

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نېاشد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/Print/16352.aspx>

Egypt's desired renaissance

Only by investing in education can Egypt make the leap into the future its citizens aspire to and its situation requires

Monir El-Ganzuri

5/19/2016

In Egypt, we have to face the fact that the teaching system is in an unenviable position. I shudder to imagine the fallout on practical skills and its reflection on our feebleness and impuissance in satisfying our needs.

Our students in schools should learn to not waste their time in unprofitable activities. The state should be obliged to wipe out illiteracy. It was dreadful to read that there are 17.6 million (21.7 per cent) illiterates among adults in Egypt. The annihilation of illiteracy will diminish the presence of peddlers and beggars in our streets.

Needless to say, education is the gateway to our aspired renaissance. Curricula in our schools should devote full attention to wise and good behaviour towards the environment and the cleanliness of Nile water, our streets and alleyways. There should be a commitment to respect laws and bylaws, and to precision and honesty in everything we do. Also, such curricula should stress not encroaching upon the rights of the others, maintaining politeness in speech and debate, and ennobling teamwork.

The mass media should advise the population on how to avoid infection from pathogenic parasites such as viruses, bacteria and worms. For example, widespread infection with hepatitis C virus (HCV) among Egyptian citizens is due to a shortage in hygienic culture and public awareness.

This viral disease causes irreversible dysfunction of the liver known as cirrhosis. The disease forces ailing citizens to shuttle back and forth between hospitals, and in the end a liver transplant is a must. So enlightenment and contemporary education are the proper salvage.

We have to give special concern to technical education that relies on novel techniques and modern apparatuses, and not just act as observers. We have to put an end to rote learning and adopt a learning system that ensures excellent training and high skills. And we have to be keen to provide laboratories, in faculties that deal with science, with their needs in equipment, high-quality chemicals and other tools to satisfy the standards of proper education and research.

In faculties dealing with science it is unacceptable to be isolated from global progress. We have to maximise scientific missions to developed countries and reinstate and support visits by foreign professors. Without these two approaches we will not achieve progress in the fields of science.

We have to keep in our minds that the qualifications of a university professor reflect upon hundreds of undergraduate and postgraduate students, and also upon our scientific communities. We have to establish a multifaceted mechanism that furthers vocational cooperation between university staff and relevant ministries and institutions. This system brings many benefits to society on the ground.

We should give intense attention to mathematics and physics. These two sciences are indispensable for almost all beneficial applications in other fields (including medicine, engineering, pharmacy and agriculture). Parallel to that, we should support technological applications in the fields of communications, agriculture, stem cell research, genetic engineering, molecular biology, thermodynamics, water desalination and pharmaceuticals.

We should also concern ourselves with the industrialisation of wind turbines, solar panels, medical equipment, means of transportation, machines used in sewing our clothes, making our shoes, and other household goods. And we must develop the technology to mine our wealth of natural gas, petroleum and minerals in the deep-rock strata. We have to build the infrastructure necessary for such aspirations.

We should alleviate university staff members and those who prepare postgraduate theses from the financial expenses they are obliged to shoulder in preparing their practical studies and publishing them in specialised periodicals. The current system has grave shortcomings.

Aside from the field of education proper, there are social issues we must address with urgency. We must address issues that have a direct impact on the welfare of citizens and guarantee the rights of future generations. We have to launch a campaign against overpopulation, and adopt a birth control policy to achieve a lower birth rate amid a mushrooming population that has surpassed 90 million.

Also, it is imperative to give support for the cultivation of long-fibre cotton and for wheat, as well as building modern silos. We have to eradicate the bureaucracy that is pandemic in many state entities.

Many opportunists have waged a fierce assault on agricultural land, illegally constructing thousands of buildings. We have to stop such sins. We also have to combat desertification, support the project of land reclamation, and supply the new land with clean water, sanitation, schools, medical services, marketplaces and chances of employment.

These new areas will entice many to move into these new areas, and give those who are on low incomes the chances to rent far from greedy landlords and brokers. This will reduce the overcrowding we suffer.

It is unwise to deal with the problem of the throngs of street vendors in our midst by repeated dispersal campaigns.

Everyone knows that the rational course is to establish trading centres in the districts of each town where vendors can practice their trade. As we saw in other countries, the areas of such trading centres are divided into compartments, each about five metres square, with intervening pathways. Each compartment is officially licenced to a seller whose name and licence data are stated on a signboard.

Also, we have to ban the use of carts inside our cities. These should only be used within villages. These carts, with their animals, distort our outlook and pollute the environment. We also have to follow international appeals to use clean energy sources, such as solar and wind energies.

And in certain areas of some of our towns the architecture of buildings that were constructed in the 19th century and first half of the 20th century displays marvellous design. To my sorrow, almost all that we built afterwards lost such glamour, in spite of the grandeur of some edifices.

All the abovementioned commitments will reduce unemployment, improve public services, mitigate poverty, achieve citizens' aspirations, develop Egyptian infrastructure, support the development of the economy, and make the country a logistics and business hub and an attractive destination for investors and tourists.

In conclusion, we vie with the world on the basis of our geographical location, moderate climate and what the pharaohs left to us. We should vie with the world on what our brains can do.

All in all, we should lessen our dependence on the brains of others. This can only be achieved by upgrading the capabilities of the Egyptian intellect to contemporary standards. This should be our first duty.

We must stop being just users of what the brains and hands of others make. I hope to see the day when I can read in international books of science the names of Egyptian scientists who live among us, alongside the thousands of scientists from other countries whose names adorn the pages of these books.

Only then will we be able to say that we have achieved the desired renaissance.