

**From the Soils of Culture:  
The *Qalb El-Umour* Project in the Arab World**  
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Every human being lives in and from a natural and cultural environment; i.e., from the *soil of earth* and the *soil of culture*, which s/he grew up in, lives in, and tries to make sense of. These two ‘soils’ are what sustain life and human communities, and also where real learning is embedded and takes place. After almost 40 years of working in education, it is very hard for me to talk about learning detached from these two soils. From this stems the importance and relevance of talking about learning spaces/environments/societies.

The *soil of culture* includes both a language/vernacular (which is usually very rich in history and meanings) as well as nonverbal modes of expression. In general, the current dominant language in education, knowledge, development, the professions, and mass media (which, unfortunately, is infiltrating even our everyday languages and lives) ignores these soils and their accompanying aspects. It is often divorced from history, life and ethics. Under claims of objectivity and universality, this dominant language often robs knowledge and understanding of the layers of experience through which people express what is human and real. It is usually handicapped in its ability to express and reflect the richness and complexity in life and cultural traditions, the diversity in human experiences, and the multiplicity of ways of living and making sense.

Although I did not use any of the above terms then, it was in 1971 that I started experimenting with learning as a life activity, separate and distinct from education. The expressions I used then included *learning within context* and *how education confiscated learning*, but I feel both of these expressions lacked the **roots** that the term “soil” has.

It was the ‘discovery’ of my illiterate mother’s math and knowledge, around the year 1976, that first turned things around in my head. Her math and knowledge were so embedded in her soil of culture that it is almost impossible to teach her type of math and her type of knowledge, using the means, methods, concepts, and structures of what we refer to as education — no matter how much we improve education! Her type of math and knowledge can only be learned and acquired through life itself; through living and doing in real settings and with real people. It would have been impossible for me to do what she was able to do, even if I spent another 20 years of study in the ‘best’ schools and universities and in the most prestigious math departments! Another significant aspect of my mother’s type of knowledge is the fact that she was able to make a living with her knowledge, in almost any setting, while my knowledge was ‘meaningful’ and earned money only in particular (mainly artificial and hegemonic) settings.<sup>1</sup>

That ‘discovery’ made me realize that the problem with education is not only with what it offers but also, and more importantly, with what it conceals, marginalizes, makes invisible or renders worthless. The problem is with the values that education embodies in its assumptions and practices (which are very different from what it espouses in public).

The first Palestinian *intifada*, which started in 1987, provided the opportunity to work with these convictions at a community level. The *intifada* was a spontaneous collective popular way of saying “no more” [or *bas* in Arabic, or *basta* in the way the Zapatistas express it] to Israeli occupation and oppression. That response embodied values, relationships, attitudes, convictions and perceptions that sprang more from the two soils I referred to above. People, for example, depended more on what the earth soil produces and on what the cultural soil has. The first took forms such as boycotting Israeli goods and communal farming (which was banned by Israel through a military order in August 1988). However, what the *intifada* regenerated within the cultural/social soil is of greater significance, and thus is worth elaborating.

It was the first time in my life, during that first *intifada*, that I lived in a community where all social structures were closed down or banned, and completely stopped functioning, except the family structure and the *jaame’* (the mosque), both of which Israel could not close. (There are two words in Arabic, with two different meanings and functions, for what is referred to in English as mosque: *masjid* where people pray, and *jaame’* where people assemble to talk, discuss and act, i.e. to run their affairs — which to me represents the real meaning of what is referred to today as democracy.) These two structures (the family and the *jaame’*) were the basic elements that kept the Palestinian community surviving and functioning during that period. They are basic elements in the cultural soil in which people live and are nurtured by.

Due to the closure of all institutions (for example, all Palestinian schools and universities were closed by Israel for more than four years), the *jaame* was the only place where people of all ages, walks of life, and backgrounds, could meet. After an attack by the army on a village, for example, medical groups would establish a temporary clinic in the *jaame* and start attending to the wounded. The *jaame* was the place where food was distributed to the needy. It was the natural medium, with its minaret and loudspeakers, to inform people about what was happening in the community and about approaching dangers. It was one place where popular education took place in the neighborhoods (which also was banned through an Israeli military order in August 1988). The other 'cultural structure' that Israel could not close down, was the family structure with the tremendous resourcefulness that that institution has: human warmth, hospitality, generosity, mutual support and the spirit of giving and sharing.

In 1989, in response to and as an inspiration from the *intifada*, I established Tamer Institute for Community Education in Palestine, whose philosophy and work revolved around creating learning environments and community building. A basic principle we worked with was to build on what is available and abundant in the community. This includes: working in small groups (formed by people's own initiative), reading, reflecting on and expressing experiences and life as people live it, telling stories, writing, acting/ performing, singing, and working with the elderly. The Reading Campaign within Palestinian society has been the most comprehensive project within Tamer Institute. It embodied the spirit of the *intifada* in the sense that people felt the responsibility and took the initiative to do what they felt needed to be done and which they could do. The Reading Campaign embodied learning and building community by stressing the basic elements of the learning environments that the Institute was working with: reflection, expression, discussion, and small groups formed in various places that directly interacted with one another. Such environments also embodied working within a vision and seeing interrelationships within the bigger picture. Vision here refers to seeking to know the reality in which we live, our place in and interactions with it, and the direction we want to go – including the values we choose to be governed by. It does not include goals, in the sense of controlling the outcome, because that is incompatible with learning.<sup>2</sup>

It is also worth making a distinction here between reflection and analysis (which is one form of reflection that is usually stressed in academia). The difference is basically related to assumptions and values. In reflection, for example, we start with real people and situations, rather than with abstract theories; we start with the natural and cultural/social soils, rather than with decontextualized concepts. We seek meaning, truth, harmony, simplicity, goodness, diversity and interactions and interrelationships among the various elements, rather than seek control, winning, consuming, progressing along a linear path that usually stresses technical aspects and verbal and ideological complexity. In reflection, happiness is not generated at the expense of others, where between 10-20% of the people 'win' and the rest are labeled failures. In reflection, the basis is what nurtures life. Obviously, analysis sometimes is needed in reflection. We need it, for example, to avoid what pollutes our bodies (such as the nicely packaged foods and drinks), our minds (such as the concept of progress and the belief in one right ready answer), our hearts (such as feeling superior to others,); and our souls (such as getting value through measures that are symbolic, external and built on comparison with others). The main difference between reflection and analysis is thus related to where we start: do we start with life, i.e. with our experiences and interactions with people and nature, or do we start with some theories, concepts or abstractions? Do we start with living that could lead to change, or do we start with the changes that we desire in life?

The above were the roots and elements of two projects which I worked on as a visiting scholar at Harvard University's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, in 1997-98: the Arab Education Forum and *Qalb El-Umour*. In the following I will describe the *Qalb El-Umour* (QU) project. It may, however, be helpful to say a brief word about the Arab Education Forum (AEF), of which QU is one manifestation.

AEF is an Arab initiative which, in September 1998, came under the sponsorship of the Contemporary Arab Studies Program at Harvard University's Center for Middle Eastern Studies. It is an initiative to develop a shared vision related to education and learning in the Arab world; a vision that springs out of authentic initiatives in the Arab world, which start with and build on what people do and what culture has. AEF differentiates very clearly between education and learning and strives to end the equation of the two as well as to end the confiscation of learning by education. It strives to regain learning into people's lives and communities. It starts with the premise that people are builders of meaning, understanding, knowledge, cultural expressions and social groups. It is worth stressing that learning as used here embodies constructing the 'inner world' of persons (through reflection and expression); stitching the social-cultural-intellectual-spiritual-economic fabric of communities (mainly through small groups

involved in actions, interactions, dialogue and production — especially of knowledge and cultural products); and constructing a shared vision.

In short, AEF tries to give value, visibility and legitimacy to initiatives that embody learning and that go beyond education — initiatives that can contribute to the building of learning environments and learning societies in the Arab world. Another basic conviction of AEF is that, since learning is almost synonymous to living, then the issue of learning is everybody's business: teachers, educators, students, parents, governments, peasants, workers, artists, business people... The issue of learning cannot be monopolized by any one group or one view or one path. It can only be dealt with as a 'harmonious collaboration' among all.

AEF, including QU, is one way of reconnecting with one's cultural soil and of contributing to the construction of a shared vision concerning learning in the Arab world. Such reconnection and construction can only come from deepening our understanding of our own human experience, including people's histories and the history of ideas. They come from regaining the layers of experience through which we express what is human and real, from the various means of making sense of life, as well as from regaining the historical, the ethical and the contextual in our thinking and work.

### *Qalb El-Umour*

QU provides spaces and opportunities for people, especially young people, to reflect, express, interact, learn, build and network. The 'raw material' in the project is people's lives and experiences. The terms learning and building here refer to what I mentioned above, concerning building the inner world of individuals and the social-cultural fabric in society. We consider reflecting on one's life and experience and expressing that to be the most important elements in learning and in building the inner world of individuals. Developing meanings of words, and agreeing on measures in accordance with people's lives and experiences, form the most crucial elements/aspects in building the inner world. The formation of small groups at their own initiatives and doing things in the real world of their own choice, and reflecting and expressing and discussing and sharing, form the most crucial aspects in stitching the fabric in society. QU can take various forms through which people express and share their lives: magazines, videos, photographs, drawings, songs, dancing, music, drama.

In fact, QU can be in any form, as long as it is sincere and authentic, as long as it reflects honestly the lives of people, and as long as the expressions are in harmony with the principles and values that people have agreed to be governed by. These of course can always be debated and reformulated. Moreover, there are no copyrights for the magazine, no editor-in-chief, and no higher authority to tell people what is allowed and what is not. Those in charge of a particular issue decide. The only two requirements they have to abide by are the values and that the subject of the magazine is life itself. There are no sections and no fragmentation; each contribution is a 'whole' in itself, reflecting an aspect of the life of the contributor. The design of the project does away with the values of control, winning, defining things unilaterally, uniformity, universality, hierarchy, progress along a linear path, and comparing and judging according to some one external measure. Thus, there is no voice that can be suppressed and no experience that can be ignored. And there is no meaning for words such as right or wrong experience, nor for success and failure. Every experience is an opportunity for learning; what is needed is to reflect on it, express it, communicate and discuss it, and build on it.

### **The Various Meanings of "Qalb el-Umour" in Arabic**

It is instructive to mention here the various meanings that underlie the choice of the name of the project. The first meaning is "the heart or essence of matters." There is so much junk going on in almost all aspects of modern life, and we often forget the essence of what we do or talk about. This meaning also includes the function of the heart in the human body: it treats all parts of the body as important. It knows that if it ignores one part, say the small finger, and does not pump blood into it, then the whole body suffers. The same with society: any person or experience that is ignored will affect the whole society negatively. Second, the name of the project means turning things around, so that we see them from as many angles and perspectives as possible; in other words, stressing the wholeness in knowledge. Third, *qalb el-umour* means looking into the consequences of things, of what we say, do and think. If things seem attractive, that is not enough. We should ask how they affect other aspects in life as well as future generations. And, fourth, the name of the magazine embodies the meaning of ploughing the soil. Whether it is the soil of earth or the soil of culture that we are talking about, without turning it around, it won't be able to give. If we ignore the soil of earth or the soil of culture, they would be hardened and become suffocating. And, if we try to

replace them with foreign soil, they would lack the ability to nurture the way natural soil does. In addition, in turning the soil around, we ‘clean’ it from what could be stifling in it to the growth of plants or human beings.

While still on the subject of soil, I would like to comment on the concept of identity, which many today try to tackle and clarify. I don’t like the term identity when it means purity of belonging to a particular group. I would rather talk about belonging to a cultural soil, which nurtures all that belong to it. If a tree belongs to a certain orchard, that orchard obviously nurtures all the trees that belong to it, and not only one type of trees. There are no ‘super’ trees or ‘chosen’ trees. In fact, the beauty of a certain orchard is linked to how much diversity it contains. In this sense, I belong to the Arab-Islamic cultural soil, with all its diversity that has always been part of it (Christian, Jewish, Kurdish, Persian, Assyrian, Berber, Amazigh...). This was interrupted at times, especially in modern times, and replaced with harmful and artificial concepts, such as that of nationalism and the nation-state, and the ideologies associated with them. The difference between nations and soils of culture is worth clarifying. The first is an abstraction that we fell into through the influence of western domination and hegemony. The second is all that real people do, their knowledges, their ways of living. The first stresses uniformity, which is false and impossible. The second is as diverse as people make sense of life. The first bolsters systems of control. The second nurtures people...The first is like a soil in which only one type of trees can grow. The second is the soil of earth we know where many and different kinds of trees and plants grow.

### **Principles, Convictions and Values that Govern the Thinking and Work of Qalb el-Umour:**

*(which appear on the back cover page of every issue that carries the name of QU)*

- **My life is the object of my reflections and expressions...and my reflections and expressions are the basis of my learning.**
- Every person owns his/her experience and every **experience** is valuable. **Life** is made of people’s stories and not atoms. Life and experience are the basic elements in learning.
- People’s lives and experiences are transformed into “stories” and understanding through contemplation, **reflection**, expression and dialogue. Reflection is crucial in learning, because it necessarily connects thought to action and context.
- Human beings are **builders** of meanings, **expressions**, knowledges and social groups. Such **building** is crucial in learning.
- The building we aspire to happens at two complementary and intertwined levels:
  - building the “**inner world**” of the individual (reflection is fundamental), and
  - stitching the social-cultural-intellectual-economic **fabric of society** (working in small groups is fundamental).

Thus, we try to avoid any thing that tears the inner self of human beings or the social fabric in society.

- **Learning**, like breathing, can only happen inside and outside human beings as parts of one holistic process, i.e., learning cannot take place solely inside the person nor solely outside her/him.
- Starting the building process with what exists and what is inspiring (and not with needs and what is negative and lacking, nor with ready answers, models or solutions).  
**Knowledge** is constructed collectively, through interaction with the natural-social-political-economic-cultural environment in which people live, and through conversation, reading and dialogue.
- Life is one whole, society is interrelated, and knowledge is integrated. The **diversity** in people’s experiences, expressions, and knowledges is a fundamental manifestation of this **unity**.
- **Respecting** the human body and Nature, and acting with **responsibility** towards oneself, others and Nature in the sense of protecting them all, as much as possible, from avoidable harm.
- **Sharing** in all aspects of the work.
- Reclaiming our **senses** in the learning process, and seeking **truth, wisdom, simplicity** and **happiness** in life, and avoiding monopoly in opinion or interpretation.
- Although the main language in the magazine is **modern standard Arabic**, contributions could be in local languages spoken in Arab countries as well as languages of countries where the magazine is produced.
- Arabs are known for their **hospitality** and **generosity**. Reading is a form of hospitality: it is inviting ideas, perspectives and experiences of others into your innermost home — yourself. At the same time, reflecting on and expressing one’s experiences is a form of generosity: it is giving the dearest thing you have — your innermost self. QU is a forum for **reflective reading and writing**: a place where our greatest treasures — our lives and experiences — can be made visible, shared, and built upon.

One expression mentioned in these principles which probably needs some elaboration is what I mentioned about learning is like breathing. Breathing cannot consist only of inhaling or only exhaling. Similarly, learning cannot only happen inside the person by figuring things out in his/her head, nor can it only happen outside the person in the form of involvement in activities. It happens when actions and experiences are intermingled with reflections and expressions and seeing interrelations.

### **The Story of the First Issues**

The first issue came out in September 2000. Five students from four different schools in Beirut, Lebanon, produced it. I met with two of them in June and told them about the idea. They spoke with some friends and started writing themselves and asking others to write. They were frustrated at times and even thought of quitting. In the process of producing the issue, several questions came up. "Who is going to decide what is accepted and what is not?" was the first question. I said, "You. We are governed by shared values and not arbitrarily by an editor-in-chief or whoever." The second question was, "Some can't express themselves in Arabic, what shall we do?" I said, "We want honest expressions of people's lives. People can choose whatever means they feel comfortable with." Then came the question, "In whose name should we produce it?" to which I replied, "Your group's name; you choose whatever name you like." They chose *leash la* [why not]. Lastly, they said, "We have all the articles ready, but no money. What shall we do?" I said, "This is part of the challenge. If all what you have is enough for making five copies, then make five copies. Send us one or two." Each of the five students contributed what is equivalent to \$13 and altogether made 100 copies. They sent two copies to some Arabs who were preparing for a conference for all Arab students in the universities in the Boston area, and who made 300 copies and distributed them to participants. Other copies were made in Jordan, Palestine, Yemen, Tunis, Morocco, Egypt, Kuwait, and Germany, among other places. In all, so far, more than 1,500 copies were made. Expenses, thus, were shared, and copies were distributed as "seeds" in fertile soil. In addition, the magazine will be put on the Internet once the web site is ready (in the early part of 2001.)

The second issue was produced in October 2000, by a group of young people in Jordan, from different geographical locations and various settings. At least five other groups (that I know of) in various Arab countries are working on their own issues. In a conference, organized by UNICEF in Amman, at the end of October for youth from 15 Arab countries and Iran, I spoke about the idea, and several groups (including Iran) are working on producing issues of their own. In addition, Manish and Vidhi Jain, from Shikshantar in Udaipur, India, whom I met in Germany, saw relevance of the idea in their own setting and mentioned it to some Indian youth they work with. Their young friends have already produced three issues in Hindi, two of which are about how globalization is affecting their daily lives.

In a very true sense, the magazine is already taking a life of its own. What seems to make it attractive, especially for youth, is that, first, the design is very simple (any group can produce it); second, it is totally devoid of any form of control (other than being about life and guided by shared values and principles); third, its production depends on what is available (if all what is available is the stories of four people and the ability to produce only five copies, that constitutes an issue); and, fourth, the fact that every issue is an authentic creation of a group of friends. A gathering in the summer of 2001 is planned for groups that produce, by that time, at least one issue. They will reflect on and discuss their experiences and ideas concerning all aspects related to the magazine, including design, values, and various ways into the future.

Originally, the idea was to produce an Arab QU in conjunction with the local ones. However, after the two issues in Lebanon and Jordan were published, we thought that we better wait until several more issues are produced in various locations and countries. The Arab QU then would be an expression of what is taking place at the various locations, rather than just an additional issue. The local issues, then, are like springs and streams, which feed into the Arab issues, which would be like a river formed from the various springs/streams. And, just like rivers, the Arab issues will not be 'above' the local ones, but 'below' them. The local ones are the sources, the real thing. Without them, there is no meaning to the collective Arab issue.

The first two issues that were produced capture the values mentioned earlier. They embodied, for example, new meanings for words, including the word magazine itself, editor, value, learning, vision, etc. They did away with other words, such as copyrights. People throughout the ages shared their stories freely; the concept of copyright is disgraceful to the social majorities of the world. Moreover, the two issues that were produced in Lebanon and Jordan helped in building the inner world of each participant (in the sense that most of them — according to what they said — started reflecting on and expressing life more regularly. For some, almost daily). The issues also helped

in building a convivial spirit among the members of each group. The absence of control and of labeling, measuring, and judging led to the absence of bad feelings, jealousies, humiliation, defensive behavior, verbal accusations, lying and dishonesty. The spirit that grew within the groups was one of conviviality, of friendship, of joy, of freedom, and of creation (including creation of meanings).

Another value, which the project adheres to, is the value of responsibility towards self, others and nature in the sense of avoiding doing harm to them knowingly. In practice, this means that if a cola company, for example, offers to support financially a certain issue in lieu of an advertisement, the response will be a big NO because it violates the above mentioned value: cola is simply harmful to the body, especially for children, some of whom drink it several times a day! Moreover, in addition to robbing people their health, cola robs them their money (a barrel of raw cola is \$100 compared to \$36 for a barrel of oil at its peak!), and robs them a good deal of clean fresh water which is desperately needed in many countries — as is the case in most Arab countries.

In addition, the two issues were built on what people have and what is abundant in every community: experiences, reflections, expressions, communication, reading, dialogue, etc. They are built on giving and not only taking: each person gave part of him/her self. There are no sections in the magazine; every story is part of a 'whole' which is the contributor's life. In this sense, each contribution reflects both the unity and diversity in life. In addition, the magazine is a beautiful and honest way of reflecting the sense of belonging of people to their respective soils of cultures.

There is one last comment that is worth mentioning here. People may have noticed that we did not include democracy, human rights (as expressed in the universal declaration), development... among the values we adhere to in the project. We don't play the game of democracy. Participation in the project does not take the form of voting or choosing a person to be in charge. No one represents another. No voice is suppressed. Every person, with no exception, can get together with one, two or ten friends and start an issue of the magazine by starting to write their stories, in addition to stories from others. In this sense, any one can be an 'editor-in-chief'! Moreover, they all share in the various aspects of the work. The project is built on the belief that there is no experience that is valueless, and there is no honest expression which is worthless. We don't play the game of comparing, judging and giving prizes. Moreover, we don't play the game of one of the greatest hypocritical creations of modern times: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It was declared in the name of all people without discussing it with any! One of the most obvious and fundamental rights, anywhere and at any time, is to ask people before you declare something in their name. The Universal Declaration didn't bother to do that. What is worse is that most advocates of human rights don't even notice this hypocrisy and try to justify it if they do.

The Universal Declaration represents neither the perspectives nor the interests of the social majorities of the world. In this sense, it is also understandable why the Declaration stresses the right to education rather than the right to learning. Education, in the form of schools, curricula, etc, has acted as the Trojan horse, conquering many communities around the world, effectively defeating them from the inside. It is also understandable why the rights of children do not include the right to be protected from the junk created mainly by western countries (including foods, drinks, entertainment, and education as well as development experts.) Children and youth need to be protected from labels, such as *failures*, which educational systems, all over the world, are 'generous' to give to students at an early age! In this sense, QU project is one attempt to bring out the diversity in human experience, including the diversity in conceptions and practices of the meaning framework of rights themselves, so that they are more in harmony with people's experiences.

One issue which is related to the above discussion is the slogan, *free expression and free thought*, which the ideologues of the dominant ideology parrot every time they have the chance, and which 'experts' on democracy and human rights constantly preach. The main issue in today's world is not so much free expression and free thought, as it is freeing both (our thoughts and our expressions) from the junk ideas and 'plastic' words that fill current thoughts and expressions in academia, mass media, and infiltrating everyday language. This pollution of minds and expressions rots us from the inside and obstructs learning. Free thought and free expression, in the forms they are practiced, are like telling people that they have the full freedom to choose what they want to eat from a table that has nothing but junk food!

The example which I usually give to illustrate the difference between free thought and freeing thought, between free expression and freeing expression, is what happened when Israel closed all schools and universities in the West

Bank and Gaza for four years during the first *intifada*. Israel didn't mind Palestinians shouting and demanding the opening of schools. It even allowed conferences to be held in Jerusalem to criticize the order of closure and demand the opening of schools and universities. That was a manifestation of free thought and expression that does not usually bother oppressors. In fact, if anything, it beautifies the oppressor's image by demonstrating that such expressions are allowed. In contrast, when some people freed their thinking from demanding to doing, from blaming to creating, from reacting to acting, and started teaching children at homes and in the neighborhoods, Israel issued (in August 1988) one of the most notorious military orders in its history. Any one caught teaching children at his/her home or in the neighborhood would have faced the possibility of demolishing his/her home and up to ten years of imprisonment!

Referring to the cheating of others as a 'science' taught in the most 'prestigious' universities under the name *marketing* is another example of free expression/enslaving thought. Similarly, calling cola 'soft drinks' is an example of enslaved thought, while calling it 'polluted water' is an example of freeing both expression and thought at the same time. Freeing one's mind from the confines of where and how learning can take place (i.e. 'breaking the conditioning' process, in the words which my 22 year-old son reminded me of) is a totally different and much more fundamental act, and a meaningful manifestation of freeing thought and expression.

For learning societies to grow, we need to spend more time in conversations face-to-face with one another, in doing things together, in dreaming beautiful dreams, and in building shared visions. We need to reclaim our lives and regain our cultural soils and spaces. QU is one attempt at this. The basic topic in learning is life and people living in its midst – not outside it and not above it, but in its midst. The basic social unit for learning is small groups engaged in actions (of their choice) in real life. The basic act of learning at the individual level is to reflect on one's life, express it and communicate and discuss it with others. Today, to regain our cultural soils and spaces, we must dismantle certain myths and affirm certain realities:

- \* We need to dismantle the claim that learning can only take place in schools.
- \* We need to dismantle the practice of separating students from life for at least 12 years, but then still claiming that learning is taking place.
- \* We need to dismantle the myth that teachers can teach what they don't do.
- \* We need to dismantle the myth that education can be improved by professionals/experts.
- \* We need to dismantle the hegemony of words like education, development, progress, excellence and rights, and reclaim instead words like wisdom, faith, generosity, conviviality, friendship, hope, learning, living, joy and duties.
- \* We need to affirm that the vast majority of people go to school not to learn but to get diplomas. We need to create diverse environments of learning.
- \* We need to affirm our capacity for doing and learning, not for getting degrees.
- \* We need to affirm and regain the concept and practice of learning *from* the world, not only *about* the world.
- \* We need to affirm that people are the real solution, not the obstacle and not ignorant.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> For details, see my article "Community Education: To Reclaim and Transform What Has Been Made Invisible," in Harvard Educational Review, Vol. 60, No.1, February 1990.

<sup>2</sup> For more details, see my article "The Reading Campaign Experience within Palestinian Society: Innovative Strategies for Learning and Building Community," in Harvard Educational Review, Vol.65, No.1, 1995.

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