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Sesame Workshop

Arabic Literacy Conference

Executive Summary of Meeting Results

Dead Sea, Jordan

November 2005



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**Arabic Literacy Conference
Executive Summary of Meeting Results
November 2005**

Introduction

On November 9th and 10th, 2005, Sesame Workshop convened a conference on Arabic literacy & language acquisition in early childhood. A group of twenty-one educators, researchers, and media specialists from Jordan, Israel, Egypt, Palestine, and Lebanon joined Sesame Workshop staff and representatives of *Sesame Street's* Jordanian, Palestinian, Egyptian and Israeli co-production teams at the Dead Sea, Jordan, to discuss an array of issues related to the use of multi-media to promote literacy skills. In addition to their geographic diversity, the meeting participants reflected a range of professional backgrounds including: linguistics, media production, education, research, and developmental psychology. (A list of participants is included at the end of this document as Appendix B.) Following the bombings that took place in Amman on the evening of the first day of the session, all of the conference participants stayed on through the entire course of the conference (which was shortened to conclude mid-afternoon of the second day so as to accommodate participants who had changed their travel arrangements as a result of the hotel tragedy.)

Conference Objectives

Building on more than two decades of Sesame Workshop media projects in Arabic, the conference provided an opportunity to coalesce the expertise of advisors on this subject, while also serving as a unique forum for individuals from various countries to meet and share their related experiences and their challenges, projects, and plans for developing Arabic-language media interventions. During the two days of meetings, presentations, and continual discussion, the conference participants engaged in a dynamic dialogue – exchanging ideas, opinions and plans for new innovative projects and proposed partnerships. The conference succeeded in meeting its stated objectives, identifying several issues and serving as a springboard for future media-based literacy interventions.

Most specifically the conference sought to:

- Convene educational and media experts from Arabic-speaking countries
- Define and explore issues of Arabic literacy & language acquisition in early childhood
- Examine educational media materials produced by Sesame Workshop's partners in Arabic
- Determine factors to consider when producing Arabic language media
- Brainstorm ways to use media to promote Arabic literacy

Convene educational and media experts from Arabic-speaking countries:

While the political realities of the Middle East often prevent colleagues in this field from meeting across borders, experts from Arabic-speaking countries had an opportunity during the session to meet, share information, and create possible linkages for the future. Indeed, this was the first time that any of the participants had been in a forum comprised of individuals from Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt and Israel. By widening the scope of contact among these individuals and their respective organizations and institutions, Sesame Workshop may be better able to develop future media projects that consider the educational needs of children in diverse Middle Eastern countries while addressing universal concerns related to the promotion of Arabic literacy. The representation from Sesame Workshop's current Middle Eastern co-productions will serve to bolster the related work in each respective country, as well as build on the possibility for regional initiatives in the Middle East both within and outside of Sesame Workshop's purview. Future projects may result from the distinctive professional cooperation initiated at this conference.

Define and explore issues of Arabic literacy & language acquisition in early childhood

The integrated components of the Sesame Workshop Production Model (research, education and production) were represented at the conference, leading to a comprehensive examination of Arabic literacy and media from a variety of complementary perspectives. Researchers shared critical information about language learning and the particular challenges that young children face in learning to read and write Arabic. Educators served to inform discussions on the resources that currently exist in Arabic for young children and to reflect on the daily reality of young children and their experience of language acquisition. Production experts, both from Sesame Workshop's co-productions and other media projects taking place in the region, played a pivotal role in exploring how these issues might best be interpreted and expressed through various forms of media.

Examine educational media materials produced by Sesame Workshop's partners in Arabic

Sesame Workshop's library of electronic and print materials in Arabic provided concrete examples of previous attempts to address literacy throughout the region over the last twenty-five years. In addition to showcasing some of Sesame Workshop's "highlight" segments and outreach materials, Sesame Workshop, in planning for the session, had purposefully designed the collection of materials presented so as to invoke a critical analysis of the approaches, methodologies, and pedagogical tools utilized over time. The types of diversified materials demonstrated enabled the participants to reflect, respond, and propose strategies that could best address the current needs of children. Exploring Sesame Workshop materials also exposed participants to an array of media vehicles that might be adapted or implemented to foster such educational objectives. For example, several participants emphasized the importance of combining multiple media in the forms of television, print and interactive media (Internet based) so as to reinforce literacy skills and to aid in language acquisition.

Determine factors to consider when producing Arabic language media

Through plenary discussions as well as smaller working groups, participants devised lists of critical factors that literacy projects should address. These were based on the backgrounds and particular expertise of each individual, as well as the result of an active exchange of ideas. Identifying these factors is of crucial benefit to Sesame Workshop as we proceed with current and future media projects across the Middle East.

Some of the factors that emerged during the discussion included:

- The critical issue of colloquial vs. classical (which form of Arabic to use for different media outlets)
- Lack of unified terminology in the Arabic language dialects
- Reading and listening skills of parents and caregivers (decoding and comprehension)
- Weakness of educators in spelling, grammar and pronunciation
- Lack of forms of expression in the Arabic language
- Problem of rote learning in Arabic schools
- Absence of pride in and love of the Arabic language
- Lack of fostering a love of reading
- Socio-economic status of target groups
- Psycho-social educational needs
- Dearth of imagination and creativity when developing literacy based multi-media materials
- Issues of book distribution and availability in Arabic speaking countries
- Lack of relevant and child-centric content that is language based

Brainstorm ways to use media to promote Arabic literacy

A significant portion of the conference was devoted to group work aiming to explore and develop tangible new media initiatives – both in electronic and print formats – that promote Arabic literacy. While several of these proposed projects had particular relevance to the educational agenda and needs of specific countries, a list of potential projects that might cross borders in the region also emerged. Examples from this list include the following:

- Interactive television programming
- Interactive computer games
- Read along books (audio/visual)
- Internet based interactive media focused on literacy games and activities for native Arabic speakers, as well as non-native speakers, to aid in the learning process of reading and writing Arabic
- Uniform alphabet song designed to cross borders and apply to all Arabic speaking countries and regions (presented in modern standard Arabic so as to be universal)
- Multi-media and interactive-media packages used to present and reinforce literacy in written and oral forms that are applicable throughout the Arabic speaking world

In addition to the nascent ideas that resulted from the meeting, a general tone of collective work toward pursuing these goals also prevailed, paving the way for future brainstorming and for the potential implementation of new media endeavors.

The Arabic Literacy Conference was a tribute to the participants from throughout the Middle East, many of whom put aside political sensitivities in order to participate in this regional forum. The conference served to unite people during a time of protracted conflict and to become a catalyst, igniting an exciting dynamic through which the professional expertise and dedication represented has the potential to yield pioneering educational initiatives. Dr. Cairo Arafat, the Palestinian *Sesame Street* project's Director of Educational Content and Research and the moderator of the conference, closed the final session as follows:

"This conference is a stepping stone. Whether Sesame Workshop continues to be involved, we will generate efforts locally that can lead to these projects. We've established here the importance of dialogue on these critical issues. What's important now is our commitment to working to improve the lives of children."

The committed affirmation to working toward this aim of all those present could not have been more strongly and sincerely shared.

Sesame Workshop hopes to serve as a resource, when appropriate and possible, to help further the dialogue and cooperation initiated over the course of the conference.



Arabic Literacy & Language Acquisition in Early Childhood

**Brief Biographies of Participants
November 9 and 10, 2005**





Cairo Arafat

Cairo Arafat is the Director General of Aid Management and Coordination for the Ministry of Planning in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. She also functions in the capacity of Director of the Secretariat for the National Plan of Action for Palestinian Children/Ministry of Planning. Dr. Arafat was educated in the United States and received her Ph.D. from Ohio State University.

Over the last decade, Cairo's work in Palestine has focused on a range of children's issues. These include: early childhood development, preschool education, psychosocial programs, social work for children, and advocacy and education for children. She has conducted numerous research studies in the areas of child well-being, violations of children's rights, children's television viewing, psychosocial well-being, and the early screening of developmental disorders. Dr. Arafat served as the Director of Educational Content & Research for the Palestinian adaptations of Sesame Street: Shara'a Simsim and Hikayat Simsim.

Dr. Khaled Al Azaizeh

Dr. Khaled Al Azaizeh earned a Ph.D. in education from the Department of Languages at Brighton University, England. He also holds an M.A. in education, specializing in curricula and methods of Arabic instruction, from the Faculty of Education at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem. Dr. Azaizeh works as an inspector with the Israeli Ministry of Education and as an inspector with the Center of Arabic Programs for Israel's Educational Television Channel. He is a lecturer, teaching courses in the field of Arabic language curricula, teacher training, and mass communications. Dr. Azaizeh was involved in preparing a collection of educational curricula issued by the Ministry of Education & Culture in Jerusalem. This collection includes the following titles: Arabic Literature for High School; Arabic Literature for the Secondary Phase; Grammar for High School and Secondary School Students; World Literature Curriculum; Theatre Curriculum, and several others.

Between 1981 and 2002, Dr. Azaizeh prepared a series of compilations, educational books and workbooks issued by the Ministry of Education and the Educational TV. Among these were: Al Mukhtar, a series to accompany high school students' Arabic Literature studies; and Kan Ya Ma Kan, a textbook and workbook for primary school classes. He also has contributed as an educational consultant and supervisor in the translation and printing of educational books, workbooks and guides, including the Itar curricula for kindergarten, as well as a guide for early childhood caretakers to accompany the Rechov Sumsum/Shara'a Simsim (Sesame Street) media project. In addition to his work with Sesame Street, Dr. Azaizeh's other television consultancy projects with the Educational TV include 45 episodes of Kan Ya Ma Kan; 45 episodes of Ghush Al Zaytoon; 25 episodes of Darb Al Hikayat; and 4 episodes of Kharbout wa Mazbout. Other publications titles include: A Guide to Teaching Arabic Literature for the Secondary Phase and New Prospects, Studies and Research in Children's Literature: Methods and Curricula.

Yael Bar-Lev

Yael Bar-Lev Bsc. in Biology,
M.A in Education & Technology

Over the past 14 years, Yael has devoted her professional efforts to the development of pioneering educational projects, both locally and internationally. Yael's projects and expertise include the cognitive, psychological, and sociological aspects of education. Yael served as the co-content director for the past season of the "Sippuray Sumsum" Sesame Street coproduction. Yael is a graduate of the Mandel Leadership Institute in Jerusalem.

Rania Zaghir Benson

Rania Zaghir Benson is a children's book author and a teacher of the Arabic language. Rania holds an MA in educational psychology, a TD in teaching Arabic at the elementary level, and a BA in communication arts. Currently, she teaches courses in classroom dynamics and in socio-dramatic play at Haigazian University in Lebanon. She is also an Arabic language elementary teacher at International College (IC).

Rania has written nine children's books, all of which have been published and are used as textbooks in many local schools. She also collaborated in writing a textbook for use at the KG1 level. In addition to writing books, Rania has written the lyrics of two songs for Aljazeera Kids. The songs are animated and will soon be aired. Rania was born and resides in Beirut, Lebanon.





Dr. Charlotte Frances Cole

Dr. Charlotte Frances Cole, Vice President for Education and Research at Sesame Workshop in New York, oversees the research and curriculum development on the Company's international co-productions and new show projects, including adaptations of the well-known pre-school program, Sesame Street. Working with educators and production teams throughout the world, she has most recently been engaged in projects in India, Mexico, Bangladesh, Russia, China, Egypt, Israel/West Bank/Gaza and South Africa.

Prior to joining the Workshop, Dr. Cole worked as a Senior Researcher at Joslin Diabetes Center in Boston on a longitudinal study of families of children with acute and chronic illness funded by the National Institutes of Health. She has also worked as a consultant to the Harvard Institute for International Development on several child-health projects in Thailand.

Dr. Cole received her doctorate in Human Development and Psychology from Harvard University. Her teaching experience includes positions as instructor at Boston College (Newton, Massachusetts), Lesley College (Cambridge, Massachusetts) and Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College (Terre Haute, Indiana). She has worked as a board member for several community-service organizations including the Council on Domestic Abuse in Terre Haute, Indiana (from 1985-1986) and currently serves on the board of Oxford Academy in Westbrook, Connecticut. She is also a registered foster parent. When she is not looking for lost luggage, she enjoys life with her family in New York City.

Nada Elattar

Nada Elattar currently serves as the Education and Research Specialist for several Sesame Workshop co-productions including Alam Simsim (Egypt), Hikayat Simsim (Jordan), Rechov Sumum (Israel), and Sisimpur (Bangladesh). As the Education and Research Specialist on these projects, Nada's role is to work with the Sesame Workshop team in New York and with local partners to ensure the educational integrity and age appropriateness of project related production including: television production in the form of studio segments, live action films and animations; outreach materials; published books (readers and storybooks) and all other project related material. Nada also works with local partners on the development of formative research that serves to inform the production of television and outreach materials.

Ms. Elattar holds a Masters of Public Health (MPH) from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health with a focus on international child health and a Bachelors of Health Science from San Francisco State University from the Department of Health Education.

As a Masters student at Johns Hopkins, Nada focused her studies on international child health, which included background on child development and lifespan development. Nada concentrated on courses relating to children, specifically children 6 and under, with a focus on socio-economic factors and their relation to health. Her thesis focused on injury prevention and control (specifically relating to motor-vehicle injuries amongst children in Egypt). Nada received a scholarship from the Centers for Disease Control and the Association of Schools of Public Health to implement a pilot study which served to track motor vehicle related injuries amongst Egyptian children in the Suez Canal region of Egypt.

During her studies at San Francisco State University Nada Elattar served as a mentor and tutor (basic skills including reading and mathematics) for pre-school and kindergarten children from underserved communities in San Francisco through the Americore after school program. Nada was also a chair person of the Student Health Association, an on campus organization working towards the improvement of health and on raising awareness about general health throughout the university environment. During her last semester at San Francisco State University Nada was chosen as Valedictorian of her graduating class and received the Departmental Honoree award from the school of Health Education for high academic achievement.

Whether it be through work, school or daily interactions, Nada is dedicated to helping improve the lives of children around the world through education and other means of empowerment.





Naila Farouky

Naila Farouky serves as Producer, International Global Production for Sesame Workshop. In this capacity, Farouky is responsible for managing the production/creative side of the Egyptian, South African, Jordanian and Palestinian television co-productions, as well as radio for the South African co-production. Additionally, she has served as producer on an Australian co-production and was in charge of the development of the Bangladeshi co-production.

Farouky has worked for seven years at Sesame Workshop, producing shows that encourage children to learn about culture, embrace education, and appreciate diversity all over the world. Farouky is the producer of the award-winning *Alam Simsim*, the Egyptian adaptation of *Sesame Street* helping children to learn about health and hygiene, the environment, and literacy. She also produces *Takalani Sesame*, the highly acclaimed South African co-production, encouraging children to develop a positive self-image, to celebrate South Africa's diverse culture, to cope with issues around HIV/AIDS, and to promote a life-long love of learning. In 2004, she also served as the producer on the South African prime-time parenting special *Takalani Sesame Presents: "talk to me..."* – a one-hour documentary which aired in South Africa on World AIDS Day 2004 and was the culmination of a multi-media campaign urging parents and caregivers to talk to children about issues surrounding HIV and AIDS. This special went on to win a number of prestigious international awards, including the Peabody Award.

Farouky grew up mostly in Cairo, Egypt, and lived in Nairobi, Kenya and Geneva, Switzerland. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the American University in Cairo. Farouky currently resides in New York City.

Dr. Mahmud Abu Fani

Dr. Mahmud Abu Fani earned his B.A. degree in Arabic Literature and the History of the Islamic World from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, from which he also earned a teaching certificate. Dr. Abu Fani's master's thesis was dedicated to the topic of Arabic literature. He earned a scholarship from the Ministry of Education to study "Educational Planning and the Preparation of Educational Curricula" in the Faculty of Education at the Hebrew University. Dr. Abu Fani was awarded his doctorate in the study of children's literature from St. Petersburg University.

Dr. Abu Fani has been actively involved in the field of education since 1967. He has worked as a high school teacher as well as a lecturer at the Teachers' College in Jaffa. In 1977, he was appointed as an inspector in the Ministry of Education's Arabic Language Center & the Center for Arabic Language Curricula. He was later appointed as the head of the Humanities Department at the Ministry of Education's Educational Curricula Center, while he also served as a lecturer in the Arab Educational College in Haifa. Dr. Abu Fani has issued a number of books, studies, and articles in literature, literary criticism, and education; and he has participated in preparing several educational curricula.

Gila Ben Har

Gila Ben Har is currently the Managing Director of the Center for Educational Technology (CET) in Israel. CET is a non-governmental organization with 30 years of experience in leading the development and assimilation of innovative educational concepts, methodologies and strategies. Gila Ben Har's professional experience in the field of education includes developing study materials, training teachers, and managing systems for the purpose of observing various population groups and student levels, exploring the variance between them, and developing learning environments to help close gaps between populations. She has been involved in the establishment of pre-kindergarten classes in Arabic language schools in Jaffa and in developing and expanding libraries and learning centers in Jaffa.

Through her work with the Center for Educational Technology, she has also helped guide Arab schools in East Jerusalem in designing a framework for a five-year program. At present, she is monitoring the management of Arab, Druze and Bedouin schools in Israel. CET is currently leading an applied research study to examine the lexical knowledge of Arab pre-school children as a basis for the development of curricular programs for reading acquisition in Arabic.

Prior to her work with CET, Gila worked directly with Israel's Ministry of Education. She served as the Managing Director of the Department of Education, Culture & Sport for the city of Tel Aviv-Jaffa. In this capacity, she was responsible for educational policy development and its implementation in the city of Tel Aviv-Jaffa, covering over 300 kindergartens and 120 elementary and high schools with an overall student body of over 60,000 students. Gila Ben Har holds a master's degree in education from Bar Ilan University.





Khaled A. Haddad

Khaled A. Haddad is the Executive Producer, Director, General Manager, and Founder of Jordan Pioneers TV Production in Amman, Jordan. He has accumulated more than 15 years of experience in the field of television and film. Throughout this time, he has been a producer, director and production consultant for local and international productions in Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Syria & Iraq.

Mr. Haddad has directed more than eighteen documentaries and TV programs, as well as over 85 television advertisements and video clips. He has served as an Executive Producer for Jordan Television and Radio (JRTV), for Jordan Satellite Channel's various weekly TV programs, and with Sesame Workshop on the twenty-six episodes of the Jordanian co-production of Sesame Street (Hikayat Simsim). Mr. Haddad has also been a producer for international companies, channels and pre-production services such as BBC, WGBH (Boston, USA), National Geographic, Al-Arabyieh, and Point du jour. Khaled began his production career as a general manager & director for the Arab Media Company for TV Production. He is now the acting and general manager & consultant for Jordan Movie Channel & Arab Media.

Khaled recently produced a three-part docu-drama (Political, Social, & Economic) for the European Union Delegation of Jordan and produced three short cinematic films for NADA Productions: What Color are the Walls of your Apartment; Diaspora; and I.D. He has supervised more than 600 dubbed hours of cartoon & documentaries into the Arabic language and over 400 Arabic subtitled hours of feature films & TV programs. Khaled Haddad has recently worked with Danny Labin of Sesame Workshop and Dr. Naif Haddad on writing a paper titled The Role of Multi-Media in Early Childhood Education: The Case Study of Hikayat Simsim.

Dr. Elinor Saiegh-Haddad

Dr. Elinor Saiegh-Haddad currently holds a faculty position in the Linguistics division of the English department at Bar-Ilan University. Dr. Saiegh-Haddad received her bachelor of arts degree in English Linguistics at Bar-Ilan University and her master of arts degree in Applied Linguistics from the University of Reading, England. In 2000, she completed her studies and received her Doctorate of Philosophy in Applied Linguistics at Bar-Ilan University, Israel.

As a faculty member at Bar-Ilan University, Dr. Saiegh-Haddad researches the acquisition of literacy in monolingual and bilingual children. Her primary research interests include the effects of oral language skills on the acquisition of literacy, and the interface between universal cognitive processes and language-specific linguistic and orthographic factors in the acquisition of basic reading and spelling processes.

Dr. Elinor Saiegh-Haddad was born in Acre, Northern Galilee in 1968. She is married and the mother to two children, Lama and Michael.

Ashraf M.H. Abu-Khayran

Ashraf M.H. Abu-Khayran has had several years of experience in the field of early childhood education. He has worked in Palestinian schools as a teacher of Arabic language. He has attended numerous conferences devoted to pedagogical methodology for Arabic instruction. Abu-Khayran holds a B.A. in education from Bethlehem University, Palestine, and an M.A. in educational administration from Al-Quds University in Jerusalem. He is a lecturer at Al Quds University in the Faculty of Arts, Department of Philosophy and in the Faculty of Education. For the last three years, Abu-Khayran has been the field supervisor at Al-Quds University for a learning disabilities research project funded by USAID. He is the public relations manager for the Al-Arabi Magazine, a publication that addresses issues of Palestinian youth. He has also contributed written reports to Al-Arabi Magazine.

Abu-Khayran is a member of the Youth Activity Center at the Al-Arroub camp in Palestine. He is also the co-founder of "Lagi," the Children's Cultural Center at the Al-Arroub camp. In addition to his current lecturing positions at Al Quds University and Bethlehem University and his involvement in a range of community educational projects, Abu-Khayran is a journalist for Bethlehem TV and is a librarian at Al Quds University.





Daoud Kuttab

In 1996, Daoud Kuttab founded the Institute of Modern Media at Al Quds University in Ramallah, Palestine. Since that time he has served as the Institute's Director. Within the framework of the Institute he established the Al Quds Educational Television Station, a leading media vehicle combining public service broadcasting with community television. Daoud is also the director of AmmanNet (www.ammanet.net) the first Internet-based radio station in the Arab World, which he founded in 1999. Daoud established the Arabic Media Internet Network (AMIN) (www.amin.org) in 1995. AMIN is a pioneering internet site that attempts to provide alternative media content in Arabic. He is the Co-Director of Internews Middle East Institute in Jerusalem and was the founder of the Jerusalem Film Institute, of which he served as the first president from 1990 through 1995.

Daoud is a journalist whose column in the daily newspaper Al Quds ran from 1987 to 1993. During that time, he conducted exclusive interviews with Yaser Arafat, Yitzhak Rabin, and other leaders. Daoud has served as the Managing Editor of the weekly Al Fajr in English and is currently a columnist for: The Jordan Times, Gulf News, The Jerusalem Post, and Beirut Times. Daoud's past articles have been published in The New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Globe and Mail - Canada, The Age - Australia, HaAretz, Yomuri Daily, Journal of Palestine Studies, Al Rai, Al Sabeel, and Al Hadath.

Daoud has been the Executive Director of the following films and television series: Palestinian Diaries; We Are God's People; Jerusalem Under Siege; Marda: A Story of a Land; On the Edge of Peace; Arab Diaries

Bethlehem; Face to Face; and the Chat the Plant series, in which five Jordanian and American youth discuss issues of family and war. Daoud was the Executive Co-Producer of Shara'a Simsim (Sesame Street) and Hikayat Simsim (Sesame Stories).

Daoud is the recipient of the following awards: Press Freedom Award from the Committee to Protect Journalists in New York; Freedom to Write Award from the PEN USA West; Press Freedom Hero from the International Press Institute; and Courage and Future of the Media from the Leipzig Media Institute, Germany.

Danny Labin

Danny Labin is a Project Manager and Educational Consultant at Sesame Workshop. Since 2000, Danny has been involved in the diverse research projects and content development for the Workshop's international co-productions of Sesame Street. He served as the content advisor for the Sesame English project, developing educational print materials to supplement the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) series in its multi-national broadcast.

Danny has been living in the Middle East since 2002, during which time he was the Senior Content Researcher for the Sesame Stories project. Working together with Palestinian, Israeli and Jordanian production teams, Danny developed the project's educational content, research, and outreach initiatives as part of the comprehensive multi-media project. Danny will be working with the Jordanian, Israeli and Palestinian production teams as they produce additional seasons of Sesame Street programming and educational materials.

Danny graduated with a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of California at Los Angeles, and received his master's degree in education from Harvard University. He has served as a researcher with the UCLA Family Development Study, as well as a variety of other projects investigating the relationship between scholastic achievement and psychological adjustment. Working previously as a teacher in the United States and in Russia, Danny is the author of a proposal for a children's television series on health and nutrition and has written for the Let's Go travel guide series in South Africa and The Middle East.

Alyaa Montasser

Mrs. Alyaa Montasser is a clinical psychologist currently responsible for the content development of Alam Simsim in its fourth season of airing on national Egyptian television. Her tenure at Alam Simsim began in 1998 when she was director of Research and Content for the conception of the program.

Mrs. Montasser is a practicing therapist in the field of clinical psychology specializing in family therapy. Since 1997, she has served at the German School in Cairo as Director of Counseling. She also maintains a private practice in Cairo. In addition to her activities in the field of psychology, Mrs. Montasser is studying for a certification in the field of homeopathy.

Mrs. Montasser received her B.A. in Psychology in 1992 from the American University in Cairo, Egypt, and her M.Phil. in Clinical Psychology in 1996 from the University of Mannheim in Germany.





Dr. Samar Mukallid

Dr. Samar Mukallid has a Ph.D. in Special Education from Columbia University in New York City and an M.A. in Educational Psychology with emphasis on school guidance and counseling from the American University of Beirut (AUB). Dr. Mukallid is a faculty member in the Department of Education at AUB, where her major responsibilities involve teaching graduate and undergraduate courses in Educational Psychology, School Counseling, and Special Education. Dr. Mukallid's research and professional experience are in the areas of learning, cognition, and curriculum development. She is very actively involved in teacher training in Lebanon and other Arab countries.

Dr. Mukallid is a consultant for a family awareness program on Future TV. She has presented a parental awareness segment on Future TV for two years.

Dr. Saleh K. Abu-Osba

Dr. Saleh K. Abu-Osba is the Vice President of Philadelphia University in Jordan. Dr. Abu-Osba holds a doctorate in Mass Communications from Howard University, Washington, D.C.; and a doctorate in Rhetoric, Literary Criticism and Comparative Literature from Cairo University, Egypt. Dr. Abu-Osba has a Diploma of Graduate Studies in Journalism and Publishing from Cairo University.

In addition to serving as the Vice President of Philadelphia University, he is a professor there in the Department of Mass Communications and is the Dean of the Faculty of Arts. He is the CEO of Aram Studies & Publishing House, Amman; the General Coordinator of the Establishing Committee for the Arab Foundation for Literary & Artistic Production; and a mass media consultant at the National Council of Arab Culture in Rabat, Morocco. Dr. Abu-Osba has published over sixty papers, many of which have been presented at international symposia and workshops. He is also the author of several books addressing issues of mass communications in Arabic: Mass Media & Development; Mass Media Issues; Readings in Mass Media & Arab Development (Editor); Communication & Mass Media in Modern Societies, 5th edition; Communication & Public Relations (co-authored with Dr. Taysir Abu-Arja); Mass Media Organization Management in the Arab World, 2nd ed; Public Relations and Human Communication ; Mass Communication; Media Challenges: Freedom, Credibility & Cultural Dependency; Arabic Heritage Texts in the Communication Field; and Communication Strategies, Policies & Effects.

Dr. Abu-Osba has served as a member of The International Advisory Board for the Arab Humanities Journal (Kuwait University, 2004); the Academic Committee in the Communication Training Center (Supreme Media Council, Jordan, 2003-present); and the Editorial Board of the Arab Arts & Humanities Faculties Union Journal (2003-present). He has served six times as the annual chairman of referees for the committee of the Local Television Festival in Dubai; twice as a member of the referees committee of the Pan Arab Press Prize, Dubai Press Club; and as a member of the referees committee for Philadelphia University's prize for best translated book.

He has served as a member of the international committee responsible for preparing the Mass Communication Faculty Program at Sharjah University, U.A.E; has been the Chief Editor of Philadelphia's Cultural Magazine, the Chairman of the organizing committee of the academic conference for the Mass Communication Department at Sultan Qaboos University in Muscat, Oman; Chairman of the organizing committee of the academic conference for the Faculty of Arts, Philadelphia University; Chief Editor of Philadelphia's Cultural Magazine, Amman; a member of the advisory board of Mizan Journal, Amman; a member of the advisory board of The Social Affairs Journal Sharjah; a member of the editorial Board of The Faculty of Arts Journals; a member of the advisory board of Palestinian Annals Journal; and a member of the cultural committee of the second Gulf States Universities Festival at U. A. E. University.

Dr. Abu-Osba has been awarded the A.H Shoman Award for Young Scientists in Humanities, 1986; Ghaleb Halasa award from the Jordanian Writers Association, 1996; Excellency Scientific Award from Philadelphia University, 1999; and the Distinguished Referee Award from the Arab Journal for Humanities, 2002.

Dr. Samy Mahmoud Abdallah Rizk

Dr. Samy Mahmoud Abdallah Rizk is an Associate Professor at Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt. Dr. Rizk's field of expertise is in Arabic language curricula and instruction. He holds a specialization in reading and linguistic communication. Currently at the College of Education at Al-Azhar University, Dr. Rizk holds a doctorate in education from the Department of Language Communications at the University of Pittsburg in Pennsylvania, USA.

Dr. Rizk has extensive experience teaching Arabic Language Arts in the elementary, middle, and high school grades, as well as across a variety of economic and social environments. At the University of Pittsburgh, he worked at the Media Learning Center, where he gained experience in educational technology, multi-media programs, and the use of audio-visual aids. Since completion of his Ph.D., his activities have included academic teaching, teacher training, participating in and directing academic research, and advising national research projects in Egypt. He has been closely involved with field educational projects such as: the one classroom school, the deprived environments community one classroom school, and the inclusive school. Dr. Rizk has designed and implemented comprehensive educational projects, including the in-service training of teachers, psychologists, social workers, and school administrators. In addition to his work in Egypt, Dr. Rizk's professional endeavors have taken place in several countries: Sudan, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and UAE. Dr. Rizk has worked with a range of international educational agencies and institutes, including: Learn Link, AED, UNESCO, UNICEF, The Arabic League Institute of Arabic Studies and Humanities in Cairo, the British Council in Cairo, the Military Literacy Center, The National Council for Motherhood and Childhood, and the Ministry of Education in Qatar and in Egypt.





Nabil Shoumali

Nabil Shoumali is a director and scriptwriter. Mr. Shoumali completed his academic film studies in 1983 at the Academy of Arts (FAMU) in Prague. His work as a director of television and film has included several educational TV shows, such as Al Manaahil, an Arabic literacy series co-produced with Sesame Workshop in 1986. Most recently, Nabil was the Director of the Jordanian adaptation of Sesame Street (Hikayat Simsim). Nabil was also the writer of the educational print materials accompanying the Hikayat Simsim television series. Among his many media projects, Mr. Shoumali is the director and producer of three short feature films, one of which won an international prize at the Clermound-Ferrand Short Film Festival.

Mr. Shoumali has extensive experience with a variety of media formats, including documentary and animation. His directing and writing projects include series of public service announcements to raise mass awareness about various social and educational issues. He has lectured on topics related to directing and scriptwriting at several film institutes.

Mahmoud Soboh

Mahmoud Soboh has enjoyed a varied and successful career in the performing arts. For nearly a decade, Mahmoud worked as a representative with the Beit al Karma Theatre, as well as playing several roles in the theatre's productions. As a production and administrative manager, two of Soboh's productions were awarded the first prize at the Acre Festival for Alternative Theater. While facilitating several international theatre festivals and performances in Germany, France, Belgium, Sweden, Denmark, Jordan and the United States, Mr. Soboh has also taught courses promoting theatrical culture to school teachers and principals. Mr. Soboh managed and produced the Monodrama Festival in 1992 and 1996; has produced and directed four consecutive plays for the Castle Festival in Shfar-Am; and produced a series of plays for the al Maydan Theatre.

In addition to theatre, Soboh has worked with other forms of media, including radio and television; he developed the program "Palestine's Tent" with the ART. Soboh was responsible for translating and directing the dubbing of the recent Israeli Sesame Street television production and educational print materials to Arabic. Mahmoud Soboh wrote and produced the play Um Al Sharayet, which was performed by the artist Salwa Naqara. Several of the plays that Soboh has written, produced and directed are performed today in Arab schools in Israel. Soboh's play, The Magic Cave, which he wrote and directed for the Al Bayader Theatre in Tamra, was awarded the Best Theatrical Script Prize and Best Play Prize at the 2005 Children's Theatre Festival in Sakhnin. Soboh conducts workshops about the art of storytelling.

Amani Tuffaha

Amani Tuffaha holds a B.A. in psychology, an M.A. in women studies, and a diploma in early childhood "Montessori system." She is a coordinator in the childhood unit at Jordan's National Council for Family Affairs and is responsible for issues of protection and child rights, including the Jordanian third report of the Child Rights Convention: Disadvantaged Children & Child Labour. Amani is the focal person for monitoring and evaluating protection and media components within Jordan's National Plan of Action for Early Childhood.

Amani has authored a paper on dubbed television programs for children. She recently presented this paper at the Child Conference held in Alexandria, Egypt, in September 2005. The paper explores the effects of violence in cartoon programs on child behavior.

Nourhan Youssef Zehnie

Nourhan Youssef Zehnie holds a B.A. in Education & English Language, a Diploma in Nursery Infant Training, a Diploma in Early Childhood Education, and a Diploma in General Nursing. She is the Academic Director for both The International Centre for Montessori Education (ICME) and the AlRaeda Company for Educational Investments (RCEI). She is the kindergarten principal at the Modern Montessori School in Amman. She is also the external examiner for the ICME and a lecturer at the AlRiyadi Centre for Modern Teaching Methods.

Nourhan founded the Arabic Language and Literacy Programme, the Montessori Method, and has been involved in Montessori training for over twenty years. She has received distinction through numerous achievements in the field of Early Childhood Education and has acted as a consultant and advisor to a number of governmental organizations and NGOs to help further the education process in Jordan.



APPENDIX B: Participant Contact Sheet

**Sesame Workshop
Arabic Literacy Conference
November 8 - 10, 2005**

Participant Contact Sheet

	Name	Institution	Address	Phone	Fax	Email
1	Ms. Alyaa Montasser	Alam Simsim	Cairo	2012 3 193015		alyaamontasser@yahoo.com
2	Mrs. Amani Tuffaha	National Council for Family Affairs	Amman / Jordan	962 79 6867222		amani.t@ncfa.org.jo
3	Mr. Ashraf Abu-Khayran	Al Quds University	Jerusalem	05/ 99732294		ash73raf@yahoo.com
4	Dr. Cairo Arafat	Children's Secretariat	Ramallah / Palestine	00972 22973018	00972 22973012	carafat@mop.gov.ps
5	Dr. Charlotte Cole	Sesame Workshop	One Lincoln Plaza New York, NY 10023 USA	+1-212-875- 6594		charlotte.cole@sesameworkshop.com
6	Mr. Danny Labin	Sesame Workshop		+1-212-875-6956		Danny.Labin@sesameworkshop.com
7	Mr. Daoud Kuttub	Al Quds University		962 79 5577646		dkuttub@ammannet.net

**Sesame Workshop
Arabic Literacy Conference
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Participant Contact Sheet

	Name	Institution	Address	Phone	Fax	Email
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9	Ms. Gila Ben Har	Center for Educational technology (CET)	Israel / Tel Aviv	972 546646899		gila@cet.ac.il
10	Dr. Khaled Azaizeh	Ministry of Education	P.O.B: 104 Dabburiya 161910	04-6702988	04-6762988	khaled_azaizeh@yahoo.com
11	Mr. Khaled Haddad	Jordan Pioneers	P.O.Box 3034 Amman 11181Jordan	962 6 592 2051	962 6 592 1158	khaled@jordanpioneers.com
12	Dr. Mahmud Abu Fani	Ministry of Education	P.O: 2032 Kfar-gari	06-6282238	04-6352270	mahmudab@int.gov.il
13	Mr. Mahmoud Soboh	Kewalies Theater	Shefa amer 160/42 Israel	523789681	04-9866299	Soboh-ma@zahav.net.il
14	Mr. Nabil Shoumali	Jordan Pioneers	Amman / Jordan	962 79 5940329	962 6 592 1158	nabil@jordanpioneers.com

**Sesame Workshop
Arabic Literacy Conference
November 8 - 10, 2005**

Participant Contact Sheet

	Name	Institution	Address	Phone	Fax	Email
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17	Mrs. Nourhan Zehnie	ICME MMS	P.O.B: 851067 - 11185 Amman	962 79 5511937	5535831	nourhaz@hotmail.com
18	Mrs. Rania Zagher Benson	International College CIC Haigazian University	P.O: 11-0236 Beirut 11072020	961 3 868124		rzagher@thisiscyberia.com
19	Dr. Saleh Abu-Osba	Philadelphia University, Jordan	P.O.: (1) Philadelphia	962 77 798461	02-6374366	sabuosba2000@yahoo.com
20	Dr. Samar Mukallid	American University of Beirut	Lebanon	961 3 770427		samart@aub.edu.lb
21	Ms. Yael Bar-Lev	Yael Bar-Lev Educational Communication	24 Haviva Reich st. Kfar-Saba	544207085	97469091	barlevdy@netvision.net.il

APPENDIX C: Agenda

Sesame Workshop
Arabic Literacy Conference
Agenda



ورشة سمسيم
مؤتمر مهارات اللغة العربية
جدول الأعمال

Tuesday, November 8th

Welcome Reception 20:00 حفل الاستقبال

Wednesday, November 9th

Welcome (Dr. Charlotte Cole) 9:00 كلمة ترحيب (د. شارلوت كول)
 Overview of Agenda & Conference Objectives (Dr. Cairo Arafat) 9:15 مراجعة جدول الأعمال وأهداف المؤتمر (د. كايرو عرفات)
 Introductions 9:30 مقدمة
 Advisor Commentaries 9:45 تعليقات المرشد
 Coffee Break 11:00 استراحة
 General Discussion 11:15 نقاش عام
 Presentation by Dr. Elinor Saiegh-Haddad & Discussion 12:00 عرض مقدم من الدكتورة إليانور صايغ حداد ونقاش
Diglossia challenges to the acquisition of basic reading processes in Arabic التحديات الناتجة عن الاختلاف ما بين اللغة المحكية و اللغة الأدبية في عملية التحصيل الأساسية في القراءة باللغة العربية
 Lunch 12:45 إستراحة غداء
 Presentation by Nada Elattar of Sesame Workshop's Publishing 14:00 عرض لندى العطار لمشروع إنتاج ورشة سمسيم في مصر ونقاش
 Project in Egypt & Discussion
 Screening of Sesame Workshop Multi-Media Materials & Discussion 14:45 عرض المواد الإعلامية لورشة عمل سمسيم ونقاش
 Coffee Break 16:15 استراحة
 Open Discussion 16:45 افتتاح النقاش
 Organizing Small Working Groups 17:15 تنظيم مجموعات عمل صغيرة
 Small Working Group Orientation & Introductory Session 17:30 توجيه المجموعات الصغيرة و الجلسة الأولية
 Dinner 20:00 العشاء

Thursday, November 10th

Welcome & Opening Remarks (Dr. Cairo Arafat) 9:00 الترحيب والملاحظات الافتتاحية (د. كايرو عرفات)
 Small Group Work Continues 9:15 استمر عمل مجموعات العمل الصغيرة
 Coffee Break 11:00 استراحة
 Group Presentations 11:30 عروض مجموعات العمل
 Discussion 12:00 نقاش
 Lunch 13:00 إستراحة الغداء
 Plans for Implementation & Formalization of Action Plans for Interventions 14:30 خطط تطبيق خطط العمل الخاصة بالتدخل ووضعها وإعطائها الصفة الرسمية
 Final Discussion and Conclusion 15:30 النقاش الختامي والخلاصة
 Conference Ends / Coffee Break 16:30 انتهاء المؤتمر / استراحة
 Dinner 19:30 عشاء