

Summary Report

UEF Participates in the 5th Meeting of the Arab Foundations Forum and The Arab Philanthropy Conference

The United Arab Emirates
January 18-21, 2008

Dr. Marwan Awartani, Secretary General of the Universal Education Foundation (UEF), attended two events in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) during January 2008.

The fifth Meeting of the Arab Foundations Forum (AFF), of which UEF is a founding member since 2006, was held January 18-19 with the aim of creating an active learning community in the field of social justice philanthropy. The meeting, hosted by the Emirates Foundation in Abu Dhabi, discussed issues related to the objectives and activities of AFF, as well as its institutional development and the capacity building of its members. Participating individuals from member organizations from UAE, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine explored ways and means of increasing awareness of social responsibility and of capitalizing on private funding for the benefit of the public. Members of the AFF were encouraged to find joint ventures in areas of mutual interest. Participants agreed to consolidate links between the AFF and other International and Arab foundation networks. A proactive effort will be undertaken to solicit new members who fulfill certain membership requirements. The sixth meeting of the AFF will be planned in conjunction with the forthcoming European Foundation Centre meeting to be held in Istanbul, Turkey in May 2008.



Dr. Marwan Awartani

On January 20-21, the Mohammad Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Foundation in collaboration with the Gerhard Center for Philanthropy and Civic Engagement hosted a forum entitled *From Charity to Change: Trends in Arab Philanthropy*. The two-day conference in Dubai drew the participation of key Arab dignitaries including HH Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum & Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, and Queen Rania Al-Abdulla of Jordan. Of particular interest to UEF was a special session on strategic directions in the area of education in the Arab region. The concept and approach of “learning for well-being” was introduced and adopted as one of the desired directions of investments in education. Dr. Awartani held constructive talks and explored possibilities of collaboration with several participating delegations. Key recommendations of the forum’s working session, included the need to improve teacher quality and the importance of extracurricular activities, as well as “bridging the gap between what is being taught and what is required by employers.”