

Saudi Arabia

Mohammed A. Rasheed

Minister of Education



Towards Activating the Role of Education To Achieve the Principles of "Living Together"

It is acceptable that education plays a primordial role in terms of an individual's nurture, preparation and guidance. In fact, the role of education in our contemporary world should be effective in spreading peace and prosperity worldwide. Nowadays, education faces the challenges of new technology development, which has its own merits and demerits. On one hand, it improves communication and convergence. On the other hand, it inundates the world with a horrendous, appalling and multifarious quantity of mass - destruction material, which puts the world on the verge of self - destruction.

Science is a mixed blessing. But education - if its means and effects are properly used - can put science at the service of humanity to achieve its well – being and peaceful relations.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia embraces Islam as a creed, a constitution and an integrated way of life. Hence, Saudi education counts on deeply - rooted fundamentals which prepare children for real peace that is based on the following principles: administration of justice, preservation and protection of rights, fulfillment of commitments, giving a hand to the weak and the poor and having respect for other people's opinion as long as such opinions do not conflict with creed and legitimate rights.

Furthermore, education in Saudi Arabia not only preserves the cultural identity of its citizens but also acquaints them with other cultures in compliance with the words of God: "O mankind! We created you from male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other. Verily the most honored of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you ". Also, the saying of Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him); "Wisdom is the goal of the faithful, wherever he finds it he deserves it first".

Likewise, education in Saudi Arabia is through installing sublime morals and respect for others in children at their tender age make them capable of coexisting with others. Thus, they will be more able to achieve the principles of "living together" in our world, which is in dire need of education that can achieve the following objectives:

- To preserve human dignity and rights in this life without prejudice to those of other people.
- To emphasize the principles of real citizenship without bigotry, arrogance or derogation against other nations and races. God says: "Verily the most honored of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you ".
- To reject domination, haughtiness, despotism and insolence, and achieve mutual respect among nations. Prophet Mohammed says: (All of you are Adam's offspring and Adam was created of clay).
- To promote a positive interaction among civilizations in a manner conducive to mutual understanding which facilitates "living together".
- To make new technologies as a source of convergence and an instrument of communication among nations, and harness them to help solving the world crises and economic, environmental and developmental problems.
- To upgrade the school in order to be a center for social enlightenment and a field for furnishing the youngsters with useful knowledge enlightened thought and lofty morals, which enable them to face the accelerating changes of the present.

In this context, education in Saudi Arabia is concerned with moral practices and solicitous for seeing education all over the world proceed in the same direction because it believes that

the principle of "living together" is not achieved by a resolution but through educational actual practice's.

IBE can achieve this objective when it adopts a strategy based on a clear-cut vision. Such a strategy should state that educational institutions all over the world couldn't be detached from dominant political trends. As educational institutions don't make war and peace decisions, so politicians should support - through their conduct and practice - these institutions to achieve a better education for the sake of "living together" principle. ✍