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Recommendations for the Improvement of the Arab Education System in Israel

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List of Position Papers:

Dr. Muhammad Amara: The Role of the Education System in Consolidating the Unique Collective Identity of Arab Pupils

Dr. Hassan Agbaria and Mr. Yosef Kanaaneh: Civil Society and Parental Involvement in the Arab Education System

Dr. Ayman Agbaria: Pre-Service Training of Arab Teachers in Israel: Towards an Academic and Public Agenda.

Dr. Khalid Arar and Mrs. Taha Hadiji: The Development of Educational Leadership in the Arab Sector

Dr. Saleh Darawsha: A School for Intellectual and Educational Leadership

Mrs. Soad Diab: Arab Society in Israel and Reading Culture

Dr. Kaussai Haj-Yahia and Dr. Ghanem Yakobi: Access to Higher Education Abroad Amongst Arab Students: Motives, Problems and Future Possibilities

Prof. Yossi Yonah: The Palestinian Minority in Israel: Conflicting Narratives in the Education System

C o n t e n t s

1. Executive Summary

This document summarizes the conclusions of the Working Group on the Advancement of Arab Education in Israel, which operated at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute during 2006. It is the first in a series of papers that will present the conclusions and recommendations of a multiyear strategic project at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute on the advancement of Arab society in Israel, focusing on education, civil society, leadership, and economic and job development.

The working group was guided by the following basic assumptions and principles:
- There is a need for a proactive alternative policy, based on an up-to-date, system-wide view, to improve Arab education in Israel.
- Improving the Arab education system is essential for attaining the desired advance in the overall status of the Arab minority in Israel.
- Arab education is culturally, socially, and nationally distinctive.
- Dealing with the Arab education system is the shared responsibility of all relevant parties involved, from government agencies and the Education Ministry to the Arab population itself.
- The State of Israel's commitment to the Arab education system mandates the allocation of resources on a substantial-equality basis.
- Most of the members of the group should be Arab educators and professionals.
- The goal is to trigger action that will change and improve the Arab education system, given both its current condition and the possibility that government policy will not change substantially or at all.

The working group at The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute concentrated on identifying and evaluating those strategic niches for action that it believes have high leveraging potential and have been insufficiently considered in the past. It focused on the following five challenging spheres of action:
- The distinctive identity and cultural repertoire of Arab education and their implications for organizational structure, goals, and content.
- The training and development of human resources and leadership in the Arab education system, with an emphasis on teachers, professional administrators, and outstanding pupils.
- The extent of parental and community involvement in the education process in Arab society.

- Reading culture and Arabic fluency among Arab pupils.
- The growing phenomenon of Israeli Arabs seeking higher education abroad.

The methods proposed to effect change in these areas include the following:
- Adopting an educational model that is multicultural, liberal, and polycentric, within separate educational spaces.
- Establishing a separate Arab Education Administration in the Education Ministry (similar to that of the State-Religious school system).
- Writing a new curriculum unit on Arab culture and identity for Arab education;
- Establishing Arab schools for educational and intellectual leadership, running from preschool through twelfth grade.
- Establishing an institute for the development of educational administrative leadership in the Arab sector.
- Launching a pilot program of "Arab community schools" in several existing Arab schools.
- Establishing a flagship project to advance the reading culture in one Arab locality;
- Running a guidance, counseling, and job-placement institution for Arab students in Israel.
- Cultivating advanced technological education in the Arab education system and promoting the integration of its graduates into the Israeli labor market.

2. Foreword

This document presents a comprehensive, unified, and purposeful summary of the activity of the Working Group on the Advancement of the Arab Education System in Israel, which operated at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute in 2006. The group was established as an integral part of the Institute's broader multiyear strategic project on the advancement of Arab society in Israel in various realms, including civil-society organizations, economic and job development, urban planning, and community leadership.

The bulk of this document is based on eight position papers[1] written by the members of the group at the end of its deliberations. It synthesizes their insights, positions, and operational recommendations at the strategic and tactical levels.

It includes a basic overview of the subject addressed by the working group—Arab education in Israel; a description of the working group's principles and postulates; a mapping of the foci of activity on which its members concentrated; and the recommendations, alternatives, and practical measures proposed by the group.

We would like to thank the administration of the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, which provided the support, encouragement, and resources that made it possible for the professional group to function, and the UJA–Federation of New York for its ongoing support of the project. We would also like to thank Prof. Dan Inbar, who served as an important professional and academic resource and oversaw the group's work. We are grateful to Rabbi Prof. Naftali Rothenberg for his support. Finally, we thank Mrs. Asmahan Masry-Herzalla, the project coordinator.

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[1] The position papers will be published separately.

3. Arab Education in Israel

Arab education in Israel operates in a state with a Jewish majority. It is part of an education system in a multicommunity society with profound differences between its components. Much has been written about the implications of this situation for issues such as majority-minority relations, control of study content, allocation of resources, and organizational structure (Abu-Asbah, 2007; Gavison, 2006).

The status and quality of the Arab education system in Israel have long engaged academics, policy-makers, and decision-makers in government, as well as education professionals, both within and outside Arab society in Israel.

Since the establishment of Israel, the Education Ministry has appointed countless official and professional committees to examine the condition of the Arab education system and offer recommendations for changing and improving it (Abu-Asbah, 2006; 2007). These include the Yadlin Committee (1972), the Peled Committee (1975), the Harari Committee (1986), the Ben Peretz Committee (1999), the Goldstein Committee (1999), the Katz Committee (1999), the Lapid Committee (2003), and the Dovrat Committee (2003).[2]

Most of these committees focused on specific questions related to Arab education and lacked a systematic overview of the problems and unique features of the Arab education system in Israel (Abu-Asbah, 2007). Their reports and recommendations did not include adequate reference to pedagogical issues that are unique to Arab education; did not pay attention to the decisive importance of the involvement of the Arab sector itself in the education of its children; and tended to overlook the organizational and structural aspects of this system in relation to administrative authority and determination of content. Furthermore, the committees' recommendations were implemented only partially and incrementally, especially with regard to fiscal investment and inputs (ibid.). A government policy that is insufficiently dynamic and comprehensive, short-term, and ill-suited to the processes of change and internal needs of Arab society in Israel has left the Arab education system burdened by unresolved challenges and disparities vis-à-vis the Jewish system (ibid; Haidar, 2005). For example, both Jews and Arabs have criticized the management and recommendations of the Dovrat Committee, pointing out that the committee's demonstrative exclusion of Arab members prevented it from discerning the unique features, challenges, and needs of the Arab education system in Israel (Abu-Asbah, 2006; Yonah, 2006). Critics noted that the committee's proposed common core curriculum all but ignored the Arab public in Israel, because the curriculum's content

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[2] For further details on the subject of state appointed committees see Abu-Asbah (1997) and Abu-Asbah (2007).

and principles were not suited to the perceptions of identity and culture of that public (Yonah, 2006; Avishai and Rothenberg, forthcoming).

It is true that the Arab education system has made major progress since the establishment of the state. Arab pupils and Arab education institutions have increased in number, the quality of instruction has improved, and the overall educational level of the Arab population in Israel has risen significantly (Haidar, 2005; Abu-Asbah, 2005).
Nevertheless, from a comparative perspective there are still vast discrepancies between Arab education and Jewish education in Israel. These discrepancies are an obstacle to the upward socioeconomic mobility of graduates of the Arab education system and of Arab society as a whole. One disparity is in the median numbers of years of schooling: in 2002 the median length of schooling in the Jewish sector was 12.6 years, but only 11.2 years in the Arab sector (the median for the Jewish sector in 1980). That is, Arab society lags more than 20 years behind Jewish society with regard to median years of schooling (Abu-Asbah, 2005). Furthermore, in 2002/3 only 14.4% of the "teaching units" in the Israeli education system were allocated to Arab education, so that the average number of pupils per teaching unit was 16.9 in Arab education, as against 11.2 in Jewish education. In 2001, only 5.6% of Arabs aged 15 and older held an academic degree, as against more than 20% of the Jewish population (Haidar, 2005). Fewer teaching hours are allotted to the Arab system than to the Jewish system, because the Education Ministry employs metrics and criteria that are not applicable to the Arab sector (such as special educational baskets for "national priority" areas). The overt and hidden dropout rate in the Arab sector is particularly high (20% to 25%), and is fed by the lack of educational tracks within the system and programs for vocational training, the shortage of technological schools in the sector, and the paucity of support and counseling services in the schools (Abu-Asbah, 2005). As early as elementary school, Arab pupils lag behind their Jewish peers in subjects such as mathematics, science, and English. This lag continues at the more advanced stages and is manifested in the Arab sector's relatively low rate of matriculation-certificate eligibility, and especially of eligibility for matriculation certificates that meet Israeli university-entrance requirements (ibid).

Given these and other data, policy-makers, experts and professionals in the field agree that the Arab education system operates in conditions of continuing discrimination and inequality of inputs and outputs. They also agree that it is the victim of a political and educational policy that imposes inappropriate and ineffective content and procedures without the participation of the Arab public (ibid; Abu-Asbah, 2006). It is recognized that this situation, in addition to the poor achievements of the Arab education system as a whole, exacerbates the feelings of alienation and dissatisfaction among the Arab public in Israel (Abu-Asbah, 2007). One expression of such feelings is the unanimity within the Arab public that the education system is a tool by which the Israeli Jewish establishment exerts control and hegemony over the Arab minority in Israel (Al-Haj, 1996). There is no consensus between Jewish policy-makers, on the one hand, and educators and parents in Arab society, on the other, as to curricula, goals, and content, the nature of the values

to be instilled in Arab pupils (in particular with regard to their civic and national identity), and the desirable extent of participation in the decision-making process at the staff level (Abu-Asbah, 2007).

Education in general and the education system in particular are central and important in Arab society. This centrality is not unique to the Arab sector in Israel; rather, it is a familiar pattern for minorities throughout the world (Abu-Asbah, 2007). For them, education has normative, cognitive, and functional roles but also serves as an increasingly important tool for socioeconomic advancement and social mobility. In recent years, the Arab population has evinced increasing awareness of the importance of providing the younger generation with a quality education, in the belief that education can guarantee social mobility at the individual and collective levels (ibid.). For Arab society in Israel, which is experiencing accelerated processes of modernization alongside trends toward conservatism, traditionalism, and religious collectivization, education is seen as playing a decisive and active role in shaping the changing society.
Nevertheless, various factors within the Arab sector impede the development of the Arab education system and pose harsh dilemmas for Arab schools today.

Arab schools find it difficult to maneuver between conflicting demands (modernism versus traditionalism, values-orientation versus achievement-orientation) within Arab society, and to deal with the demand for excellence and the need to satisfy the conditions of the competitive markets in Israeli society as a whole. In a certain sense, the Arab school is trapped between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand, it is the target of withering criticism because it does not provide its pupils with a distinctive sociocultural code and values (a situation that, as stated, is strongly influenced by the long-term policies of the Israeli establishment). On the other hand, it cannot use educational content with a traditional orientation, because that would reinforce a social and cultural structure that is unsuited to the needs of Arab graduates, who must function in Israeli society, with its modern, Western, and technological orientation (ibid.). The many pressures and tensions make the Arab sector unable to cope, responsibly and with leadership, with the need to determine the Arab schools' future direction and fuel the changes required. The Arab education system today does not provide a holistic educational experience; in essence, its course is steered by objectives that are externally defined and that focus on conveying information and skills (ibid.).

The overall picture portrayed here reflects a complex interplay of external and internal obstacles that impede the advancement of the Arab education system in Israel.

The external obstacles are associated with government policy, which dictates the ways in which the system operates and is intimately linked to the overall status of the Arab minority in Israel. Policy-makers and decision-makers at the national level must change their positions and conduct, adopt a fair policy for the allocation and management of educational resources (budgetary, organizational, and human) that is better suited to

closing the gaps between the two systems, and define long-term policy objectives that reflect a strategic and shared vision. The internal obstacles require an increase in Arab society's ability to play a role in educating its children; this includes entrusting the system to a greater extent to Arab professionals. Another requirement is pedagogical activity that suits the cultural, political, economic, and social needs of the Arab population in Israel and is attentive to the grassroots demands of Arab society.

The need for change in all three domains—resources and achievements, structure and organization, and pedagogy—taking account of the circumstances described above, generated the idea of establishing the Working Group on the Advancement of Arab Education in Israel at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. The group's working assumptions and principles are summarized in the next section.

4. The Working Group on the Advancement of Arab Education in Israel: Basic Assumptions and Working Principles

During 2006, the Working Group on the Advancement of Arab Education in Israel spent a year studying the issue in order to reach a deeper understanding of it, map the obstacles that hinder the advancement of the Arab education system in Israel, and propose feasible means for improving and streamlining its operation.

The group had twelve core members, with academic and organizational support from the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. All but one of the members were Arab citizens of Israel.

The diverse professional mix included academics who study Arab education in Israel, headquarters staffers of the Education Ministry who are in direct contact with the Arab education system, education officials in Arab local government, school principals and teachers, and representatives of civil-society organizations that deal with Arab education.

The group engaged in thorough and open discussions, wrote position papers, and held a conference with a broad audience to raise awareness of the issue and of the group's work.[3]

Six key assumptions underlay the group's work:

1. The many professional committees appointed by the government over the years in top-down fashion have generated antagonism and disappointment in the Arab sector. In contrast, a nongovernmental group can be an effective and essential force that generates change in the system from the bottom-up, by involving educational professionals from the Arab sector in a meaningful fashion.

2. The Arab education system in Israel suffers from prolonged under-investment and unsuitable official policies. Accordingly, it needs an alternative, proactive, multi-dimensional policy that is up-to-date and has a system-wide perspective.

3. Improving the status and conditions of the Arab minority in Israel is a desired objective for the Arab population, the Jewish population, and the general welfare of the State of Israel. This objective can be achieved, in part, by helping the Arab education system in Israel advance. This system is an essential component of Israeli Arab society and a key means for raising its status and increasing its socioeconomic mobility. Furthermore, the Arab education system and its pupils are culturally, socially, and nationally distinct.

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[3]   The Conference was held on December 25, 2006, at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. The conference can be viewed at the Van Leer website: http://www.vanleer.org.il/heb/videoShow.asp?id=344.

4. Dealing with the Arab education system requires attention, responsibility, and cooperation among all those involved: civil servants and Education Ministry officials, Arab professionals and the general Arab public, and civil-society organizations. The integration, responsibility, and involvement of the Arab public (including parents, pupils, and teachers) in determining the system's future image and in shaping the educational and pedagogical policy that guides it are desirable and should be encouraged.

5. The State of Israel has an obligation to the Arab educational system that is no different from its obligation to the other streams in Israeli education, such as the State-Religious school system. This obligation mandates a government policy of allocating resources on a substantial-equality basis that can reduce external barriers and diminish the disparities between the Jewish and Arab education systems.

6. While demanding massive state investment in Arab education in Israel, one must recognize that even with such an investment, reducing immense gaps and modifying entrenched attitudes will be a long and slow process, because of the objective constraints of a shortage of human and financial resources. Consequently, given all the obstacles, at the same time one must work intelligently to create and drive change in the system, even in the existing situation and even if government policy does not undergo any substantial modification.

These basic assumptions yield the group's central working principle: creative strategic thinking with the accent on locating niches for activity, crossroads for action, and various fulcrums with the potential for great leverage, that have not been adequately discussed in the past.
This means focusing on those domains in which, in the group's estimation, action would have long-term implications of intrinsic value and with a spillover effect on the entire Arab education system in Israel.
This principle would help guarantee advance of the system, with intelligent use of resources and an effective translation of deliberate investment into real, operational, and positive outcomes.
Appropriate attention to these strategic points will make the system perform better.

The professional caliber of the working group's members and their individual and collective commitment led them to identify five strategic foci and to outline practical steps related to them. The products of their labor were committed to writing in eight position papers, whose overall thrust will be discussed and summarized in the next two sections.

5. Issues and Foci for Action

The content-fields of the working group began to crystallize during the discussions and deliberative forums of its members. They decided not to define in advance the themes for discussion and the topics of the position papers. Instead, they mapped out areas they considered of major strategic and practical value.

The group identified and addressed five major issues:
1. The manner in which the Arab education system handles the unique repertoire of identity and culture of Arab society in Israel, especially in regard to organizational structure, goals, and educational content;
2. The training and development of human resources and leadership in Arab education in Israel, in three circles: pupils, professional administrators, and teaching staff;
3. Parental and community involvement in the education process and the education system in the Arab sector;
4. Fluency in Arabic and the culture of reading and writing among the Arab population and among pupils in Arab education in particular;
5. The tendency of Israeli Arabs to go abroad for higher education and the implications of this phenomenon for the access of graduates of the Arab school system in Israel to higher education and employment suited to university graduates.

These issues constitute the infrastructure for an overall strategic program for the Arab educational system in Israel. They include three main dimensions for change: structural and organizational policy for the entire system, inputs and outputs, and pedagogical matters.
By identifying those issues, one can enable those involved in Arab education in Israel to work in a focused and goal-directed manner to improve the performance of the system in a variety of domains.
Before the recommendations relating to each issue are presented, it is important to understand and describe the current situation within each issue, as assessed by the members of the group.

1. The Distinctive Repertoire of Identity and Culture

Official educational policy in Israel, including its manifestations in various reforms that have been proposed and implemented (though incompletely) in Arab education over the years, finds it difficult to relate to the Arab public as a minority with its own distinctive national culture and heritage and a historical narrative different from that of the Jewish majority. The state's solution to the incorporation of the Arab collective identity into the structure, goals, curricula, and content of the Israeli education system has always gone beyond administrative and pedagogical considerations to reflect the political and

national positions of the Jewish and Zionist majority. This has entrenched an approach in which the collective identity of the Arab minority is seen to be competing with and threatening the Jewish Zionist narrative. Accordingly, that collective identity must be blurred, emptied of its distinctive national and religious dimensions, and kept out of the schools, while at the same time the Arab minority's allegiance to the State of Israel and its Zionist values is reinforced (Gur-Ze'ev and Pappe, 2003). The education establishment's long-seated ambivalence toward the Arab sector in Israel can be seen, on the one hand, in the fact that it acknowledges the cultural distinctiveness of the Arab minority in Israel and permits it to school its children in Arabic (Gavison, 1999). This fits in with the fact that there is actual segregation of Arab and Jewish residential areas in Israel, and is reinforced by the policy of elementary-school enrollment districts. On the other hand, Education Ministry policy over the years has rejected any reflection and significant recognition of the complex identity repertoire of the Arab public in Israel.[4]

This ambivalence is manifested, for example, in the Education Ministry's experimental core-curriculum project, "One Hundred Concepts in Heritage, Zionism, and Democracy" (2003), for grades 7 through 9, divided into Jewish, Arab, and Druze sectors. More than half of the concepts for the Jewish sector relate to the Jewish and Zionist heritage, whereas the concepts associated with the Arab population in Israel focus on narrow symbolic, folkloric, and cultural aspects. The concepts associated with democracy are drawn chiefly from the narrow perspective of human rights. Hence Jewish pupils are hardly exposed to the heritage of Arabs in Israel. At the same time, and asymmetrically, one-third of the concepts for the Arab sector are taken from the category of "Zionism for Arabs," while Arab-heritage concepts include terms from basic Arab folklore, such as *al diyafa* (the Arab culture of hospitality) and *al khima* (the tent). That is, Arab pupils are supposed to have a thorough acquaintance with the Jewish Zionist heritage, whereas their own heritage is not reflected in an up-to-date or sufficient manner.

Another example is offered by the Dovrat Committee report. The report does not recognize the right of the Arab minority in Israel to maintain a separate and autonomous Arab education administration in the Education Ministry, similar to the administration granted to the Jewish State-Religious system (Dovrat Report, 2005). The Arabs and Druze are not to have such an administration that would embody their educational autonomy and provide them with more substantial control of the curricula in their schools.

In addition, the curricula and textbooks in subjects such as history, geography, literature, and civics do not contain enough units and topics that relate positively, and from their own perspective, to the Arab heritage and the unique dilemmas posed by the fact that they live in Israel (Avishai and Rothenberg, forthcoming). These circumstances produce segregation, alienation, distrust, incoherence in the education process, and dissatisfaction with the performance of the system in the Arab public.

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[4] It is customary to refer to multiple circles that compose and influence the identity mix of the Arab citizens of Israel: a broad pan-Arab circle, an Islamic circle, a Palestinian circle, a local Arab (region, clan, confessional) circle, and an Israeli-citizen circle.

A full structural integration of the Arab and Jewish education systems, with a single Israeli educational identity, is neither realistic nor feasible, given that the two groups themselves prefer separation and reinforcement of their own identity and culture (Abu-Asbah, 2007).

2. Leadership and Training

The issue of professional training and the caliber of human resources and leadership in Arab education in Israel concerns the three main groups involved in education: pupils, teachers, and professional administrators (i.e., school principals, the senior echelons of local-authority education departments, and middle-level managers in the Arab educational system).

Pupils
Arab education today does not have appropriate means for nurturing gifted pupils with exceptional abilities who could become educational leaders and intellectuals in the Arab sector and in Israeli society as a whole.

The entire education system in Israel must balance two overarching educational goals. On the one hand, it needs to cultivate the potential for excellence among pupils and use it to the fullest, while minimizing the recently discovered gap between the achievements of Israeli pupils and their peers elsewhere in the world (Ben Zur, 2003). On the other hand, the system must provide all pupils with a value-oriented and integrated education along with the skills for contemporary living, which means going beyond simply providing knowledge and information.

This challenge is even greater in the Arab education system in Israel, which has lower system-wide inputs and outputs than the Jewish system, on top of the limitations that apply to Israeli education in general. First of all, the percentage of matriculation-certificate eligibles in Arab education is lower than in the Jewish sector. It is true that the large disparity between the percentage of matriculation-certificate eligibles among Jewish and Arab pupils who complete twelfth grade is decreasing, but it still exists. On the other hand, there is a large gap between the proportion of matriculation eligibles among Jewish pupils and Arab pupils in the same age cohort. The matriculation eligibility rates, according to figures of the Central Bureau of Statistics and as published in the report by Sikkuy (Haider, 2005, p. 40), are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Matriculation Eligibility

Year	Percentage of Matriculation-Eligibles among Pupils who Completed 12th Grade		Percentage of Matriculation-Eligibles among all Pupils in the Age Cohort	
	Jewish Education	Arab Education	Jewish Education	Arab Education
1996	51.7	41.8	45.9	20.5
2000	52.2	41.8	45.6	23
2003	57.4	50.7	53	29.7

The relatively low proportion of matriculation-certificate eligibles among the pupils of Arab education in each age cohort is strongly influenced by the relatively high dropout rate in the Arab sector. Data of the Central Bureau of Statistics report a 7% dropout rate in the Arab system in 2003–2005, as against a 3% dropout rate in Jewish education (ibid., p. 39). The dropout rate in the Arab sector is influenced in part by the lower level of achievement in Arab schools, as judged by the current standards of the Israeli school system.

Furthermore, the figures indicate that matriculation-certificate eligibility per se does not necessarily mean that the pupils will succeed in higher education. As can be seen from the Central Bureau of Statistics figures in Table 2, the percentage of Arab matriculation-certificate eligibles who satisfy the entrance requirements of Israeli universities is still much lower than that among Jews (Haider, 2005, p. 40).

Table 2: University-Entrance Matriculation Certificate Eligibility

Year	Pupils Eligible for a Matriculation Certificate that Satisfies University-Entrance Requirements, as Percentage of Age Cohort	
	Jewish Education	Arab Education
1996	37.7	11.6
2000	38.6	13.9
2003	44.3	18.1

Taken together, these figures reflect the difficulties of the Arab system in educating its pupils and especially in satisfying the needs of outstanding pupils.

Another factor that impedes the Arab system's ability to provide a suitable solution for outstanding pupils inheres in its teaching methods, content, and methods of assessment. The traditional and unvarying frontal teaching methods that predominate are insufficiently flexible or diverse and consequently can do little more than provide knowledge and information. The heterogeneous class model makes it difficult for teachers to give effective special attention to both outstanding students and to slow learners.

The absence in Arab education of separate support programs for gifted pupils, which could provide an outlet for their special skills, exacerbates the failure to deal with them adequately.

Another problem is inherent in the frequent transfers from one institution to another: from preschool to elementary school, from elementary school to junior high, and from junior high to senior high. Given that the dropout rate in Arab education is already high, the many transfers between institutions create yet another crisis for Arab pupils, with potentially negative side-effects.

Teachers

The issue of the initial or pre-service training[5] of Arab teachers in Israel has never received adequate attention. The problems and challenges here are associated with the need to develop cultural distinctiveness in Arab teachers' colleges and to fashion a suitable and multicultural policy for training Arab teachers who are enrolled in Jewish teacher-training institutions.

This issue is important for three major reasons: historical, educational, and public.
From a historical perspective, Israeli teacher-training institutions initially played a major role in introducing modernization practices in Israeli Arab society (Khalifeh, 2006). Teachers trained in them came to be strongly involved in amplifying the collective consciousness of Arab society and promoting social and political action, while catalyzing modernization in rural and traditional regions. Nevertheless, the role of teachers as agents of social and political education in Arab society eroded over the years, because of the close surveillance maintained by the Israeli Jewish educational establishment and the government. This supervision was accompanied by the dissemination of the Jewish Zionist narrative in the teachers' colleges. The image of the teacher as an apolitical civil servant, with an increasing focus on the technical side of teaching and the transmission of predefined material, became more prevalent in Arab society (Swirski, 1990). In this sense, one can identify a continuing process in which the Arab teacher-training system in Israel served as a channel for establishment control and supervision, and also as a major source of employment in Arab society (Al-Haj, 1995). There was an increasing disconnection between Arabs enrolled in teacher-training institutions and their distinctive personal, social, political, community, and pedagogical milieu.

Education and teacher training (including teacher-training institutions) continue to occupy a central place in Arab society. Central Bureau of Statistics figures indicate that the total number of students in teacher-training programs increased by 140% in the decade from 1989/90 to 1999/2000: the growth in the Jewish sector was 130%, whereas that in Arab education exceeded 350% (CBS, 2005a; 2005b).

From an educational perspective, the quality and manner of teachers' education and training exerts a strong influence on pupils' classroom achievements (Shye, Olitzky, Ben Shitrit, and Mironichev, 2005). This dimension is a cause for concern, given the continuing disparity between the Jewish and Arab systems in the percentage of faculty members with college or university degrees. For example, in 2005 the percentage of junior-high-school teachers with such degrees was 88% in the Jewish system but only 78% in the Arab system (CBS, 2005c). The public dimension is the increasing attraction of teacher-training institutions for Arab students. In recent years they have become the second most important arena of higher education, after the universities, among Israeli Arabs (see Table 3).

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[5] It is conventional to divide teacher training into three phases: pre-service training, induction training, and in-service training. Despite the intimate links among these phases, pre-service training is the most important because it prepares students for teaching and introduces them to the demands of the profession.

Table 3: Arab First-Degree Students, by Type of Institution (1995/6–2004/5)

| | Total | Total in Universities | Thereof | | Academic Colleges | Teachers' Colleges |
			In Universities	In Academic Programs under University Auspices		
1995/6–1996/7*		68,950	63,563	5,387	17,263	14,257
Thereof: % Arabs		7.0	6.7	10.5	3.5	15.6
1999/2000	127,448	74,194	66,953	7,259	33,250	20,000
Thereof: % Arabs	10.1	9.0	8.1	16.6	6.0	20.9
2003/4**	151,500	78,715	70,204	8,511	51,085	21,700
Thereof: % Arabs	10.7	9.8	9.1	15.1	5.0	27.7
2004/5	155,900	78,450	69,910	8,540	55,000	22,458
Thereof: % Arabs	11.4	10.1	9.3	16.8	5.6	30.4

Source: CHE (2006), p. 113.
*The figures for universities and academic programs under their auspices refer to 1995/6; those for academic and teachers' colleges refer to 1996/7.
**Because the CBS categories for population groups were modified in 2002/3, caution must be exercised when making multiyear comparisons.

Although the Arabs account for some 20% of the Israeli population (CBS, 2007), the percentage of Arab students among all those pursuing a bachelor's degree in teachers' colleges exceeds 30%. The percentage of Arab first-degree students in universities increased from 7.0% in 1996/7 to 10.1% in 2005; the increase in academic colleges for the same period was from 3.5% to 5.6%. But the percentage of Arab students in teachers' colleges increased dramatically, from 15.6% in 1996/7 to 30.4% in 2005. In light of these figures, it is clear that the teachers' colleges shape the image and values not only of Arab teachers, but also of the intellectuals in Arab society in Israel.

Several problems beset the training of Arab teachers in Israel today.
First, teacher-training institutions operate as nonprofit organizations or as independent corporations, under the supervision of and with significant direct funding from the Education Ministry's Teacher Training Department. Most of them grant only the B.Ed. degree, which allows its holders to continue for a master's degree in education only. In order to receive funding, these institutions must have a curriculum that is approved by the Education Ministry and the Council for Higher Education. As a result, they have little independence in setting their own goals and curricula. This dependence is perpetuated by legislation such as Section 27 of the Council for Higher Education Law–1958, as well as by the model that defines the Education Ministry's curricular requirements. This situation makes it extremely difficult for Arab teachers' colleges to develop cultural distinctiveness while satisfying the needs of their students, future Arab teachers.

Second, there is little variation among the Arab teachers' colleges and between Arab teachers' colleges and Jewish teachers' colleges. Most of the Arab colleges offer courses, internships, and pedagogical emphases that are quite devoid of a distinctive ideology and identity, except for the fact that the language of instruction is Arabic and that basic courses in Arab heritage are included. That is, the Arab colleges have not been permitted to distinguish themselves from the Jewish colleges, to provide a stronger reflection of the Israeli Arab identity, or to emphasize the unique role of Arab teachers in a divided society and as members of a minority that is struggling to attain recognition and status (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). A byproduct of this Tweedledee-Tweedledum situation is the increasing number of Arab students who attend Jewish teachers' colleges, which reduces the budgets allotted to the Arab colleges.

Another problem stems from the criteria for budgeting teacher-training institutions, especially criteria concerning current enrollments and the approved enrollment for the next academic year (Van Gelder, 2004). There are no clear criteria for allocating enrollment quotas among the teacher-training institutions. In practice, the most influential factors in this regard are seniority and size. Older and larger institutions are authorized to have larger enrollments, whereas newer or relatively small institutions are allotted a smaller quota based on their current capacity. This approach does not favor the Arab colleges, most of which are of more recent vintage than the Jewish colleges and have a smaller capacity, as measured by their physical and organizational resources.

According to Central Bureau of Statistics figures, in 2005–2006 there were four Arab teacher-training institutions, as against 55 in the Jewish sector. The total enrollment in the Hebrew sector (State, State-Religious, and Ultraorthodox) was 31,301 students, as against 3,450 students in Arab education. This means that in the Jewish sector the average number of students per institution was 559, whereas in the Arab system it was 862. The result is that whereas Hebrew education is marked by a multiplicity of institutions, permitting ideological pluralism and differentiation in educational and pedagogical emphases, the options available in Arab education are more limited. The problems in developing a personal relationship, support systems, cultural diversity and distinctiveness, and appropriate educational orientation stem in part from the limited capacity of the Arab teacher-training institutions and the relatively large number of students in each of them.

The phenomenon of Arab students enrolling in Jewish teacher-training institutions requires special attention. They study in special tracks, such as that for Bedouin teachers at Kaye College in Beersheba. Formally, these tracks reproduce the typical "minorities discourse" of the Education Ministry, which carves up Arab society in Israel into subsectors (Muslims, Druze, Christians, and Bedouin). In practice, students from all of these subsectors are admitted to the various tracks, so that the supposedly specific tracks serve mainly to attract Arab students to the Jewish colleges, which take advantage

of the natural attraction of education studies for Arab students to gain a greater foothold in the field of teacher training[6] and increase their enrollment.

The tendency of Arab students to enroll in Jewish colleges may be expected to increase in coming years, until this group becomes the most important set of consumers and the main reservoir for increasing the quota of education students in Jewish institutions. According to figures published by the Central Bureau of Statistics, the number of Arab students in Hebrew institutions in 2005/6 was 3,682, out of the total of 7,132 Arab students in all teacher-training programs in Israel. That is, more than 51% were not studying in Arab institutions. Despite these figures, the Jewish teachers' colleges pay no special attention to Arab students, who, when they receive their degrees, are supposed to find jobs in the Arab educational system. Also, there is no clear and deliberate policy of employing Arabs on the regular faculties of Jewish teachers' colleges.

Professional Administrators

Programs for developing Arab educational leadership at the professional administrative level (school principals, heads of local-authority education departments, and middle-rank managers in the Arab school system) do not adequately reflect the needs of Arab schools and the labyrinthine administration in Arab society in Israel. Arab educational leadership is very important for improving the caliber of teaching and learning in schools and in leveraging system-wide change.[7] Yet the process of identifying, selecting, and training such leaders has no conceptual or practical link to the needs of Arab society and Arab schools. The requisite sensitivity to distinctive social, cultural, and curricular aspects in Arab schools in Israel is undeveloped.

The continuing gap between the Arab and Jewish education systems is manifested in four key obstacles that impede the improvement of Arab education in Israel: (1) the absence of a clear vision, policy, and goals; (2) a paucity of values-oriented education (Abu-Asbah, 2003); (3) under-exploited human capital, which results from the limited mobility of educated Arabs, who frequently turn to teaching out of frustration and because they have no other options, and from the tendency to fill senior positions in Arab education in a manner that is not necessarily tied to the job-holders' performance (Al-Haj, 1996; Abu-Asbah, 2006); and (4) low achievement and disparities in inputs that are perpetuated over time (Mazawi, 2003).

Efforts have been made to improve the nature and achievements of the Arab education system in Israel. These efforts include reducing disparities in core subjects, directing resources toward resolving the shortage of physical plants, improving the school climate, and solving problems of violence. Yet no emphasis has been placed on empowering the human capital in the system, especially in administrative and leadership positions, and insufficient effort has been made in this direction.

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[6] This attraction is augmented by the limited options available to graduates of Arab institutions in the Israeli employment market. For further information on this topic, see Ghara (2005).

[7] For more on this subject see Hopkins (2001) and Harris (2002).

Education researchers and experts cite a number of reasons for the importance of educational leadership and specify the appropriate traits of such leaders. They assert that educational leadership is essential for spearheading change, introducing improvements in teaching and learning, and defining a vision. Leadership is crucial, too, because of the worldwide tendency to decentralize public education and give principals increased authority, on the assumption that principals have a stronger connection and proximity to the social and educational milieu in which they function and accordingly are able to make decisions that are more appropriate and more effective for the system (Nir, 2005; Fullan, 2005). Educational leaders help implement educational reforms by mediating and managing conflicting expectations and demands in the field. They bear the responsibility for nurturing future leaders, maintaining interactions outside the organization, setting a high threshold of expectations of the faculty, identifying and evaluating problems, fostering organizational learning, and providing incentives and support.

Many obstacles block the development of educational leadership in the Arab education system in Israel. First, Arab leaders are trained in isolation from their sociopolitical and cultural milieu. Second, the employment infrastructure for educational leaders in the Arab sector is inadequate. Administrative positions in Arab schools are enmeshed in political, clan, and gender struggles, and sometimes appointments are not made on an objective basis of qualifications (Eddy and Chen, 1995; Eddy and Ayalon, 2000). Turnover in administrative positions is very slow, because these jobs (principals, core teachers, and heads of education departments in local authorities) are relatively rare. The centralized supervision practiced by the Israeli education establishment impedes the development of a proactive educational leadership with a vision that is relevant for the sector.

Israeli training programs for administrators have many problems. Educational leaders are trained in two parallel tracks: academic programs in universities and colleges, and certificates in education administration, intended specifically for school principals, with a more practical and experience-based orientation. Screening and evaluation of candidates for training as administrators, conducted, for example, by the Principals' Training Unit of the Center for Developing Senior Educational Workers, are problematic, because they involve agencies (placement and assessment organizations) that are divorced from the actual task of education. These agencies ignore candidates' academic background and experience in administrative jobs in the school (Gibton and Chen, 2003). Furthermore, the faculties of the various programs include too few experts from the Arab sector, and the course contents are divorced from the particular events and reality experienced by Arab candidates in their schools.

3. Parental and Community Involvement

The involvement of Arab society and the Arab community in Israel in the Arab education system and schools is limited; in fact, there is no meaningful partnership. Effective parental participation and involvement, which is an important fourth leg of the Arab education system, must be reinforced in order to improve the system's outputs and mold graduates who are active in and contribute to society and their social environment.

Fostering parental involvement in Arab education is a distinct aspect of the development of an active civil society in the Arab sector in Israel. Precisely because of the scarcity of resources and the many challenges facing Arab education in Israel, parents represent social capital that could make a meaningful contribution to the education system. Yet that capital is insufficiently exploited.

Relations between Arab schools and parents are characterized by one-way communication and by strains and conflicts that interfere with the proper balance between the two agents of socialization that shape pupils' personalities—the school and the family. Today's parents have more education themselves, recognize that advanced education is the key to their children's success, and are increasingly interested in being partners in educational decision-making and the work of the school (Goldberger, 1995). Yet the faculties of Arab schools generally ignore parents' expectations and requests.

Experts tend to emphasize the importance of a partnership between parents and the school for pupils' personal and cognitive development (Freedman and Fischer, 2003; Macionis, 1999). Parental awareness and attention are essential for developing pupils' values, attitudes, social skills, and verbal abilities. Cooperation and a conceptual and behavioral continuity between the family environment and the educational institution can augment pupils' achievements, consolidate a positive personality, and encourage success (Vassallo, 2000). Involved parents can take responsibility—social, communal, and even financial— and strengthen the entire education system (Rosenblatt and Peled, 2003).

For Arab parents today, the school is not the unchallenged authority it was in the past. They are open to hearing their children's criticism of the school and its teachers and are willing to voice open disapproval of the institution.
Because of the prevalent recognition among Israeli Arabs that education is a tool for socioeconomic mobility, parents tend to overemphasize pupils' scholastic achievements. This leads to a neglect of education for values and heritage in Arab schools and produces persistent conflicts between parent organizations and the education departments and schools in the sector (Abu-Asbah, 2001).

The demand by some parents for rigid discipline and traditional aspects of education is sometimes incompatible with modern ideas about education for democracy and tolerance.

Parents' involvement in Arab education focuses mainly on the physical infrastructure of schools and their own children, with no commitment to the school as a whole. This reinforces achievement-oriented individualism at the expense of community and social solidarity.

On the other hand, veteran principals in the Arab system react with hostility and do not cooperate with parents' desire to be involved in professional and pedagogical issues and tend to ignore parental feedback.
Under these circumstances, parents are chiefly observers of the educational process, as a matter of personal choice or because the educational institution is not receptive to them. Both parents and teachers are dissatisfied with the way the system works.

4. Reading Culture

The phenomenon of reading poverty and the undeveloped reading culture of Arab society is not unique to Israel; rather, it is characteristic of the entire Arab world (Middle East Transparent, 2006). The tendency of Arab society to de-emphasize reading literature, purchasing books, and using the infrastructure of public libraries produces an unfortunate gap vis-à-vis Western societies and Jewish society in Israel. The behavioral patterns of the Arab population in Israel show that reading is not considered an essential activity; they also show a lack of interest in acquiring and reading books and an absence of leisure-time and recreational habits based on reading literature (among both children and adults). Yet the adult Arab population does read canonical religious texts. This type of reading sticks closely to the literal text and eschews interpretation and critical thinking. Thus we are dealing with a reading poverty that is both quantitative and substantive.

The number of Arab readers for whom Arabic is their mother tongue is decreasing, and this trend is accompanied by a growing tendency to read mainly Hebrew texts, for utilitarian reasons. Every age group in Arab society is becoming less fluent in reading and writing Arabic. These tendencies intensify the use of a pidgin that is neither Arabic nor Hebrew, a mixture of Hebrew and Arabic words (Amara and Mari, 2004). This reading poverty exists in addition to the small number of authors producing belles-lettres in Arabic today.

We can identify several key factors associated with the poverty of reading in Arab society today:
First, there is a shortage of infrastructure and resources. Israel makes a scant investment in encouraging reading and writing in Arab society, as reflected in the relatively small number of public libraries and school libraries in the Arab sector, the age and poor quality of the books in existing libraries (CET, 2004), the paucity of grants to writers, the small investment in quality translations into Arabic, the inadequate access to books by the general population (such as free distribution of books or mobile library projects), and the failure to develop an awareness of the issue during the training of teachers and school administrators. Partly because Arab local government is swamped by deficits and torn by political struggles, reading culture in Arab society is nowhere near a top priority for the leaders of local government, who sometimes close down libraries or prevent the development or opening of new ones in order to devote resources to other areas (Abu-Asbah, 2004). All this contributes to the shortage of talented Arab professionals who are storytellers, librarians, and writers.

The general economic, social, and political status of the Arab minority in Israel is another factor. The low socioeconomic level and relatively high unemployment rate influence the priorities of Arab society in favor of instrumental expenditures on basic commodities, such as food and clothing. The relatively low socioeconomic level also influences the literacy of Arab preschoolers, so that children have a lower starting point when they begin school. Only 50% of Arab four year-olds are in preschools, as against 95% of their Jewish peers (Gur and Brut, 2004). Arab pupils' desire to escape their poor self-image

and poor sectoral image pushes them to emulate the language and lifestyle of Jewish pupils, and this has a negative impact on their own identity, heritage, and fluency in Arabic. Moreover, the continuing dominance of the Jewish-Zionist-Western narrative in the Arab education system blurs the unique dimensions of Arab culture in the curriculum and content, including original literature in Arabic and fluency in that language.

Two other issues are associated with the Arabic language itself. The coexistence of two separate linguistic systems (classical literary Arabic and spoken Arabic) makes fluency and use more difficult. The distinction between the spoken language and the language of reading and writing (diglossia) produces individuals who have not mastered the written language (Almamuri, 1983). This creates special problems for Arab pupils in their Arabic language studies.

Another difficulty stems from the problematic status of Arabic in Israel. Even though it is defined as a second official language, Arabic is considered to be of lesser importance than other languages commonly used in Israel, such as English and Russian. Its use is limited to the Arab sector and it finds inadequate expression in the public, business, and academic sectors. The inferior status of Arabic influences the minority of students who major in it in university. The texts studied by Arab pupils rarely have anything to do with their culture and daily lives. Pupils in Arabic classes are not high achievers and there is a significant gap in reading comprehension in Arab education.

The location of Arab culture on the historical continuum is the background for the Arab population's undeveloped reading culture. The key processes along this continuum include the decline of Arab culture after its golden age in the early Islamic era; the decline in Arab cultural products in Israel under Ottoman, British, and French occupation; and the oral transmission of elements of pre-Islamic culture when Arabic became the province of the elites.

Cultural activity today does not reflect or include the Arab collective in Israel. Arab society consists of individuals who are alienated from their surroundings and community. In the absence of a mechanism to encourage reading in the public sphere, it has become a private act. There is no cultural forum to cultivate and revive the Arabic language and reading among Arab society in general and in the Arab education system in particular.

The small number of readers and writers in Arabic has ethical and political implications that impede social development in diverse areas. It is associated with patterns of unemployment, poverty, ignorance, and separatism, the relatively low proportion of pupils who go on to university studies, alienation, the disintegration of collective social values, the failure to utilize human capital in Arab society, a decline in the percentage of students who take the matriculation exam in Arabic language, and a decline in scholastic achievement in general (Dwairy, 1997). Reading is a culture-constitutive act (Ghanem, 2005). Its decline dilutes Arab identity in Israel at both the individual and group levels. The general importance of fluency in and use of language is inherent in the fact that it opens a window to freedom through which a person's basic humanity can be realized.

5. Going Abroad for Higher Education

The phenomenon of Israeli Arabs going abroad for higher education is not new. In the past, Arab students from Israel would often attend universities in the Communist bloc[8] with scholarships provided by the Israel Communist Party (Al-Haj, 1996). Despite the steady increase in recent years in the number of Arabs studying abroad[9] (Council for Higher Education, 2005; Haj-Yahia, 2002) in fields such as medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, and communication therapy, the phenomenon has neither been studied nor dealt with adequately.

Like other minorities all over the world, Arab students in Israel view higher education as the key to closing gaps, lowering socioeconomic barriers, and enhancing their social mobility. It is true that emigration for academic studies is "temporary emigration," but it can be a step toward permanent emigration and may set off a brain drain.

Arabs go abroad to study for several reasons: First, Arabs' access to higher education in Israel and especially to prestigious university departments is difficult and relatively limited. Only 56% of Arab applicants were admitted to Israeli universities in 2002/3 (Haidar, 2005). There are also disparities in the admissions rate by disciplines, notably the paramedical professions, where 38% of Arab applicants and 70% of Jewish applicants were accepted (ibid.). The low admissions rate by Israeli universities and prestigious departments is associated with Israeli Arabs' failure to satisfy the high admission criteria, and especially their relatively poor performance on the matriculation and psychometric exams (ibid.). It has been asserted that the psychometric exam is a major barrier to Arab students because it is tailored to the training of Jewish students.

Arab students face the greatest obstacles in being accepted by Israeli universities to study those disciplines in which there is the strongest demand in the Arab labor market in Israel and the best prospects of finding work; this, of course, motivates them to go abroad. In high-demand disciplines, entrance requirements are generally lower and the academic programs are generally shorter in countries such as Jordan and Romania, which have no stringent selection process or psychometric exams. Furthermore, graduates of the Arab education system have greater access abroad to fields such as aeronautics and astronomy, subjects from which they tend to be excluded in Israel on security grounds.

Another factor is that Arabs do not satisfy the relatively new requirement of a minimum admissions age. Recently, the University of Haifa and Tel Aviv University set a minimum age of twenty for admission to some faculties and programs, such as medicine and communication therapy. Arab students, especially women, tend to be younger than

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[8] Most of them studied medicine or engineering.
[9] Today the number of Arab students from Israel who go abroad for their university education is approximately 10,000.

this[10] (Abu-Asbah, 2006). This restriction keeps them from starting their studies when they complete high school at age eighteen.

From an economic perspective, Arab students in Israel have a better chance of winning a scholarship abroad than in Israel. The options for student employment abroad are less limited and the cost of living is lower in countries such as Jordan and Romania than it is in Israel.

Many Arabs believe that studies abroad, especially in Europe, will provide them with better professional skills. A prestigious degree from Europe is a source of personal and collective pride, especially when graduates compete with Jewish students in Israel. Arab graduates who studied abroad and were then able to raise their economic status in Arab society in Israel influence the next generation and serve as role models.

The signing of the peace agreement between Israel and Jordan opened a new opportunity for Arab students in Israel to acquire higher education. The fact that the language of instruction is Arabic, the geographical proximity, the content that is appropriate to Arab culture, and a system of Jordanian scholarships intended for Arab students from Israel, has made Jordan the preferred and main destination for students in fields such as medicine, paramedical professions, and pharmacy. According to figures of the Jordanian Council for Higher Education, nearly 1,700 Arab students from Israel were enrolled in Jordanian universities in 2006.

The problems associated with this rush by Arab students from Israel to foreign universities must be addressed.

The fact that Israeli Arabs are not admitted to the departments most in demand in Israel engenders from the outset a low self-image and sense of inferiority vis-à-vis Jewish students. The scholastic level at institutions abroad that do accept students who were rejected in Israel is called into question, causing the Israeli labor market to look down professionally on those who have studied abroad. Israeli institutions' reluctance to recognize foreign degrees[11] makes it more difficult for Arab students who have studied abroad to find a job or professional internship when they return to Israel. The cost of studies abroad is significant, despite the various options for employment and assistance. Arab students from lower economic strata find it difficult to finance foreign studies.

The Israeli licensing exams (in medicine, for example) are another barrier. Arab students with degrees from foreign institutions find it difficult to pass the licensing exams because of problems with professional terminology, the level of studies abroad (which frequently fall short of the standards required in Israel), and a shortage of internships. A major source of frustration for Arab university graduates in Israel in general and for Arabs with foreign degrees in particular is the immense difficulty of breaking in to the Jewish and

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[10] Because they do not serve in the IDF or perform National Service.
[11] For example, the status of Jordanian degrees remains far from clear.

Arab labor market in Israel. This is associated with the absence of a sufficiently developed employment infrastructure and with social, political, and security-related restrictions.

Recently, objections within Israeli Arab society have been raised to study abroad, especially in Jordan. The differences of mentality between the Arabs in Jordan and those in Israel, tensions between Jordanian and Israeli Arab students related to the Israeli component of the latter's identity, the absence of a clear policy concerning Jordanian university studies (Agbariya, 2006), and the negative impact on Arab colleges in Israel are all cited as arguments against studies abroad. This internal opposition constitutes another front with which Arab students in Israel must contend.

To sum up, the five issues described above are the main arenas in which action is required. They are complementary and constitute a single entity. Resolving them would increase coherence in the Arab education system and improve its performance. For example, promoting excellence among gifted Arab pupils could improve the system's outputs and create a pool of new leaders for the Arab education system and for Arab society at large. Relevant and up-to-date training of Arab teachers would yield greater satisfaction among parents while opening a window for more fruitful cooperation between innovative faculty and parents. Action to foster a reading culture in the Arab population in Israel could provide many opportunities for unique expressions of identity and culture, create new content, and forge a partnership of teachers, pupils, and parents in the entire Arab sector.

In keeping with the working group's basic principles, these are all points that have never received adequate attention from the education establishment and the organizations involved in the field. Because the members of the working group believe that action in these areas could leverage a real strategic change in Arab education in Israel, they went beyond identifying and describing them and outlined measures and recommendations related to them. These are discussed in the next section.

6. Recommendations

The working group's recommendations outline paths of action for each of the niches identified. Some of them relate to changes that must be introduced in the typical attitudes and positions of the entire Israeli education establishment; others relate to specific practices and steps that should be taken in these areas.

The members of the working group and its professional advisers attach particular importance to the fact that most of the recommendations were proposed by experts and professionals who come from Arab society and Arab education in Israel. This is seen as an essential step toward planning and policy-making that are more attentive and better suited to the needs of Arab education today.

For the reader's convenience, the recommendations are arranged in the order of the points in the previous section.

1. The proper attitude toward the distinctive identity and cultural repertoire of the Israeli Arab public within the Arab education system, especially with regard to its structure, goals, and educational content

The basic assumption here is that the proper way to incorporate the Arab collective distinctiveness into the Arab and Israeli education system is to base it on the multicultural educational approach.

Because there is more than one way of implementing this approach, one must select the multicultural model appropriate to the Arab-Israeli case. In general, multicultural models vary as a function of the closure of the social groups that make up a society and the degree of estrangement between them. This variation requires a normative and analytical distinction between a multicultural approach implemented in shared public spaces and the multiculturalism that applies to separate public spaces. That is, where the groups' cultural openness and mutual intimacy is greater, the multicultural project should be manifested in shared public arrangements; and vice versa.

The first situation, in which the groups' cultural openness and mutual intimacy are great, reflects a social reality in which the gulf between the cultural distinctiveness of the various groups and their lifestyles is not so wide, allowing them to find a broad common denominator expressed in their ability to share public spaces. In these cases the multicultural project is intended to guarantee that the shared public spaces provide

fitting expression of the cultural heritage of the groups that constitute society.

The second and opposite model corresponds to cases of cultural closure between the social groups, that is, instances where the cultural distinctiveness of the groups and their lifestyles is so great that each one segregates itself in separate residential neighborhoods, sends its children to schools with a particularistic cultural climate, and makes use of its own social and cultural services (media, religion, etc.). In such cases the multicultural project must guarantee the groups' rights to preserve their cultural distinctiveness and own way of life.

It is true that the real world does not support such an analytical and unambiguous separation in public spaces; nor should such separation be accepted as a given and static situation. Identities are flexible and fluid. They are created by the dialogue among the various groups in a society and coalesce as a consequence of historical, geographical, political, and economic changes and constraints. That is, the multicultural approach proposed here does not require that social groups create segregated cultural frameworks; it does hold, however, that if the groups are interested in them, their preference should be respected.

The case of the Arab minority in Israel falls into the second of these categories. As described in the previous section, institutional educational policy in Israel has for years found it difficult to treat the Arab public as a minority with its own distinctive culture and national heritage and a different historical narrative than that of the Jewish majority. This has led to separatism and alienation in Arab education. Those who have studied Arab society in Israel note that the Arab citizens of Israel are not assimilated and are not interested in assimilating into the Jewish Zionist culture (Jabareen, 2000). An approach that calls for full structural integration between the Arab and Jewish education systems, aimed at creating a single Israeli educational identity, is not relevant, given both groups' preference for segregation and reinforcement of their own identities and cultures (Abu-Asbah, 2007). In terms of multicultural models, this situation corresponds to the multicultural approach applied in separate public spaces.

This approach is compatible with the liberal interpretation of the multicultural project, which stands for granting collective rights to cultural minorities. In this interpretation, the right of these groups to maintain, for example, a separate and autonomous educational administration needs to be entrenched in legislation. Yet liberal multiculturalism does not see this autonomy as an unconditional right. For example, it must not be taken for granted that minorities have the right to refuse to teach their pupils the civic principles that should be shared by all citizens. That is, alongside the existence of separate and legitimate public spaces, there must be a constant cultural dialogue devoted to expounding and cultivating the elements of shared citizenship that constitute the shared public space.

Accordingly, it is proposed that the liberal multicultural approach be combined with the existence of separate and independent public spaces. In the present case, which deals with

educational spaces and structures, this would mean the establishment of a separate and autonomous Arab education administration in the Education Ministry, similar to the Jewish State-Religious education administration, and the establishment of an Arab Pedagogical Council to develop content and curricula, that would operate alongside the Pedagogical Secretariat in the Education Ministry. This combination and structural arrangement are appropriate to the relations between Jews and Arabs in Israel.

A further conceptual step is proposed, because liberal multiculturalism does not fully exhaust the multicultural options inherent in the interactions between the Arab and Jewish citizens of Israel. What is needed is polycentric multiculturalism (Shochat and Stam, 2001). Polycentric multiculturalism holds that the existing ethnic hierarchies in many liberal democracies derive from the ethnocentricity of the Western world, which has defined itself as modern, rational, and homogeneous, while dismissing the "other" (the Orient, the Third World, the native, the ethnic) as passive and irrational (Said, 2000; Gandhi, 1998). To find a solution to such labeling practices, one must make the culturally absent present again and identify a language in which they can make their voice heard. In the case of the Arab and Jewish populations in Israel, this can be done through a more symmetrical exposure of the two groups to the other's historical and cultural legacies and narratives.

The proposed model would combine (1) the liberal dimension that emphasizes legislative guarantees of group educational rights; (2) a polycentricity that tries to balance the asymmetrical power relations between the majority and minority identities; (3) separate educational spaces with regard to organizational structure and content; and (4) a shared public space based on the civic values common to all that can serve as a model to encourage positive educational values and skills, such as openness, tolerance, inclusiveness, and a critical outlook.

The members of the working group are well aware that the proposed multicultural model requires a substantial change on the part of Education Ministry policy-makers. Promoting an alternative model like this requires, first of all, serious public action to increase awareness of its advantages among the decision-makers and policy-makers of the Israeli education system. The members of the working group believe that precisely in light of the negative results of the long-standing ministry policy with regard to Arab education in Israel, notably the hardening of one-dimensional and uncompromising nationalist worldviews by both sides, adopting this model is essential.

On the basis of the above multicultural model, a change in the curricula and content of certain subjects in Arab and Jewish education is proposed.

✆ Core-Civics: The study of civics as a stand-alone subject is not enough. The shared civic dimensions of Israeli identity and culture, such as the values and institutions of Israeli democracy, must be bolstered and emphasized as the connecting thread of all subjects studied and educational activity in the schools. The inclusion of elements of Arab culture, which are part of the way of life not only of the Arab minority but also of Jews whose origins are in the Arab world, in the Israeli civics corpus would help

structure a more inclusive civic partnership. Issues such as equality as a hallmark of democracy and its implications for the status of the Arab citizens of Israel must find expression in this civic identity.

✍ History: The content covered in this subject inadequately reflects Israeli Arab history, which is central to the identity and consciousness of Arab pupils in Israel. Over the years, most of the historical knowledge taught to Arab pupils has related to world history, the history of the Jewish people and the Zionist enterprise, and Arab-Muslim history in the pre-Zionist era. To supplement the units currently taught in this subject, new units need to be developed and new textbooks written that would provide both Arab and Jewish pupils with greater exposure to Arab and Palestinian history, accompanied by an explicit discussion of the points of disagreement between the Jewish and Arab sectors. Broad and open discussion of the issue of the two groups' different narratives and of the tension that prevails, from the Arab perspective, between the definition of Israel as a Jewish state and as a democratic state, must be reflected in these new materials.

✍ Arabic as a first language in Arab education: The teaching of Arabic as a first language in Arab schools does not reflect its status as the pupils' mother tongue and an official language of Israel. Arabic is treated as a functional tool of communication, not as an instrument of identity, culture, and community. The development of texts in Arabic that are linked to all aspects of the Arab nation and culture and to the world of Israeli Arab pupils, along with a reinforcement of language teaching, would promote Arab pupils' literacy and command of their own language. Research has shown that better command of one's mother tongue facilitates pupils' acquisition of a second language. Hence, improving the teaching of Arabic and Arab pupils' command of the language would not come at the expense of their learning Hebrew as a second language.
At the same time, more programs in Arabic as a second language need to be added to Jewish education in Israel.

✍ Hebrew as a second language in Arab education: The need for Israeli Arab pupils to know Hebrew is obvious: this is how they learn about Jewish culture, acquire the ability to function in various areas of daily life in the country, and gain the potential to go on to higher education and penetrate the Israeli job market. But the teaching of Hebrew in the Arab system is based on texts taken from Jewish culture. These materials fail to take account of the special needs that arise when Arabs study Hebrew. The recommendation is that Hebrew texts based on Arabic culture and literature be developed, translated, and introduced to the curriculum.

✍ Arabic culture and identity: A new study-unit should be developed—either as a separate subject or as part of history classes—for the Arab education system, devoted entirely to the identity and cultural repertoire of Arab society. Most of the authors of the new unit and materials should be pedagogical experts and writers who are themselves Israeli Arabs.

2. The appropriate training and development of human resources and leadership in Arab education in Israel: pupils, administrators, and teaching staff

Pupils

In order to provide a more appropriate solution for gifted Arab pupils with exceptional abilities, who could serve as a reservoir of future educational leaders and intellectuals for Arab society in Israel, three key principles must be combined: (1) selecting educational institutions and teaching methods in relation to pupils' abilities; (2) reducing the number of transitions from one school and level to another; (3) enabling a broader and more varied range of expression and teaching methods, suited to gifted students.

Two models exist in the Israeli education system:
1. Jewish schools for outstanding pupils, such as the residential school for the sciences and arts in Jerusalem
2. Weekly day-long enrichment programs for gifted pupils, run by the Department for Gifted and Outstanding Pupils in the Education Ministry.

The members of the working group are of the opinion that these two alternatives cannot provide an appropriate solution, either in scale or substance, for pupils in Arab schools. The existing model of a school for outstanding pupils limits the fields in which the school can specialize and leaves many groups of pupils with no solution; it is limited to a particular geographical region; the number of Arab pupils who are accepted or who can attend, physically, is very small; these schools do not have the capacity to absorb the potential pool of gifted Arab pupils; the mixed residential model is inappropriate for many girls in the Arab sector; the language of instruction is Hebrew; and this solution exists only for high-school pupils. Day-center programs for the gifted, too, are limited in their capacity: The tests to identify suitable candidates are too rigid and fail to take into account motivation and interpersonal skills; there is relatively limited cooperation between these centers and pupils' schools; and the centers do not provide a solution for the highest and lowest grades. The bottom line is that these two alternatives would require major expansion and substantive change to make them suitable for the needs of Arab education.

Hence a third and new model is proposed: sub-regional Arab schools for intellectual and educational leadership. These schools would attract talented Arab pupils from nearby localities, on a voluntary basis, on condition that they meet the entrance requirements. The selection of candidates would not be based exclusively on IQ tests but would include other parameters that are appropriate for Arab pupils, such as motivation, perseverance, and social skills. The classes would be homogeneous with regard to abilities and level, with up to 25 pupils in a class. The schools would run from preschool through twelfth grade. The teaching methods would include modern participatory and hands-on approaches. The

infrastructure would include state-of-the-art computer rooms, sports facilities, libraries, science laboratories, equipment for virtual learning, apprentice and internship programs, and a specially trained teaching staff. The curricula would be developed to satisfy the objectives of fostering excellence and leadership among pupils (including skills for self-examination, critical thought, values education, and the like), and compatible with the distinctive identity and culture of Arab pupils in Israel.

The proposal is to begin with three Arab schools for leadership, as a pilot, in three of the following locations: Haifa, Nazareth, Umm el-Fahm, Tayyibe, and Rahat. Later the model would be expanded and six other regional schools added, in the two locations of the previous list omitted from the pilot and in Tarshiha, Shefaram, the Beit Netofa Valley, and central Israel.

The new schools would fall under the purview and supervision of the Education Ministry and its Department for Gifted and Outstanding Pupils. The schools' work would be evaluated by department experts, and the educational process would be supervised by professional mentors and inspectors. To promote this initiative, a voluntary strategic partnership should be developed with the Department for Gifted and Outstanding Pupils of the Education Ministry.

During the first year of the pilot, an Education Ministry team would work with representatives of the new schools to evaluate, study, and improve its work.

Teachers

Several steps are recommended for dealing with the difficulties and challenges associated with the need to foster cultural distinctiveness in the teacher-training institutions of Arab education and to develop a suitable policy for training Arab teachers in Jewish institutions.

First, in the absence of adequate empirical knowledge, there is a need to increase academic research on the training of Arab teachers in Israel, in the following areas, for example: historical and sociological research to systematically document and analyze the process of opening Arab teacher-training institutions, official policy concerning them, and their curricula; a focused study of the Israeli Jewish establishment's goals in the training of Arab teachers in Israel; a description and evaluation of the role of teacher-training institutions at the local Arab level; identification of the knowledge required by future Arab teachers in Israel; an investigation of the effectiveness of the training provided by existing institutions; and a study of the conditions for training future Arab teachers in Jewish colleges.

An effort must be made to equalize the inputs and scholastic conditions of the Arab colleges as compared with the Jewish colleges, with regard to class size, student-faculty ratio, improved computer infrastructure, libraries, and professional guidance and consulting services. Furthermore, Arab representation in staff and administrative positions of the Teacher Training Division of the Education Ministry must be increased, by means of legislation.

It is essential to devote resources and investment to improving Arabs' preparation for studies in teachers' colleges, because their high-school education frequently does not provide them with the proper background for academic studies. Courses and workshops on fundamentals of writing, academic methods, and general knowledge should be developed to prepare Arab students for academic studies.

The cultural and educational distinctiveness of the Arab colleges should be fostered, along with greater diversity among the various Arab colleges. This should be done by promoting greater self-government and by developing new curricula and content suited for the training of Arab teachers.

Another step is associated with reinforcing the continuity from one stage to another in the training of Arab teachers in Israel. The recommendation is to set up a supportive, institutionalized, and systematic mechanism for the professional development of Arab teachers throughout their careers. This could be implemented under the executive responsibility of civic organizations if the education establishment fails to do so.

The Administrative Echelon

Solutions in three areas can help make programs that train educational leaders at the professional administrative level in Arab education more responsive to the needs of Arab schools and the labyrinthine administration in Israeli Arab society.

(1) Establishing an institute to develop Arab educational leadership. This institute would serve school principals, heads of local-authority education departments, senior educators, and middle-level managers in Arab education. It would combine theoretical and practical elements for developing leadership, tailored to the sociopolitical reality of the Arab school in Israel. The institute would enjoy autonomy in admissions and staff decisions. Implementing such an institution would require, as a first step, mobilizing support for the project from businesspeople in industry and hi-tech, from the Arab sector and from Israeli society as a whole.

(2) Adapting training programs in existing institutions to the profile and needs of Arab students of education. This would include a more thorough survey of and familiarity with the needs of Arab society and Arab schools in Israel, as part of the curriculum; more Arab researchers and educators on the faculties of teacher-training institutions; ongoing research and evaluation of changes and needs in Israeli Arab society and in Arab education so that the existing training programs can be modified dynamically; and efforts to make the process of attracting, screening, and accepting applicants more professional, while identifying the most promising candidates and focusing on their professional abilities. A committee could be set up to select suitable candidates from Arab schools, while providing appropriate representation to all localities and districts and defining clear and transparent standards.

(3) Developing ties with relevant new programs. A new concept is being developed in Israel for an institute of management known as IVN, involving the Education Ministry, the Rothschild Foundation, and a group of hi-tech industrialists. The institute would engage in developing and training educational administrators. It would include faculty members from the Arab sector and a department devoted to administration in the Arab education system in Israel.

In addition to these fields of action, two structural changes are recommended for Arab schools: first, creating clear and unambiguous promotion tracks, leading from classroom teaching to education administration in local government; second, expanding the authority of Arab school principals in pedagogical matters and in the hiring of teaching staff, in keeping with the school's vision.

3. Promoting parental and community involvement in the education process and education system in the Arab sector

Fostering parental and community involvement in the work of the Arab school must be based on a model of two-way communication and parental participation in the educational institution. In this model, parents are involved in various ways, starting from the basic levels of contributions and activities that are not directly related to the educational process (serving as chaperones on field trips, providing decorations, etc.), and at the most advanced levels including parents who teach after-school groups and workshops related to their own professions; parents who take part in conceptual planning, implementation, and evaluation; and regular joint forums in which parents play an active role in setting policy, making decisions, and implementing them (Harpaz and Stein, 1995; Freedman and Fischer, 2003).

To foster improvement in this area in Arab education in Israel, it is proposed to develop and implement a pilot project, the "Arab community school." The pilot would run in 10% of all Arab schools for two to three years. The decision to adopt the community-school model would be left to the individual institution. An Arab community school would make the three-way partnership of school, parents/community, and pupils the basis for effective quality education.

Based on the approach of shared authority and responsibility among all those involved in the education of the pupils, the Arab community school would institute programs that permit and in fact require partnership in decision-making at all stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation. The community school would serve as a meeting place for the entire community (including senior citizens, for example) after regular school hours, and function as an educational, social, and physical resource for the entire population.

The resources of the community school would be the teachers, the target population and community, the local authority, and the Education Ministry.

The Arab community school would provide an authentic expression of Arab culture and identity in a manner that would permit parents to express their own values and heritage in the curriculum.

This proposal would be implemented through a partnership with the local authorities and Arab civil-society organizations. An independent body should be established to promote the idea among Arabs in Israel and to train professional facilitators, similar to the Community Schools Administration of the Israel Association of Community Centers (formerly the Association to Promote Community Education).

4. Promoting a reading culture and fluency in Arabic

Dealing with the phenomenon of reading poverty and the underdeveloped reading culture of Arab society in Israel requires integrated action at two levels:

(1) On the macro level, the official and covert policy of the Education Ministry must change. Professional and public pressure must be exerted on the Education Ministry to invest resources and develop infrastructure that would encourage Arabs to read in Arabic. New public libraries must be established in Arab localities and in every Arab school. Special programs should be developed and operated by Arab-sector civil-society organizations to reinforce the ties between public libraries and the Arab community.

(2) At the local level, a flagship project would promote reading culture in a specific Arab locality and would serve as a model to be duplicated elsewhere.

The stages of this project would include: (1) identifying and analyzing the need for intervention in certain localities and selecting the pilot locality; (2) winning the support of the head of the education department in that locality; (3) mobilizing the support of school principals, parent committees, civil-society organizations, teachers, inspectors, prominent figures in the community, and well-to-do citizens in the town; (4) mobilizing local resources; (5) establishing an action team or community forum to promote the project in the locality; (6) publicizing the project objectives among parents, administrators and teachers, pupils, and the community as a whole; (7) evaluating the program and deciding to adopt it in other localities.

As part of the project, methods would be devised to encourage reading habits and change the consumption patterns of literature, in addition to training of teachers, principals, parents, inspectors, and pupils. Relevant texts in Arabic, which are linked to their cultural and community surroundings, would be distributed to pupils. The pupils would also receive extra classroom instruction in the Arabic language. There would be special events, such as story hours and reading hours in schools and community institutions, literary festivals and fairs.

5. The phenomenon of Arabs going abroad for university studies

Five measures are proposed for dealing with the complex implications of the large number of Arab students in Israel who pursue university studies abroad.

First, a thorough and up-to-date academic study of the issue is needed to provide fuller knowledge and a better understanding of the motives, content, and implications of studies at foreign universities for graduates of the Arab school system in Israel.

A guidance, counseling, and job-placement institution should be set up to help Arab students in Israel. It would provide services from high school until after the completion of academic studies and would study supply and demand both in higher education and in jobs for university graduates.

Arab students should be encouraged to attend recognized institutions that pose no problems of licensing and academic recognition by the Israeli establishment and to prefer advanced technological and biotechnological fields.

With regard to the job market for university-educated Arabs in Israel, official policy must be modified and the hiring of educated Arabs by different branches of the Israeli economy must be increased, by means of lobbying efforts and Knesset legislation.

At the same time, efforts are needed to encourage employment and cooperative commercial ventures that link the Arab population in Israel with the job and business markets in Jordan and other Arab countries, so that Arab university graduates from Israel can find work throughout the region.

The recommendations presented here include conceptual and practical measures at the macro level along with more focused actions, such as writing new content, establishing new institutions, and improving current programs.

The recommendations are a scaffolding on which an improved Arab educational system can be erected.

The recommendations are not devoid of obstacles or potential opposition. Entrenched institutionalized ideas, the traditional mentality of educators, and a shortage of resources are factors that could impede the implementation of the various recommendations. Nevertheless, precisely in a situation in which there are scant inputs, action in these selected niches and implementation of the recommended steps could maximize the use of resources available to the system in a way that would promote broader and more comprehensive change.

The following steps would contribute to the advancement of Arab education in Israel:

- ✂ Establishing a separate Arab Education Administration and Arab Pedagogical Council within the Education Ministry.
- ✂ Writing new educational content in history, Arabic, Hebrew, and Arab culture and identity, and introducing it to the Israeli education system and to the Arab system in particular.
- ✂ Establishing Arab schools for gifted pupils to foster educational and intellectual leadership.
- ✂ Running an official program of professional in-service courses for Arab teachers.
- ✂ Establishing an institute for training Arab educational leaders.
- ✂ Adopting the model of the Arab community school.
- ✂ Running local projects to promote an Arabic reading culture in Arab localities in Israel.
- ✂ Establishing a counseling institution that serves Israeli Arab high-school pupils and university students.

These steps would lead to a more faithful reflection of Israeli Arab identity and culture in Arab education; improve Arab pupils' ability to find their own identity in the educational process; reduce the dissatisfaction with Arab education felt by pupils, teachers, and parents; increase Arab pupils' outputs and achievements; enrich the reservoir of resources available to the Israeli Arab education system; and support greater integration of educated Arabs into the Israeli and regional labor markets.

7. Afterword

The members of the Working Group on the Advancement of Arab Education in Israel at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute believe that their insights and recommendations can serve as the basis for an overall strategic plan to improve the Arab education system in particular and the welfare of the Arab minority in Israel in general.

Because the group's work produced a relatively large number of proposals for action, a practical ordering of priorities is essential.

The first two areas that should receive strategic attention are:
1. Developing educational leadership among teachers in training, teachers, and education administrators.
2. Increasing parental and community involvement in the educational process.

The members of the working group see these two areas as offering the greatest potential for leveraging the Arab education system as a whole, while providing a solution to its complex needs. Further development of the practical dimension of the recommendations sketched here is certainly desirable.

It is very important to have talented educational leaders endowed with vision and a long-term perspective, who can spearhead the many decisions and changes required, while raising the level of their pupils' scholastic achievements so that they can find their place in Israeli social and economic life. Accordingly, it is proposed that, as a first step, resources be focused on establishing an institute to develop educational leadership and/or on the development of training programs for use in existing institutions.

At the same time, one of the most important factors in education is the extent to which parents are involved in their children's educational environment. Increasing parents' interest in all aspects of their children's lives would contribute greatly to raising pupils' expectations of themselves and to increasing their motivation to succeed in their studies. Augmenting parental involvement in Arab society would require a change in the work culture of Arab schools, openness to parents on the part of the administration, and the inclusion of parents as full partners. It is proposed to expand joint activity with the parents in Arab education. The initial efforts should be focused at the local level in several Arab localities, as a model for joint action between educators and parents.

We hope that the group's work and recommendations can serve policy-setters and decision-makers in the Israeli education establishment, as well as Arab educators, in their pursuit of improvement of the Arab education system in Israel, to the benefit of all those involved.

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