



# MENA TRIP REPORT

October 14-27, 2011 / Global Development

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# EGYPT, QATAR & JORDAN

Trip Report / October 14-27, 2011 / Global Development

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## WIKIMEDIA FOUNDATION TEAM IN MENA



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# PURPOSE OF THE TRIP

- 01 **To further develop the global education program**
- 02 **To provide the global development and global education program team with contacts, recommendations on universities and to build a knowledge base for working in the region in the future.**
- 03 **To meet with the qatar foundation team and gather with the arabic wikipedians at the ar:wp convening**

## Work Done by Team



Conducted interviews in Egypt, Qatar and Jordan over a two-week period for Wikimedia Foundation. (SY, FS, AI)

Served as a Catalyst Project Associate and Middle East consultant to the WMF team (SY)

Evaluated five universities on their ability to contribute to Wikipedia: Ain Shams, Cairo University, American University of Cairo, Qatar University, University of Jordan (SY, FS, AI)

Interviewed 30 professors based in the MENA Region about the Global Education Program (SY, AI, FS)

Co-led an education session about Wikimedia at Cairo University and Qatar University (SY, ES)

Coordinated Wikimedia Meet-up in Cairo, Egypt for the local community, 17 attendees (SY, ME)

Supported efforts for the first launch of the Arabic Wikipedia Convening in Doha, Qatar (ME and SY)

Conducted informal on-the-ground user research for mobile technology in three MENA countries to share with the Wikimedia Mobile team.

The team requested information on the types of devices people in the MENA region use, if applicable, how Wikipedia renders on their smartphones, and general insights into users' habits in the MENA region.





# BRIEF INTRO: THE STATE OF THE ARABIC WIKIPEDIA AND THE WIKIPEDIA COMMUNITY

## Statistics

**400** million  
ARABIC SPEAKERS

**150,000**  
Articles in Arabic Wikipedia  
(as of October 2011)

**600**  
Active Editors  
FOR ARABIC WIKIPEDIA

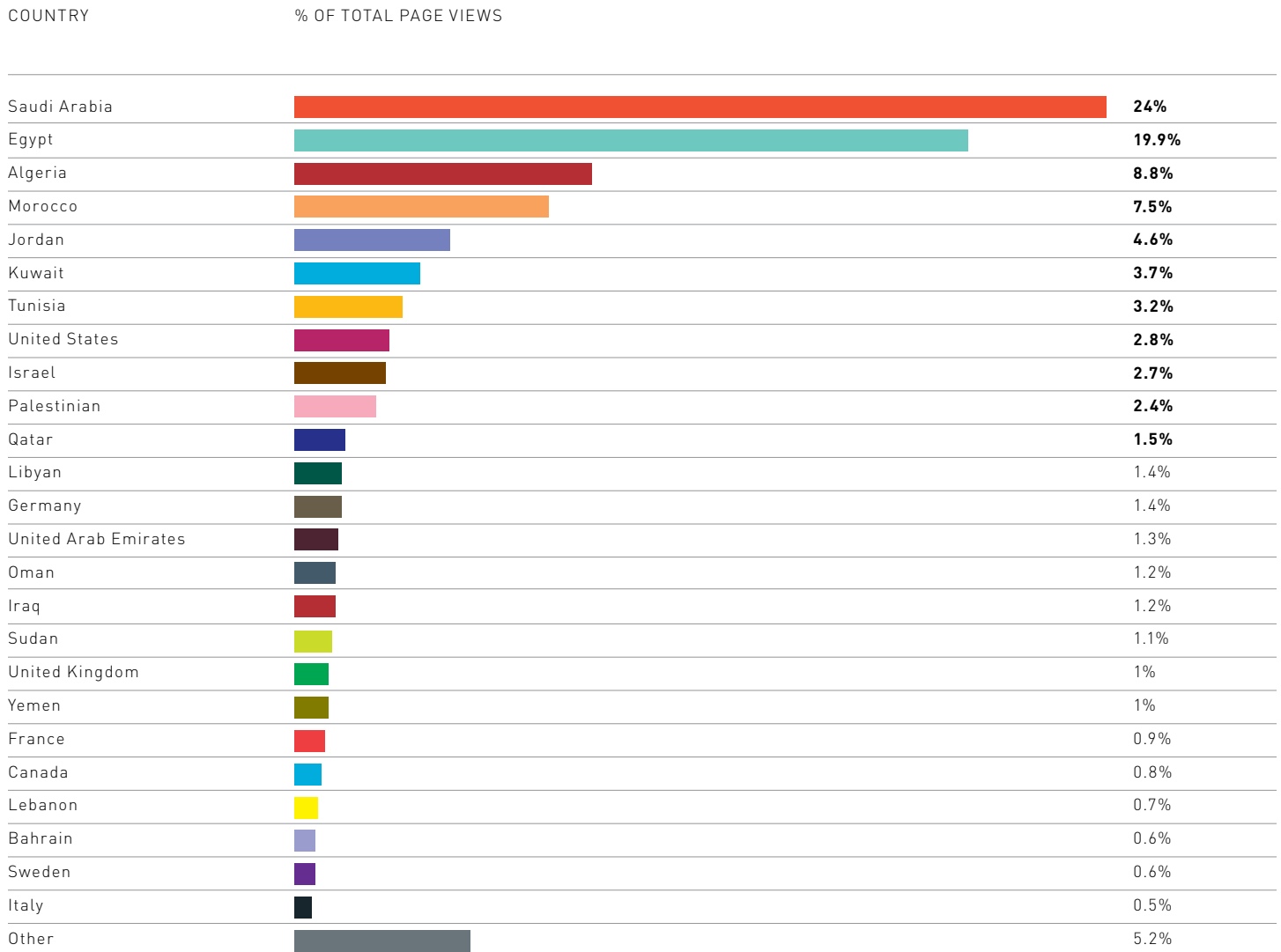
**25th** ranking for  
ARABIC WIKIPEDIA

**5th most spoken language**



# BRIEF INTRO: THE STATE OF THE ARABIC WIKIPEDIA AND THE WIKIPEDIA COMMUNITY

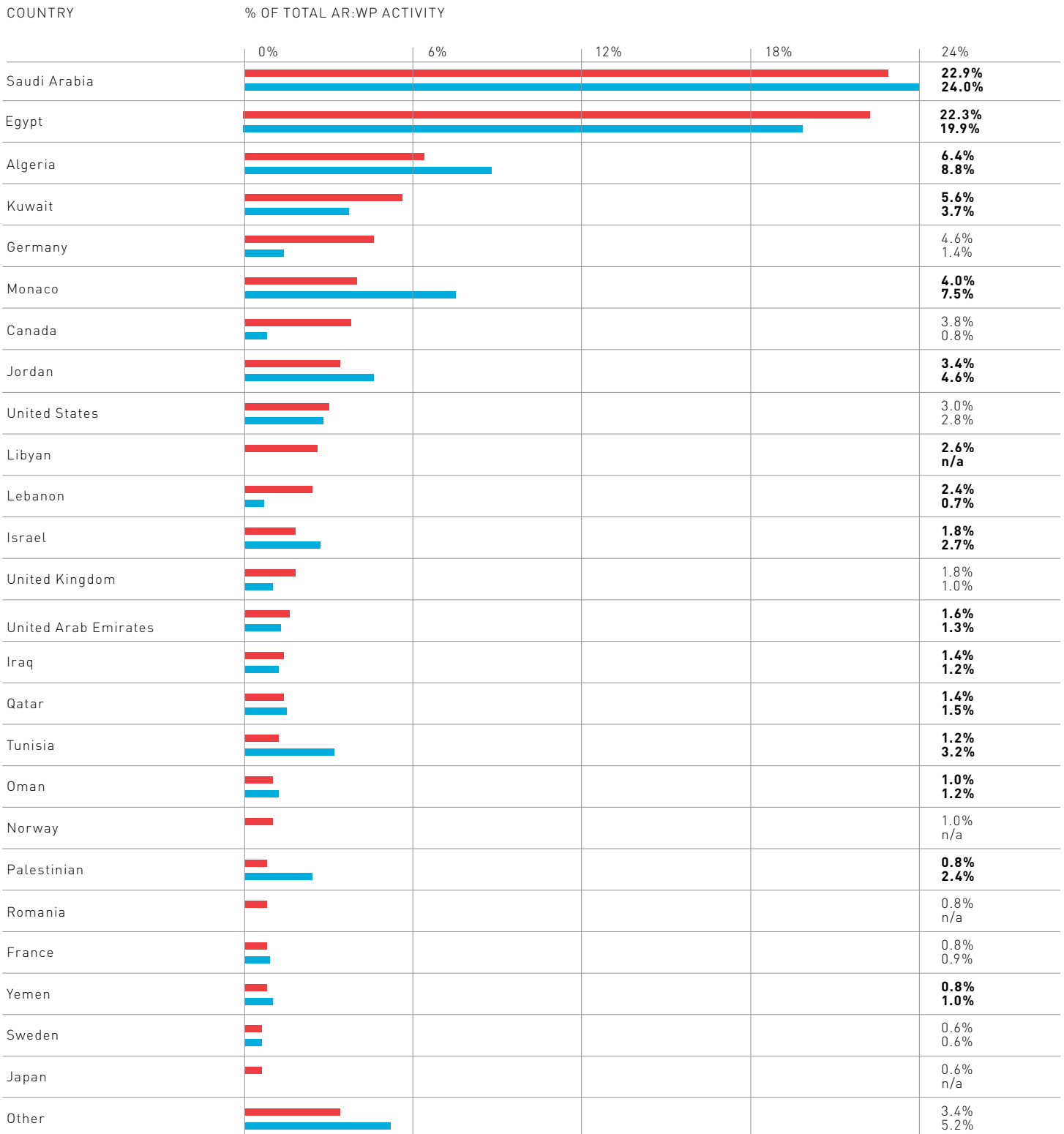
## Statistics / % AR:WP Page Views By Contry (Other = countries < 0.5%)





# BRIEF INTRO: THE STATE OF THE ARABIC WIKIPEDIA AND THE WIKIPEDIA COMMUNITY

## Statistics / % Of Total Page Views & Edits On AR:WP





# BRIEF INTRO: THE STATE OF THE ARABIC WIKIPEDIA AND THE WIKIPEDIA COMMUNITY

## Statistics / % AR:WP Internet Penetration

MIDDLE EAST	POPULATION / 0.002 in = 100000	USERS (DEC 2000) / 0.01 in = 10000	INTERNET USAGE / 0.002 in = 100000	% POP (PENETRATION) USERS [% OF REGION]	FACEBOOK SUBS / 0.01 in = 100000
Egypt	82,079,636	450,000	20,136,000	24.5%	7295,240
Saudi Arabia	26,131,703	200,000	11,400,000	43.6%	4,034,740
Israel	7,473,052	1,270,000	5,263,146	70.4%	3,442,680
Syria	22,517,750	30,000	4,469,000	19.8%	6.2%
United Arab Emirates	5,148,664	735,000	3,555,100	69%	2,340,880
Yemen	24,133,492	15,000	2,349,000	9.7%	329,040
Jordan	6,508,271	127,300	1,741,900	26.8%	1,675,780
Oman	3,027,959	90,000	1,465,000	48.4%	285,080
Palestine (West Bk.)	2,568,555	35,000	1,379,000	53.7%	599,520
Lebanon	4,143,101	300,000	1,201,820	29%	1,201,820
Kuwait	2,595,628	150,000	1,100,000	42.4%	822,640
Iraq	30,399,572	12,500	860,400	2.8%	860,400
Bahrain	1,214,705	40,000	649,300	53.5%	563,800
Qatar	848,016	30,000	563,800	66.5%	245,580





# Cairo University



Just minutes from the Pyramids of Giza is Egypt's top public institution, Cairo University. Many of the country's most noted scholars have graduated from Cairo University (Naguib Mahafouz, Nobel Laureate and Mohamed Elbaradei, presidential candidate and Nobel Laureate). The faculty teaches thousands of students each year (on-campus, 200,000 and distance learners. number N/A). The school is quite competitive, even more selective than private universities; the top six Faculties are Medicine, Law, Engineering, Computer Science, Economics, and Political Science. Many of the university students who live in the heart of Cairo, led the protests during the Arab Revolution. Department buildings are painted with graffiti and reflect the increase of students speaking out against the government. Just eavesdrop on the conversations of the students and faculty and the discussions revolve around the presidential elections, politics and Egypt's future.



The university's reputation and academic curriculum makes it a desirable partner to increase the use of Wikipedia in this region of the world. We (Adel Iskandar and I) met with seven professors from Cairo University from the departments of Mass Communication, Faculty of Arts (International Relations, Foreign Policy, Languages) and Faculty of Sciences (Engineering, Math, and Physics). One professor from Cairo University's Faculty of Economics said accessing computer labs for



Wikipedia workshops and the challenge of university bureaucracy would make running the pilot difficult (notes taken). Two administration members wanted to benefit from the non-profit mission of the Education Program (i.e., to use the Wikipedia brand to apply for funding from international organizations).

We also met with the Dean and Head of Administration, who were possibly once a part of the National Democratic Party. These members are leaving the university because of the changing of the regime, students are frustrated with their lack of responsiveness, the poor allocation of funding and the general state of affairs at school. During these interviews, students protested outside of the offices of the Administration.

We finally found a good core group who navigate through the university bureaucracy, which departments to focus on and who would lead the discussions. In this last meeting, we established contacts for the education pilot: Dr. Hani Hussainy (Math/Physics), Dr. Abeer El Hafez (Spanish), Prof. Nefertiti Mefahed (Math for CS), and Salwa Sabet (Zoology) provided helpful insights and leads for the future of the Global Education Program at Cairo University. They shared candid perspectives, offered samples of the course syllabus, student work and recommended contacts. I suggest that we continue to maintain contact with this core body of faculty at Cairo University.



## Ain Shams University



Ain Shams University, was founded in July 1950, making it the third-oldest non-sectarian native public Egyptian university (ancient Islamic universities such as Al-Azhar and private institutions such as the American University in Cairo are older). Today, Ain Shams University has eight campuses with about 170,000 students. Located in Abbasiya, Cairo, the university is an attractive institution for the Global Education Program because of the number of Arabic classes, especially in the Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Languages. Adel Iskandar introduced us to Dr. Iman who teaches a literature and drama class. Her students have published their research on Egyptian history, theatre, drama and general research that could enrich the Arabic ecosystem on Wikipedia. Although computer access is a challenge on campus; Dr. Iman reported that about 80% of students have online access. Dr. Iman maintains tightly knit relationships with her students (graduates would still willingly share their research work even after finishing the university). She also was open to sharing her university contacts and introduced us to her students to discuss their written work. She was candid about the level of her students' research (such as using citations and the challenges of plagiarism ). Her students have written thesis papers on Phaedra, Cleopatra,

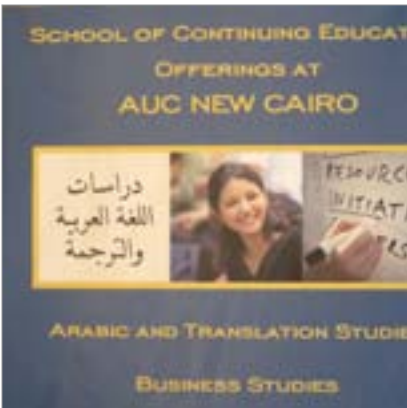
The History of Censorship in Egypt, Egyptian Arabic Theatre, and Voices of the Marginalized. Through discussions, the key lessons that will help the Global Education Program include:

- *Learn from the current Wikimedia community in the MENA region.*
- *Encourage new ways to successfully build the projects.*
- *Find ways for students to succeed by having them write on topics they are actually interested in researching.*
- *Incentivize the program by finding academic rewards (whether it may be through grades, letters of recommendation, etc.).*
- *Leverage the current situation around the Arab Revolution to move students' disenchantment with the academic system towards improving the relationship between the teachers and students at the university.*

The Global Education Program should continue to engage with Ain Shams and connect with Dr. Iman as she expressed interest in building the Wikipedia workshops into future courses.



# American University of Cairo



About an hour outside of Cairo, in the desert of New Cairo, sits a \$400 million investment in the future of Egypt. Founded in 1919, American University of Cairo ranks high amongst private programs in the region. The school brings together more than 34 undergraduate programs and 30 graduate programs. They have a publishing center, quality libraries (although with mostly English books), and easy access to state-of-the-art computer facilities. Frank and I walked through the campus to get a flavor of the university before the meetings with professors. Student groups on campus have booths set up: "Students in Free Enterprise" (SIFE), "Annual Student Comedy Show", and an "AUC 10k Running Race". There are workshops on "How to Use a Wiki", "Presentation Skills", "Library Electronics" and "Referencing Work". Across the main square some students line up for McDonald's and Cinnabon.

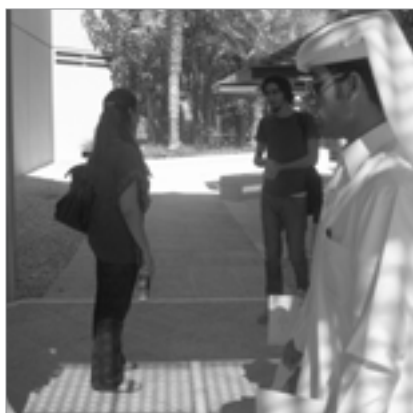
We met with Magdi Messehieh (Professor of Islamic Civilization and History), Zeinab Abulmaged (Professor of History), and Mona Mikhail (Professor of Islamic Civilization). Although the facilities at AUC are ideal to run a Global Education Program pilot, AUC students would not be the best to pilot the Wikipedia classes. AUC

students usually take only English-based classes, with the exception of the CASA Arabic program (for Americans), Islamic Civilization, and History departments (select courses in Arabic). Professor Mikhail mentioned more about the challenges of plagiarism by the students. She also suggested that professors recommend student work that is well written and cited to ensure we get the best content for the Arabic Wikipedia.

The Education team should prioritize universities where professors and students use Arabic at the core of teaching and learning. Since AUC is mostly an English-based university with limited Arabic-based classes, they would not be pilot candidate for the Global Education Program; however, the university could provide us with some Arabic content, facilities and some helpful faculty contacts.



## Qatar University



After the two-day Wikipedia conference in Doha, Essam Sharaf (Wikipedian and Convening attendee) and I visited Qatar University. We conducted a workshop on the mission of Wikimedia and learned about Qatar University's academic system. Qatar University is the only government university in the country. The university has seven colleges: Arts and Sciences, Business and Economics, Education, Engineering, Law, Sharia and Islamic Studies, and a newly instated College of Pharmacy. It's a total of almost 8000 students at a 13:1 student-teacher ratio. Students entering the university are initially placed in a "Foundation Program", which ensures the acquirement of regionally crucial skills such as Math, English, and computer technology. Qatar University vastly differs from the public universities in Cairo. Billiards tables, vending machines, ATMs, and spacious classrooms adorn the Student Center. Parents often send their children to Qatar University because of the single-sex environment and the smaller class sizes. If the Global Education Program partners with Qatari universities, the best opportunities to build Arabic content will be either in the Journalism department or in Qatar's public schools, not in private institutions. Professor Rana Hasan, invited

us to her Mass Media and Communications class. Since Qatar University is an all-male campus, Professor Hasan is one of the few females on campus. The 17 students from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Lebanon, Qatar, China and sub-Saharan Africa congregated for the 9:00 a.m. class. Essam Sharaf, a Wikipedian and Cairo medical student and I divided the session into two parts. We talked briefly about the Global Education Program and the gave an overview about Wiki(m/p)edia. We discussed the role of media in the Arab region, diversity in communications, editing and referencing articles. Lessons learned:

- *Most of the students are not aware that they can edit Wikipedia*
- *Qatar University offers over 60 specializations (the widest range in the country), and access to researchers and academic infrastructure*
- *Qatar University has a number of support-for-learning centers and units, including an audio library, an e-library, advanced Internet facilities, an educational-technology center, and advanced video-conferencing facilities.*





# University of Jordan



After the Wikipedia Convening in Qatar, Moushira Elamrawy, Frank Schulenburg and I traveled to Jordan to meet with professors and administration at the University of Jordan in Amman. This university has key faculties such as the King Abdullah II School of Information Technology, the Faculty of Foreign Languages and the Islamic Studies Institute (Arabic-based). Furthermore, the University of Jordan has unique institutions such as the Jordan Academy of Arabic, the Center for Documents and Manuscripts, Jordan University Press and The Cultural Journal.

We met with Rami Tarawneh, a Jordanian Wikipedia (since 2005) and a professor of Engineering at the University of Jordan. He introduced us to Dr. Yousef Al-Abdallat, the Program Director at the University and Professor Moudar Zgoual, from the Mechanical Engineering Department. There is interest by the faculty and students to have a workshop (November 2011) on editing wikis and run a Global Education Pilot for the Spring 2012 semester.



# WIKIPEDIA ARABIC CONVENING IN QATAR



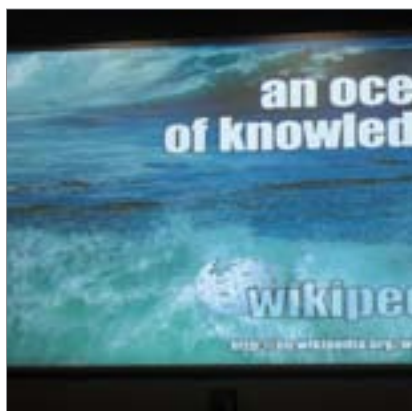
Wikimedia Foundation staff, including Global Development Director, Barry Newstead, Global Education Program Director, Frank Schulenburg, Chapter Relations Manager, Moushira Elamrawy and I continued our meetings in Doha, Qatar for the Arabic Wikipedia Convening. Barry kicked off the Wikimedia Foundation presentation. Frank provided context for the Global Education Program in the region. The discussions and presentations were in Arabic and English with live translation. Ciphers, one of the top Arabic Wikipedians highlighted some of the interesting data about the Arabic Wikipedia. Moushira wrote a blog post that recaps some of the highlights about what we can learn from the movement in the region.

Bala Jeyamrama, a Wikipedian, gave a talk on Google Translation and flagged what we can learn from the perils of machine translation. Personally, this makes me think about where machine translation would fall short in the Arabic language citing the number of idioms and multiple meanings in the vocabulary. The Qatar Computing Research Institute is developing ideas for research activities that could help us. Barry mentioned that QCRI researchers could develop some useful tools for the community and Wikimedia. Overall, we got a lot of positive feedback from the Wikipedians who attended the meeting in Doha. This was the first time for the Arabic Wikipedians to meet in person. Everybody agreed that face-to-face interaction is very important for building trust and for working closely with each other in the future.





# CAIRO WIKIPEDIA MEETUP AT LE CAIRE 1940



Volunteers are the foundation of Wikimedia's projects and meetups allow staff to connect with the community. For the Wikipedia Education Program, we need a network of local volunteers to support the pilot program (whether as Campus Ambassadors, or simply by agreeing not to revert edits automatically), and the willingness to continue on with the Wikimedia project at large. The meetup in Egypt brought together a motley crew of 17 community members and newcomers mostly from Cairo. We connected with engineers, architects, a chemist, a petroleum engineer, a geophysicist, an Arabic professor from Germany, journalists, an activist, history and computer science professors, as well as Wikipedians from Egypt. Le Caire 1940, just outside of downtown Cairo was musty and had mediocre acoustics, but the attendees affirmed their interest, especially in light of

the recent Arab Revolution. Questions and comments from the attendees included:

- *Who leads and verifies the corrections on Wikipedia?*
- *Many people don't know that they can edit Wikipedia-can you make the edit button larger?*
- *It will be difficult to lead a Global Education Pilot because so many students already plagiarize. Students are not taught and regulated in terms of using work from other resources. Students don't realize the overall detriment of not citing work. If the Global Education Program continues in the MENA region, it will be important to emphasize in the curriculum: how to cite, why students should reference and be provided with the tools to do so.*



## CHALLENGES



- 01 **Protests at the Egyptian universities could affect future meetings. Schedules of the students could change during the Egyptian presidential elections.**
- 02 **Access to computer facilities is limited on campus, but many students at private universities have computers. In general, most students have access to computers.**
- 03 **Many students do not necessarily want to learn FusHa (Classical Arabic) and write in formal Arabic. (Professor Darwish, Cairo University, Engineering)**
- 04 **Connect with people in MENA in-person or by phone rather than email.**



# OBSERVATIONS



- 01 **Professors who worked, studied or traveled outside of their home country seemed more willing to adopt the Global Education Program. In no way is this a conclusive statement but it provided an interesting factor that could also help the program when determining faculty to partner with at universities.**
- 02 **The amount of Arabic readership increased post-Arab Revolution; people want to learn more about current news and global events, especially within the MENA (pronounced MEH-NA) region.**
- 03 **Younger faculty members tend to have a better understanding of the Wikipedia Global Education Project and how it can fit into the curriculum**
- 04 **We have to find the “connectors” who genuinely care about their students and demonstrate a willingness to innovate education and promote free knowledge. We relied on the suggestions of similarly minded professors to find other faculty members who fit this criteria.**
- 05 **Masters students will be difficult to collaborate with as they might be preparing synopses for their research and they might be too specialized. Target 3rd year students since they tend to be better at both English and Arabic. -Professors at Cairo University.**
- 06 **It’s very helpful to have an interlocutor (native Arabic speaker and local) to build these relationships with the professors.**
- 07 **Several professors from Cairo University commented that the success of the pilot will depend on frequent contact with the Wikimedia staff and Ambassadors.**



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## General Recommendations on Next Steps

### Recommendations for Classroom Tools



- Provide several types of syllabi for professors who will help with the Education Program's adoption rate. Professor Bahi from Cairo University mentioned that a detailed syllabus for the Wiki program and in Arabic would be helpful. For teachers who do not have as much room in their curriculum to commit to wiki editing with their students, a more general syllabus in Arabic is suggested.
- Have frequent contact with the professors, or implement a listserv, use Google+ or Yammer
- Localize the education materials (i.e., Bookshelf Project) into Arabic for the students and faculty. Professors have expressed interest in reading resources such as: an overview of the Global Education Program, Arabic videos on Wikipedia, transparency about the time commitment of the program, overview of the Campus and Online Ambassador program, etc.).

### Recommendations for Outreach



- Start a small pilot! 3-5 classes at most.
- The Global Education Program team should find core faculty members to work with instead of going through university administration officials at Cairo University (at least in this post-Revolution transition period).
- Professor Bahi of Cairo University recommended giving the Dean of Political Science and International Relations a general presentation before proceeding with the program. She recommends having the Political Science Dean on board before building out the Global Education Program.
  - » Bring students to a point of understanding
  - » Train the students with the technical aspects of WP
  - » She wants a workshop facilitated by the Dean and WP
  - » Go to the higher levels and provide workshops
- Student groups often gather to study and discuss subjects such as technology, linguistics, social media; university groups can also contribute in increasing Arabic content.
- Consider hosting a larger gathering on campus (a type of TEDxEgypt event). Cairo University has access to facilities such as various auditoriums. (Dr. Darwish from Cairo University offered to sign off on the sponsorship signature for facility access.)
  - » Advertise the event as a regional initiative, create an Arabic region project.
- Encourage having a female Wikimedia meetup groups/editing hackathons since some women may not attend co-ed Wikimedia meetups
- Create an editing meetup with Creative Commons and Mozilla Arab World
- Measure the impact of the speakers at the workshops or presentations
- Measure the Outcomes through a survey



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## General Recommendations on Next Steps

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### Recommendations for Building Incentives



- Incentivize the program for both students and professors. By asking professors to commit 10% of their grading system for contributing to Wikipedia on class assignments, students will be more likely to edit.
- A volunteer model for contributing Arabic content instead of a course requirement may be a better model

for some universities; this idea can be explored in the 2012 semester.

- Incentivize adopting the Global Education Program for teachers by continuing the Fellows program implemented in the United States program.

### Recommendations for Project Ideas



- In collaboration with the faculties of History, consider projects in the local vicinity that need to be documented (there are many in Egypt)
- Direct students to Wiki Projects on the Arabic sites to engage students on areas that need to be populated on the Arabic Wikipedia.
- Build a list of pipeline projects to suggest to the local team such as promoting a local Wiki Monuments project to document old buildings and establish-

ments in Cairo such as historical restaurants and monuments near Tahrir Square where people can learn about these sites through Wikipedia.

- Educate students and faculty on the mission of the project which includes how the funding structure works; this will help to encourage students and faculty to use Wikipedia is to continue
- Develop a class exercise where students dissect a good vs. bad article

### Recommendations for Knowledge Building



- Research specific ways Wikipedia is working with universities around the challenges of plagiarism
- Develop a "story-bank" about how the community has financially committed to the organization (providing the example about a young child in India who has raised money for Wikimedia illustrated the global support for the movement).





# RECOMMENDATIONS

Prioritized List of Recommended Professors for the Global Education Program



## Phase II Timeline and Next Steps

Nov-Jan: Consider communicating on a monthly or bi-monthly basis to update professors on current Global Education Program news (newsletter?)

1. Nov. 1-30: Finalize hiring for the Global Education Team (FS)

2. Nov. 1-15: Formalize communication with professors. Hand-off introductions to contacts. Follow up by sending Global Education Program Newsletter (SY or AL)

3. Dec. 15: Finalize list of professors to recommend to the Global Education Program staff and local MENA team and have a call for applicants and applicant reviews prior to selecting the Campus Ambassadors (AL, LD, FS, and SY)

4. Dec. 2011: Hire a translator to update materials Bookshelf Project in Arabic (ME, SY)

5. Dec. 2011: Once a local team is in place in MENA (pre-Semester II), Ambassadors and local Wikimedia staff should assist professors by setting up Wiki Course Websites. Wikimedia should encourage that professors register their students' user

pages so Ambassadors and Education team can track edits (FS, AL, LD)

6. Nov. 2011 - Jan. 2012: Continue to communicate with contacts from the region (GEP Team)

7. Jan. 2012: Conduct workshops at universities in Cairo, Egypt (GEP team)

8. Jan. 2012: Creating a wiki-portal for the Arabic Education program

9. Jan. 2012: Target a time for when professors need to commit to the program. (We were advised not to use MOU's or formalize the commitment via formal contract or else there will be more bureaucratic steps for the Global Education team. (GEP team)





# CONCLUSION



**“The fundamental choice is whether this region’s trajectory will remain marked by inertia; or whether prospects for an Arab renaissance, anchored in human development, will be actively pursued. -T. Friedman”**

The trip to Egypt, Qatar and Jordan was extremely valuable in part because of the people whom we connected with at the universities. The visit to the region also helped to mitigate concerns on the stability of areas like Egypt, post-Revolution; we are still uncertain how the

current of state events will impact the program, but the overall trip was promising in terms of future engagement. Wikimedia will most likely target one or two countries to work with in the region for this first pilot.



# How to Organize a Wikipedia Convening



A couple of Wikimedia staff asked how our team selected the participants at the Convening. Some considerations when planning an event: First, what is objective of the Convening? We targeted a small participant size for the event. For a gathering of about 25-45 people, these are some tips on how this event was organized.

For a Convening, bringing the right group of people can significantly impact the

outcome of a convening. Since there were planned discussion tracks for the event, the Wikimedia team wanted to recruit people involved in a variety of specific topics. The Global Development Team looked for traits of the participants that would promote group participation, move participants towards the greater goal: to promote the need for Arabic content on Wikipedia.



# How to Host a Wiki-Meetup



- Select a date and location for the event in possibly a quiet venue; inquire with local affiliates or contacts to suggest places and scout the venue prior to hosting. Page 35-36 in this AUC guide book lists some potential places for a meetup: <http://www.aucegypt.edu/studentlife/isa/Documents/ISHandbookFall11.pdf>
- Write a geo-targeted banner on the host-country's wiki homepage with a link that directs users to an event sign-up page. Post banner via Ayush Khanna ([akhanna@wikimedia.org](mailto:akhanna@wikimedia.org)).
- Other promotion: ping relevant channels on IRC, Twitter, mailing lists, local Wikipedians and people who are respected carriers of information in the community.
- Create the Wiki landing page: make updates as details are coming in.
- If possible, pack copies (localized if possible) of "Welcome to Wikipedia" and "Evaluating Wikipedia Article Quality Evaluate an Edit" (Bookshelf Project/Arabic):[http://outreach.wikimedia.org/wiki/Evaluating\\_Wikipedia\\_article\\_quality\\_\(Bookshelf\)/ar](http://outreach.wikimedia.org/wiki/Evaluating_Wikipedia_article_quality_(Bookshelf)/ar) Wikipedia stickers and brochures that explained the mission and other practical information). We brought extra informational brochures for the local Ambassadors.
- Pack Wikimedia merchandise (stickers, notebooks, etc.)
- Make it a priority to invite local Wikipedians to the event. This can be through personal contacts or writing on talk pages.
- The format (2-3 hours),
  - » WMF team members provide background and an overview of the purpose of the overall trip. (Example: To meet professors at MENA universities, learn about the academic system and embark on grassroots fieldwork for to get leads on potential Ambassadors and faculty to work with for next semester.)
  - » Introductions by the team and guests
  - » Q&A time about Wikipedia/Wikimedia Foundation
  - » Discuss upcoming timelines, project goals, pipeline projects with the community
  - » Divide into smaller groups to learn more about peoples' interests, questions and build connections with the community (one staff/Ambassador/Wikipedian representative per group)
  - » Circulate a sign-up sheet for guests' email addresses
  - » Take a group photo and upload it on WikiCommons
  - » Provide beverages and/or snacks
- Wikimedia team follows up with an email and group photo after collecting attendees' contact information



# How to Conduct a Meeting With a Professor



- When creating handouts for contacts in the region, avoid long paragraphs on brochures. Infographics, bargraphs and short bulleted sentences work best. Photos of people in documents should reflect WMF's diversity.
- Localize the booklets/pamphlets/leaflets when sharing Wikimedia's mission and the Global Education Program. Native Arabic speakers will appreciate the added effort and this will help brain absorption rates. People who might serve as translators for short Arabic online/hard copy content are: Ahmad Gharbeia, Haitham Shamaa (User: Cipher), Osama Khalid (User:OsamaK) and Moushira Elamrawy
- Prior to meeting, send the professor background about the purpose of the interview, goal of the meeting (insight into the curriculum, learn about the university, contacts for the project).
  - » Tip: Create a template for this email since there will be several letters sent to various professors.
  - » Request the professor's phone number.
  - » Request instructions for the meeting location in Arabic (helpful reference for taxi drivers and when on campus)
- Prior to the meeting, reconfirm with the professor the time and location of the appointment.



# How to Conduct a Meeting With a Professor

Continued

- 
- Greetings are good (salam walekum)
  - It's encouraged to request a professor's business card to ensure you have their correct title and role. Present the professor with your business card. Bonus points if your cards are localized on one side in Arabic.
  - It's not uncommon to be offered a beverage (Nescafe, Arabic coffee, soda, juice, tea), so get ready for a lot of drinking! Otherwise, just say, "La, shokran."
  - It's recommended not to use a laptop when taking notes, though a paper notebook is fine.
  - The structure of the interview/discussion looked like this:
    - » Introductions, pleasantries
    - » Why Wikimedia is interested in speaking with the professor
    - » Listen and learn from the professor about their class, the university, thoughts on Wikimedia/Wikipedia
    - » The Global Education Program team describes the State of Arabic Wikipedia, the purpose of the program is needed, goes into the timeline of the program through the "pitch". It's very helpful to have this discussion done in Arabic since it is an Arabic-based initiative. Present any relevant Wikimedia materials to the professors (leaflets, handouts, etc.).
  - » Launch into specific questions to the professor:  
<http://bit.ly/vzXEnM>
  - » Q&A
  - With permission, take pictures with your camera or phone of: the professor (to upload onto the wiki interview notes), the class syllabus, course papers, contacts of people they have suggested.
  - Make sure you have the professors Name, Email, Phone number, Class description, number of students, etc.
  - Take notes on the Action Item's and follow up with the professor with a thank you and if applicable, Next Steps.
  - At the end of the day, transfer meeting notes onto the wiki, share findings with the team.



# Cultural Insights

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## Concept of Time

- Egypt: Punctuality is not commonly adhered to; in fact, when we came to meetings on time, it was surprising for the professors.
- For Jordan and Qatar: these countries are a bit closer to being on time. Calling is best when running late.

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## Communications

- There is often a lag time between the time an email is sent and when you'll receive a response. Don't feel offended! We made our appointments by calling before or the day of because people did not know their schedules ahead of time.
- The benefit of working with universities is that most of the professors are already based on campus. Unlike professors in the U.S., most professors go to the university everyday (which was the case at Ain Shams and Cairo University).
- As a visitor, especially in Egypt, you might get attention (stares, people talking to you), especially females. If you feel uncomfortable in the situation, DO NOT feel obligated to respond. People don't really invade your physical space but you might experience minimal harassment.

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## Things to Avoid

- Avoid showing the bottom of your shoes; this is considered as inappropriate in most Middle East/North African cultures.
- Avoid showing skin, especially for females; long shirts, long pants and skirts are best. Avoid exposing skin below the collar bone. In Egypt, Qatar and Amman, females should at least err on the side of being more conservative. Women will not need to wear a hijab or higan in Cairo, except when visiting a holy site, such as a mosque.
- Avoid eating with your left hand.
- For men, avoid shaking a woman's hand unless she extends her hand first--this is usually more common among women who wear the veil. For women, you can shake hands with the man if he extends his hand first. If you work with people who have lived outside of the region, they tend to be more willing to extend a handshake.
- If you invite someone to coffee/tea or a meal, you should pay for their drink/meal. On the flipside, you should be aware that it's offensive to pay when you've been invited as a guest; send a note of thanks and extend words of appreciation instead.





## Things to Avoid

- If Egypt, you can hail a cab or take the Metro. There are two different types of taxis that you will see –a white one and a black one. White taxis are the metered taxis and you cannot haggle or negotiate the price of the trip. However, black taxis are generally not metered. This means you can negotiate with the cab driver on how much you will pay for the ride. In any case, always have change ready when riding a taxi and pay after you dismount the taxi (AUC Handbook). In Egypt, most of the cabs are now metered. To ask for a receipt, say, “Endak fatura?” If the machine is broken, take a picture of the “ahhdad”/meter and write the amount down on a piece of paper for your expense report.
- The other option for transportation is the Metro. The Metro costs only 1 Egyptian pound (about 18 cents) and can take you around the major districts of Cairo. There are 3 different lines that span the entire city, and 2 more lines are set to begin construction in 2011. On all trains, men and women can ride in any car freely except the middle two cars, which are for women only.
- This guide also provides some additional cultural insights and tips for people visiting the region.



APPENDIX / HOW TO'S

## **Interview Notes & Database of MENA Region Contacts**

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Global Education Program MENA Trip on Wikimedia Outreach:

<http://bit.ly/ttJlqg>

Contacts for WMF in MENA Region:

<http://bit.ly/vMtCT0>



# Trip Overview



## Cairo, Egypt

- October 15-19 and 24-27 2011
- Ain Shams University
- Cairo University
- American University of Cairo
- Wikimedia Cairo Meet-up

## Doha, Qatar

- October 19-23, 2011
- Arabic Wikipedia Convening
- Qatar University
- Carnegie Mellon University

## Amman, Jordan

- October 24, 2011
- Jordan University



## Places Visited in Alphabetical Order

Abdoun, Ain Shams University Faculty of Arts, American University of Cairo, Amman International Airport, Arab Revolution Graffiti walk at Cairo University, Beirut, Lebanon International Airport, Cafe Riche, Cairo University (Faculty of History, Political Science, Economics, Engineering, Literature, Dean's Office, Diwan Bookstore, Math, Physics), Carnegie, Corniche,

Doha, El Qods - Amman, Frankfurt Airport, Habiba Sweets, Jordan University, Le Caire 1940 Cafe for Wikimedia Meetup, London Heathrow Airport, Mezze, Nile River, Paddington Station, Qatar Foundation, Qatar University, Regency Hotel - Amman, Roman ruins, Semiramis - Cairo, San Francisco Airport, Souq Waqif, Tahrir Square, TV Tower Cairo