Mentor Association’s Final Report on the
First International Conference on Media Education in the Middle East
Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
March 4 -7, 2007

Summary

The First International Conference on Media Education in the Middle East, which took place in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia between March 4 and 7 2007, was organized by the International Mentor Media Education Association, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia. The Conference, launched by HE Saudi Minister of Education, was sponsored by His Royal Highness King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz.

Overall, the event was a great success. The conference received wide media coverage, not only in Saudi Arabia but also in other Gulf and Arab countries.

Saudi officials and members of the Saudi Royal family attended the opening session, which attracted more than 1,500 guests from around the world. There were speakers from the Arab World, Europe, Asia, USA, Latin America and Africa. A representative from the European Commission was also present.

Participants expressed their appreciation of the international spirit of the conference, in which different points of view and practices were discussed. They also stressed the importance of fostering this kind of international debate and academic exchange on a regular basis, as a way of developing a new forum for intercultural dialogue. The cultural differences enriched the debates and paved the way for a fruitful dialogue leading towards an increased mutual understanding.
Background

The Mentor Association was founded in 2004, with the objective of bringing together Media Education professionals from around the world, in order to develop independent and effective Media Education training.

The Mentor Association evolved from a UNESCO-led project and was supported by the European Commission under the 2003 Media Literacy Programme. The Mentor Project highlighted the need for a shared Media Education curriculum throughout the Mediterranean Basin. During the meetings that took place, it became clear that there was a real opportunity and need to create an international association for promoting and fostering Media Education initiatives around the world and enhancing dialogue between different cultures.

Since its creation, Mentor Association has been working steadily on promoting Media Education in Arab countries. The efforts of Dr Samy Tayie, President of Mentor Association, in creating awareness among education officials and stakeholders on Media Education led him to begin conversations with the Saudi Ministry of Education. The most important results of these efforts were the consolidation of a trust-based relationship with the Saudi counterparts and the decision to organize the First Conference on Media Education in the Middle East.
The main objective of the First International Conference on Media Education in the Middle East was to support and coordinate current and future research efforts in the field of Media Education through the international exchange of knowledge and experiences. Its specific aims were:

- Raising awareness about currently available research.
- Serving as a vehicle for researchers across disciplines to meet and share expertise and experiences.
- Identifying critical problems that must be addressed in order to make some progress in the field of Media Education.
- Promoting new collaborative efforts and dialogue between researchers from around the world.
- Discussing potentially beneficial international initiatives.

The main topics of the Conference were:

- Why and how to introduce Media Education into education systems.
- Teacher training in Media Education.
- Methods for teaching Media Education in the classroom.
- The role of multimedia and Internet in education.
- Media responsibility towards Media Education.
- The role of families and NGOs in Media Education.

The vast majority of the 1,500 participants are currently working as:

- Primary and secondary school teachers.
• University professors (education, audiovisual communication, journalism, etc.)

• Education and Communication researchers.

• Technology experts.

• Media producers.

Ministers of Education from the countries belonging to the Gulf Cooperation Council, and other Arab states, as well as representatives from developing countries in Asia, attended the conference. In addition, several world-renowned experts were invited to share their expertise as speakers at the Conference. Therefore, it represented a unique opportunity to promote the principles of Media Education in the region, and to inaugurate a new line of mutual collaboration and multicultural dialogue.
Mentor Association’s participation in the conference

Mentor Association and its Saudi counterparts agreed to take on the responsibility for organizing specific and separate aspects of the event. While the Saudi organization was in charge of planning the research-oriented sessions which were delivered in the main by experts from Arab countries, Mentor Association was in charge of inviting renowned Media Education experts from Europe, North America, South America and Asia. It was also a Mentor Association responsibility to define the round tables and workshops in the scientific program.

Many experts were invited to the conference, although some were unable to attend due to previous commitments. Mentor’s final list of speakers included:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Samy Tayie</td>
<td>President of Mentor Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. José Manuel Pérez Tornero</td>
<td>General Secretary of Mentor Association</td>
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<td>Dr. Manuel Pinto</td>
<td>Vice President for Europe of Mentor Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Fabio Tropea</td>
<td>Professor Universidad Pompeu Fabra (UPF); Escuela Superior de Diseño (ELISAVA); Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona. (Spain)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. José María Perceval</td>
<td>Professor in the Department of Journalism of the Faculty of Communication Science at the Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, and coordinator of Media Education for the Masters in Communication and Education.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Paolo Celot</td>
<td>President Eavi - European Association for Viewers Interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Matteo Zacchetti</td>
<td>Responsible for Media Literacy, Digital Programme for the European Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Samy Tayie</td>
<td>President, Mentor International Media Education Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. José Manuel Pérez Tornero</td>
<td>Secretary General, Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, Edificio I, Despacho 49, Barcelona, Spain.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Patrick Verniers</td>
<td>Director Média Animation, membre du Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel (CSA) -Belguim</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Alejandro Piscitelli</td>
<td>General Manager Educ.ar (Argentinean Educational Net <a href="http://www.educ.ar">www.educ.ar</a>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Howard Schultz</td>
<td>Director, Modern American School of Egypt, Cairo, Egypt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Vitor-Reia Baptista</td>
<td>Professor at the University of Algarve, Portugal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Ulla Carlsson</td>
<td>Director of Nordicom -Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Cary Balzegette</td>
<td>Education Policy Adviser and General Secretary of the 8-nation Steering Group for the European Charter for Media Literacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. M. Abdelkarim Hizaoui</td>
<td>Professor at the Press and Information Sciences Institute (IPSI) of La Manouba University (Tunisia)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Pier Cesare Rivoltella</td>
<td>Professor of technologies for teaching and learning, Professor at the Faculty of Education Sciences at the Università Católica del Sacro Cuoro. (Italy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Sanjay Asthana</td>
<td>Assistant Professor at the College of Mass Communication at the Middle Tennessee State University Murfreesboro (collaborated in UNESCO research on Media Education)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Evelyne Bevort</td>
<td>Directrice déléguée, relations internationales of CLEMI - Centre for liaison between teaching and information media</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Divina Frau Meigs</td>
<td>Professor of American Studies and Mass media sociology Université Paris 3-Sorbonne(France)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Genevieve Jacquinot</td>
<td>Professor at Culture et Communication Université de Paris 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Marco Ricceri</td>
<td>Secretary General of Eurispes - Institute for political, economic and social studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Susanne Krucsay</td>
<td>Head of department Media Education/Educational Media/Media Service Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (Austria)</td>
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As co-organizers, Mentor Association played a crucial role during the Conference in Riyadh and many important contacts were made. Experts and guests from around the world showed a great deal of interest in the Association and in Media Education initiatives in Europe. These hopefully long-lasting relationships and the enthusiastic response to Media Education promotion will lead to new media education and cultural activities in the region, fostered by Mentor Association and local stakeholders.

All the sessions, including the round tables and workshops planned by Mentor Association, had great attendance figures. Female guests were especially interested in the workshops, where they learned practical ways of introducing Media Education in the classrooms.
Conference conclusions and recommendations

The Conference was held, as planned, between March 4 and 7, 2007. The program ran smoothly. As the days went on, several Media Education-related issues arose as the main concerns of local speakers and attendees:

- **The impact of some media contents** (TV, cinema, video games, Internet) on the region's cultural, social and religious values, and the resulting need to protect children and the general population, and to empower them to protect themselves from this impact.

- **The overwhelming amount of foreign media production** against a less competitive national and regional media industry.

- **The power of media to build senses** that foster stereotypes, unfriendliness and mutual misunderstanding among cultures, peoples and societies.

- **The imperative need for bridging cultures**, for creating new spaces for dialogue, for **building a shared knowledge**, and for teaching children everywhere that diversity is a powerful value.

- **The need for teacher training on Media Education** as a means for empowering children to be critically aware of media contents.

- **The need to involve education systems, media industries and family groups** in Media Education.

- **The need to create awareness among media producers** about their social responsibility and to train media producers to create contents for teaching and promoting media education.

- **The need to regularly update media education know-how** through international encounters such as the First International Conference on Media Education in the Middle East.
In the light of these and other concerns brought up by experts and participants in the conference, Mentor Association recommended a series of future projects. Through the following recommendations, Mentor Association intends on the one hand, to promote and strengthen media education in the Middle East; and on the other, to consolidate Mentor Association as a legitimate stakeholder in the region, which can participate and foster activities aimed at enhancing mutual understanding through intercultural dialogue.

The Conference’s recommendations are:

- To organize an annual international conference on Media Education. Initially, it was planned to hold the International Conference on Media Education once every 2 years. However, because of the multiple requests to host the conference, it was decided to organize it next year. The request from Dubai to host it in March 2008 was accepted.

- Establishing the regional office for Mentor Association in Riyadh. This office will be managed by a Mentor Association vice-president for the Middle East and the South Asian Region. All activities and projects related to Media Education will be supervised by this office, which will work in collaboration with Mentor Association.
Training of secondary school teachers. In order to spread the concept of Media Education, it was suggested that there was an urgent need to train secondary school teachers in Saudi Arabia on Media Education. A 5-year plan has been conceived, which aims to train 3,000 teachers. This training program will start in Saudi Arabia, and will be extended to other countries in the region. Part of the training will be held in Saudi Arabia and the other part in Europe.

Mentor Association will participate in the Andalusia Festival in Spain towards the end of 2008. Guests from Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries will be invited to participate in this festival. This festival will be used as a forum for multicultural dialogue. Mentor Association will make a request for UNESCO and European Commission sponsorship.

Papers presented at this conference will be published in a book, after being edited and compiled. The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media at NORDICOM (Gothenburg University, Sweden) is currently editing the book.

Mentor Association will search for sponsor/s to revise and improve its Website, www.mediamentor.org, to transform it into a suitable space for discussing and sharing Media Education ideas, experiences and projects.
The importance of the First international Conference on Media Education in the Middle East which took place in Riyadh lies in the fact that it is the first of a series of media education-related activities and conferences in the Middle East and South Asia. Moreover, it marks the start of a new line of international and intercultural dialogue between Europe, the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

In a cross-cultural debate in which education, communication and information issues are discussed from different cultural perspectives, it is unavoidable that issues related to globalization, pluralism, cultural and linguistic heritage, as well as social and religious values arise.

This aspect of the Conference was noticed by many of the participants and speakers from different parts of the world. It became clear that there is a mutual desire to strengthen bonds and a need to find new ways of bridging cultures.
Mentor Association plays a crucial role in creating a space for sharing knowledge and experiences through intercultural dialogue, which may lead us to an increased mutual understanding. Therefore, Mentor Association will continue to establish relationships with the Middle East and South Asian countries and to promote international initiatives such as conferences, training programs and other projects related to media education and intercultural dialogue. Eventually, we hope that Mentor Association will reach other regions and increase the spectrum of cultures engaged in dialogue about media education.

In a world portrayed to us by the global media as one of clashing cultures, a world that we discover through the media, promoting and consolidating intercultural dialogue is a natural progression of our leitmotif, media education.

We hope that all of the above is of interest to you. Mentor Association will keep you informed of the follow-up actions that result of these recommendations.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Samy Tayie,  
President- Mentor International Media Education Association  

Dr. José Manuel Pérez Tornero,  
Secretary General - Mentor International Media Education Association
Annex 1
The First International Conference on Media Education.
From 4-7 March 2007 www.meduconf.com

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Chairman</th>
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<td>08:00-09:00</td>
<td>Coffee Reception- Registration</td>
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| 09:00-10:30| Media Education Today (Academic Opening Session)               | Dr. Saeed Al mallees Deputy Minister of Education | - Dr. Samy Tayie (MENTOR Association President)  
- Dr. Jose Manuel Perez Tornero (MENTOR Association Vice – President) |
| 10:35-12:05| Educational Culture & Media Culture: Integration vs. Fragmentation | Dr. Soud Saleh Al Mosaibeh | - Dr. Saeed Harib  
- Dr. Miqdad Yaljen  
- Prof. Fabio Tropea  
- Dr. Esmael Seedan  
- Ms. Fatma Al- Otaibi |
| 12:05-12:30| Coffee Break & Zuher Prayer                                    |                                               |                                               |
| 12:30-14:00| Education & Modern Communication Technology                    | Dr. Abdelrahman Al dawood                    | - Dr. Abdulla Al mosa  
- Dr. Badr Al Saleh  
- Dr. Lateefah Al simairi  
- Mr. Howard Schultz |
| 14:00-16:30| Lunch                                                          |                                               |                                               |
| 16:30-18:00| Technological Change & People: Risks & Opportunities            | Dr. Samy Tayie                                | Prof. Divina Frau Meigs  
Prof. Manuel Pinto  
Prof. Jose Maria Perceval  
Mr. Alejandro Piscitelli |
| 18:00-18:30| Coffee Break                                                    |                                               |                                               |
| 18:30-20:00| Media, Children & Young People                                 | Dr. Salwa Al khateeb                          | Prof. Pier Cesare Rivoltaella  
Mr. Alejandro Piscitelli |
| 20:00-20:15| Coffee Break                                                    |                                               |                                               |
| 20:15-21:45| New Educational Multimedia Communication                        | Dr. Abdul Aziz Ben salma                     | Prof. Jose Maria Perceval  
Mrs. Susanne Krucsay |

Conference Program
Day (1)
Monday 05/03/2007
# Mentor International Media Education Association

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**Day (2)**

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<td>08:00-09:00</td>
<td><strong>Subject</strong> Values &amp; Mass Media</td>
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| 09:00-10:30| **Chairman** Dr. Ali Ben Sedeek Al hakami  
**Speakers** Dr. Huda Al gafees  
Dr. Mohammad Al sewayyed  
Mr. Zeyad Al drees  
Mr. Ali alajmi |
| 10:35-12:05| **Subject** School Role in Media Education |
| 12:05-12:30| **Coffee Break & Zuher Prayer** |
| 12:30-14:00| **Subject** School Curriculums Role In Developing Critic Skills Of Mass Media |
| 14:00-16:30| Lunch |
| 16:30-18:00| **Subject** Teachers exposure to Mass Media & Its Impact on Students. |
| 18:00-19:00| **Round Table** Media Education & International Strategies |

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<th>Chairman</th>
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<th>Media Education &amp; International Strategies</th>
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| Dr. AbdulrahmanAl enad |   | Mr. Jose Manuel Perez Tornero  
Mr. Matteo Zacchetti  
Dr. Osama Hariri  
Mrs. Cary Bazalgette |
| 4 | **Speakers** Dr. Oeman Saleh Al Amer  
Prof. Jose Maria Perceval  
Dr. Mohamed Ibrahim Al- asem  
Dr. Faiza Akhdar |
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### Wednesday, 07/03/2007

#### Coffee Reception - Registration
- **Subject**: Students Use Of Modern Communication Technology
- **Chairman**: Dr. Abdullah Al katheri
- **Speakers**: Dr. Jamal Al sharhan, Dr. Huda Al mutawaah, Dr. Monerah Al salal, Dr. Saad Al rashid

#### Coffee Break & Zuher Prayer
- **Subject**: Family’s Role In Creating Interactive Awareness With Mass Media
- **Chairman**: Dr. Mudh Al naeem
- **Speakers**: Dr. Abdullah Al fouzan, Dr. Fatheyyah Al qurashi, Dr. Manuel Pinto, Ms. Arwa Al ghalyeeni

#### Educational Responsibility Of Mass Media
- **Chairman**: Dr. Othman Seeni
- **Speakers**: Dr. Mahmod Hammoud, Dr. Paolo Celot, Dr. Faozyiah Al baker

#### Lunch

#### Contents & Risks: Media Education Strategies In & Out of Schools
- **Chairman**: Dr. Norah Al hazani
- **Speakers**: Prof. Divina Frau Meigs, Prof. Vitor Reia Baptista, Dr. Marco Ricceri
- **Workshop**: Teaching about Media
  - Dr. Sanjay Asthana
  - Mrs. Cary Bazalgette

#### New Educational Needs: Distance life-long learning for teachers
- **Chairman**: Dr. Osman Al barbekan
- **Speakers**: Prof. Pier Cesare Rivoltella, Mrs. Susanne Krucsay

#### Final Session & Recommendations
- **Chairman**: Dr. Khaled Abdullah Muqrin Al-saud
- **Speakers**: Dr. Mohammed Abdulazizi Al-Heezan, Dr. Samy Tayie