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Arab Bureau of Education for The Gulf States
Introduction

Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States (ABEGS), the vanguard of joint work in the Gulf, is a regional organisation for education, research, and development. Founded by the ministers of education in 23/10/1975 to promote cooperation between the Member States, ABEGS has a clear vision with specific objectives, and a practical methodological approach.

ABEGS mission is to operate within the GCC members to serve educational, scientific and cultural goals specified in ABEGS's Articles of Association and other laws and regulations issued by the General Conference. It seeks to achieve coordination, integration and unification as
well as encouraging cooperation between the Member States:

- United Arab Emirates
- Kingdom of Bahrain
- Republic of Yemen
- State of Kuwait
- Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- Sultanate of Oman
- State of Qatar

ABEGS is now a legal entity that is financially and administratively independent under the auspices of its supreme authority, the General Conference and Executive Board having its Articles of Association ratified by the high authorities. Hence the Articles of Association are considered an international document whose text has objectives and basic principles of joint educational work by the Member States.

وتسعى لتحقيق التنسيق والتكامل والتوحيد وإيجاد صبغ التعاون بين الدول الأعضاء، وهي الآن:

- دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة
- مملكة البحرين
- الجمهورية اليمنية
- دولة الكويت
- المملكة العربية السعودية
- سلطنة عمان
- دولة قطر

وقد استكمل المكتب وضعه كهيئة خليجية لها شخصيتها الاعتبارية واستقلالها المالي والإداري تحت إشراف وتوجيه سلطانه العليا (المؤتمِّر العام والمجلس التنفيذي) بعد مصادقة القيادات العليا على نظامه الأساسي، وذلك أكسب هذا النظام صفة الوثيقة الدولية التي تحمل في نسها الأهداف والمبادئ الأساسية للعمل الترسوبي المشترك بين دول الأعضاء وفقًا لمتطلبات العمل وطموحاته.
Bureau’s mission:

Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States has many functions ranging between research, coordination, cooperation, communication and participation in:

1- Adopting appropriate measures to enable the implementation and follow-up of the General Conference’s resolutions in the Member States.

2- Coordination of education development operations to reflect the Islamic nature of the region, to promote unity among its citizens and set educational plans based on modern scientific foundations.

3- Undertake educational, cultural and scientific projects of regional significance.

4- The set up of joint educational organisations, institutions and centres within the Member States.

5- Promoting scientific and educational research, as well as developing a highly skilled workforce in educational and scientific fields in the Member States.

6- Encouraging educational, cultural and scientific cooperation via:

مهام المكتب:

يضطلع مكتب التربية العربي لدول الخليج بمهمات عديدة يجمع بينها البحث والتنسيق والتعاون والاتصال والمشاركة والاعتناء، وتقع هذه المهام في:

1. اتخاذ الإجراءات الكفيلة بتنفيذ قرارات المؤتمر العام في الدول الأعضاء ومتابعاتها.

2. العمل على تنسيق عمليات تنمية التعليم وتطويرها واستكمالها وإظهار شخصية المنطقة العربية الإسلامية ودعم وحدة شعبها، ووضع خطط التعليم والتربية على أسس علمية تواكب التطورات المعاصرة.

3. تبني المشاريع التربوية والتعليمية والثقافية والعلمية التي لها دلالة إقليمية تهم الدول الأعضاء في المكتب.

4. إنشاء المؤسسات والمركز التربوي المشترك بين الدول الأعضاء.

5. تشجيع البحث العلمي والتربيوي والعمل على تنمية الكفاءات المتخصصة في المجالات العلمية والتربوية في الدول الأعضاء.

6. العمل على تشجيع التعاون التربوي والثقافي والعلمي ونشاطه، وذلك عن طريق:
a- Scientific, cultural and educational centres in the Member States.
b- Organizing visits of academic, cultural and technical experts, and organizing forums, educational, scientific and cultural meetings.
c- Exchange of experts, information, and educational, cultural and scientific experiences as well as technical services.
d- Facilitating communication with Arab and international educational organizations and institutions, as well as representing ABEGS.
e- Strengthening ties with specialised regional and international organizations in the same area of activity of the Bureau, as well as coordinating different aspects of joint activities.
7- Emphasis placed on Arab and Islamic cultural and contemporary thought through programs and cultural activities throughout various education stages.
8- Coordination and integration in the field of higher education and research institutions in the Member States, exchange of expertise and knowledge, and standardisation of accreditation of degrees.
To achieve such objectives, the Bureau has implemented a number of ambitious plans:

- Four medium term plans.
- The future of the education process.
- The joint plan of curricula development.
- Education development project.
- An integrated mathematics and sciences development project.
- Improvement of Arabic language standards in schools.
The Bureau published hundreds of books in a variety of cultural and educational fields, as well as books for children and youth in addition to a quarterly magazine concerned with education research. The Bureau also awards a prize for the best research or education methods. A library was set up to serve researchers in all fields of education.
The Bureau established the following specialized centres:

The Arab Centre for Educational research in Kuwait:

The Arab Centre for Educational Research of the Gulf States was established by a resolution issued by the second general conference in 1977. Based in Kuwait, this specialized institution within The Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States, aims to contribute to the development of curricula, educational research, and assessments in the Member States. The centre has a Board of Trustees which convenes every six months.
The Bureau established the following specialized centres:

Arabian Gulf University in the Kingdom of Bahrain:

The fourth general conference approved the establishment of the Arabian Gulf University in 1979 to be based in the Kingdom of Bahrain. It stands as a remarkable joint effort by the Member States to modernise higher education in order to promote rare areas of specializations in line with the latest international developments as well as with the needs of the Gulf States.
The Bureau established the following specialized centres:

The Arab Centre for educational training in the Gulf States in Qatar:

This centre was established by a resolution approved by the fifth general conference of the Bureau in 1999. The centre is based in Doha-Qatar. The stated objective of the centre is to contribute to the development of educational leaders’ performance based on modern, educational and scientific foundations and to provide them with the latest in education and modern technology to enhance professional development. The Centre has a Board of Trustees who convene every six months.

The centre was established by a resolution approved by the fifth general conference of the Bureau in 1999. The centre is based in Doha-Qatar. The stated objective of the centre is to contribute to the development of educational leaders’ performance based on modern, educational and scientific foundations and to provide them with the latest in education and modern technology to enhance professional development. The Centre has a Board of Trustees who convene every six months.
The Bureau established the following specialized centres:

The idea of establishing the Educational Centre for Arabic Language in the Gulf States embodies the interest of the Leaders of the Member States in school curriculum development in general with special emphasis on the Arabic language, in line with modern methods to preserve the status and significance of the Arabic language. The idea of establishing the centre was translated into a reality embodied in the final approval by the Bureau’s general conference in its 19th round in January 2007 to establish the centre in UAE.
Projects and Programs:

ABEGS’s projects and programs are carried out to meet the needs of the Member States in accordance with directives of the leaders of ABEGS Member States and the resolutions passed by the general conference and the executive council.

The programs are designed and implemented through research, studies, workshops, consultation and cooperation with the experts.

- Identifying and nurturing the gifted
Below is a brief summary of the Bureau's most important projects, programs, and medium-term plans:

The First Medium-term Plan 1980-1985

This five-year plan was the Bureau’s first effort in formulating its future plans and programs.

Before the drawing up of this plan, the Bureau conducted a study with the objective of identifying the educational problems prevailing in the Member States and to identify practical and workable solutions for such problems. The Arab Centre for Educational Research in the Gulf States was a helping factor because it is a specialized centre in the area of research and was established concurrently with the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States. This plan provides a general framework for the Bureau’s programs and for its educational projects throughout the plan’s period. It includes 68 projects and each project comprises a number of programs according to the project’s nature and objectives (a total of 242 programs) aimed at promoting joint education activities.

In drawing up this plan, the Bureau relied upon many factors such as: the Bureau’s mission, proposals, forums, meeting recommendations, the results of studies and research conducted by the Bureau, proposals of relevant agencies such as the general secretariat of The Gulf Cooperation Council, universities, ministries, and personalities interested in joint Arab action, in addition to the Arabian Gulf and international organizations.

الخطة متوسطة المدى الثانية 1986 - 1991م:

اعتمد المكتب في إعداد هذه الخطة على عدة مصادر استمد منها موجهات العمل من بينها أهداف المكتب ومقترحات الدول الأعضاء وتوصياتندوات واللقاءات ونتائج البحوث والدراسات، التي انجازها المكتب، ومقترحات الجهات ذات العلاقة مثل الأمانة العامة لمجلس التعاون للدول الخليج العربية والجامعات والوزارات والشخصيات المهتمة بالعمل العربي المشترك إضافة إلى المنظمات الخليجية والعربية والدولية التي يتعاون معها المكتب ويشتاق عمله معها باستمرار.
The second plan includes five sections. The first one is about the current cultural, scientific and educational situation, as well as the higher education in the Gulf States. The second section is about an abstract and assessment of the first medium-term plan’s performance. The third section is dedicated to the second medium-term plan’s strategy in terms of objectives, methodology, future trends, parameters and goals. The fourth section discusses the member States’s views on the plan. Finally, the fifth section deals with the plan programs according to axis which are divided into three financial cycles. The plan has 18 axis 237 programs carried out by Bureau.

The Bureau drew up the third medium-term plan according to the following factors:

- The Arab and Muslim dimension which shapes the values and culture of the Arabian Gulf societies.
- The developed world to which the people of the region aspire and try to adopt from it the most appropriate to them.
- The challenges facing the Gulf region.
- Coping with changes sweeping the region, the extent of influence and susceptibility to the influence of such changes, and how to respond to them.

This plan adopted innovation in line with the modern educational trends, and the needs of the Bureau's Member States, with emphasis on enriching and upgrading the unified state-of-the-art curricula, and enhancing their role in developing students' knowledge as well as training them for the future.

The plan includes a number of parts derived from the plan's objectives in a way which is consistent with the fields, and key issues of the education during this period. This plan comprised 225 programs.

investing in education

وقد انتهت هذه الخطة نحو اعتماد التجديد وتعزيزه، بما ينسجم والاتجاهات التربوية الحديثة، وحاجة الدول الأعضاء بالكتب، والتأكيد على إثراء المناهج المطورة والوحدة وتعزيز دورها في تنمية مدارك الطلاب وإعدادهم للمستقبل.

واستمرت الخطة على العديد من المحاور التي تم اشتقاقها من أهداف الخطة، بما ينتسب مع المجالات والقضايا الهامة للعمل التربوي خلال هذه الفترة، وقد تم تناولها فيما مجموعه 225 برنامجا.
Exploring the future of education in the Member States:

The Bureau issued a document about the future of education in the Member States. The document includes ten areas for educational development:

1- Pres-school education
2- Primary education
3- Secondary education
4- Literacy
5- Curriculum Development
6- Resources and information technology
7- Educational Establishment
8- Professional development of teachers
9- Educational financing
10- Joint educational cooperation between the Member States
This document is considered as a valuable reference for the Bureau’s plans and projects in the future starting from the Bureau’s fourth medium term plan. This plan coincides with the growing interest and attention given by leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council as well as the supreme council’s resolution ratifying the joint plan designed to develop Member States curricula. This has motivated the Bureau to intensify its efforts to implement projects and programs of both plans; the fourth medium –term plan and the joint plan for the development of education.

- Cooperation between universities and businesses
The fourth medium-term plan of the Bureau 2001-2006:

This plan is distinguished by the fact that it has been drawn up big a large number of education experts from the Arab world along with a group of thinkers, economists, educationists, and representatives of regional, Arab and international organizations.

This plan witnessed the launch of: the Arab centre for educational training in the Gulf States. It aims to improve the performance of educational leaders based on modern, scientific and educational foundations.
The plan's programs have focused on:

- Objectives
- Improve policies and the educational decision making environment
- Developing education stages, and moving towards integration
- Curriculum development
- Human resources development

Furthermore, the plan also focuses on making use of information technology in education, and it included 49 major programs encompassing a number of various activities designed to fulfill its objectives.
The joint plan for the development of curricula in the member States:

The fifth general conference (Abu Dhabi, April 1999) adopted a joint plan for the development of curricula, and the plan was approved by the supreme council of The Gulf Cooperation Council in its 21st session (Manama, December 2000).

The plan is considered one of the most important resources of the Bureau's projects in curricula development and it consists of three areas including a number of items such as:

- The scope of objectives and general plans in education
- The scope of curricula, and teaching plans

And other fields such as:

- Teacher aptitude
- Attainment level tests
- Teaching facilities

The joint plan included 20 programs addressing such key educational issues.
Education development project among the Member States

This project complements the plans which are designed to achieve more cohesion between member states in accordance with the requirements of development needs of individuals and societies in the region amid contemporary, political, social and economic variables. The project was ordered by ministers of education during the general conference of The Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States to establish a unified plan of programs and appropriate projects to implement the recommendations of the comprehensive development study of education. The views set forth by king Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, the Custodian of the two Holy Mosques, proposals of the Member States, views of the advisory board of the cooperation council and the ongoing assessment of the joint plan for the development of education curricula are also included in the project.

The Bureau cooperated with the general secretariat of The Gulf Cooperation Council in planning the project with contribution from experts and representatives of the Member States, the General Secretariat of the Council, advisors and other experts. The key feature of this project is that its programs are based on a number of parameters and benchmarks to ensure its success and achieve its objectives such as:

- What do educationists want from the media?

- ماذا يريد التربويون من الإعلاميين؟
- Inclusion of all elements of educational system
- Integration of programs with the previous and existing projects.
- The needs of the region, its potential and priorities in opting for and implementing appropriate programs.

The project is based on a scientific approach, taking into consideration quality control measures before, during and after the implementation of each program. The project and its programs focus on education and represent a common vision by the Bureau's Member States in responding to the requirements of development, and changes in the world today. This project has been approved by the leaders of the GCC.
Translation and Publishing:

The Bureau published hundreds of books and translations in various educational, scientific and cultural areas. The publications received considerable interest and growing appreciation among people as a valuable resource of educational Arab thought in particular, and some publications won international prizes.
Risalat ul-khaleej Al-Arabi magazine:

From the beginning the Bureau sought to document its various activities and published a newsletter in 1979 called “The educational documentation in the Gulf States”. Later on in 1981 “Risalat al-khaleej Al-Arabi” magazine was published as a periodical with the objective to:

- enrich the educational thought
- revive the spirit of Islamic educational heritage
- publish the issues pertaining to education
- address education’s problems
- review the world educational experiences.
- publish topics about the educational thought and teacher training, student behaviour, assessment and other subjects related to the educational field.
تعليم اللغة العربية لغير الناطقين بها:

أولى المكتب اهتماماً خاصة ببرامج تعليم اللغة العربية لغير الناطقين بها، فعقد سلسلة من الندوات والاجتماعات واللقاءات بالتنسيق مع الجهات التربوية والإعلامية المعنية في المنطقة. وقد أسفرت هذه الجهود عن تأليف سلسلة (أحب العربية) وهي أول محاولة منهجية متكاملة لتعليم اللغة العربية للفصغ غير الناطقين باللغة العربية. وقد أضحت السلسلة مقراً أساسياً في المدارس التي تهتم بتعليم اللغة العربية لغير الناطقين بها في العديد من الدول.

Arabic for Speakers of Other Languages:

Much attention has been paid by the Bureau to programs about teaching Arabic for foreigners. A series of forums and meetings were held in coordination with educational and the media in the region. These efforts resulted in producing the Arabic series “I love Arabic”. This was the first methodological and integrated effort for teaching Arabic to non-Arabic speaking children. The series became part of Arabic courses for non-Arabs in a number of countries.
The Bureau’s prize:

The Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States (ABEGS) allotted a biennial prize of SR 100,000.00 (hundred thousand Saudi Riyals) awarded to outstanding educational research in areas specified by the Bureau. The research is subject to conditions and requirements set by a panel of experts to select the winner.
Documentary library:

A specialized documentary library equipped with references, books, periodicals, research journals, magazines, and tapes is now open in the Bureaus’ main office in Riyadh. Researchers, postgraduate students, as well as the locals are using this service. The library documents and records lectures, studies, and activities carried out by the Bureau.
Coping with the latest developments in information explosion, as well as keeping abreast of advances in technology, the Bureau uses modern technology to reach various sectors of education, particularly teachers, by providing an interactive educational environment in an attempt to enhance professional and vocational development of teachers. It also facilitates effective communication among them, and highlights their pioneering initiatives and circulates knowledge within the controls set forth by the Bureau. Moreover, it helps in recognising distinguished teachers in order to benefit from their potential and enhance their distinction.

An electronic portal was established for this purpose using the latest in technology to bring about a new shift in the Bureau’s activities and orientations.
Future Plans:

The GCC’s long-term comprehensive development strategy (2000-2025), approved by the supreme council of The GCC in its 19th session in December 1999, aims to achieve a sustainable development process in all fields in the Member States. It also strives to improve the quality of life by meeting development needs in each country and ensuring better coordination in terms of national development plans and adapting them for challenges in the future. This shows the importance of education in the plans and programs of comprehensive integrated and sustainable development. Education is a basis for human development and therefore, part of the comprehensive economic and social process. Efforts should be intensified to develop the educational systems, and its institutions with an emphasis on rectifying any discrepancies or weaknesses in areas such as curricula, teaching strategies, teacher training, and the use of technology in education.
Curricula development programs have been given priority and became the core of the Bureau’s programs. The focus has been on implementing the joint plan for the development of curricula in the Member States. The project also encompassed a number of specific programs designed to develop curricula, but the reality of the educational field in the Member States is facing problems limiting and restricting the fulfilment of the objectives of development. This means that reconsideration is needed in terms of priorities, with an emphasis on removing obstacles in the way of the development process as well as creating a suitable environment for education so as to produce results. Making use of modern technology to reach various levels in the education sector in the Member States and improving the schools’ performance and productivity are just some examples of such benefits. Priority is given to professional development and accumulated knowledge amongst supervisors, school principals and teachers.
Bureau’s World Ranking

The Bureau provides an educational and intellectual environment which attracts educationists and intellectuals from inside and outside the region. Cooperation between the Bureau, experts and intellectuals is growing and the Bureau is now able to convey its message as well as exercising its functions effectively and swiftly.

The Bureau has established strong ties with the regional and international organizations and there is cooperation in implementing joint programs which will fulfil the Bureau’s objectives.

The Bureau has been awarded a badge of honour by the UNESCO in 1993 for the Bureau’s achievements in education. Many agreements of cooperation, coordination, and implementation of joint programs have been signed with a number of organizations, institutions and know-how firms.

المكانة العالمية لمكتب التربية العربي لدول الخليج:

يُوفر مكتب التربية العربي لدول الخليج بيئة ذكاء تربوية تستقطب التربويين والمفكرين من داخل المنطقة وخارجها، وقد أتسعت دائرة التعاون بين المكتب والخبراء والمفكرين إلى أن أصبحت من القيمة والثراء ما مكن المكتب من اداء سرائه، ومباشرة الهام المتوقف به سرعة وفعالية. كما تربط المكتب علاقة وثيقة بالمنظمات الإقليمية والدولية يتم من خلالها التعاون معها في تنفيذ برامج مشتركة تسهم في تحقيق أهداف المكتب.

وقد حصل المكتب على نوط اليونسكو للجدارة التربوية التعليمية في الدورة الأولى للجائزة في عام 1993م، كما أنه عقد اتفاقيات تعاون وتنسيق وتنفيذ برامج مشتركة مع كثير من المنظمات والمؤسسات وبيوت الخبرة العالمية.
كانوا هناك...

They were there...