

# AL MOLTAQA

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE ISSUED BY ARAB CHILDREN'S BOOK PUBLISHERS FORUM



According to the views of children's books publishers

## COVID-19 and WORLD OF PUBLISHING



The kind-hearted ruler, Sheikh Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qassimi

**WE SUPPORT  
THE PEOPLE  
OF LEBANON**

Chairwoman of Big Heart Foundation, Sheikha Jawaher bent Muhammad Al Qassimi

**GREETINGS  
FROM MY HEART  
TO BEIRUT**



**Sheikha Bodour Bent Sultan Al Qassimi ordered the restoration and renovation of the libraries damaged by Beirut explosion**



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A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE ISSUED BY  
ARAB CHILDREN'S BOOK PUBLISHERS FORUM  
Tenth Edition -16th Issue - September 2020

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**1,500,000**

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## Pain... and Hope

The year of 2020 will remain unforgettable for all people in all parts of the world, and this epidemic we experienced this year will be added to the global disasters witnessed by the world since hundreds of years. We will always remember the health cases and the days, during which we suffered from the crises of this epidemic that stopped the communication and ended all aspects of normal life we used to have.

We experienced loneliness, pain, meditation and hope. We went through the most difficult moments and our main concern was the prevention and protection even from the people closest to us.

During this nightmare and based on our struggle for survival, life would inevitably go on with its good and hard times through new concepts in line with the reality we live. This epidemic may prompt us to have a deeper thinking and a better vision, as the family members forcibly meet together, so this gathering allowed solving and tackling several topics and details, for which there was no time. In addition, the parents focused on the progress of matters and tackling most of them because there was enough time... Caring has become a reality and we have plenty of time to examine and solve our issues.

While all institutions, events and activities were suspended and closed, the same applied to Arab Children's Book Publishers Forum, which includes more than one hundred and fifty institutions and publishing houses from all over the Arab world that is experiencing the same ordeal. However, we tried to remotely build bridges like others through social media platforms and we thank Allah that they were not affected by this epidemic, but they rather represented a glimmer of hope for the peoples to stay in touch... Hence, we seriously attempted to deliver our ideas and develop our capabilities by publishing, sending, delivering and reading the literary works, in order to enjoy reading them during these circumstances through social media. Furthermore, we did not forget the professional aspect related to following up the workshops, seminars and lectures, since we had enough time to hold and work through them... Even the Board meetings, which examine the development of the Forum's work, were held to stay close to the current situation.

During such circumstances, we devoted much time to handle some administrative and executive matters, which allowed us to communicate with the members of the Forum to update their files and provide us with their latest activities and publications. We also created a directory of the members, which would present an overview on each publisher at the Forum and introduce them and their publications and activities. This situation did not prevent us from completing and following up the procedures of the annual award of the Forum, since the Secretariat General completed and followed up all of its details. The award was remotely granted to the winners and we also issued a brochure about it and announced the award for the next year 2021. We also reviewed this issue, whose number is 16 and it will cover many important issues and topics in cultural affairs and children's literature.

Moreover, we are closely monitoring the events and activities we will hold during Sharjah Fair, as well as the new fairs to be held till the end of the year. We try to have an idea on the contributions we will finish in 2021.

We hope that we would continue with all exerted efforts what will develop the Forum and establish a connecting bridge between us, in order to achieve success and promote the children's book and literature to reach the highest levels.

**Ms. Aisha Hamad Meghawer**  
Secretary-General



## **The Ordeal of COVID-19 and its Benefits**

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Culture was highly affected by “COVID-19”, which is the dreadful pandemic that plagued all countries of the world, forcing them to live in an unprecedented state of terror and panic.

One of our strongest weapons in our battle with this epidemic is staying at home, which has become the dominant slogan that united all countries of the world.

Despite the disruption of many works and interests, including the direct and indirect interests of publishers, which are closely related to the movements as we know, whether between fairs that have been postponed, or movement to and from stores that witnessed decreased visits of people. In addition, this is attributed to caution and avoidance of this pandemic causes, which is still spreading.

However, many people tried to make use of the long stay at home, as many people and families competed in converting such ordeal into a useful grant by reshaping the social life among family members by staying under one roof for a long time. They used such stay to merge many separating boundaries between family relationships, make a radical change in lifestyle and allow the positive side to have the upper hand over the negative one. It is worth mentioning that this resulted in caring about the child’s culture and his book in particular, as the child’s book has an important and influential role in deepening the relationships among children as a means to make use of the long leisure time and acquire information. Moreover, there was an increased demand for purchasing stories and books through e-book selling websites and platforms launched by publishing houses to overcome the recession and stagnation that afflicted the paper book market.

Activities and workshops were held and organized to narrate stories, which witnessed a high turnout and participation, especially during the lockout and curfew times. In addition, children’s storybooks writers were very active at social media, as they were involved in holding many virtual events and activities remotely.

Despite these creative attempts to bridge the gaps, the stagnation is still affecting our situation, but we hope that this pandemic will disappear in the near future and we can overcome it and recover from its bad effects soon, so that the publishers of the children’s book can resume their work and provide their young readers with beautiful and wonderful stories. Then, reading can become more prosperous than before.



**The global Covid-19 pandemic, Beirut earthquake, as well as humanitarian and cultural initiatives sponsored by Sharjah, World Culture Capital**

**Kind-hearted ruler, Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qassimi**

## **We support the people of Lebanon**

**In every place and time, and on all Arab and international occasions and forums, we find him present and ready, taking the initiative to provide support as if he already knows about the situation and the conditions. He is always ready to answer the question of any citizen, drawing a direct line between him and the people, as he wants to say to them I belong to you and you belong to me and I am ready to listen to you with friendliness and love and answer without preparation or prior explanation. He supports children of all cultural, social or family categories. He provides assistance and awareness for young people, intellectuals, writers, authors, poets and others and encourages them for the future. He supports women, families and handicapped people... At the beginning, this support was provided for Sharjah and its people, as well as all parts of Arab world and Muslims in the entire world. He is the kind-hearted ruler, His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qassimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah.**

Magazine Issue by: **Nasser Assi**

His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qassimi, Supreme Council Member, Ruler of Sharjah, affirmed that Lebanon is part of this Arab nation and we will not let it down. His Highness thanked his wife, Her Highness Sheikha Jawaher bint Muhammad Al Qassimi, Chairwoman of the Big Heart Foundation, for the support and initiatives taken by Her Highness to support Lebanon through “Peace for Beirut” campaign, and other humanitarian actions, calling on all Arabs to contribute to Lebanon’s support, even with kind words.

**We would thank everyone who will contribute even with a kind word, because the disaster is big.**

His Highness also called on the Arab countries to help and support the Lebanese people in their ordeal and not let them down, as other

countries were left alone, pointing out that the Arabs can heal their wounds by themselves and Lebanon was and still is a part of the Arab nation and already exists in it.

His Highness Ruler of Sharjah added: We support the people of Lebanon without interfering in politics or discussing the ongoing issues and disputes, as we are far from that area. Based on this support, we are trying to say to our brothers and sisters in Lebanon: We support them till they recover from their disaster on their land, which was destabilized under them, since perhaps Lebanon will encounter bad consequences, “may Allah forbid.”

Regarding the role required from every Lebanese citizen in these circumstances, His Highness Ruler of Sharjah said: We hope that every Lebanese citizen will work and not listen to these polemics or those people who want him to waive his Arab identity and existence from the ocean to the Gulf. Lebanon is a

part of us and we will not waive it.

His Highness concluded his speech by saying: We hope that this speech will reach all the Arabs, as we will not leave Lebanon just as other countries were left without any help. We would like to inform everyone that this is an opportunity to support Lebanon, as it has become difficult to reform the countries that were left without help now. Lebanon is currently on the edge of the abyss. Hence, we call: Oh, Arab people... please help our brothers and sisters in Lebanon before they fall into the abyss of perdition. Please take an action even with a kind word, so that we can feel that we, as Arabs, can heal our wounds and support each other. We wish success to all people, Allah willing.

**Till we meet again in a big party in Lebanon, Allah willing, and we can say loudly: Lebanon is free**

## Chairwoman of the Big Heart Foundation Sheikha Jawaher bint Muhammad Al Qassimi

# From my heart, “Peace for Beirut”

“Peace for Beirut” campaign, launched by the wife of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qassimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah, Her Highness Sheikha Jawaher Bint Muhammad Al Qassimi, Chairwoman of the Big Heart Foundation, began the restoration and reformation of 485 houses in Beirut. Thus, 2,900 persons, including 225 refugees, would be returned to their homes damaged due to the calamity of the port. This campaign provided temporary shelter and social support for them.

This support was provided to achieve the objectives of the campaign supervised by the “Big Heart Foundation”, with the aim of providing urgent relief to the victims of the explosion and those affected by its results, as it began its work with its initial projects, in cooperation with “Support Lebanon” project of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and Civil Work Organization “Basma and Zaitouneh”.

The restoration works targeted the port area, Al-Midawar, Jisr, Khader, Mar Mikhael, Rumeil, Al-Hikma, Al-Jeitaoui, Al-Roum Hospital and Qobayat areas, in addition to Burj Hammoud area, and they will be completed within 6 months.

### “Support Lebanon” Project

As part of the campaign plan, “Support Lebanon” Project will handle the restoration of 355 houses that belong to 2,025 Lebanese citizens and 225 refugees, by repairing collapsed and damaged windows, doors and roofs, restoring common areas in buildings such as stairs, facilities and infrastructure, as well as rehabilitating damaged shelters.

The project will also provide supplies and safe shelter equipment to help the people affected by the explosion, as UNHCR is trying to mobilize its local relief stock and provide it with safe shelter equipment, plastic sheets and tens of thousands of basic relief items, such as blankets and mattresses,

for immediate distribution and use.

Her Highness Sheikha Jawaher Al Qassimi said in her tweets on her Twitter account: “The disaster of Lebanon is related to all of us, and the pain of Beirut is the pain of all Arabs and sincere people around the world, who have moral and humanitarian duty. We can only support our brothers and sisters in this tragic incident, who have lost their beloved ones or their homes and security, so as to provide relief for them in their disaster and help them to overcome this ordeal.”

Her Highness added, “Peace for Beirut” campaign clarifies the steadfast and sincere position of Sharjah towards the people in all Arab countries and embodies the directives of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qassimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah, which are represented in standing by the peoples in their plight and disaster and helping them to face the challenges at

**Lebanon deserves peace and security, and this is time for fulfillment.**

various levels.”

Her Highness Sheikha Jawaher Al Qassimi called on Arab societies, including their institutions and individuals, to support Beirut and provide the needed assistance to overcome this difficult situation. She also stressed that supporting Lebanon in these diffi-

cult circumstances is a duty for every Arab citizen, because of the civilizational, cultural, artistic and scientific position that this country has and its positive impacts on all Arab societies, since this country represents a destination for ambitious intellectuals.

**Supporting Lebanon in this difficult circumstance is the duty of every Arab citizen.**

Her Highness said: “Lebanon deserves peace and security, and this is the time for fulfillment. Hence, through this campaign, we want to say to every family and individual in Lebanon and its beautiful capital, Beirut, in particular from Sharjah and the UAE, we are supporting you. The safety of our societies is indivisible. We pray to Allah to have mercy on the victims, heal the wounds of the injured people, return the lost people to their families and relieve the grief of those who have lost their beloved ones.”

The Big Heart Foundation, which is the humanitarian institution concerned with helping refugees and needy people around the world, started from the first day, communicating with its partners in Lebanon for mobilizing efforts, collecting donations and coordinating with committees and concerned authorities in the Lebanese capital “Beirut” to deliver aids to the most affected people and areas.

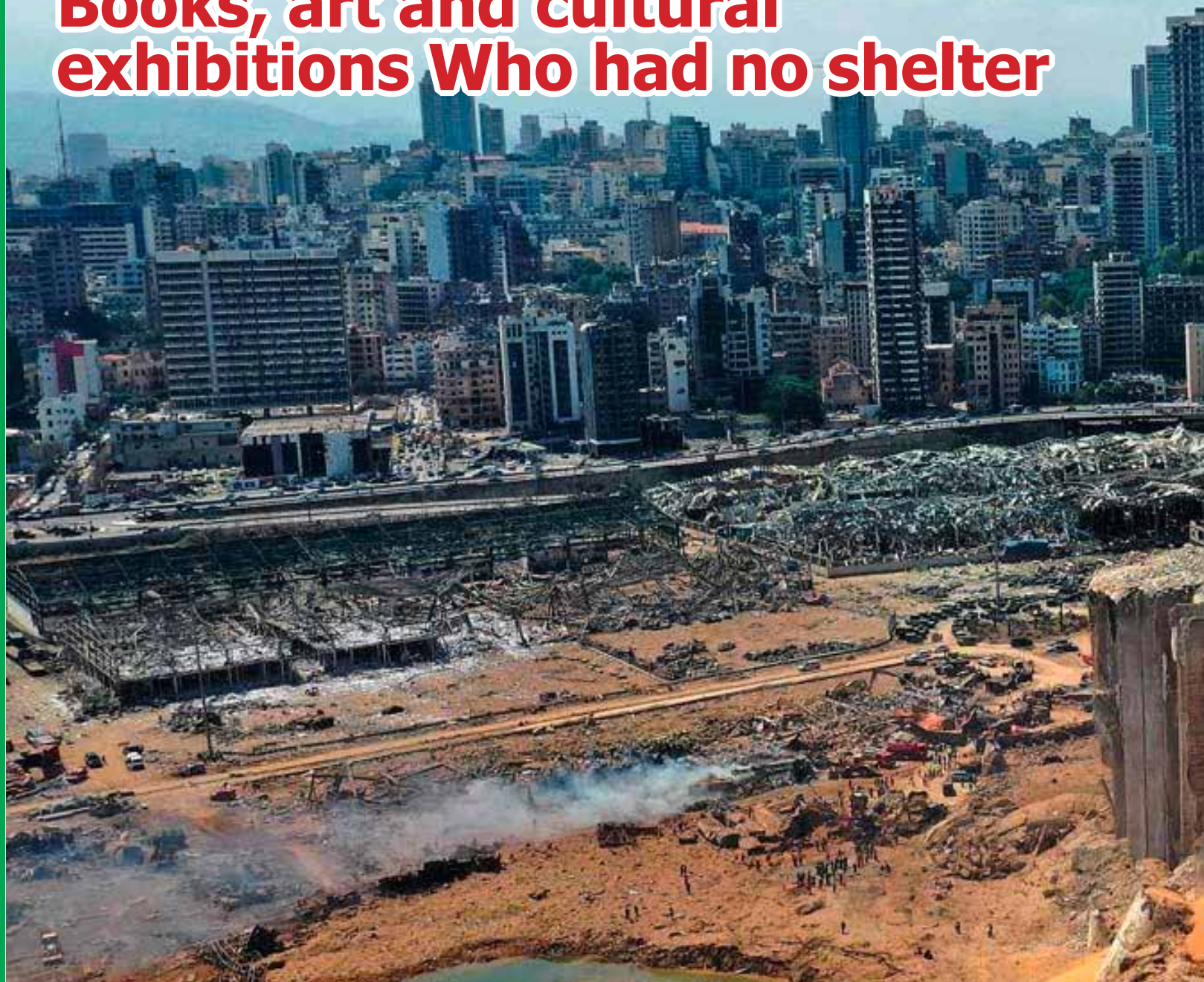


# **Vice President of International Publishers Association and Head of Advisory Committee of Sharjah, World Book Capital of 2019**

**Sheikha Bodour bint Sultan Al Qassimi**

Gave directions to restore the libraries affected by Beirut explosion

**Families who lost their homes  
Books, art and cultural  
exhibitions Who had no shelter**





**Sheikha Bodour bint Sultan Al Qassimi, Vice President of International Publishers Association and Head of Advisory Committee of Sharjah, World Book Capital of 2019, has called for supporting the efforts dedicated to reform the cultural aspect of the Lebanese capital and allocating part of the initiatives to restore libraries, art galleries, music houses and associations whose work was stopped, following the explosion of Beirut Port. Sheikha Bodour gave directions to restore and develop a number of libraries damaged due to the explosion.**



The initiative of Sheikha Bodour bint Sultan Al Qassimi targeted three public libraries run by “Al Sabeel Association”, including the restoration and rehabilitation of “Mono” library, upgrading the supplies in “Al-Bashoura” and “Al-Jeitawi” libraries, in addition to providing institutional support for the association, which was established in 1997. It is one of the non-governmental organizations that support public libraries in Lebanon to provide free service.

Sheikha Bodour bint Sultan Al Qassimi, in announcing the initiative, sent a solidarity message to the members of the Lebanese society, in which she emphasized that the difficult situation they faced is not difficult for them only, but for millions of Arabs who feel their suffering and support them by every aid they can provide.

She said: “The need to pay attention to the Lebanese libraries and cultural centers goes hand in hand with the need to take care of the humanitarian cases affected by Beirut explosion. While helping those people whose work and homes were affected and damaged, we must not forget the civilized aspect of the city or the value of its libraries, art galleries and creative institutions. The revival of such institutions and centers would give the Lebanese people the strength to continue their advancement and preserve Lebanon’s ancient cultural history for us.”

She added: “We hope that local, Arab and international initiatives and efforts will be contin-

ued to support the revival of cultural aspect of Beirut and we wish that the supportive humanitarian institutions would give such aspect the priority in the restoration and reform projects that they lead. While there are families who have lost their homes, there are also books, paintings and musical instruments that have no longer place and there





**Al Sabeel Library after the explosion**

is no longer anyone who takes care of them to complete the message of awareness and love.”

### **Ziad Boualwan**

Chairman of Al Sabeel Association, Eng. Ziad Boualwan, said, “All we hope to achieve is that the book remains close to the readers, and is free and

whom we depend in continuing the march and work of reconstruction and advancement of Lebanon. This kind of initiatives revives our determination and hope to complete our cultural goals.

Three municipal libraries run by Al Sabeel Association were severely damaged during the port explosion in Beirut on 4 August 2020. The three libraries are located in Al Bashoura, Al Jeitaoui and Mono districts, which are close to the port. This explosion resulted in the destruction of windows, walls, false ceilings, suspended secondary ceilings, wooden decorations, lightings, chairs and floors. Many computers and some machines and others were destroyed by the force of the explosion.



**Effects of damage in Al-Sabeel library**

### **The initiative of Sheikha Bodour bint Sultan Al Qassimi**

The initiative aimed at restoring and developing libraries damaged by the explosion of Beirut Port. The importance of this initiative is not only associated with the restoration, but also the reformation of the libraries to become even more beautiful than they were, by developing the internal environment in the three libraries, developing equipment and devices, even in terms of providing electricity, air condition-

ers and offices, as well as providing everything necessary for a sound, warm and aesthetically pleasing environment in libraries, especially before the winter season and the start of the school year. In addition, due to the pandemic of Covid-19, many people may resort to online learning, and accordingly, this initiative intends to secure everything necessary with the latest technologies in a comfortable environment. (Solar energy, air conditioning, very fast internet service...)

### Ali Sabbagh

Ali Al-Sabbagh, Executive Director of “Al Sabeel Association”, said that the figures related to the three libraries run by the association call for being optimistic during the sad circumstances witnessed by the Lebanese people now. “We have 3 libraries in Beirut. 30,000 readers visit us annually. We loan 20,000 books annually for free and organize 150 cultural activities in Lebanon and 3000 people participate in our various cultural activities annually,” he explains.

He also announced the imminent reopening of Mono Library (within a week), and the other two libraries will need a much longer period to be reopened and their collections will not be available until the repairs are completed, Al Jeitawi Library (20 days as minimum) and Al Bashoura Library (a month or more).

It is not the first time that Sharjah government has taken the initiative to support culture, even before it was granted the title of (Book Capital), since there were several great initiatives in terms of financial and



Al-Sabeel library renovation

cultural support, children’s literature awards, etc. In addition, Al Sabbagh stresses his optimism and hope for reviving the libraries run by the association, as long as there are people who are keen on the continuity of this sector, such as the initiative of Sheikha Bodour considering Lebanon as a beacon of culture, reading, literature, coexistence, poetry and peace. He indicated that the association receives support from many donors inside and outside Lebanon.



Al-Sabeel library renovation



Al-Sabeel library renovation

## Dr. Farouk Majdalawi: Contemporary publications combining the facilitated language with the daily life of Arab child

Subheadings:

Good content is clearly evident and allows the child to see the truth.

Some of the organizers of Arab international fairs are targeting material gain more than their interest in cultural promotion.

Getting acquainted with what other people publish and establishing relationships with publishing houses specialized in children's literature.

Majdalawi Masterpieces Publishing House is one of the active institutions in the Jordanian and Arab publishing movement, and it is a member founder of Arab Children's Book Publishers Forum and has a large share of children's publications.

In this regard, we are pleased to host Dr. Farouq Saeed Majdalawi, the Founder and General Manager of this publishing house, to ask him many questions. Here is the dialogue.

**\* Please give us an idea about your start.**

Majdalawi Masterpieces began its work as a bilingual library that provided the children's book in Arabic and English by distributing the publications of several leading publishers in Lebanon, UK, Egypt and USA. Given the large gap between Arab and foreign production, we began publishing in 2005.

**\* When did you start publishing targeted at children?**

Our first book was published in 2005, but our establishment as a children's library dates back to the beginning of 1993.

**\* We note your interest in international fairs, so what is the idea about this interest?**

Our interest in international fairs has been and is still related to getting acquainted with what others are publishing and establishing relationships with publishing houses specialized in children's literature. In addition to our participation in Arab fairs, we also contributed to Jordan's participation for the first time in London, Frankfurt, New York and Chicago Book Fairs. Our publishing house was also among the first participants in Beirut International Book Fair annually.

**\* How do you see children's desire, in Jordan in particular and the Arab world in general, to own the paper book and read in general?**

Private schools in Jordan have greatly contributed to encouraging the child to be interested in the paper book, borrow and own it. It is also worth mentioning the role of the Greater Amman Municipality libraries in developing their own reading resources for children through more than 40 public libraries distributed in many areas of Greater Amman and its districts.

**\* What are your criteria for choosing your publications for children?**

At our publishing house, we strive to provide contemporary publications, which include facilitated language appropriate for the targeted age group, attractive direction and topics closely related to the daily life of the Arab child.

We must not also forget that our



era is the era of the image, and our eagerness to choose the appropriate illustrator parallels our interest in the text, as through the beautiful expressive image we can raise the interest of the child and deliver the desired messages to him in a way combining beauty, suspense and speed.

**\* What is your assessment of the publishing movement in Jordan?**

Publishing in Jordan is in continuous progress. Jordanian Publishers Association was established in June 1993.

It had limited financial resources and included a small number of members in the beginning. I contributed with some colleagues to managing the administrative bodies from 2002 until the end of 2017. What has been achieved for the Association during this period inside and outside Jordan cannot be denied or ignored. The number of members increased from around 30 publishers upon incorporation to more than a hundred nowadays. During my tenure as President of the Association, I sought to get a special official pavilion for Jordanian Ministry of Culture and Greater Amman Municipality at Cairo International Book Fair for the first time after 40 years of its establishment and I did it. I did my best to facilitate the formal participation of

Jordan for the first time in London Book Fair in 2008. I also succeeded as instructed by President of Arab Publishers Association to manage the Association's pavilion at New York Book Fair in 2009. I contributed to the official approval of the headquarters of Arab Publishers Association in Cairo during a meeting held with Secretary-General of the Arab League, Dr. Amr Moussa, in cooperation with his assistant at that time, Her Excellency, former Minister of Culture, Nancy Bakir. Upon the end of my term as the President of the Association, another person was appointed to complete the march and I left for them in the Association's Fund a big amount, which contributed to the purchase of the headquarters of the Association later.

**\* Do you consider book fairs alone sufficient for introducing the publisher?**

No. The publisher is supposed to have a team specialized in marketing his publications, along with caring about e-marketing, communicating with other publishers and entities in charge of holding fairs, especially Arab Ministries of Education and public libraries.

**\* How do you criticize Arab book fairs?**

It is necessary to reconsider how book fairs are presented to the Arab public in a more contemporary and attractive way, in which all sources of culture are combined, not just the paper book. Some of the organizers of Arab international fairs are now seeking the financial profits more than caring about the cultural promotion. The interest in the number of participants has negatively affected the participant and visitor to a great extent.

**\* In your opinion, what are the most prominent problems faced by the Arab publisher?**

The organizers are supposed to secure entry visas for the publisher for reasons unrelated to the disse-



Dr. Farouk Majdalawi / the first to the right, a participant in the activities of the forum in 2009

nation of culture and grant an opportunity for the efficient Arab publisher to participate when applying for participation.

**\* What are your most prominent projects that you are working on?**

For years we have been working on publishing our publications in international languages and exchanging translation rights to deliver the largest possible volume of our publications to the world children. Two years ago, we were involved in a joint publication cooperation with Swedish Bonaire House, which is deemed the oldest and largest publishing house in Scandinavia.

**\* Did Majdalawi Masterpieces get literary awards?**

Yes, Gorman World Prize 2009 "Best of the World" for Children's Food Books translation category, in a great international celebration held in the French capital, Paris, in the presence of more than 500 people from

136 countries, while competing more than eight thousand books. Our publishing house also received the award for the best stories for people with special needs from Swedish institution (Anna Lindh Foundation) in 2011.

**What ideas do you think are**

**necessary to support the publisher and raise the level of the publishing profession?**

Facilities should be provided for the participation of the Arab publisher while participating in fairs, so that he can deliver his masterpieces, which he mastered more than others.

Do you consider the Arab child to be reluctant to read, and how can we reinforce his desire to read?

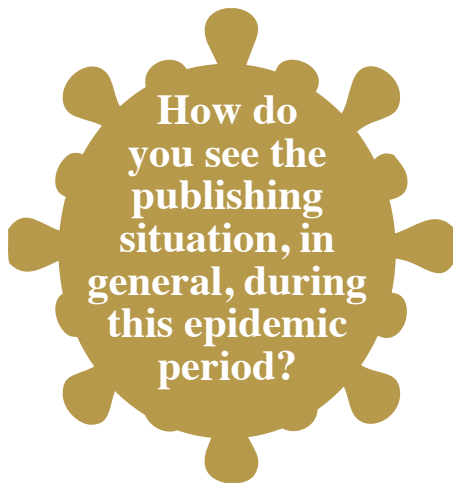
This question is very difficult to be answered, but what I can say is that good content imposes itself and the child will love to read it.

**\* You saw the inception of Arab Children's Book Publishers Forum since its early years, and you sought to achieve its goals. You had an active participation in its General Assembly, are you satisfied with what has been accomplished and what are your wishes for the Forum at Arab and international levels?**

Of course, we are satisfied with what has been accomplished. At the annual Sharjah Book Fair, it seems to me that the Forum's work is competing with the participants from Arab and other publishers at the seminars and plays that attract children. I hope that the administrative and public bodies go ahead with this march at the Arab and international levels.

## COVID-19 and World of Publishing

There is no sector in our vast world that was not affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in a certain way, as this crisis has become the most prominent feature of 2020, whose indicators recorded a dramatic decline in the performance of publishing activity. The Forum Magazine surveyed the views of some publishers about the repercussions that accompanied and still accompany the precautionary actions taken against COVID-19 in this survey, with the participation of some children's books publishers in the United Arab Emirates, Republic of Sudan, Republic of Lebanon and Arab Republic of Egypt.



- The publisher, **Asim Al-Sharif**, Director of Al Dar Namozagia Publishing House in Lebanon, said: Based on this global health threat that is most burdensome for the Arab region, what is supposed to be a decade of hard work for sustainable development has turned into a



Asem Al Cherif

decade of urgent work to save lives and reform livelihoods. COVID-19 pandemic has created a crisis that reminds us that the strong and effective public sector is the first line of defense against threats endangering the entire systems and areas. The area of the epidemic is expanding and the Arab sectors are already suffering from multiple conflicts and exacerbating financial burdens, including the Arab publishing sector, which is already reeling economically before the pandemic, so what is the situation during and after such pandemic?! Hence, we view that the situation of publishing and publishers during this epidemic period had an additional negative impact on the deteriorated situation of publishers, in terms of physical and moral aspects in varying degrees. They are in an unenviable situation, which indicates that publishing and the publisher are suffering a lot and urgently need unprecedented support from the concerned parties, as well as public and private cultural sectors to maintain at least the dream of restoring hope for the Arab publisher.

- **Ms. Hala Halles**, Director of Children and Teachers Publishing House - United Arab Emirates, believes that answering the questionnaire is not easy because it is a topic that needs a long discussion about it and its details, but we

will try to be as brief as possible. She views that the epidemic did not stop at publication only, but it had negative effects on many sectors and a lot of correlated works. Based on the people's preoccupation with the news of the epidemic, in an attempt to prevent its health, social and economic risks to the family and society; business lockdown; closure of schools and universities; and cancellation of book fairs entirely in all countries, decreased the demand for books, newspapers and paper magazines. Thus, publishing industry has been greatly affected by the same and its cash flows have decreased. Hence, many specialized laborers were laid off and it is no longer possible to invest in printing and publishing new and various works and some of publishers and publishing houses could not continue to work.

- The publisher **Al-Fatih Mohamed Al-Hassan Othman**, General Director of Dar Al Manaheg Library for Publishing, Sudan, believes that the publishing movement has been affected by this epidemic and the publishing process has become very difficult, especially for novice publishers. This is due to the health ban that affected all categories of publishing, and there was recession and semi-stagnation in the publishing situation.

- The publisher, **Ali Abdul Moneim**, Director of "Unlimited Press" from Egypt, said that there is no doubt that there are many industries around the world that have been severely affected due to the negative implications resulting from the spread of COVID-19, such as tourism and aviation. It is also clearly obvious that the publishing industry around the world and in our Arab world, in particular, was greatly affected by this spread of the virus, but while reading the history of the publishing industry and movement throughout history, we found out that such industry will never end, because publishing

is the axis of most cultural creative industries, in addition to its great importance in the educational process. Moreover, the book is still the first means of acquiring culture and learning, and it is considered as a comprehensive container for all components of culture. Whereupon, we must look deeply into the grant that exists within this ordeal, as e-commerce markets flourished strongly during lockdown time. The demand for electronic and interactive content on the Internet has increased and this is a good indicator if we can exploit it well as publishers, in order to benefit from modern technology in reaching out to our customers around the world, identifying their requirements and desires and fulfilling them in line with current and future circumstances.

### How have publishers been affected by the cancellation of Arab and international fairs?

- The publisher, **Asim Al-Sharif**, Director of Al Dar Namozgia Publishing House in Lebanon, said that no one denies that many Arab publishers rely on Arab and international fairs, and based on the continuing outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has negatively affected book markets around the world, like other economic sectors, the regulators of Arab and international fairs were forced to cancel them, despite such fairs were previously and currently scheduled. However, they hope that health professionals can discover a vaccine that reduces its negative health effects on everyone, so as to restore their natural role and resist

the shrinkage and decline of sales opportunities they have suffered, as it is difficult to compensate for their loss in the foreseeable future. It is proven that this pandemic affected all publishers with varying degrees, as each publisher was affected according to his productive capabilities and the type of his books. Then, we believe that the negative impact of the pandemic on publishers was not the same, but had different levels.

- The publisher **Al-Fatih Mohamed Al-Hassan Othman** believes that Arab and international fairs represent a window for publishing houses with foreign currencies, as they generate funds representing about 50% of their work, and also include good opportunities for contracting with authors, illustrators and translation companies, the same as Sharjah International Book Fair and Sharjah Children's Reading Festival, which has always been a direct target of children's book publishers.



- Ms. **Hala Halles**, Director of Children and Teachers Publishing House - United Arab Emirates said that Arab and international book fairs are the backbone of life for publishers, because these fairs represent the forum for knowledge and commercial exchange. They are the lung by which publishing houses

can breathe and introduce themselves and their works. Hence, the cancellation of those fairs was like slow drowning while struggling for survival in a crumbling sea.

- Mr. **Ali Abdul Moneim** said that a questionnaire was done through the coordination between Professional Development Committee of Arab Publishers Association and Professional Development Committee of Egyptian Publishers Association, in which 293 Arab publishers participated. The most important results of the questionnaire included:

The decline in publishers' sales during the first and second quarter of 2020 as compared to the same period in the previous year was 74%.

86% of the respondents were forced to stop dealing with printing houses, and this will definitely affect the movement of production for the remainder of the year.

75% of the respondents were forced to stop dealing with authors, and this will certainly affect the movement of intellectual and literary creativity during this critical period in our Arab nation. In addition, a percentage of respondents ranging from 50% to 67% were forced to stop dealing with designers, language reviewers, translators and paper merchants, which could seriously and greatly affect jobs related to the publishing industry and increase the unemployment rates.

87% of the respondents had to lay off some employees.

Arab fairs sales represent 53% of publishers' total sales, and this shows the extent of the damage caused to Arab publishers as a result of canceling fairs this year, and stresses the need to find quick solutions to the crisis of organizing fairs in the next phase.

Paper book sales through electronic platforms represented 15%, and e-book sales represented 10%, and it is clear that these percentages do not adequately compensate for the sharp decline in total sales.

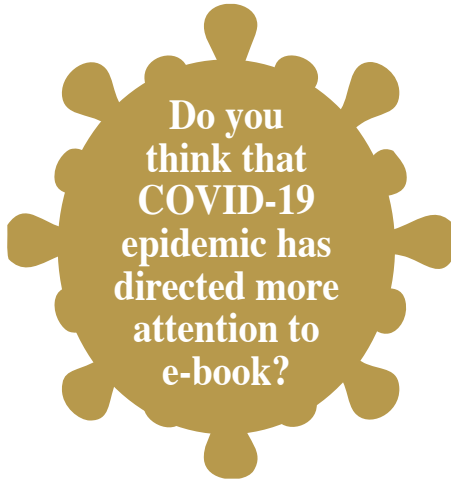
Only 56% of the total respondents agreed to participate in Arab fairs in their traditional form, which will be held in the coming period.

51% of the respondents do not have electronic sales platforms, and 57% of them need technical assistance in establishing such platforms.

91% of respondents believe that sales and reading have been affected by the current economic conditions, which makes all publishers and readers in a bad need of government support to stimulate and encourage people to read.

54% of the respondents agreed that they need to reconsider the way of work in the future.

77% of the total respondents agreed to participate in virtual fairs, and this is a very positive indicator, while adopting some important observations for the success of this experiment, such as:



- The publisher, **Asim Al-Sharif**, Director of Al Dar Namozgia Publishing House in Lebanon views that in order to answer this questionnaire or survey without the epidemic existence, it is necessary to make a comparison between the disadvantages and advantages of the paper book and the e-book in general. Undoubtedly, increasing the love of reading at early childhood and providing the proper environment for reading, in terms of time and place, had proven the child's love of paper book since his early childhood. This loves contin-

ues in his youth until his graduation from university and entry into the arena of public life. Thus, we, like such intellectuals, see the difficulty of using the e-book, which would include many disadvantages in spite of some of its advantages. Then, I will not delve into the details of this issue. What I meant is that some readers tend by force to read the e-book, while ignoring its disadvantages due to the current bad circumstances. Most of them read books which are available in their home library or read the same books again. No matter how the e-book is developed, it will not be able to replace the paper book.

- Ms. **Hala Halles**, Director of Children and Teachers Publishing House - United Arab Emirates said that the e-book has aroused a great interest since its appearance, because it was reflecting a future view of the transfer and exchange of knowledge, but the process of change and transition from the traditional book to the e-book was slow, due to the difficulty of change, society habits, costs associated with change and lack of understanding of the method of circulating the book electronically in an easy way. However, what was imposed by the epidemic on societies, in terms of embargo and a ban on visiting libraries and fairs, led to the acceleration of the circulation of the e-book, especially in the field of distance education. Thus, the interest in the e-book increased rapidly, till it became, within a few months, one of the basic requirements and a clear future alternative to the paper book. Indeed, it has become clear that publishing houses that delayed the change will face great difficulties in publishing.

- The publisher, **Al-Fatih Mohamed Al-Hassan Othman**, said that in developed countries, the e-book has witnessed great interest in light of the COVID-19 epidemic, and the readers' interest in the e-book has increased. In third

world countries, such as Sudan, the paper book maintains its value and popularity among readers, especially children's books, as during COVID-19 epidemic period, paper books witnessed great demand for several reasons, the most important of which is the closure of schools, as the demand for children's paper books has increased in Sudan, which is not a very great value, but rather an indication of the circulation of the paper book in healthy conditions all over the world.



Ali Abdulmenem

- The publisher, **Ali Abdul Mo-neim**, believes that the repercussions of the spread of COVID-19 indicate that digital publishing is the future, and that the spread of electronic applications and artificial intelligence during crisis management had an impact on many creative industries. Hence, Arab publishers should speed up the transition to digital publishing and digital printing as soon as possible, along with reducing investments in fixed assets, such as expanding the purchase or lease of stores or libraries, because the current situation is a warning bell, as paper publishing could be endangered in the future. World Health Organization's warning about the transmission of COVID-19 through paper currencies, and the subsequent demands to prevent the circulation of paper newspapers completely,



were among the most dangerous indicators for the paper publishing industry in the near future. In addition, the concept of digital publishing will include all forms, whether digital books or audiobooks, but it will not completely stop the production of the paper book.

What are your suggestions to support Arab publishers, especially children's book publishers?

- The publisher, **Asim Al-Sharif**, said that it is prevalent in our current situation that the publishing sector in the Arab countries is witnessing a real setback, due to many causes, including the subjectivity and the general situation in the Arab countries. There is no doubt that some publishing houses, especially those carrying the banner of publishing novel books, are less affected by these circumstances. It is necessary to reposition the publishing sector in the Arab world based on advanced foundations to start a comprehensive structural resurgence by defining the type of their production aiming at protecting and developing society in all scientific topics towards a better future, provided that they are supported by public and private financial and cultural sectors. This is in general terms. As for children's book publishers, with my respect and appreciation for them, some of them rely on translated books and others depend on books written in Arabic in text and content. I view that this is more useful than previous cases. The concerned sectors should also provide support and care to publishers, authors and

writers of children's literature, as well as illustrators. I believe that this is a realistic and sound trend to restore the hope, visions and glamor of the dreams of the distinguished Arab child in all fields.

- Ms. **Hala Halles** believes that there are many proposals that can help publishing houses to continue their work, especially those specialized in children's stories, such as encouraging virtual fairs during the epidemic period; reducing their charges, as well as fees for participation in book fairs; expanding their scope when it is possible; forming committees for social communication in the society to support the publication of books and stories; supporting the development of the e-book; seriously considering the presentation of "remote" lectures and seminars specialized in explaining the techniques and costs of the e-book and how to deal with its publication and distribution in a safe manner; cooperating with the relevant state ministries, Emirates Publishers Association and Arab Publishers Associations to provide financial assistance to publishers to facilitate the transition to the e-book, support them through grants, facilitate financial loans for publishing development and deliver their publications to the recipient quickly and smoothly; encouraging parents through social networks, schools and forums to enrich knowledge for their children to acquire stories, educational aids, as well as scientific and social books in all their forms; encouraging children at their early educational stages to read educational leaflets in the media, schools, shopping malls, etc.; urging the child to invest in buying a story or book from (his personal pocket money), so that he gets accustomed to the fact that the book is his first friend; and urging the parents to discuss the book's contents with their children. Then, the specialized forums should take the initiative to hold numerous competi-

tions to encourage the competition to provide good and beneficial books to the society. Schools must be motivated to hold electronic school fairs, so that publishers can display their publications on screens at school's halls, instead of tables. Each book should have a certain number that students register on the purchase form when they desire to buy it. Schools should be certainly keen on obliging the students to keep social distancing and wear the face masks while touring the fair. Then, the student presents a wishlist to the teacher or the fair official, so that the books are provided to the student later.



Al Fateh Mohamad Al Hasan Othman

- The publisher, **Al-Fatih Mohamed Al-Hassan Othman**, calls for granting children's book awards, expanding the extent of participation and increasing direct financial support by providing opportunities for the largest number of publishing houses to participate and win prizes.

- The publisher, **Ali Abdul Mo-neim** asks all officers in charge of the publishing industry in the Arab world to adopt effective strategic policies to increase the Arab cultural products on the Internet and provide training programs to train Arab publishers on the speed of digital transformation.

# Bodour Al Qasimi Launches the “Crisis Fund for Emirati Publishers”

Sheikha Bodour bint Sultan Al Qasimi, founder and honorary president of the Emirates Publishers Association, in an effort to support the bright tomorrow of the book and publishing industry in the Emirates, officially announced the launching of the "Crisis Fund for Emirati Publishers" endowed with a one-million-dirham budget, with a view to backing publishers affected by the Corona pandemic and helping them in the concretization of their creative and cultural projects.

In partnership with the Sharjah Book Authority and Sharjah Publishing City, the Emirati Publishers Association embarked on the task of coordinating and communicating with Emirati book creators who are seeking to benefit from the services provided by the fund, whilst the Fund aims to reach out to the various publishers operating in the country, identify the challenges they are facing, and endeavour to extend assistance to them, necessary for the smooth survival and advancement of their business.

Speaking about the inception of the fund and its vision, Sheikha Bodour bint Sultan Al Qasimi said: "There is no separation between the publishing sector and the book industry from other vital economic sectors in the world, undoubtedly it is natural that the fund will overcome the challenges that have been caused by the spread of the Coronavirus. Whenever there is a crisis, there are mechanisms to overcome it and opportunities with which to deal with it, that is why today we are working alongside the country's publishers to give them a boost so that they will be able to develop the necessary plans to carry out their projects in the knowledge and creativity industry".

"In the light of the crises, we have to stand together, cooperate and work in the spirit of one team more than ever before." Sheikha Bodour Al Qasimi went on to say: "For the sake of serving the Emirati book, not least because the Corona virus crisis has proven that the book will remain the single strongest pillar to raise awareness, promote the values of brotherhood and peace and foster a culture of dialogue with others in all corners of the world."

It is worth noting that the mechanisms that will be used to benefit from the fund are to be announced at a later date, on the basis of a series of steps being worked out in coordination with the Emirates Publishers Association, as well as in close partnership with the Sharjah Book Authority and Sharjah Publishing City.

Through the National Creators Support Program,



the Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development pledged its contribution to the Crisis Fund for Emirati Publishers, with the aim of assisting the country's publishing houses to uphold their cultural efforts, to provide society with lifelong cultural and knowledge production, and to overcome the economic challenges faced by publishers in these critical circumstances.

Sheikha Bodour Al Qasimi thanked Her Excellency Noura Al Kaabi, Minister of Culture and Knowledge Development, for her tireless efforts in bolstering the institutions of the cultural movement and consolidating initiatives and efforts to drive the local publishing sector forward, emphasizing that continued coordination and support will pave the way for a brighter future for the cultural sector, knowledge and creative industries in the UAE. Indeed, doing so makes it an essential contributor to the implementation of the UAE's civic project.

## Board meeting of Arab Children's Book Publishers Forum



From a previous meeting of the board

The Board of the Forum held a regular meeting through video conference on Sunday, corresponding to 06/09/2020, headed by Mr. Nasser Assi, Chairman of the Forum, with the participation of Ms. Aisha Hamad Meghawer, Secretary-General, as well as the members of the Board and the Office of Secretariat General.

The present parties discussed many important topics related to the Forum, the efforts exerted to support the publishers, who are members of the Forum, and the preparations for participation in Sharjah Book Fair by next November.

## New members in the Forum



The Board of Arab Children's Book Publishers Forum approved the membership applications submitted by publishing houses in the UAE, Jordan, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon, and we hope that they will form an added value for the Forum work, namely:

Publishig House	State	Director in charge of the Forum affairs
Yaffa Scientific Publishing House	Jordan	Wael Mohammed Abd Rabu
Al Maya Publishing and Distribution	Jordan	Dina Al Zebda
Nabd Al Qalam	UAE	Ihsan Al Suwaidi
Thaqafa Publishing and Distribution	UAE	Bassam Shabaro
Noor Publishing House	UAE	Noor Arab
Wow Publishing House	UAE	Majdi Al Kafrawi
Jarir Distribution Bookshop	UAE	Yassin Al Zamel
Al Ershad Publishing and Distribution	Syria	Nabih Al Jandali
Al Sebai Establishment	Syria	Abdul Razzaq Al Sebai
Al Asmaa Publishing House	Syria	Muhammad Ziyad Makhlalati
Dar Al Fikr Al Lubnani	Lebanon	Nader Assi
Gifted children	Lebanon	Mostafa Wahba
Dar Al-Maaref Publishing and Distribution	Egypt	Saeed Abdo

## The Forum honored its members who received Etisalat and Sharjah Book Fair awards



The Board of Arab Children Book Publisher's Forum honored the member publishers of the Forum, whose publications received the awards, or the writers and illustrators participating in their publications, who were granted Etisalat Award in its 11th session and Sharjah Book Fair Award in its 38th session.

Mr. Nasser Assi, the Chairman of the Forum, congratulated the members on this great achievement, calling on the rest of the colleagues to exert efforts to promote the children's book and receive appreciation awards that represent a recognition of the high level reached by the publications of the Forum members, in order to achieve the lofty goals that the Forum seeks to fulfill.

Honoring was done in the Forum's pavilion during Sharjah

Book Fair in the presence of Ms. Aisha Hamad Meghawer, Secretary-General; His Excellency Mr. Muhammad Rashad, President of Arab Publishers Association; Mr. Ashraf Shaheen, Vice President; Mr. Ziad Kassara, Head of Fairs Committee; and the administrative body of the General Secretariat Office.

The winners of Etisalat Award, who were honored, are Mr. Ahmed Abu Touq, Al Ahlia Publishing and Distribution in Jordan, which received "Child Book of the Year" Award (a story about "S" and "L"), written by Anas Abu Rahma, and the illustrations were made by Lubna Taha; Ms. Taghreed Al Najjar, Dar Al Salwa Studies and Publishing - Jordan, the category of "Young People Book of the Year" Award, as the book of "To whom does this doll

belong?" received the award, written by Ms. Taghreed Al Najjar; Mr. Kamal Halawa, Delegate of Al Hadaeq House - Lebanon, in the category of "Best Director", the book of "Abu Karkouba" received the award, which was written by Nabiha Mohaidly, and the illustrations were made by Walid Taher; as well as Mr. Muhammad Al Qasimi, Al Buraq House for Children's Culture - Iraq, "Best Silent Book" Award; the New Category, the book of "Secret of the Well", written by Ali Al Qasem and the illustrations were made by Maa-soumah Haji Wand.

Honoring included Mr. Moenis Al Hattab, ABC Publishing House - Jordan, the category of "Best Illustrations" by the illustrator, Ali Al Zaini; and Mr. Balsam Saad, Al Balsam Publishing and Distribution House - Egypt: Award of "Best

Text" for the book of "Damascus: A City Story", written and illustrated by Alaa Murtada. The winners of Sharjah Book Fair Awards were also honored, namely Mr. Mahmoud Labinah, representative of Al Hudhud Publishing and Distribution House - Dubai, Award of "Best Local Publishing House"; Mr. Saeed Abdo, Dar Al-Maaref Foundation - Egypt, Award of "Best Arab Publishing House"; and Mr. Issam Abu Hamdan, Dar Al Saqi - Lebanon, represented by Ms. Manal, Award of "Best Arabic Book in the Field of Novel" and Sharjah Award for Translation "Tarjuman".



## Granting books in Braille to blind children in Cairo



Arab Children's Book Publishers Forum presented a collection of children's stories on 25/01/2020 to the National Council for Persons with Disabilities in Cairo at its booth at Cairo International Book Fair, as Mr. Nasser Assi; Chairman of the Forum, and Ms. Aisha Hamad Meghawer; Secretary-General, delivered fifty cop-

ies of the books "Papa Zayed" and "Papa Sultan", which were written by Ms. Saleha Ghabesh, and they were published by Kalimat Group. They were converted into Braille at the expense of the Forum to support the blind and promote their right to learn about the culture and acquire knowl-





## A distinctive participation of Forum in



In its annual participation in Sharjah International Book Fair, Arab Children's Book Publishers Forum was present at 38th session of the Fair that ended on 9/11/2019, where the General Secretariat presented several publications of member publishing houses, the Forum's magazine and the introductory bulletin of the Forum's Award for Best Child Book of 2020.

The Forum pavilion provided wonderful opportunities to meet many of the participating fel-

lows, writers, painters, cultural workshop activists and representatives of cultural production institutions. In addition, rich discussions were conducted on the future of the children's book, publishing methods and literary awards.

### Meeting of the Board of the Forum

The Board of of the Forum held its regular meeting on the sidelines of the Fair, on 2/11/2019, as the meeting tackled many topics of interest



## the 38th session of Sharjah Book Fair

to the Forum members and related to the advancement of its career.

### A seminar entitled (Emirati curricula with international specifications)

On 4/11/2019, the Forum held a joint professional meeting between the publishers and the team of Ministry of Education, which was managed by Ms. Thoraya BATERJI, Head of Professional Development Committee at the Forum. The Ministry's team

included Ms. Osha Al Mazroui, Head of Learning Sources Department; Mr. Khaled Al Zanhani, Head of Interactive Sources Department; Dr. Mahmoud Al Majri, a curricula expert; and Mr. Nabil Al Mayhoub, a theater curricula specialist. The participants examined the policies and methods of procurement followed by the Ministry of Education, and explanations on the topic of procurement delay were presented by the participants in Abu Dhabi Fair last year.



# Participation in the 51st session of Cairo International Book Fair



Arab Children's Book Publishers Forum participated in the 51st session of Cairo Book Fair from 22 January to 4 February 2020.

During this participation, the Forum held on 25/1/2020, and within the cultural activities of the Fair, a creative workshop for gifted children in writing entitled: (After the end, the story begins), with the participation of a distinguished group of talented students of Franciscan Sisters School. The workshop was presented by the writer, Ms. Samah Abu Bakr Ezzat, by reading a

story and interacting with it through dialogue and discussion. Then, she asked the participants to complete the same story after concluding it in their own language and writing, in order to stimulate their creativity and train them to formulate and put ends or amend the story events by using their imagination.

The outputs of this workshop will be audited and added to other workshops that will be held later, along with filtering the best and printing them at the expense of the Forum.

The workshop was attended by Mr. Nasser Assi, Chairman of the Forum; Ms. Aisha Hamad Meghawer, Secretary-General; and Mr. Ashraf Shaheen, Vice President.

Samples of members' publications up to (80) books, in addition to the books which were granted the Forum's Award for Best Child Book of 2019, were presented at the Forum's pavilion. Moreover, the Forum's magazine, the Forum's Award booklet, the nomination form, the annual report of 2019 and other introductory bulletins were presented.







# Winners of the Seventh Forum Award 2020

It was the wish of the Arab Forum of Children's Book Publishers to complete the seventh edition of the Forum's Award, as it coincided with the outbreak of the Corona Pandemic, since a number of operating mechanisms have been adopted in view of the communication of the jury members, at the same time as the committee was conducting its deliberations using visual communication technologies, while the evaluation and discussion were marked by vitality and transparency. The jury of this forum was made up of many specialists and experts: Ms. Salha Ghabsh - Writer and Editor – Unite Arab Emirates. Professor Ali Al-Zaini (Painter) - Egypt. Professor Ranad Al-Qabaj Editor - Palestine. The number of nominated books reached 66 from 19 Arab publishing houses.

## Final Results And Announcement Of The Winners:

### 1st The best book for children (16-12) years old:

**"The Red Snake"**, Writer Mays Dagher and Illustrations Omar Lafi, published by Nahid Al Shawa Cultural Foundation House (Books Noon / Canada) is the winner, as it tells the story of the loss of father, land and home. The story's hero finds himself in front of a snake that eats dreams and hopes. Still, this child is determined to brave the circumstances and conquer them. The story is very interesting, while the language is beautiful and the most important aspect is that the child's perspective and voice are clear in the narrative which expresses his feelings and dreams vividly and with deep sincerity.



### 2nd The best book for the children's age group: under 12 years old

The book **"I and He"** was the winner: the writer Maria Daadoush and the cartoons by Walid Taher, published by Dar Al-Yasmine / Jordan.

This book is adorable and fun for children and adults as well. It encourages children to see everything in an open, tolerant and positive way.

We can say that the paintings and the writing are in excellent harmony with each other. Suitable everywhere.



### 3rd Award for the best text

**"What's inside my head?"** The writer: Muhannad Al-Aqus, and the drawings, by Amira Al-Tababi, published by Nour Al-Maarif House / Egypt.

The tale is about a child's obsession with how big his head is; we have been taken on a journey to understand why. The story had not one answer, but rather several ones, which means that the question was the main element in the storyline's development. The narrative, in the committee's eyes, can be a tool to empower the matter, what is most important is the recognition between the recipient and the child in the story of the real necessity of asking questions in life as a means of understanding and accepting each other.



### 4th Best Drawing Award

It is the book of **"Adnan and Ramadan"** of Dar Al-Yasmeen by the writer Haya Saleh and the painter Ali Al-Zaini which won the award for the best drawing owing to the painter's skill in brilliantly bringing out the aroma of Ramadan by invoking the ornaments of the city, the warm city full of Ramadan candy sellers and the family feast of the family during a Ramadan meal. There are many details in the drawings depicting the Arab House.

Following the cancellation of the Sharjah Reading Festival, the winners' awards ceremony has been called off and the cash value of the Award is being transferred to their accounts.

The Arab Children's Book Publishers Forum extends its congratulations to all the winners and wishes all the Forum members further success and creativity, towards the common goal that we all strive to develop Arab children's literature.



## Financial Aid from: The Crisis Fund for members of the Emirates Publishers Association

Emirates Publishers Association announced during the seventh meeting of its Board of Directors the allocation of AED 356,551 from “Crisis Fund” as financial aids to 19 publishing houses out of 40 and revealed that it is examining other applications for benefiting from the Fund, which was launched by the Association last June, in order to support the publisher members of the Association affected by Covid-19 pandemic.

The meeting tackled the reality of publishing in the state, its options and criteria for its development and advancement; witnessed the Association’s Board members approval of the agenda of the previous meeting, which included a package of innovative initiatives to support the mem-

bers during the spread of Covid-19; and discussed some copyright infringements and their impact on the Emirati book industry.

Mr. Ali bin Hatem, President of the Association, stressed that the Fund shows its keenness on supporting and helping the publishers and promoting their business amid these difficult circumstances they experienced during the spread of Covid-19 and indicated that the support serves the interest of the publishing sector and paves the way for continuing the publishers’ work and developing it.

The President of the Association added: “The world is witnessing nowadays during this pandemic difficult circumstances that badly affected many business sectors, especially



Ali bin Hatem, President of the Emirates Publishers Association

the publishing sector, which suffered from repeated lockdowns and cancellation of cultural occasions, book sale and supply chain events, etc. Hence, Crisis Fund was established and its establishment embodied the keenness of Sheikha Bodour bint Sultan Al Qassimi, Vice President of International Publishers Association and Founder of Emirates Publishers Association, and her continuous efforts to improve the work of Emirati publishers.

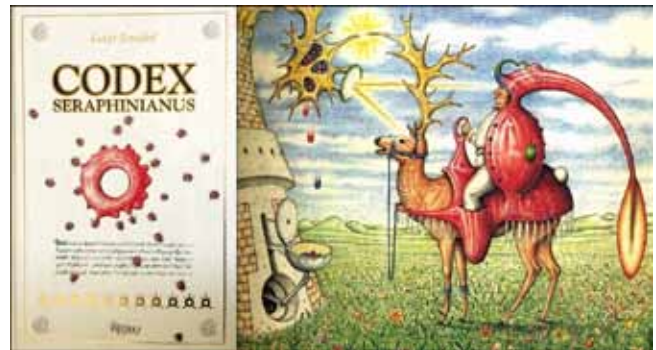
## ► Wonders of Serafini Manuscript

It is a manuscript that was written by Italian architect and designer, Luigi Serafini. It is an encrypted fictional book written by Serafini when he was 27 years old and after three years, it was first published in 1981. Two large books were widely famous at that time, and that book was considered the most expensive book in the world at the time, since its cost was USD 2000. After the demand increased, it was formulated, shortened and published at a lower price.

The strange thing about the book’s popularity is that the readers did not understand anything from it, either at that time or in our current era. Scientists spent many years trying to understand it, but they could not decipher the language that no hu-

man had written before throughout the ages.

The first chapter is about the plants world, which contains strange species that have no analogues in our world. The second chapter addresses the world of animals, including strange groups of animals having no presence on the Earth. The third one depicts two-footed creatures like humans living among and with them. The fourth chapter tackles the field of physics, while the fifth one sheds light on machines and inventions of complex geometric shapes that do unknown functions. The sixth chapter



is about biology and anatomy of human body in a strange way, while the seventh one deals with the history of that superstitious world. The eighth one revolves around writing, tools and methods. The ninth chapter is about foods in that world and fashion, while the tenth one sheds light on games and entertainment methods.

A blog at “3lafkra.com”

## Yellow Crane Tower

Yellow Crane Tower is a traditional Chinese tower and an important landmark in the famous “Wuhan” city. It was built around 223 AD. It was renewed on various periods, most recently in 1981.

The height of the tower is 169 feet and covers an area of 34,000 square feet, near Yangtze River. The tower is one of the sacred places for a sect called “Taoism”, where the famous legend assumes that “Lu Dongbin” is a Chinese scientist and poet and one of the gods that ascends to the sky from the Yellow Crane Tower.



## Arabic Wikipedia

Arabic Wikipedia is the Arabic version of Wikipedia. It was launched in 2003 and includes 1,029,534 articles, 1,802,498 registered members and 34,817 files. Arabic Wikipedia is ranked 15th in terms of the largest Wikipedia by the number of articles and 12th in terms of depth, surpassing the depth percentage in French, German, Spanish and other Wikipedia, which need more accuracy. It received 1.2% of Wikipedia visitors. Nevertheless, it helps the Arabic-speaking user, as encyclopedic traditions exist in the worldwide languages through comprehensive and modern encyclopedias in the form of volumes or film formats, while Arab Wikipedia plays this role due to the lack of proliferation of high-quality Arabic encyclopedic projects in the form of volumes in the Arab world, as well as the presence of Wikipedia in the first search engine results.

## Academic Ranking Presents The Best Students in the World

An academic report shed light on the nationalities of the best students in the world, in terms of performance in several subjects, and according to the classification of the International Student Assessment Program, Chinese students are the first in the world.

This program evaluated students' abilities in three subjects, namely mathematics, science and reading, and it was based on a large sample of 710,000 adolescents, who are 15 years old from 79 countries in the world.

Singaporean students were ranked second, while Hong Kong and Macau Autonomous Territories in China came in third and fourth places.

Meanwhile, Estonian students came in fifth place, followed by Canadian students in sixth place, and Finnish students in seventh place.

As for South Korea, it was ranked eighth, while the Polish students were ranked ninth, and the Swedish students followed them in tenth place.

The report states that the students were not asked about academic matters purely, but were also requested to talk about themselves, their relationship with others, and their view for the future.

Sky News



## SEO Gives Priority to Search Engines



What does it mean that your website content is SEO-friendly? It is the configuration of content to be displayed in search engines in a distinctive way. If your website is new, it is normal that you want to have a good and

advanced ranking and presence in search results. Among the important tips for writing SEO-friendly content: Write useful content. Write about the core topic. Choose keywords and use them

wisely. Make links part of your article. Optimize images to have a better ranking in search results. Read the article before publishing it: **seo-stars.com**

## Rereading Books

Rereading or repeated reading of books have many supporters, as they view that rereading gives them an opportunity to delve beyond the lines and understand the explanations and intentions. In addition, rereading allows them to fully comprehend and understand the book material, making it a part of the individual's cognitive system. Some readers have sometimes nostalgia to reread some books, and the reason for that is different, because some of the readers have various behaviors. In fact, those people



who tend to repeat reading, do that action for various considerations, including searching for a previous moment of pleasure, a better understanding or analysis, a comparison with the new information for

the reader or for further understanding. The great Russian writer, Leo Tolstoy, had a famous saying: "A book that is not worth reading twice, is not worth reading once".



# The Publisher and COVID-19

**Mohamed Al Qasimi**  
Dar Al Buraq Publishing House

The publishing profession has faced a major obstacle, which mainly suffers from many obstacles and difficulties, especially in our Arab world that has other crises, including the economy, wars and political situations, which lead to the creation of steel barriers. The publisher must solely struggle and overcome such obstacles and barriers, in order to stay and continue to handle his humane mission that is indispensable for any nation or people. It represents the most important factor in building a good citizen, who is capable of development and production and aware of his social and national responsibilities. Without books, reading and publishing, this person will be illiterate and unaware of his responsibilities, but rather will waste lots of efforts, money and opportunities for the state's progress.

Amid such circumstances, a black cloud pervaded the corners of the globe, increased the burdens of many professions and businesses, restrained people and prevented them from moving forward and thinking, including the publishing profession, which was completely stopped, hoping that the crisis will regress and be overcome with the least losses. However, this period was long and there were financial dues payable by the publishers and the same was applied to commercial, industrial sectors and others.

Based on this situation, we have found out, at Dar Al-Buraq management, that there is no way but facing this pandemic with more thinking and efforts to find solutions. We started taking advantage of the opportunity of free time we have and reviewed the relationship record and the list of contacts registered at our house. At the beginning, we took the initiative to improve the website, change its design and increase the information and high-quality pictures about books. Then, we opened an

e-book channel through Amazon Arabic Book Store, which is deemed an important and influential step. It is a gate for selling our e-books, as there are many readers who visit Amazon to review and buy books. Some of them are interested in acquiring the paper book or interested in buying the rights and translating the books into other languages. We believe that this step is important for every publisher.

Customers in different countries have also been contacted to revive our relations and create alternative mechanisms instead of international fairs that we get used to. It was generally clear that e-marketing, funded advertisements and outstanding website have great importance in the spread of the brand, as many customers, who do not know Al Buraq and its publications, hurried to contact us and purchase their desired books for personal use or online stores selling books in their regions. Hence, the situation was improved and business witnessed progress to an extent that keeps its continued development and helps it move forward and coexist with this pandemic in ways ensuring the safety of the publisher and the reader.

**The need is urgent from the official authorities to support the publisher so that he can preserve his vitality in human production with his intellectual and cultural needs.**

We also believe that government entities should seek to revitalize the publishing profession through reading initiatives, public libraries and other matters, in proportion to COVID-19 risk and the necessary precautionary measures to confront it. They have to help and motivate the publisher to keep his energy to produce culture and thought and fulfill the intellectual and cultural needs of people.

# The Role Of The Story In Establishing The Cultural Identity Of The Child

**Abu Sufyan Al Qadal**

Journalist, writer and researcher in children's literature



"Children's literature" in general, and the story in particular, plays the role of the impregnable fortress against successive attacks led by satellite channels intended for children, as those channels intentionally and unintentionally act as the carrier who is hardly aware of his role well, so he mixes concepts and visions, which would affect the culture of the child. Their materials and programs directed at the child become strange for him in all aspects and even further from his values, morals and traditions. Hence, we should shed light on the importance of the story and its impact on preserving the cultural identity of the child, rather than supporting it.

Al Maany dictionary defined (human identity) as "meaning absolute truth and essential qualities, and it is the individual's feeling of himself and his personality, as well as his preservation of his integrity, values, behaviors and ideas in various situations."

As for the cultural identity that should be hopefully established and strengthened, it means the cultural uniqueness of a particular individual or group, and what is covered in the meaning of culture, including habits and patterns of behavior, tendencies and values, and a view at the universe and life. This meaning also includes the religious and historical dimensions of the individual or group according to the fact that they represent one of its main components.

Since the child is the first cornerstone of society, he needs a higher focus and greater effort in order to establish the values and meanings of cultural identity inside him.

We cannot ignore what was mentioned in the lecture

## The beginnings of children's literature were translation

entitled, "Cultural Identity of Child" organized by Department of Cultural Affairs at Department of Culture and Information in Sharjah earlier, in which the researcher, Badea Khalil Al Hashemi stressed the cultural identity and the important role it plays in the lives of countries and societies, especially it reflects the civilization of such countries, their growth and characteristic as it represents one of the most important elements of patriotism, which is the major umbrella for belonging and loyalty to the homeland.

The story has a pivotal and influential role in the emotional and psychological formation of the child and in linking him with his values, customs and society, along with the consolidation of his religious and moral values. In this sense, Arab writers of children literature appeared and played an active role earlier. Kamel Kilani appeared by his book "Aspects of Prophet's Life", in which he simplified the life of Prophet Muhammad PBUH to fit the child's mentality. Then, a number of writers followed him by writing various religious books. In addition, the writer, Abdel Hamid Gouda Al Sahar, author of the series "Stories of Prophets" emerged. There are other books that tackled Holy Quran stories in certain narrative forms attracting the children, and there was the prophetic biography written by Ibn Hisham, and stories of Companions, may Allah be pleased with them.

The writers are still benefiting from that rich source, but they are blamed on the repetition, redundant statements and abiding by the traditional pattern initiated by the writers who preceded them.

The beginnings of children's literature in our Arab



Among the activities of the forum - Telling stories to children

world emerged through translating some western stories, and then the situation was shifted to having interest in the heritage stock. Thus, the story of Kamel Al Kilani, "Sinbad the Sailor" was written in 1927. Then, some writers revised and refined the stories of One Thousand and One Nights to make them more suitable for children.

Others have also benefited and quoted from the book "Kalila wa Dimna" and tackled folk tales that were a basis, on which the writers depended for a long time and they still rely on them. However, it is important to distinguish between the inspiration from heritage and its simplification, so that the children's writers can leave their place from which they started long time ago! One of the stories that greatly solidifying the national values of children is the story of "Forest and Hunter" written by the Sudanese writer, Amal Siraj, in which she presented the forest as a symbol of homeland, and considered the turtle's betrayal for the forest animals and its collusion with the hunter as a reason for punishing it, by forcing it to carry a stone on its back forever. On an accelerating basis, we are currently witnessing some publishing houses' infatuation with translating western books of children, without considering the

translated material and its suitability for the taste and privacy of the Arab child, his culture and different environment. Some people believe that there are stories and magazines translated by such publishing houses extensively, and they are based on either absolute good or absolute evil such as the stories of "Super Man", "Batman" and others, despite they violate human nature, which led to the dissemination of inappropriate educational values in our societies!

There is another explicit accusation recently mentioned by some children's literature critics, which indicated that some writers are quoting their stories from western ones, meaning that this material contradicts with the privacy of the Arab child because it was not directed at him at all.

Perhaps it is important to point out here that maintaining the cultural identity of the Arab child seems to be complicated to the extent that private publishing houses may not be able to deal with it alone. Therefore, the governments and countries must intervene to implement many joint programs and theses to build a thicker cultural wall to protect the child and ensure that his ideas are not invaded.

# Al Fulk Translation and Publishing adapts to COVID-19

**Dr. Alyazia Khalifa**



Every time has its own circumstances and lifestyle, and one has to be flexible enough to live through any circumstance. The business suspension and loss faced by the world and the psychological and social impact of obligatory home quarantine for people at their homes due to COVID-19 pandemic had undoubtedly affected the entire world, whether individuals or families, institutions and governments. Publishing sector in the Arab world was one of the most important sectors that have been deeply affected, since publishing industry was paralyzed for more than three months.

As the owner of a publishing house concerned with children's literature, we decided to support the reader, so we launched a blog called (# Remotely\_Together), through which we provided some of our publications for free digital reading and we organized a competition for creative writing. Then, we held reading sessions for children and young people, in cooperation with institutions in the country, such as Abu Dhabi Libraries, UAE Board on Books for Young People, Culture Without Borders and Ministry of Culture. Such sessions were various, as some of them were previously recorded and some were presented in an audio form only, including live broadcast sessions with children.

As far as we are concerned at Al Fulk Translation and Publishing, the cultural experience of direct digital reading sessions had the greatest impact on us and children. We gained the experience of learning and interacting with children digitally. In addition, we believe

that such sessions achieve one of our most important goals, in terms of instilling reading behaviors in our children. Thus, direct interaction with them allows them to love reading. We did not read and narrate stories only, but we held discussions with them about what we read, so we made sure of our children's ability of comprehension, analysis, discussion and creative narration.

**The cultural experience of the direct digital reading sessions had the greatest impact on us and on children**

As a publishing house concerned with Arab children's literature, we must make use of the content we produced before the crisis in such reading sessions, so as to revive the love of reading in the hearts of our children, and we should not be worried about the severe decline in the number of publications and sales during 2020. Therefore, what we will gain from encouraging and motivating our children to read through these digital reading sessions is the greatest and most successful investment that can be made during this crisis.







# Characteristics of child literature

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Literature directed to the child derives its stereotypical definition from being a kind of literature, and in this sense, it belongs to the family of Arab literatures covered by artistic prose, poetry and narration in its various forms. However, in this respect, it is close to visual arts of all kinds, and the presence of the visual arts in the child's literature has a special and exceptional value. Visual arts mean full alternatives and technical options related to the painting, photographs, television drama, child's theater and cinema. In all these arts, the written texts of the child are blended with those arts dedicated for providing a technical semantic expression that addresses the child and gives him many cognitive, gustatory and educational dimensions.

However, this exceptional presence of children's literature in the framework of visual arts does not make us overlook the programs, radio drama and pages related to the child in newspapers and magazines, as well as the book of the child, which represents a cornerstone in addressing the child. We do not forget here the world of digital multimedia that created new opportunities for expression, as well as moral and educational challenges that cannot be ignored.

Based on all of the above reasons, we can observe the stormy changes in the world of childhood coupled with different influences, which would require addressing the new and renewed benefits, which are summarized in the following:

Cognitive, perceptual and technical encirclement of the arts of authorship and modern writing of children's literature, which requires a context; considering the compelling transformations of the written text and the probability to be written, visible and audible at the same time; Addressing the child according to the different age lev-

els; adapting the written texts for an age group, in terms of its specific sensitivity, cognitive awareness, the language of discourse and the nature of influences;

Considering the rules of modern artistic standards without compulsion and coercion, which would require a balance and parallelism between the writer, director, photographer, artist and musician, so that the result can express such balance;

Balancing the public and the private aspects, which means the search for historical cultural privacy, taking into account the reasons for creative usage of the human product in children's literature, and there is proof indicating that the private aspects do not have its beauty and significance except by addressing the open world and providing educational and creative terms included in the global art industry; and Participating in the writing and production processes with the exterior world, as such partnership would be sufficient for clarifying the relevant merits for each party and the mutual benefit at various levels.

**The art of writing and addressing the child is raised and promoted to the level of mixed arts, which are interactive in the presence and more interactive.**

Based on the foregoing, we can conclude the common denominator in the characteristics of children's literature, which we would summarize in saying that the art of writing and addressing the child is raised and promoted to the level of mixed arts, which are interactive in the presence and more interactive in the future, as barriers between the types of arts disappear under the framework of children's literature, and the past, present and future are mixed together. Such barriers are broken before children of all ages, and they are eliminated by the recent digital technology.

## “Library Friends Initiative Stars Competition” breaks the home quarantine

### Amal Al-Randi: We continue to develop the culture of the Arab child



Amid the effects of the quarantine, the anxiety that surrounds the world, the fear of the spread of “Covid-19” pandemic and the forced decline of cultural activities, there are people who do not lose their enthusiasm and try to give hope at all times. At the cultural level, a number of intellectuals continued to fight difficult circumstances and resist the atmosphere of despair and frustration, as they have continued to spread a spirit of optimism, with the continuation of cultural life despite all difficulties. Among those people, there is Kuwaiti writer, Amal Al-Randi, Head of “Library Friends Initiative”, and a group of Kuwaiti and Arab writers, who were preparing for the closing ceremony during the last weeks of their initiative. When the pandemic has arisen, they continued their goal towards motivating the children for reading, creativity and excellence, while trying to get adapted to new circumstances. Hence, the idea of "Library Friends Initiative Stars Competition" was created.

Last June, the writer, Amal Al-Randi, announced the results of the competition and distributed the prizes among the winners, thus she broke the home quarantine and stagnation that disrupted all cultural activities, especially children's activities, amid the lockdown of schools, emergencies and general mobilization for isolating people at their homes.

We contacted Al-Randi, who told us about her feelings towards the frustrated children, the need to communicate with them, and taking a positive action to get rid of idleness and do a useful activity.

Amal Al-Randi said, “I held this competition in cooperation with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature and the sponsorship of its Secretary General, Mr. Kamel Al-Abdul Jalil, as well as the participation of a group of writers of child literature in Kuwait and Arab world, who are dedicated to the culture of children in Kuwait and the Arab world. We agreed on the mission and all our orientations and attitudes were based on the objectives of the competition. Enthusiasm was evident on everyone, as they were members of the jury and contributed effectively to selecting stars, not-

ing that most of these participating writers had previously taken part with me in "Library Initiative Friends", which was held over two years. In the first year, it was supported by Kuwaiti Writers Association, and in the second one, it was promoted by the Council, and always in cooperation with "Dar That Al-Salasil".

Al-Randi presented the names of the writers who participated in this activity, since the creation of this idea and till the selection of the winners in "Library Friends Stars Competition", namely: Thoraya Al-Baqsam, Huda Al-Shawa, Alaa Al-Jaber, Fatima Shaaban, Saadia Al-Mufarah, Hayat Al-Yaqout (from Kuwait), Dr. Wafaa Al-Muzghani (Tunisia), and the poet, Jamila Al-Alawi (Bahrain).

She added, “Despite the difficulties that accompanied the period in which this competition was held, the emergency situation which we witnessed and the negative retreat that forced us to stay at home, and in spite of the short period we had for accomplishing this task, we succeeded in the experience that resulted in discovering a lot of talents, and added to Kuwait a new title regarding the reading projects that are prevalent in the region. In fact, we were surprised by the children’s response to us so quickly. In addition to Kuwait, the response included eleven Arab countries: Bahrain, Yemen, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and the Sultanate of Oman. We were very pleased with the interest of the children's parents and their positive reactions, as they viewed that we had rescued their children from electronic games and their addiction. We were happy that many families continued to contact us, before and after the results were announced, to express their feelings about our activity. I was also very happy with the enthusiasm of the writers team who worked together to accomplish this task, contributed and cooperated with me for enhancing the awards level, as well as left a special fingerprint recognized by everyone who got acquainted with the news of the competition.

Al-Randi added, “The competition between story and poetry was strong among children, and it included the ages (5-7 years) and (8-11 years).

At the competition, we adopted three ranks in each category. The result was as follows:

Winners in (Story) category from the age of (5-7 years) were:

First place: "Maria Hashem" (Lebanon), in cooperation with Abbas Hashem Educational Center, "Sour".

Second place: "Bahaa El-Din Muammar" (Lebanon).

Third place: "Suhaib Al-Bahri" (Yemen).

Winners in (Story) category from the age of (8-11 years) were:

First place: "Sarah Syed Abbas" (Bahrain).

Second place: "Maleka Hamdi" (Tunisia).

Third Place: "Youssef Nashat Mobaideen" (Jordan).

Winners in (Poetry) category from the age of (5-7 years) were:

First place: "Hawazen Badr" (Syria).

Second place: "Fadakh Badr Al-Ibrahim" (Kuwait).

Third Place: "Amir Khaled Fawzy" (Egypt).

Winners in (Poetry) category from the age of (8-11 years) were:

First place: "Muhannad Mussa Abu Jad Allah" (Palestine).

Second Place: "Israa Ahmad Zaghair" (Iraq).

Third place: "Zeyad bin Nasser Al-Manthari" (Sultanate of Oman).

The committee decided to grant an incentive prize to the child, Khalil bin Salah bin Salim Al-Ghafri (the only participant with special needs), from the Sultanate of Oman / Wilayat Ibra / in cooperation with Child Kingdom Center for Autism.

In addition to the financial prizes, all the winners were granted an annual subscription to (Al-Arabi) and (Al-Arabi Al-Sagheer) magazines, and certificates of appreciation.

In conclusion, Al-Randi thanked the Secretary-General of National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature, Mr. Kamel Al-Abdul Jalil, for his continuous cooperation and sponsorship of the initiative and its competition, the dedicated team of writers, as well as all children who participated, both winners and non-winners. She wished that everyone would cooperate in raising the level of the awards and preparing for the competition next year, so that it can include more children and cover more Arab and Diaspora countries. She hoped that this competition would turn from an initiative to an institution that would continue to give and spread cultural benefit and provide cultural service for the Arab child.



# (FW) platform for developing creativity and consultations

## The platform idea

(FW) platform for the development of creativity and therapeutic consultations is a platform dedicated to provide training services in the fields of creative writing and therapeutic consultations related to children, educators and those interested in ways keeping pace with the virtual language of the age; train surrounding people; empower them and refine their skills, whether this person is a father, mother, writer, painter or educator interested in developing his abili-

ties in child care.

The platform idea is based on providing knowledge and information remotely, contacting and interacting with the audience, in a way transcending the geographical and temporal dimensions.

This platform was established by Wafaa Al Shamsi, who is specialized in children and young people literature. She is a writer and trainer in the field of creative writing, as well as Fatima Al Zaabi, who is a specialist in the field of learning difficulties and behavioral therapist.

## Al Shamsi said:

“This project is considered as one of the initiatives that we used to hold and implement together, due to our belief in social responsibility, and our desire to use the knowledge we gained in empowering others and preparing them to achieve an authentic child culture.

Given our interest in reaching different sects of the audience and providing real knowledge based on experience, training and scientific methodology; the platform idea was created amid the prevalence of Covid-19 pandemic, as it is no longer possible to implement the agenda of the planned activities and programs on the ground. Hence, we have directed towards activating the virtual world and investing it in providing various programs and activities, which are not outside our competence.

## Platform goals:

The platform aims to contribute to the promotion of community services and volunteering work related to civil culture; provide training services remotely by investing in the interactive platforms on the Internet; contribute to creating and providing knowledge as a permanent and constant reference for what is presented in the areas of specialization; collect and highlight the largest available number of experiences at the local, regional and global levels and present them to those looking for knowledge; present Omani culture

for foreign countries and people by hosting guests, getting to know them and introducing ourselves to them; think based on an economical aspect; accommodate the largest number of creative and interested people at the level of the Arab world; spread and provide our services beyond regional borders; as well as contribute to enriching the Omani presence in the areas of specialization that we are concerned with, whether at the local or international level.

- The importance of shedding light on those working in children's literature and those interested people outside the Arab world, such as Turkey, Iran, India and others?

Based on the prevalence of platforms that serve the culture of the child and those working in it, and we wanted to present something different and desired in the cultural field. This was also based on our personal need, because we wanted to exchange cultural knowledge with various foreign cultures and international book fairs contributed to a certain extent to establishing this bridge. However, due to Covid-19 pandemic, all fairs were been suspended. On the other hand, we believe that technology and information communication revolution were created to benefit us. We have found out that attracting the others to define their cultural experience in the field



of child and young people literature is a basic requirement, since the writer of this category writes for the human child at the first place, and benefiting from the experiences of others would enrich the cultural outcome. Hence, the writer would become more accurate and aware of what he is providing for the child.

Looking for specialists in the field of child and young people literature, who have good command of Arabic language and accept to participate with us in this project, was difficult, and the difficulty here lies in the language barrier at the first place. Since May, we have been communicating with various universities and researchers we personally know to have a common ground and start the project.

We started with Persian child literature, as one of the researchers specialized in this field was hosted and she highlighted the experience of one of the pioneers of Persian child literature, Dr. Khusraw Nejad. This was followed by Turkish child and young people literature, and we have an agenda covering



Wafaa Al Shamsi

four different sessions and focusing on children's literature and those working in it, the difficulties of publishing and translation, in addition to discussing the possibility of cooperation and cultural exchange between the two countries because of its impact on enriching the cultural movement.

In our plan for the next two months, there are also sessions in which we highlight children's literature in Indian culture, as well as children's literature in Malaysia and South Africa, through hosting researchers and specialists who have good command of Arabic and speak it fluently.

This cultural project is very important to us and our guests from other cultures, as we do not exchange knowledge and accumulated experiences only, but we also pave the way for achieving cooperation and cultural exchange between us, in addition to introducing the others to what was achieved in Sultanate of Oman and what was written in the field of child and young people literature.

We can proudly say that we have the leadership in this cultural project to communicate with others in a way serving the cultural movement in general.

**- Platform agenda:**

The programs presented in the platform's agenda are not limited to children, even though they represent 25%

of the platform's programs, as they vary between reading, creative writing, technical, skills and technological dialogue sessions. The programs also cover various competitions aimed at developing personal skills and empowering children by 21st century skills.

Regarding the remaining programs, they include fixed monthly shows, such as (a story and coffee), (an hour for you) and (one-hour interview with the guest of the month). This hosting represents a single station, according to our view, by which we tackle concepts, solve problems and meet those people who have a great impact on shaping our true childhood. There are programs created according to occasions and events and programs implemented based on prior coordination by some of the concerned institutions.

Hence, we are interested in providing leading models that have provided clear services for children in their fields of specialization, and among these figures, we can find Mrs. Qamar Al-Safadi, who had a deep and significant impact on our language and speech, due to her contributions and the achievements of the remaining figures who worked in the cartoon dubbing field.

This session had important dimensions on which we tried to focus, and the most prominent of which is hosting a leading figure in the field of cartoon dubbing and highlighting the current and previous dubbing methods to enable the participants to use tools for criticism and filtering for the shows presented on our TV screens that are



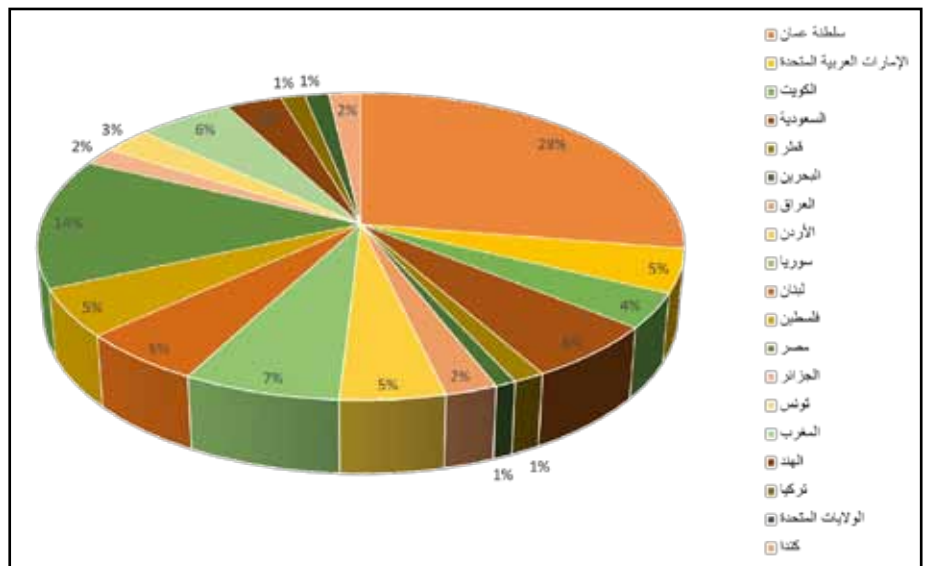
Fatima Al Zaabi

almost devoid of beauty, values and real educational content by dubbing spoken accents keeping the child away from his eloquent language. In addition, we tried to learn about the forms of children's theater in Jordan and benefit from their advanced experience in this field.

**Diversity and demand:**

We have a regulated plan for each month, and we start by announcing all the month's activities, then we provide a statistic at the month end on the number of beneficiaries and the type of shows presented.

We were able to have a large presence at the internal and external levels, and we have provided quality shows presented periodically, such as (a story and coffee) show, in which we host a



story writer and illustrator and tackle with them the targeted story with criticism, analysis and reading of the literary, artistic and psychological contents and dimensions. There is a show called (stimulate your imagination), which is also for adults. It is concerned with stimulating the skill of writing in the child's story field among the participants, then providing feedback to them based on the idea of the work that each participant produces.

Moreover, we have (an hour for you) show, in which we shed light on the most important studies and critical and analytical readings on a topic related to child and young people literature. The last session we presented was about endings in children's stories.

In addition, we offer a variety of programs and shows for children, some of which are related to the creative side, which means the field of writing in the story, theater and articles, and some are related to the skill aspect, such as tackling the behavior and providing the participating children with 21st century skills, thinking skills of all kinds, skills related to dealing with emotions, as well as financial education and many more.

This diversity resulted from the merge between the founders of the platform, as I am interested in the creative and thinking aspects, while Fatima Al Zaabi is interested in the behavioral, skill and therapeutic aspects. This allowed us to have a variety and abundance in what we offer, in addition to hosting some specialists to hold workshops in their fields of specialization, including educational, artistic, theater, technical fields and others.

The latest statistics in July indicated that (1013) participants benefited from the services provided by the platform. The number of programs directed to adults was (6), while the number of programs directed to children was (13).

We are currently preparing to release a first collection of stories that includes the best and finest stories written by the trained children who participated with us in creative writing workshops, and we hope that it will be released soon at Muscat International Book Fair.

## De Bono Center for Teaching Thinking Organizing the second De Bono Summer Club 2020

De Bono Center for Teaching Thinking held the events of the second virtual De Bono summer club. The Director of the center granted graduation certificated to the participating students and affirmed that the summer club was one of the most successful programs implemented by the Center, in terms of educational outcomes, number of participants and intellectual diversity. The number of participants was 56 participants from various countries, including: Jordan, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, Algeria and Canada.

The summer club had a message,

which is "Hear Yourself and Think", since we believe that every talented child is aware of his individual talents, enthusiastic, tries diligently to develop them, as well as is creative and innovative if he is provided with sufficient support to start his mission.

The events contained a set of programs, activities and projects, including S.C.A.M.P.E.R, Keys of Thinking and Multiple Intelligences Program, Artificial Intelligence and Robot Program, in addition to life skills, which were provided by professional trainers: Dr. Dalal Hussein, Ms. Rawan Al-Nasour and Ms. Yasmine Abu Salah.

It is worth mentioning that the center will repeat the experiment in the coming period to spread the benefit, educate and train students and our children on life activities, as well as encourage them to lead and plan for the future.

