

# VERANSTALTUNGSBEITRAG

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

AUSLANDSBÜRO JORDANIEN

June 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011

DR MARTIN BECK  
CHANTAL FOYER

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## International Conference on Cross Cultural Education

Event: **International Conference**

Date/Place: June 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> 2011,

Notre Dame University

Beirut, Lebanon

**Concept:** Dr. Fadi Daou, Dr. Martin Beck

**Organization:** Adyan Foundation, Notre Dame University, KAS Amman

### 1. Program Overview

<b>Opening Session – June 2, 9h30-10h30, Issam Fares Hall</b>	
Dr. Nayla Tabbara	Scientific Coordinator of the Conference
<i>Presentation of the Euro-Mediterranean Adyan Understanding Program (8 minute Movie)</i>	
Prof. Martin Beck	Regional Representative of Konrad Adenauer Stiftung
President Jorge Sampaio	President of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations
Fr. Prof. Walid Moussa	President of Notre Dame University
Prof. Fadi Daou	Chairman of Adyan Foundation
Salim Wardy	Minister of Culture of the Republic of Lebanon Representing General Michel Sleiman President of the Republic of Lebanon
<b>Cocktail and Cultural Exhibition</b>	
<b>1. The Arab Uprising: Change or Challenge for Diversity?- June 2, 11h30-13h00, Abu Khater Hall</b>	
Dr. Eugene Sensenig-Dabbous	Panel Chair
Prof. Fadi Daou	<i>The Arab uprisings and the new challenges for social and cross-cultural cohesion</i> Chairman and CEO of Adyan foundation (Lebanon)
Dr. Martin Beck	<i>European Foreign Policies Towards the Middle East Revisited</i> Resident Representative to Jordan, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (Jordan/Germany)
Prof. Farag Elkamel	<i>Media and the Egyptian revolution</i> Dean of Faculty of Mass Communication, Ahram Canadian University (Egypt)
<b>2. Diversity, Intercultural and Interreligious Education- June 2, 15h00- 16h30, Abu Khater Hall</b>	
Dr. Nayla Tabbara	Panel Chair

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Prof. Fr. Jamal Khader	<i>Teaching Christians about Islam and Muslims about Christianity - The Vision and Experience of Bethlehem University</i> Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Chairperson of the Department of Religious Studies at Bethlehem University (Palestine)
Prof. Martin Tamcke	<i>Interreligious Interaction on the Path to Transculturality</i> Professor at Gottingen University, President of German Symposium Syriacum (Germany)
Prof. Antoine Messarra	شرح التنوع الديني... في ابعده من التنوع ( <i>Explaining religious diversity but beyond diversity</i> ) Coordinator of the M.A. in Islamo-Christian Relations, Saint-Joseph University (Lebanon)
<b>3. Education on Cross Cultural Diversity: Mutual Challenges- June 2, 17h00-18h30, Abu Khater Hall</b>	
Dr. Carol-Ann Goff Kfouri	Panel Chair
Mr. Miguel Silva	<i>Intercultural competences to engage in global citizenship</i> Programme manager-Global Education Programme of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe (Portugal)
Dr. Mazin Motabagani	ضرورة إنشاء الدراسات الأوروبية والأمريكية في الجامعات العربية لتعزيز التواصل الثقافي ( <i>Necessity of introducing European and American Studies in Arab Universities to foster intercultural dialogue</i> ) Director of Al-Madinah Center for European and American Studies (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)
Dr. Suzanne Albanus and Miriam Khalil	<i>Perspectives on the challenges of cross-cultural education in the GCC. A case study of the American University in Dubai</i> Academic Advisor at American University of Dubai (United Arab Emirates)
Ms. Christine Loy	<i>Intercultural Education in German Higher Education</i> PhD Candidate at the Ludwig-Maximilians Universität, München (Germany)
<b>Education Panels- Parallel Sessions</b>	
<b>4. Cross Cultural Education and Methodological Challenges (Methodology, History, Identity, Perception)- June 3, 9h00-10h30, Friends Hall</b>	
Dr. Edward Alam	Panel Chair
Dr. Fr. Georges Antaby	<i>Cross Cultural Education and Methodological Challenges: An inclusive and dynamic reality</i> Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Notre Dame University (Lebanon)
Prof. Gennaro Auletta	<i>An emerging cross disciplinary research strategy</i> Scientific Director of the Specialization Science and Philosophy- Pontifical Gregorian University (Italy)
Dr. Eugene Sensenig-Dabbous	<i>The theory and praxis of Western research methods in the MENA region</i> Chair of the political science department at Notre Dame University (Austria/Lebanon)
Mr. Martin Dougiamas	<i>E-learning as a model space for Cross-Cultural Education: the example of Moodle (Video-Conference)</i> Moodle Founder and Lead Developer; Managing Director of

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	Moodle Pty Ltd (Australia)
<b>5. Cross Cultural Education and the Transformation of Teacher and Learner Role- June 3, 11h00-12h30, Friends Hall</b>	
Dr. Konrad Pedziwiatr	Panel Chair
Prof. Naji Oueijan	<i>Managing Cultural Diversity: The Role of a Teacher</i> Professor of English at Notre Dame University, Chair of the "Common Platforms for Bridging World cultures" (Lebanon)
Dr. Zeinab Abou Samak	<i>Teachers as change agents of multicultural education</i> Assistant Professor at the College of Education, Hashemite University (Jordan)
Dr. Patrick Gibbons	<i>Cross cultural education and the transformation of teacher &amp; learner roles: the NOHA experience</i> President of the Network on Humanitarian Assistance NOHA at University College Dublin (Ireland)
Ms. Hebatallah Zohni	<i>Learning from our learners</i> Arabic Instructor-Misr Language School (Egypt)
<b>Religion Panels-Parallel Sessions</b>	
<b>6. Interfaith Dialogue and Education on Religions- June 3, 9h00-10h30, Abu Khater Hall</b>	
Fr. Jean Jacques Perennès	Panel Chair
Prof. Fr. Robert Christian	<i>Know thy enemy or love thy neighbor? A proposal for interreligious education by both</i> Vice Dean of Theology Faculty- Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Italy)
Dr. Joseph Yacoub	<i>A Spiritual Perception on Multicultural Education</i> Associate Professor at Notre Dame University (Lebanon)
Ms. Farah Charif D'ouezzan	<i>Teaching religions in a cross cultural environment</i> Director of the Center for Cross Cultural Learning (Morocco)
Dr. Fr. Akram Houry	<i>A spiritual interreligious dialogue</i> Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Humanities at Notre Dame University (Lebanon)
<b>7. Theology and Religious Diversity- June 3, 11h00-12h30, Abu Khater Hall</b>	
Prof. Fadi Daou	Panel Chair
Prof. Mohammed Issam Eido	حكمة الإشراف كمصدر للمعرفة المتبادلة : دراسة في أدبيات جلال الدين الرومي وفريد الدين عطار <i>(Illumination Philosophy as a resource for mutual understanding: a study of the literature of Jalaluddin Rumi and Fariduddin Attar)</i> Professor Department of Quranic Studies & History of Islamic Sciences at Damascus University, Director of Dalalah Institute (Syria)
Dr. Fr. Roger Chikri	<i>Christological sources for catholic leaders in the task of cross-cultural education</i> Director of Administration – Notre Dame University (Lebanon)
Ms. Sandra Lenke	<i>The methods of comparative theology-Goals and</i>

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	<i>Challenges</i> Research assistant at the "Centre of Comparative Theology and Cultural Sciences", University of Paderborn (Germany)
Dr. Claire Henderson Davis	<i>Connecting Religion &amp; Society in the work of Charles Davis &amp; Ali Shariati</i> Programmes Manager in the Centre for Public Education at the Woolf Institute, Cambridge (United Kingdom)
<b>Civil Society and Peace Building Panels- Parallel Sessions</b>	
<b>8. Diversity, Education and Peace-Building- June 3, 14h30-16h00, Abu Khater Hall</b>	
Dr. Martin Beck	Panel Chair
Mr. Barry Van Driel	<i>Intercultural Education: Lessons learned, controversies and best practices</i> Editor-in-Chief of the academic journal Intercultural Education, Routledge Publishers. (Netherlands)
Fr. Jean Jacques Pérennès	<i>The mutual perception of Christians and Muslims: From a controversial to a confident and respectful relationship</i> General Secretary of Institut Dominicain d'Etudes Orientales IDEO (Egypt)
Dr. Armando Bernardini	<i>Role of schools in raising children and acceptance of the other</i> President of International Foundation for Interreligious and Intercultural Education IFIIE -Rome (Italy)
Dr. Ziad Fahed	<i>Cross Cultural Education and its challenges among the Lebanese post war generations: A case study from Notre Dame University, Lebanon.</i> Associate Professor of Humanities at Notre Dame University (Lebanon)
<b>9. Civil Society: Space of Cross Cultural and Non Formal Education- June 3, 16h30-18h00, Abu Khater Hall</b>	
Dr. Ziad Fahed	Panel Chair
Ms. Tihomira Trifonova	<i>The educational power of civil society</i> PhD candidate, lecturer and researcher at New Bulgarian University in Sofia (Bulgaria)
Mr. Bernard Abrignani	<i>Intercultural Learning an essential Key for the EuroMed Youth Cooperation</i> Coordinator of Salto-Youth EuroMed Resource Centre and Project Director of the technical assistance for the EuroMed Youth Programme IV (France)
Mr. Garba Diallo	<i>The Danish Folkehojskole as a Space for Cross Cultural Fertilization</i> Director and programme leader of Crossing Borders Global Studies at the Krogerup College (Denmark)
Ms. Eva Vens	<i>Passages: using life stories about celebrating rites of passage as recognition between different group</i> Anthropologist, Lecturer and Coordinator of the diversity policy at the Faculty of Social Work and Welfare Studies, Ghent University College (Belgium)

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<b>Management of Diversity: Methods and Tools Panels- Parallel Sessions</b>	
<b>10. Tools for Cross Cultural Education- June 3, 14h30-16h00, Friends Hall</b>	
Mr. Miguel Silva	Panel Chair
Ms. Naima Bouchemma	ثقافة السلام في الكتب الدراسية ( <i>The culture of peace in education Textbooks</i> ) Counselor on Education at the Dialogue of Civilizations Department- League of Arab States (Algeria/Egypt)
Ms. Rina Viers	<i>Teaching the common origin of the alphabets as an educational purpose for the people of the Mediterranean</i> Head of the ALPHABETS association (France)
Ms. Nadezhda Savova	<i>Bread: resources for ecological and art based development in informal and formal cross-cultural education</i> Lecturer in Cultural Studies at Sofia University (Bulgaria)
<b>11. Managing Global and Local Diversity- June 3, 16h30-18h00, Friends Hall</b>	
Fr. Dr. Jamal Khader	Panel Chair
Ms. Gizel Hindi	<i>Globalization and Identities</i> Instructor of Advanced Writing and Business Communication course at Notre Dame University and La Sagesse University (Lebanon)
Dr. Konrad Pędziwiatr	<i>European Muslims and the Transformations of the Multicultural Regimes</i> Tischner European University (Poland)
Prof. Stephan Schreiner	<i>The Concept of Trialogue of Cultures - Remarks on inter-cultural education</i> Coordinator of European Abrahamic Forum, Tübingen University (Germany/Switzerland)
Mr. Christian Van Kerckhove	<i>What about me? Managing diversity in a Faculty of Social Work and Welfare Studies</i> Lecturer at the Faculty of Social Work and Welfare Studies at University College Ghent and at Ghent University and coordinator of diversity policy (Belgium)
<b>Closing Session- June 3, 18h30-19h30, Abu Khater Hall</b>	
Dr. Nayla Tabbara	Scientific Coordinator of the Conference
Mr. Andreu Claret	Executive director of <i>Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean foundation for dialogue of Cultures (ALF) and Cross-Cultural education</i>
Prof. Fadi Daou	Chairman of Adyan Foundation

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## 2. Objectives

The growing notion of global belonging, in relation with the revolution of communication tools, would make it easy to assume that diversity is now celebrated and differences are accepted as an opportunity for strengthening a global multicultural world. Too often, however, diversity and difference lead to division and violence. This is in part due to the fact that many people do not have the chance to move beyond the scope of their own cultural framework and communicate positively with others. A certain degree of "cognitive mobility" is required to understand persons and issues in different cultural frameworks, and to build communication. Such communication leads to the kind of constructive action that makes space for a healthy multicultural world.

Pluralism and multicultural interactivity have grown faster than the ability of people to manage diversity and perform cognitive mobility. Misunderstanding and misconception stem from a lack of knowledge of others, their cultures, religions and viewpoints and from a confinement in single-minded thought. Islamophobia in the West, prejudices and stereotypes among



*Prof. Fadi Daou, Chairman of Adyan Foundation*

Arab populations regarding the West and Christians, and misrepresentation of religious issues in the media and in some educational tools constitute symptoms of this deeper problem of ignorance.

For these reasons, Adyan Foundation, Notre Dame University, Anna Lindh Foundation, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the KAS Amman Office joined efforts to organize a two-day conference on Cross Cultural Education. Fifty speakers from Academic Institutions, International Organizations, Civil Society Organizations, and over 24 different countries were

present. The aim of the conference was to bring together experts from a large range of fields in order to prompt fruitful discussions about the merits and challenges of Cross Cultural Education.

The following report intends to summarize the main focuses of the conference, but for rhetorical purposes and considering the length of the event and the number of speakers, only a few presentations are cited as examples in the present report. However, abstracts of all presentations can be found at:

<http://www.understandingprogram.net/course/view.php?id=12>

## 3. Concepts

**Dr. Nayla Tabbara**, the scientific coordinator of the conference and the program coordinator at Adyan Foundation, opened the conference by welcoming and thanking all the participants and speakers. She highlighted the importance of cross-cultural education by presenting the Adyan Understanding Program. Then **Dr. Martin Beck**, Resident Representative of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Amman, also welcomed all attendees and stressed the fact that Lebanon was the perfect setting for a conference on cross-cultural education.

**President Jorge Sampaio** from the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations called the conference a great opportunity to reflect on strategies of cross-cultural education, because cultural literacy is an underexplored discipline in our age of diversity. **Father Pr. Walid Moussa**, President of Notre-Dame University, welcomed the high number of attendees and thanked Adyan Foundation, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Amman as well as the Department of Political Science of Notre-Dame University for their hard work.

**Dr. Fadi Daou**, Chairman of Adyan Foundation, mentioned the clash that resulted from the process of globalization combined with the emergence of extremism. **Salim Wardy**, Minister of Culture of the Republic of Lebanon, welcomed all speakers and attendees in the name of **General**

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**Michel Sleiman**, President of the Republic of Lebanon, under whose patronage the conference took place.



Salim Wardy, Minister of Culture of the Republic of Lebanon

*Cross Cultural Education*

Cross Cultural Education is a very broad concept and is in fact a very common occurrence, because it takes place when a culturally heterogeneous group is being taught while being treated as such. The teacher needs to look beyond what might appear as homogeneity, i.e. he or she thinks that he or she is standing in front a group of students, but in fact he or she is standing in front of a very diverse group of students of different origins, with different beliefs and/or cultural references. The teacher is thus responsible of raising cultural awareness among the learners and intercultural communication will naturally happen. However, Cross Cultural Education is not restricted to a classroom. It occurs in schools, universities, but also within civil society.

The level of ethnic and religious diversity varies considerably across the Arab World and leads to very different challenges. In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for example, society is rather homogenous, if one does not take into consideration migrant workers, who do not benefit from Higher Education in the KSA, which is where Cross Cultural Education starts. **Dr. Masin Motabagani** from the KSA talked about the importance of learning about the other, as he declared the necessity of introducing European and American Studies in universities across the Arab World and in particular in Saudi-Arabia. Maybe it is not possible to put these students in a multicultural context, but through making the study of the other available to them, they will be in a predisposition of being able to let go of their prejudices when meeting the other. The establishment of such courses would be the

first step towards implementing cross-cultural education in Saudi Arabia, where the conservative society combined with an autocratic regime does not encourage students to consider and learn about "The Other".

In the Mashreq region, the challenges are very different. Teachers have to adapt to a very diverse society. **Professor Naji Oueijan** from Notre Dame University pointed out the special case of Lebanon, with a history of 4000 years of innumerable different civilizations. He observed what he called an abuse of cultural diversity, meaning the unwillingness to learn about the other combined with the stereotyping of the other. Indeed, the Lebanese society, especially since the Civil War, remains much divided, even if it is in a more peaceful way. Religion is geographically defined which restricts the level of interaction of believers of different faiths. On the other hand, **Dr. Zeinab Abou Samak** from Hashemite University talked about the Jordanian case. She explained that the ethnic or religious diversity in Jordan remained quite limited and it is rather the different degrees of conservatism that are the factors that lead to verbal and physical confrontations. According to her, the classroom is probably the only place where students are faced with diversity. Teachers can thus be a primary actor in bringing by tolerance and understanding of each other. This also applies for Lebanon, where Christians, Sunni and Shia Muslims might only meet in the classroom. Therefore, teachers need to be the major actors in bringing the different cultures together and cross-cultural education is the fundament of cultural harmony within a state.

*Religion and Cross-Cultural Education*

In a region where religion plays a preponderant role in all social and political activities, it was of key importance to talk about interreligious education.

**Professor Father Jamal Khader** from Bethlehem University presented his experience in Palestine of teaching Christian

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and Muslim students the religion of the other. This is a clear situation where Cross Cultural Education presents real challenges, because the students see the other's religion through their own. In Palestine it is compulsory to take a religion course, with one semester on Islam and one semester on Christianity. The students do not sign up for the class because they want to learn more about the other religion, but because they want to pass their degree. In this environment, the teacher needs to adapt his teaching and make sure that prejudices are being discussed. Open dialogue is crucial and thus it is important to teach Christians and Muslims at the same time about Islam and Christianity, because if they were being taught separately, the benefits of living in a multi cultural environment would not extend to the classroom and they would see the other religion as 'The Other' while never trying to understand nor being able to grasp why the other does certain things in a particular ways.

**Professor Stefan Schreiner**, Coordinator of the European Abrahamic Forum and Professor at Tübingen University, explained that in terms of religion, cross-cultural education needs to take the differences between religions and cultures serious, but it should not make different religious commitment an insurmountable obstacle to cross-cultural, inter-religious understanding and peaceful living together. It is important for teachers and students to be able to openly take a religious standpoint without taking this as the end of the discussion.

When **Farah Charif D'Ouezzan** presented her work at the Center for Cross Cultural Learning, she insisted on the fact that on top of learning about the different religions from a multi-disciplinary approach, the most important source of learning comes from the interactions of people of multiple faiths experiencing religion as lived and practiced in daily lives and witnessing how societies grapple with the challenges of religiosity and secularism. However, she also stressed that it is important to leave people the choice whether to take a religious standpoint or not. Learners should be able to say they do

not believe and they should also be able to say that they prefer not to say what they do or do not believe in.

After highlighting the fact that cross-cultural education on religion has seen its first attempts as early as the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, **Professor Martin Tamcke** from the University of Göttingen presented another challenge when he asked: "Can cross-cultural education on religions help to transform the situation in coexistence of Christianity and Islam towards transculturality, or will we see the prevailment of merely intercultural schemes of thought?" Indeed this type of education could lead to deeper understanding of the other, but it could also raise tensions when interaction is stopped in early stages. Therefore cross-cultural education needs to be an ongoing process, where continuity is essential.

*Methods of Cross-Cultural Education*

**Miriam Khalil** from the American University of Dubai presented her research in collaboration with **Dr. Suzanne Albanus** on cross-cultural education in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The research made clear that students were much more inclined and have more facilities to embrace cultural diversity and to change their mindsets than teachers. However, it is necessary for teachers to know how to work with a heterogeneous group and they should be encouraged to revise their methods in order to be able to communicate to a diverse group and to cross cultural borders in the classroom. One of the methods is for the teacher to consciously move back and forth between the everyday world and the topic at hand. It is also necessary for cultural borders to be explicit so that all parties understand the boundaries.

Therefore it is essential that teachers are trained in cross-cultural education. **Miguel Silva** from the Global Education Program of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe presented the Global Education Guidelines, a pedagogical handbook for educators to understand and implement



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global education. The program also offers a global education on-line training course in order to form more and more teachers in that field. Although teaching is said to be an art, more than a profession, it is important that teachers become learners again so that they can improve their methods and adapt to new conditions.

### *Education in the MENA region*

**Dr. Eugene Sensenig-Dabbous** exposed a problem teachers or academics are faced within the MENA region: The theory and praxis of Western Research Methods cannot fully be applied and this for three main reasons: (1) There is a lack of useful referenced data and often incompatibility problems are not rare. (2) There are no laws on accessing data, but many "taboo topics" exist in social sciences. (3) The question of applicability of Western research remains open, because all paradigms have Western origins. He also made clear that MENA Research on the region, but also on Europe and on North America, should be undertaken in order to address the imbalance between research coming from the economic North and research coming from the economic South.

Indeed, European politics are not always the priority of academics, experts and politicians in the MENA region. Therefore, **Dr. Martin Beck**, Resident Representative of the



*Dr. Martin Beck, Resident Representative of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung – Amman*

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Amman, talked about European Foreign policies towards the Middle East that have been based on the ideals of the civilian power concept. However, he argued that the European Union failed to realize these ideals, as it faced inconsistencies and realities on the ground.

The EU was firstly unable to solve the dilemma between stability and

democratization and secondly it was both unprepared and incapable to walk the talk of its declaratory policy of even-handedness in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Yet, the recent cataclysms in the Arab World provide the European Union with the opportunity to revise its past policies of demanding democracies without democratization. At the same time the Arab World could contribute to a more fruitful cooperation by acknowledging the complexity of Mediterranean relations and taking European concerns seriously. Last but not least, he pointed out that the European Union should not miss the opportunity to recognize a Palestinian state in the borders of 1967, if, as expected, it will be declared in September 2011.

### 4. Conclusion

During the closing session **Mr. Andreu Claret**, Executive Director of Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation, congratulated Adyan Foundation for their initiatives, in particular the Understanding program as well as KAS Amman. He also highlighted the fact that the conference took place at a very significant moment for the Middle East, because the Arab diversity will emerge in countries that have so far been considered as homogeneous entities. **Dr. Fadi Daou** and **Dr. Nayla Tabbara** thanked all the speakers and participants and both declared the success of the International Conference on Cross Cultural Education. They attributed this success to the outstanding variety of leading academics, experts from civil society and the private sector as well as educators from different field. The fruitful discussions that arose during the conference also found continuity in an online platform, where speakers are still able to discuss and to inform the others about their research and activities.

The Conference was highly covered in the national media in Lebanon. A report on the press coverage can be found at: <http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/3276-1442-2-30.pdf>