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**Mentor Association's Final Report on the  
First International Conference on Media Education in the Middle East  
Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
March 4 -7, 2007**

## Summary

The First International Conference on Media Education in the Middle East, which took place in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia between March 4 and 7 2007, was organized by the International Mentor Media Education Association, in cooperation with the Saudi Ministry of Education and the Capital Center for Conferences & Exhibitions (Al mahwar). The Conference, launched by HE Saudi Minister of Education, HE Dr Abdallah Al Obeid, was sponsored by His Royal Highness King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz.

Overall, the event was a great success. The conference received wide media coverage, not only in Saudi Arabia but also in other Gulf and Arab countries.

Saudi officials and members of the Saudi Royal family attended the opening session, which attracted more than 1,500 guests from around the world. There were speakers from the Arab World, Europe, Asia, USA, Latin America and Africa. A representative from the European Commission was also present.

Participants expressed their appreciation of the international spirit of the conference, in which different points of view and practices were discussed. They also stressed the importance of fostering this kind of international debate and academic exchange on a regular basis, as a way of developing a new forum for intercultural dialogue. The cultural differences enriched the debates and paved the way for a fruitful dialogue leading towards an increased mutual understanding.

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## Background

The Mentor Association was founded in 2004, with the objective of bringing together Media Education professionals from around the world, in order to develop independent and effective Media Education training.

The Mentor Association evolved from a UNESCO-led project and was supported by the European Commission under the 2003 Media Literacy Programme. The Mentor Project highlighted the need for a shared Media Education curriculum throughout the Mediterranean Basin. During the meetings that took place, it became clear that there was a real opportunity and need to create an international association for promoting and fostering Media Education initiatives around the world and enhancing dialogue between different cultures.

Since its creation, Mentor Association has been working steadily on promoting Media Education in Arab countries. The efforts of Dr Samy Tayie, President of Mentor Association, in creating awareness among education officials and stakeholders on Media Education led him to begin conversations with the Saudi Ministry of Education. The most important results of these efforts were the consolidation of a trust-based relationship with the Saudi counterparts and the decision to organize the First Conference on Media Education in the Middle East.



*Mentor's President and Secretary General with top officials from the Saudi Ministry of Education.*

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The main objective of the First International Conference on Media Education in the Middle East was to support and coordinate current and future research efforts in the field of Media Education through the international exchange of knowledge and experiences. Its specific aims were:

- Raising awareness about currently available research.
- Serving as a vehicle for researchers across disciplines to meet and share expertise and experiences.
- Identifying critical problems that must be addressed in order to make some progress in the field of Media Education.
- Promoting new collaborative efforts and dialogue between researchers from around the world.
- Discussing potentially beneficial international initiatives.



*Professor Fabio Tropea during his speech.*

The main topics of the Conference were:

- Why and how to introduce Media Education into education systems.
- Teacher training in Media Education.
- Methods for teaching Media Education in the classroom.
- The role of multimedia and Internet in education.
- Media responsibility towards Media Education.
- The role of families and NGOs in Media Education.

The vast majority of the 1,500 participants are currently working as:

- Primary and secondary school teachers.

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- University professors (education, audiovisual communication, journalism, etc.)
- Education and Communication researchers.
- Technology experts.
- Media producers.

Ministers of Education from the countries belonging to the Gulf Cooperation Council, and other Arab states, as well as representatives from developing countries in Asia, attended the conference. In addition, several world-renowned experts were invited to share their expertise as speakers at the Conference. Therefore, it represented a unique opportunity to promote the principles of Media Education in the region, and to inaugurate a new line of mutual collaboration and multicultural dialogue.



*The number of Conference participants far exceeded all expectations, particularly in the case of women.*

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## Mentor Association's participation in the conference

Mentor Association and its Saudi counterparts agreed to take on the responsibility for organizing specific and separate aspects of the event. While the Saudi organization was in charge of planning the research-oriented sessions which were delivered in the main by experts from Arab countries, Mentor Association was in charge of inviting renowned Media Education experts from Europe, North America, South America and Asia. It was also a Mentor Association responsibility to define the round tables and workshops in the scientific program.

Many experts were invited to the conference, although some were unable to attend due to previous commitments. Mentor's final list of speakers included:



*Ms Geneviève Jacquinet and Ms Evelyne Bèvort, two of the Conference speakers.*

Dr Samy Tayie	President of Mentor Association
Dr José Manuel Pérez Tornero	General Secretary of Mentor Association
Dr Manuel Pinto	Vice President for Europe of Mentor Association
Mr Fabio Tropea	Professor Universidad Pompeu Fabra (UPF); Escuela Superior de Diseño (ELISAVA); Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona. (Spain)
Dr José María Perceval	Professor in the Department of Journalism of the Faculty of Communication Science at the Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, and coordinator of Media Education for the Masters in Communication and Education.
Mr Paolo Celot	President Eavi - European Association for Viewers Interest
Mr Matteo Zacchetti	Responsible for Media Literacy, Digital Programme for the European Commission

## Mentor International Media Education Association

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Mr Patrick Verniers	Directeur Média Animation, membre du Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel (CSA) -Belguim
Mr Alejandro Piscitelli	General Manager Educ.ar (Argentinean Educational Net <a href="http://www.educ.ar">www.educ.ar</a> )
Dr Howard Schultz	Director, Modern American School of Egypt, Cairo, Egypt
Dr Vítor-Reia Baptista	Professor at the University of Algarve, Portugal
Dr Ulla Carlsson	Director of Nordicom -Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research
Ms Cary Balzagette	Education Policy Adviser and General Secretary of the 8-nation Steering Group for the European Charter for Media Literacy
Dr M. Abdelkarim Hizaoui	Professor at the Press and Information Sciences Institute (IPSI) of La Manouba University (Tunisia)
Dr Pier Cesare Rivoltella	Professor of technologies for teaching and learning. Professor at the Faculty of Education Sciences at the Università Católica del Sacro Cuoro. (Italy)
Dr Sanjay Asthana	Assistant Professor at the College of Mass Communication at the Middle Tennessee State University Murfreesboro (collaborated in UNESCO research on Media Education)
Ms Evelyne Bevort	Directrice déléguée, relations internationales of CLEMI - Centre for liaison between teaching and information media
Dr Divina Frau Meigs	Professor of American Studies and Mass media sociology Université Paris 3-Sorbonne(France)
Dr Genevieve Jacquinot	Professor at Culture et Communication Université de Paris 8
Dr Marco Ricceri	Secretary General of Eurispes - Institute for political, economic and social studies
Ms Susanne Krucsay	Head of department Media Education/Educational Media/Media Service Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (Austria)

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As co-organizers, Mentor Association played a crucial role during the Conference in Riyadh and many important contacts were made. Experts and guests from around the world showed a great deal of interest in the Association and in Media Education initiatives in Europe. These hopefully long-lasting relationships and the enthusiastic response to Media Education promotion will lead to new media education and cultural activities in the region, fostered by Mentor Association and local stakeholders.

All the sessions, including the round tables and workshops planned by Mentor Association, had great attendance figures. Female guests were especially interested in the workshops, where they learned practical ways of introducing Media Education in the classrooms.



*Dr José María Perceval receiving an honorary plaque from HE Dr Abdallah Al Obeid, Saudi Minister of Education, and Mr Abdullah Al Joubairy, Vice President of Mentor Association for the Middle East.*

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## Conference conclusions and recommendations

The Conference was held, as planned, between March 4 and 7, 2007. The program ran smoothly.

As the days went on, several Media Education-related issues arose as the main concerns of local speakers and attendees:

- The **impact of some media contents** (TV, cinema, video games, Internet) on the region's cultural, social and religious values, and the resulting need to protect children and the general population, and to empower them to protect themselves from this impact.
- The **overwhelming amount of foreign media production** against a less competitive national and regional media industry.
- The **power of media to build senses** that foster stereotypes, unfriendliness and mutual misunderstanding among cultures, peoples and societies.
- The imperative need for **bridging cultures**, for creating new spaces for dialogue, for **building a shared knowledge**, and for teaching children everywhere that diversity is a powerful value.
- The need for **teacher training on Media Education** as a means for empowering children to be critically aware of media contents.
- The need to involve **education systems, media industries and family groups** in Media Education.
- The need to create **awareness among media producers** about their social responsibility and to train media producers to create contents for teaching and promoting media education.
- The need to **regularly update media education know-how** through international encounters such as the First International Conference on Media Education in the Middle East.

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In the light of these and other concerns brought up by experts and participants in the conference, Mentor Association recommended a series of future projects. Through the following recommendations, Mentor Association intends on the one hand, to promote and strengthen media education in the Middle East; and on the other, to consolidate Mentor Association as a legitimate stakeholder in the region, which can participate and foster activities aimed at enhancing mutual understanding through intercultural dialogue.

The Conference's recommendations are:

- To organize an annual international conference on Media Education. Initially, it was planned to hold the International Conference on Media Education once every 2 years. However, because of the multiple requests to host the conference, it was decided to organize it next year. The request from Dubai to host it in March 2008 was accepted.
- Establishing the regional office for Mentor Association in Riyadh. This office will be managed by a Mentor Association vice-president for the Middle East and the South Asian Region. All activities and projects related to Media Education will be supervised by this office, which will work in collaboration with Mentor Association.

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- **Training of secondary school teachers.** In order to spread the concept of Media Education, it was suggested that there was an urgent need to train secondary school teachers in Saudi Arabia on Media Education. A 5-year plan has been conceived, which aims to train 3,000 teachers. This training program will start in Saudi Arabia, and will be extended to other countries in the region. Part of the training will be held in Saudi Arabia and the other part in Europe.
- Mentor Association will **participate in the Andalusia Festival in Spain** towards the end of 2008. Guests from Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries will be invited to participate in this festival. This festival will be used as a forum for multicultural dialogue. Mentor Association will make a request for UNESCO and European Commission sponsorship.
- Papers presented at this conference will be **published in a book**, after being edited and compiled. The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media at NORDICOM (Gothenburg University, Sweden) is currently editing the book.
- Mentor Association will search for sponsor/s to **revise and improve its Website**, [www.mediamentor.org](http://www.mediamentor.org), to transform it into a suitable space for discussing and sharing Media Education ideas, experiences and projects.



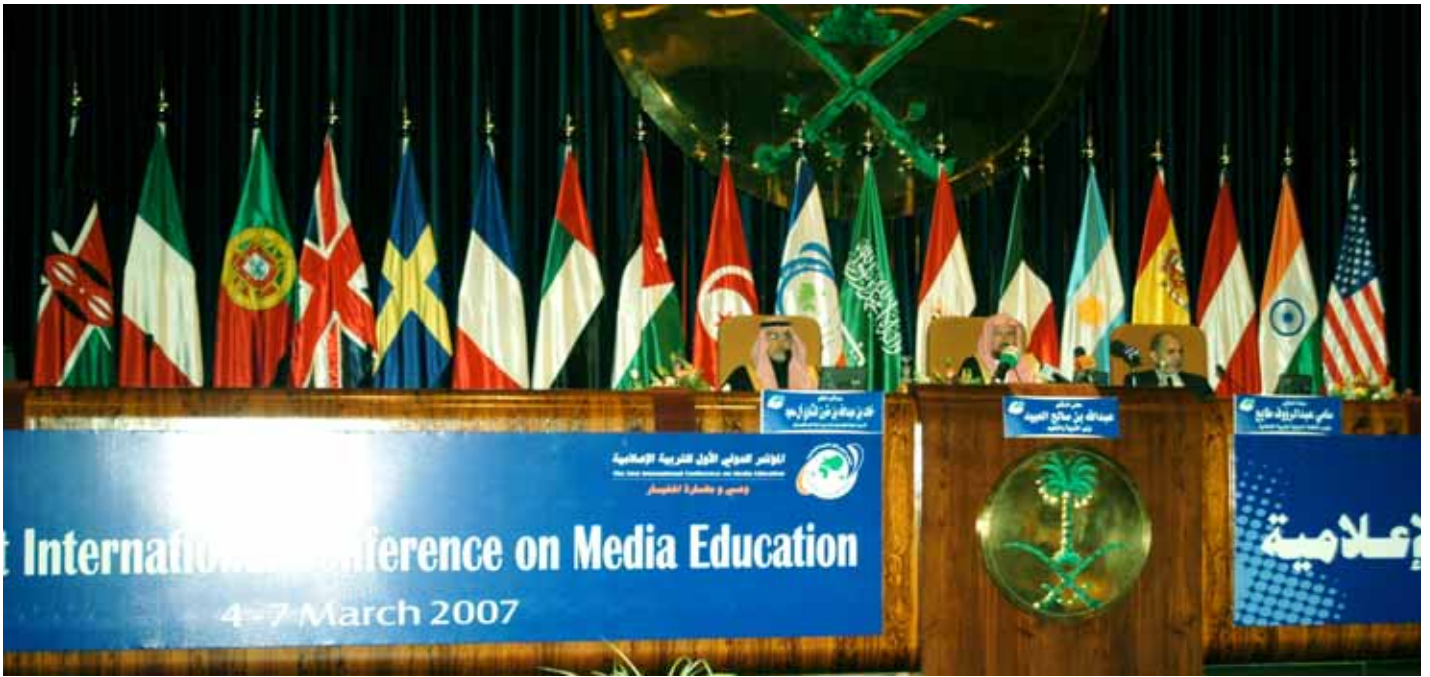
*Mentor President and Secretary General welcoming HE Dr Abdallah Al Obeid, Saudi Minister of Education and HH Prince Khalid Al Saoud, Deputy Minister of Education for Girl's Education.*

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### Mentor Association fostering intercultural dialogue



*The Conference opening session. HE Dr Abdallah Al Obeid, Saudi Minister of Education opened the Conference on behalf of his Royal Highness King Abdallah Ben Abdel Aziz, accompanied by HH Prince Khalid Al Saoud, Deputy Minister of Education for Girl's Education and Mentor's President, Dr Samy Tayie*

The importance of the First international Conference on Media Education in the Middle East which took place in Riyadh lies in the fact that it is the first of a series of media education-related activities and conferences in the Middle East and South Asia. Moreover, it marks the start of a new line of international and intercultural dialogue between Europe, the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

In a cross-cultural debate in which education, communication and information issues are discussed from different cultural perspectives, it is unavoidable that issues related to globalization, pluralism, cultural and linguistic heritage, as well as social and religious values arise.

This aspect of the Conference was noticed by many of the participants and speakers from different parts of the world. It became clear that there is a mutual desire to strengthen bonds and a need to find new ways of bridging cultures.

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Mentor Association plays a crucial role in creating a space for sharing knowledge and experiences through intercultural dialogue, which may lead us to an increased mutual understanding. Therefore, Mentor Association will continue to establish relationships with the Middle East and South Asian countries and to promote international initiatives such as conferences, training programs and other projects related to media education and intercultural dialogue. Eventually, we hope that Mentor Association will reach other regions and increase the spectrum of cultures engaged in dialogue about media education.

In a world portrayed to us by the global media as one of clashing cultures, a world that we discover through the media, promoting and consolidating intercultural dialogue is a natural progression of our leitmotif, media education.

.....  
We hope that all of the above is of interest to you. Mentor Association will keep you informed of the follow-up actions that result of these recommendations.

Sincerely yours,

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President- Mentor International Media  
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**Dr. José Manuel Pérez Tornero,**  
Secretary General - Mentor International Media  
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**Annex 1**

**The First International Conference on Media Education.**

From 4-7 March 2007 [www.meduconf.com](http://www.meduconf.com)

**Conference Program**

**Day (1)**

Time		Monday 05/03/2007				
From	To					
08:00	9:00	Coffee Reception- Registration				
09:00	10:30	Subject	1	Media Education Today (Academic Opening Session)		
		Chairman		Dr. Saeed Al mallees Deputy Minister of Education		
		Speakers		- Dr. Samy Tayie(MENTOR Association President ) - Dr. Jose Manuel Perez Tornero (MENTOR Association Vice – President)		
10:35	12:05	Subject	2	Educational Culture & Media Culture: Integration vs. Fragmentation		
		Chairman		Dr. Soud Saleh Al Mosaibeeh		
		Speakers		- Dr. Saeed Harib - Dr. Miqdad Yaljen - Prof. Fabio Tropea - Dr. Esmat Seedan - Ms. Fatma Al- Otaibi		
12:05	12:30	Coffee Break & Zuher Prayer				
12:30	14:00	Subject	3	Education & Modern Communication Technology		
		Chairman		Dr. Abdelrahman Al dawood		
		Speakers		- Dr. Abdullah Al mosa - Dr. Badr Al Saleh - Dr. Lateefah Al simairi - Mr. Howard Schultz		
14:00	16:30	Lunch				
16:30	18:00	Subject	1	Round Table	1	Workshop
		Chairman		Technological Change & People: Risks & Opportunities		Involving Families in Media Education
		Speakers		Dr. Samy Tayie Dr. Abdelkarim Hizaoui Dr. Santiago Tejedor Calvo Mr. Gordon Mumbo Dr. Abdel Mohsen Al Baz Mr. Yehya Abdel RahmanAl yehya		Prof. Divina Frau Meigs Prof.. Manuel Pinto
18:00	18:30	Coffee Break				
18:30	20:00	Subject	2	Media, Children & Young People	2	Introducing Multimedia in The Classroom
		Chairman		Dr. Salwa Al khateeb		Prof. Pier Cesare Rivoltella Mr. Alejandro Piscitelli
		Speakers		Prof. Ulla Carlsson Dr. Sanjay Asthana Dr. Hanan Ashy Mrs. Evelyne Bevort		
20:00	20:15	Coffee Break				
20:15	21:45	Subject	3	New Educational Multimedia Communication	3	Television, Education & School
		Chairman		Dr. Abdel Aziz Ben salma		Prof. Jose Maria Perceval
		Speakers		Dr. Ghanim Al ghanim Mr. Patrick Verniers		Mrs. Susanne Krucsay

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**Day (2)**

Time		Tuesday 06/03/2007					
From	To						
08:00	9:00	Coffee Reception- Registration					
09:00	10:30	Subject	4	Values & Mass Media			
		Chairman		Dr. Ali Ben Sedeek Al hakami			
		Speakers		Dr. Huda Al gafees Dr. Mohammad Al sewayyed Mr. Zeyad Al drees Mr. Ali alajmi			
10:35	12:05	Subject	5	School Role in Media Education			
		Chairman		Dr. Fahad Ben Ibrahim Al habeeb			
		Speakers		Dr. Mohammad Al khateeb Dr. Abdulrhman Al shaer Dr. Hasan Al olaiqy			
12:05	12:30	Coffee Break & Zuher Prayer					
12:30	14:00	Subject	6	School Curriculums Role In Developing Critic Skills Of Mass Media			
		Chairman		Dr. Nayef Al romi			
		Speakers		Dr. Hassan Ayel Dr. Hussah Al sughayyer Dr. Rashid Al abdukarim Ms. Wafa Al tajel			
14:00	16:30	Lunch					
16:30	18:00	Subject	7	Teachers exposure to Mass Media & Its Impact on Students.	Round Table		
		Chairman			4	Media Education & International Strategies	
		Speakers				Mr. Jose Manuel Perez Tornero  Mr. Matteo Zacchetti Dr. Osama Hariri Mrs. Cary Bazalgette	
Dr. Osman Saleh Al Amer Prof. Jose Maria Perceval Dr. Mohamed Ibrahim Al- asem Dr. Faiza Akhdar							

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## Day (3)

Time		Wednesday 07/03/2007				
From	To					
08:00	9:00	Coffee Reception- Registration				
09:00	10:30	Subject	8	Students Use Of Modern Communication Technology		
		Chairman		Dr. Abdullah Al katheri		
		Speakers		Dr. Jamal Al sharhan Dr. Huda Al mutawaah Dr. Monerah Al salal Dr. Saad Al rashid		
10:35	12:05	Subject	9	Family's Role In Creating Interactive Awareness With Mass Media		
		Chairman		Dr. Mudh Al naeem		
		Speakers		Dr. Abdullah Al fouzan Dr. Fatheyah Al qurashi Dr. Manuel Pinto Ms. Arwa Al ghalyeni		
12:05	12:30	Coffee Break & Zuher Prayer				
12:30	14:00	Subject	10	Educational Responsibility Of Mass Media		
		Chairman		Dr. Othman Seeni		
		Speakers		Dr. Mahmmoud Hammoud Dr. Paolo Celot Dr. Faozyiah Al baker		
14:00	16:30	Lunch				
16:30	18:00	Subject	5	Round Table	4	Workshop
				Contents & Risks: Media Education Strategies In & Out of Schools		Teaching about Media
				Chairman		Dr. Norah Al hazani
Speakers	Prof. Divina Frau Meigs Prof. Vitor- Reia Baptista Mr. Marco Ricceri	Dr. Sanjay Asthana Mrs. Cary Bazalgette				
18:00	18:30	Coffee Break				
18:30	20:00	Subject	6	Media Education in the School Curriculum: Topics & Practice	5	New Educational Needs: Distance life-long learning for teachers
		Chairman		Dr. Osman Al barbekan		Prof. Genevieve Jacquinot
		Speakers		Prof. Pier Cesare Rivoltella Mrs. Susanne Krucsay		
20:00	20:15	Coffee Break				
20:15	21:45	Subject	11	Final Session & Recommendations		
		Chairman		Dr. Khaled Abdullah Muqrin Al-saud Deputy Minister of Education		
		Speakers		Dr. Mohammed Abdulazizi Al-Heezan Dr. Samy Tayie		