

# Human Dignity: A Proposal for Middle - Eastern Area of Conflict: towards an Education for Coexistence

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## Abstract

The proposed scenario is one that is hardly needed for the Middle - eastern area of conflict . It is called the " Human Dignity " proposal : Towards an Education for Coexistence. Such a project is suggested in an era where there is so much conflict in this part of (Middle –east ) and Arab world (in terms of multi- cultures, religious communities , gap- generation, and socioeconomic classes, there is a great need for broad agreement on something unifying, something that encourages and even grows a sense of human unity. That would only be through the path of "Human dignity ".The research recommends areas where different entities can participate together to implement and support the fulfillment of a great concept of " Human dignity " , such entities may include (Interfaith Coexistence Research Centers throughout the Arab World) , educational institutions , higher education institutions , civil society , and media. Together they can work in the region to promote religious freedom and religious education aiming at achieving " Human dignity ".Human dignity comes to be the responsibility of all partners ( politicians, educators , religious leaders, and the Arab youth generations ) .

**Keywords:** Human dignity, middle east , conflict ,education , coexistence , religious freedom , Arab world , multi-cultures .

## 1. Introduction

In an era where there is so much conflict in this part of (Middle –east ) and Arab world (in terms of multi-cultures, religious communities , gap- generation, socioeconomic classes, and more) , there is a great need for broad agreement on something unifying, something that encourages and even grows a sense of unity. That would only be through the path of "Human dignity " .

In a world where it seems no-one agrees on anything, a world where politics divides, religion divides, and even cultural regional borders seem to divide, “Human dignity” is something that everyone can agree on.

This “Human dignity “proposal will provide areas where different entities can participate together to implement and support the fulfillment of a great concept of “Human dignity”. Such entities may include (The Interfaith Coexistence Research Centers throughout the Arab World) , the educational institutions , higher education institutions , civil society , and media. Together they can work in the region to promote religious freedom and religious education aiming at achieving “Human dignity” using three parallel approaches.

### 1.2 Theoretical background

Global Dignity day is the brainchild of three friends, concerned global citizens who met as Young Global Leaders at the World Economic Forum: HRH Crown Prince Haakon (Norway), Professor Pekka Himanen (Finland) and founder of Operation HOPE, John Hope Bryant (United States).

The three friends realized that the one thing that everyone in the world could agree on, irrespective of their differences is: We all want our Dignity to be recognized. Dignity is the very foundation of our humanity. Dignity is universal. Dignity is also the source of human rights.

The co-founders created Global Dignity in 2006. Since then they have worked with many Young Global Leaders and other partners in over 40 countries, hosting what are known as Dignity Days. This involves visiting local schools and communities around the world and teaching a "course in dignity" to youth.

In a day and age where there is so much conflict in the world (between cultures, religions, generations, socioeconomic classes, and more) there is a great need for broad agreement on something unifying, something that encourages and even grows a sense of community. That thing is dignity.

Global Dignity Day 2014 builds upon the great success of last year’s event during which 350.000 young people participated across 54 countries. Young Global Leaders and other volunteers organized events in an effort to instill and inspire a new, more positive and inclusive and interconnected value proposition in students for their lives as they grow into adulthood.

This event is a global demonstration of the inspirational and inclusive power of dignity.

The Seventh Annual Global Dignity Day was scheduled for Wednesday, October 15th, 2014. In 2013, Global Dignity Day was celebrated in over 50 countries around the world.

The youth of today make up half of the world's population. Young people instinctively have and display genuineness, loyalty, respect, tolerance, and understanding - a great and comprehensive definition of dignity. The elder generation must ensure this purity remains within our youth, which in return, will ensure a future of positive enhancements. The potential of the youth extends far beyond our imagination... and we must

do everything to help that flourish.

### 1.3 Rationale

Why do we want "Human dignity" project?

This project is a suggested regional project suggested as a tool for an inspirational and inclusive power of "Human dignity".

The Middle – eastern world could agree on the need for "Human dignity", irrespective of their peoples' differences, so that we all agree upon and want our "Human dignity" to be recognized. "Human dignity" is the very foundation of our humanity. "Human dignity" is universal. "Human dignity" is also the source of all other fundamental human rights.

### 1.4 Human dignity Program

This program is targeting the youth of today's Arab region, those who actually make up half of the region's population. The elder generation must ensure this human purity remains within our youth, which in return, will ensure a future of positive enhancements. The potential of the youth extends far beyond our imagination... and we must do everything to help that flourish in our Arab region. Nowadays, "Human dignity" is much needed in all aspects of life; societal, religious, economical, environmental, and political.

Realizing that the one thing that everyone in this region could agree on, irrespective of their differences is: We all want our ("Human dignity") to be recognized. Dignity is the very foundation of our humanity. Dignity is universal. Dignity is also the source of human rights. Dignity is also hardly needed in our Arab region.

The following are the vision, mission m scope and objectives of such a program that should be accomplished in the middle – eastern Arab world of regional conflicts.

**Vision:** Seeking the realization of "Human dignity" concept in our Arab region, demonstrating the inspirational and inclusive power of dignity.

**Mission:** Helping youth to become better feeling their sense of "Human dignity" spreading "Human dignity" in our region.

**Scope:** Arab region - through two main project tools: Education for "Human dignity", and Media for "Human dignity".

#### 1.4.1 Objectives

- Empowering people in this part of Arab world to realize "Human dignity", although politics, religion, race and even cultural borders seem to divide, whereas "Human dignity" is something that everyone can agree on.
- To raise the spirit of "Human dignity", spreading awareness of interfaith values system, aiming at building a civil state with a value system, establishing peace & harmony to tackle things positively in nowadays unbalanced political and social situation in the Arab region.

#### 1.4.2 Human dignity Principles

The concept of "Human dignity" includes the following principles:

1. Every human being has a right of a dignified life.
2. A dignified life means an opportunity of having a human level of health care, education, income and security.
3. "Human dignity" means having the freedom to make decisions with respect for human rights.
4. "Human dignity" should be the basic guiding principle of democracy and peace.
5. "Human dignity" means having freedom of opinion, and freedom of religion.
6. "Human dignity" fosters both religious value systems of Islam and Christianity as well.
7. "Human dignity" means living in unity with diversity, accepting our differences.

#### 1.4.3 Moral values

"Human dignity" is related to a chain of values: loyalty, respect, tolerance, understanding, human rights, freedom, liberties, democracy, security and peace – together they all fulfill a great and comprehensive definition of "Human dignity".

#### 1.4.4 Core concept of "Human dignity"

It is the one concept that all people can relate to. "Human dignity" has a great effect on enhancing humanity positively. Imagine living in a world where respecting one's "Human dignity" is the norm. We seek to instill "Human dignity" in the hearts and minds of people in this part of the world, where the Arab region finds it necessary for survival. This concept can be furthered through events, online media, and most importantly by actions that touch people's lives.

Connecting and collaborating with similar mindsets will strengthen our momentum towards enhancing this Arab region where lots of conflicts are taking place nowadays after what is called the Arab Spring. In such days we currently live, "Human dignity" is much needed from all aspects of life; societal, political, religious, economical, and educational. Spreading the messages of "Human dignity" will hopefully be fruitful; and

convincing to the hearts of Arab people to live dignified lives may be the real challenge.

#### **1.4.5 Partnership**

Academic – professors, religious leaders, educators, social activists, Government representatives for ministries of Education and ministries for Higher Education. In addition to people who are well aware and educated figures of special-tailored educators and religious leaders, from each country in conflict representing the region.

#### **1.4.6 Human dignity Approaches:**

1. Revive and strengthen the network of cooperating religious leaders, education activists and religious education institutions in the region.
2. Develop a formal education approach consisting of guidebook, textbook, and curriculum plan for students at the three levels of Elementary, Secondary, and University education.
3. Create a positive healthy humane atmosphere for change in civil societal structures, through behavioral training for wide different sectors on issues of mutual respect, democracy, peace, freedom of opinion, freedom of religion, coexistence, and brotherhood.

#### **1.4.7 Human dignity Tools for Realization**

This involves visiting universities, local schools and communities in the region, and teaching a "course on Human dignity" specially tailored to youth.

This proposal for "Human dignity" may be realized through a special tailored program using different tools such as workshops, committees, and program development. This may begin with a preliminary regional workshop, so that this program will prepare for the launch of a "Human dignity" education curriculum throughout the Arab region, with the designation of a commission of religious, interfaith, and educational specialists from partner countries in the region.

The following are the main tools through which "Human dignity" program can be achieved and lead to this project implementation:

- Publications & guide books
- Community service programs
- Conferences
- TV. Sessions
- Posters
- Workshops
- Articles
- Educational sessions & lectures
- Special –tailored Curricula
- Special –tailored programs for training of trainers (TOT)

### **1.5 Human dignity Action Plan & committee**

"Human dignity Education" Program should be the key part of an action plan reacting to changing needs in the region due to the Arab Spring. "Human dignity" is the foundational interfaith value serving and addressing pressing regional issues concerning democracy and religious freedom, where religion remains as an influential tool to positively serve the education of youth and adults in the region.

"Human dignity" education curriculum program is based on (Equal dignity for equal Citizenship), so that both Christians and Muslims are entitled for "Human dignity".

"Human dignity" celebration will focus on the role of religion emphasizing human dignity and common interfaith value system in bringing about the ultimate objective of equal enjoyment of the rights and privileges of citizenship for all aspects of society, regardless of social, ethnic and religious status. "Human dignity" education curriculum will be conceived of as an effective method to achieve the ultimate objectives of combining the use of religious influence and pedagogical methods to achieve the necessary reform for equality, social justice, and democracy. "Human dignity" program uses the internal process of religious moderation to provide immediate and widespread access to the tools needed for the promotion of equality and social justice within a religiously active environment of the region.

"Human dignity" concept greater vision is that of Human Dignity as the guiding principle of the interfaith value system, and the Education for Coexistence that manifest through initiatives such as Media for "Human dignity", Women for "Human dignity", Education for "Human dignity", and Higher Education for "Human dignity". The successes of these initiatives should be handled parallel to make a real effect and clear positive difference.

The ultimate mission of "Human dignity" program is the creation and implementation of a regional "Human dignity" education plan, and implementing "Human dignity" workshops through special tailored committees all over the Arab region, that should be responsible for the curriculum implementation. Such committees should consist of education experts and specialists that should meet periodically to develop the general "Human dignity" curriculum.

The formal education approach may present "Human dignity" education to three levels of students, elementary, secondary and university level. Each stage may consist of a classroom plan outlining the approach with age-appropriate textbooks and accompanying guidebooks for educators. Based on the workshop's recommendations, the committees should also develop corresponding training programs for selected individuals who will then conduct their own training sessions for educators across the region who may represent an alliance of religious leaders, religious educators, and human rights activists. Therefore, the initial Human dignity workshops may bring together stakeholders in conflict countries in order to develop regional curricula in conjunction with government and non-governmental organizations in the Arab region and middle – eastern countries as study cases, such as (Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Palestine) .

**1.6 The following table presents Human Dignity project suggested activities in both Education and Media sectors:**

Education	Media	
2015		-
<b>Activity</b>		<b>Remarks</b>
Formation of Committees, Finalize Human dignity Plans Designate Human dignity Program Coordinators, Executive Secretary Design Website, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc..		10-12 Human dignity committee
Consultation meetings/Workshops for Executive Committees working on : a. Review of Human dignity Plan b. Input requested from the members c. Launch of Human dignity Website		10-12 members will meet in Amman
Designate Arab countries coordinators. Visits to Lebanon, Egypt, and Palestinian Territories, Iraq and Syria- engage as appropriate to mobilize regional network.		Visits to Lebanon, Egypt, and Palestinian Territories + Iraqi.. Syrian -invite as appropriate 20-30 journalists, media professionals (reporters, television, newspaper, etc) bloggers, students, and interfaith leaders
Media Workshop (Journalists for Human dignity): journalists, media professionals (reporters, television, newspaper, etc) students, and interfaith leaders to announce commitment.		Journalists under the Human dignity committees' supervision diction of TV reports to promote Human dignity concept
Regional workshops Working Groups Review of developed education Plans Finalize Roadmap to meet goals	start producing Articles on Human dignity concepts through partner media outlets	
Mobilize Network, continue coordination with selected schools, universities etc. to launch local country campaigns Review draft guidebooks for education		
Potential start of the Project Implementation of the Educational Plan, in Arab countries		
Education personnel, professors, journalists, media professionals, religious leaders should participate in community dialogue groups – visiting local centers, organizations.		

<p>2 Announce community services</p> <p>3 Contest promoting Human dignity for groups and individuals.</p> <p>4 Announce Human dignity contest for educators and leaders.</p>		<p>5 Announce Writing/Photography Contest for emerging journalists.</p> <p>6 Announce Human dignity initiatives for Emerging Interfaith Leaders.</p>	<p>Communities. d. Prepare and build momentum</p>
<p>Meeting Educational Committee Sharing progress, accountability roadmap and action plan Evaluate implementation of Educational Plan/Curriculum</p>		<p>End of year Review on Human dignity- Production and finalization of a Human dignity plan for Year 2016</p>	

**General Remarks for implementation:**

- 7 Journalists under the Human dignity committees' supervision.
- 8 Production of TV reports to promote Human dignity concept.
- a) Partnering agents of Action Plan should be invited back to share their progress.
  - b) Accountability to the road map and active pursuit of the Plans.
  - c) Reinforcement of the network between programs, partners and advocates. Brainstorming between respective experiences to more effectively reach their communities.
  - d) Prepare and build momentum.

**Mission Statement "Human Dignity"**

<p><b>Mission</b></p>
<p>Roadmap and Milestones for Implementation for Human dignity project( planning &amp; dissemination )</p>
<p>Guide Book - Arabic - English summary for Human dignity</p>
<p>Educational Curricular Plan for human dignity (Planning &amp; dissemination )</p>
<p>Educational Curriculum for human dignity (all levels- schools and universities )</p>
<p>KPI - Key Performance Indicators for human dignity project (Results – oriented ) Evaluation system</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Descriptive proposal for ( Material &amp; references ) to be used in Human dignity project :</b></li> <li>• <b>Brief description of content for Missions :</b></li> <li>• <b>Roadmap and Milestones for Implementation :</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This document should set a roadmap for achieving the vision of Human dignity project, including both (planning phase &amp; dissemination), introducing the roadmap in workshops and seminars to be conducted.</li> <li>- The document should set major milestones to be implemented as major accomplishments of the Human dignity project.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Human dignity Guide Book (Arabic - English summary) :</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Guide book should include two main parts in both languages for some guiding headlines and</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- suggested non-curricular activities to be recommended for all sectors (Media, civil community services, educational).
- The Guide book should help experts and counterpart officers to implement the best practices for achieving the goals set for the Human dignity project.
  - **Human dignity Educational Curricular Plan (Planning & dissemination) :**
    - The educational curricular plan presents the mind-map for building an educational curriculum, including all dimensions: Vision, mission, values, objectives, activities & responsibilities.
    - This also includes, in addition to planning, all steps for best dissemination ways to approve the suggested plan after conducting different brainstorming sessions and discussion meetings.
  - **Human dignity Educational Curriculum (all levels- schools and universities) :**
    - The curriculum is based on mainly two parts so as to cover all age levels, designed for both school curricula for all levels, in addition to building new schemes for courses plans to be accredited in universities for all faculties.
    - The curriculum should include all the conceptual data as to be discussed in details with practical examples for best ways to adopt such interfaith values aiming at better understanding and raising awareness for Human dignity project strategic goals.
    - This needs a lot of workshops to discuss the draft curriculum for Human dignity project.
  - **KPI - Key Performance Indicators for Human dignity project (Results – oriented )**  
**Evaluation system :**
    - The system should cover all needed tools to guarantee better achievement for the suggested Human dignity project.
    - This should also include setting Key performance indicators for measuring and evaluating the project in progress implementation through definite period duration.

### 1.7. Conclusion

#### The research concludes with the following recommendations :

- To officially adopt this suggested “Human Dignity” Proposal for Middle – eastern Area of conflict by all partners concerned (Educators, political leaders, religious leaders, and media agents) .
- To raise the awareness of the youth in Arab countries in conflict towards the need for Education for Coexistence.
- To build educational curricula for Human dignity and coexistence values in all stages and levels of education, whether elementary or school or higher education.
- To unify all efforts for building an education for coexistence and adopting human dignity values, through networking with all partners: governmental, non-governmental, and private sectors.
- To promote through media channels the coexistence education awareness programs for human dignity emphasizing the responsibility of all partners (politicians, educators, religious leaders, and the Arab youth generations).

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