

Queen Rania opens first regional Teacher Skills Forum




Image

Amman, Dec 6 (Petra) — Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah on Saturday opened the Teachers Skills Forum, the first regional forum of its kind that aims to address the most pressing needs of the educational sector in the Arab World.

Held by the Queen Rania Teachers Academy (QRTA) at the King Hussein bin Talal Convention Center in the Dead Sea, the two-day forum, which was attended by UAE Minister of Education, Hussein Ibrahim Al-Hammadi, and Minister of Education, Mohammad Thuneibat, brings together

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more than 700 educators from Jordan and the Arab world.

Delivering the opening remarks, Her Majesty stressed that teachers are the core of the educational development process, and without them, the entire process would cease to exist.

Queen Rania addressed teachers and said: "You need to constantly broaden your knowledge, adopt new techniques that are better suited for this day and age, and be fully aware of what influences your students." Her Majesty then talked about the important role teachers play today and said that it has changed from merely being conveyers of information to being experts and mentors.

Addressing the external factors that affect young people today, Queen Rania said "In light of globalization, openness, and social media networks' impact on shaping the characters of this generation, your responsibilities are immense. You are the ones closest to our children and the ones who can influence them the most." "Students need a role model to admire," the Queen told the audience, "because they learn by observing and copying their role models, the same way they learn from books." She addressed the teachers and added "You are the best role models for our children. With your love and trust, you can strongly influence their learning process and benefit them the most." Her Majesty then explained that when teachers are closer to their students and understand their psychological needs, they can best protect them from any harm external influences might cause.

"You teach them to select what is beneficial, give them access to technologies for their self-development, and show them how to benefit from sciences," Her Majesty added.

Queen Rania talked about the huge effect teachers can have on their students as opposed to the effect of the characters they meet through the internet. "Online, characters are two-dimensional or three-dimensional at best, and their influence is superficial when compared to a real person who is constantly in contact with them personally. A person who listens to them and spends a third of their day with them, winning their trust with honesty, fulfilling promises, and showing commitment and courage." The Queen then stated, "Teachers should be courageous and ambitious. Aspire to create a generation of distinguished graduates and become role models that mentor students and help them develop their skills." Her Majesty then called on teachers and urged them to motivate and raise expectations of their students so they strive to meet them.

The Queen also emphasized the urgent need for the Arab World to become ambitious and to strongly believe in the capabilities of its generations. She added that the Arab World must view education as an opportunity rather than blaming it for the different challenges it faces, such as ignorance, unemployment, sectarianism, and extremism.

"Education might not be the only solution to all of our problems, but I believe that if there is one thing that can help address most of them, it is education. If there was ever a time when we desperately needed an education renaissance to empower our youth, it is now. If there is a profession that can advance our future and the quality of our children's lives, it is teaching." Reiterating the pivotal role of teachers today, the Queen said, "You play a great role in raising generations that respect life and its sacredness; raising them on the values of coexistence and

dialogue; developing a well-rounded, innovative and entrepreneurial Arab character and nurturing a generation that is capable of competing within the developed global market. Your responsibility is tremendous and we have so much faith in you." Her Majesty also thanked all the partners and supporters of QRTA who helped bring together this remarkable array of leading teachers and experts in the field of educational development.

QRTA CEO Haif Bannayan also spoke during the event and said that this forum, which brings together a remarkable host of teachers and educators, aims to promote experience and knowledge exchange between peers to empower teachers, and to expose them to rich educational knowledge they can use inside and outside of their classrooms. It is designed to emphasize the importance of a teacher's role in student achievement.

He also added that "since the launch of QRTA 5 years ago in collaboration with Teachers College at Columbia University, over 20,000 teachers from all over the Kingdom have partaken in QRTA's myriad of programs that helped build their capacities in areas specializing in science, math, English and Arabic literacy, as well as education pedagogies." He also added that several Arab countries count on QRTA to relay its rich experience to their teachers. He stressed that QRTA works hard to build fruitful partnerships with donor entities like USAID and the Canadian Government (DFATD), in addition to other international organizations like UNESCO and the International Baccalaureate (IB), as well as a number of Arab and foreign universities.

Also during the opening session, attendees watched a short video about the forum and the goals it aims to achieve. Her Majesty also attended a panel discussion which included Siva Kumari, Director General of IB, Kay Merseth, Professor from Harvard University, Dr. Richard Larson, Mitsui Professor in Engineering Systems of MIT, and H.E. Tayseer Al Nueimi, Chairman of the Board of QRTA.

The panel discussed teachers' role and how it can be improved so as they become role models and mentors rather than just being conveyers of information.

The Teacher Skills Forum includes more than 70 sessions that focus on equipping teachers with applicable teaching practices and techniques, as the forum chiefly aims to provide teachers with practical solutions to some of the challenges they might face in the classroom.

The forum also offers a unique platform for teachers and education professionals to exchange experiences, and attend workshops delivered by world renowned experts in a new and innovative setup.

Held in partnership with IB and Texas Instruments (TI), the Forum offers numerous plenaries and hands on workshops run by teachers and experts, as well as exhibitions, interactive activities, and reflective sessions. The Forum sessions revolve around 5 main strands: science, math, English and Arabic literacy, technology in education and general pedagogies.

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