. Conferring has the power to be a learning tool.

My paper validates the importance of international organizations for learning. It is about the dissemination of my research study, _The Light of Fire: Value of Dialogic Process in SL Learning_, presented at Annual SPELT conference. My research explored some of the questions educators associate with critical pedagogy. Implementing critical pedagogy presented possibilities and limitations for both the participants of the study and the audience at the conference. The context of the research project
was workshops conducted at conferences (in UAE & Pakistan) with a focus on ES/FL learning/teaching practices. Seventy teachers were involved (28 males and 42 females). I conducted sessions of “dialogic spaces” to explore the complexities involved in implementing critical pedagogy. During “conferring” my audience shared the apprehensions and excitement of the participants of the research. Data were collected from multiple sources to give the participants a voice in the research process. The paper presents the learning process during conferences and how the attendees expressed excitement to rise to the challenge of preparing students for critical global citizenship.

_Nayyer Chandella_ is an Associate Professor at the Lahore College for Women.

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**Breakout Session 2.3: Innovating Curricula and Enhancing Learning**

**Teacher Perceptions of Curriculum Change in the Bilingual Reform Programs in Government Schools in the United Arab Emirates: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis**

_Glenda El Gamal_

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) Ministry of Education has partnered with international educational bodies to conduct educational reform. This paper explores teacher perceptions of change in the bilingual reform projects in government schools since 2008 in the UAE. The aim was to uncover themes in the teacher experience of those directly implementing the bilingual program in government schools in the UAE, in order to inform practice so that they may be more effective in their teaching and learning objectives. Using a constructivist, phenomenological approach, the study employed a qualitative interpretative analysis of interview data from the three participants to investigate their lived experiences in relation to rapid, “top-down” (government) curriculum change.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with three teachers involved in the bilingual reform programs in UAE government schools to provide rich accounts of their authentic lived experiences. The interview data were analyzed using an Interpretative Phenomenological Analytical (IPA) approach to identify themes regarding their perceptions of the change process in the bilingual reform project. The results showed that three superordinate themes arose related to how the participants’ experienced curriculum change in the bilingual program: level of teacher agency; quality of ongoing professional learning opportunities; and concerns about the role of Arabic language in relation to Emirati identity.

The study will help education policy makers develop appropriate professional learning activities to support the rapid reforms taking place in UAE government schools and has the potential to usefully...
inform development and implementation of bilingual education programs in wider contexts.

Glenda El Gamal is a Senior Lecturer at the Masdar Institute of Science and Technology.

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Infusing Entrepreneurship in Higher Education: A Content Analysis of Three Undergraduate Business Programs in the UAE

Reem Thani

This research deals with entrepreneurship as part of higher education curricula. There is a growing evidence that entrepreneurship education is an important factor in promoting entrepreneurial activity (Lekoko et al., 2012; Lin et al., 2011). Many developing countries see entrepreneurship as a key element of their economic prosperity (Kuratko 2005; Oosterbeek et al., 2008). The UAE is not an exception. Its vision to become a knowledge-based economy by 2021 is heavily infused with ideals and principles of entrepreneurship being a key factor for its achievement. In 2015, an initiative was launched in partnership with Stanford University to ensure all federal and private universities integrate entrepreneurship into their programs.

In spite of the fact that entrepreneurship education is gaining a lot of attention, recent research revealed that there is a gap between entrepreneurial desire and preparedness amongst undergraduate students in public and private universities in the UAE (Ashour, 2016). Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by analyzing the curriculum of three undergraduate business programs to examine the extent of entrepreneurship education integration in those programs and provides a useful overview of the current practices in higher education related to the development of entrepreneurship programs.

The results show low levels of integration of entrepreneurship education across the analyzed curricula. The research suggests that more efforts to integrate entrepreneurship education into the curriculum of higher education are required. There is also a need for education policymakers to formulate unified standards for infusing entrepreneurship in higher education in the country.

Reem Thani is a Ph.D. Candidate at the British University in Dubai.

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Curriculum Innovation for Postgraduate Programs: Perspectives of Postgraduate Learners in the UAE

Solomon Arulraj David

Curriculum research and curriculum theories have long been suggesting designing appropriate curriculum that suits the type of learners. Postgraduate learners are often adults, who are mostly well motivated, self-regulated, and have a different learning approach and ability than young learners.
The aim of the study was to explore curriculum innovation for postgraduate programs, particularly through postgraduate learners’ perspectives. The researcher developed an interest when teaching a module “curriculum and innovation” to postgraduate learners. Informed by Bernstein on classification and framing of knowledge, stratified and differentiated approaches, and vertical and horizontal discourses, the study further explored the preferred learning materials and desired instructional and assessment strategies of postgraduate learners.

The study particularly accounted for the perspectives of the postgraduate scholars on curriculum innovation, as shown through four focus groups among masters and doctoral students from two different academic years. The early findings indicate that the postgraduate learners prefer postgraduate curriculum to be challenging, current, offered in a contested mode, career-, and profession-focused. They suggested enriching with both theories and practices; providing tools to practice the knowledge, frequently updated; providing skills to meet real world requirements, including internships; developing critical thinking; developing problem-solving abilities; providing comprehensive content; encouraging self-regulated learning; and reflecting collectively. The study strongly believes the postgraduate learners’ experiences and perspectives support curriculum innovation in postgraduate programs.

Solomon Arulraj David is an Associate Professor at the British University in Dubai.

Islamic Education in UAE Schools: Challenges and Opportunities

Naved Bakali & Mariam Al Hashmi

The issue of Islamic Education curricula and pedagogy in the UAE has gathered a significant amount of attention in recent years. This presentation explores the experiences of various stakeholders of Islamic education curricula in UAE schools including educational professionals, administrators of schools, teachers, and parents, to better understand the challenges of teaching Islamic Education in the present global climate of radicalization, modernity, and globalization. This inquiry employed a critical ethnographic approach aimed at constructing knowledge through the lived experiences of participants. Through in-depth interviews posing open-ended questions relating to participants’ experiences with Islamic Education in the UAE, their views regarding challenges and opportunities for Islamic Education in the region, and their insights on areas of concern, a number of pressing and valuable insights emerged.

Ultimately, participants described vastly different experiences of Islamic Education in public and private schools, challenges with teachers’ workloads, and a greater need for professional development opportunities. Findings from this inquiry suggest that schools need to invest heavily in teacher training and professional development; schools should facilitate grade level specialization, autonomy, and teacher retention; and a need for teachers to incorporate differentiated practices in their
teaching to encourage student interest in the subject and its applicability in their daily lives. As Islamic Education is a required course of study in UAE elementary and secondary schools, the findings of this study are particularly relevant in the GCC context.

Naved Bakali is a Research Analyst at the Tabah Foundation.  
Mariam Al Hashmi is an Assistant Professor at Zayed University.

**Featured Panel 4: The Internationalization of Education: Effects on Students, Educators, and Institutions**

**New Education Landscapes: The Technology Trap**

*Alexandra Draxler*

With worldwide increases in the variety and scale of private finance in education, we see increased motivation and pressure for competitive experimentation, often perceived as a healthy force for improving quality. There is concurrent belief that expanding the role of technology for delivery can enhance both geographic reach and better control over content and quality. With these trends it is important for policy actors to keep in mind that there is no strong education system that is not adequately based on a supply of well-trained, well-supported, and motivated teachers.

Private actors’ motivations frequently differ from those of governments. The former often are principally interested in innovating in terms of methods, materials, and tools often technology-based. Quite naturally, they typically focus on parts of education systems through projects, a single or group of institutions, and innovative delivery. They may train teachers as part of their own focus, but overall teacher training and certification remains government responsibility. Governments on the other hand are responsible for overall coherence, equity, quality, and sustainability of systems, including wise and informed use of public funds.

While no one doubts that technology has important roles to play in both delivery and as part of the curriculum in education, some caution is required. The technology trap is one of the of unintended consequences of favoring technological innovation over investment in people for teaching and learning. Capture of public funds for insufficiently thought out or proven technological innovations can retard or weaken support for the teaching profession, the pillar of any education system.

This presentation will be an overview of some of the promises and pitfalls of massive use of technology, lessons learned elsewhere, and the role of researchers in the creation of knowledge for collaboration and decision-making. In GCC countries, the role of private actors is expanding very rapidly. The need to strengthen culturally and economically relevant educations means maintaining adequate emphasis on training, retention, and support for teachers. Failed experiments in education always have consequences for learners and their families. Ensuring that
technology for learning is conceived and used with the input and participation of excellent teachers is fundamental.

Alexandra Draxler is a Senior Advisor to NORRAG and Associate Editor of the International Journal for Educational Development.

Empowered but not Equal: Challenging the Traditional Gender Roles as Seen by University Students in Saudi Arabia

Fawziah Al-Bakr, Elizabeth R. Bruce, Petrina M. Davidson, Edit Schlaffer, & Ulrich Kropiunigg

This study examines perspectives of Saudi university students regarding changing gender roles as affected by women’s rights, education, employment, and activity in the public sphere. Results from a questionnaire distributed among 4,455 university men and women indicate students are confident and optimistic about improving gender equity; however, resistance from those holding traditional views still exists. Women are more optimistic than men, seeing changes in gender roles as advantageous to their personal and professional lives. Representing a group of allies, a majority of men regard changing gender roles positively. Men and women reported personal courage to address these challenges, which is an asset moving forward. While approval will never reach consensus, changes may be forthcoming.

By surveying the Saudi university population, this study seeks to inform strategy and policy. Gender equity is only possible through increased societal acceptance of women’s freedom in their everyday lives. This research project was supported by a grant from: (1) The Research Center for the Humanities, Deanship of Scientific Research at King Saud University and (2) The Austrian Scientific Fund (FWF), Vienna.

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Internationalization as an Emerging Approach in Higher Education in Iraq and Tajikistan

Hayfa Jafar & Emma Sabzalieva

Both Iraq in the Middle East and Tajikistan in Central Asia have experienced significant change over the past three decades followed by sectarian divide, civil war, and near economic collapse. As these two states recover from the impact of conflict, we observe
a similar drive in their higher education systems towards a globalized idea of internationalization.

This study aims to understand and compare the perceptions of faculty members of internationalization and its importance in reshaping and rebuilding higher education in Iraq and Tajikistan.

Through in-depth interviews and document analysis being undertaken in late 2017 and early 2018, this study utilizes cultural and institutional frameworks to explore faculty perceptions of internationalization within the context of the dramatic institutional change and the relevant context of Iraq and Tajikistan.

We expect to find that internationalization is becoming more embedded as an approach in the higher education systems of both states, although it is expressed through different policies and emphases. For instance, the notion of international rankings is perceived as a key aspect of internationalization in Iraq, whereas greater priority is being placed on European-led reforms such as the Bologna Process in Tajikistan.

Our study will conclude by comparing the implications of the global discourse of internationalization in the higher education systems of Iraq and Tajikistan. Fitting the GCES Symposium’s theme, this study explores the dynamics of interactions between the public sector of higher education and the academics within the context of internationalization.

Hayfa Jafar is a Ph.D. Candidate at the University of Toronto. Emma Sabzalieva is a Ph.D. Candidate at the University of Toronto.

School Leaders Navigating the "Coercive Power of Best Practices" to Support Instructional Practice and Student Learning on the Ground

Mary Ellen Kelly

What are the forces that are moving educational policy and practice in the world today and what is the impact in the school building and in the classroom? The impact of globalization has shifted the governance and control of educational policy and practice from the local nation state to the control of global governing bodies. Additionally, all manner of policy actors coming from non-state institutions and transnational business and philanthropic entities are involved in new global “policy networks” that are changing the dynamics of policy flow, adoption, and implementation. These global actors are exerting enormous influence and power on educational reform internationally and nationally, but what happens once the "best practice" is purchased and delivered to actors on the ground?
The focus of the author’s research is on the role that school leaders play within the policy network. How are these global developments in policy impacting leadership in schools and how are leaders influencing and translating the implementation of policy within the schools? The methodological approach for the research is a mixed-method ethnographic study involving participant observation and unstructured interviews based on a reflexive interpretive perspective that gets at the subjective understandings of school leaders. The presentation will include findings from a literature review and anecdotal information from the presenter's personal experiences and observations as a participant researcher/school leader working in Kuwait in an international school, thus adding to the research on this topic within the context of the GCC.

*Mary Ellen Kelly* is an Ed.D. Candidate at the University of Toronto.

### Special Panel 1: NORRAG Special Edition Arabic Report Launch

**Launch of the NORRAG Special Issue 01 in Arabic: The Right to Education Movements and Policies: Promises and Realities**  
(Translated and sponsored by Al Qasimi Foundation)

*Alexandra Draxler, Soohyun Jeon, & Rasha Mohsen*

In January of 2018, the first edition of NORRAG Special Issue (NSI) was published highlighting the subject of the right to education policy and practice. This inaugural issue of NSI concisely collects and contrasts the interrelatedness of civil and political rights that have been frequently emphasized globally in the right to education policy and practice. Divided into six parts, NSI 01 is comprised of 36 articles that are grouped into the following themes: the normative and legal frameworks for the right to education; history and perspectives of the right to education; implementing legislation, institutional actors: government, non-government, and community; private actors and Privatization; and fragile contexts.

The Al Qasimi Foundation is proud to continue running the Middle-Eastern chapter of the NORRAG newsletter. Six articles with regionally-relevant content were translated for this issue, offering comparative perspectives of the international community’s progress in ensuring access to education for all. In addition, an editorial shines the spotlight on pressing challenges of implementing the right to education, with a focus on minorities and disadvantaged groups in the MENA region.

*Alexandra Draxler* is a Senior Advisor to NORRAG and Associate Editor of the International Journal for Educational Development.  
*Soohyun Jeon* is the Director of Research at the Al Qasimi Foundation.  
*Rasha Mohsen* is a Student Programs Associate at the Al Qasimi Foundation.
The Sustainable Development Goals’ (SDGs) call to “leave no-one behind” poses a global challenge to governments and partners to ensure inclusion, equity, and sustainability across all areas of policy and planning. With specific reference to SDG 4, what does this mean for public, private, and philanthropic actors at the national level? How can we explore the impact of new stakeholders on education in the Gulf States, keeping learning at the center of the policy dialogue? What are key messages for advocacy to roll out SDG 4 - ED 2030 agenda? How will governments and the private sector partner to plan, organize activities, and evaluate progress? Who will hold the governments, partners, or civil society accountable?

Many countries are well engaged in adapting the new development agenda adopted at the UN General Assembly in September 2015, “Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”

UNESCO, lead agency for SDG 4 focusing on education, is supporting capacity development of Ministries of Education and partners as a stepping stone to inclusive implementation of SDG 4 - ED 2030 at global and national levels. The SDGs are interconnected, and ED 2030 coordination requires partners collaborate with health, employment, environment, social affairs, and other sectors to deliver results.

Specific objectives of this panel are to share information on SDG 4 developments to ensure a continued shared understanding of SDG 4 progress in the GCC states, through updates on SDG 4 and SDG-wide developments in the GCC by the UN, civil society, private foundations, and development funds.

Faryal Khan is the Head of Education at the UNESCO Cluster office for the Gulf States.
Frode Mauring is the United Nations Resident Coordinator and the UN Development Program (UNDP) Representative to the UAE.
Natasha Ridge is the Executive Director at the Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research.
Jebrin Aljebrin is the Director of Projects Department at the Arab Gulf Program for Development (AGFUND).
Maricel Fernandez is an Education Program Assistant at the UNESCO Cluster office for the Gulf States.