SPARKING
DIALOGUE
ON EDUCATION
PROGRAM
REPORT
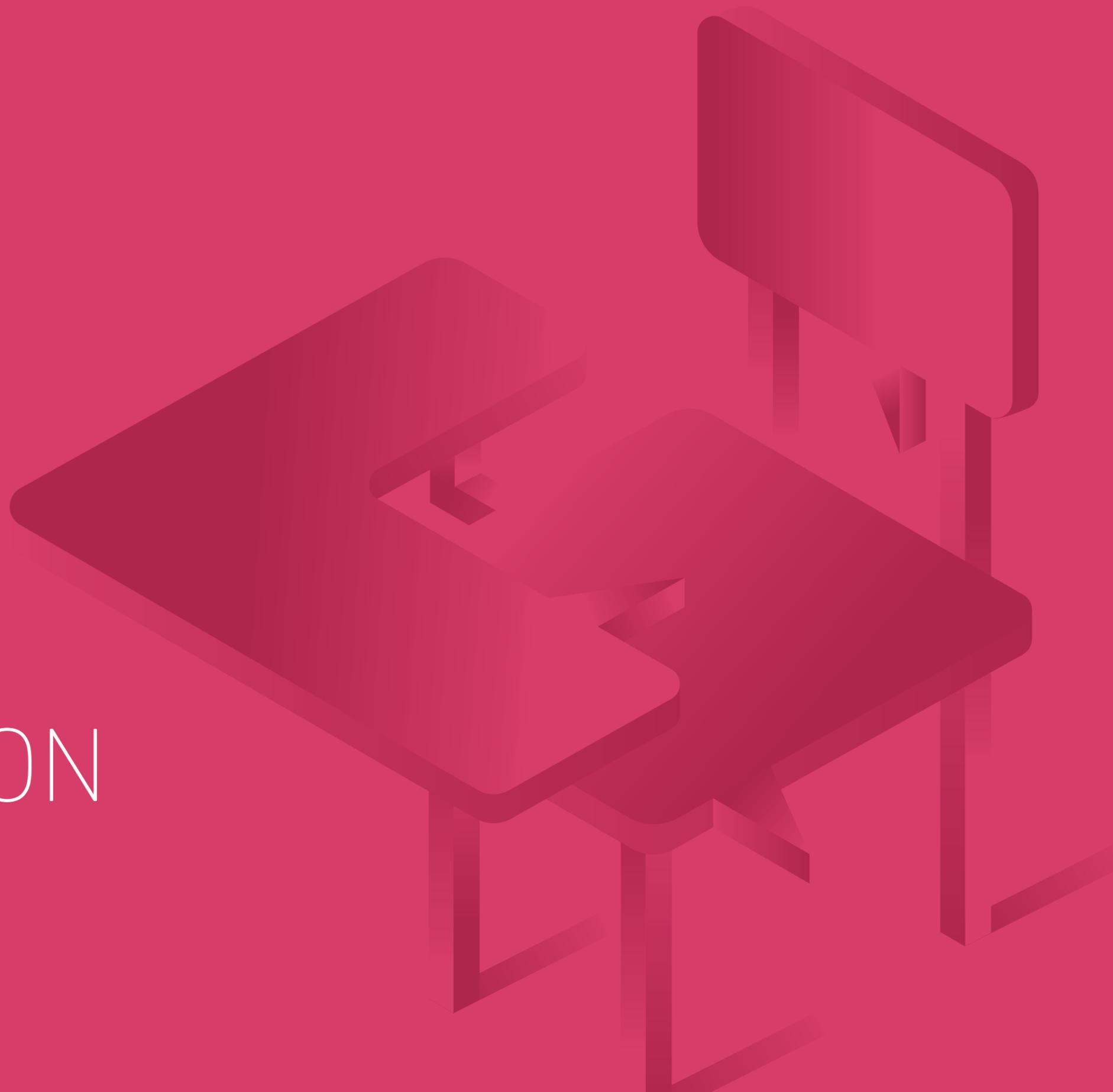
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In April 2018, HQSF concluded its innovative program **"Sparking Dialogue on Education"**. The program brought together stakeholders from the field of education in Palestine for a dialogue, in view of arriving at a common vision of the education that is aspired to in Palestine.

The program drew its inspiration from the Finnish education model, which relies on dialogue as the core of ongoing education reform. HQSF enlisted the services of OEP, a Finnish education consulting company specializing in supporting private and public sector entities in building quality education systems, to design a program based on dialogue, adapted to the Palestinian context, and highlighting some of the key concepts and trends in education today.

This report will outline the program phases, starting with the study visit to Finland to give participants a first-hand experience of the top-ranking education system, followed by a series of workshops in Palestine, each centered around a core theme. Workshops were largely interactive including food-for-thought presentations, breakout sessions and a variety of engaging techniques and exercises. A closing ceremony marked the end of the program, highlighting its impact and announcing future steps to be taken by HQSF to consolidate impact.

Moreover, this report will highlight the positive impact of this unique, groundbreaking program, whether on the participants themselves, on their respective institutions, or the impact created by online discussions and interactions about the program on HQSF's social media platforms. In the spirit of the program, HQSF sought to include the largest number of stakeholders in the conversation, and utilized a variety of traditional and online communication channels to extend the circle of dialogue.

The program's fresh and novel approach and its immediate relevance to education in Palestine sparked the interest and excitement of a large number of people who expressed their support and encouragement for the program through various channels.

This report also looks at some of the challenges HQSF faced in designing and implementing the program, the main challenge being the logistical impossibility of including any participants from Gaza in the program, among other challenges.

Overall, the program fulfilled its objective of creating a dialogue around the education that is aspired to in Palestine, highlighting existing best practices and success stories and identifying key components of an education ecosystem capable of inspiring and empowering learners today.

INTRODUCTION

HQSF was founded in 2000 with the mission of supporting bright and promising young Palestinian students with access to education through scholarships for graduate and undergraduate studies. Over the past 18 years, HQSF has followed the trajectory of its alumni throughout their academic career and after graduation, and has become cognizant of the challenges they face as they enter the job market. It has become clear that there is a gap in terms of educational outcomes delivered by the Palestinian education system, and that students must be better equipped if they are to succeed and thrive in the 21st century. On this basis, HQSF REVISITED ITS CORE MISSION AND EXPANDED IT, SEEKING TO HELP IMPROVE AND SUPPORT THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AT VARIOUS LEVELS TO CREATE A GENERATION OF EDUCATED, DISRUPTIVE YOUTH CAPABLE OF SHAPING THE FUTURE OF PALESTINE.

Under its expanded vision, HQSF conducted an innovative new program entitled Sparking Dialogue on Education. The program brought together 25 Palestinian educators for a learning journey based on dialogue and exchange.

THE PROGRAM

The program preparation phase, which spanned over a year, started with looking at several top-ranking education systems worldwide. The Finnish education system was selected due to its high ranking which was achieved through an education reform process spanning several decades. HQSF commissioned Finnish education consultants to design a program inspired by the Finnish educational reform process – based on dialogue between all stakeholders and a commitment to ongoing reform – that would break down the silos of communication between various stakeholders across the Palestinian education ecosystem in order to arrive at a shared vision of the education that is aspired to in Palestine.

PROGRAM DESIGN

The first step in designing an effective program was to look at successful education systems on a global level in order to learn from their experience and the process they underwent to arrive at their current ranking. We selected Finland, one of the top-ranking educational systems in the world, as the inspiration for our program.

IN DESIGNING THIS PROGRAM, WE WERE INSPIRED BY THE FINNISH MODEL THAT BELIEVES IN DIALOGUE BETWEEN ALL STAKEHOLDERS – TEACHERS, PARENTS, PRINCIPALS, RESEARCHERS, AND GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL REPRESENTATIVES – AS THE CORE FOR POSITIVE CHANGE.

It was clear from the beginning that we were not interested in replicating or importing the Finnish education system as a ready-made model, which would be impossible and unsuccessful given the vastly different contexts of Finland and Palestine. Rather, our program sought to draw inspiration from the education reform process that Finland undertook, leading them from a very rigid and antiquated education model to an adaptive model that addresses the 21st century skills needed by students today and tomorrow.

HQSF enlisted the services of Finnish education consulting company Omnia Education Partnerships to design a program tailored to the needs of the Palestinian education context. OEP supports public and private education providers in building education ecosystems. They bring stakeholders together to work for quality education, using the tried and tested Finnish model as the cornerstones of their consultancy.

The assumptions that served as a basis to our approach is that what is lacking the Palestinian education system is a common vision of education shared by all stakeholders. This is due to a lack of communication and dialogue, as each group of stakeholders seems to be operating in a silo, focused on their specific context. In order to be able to formulate a common vision, what is needed is a dialogue between stakeholders. It is in this spirit that our flagship program, Sparking Dialogue on Education, was born.

PARTICIPANT SELECTION

In order to start a dialogue around education, HQSF aimed to select a diverse group of participants from across three main sectors: UNRWA schools, private schools, and educational organizations. Ideal candidates were educators who already embodied the spirit of creativity and innovation in education. Applications were sent out to educators working within the three main sectors mentioned above, asking participants to describe their work including one "best practice" that they use in their teaching or in running their organizations. The selection of the 25 core participants took into account the diversity of geographical distribution (North, South, Jerusalem, Ramallah...) as well as diversity in roles (teachers, principals, University professors and educational organization representatives).

The 25 program participants are:

From UNRWA schools:

Amal Abu Harb
Principal at Nur Shams Basic Girls School
Nur Shams Refugee Camp, Area A, Palestine

Hasan Alatrash
Deputy School Principal at Arroub Basic Boys School No.1*
Hebron, West Bank, Palestine
* During the program, Mr. Alatrash was promoted to Acting Principal at Ramadin Basic Co-Ed School, Hebron

Reman Said Afghani Abu Leil
English Teacher at Jerusalem Basic Boys School
Jerusalem, Palestine

Suheir M. Dumati
English Teacher at Qalqilia Basic Girls' School
Qalqilia, Palestine

Siryeh Fdeilat
English Teacher at Fawwar Basic Girls School No.1
Hebron, Palestine

Naela Rashad Haj Hussein
Computer & Tech Teacher at Askar Basic Girls School No. 3
Nablus, Palestine

Muneer Jawabreh
Math Teacher at Al-Arroub School for Boys
Al-Arroub Refugee Camp, Hebron, Palestine
Hebron, Palestine

From private schools:

Hadeel Jamil Ahmad
English Teacher at Saint Joseph's School
Nablus, Palestine

Jehan Al Tamimi
Principal at Alnokhba Private School
Hebron, Palestine

Fidaa Al-Azzeh
English Teacher at Alnokhba Private School
Hebron, Palestine

Samer Hasarmeh
Principal of Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Private Schools
Ramallah, Palestine

Jamil Khalil
Physics and Math teacher at Saint Joseph School
Ramallah, Palestine

Raeda Mansour
High School Science and Technology Teacher
Nablus, Palestine

Dania Samer
Head of Science and Technology Department at Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Private Schools
Ramallah, Palestine

Mohammad Shawamreh
Physics Teacher at the Arab Institute
Abu Deis, Jerusalem Suburbs, Palestine

Giovanni Anbar
Head of Vocational Education and Training Center
Ramallah, Palestine

Riham Hidmi Najjar
English Science Teacher at Dar Al-Tifel School
Jerusalem, Palestine

Iyad Rafidi
Director of the Arab Evangelical Episcopal School
Ramallah, Palestine

Suhaib Zeid
Science & Computer Science Teacher
Ramallah, Palestine

From higher education:

Dr. Ahmad Aljanazrah
Dean of the Faculty of Education at Birzeit University
Birzeit, West Bank, Palestine

Osama Abu Baha
Lecturer of English Language and Literature at University College of Educational Sciences (UNRWA)
Ramallah, Palestine

Dr. Alia Assali
Dean of the Faculty of Educational Sciences and Teacher Training at An-Najah National University
Nablus, West Bank, Palestine

Rola Omar Darwish
Lecturer at University College of Educational Sciences (UNRWA)
Ramallah, Palestine

From educational organizations:

Eng. Aref Husseini
Founder, Al-Nayzak for Supportive Learning and Scientific Innovation
Nablus, Palestine

Ala' A. Turshan
Education Program Manager at Taawon
Ramallah, Palestine

PROGRAM PHASES

FINLAND TRIP

Sparking Dialogue on Education started with a 5-day study visit to Finland. This trip was carefully designed in consultation with OEP to provide participants with the maximum level of insight into the Finnish education experience through a combination of lectures by experts, interactive activities and field visits to schools and institutions. The Finland trip included the main key activities:

1. Visit to Heureka Science Museum

Objective: expose participants to interactive learning of science through the many hands-on exhibits at the museum.

2. Walking tour of Helsinki

Objective: familiarize participants with the historical and cultural context of Finland to gain greater insight into how this affects the Finnish view of education.

3. Overview of Finnish Education

Objective: learn about the reform process that Finnish education underwent starting in the 1970s which resulted in today's top-ranking system. Learn about the basics of Finnish education including division of school years, academic vs vocational tracks, teacher training, etc.

4. Icebreaker activities

Objective: for participants to introduce themselves and get to know one another in order to create a cohesive team spirit within the group.

5. Visit to Etela Tapiolan high school

Objective: to see first-hand one of the top-ranking high schools in all of Finland that offers the IB system (in English) as well as the Finnish national curriculum. Participants were met by the principal who gave them an overview of the school, its philosophy and some of its key successes. Participants then had a tour of the facilities and were able to see classes and interact with students.

6. Visit to Omnia Vocational Institute

Objective: to learn about vocational education in general and its place within the Finnish system, through a talk by the general director as well as a tour of the facilities.

7. Visit to Espoo International School

Objective: to visit a primary (K-9) school where the curriculum is taught in English, and learn about a new open model of school where facilities such as the library, gym and auditorium are open to the community after school hours.

8. Visit to Helsinki University Education Department

Objective: to learn about teacher training in Finland. Participants learned, among other things, that admissions to the Education Department are very selective, even taking into account a psychological assessment of the candidate, and that all teachers in Finland must have a Master's degree. These are just a few of the reasons why the teaching profession is so highly valued and regarded in Finland.

9. Hackathon

Objective: to encourage participants to brainstorm ideas about "the type of education we want to see in Palestine" without being limited to traditional thinking or to the idea of right/wrong answers.

WORKSHOPS

After the trip to Finland, Sparking Dialogue on Education proceeded with a series of five thematic dialogue activities, all held in Ramallah, Palestine. The core participants as well as additional guests from the Palestinian education ecosystem attended the workshops. Each workshop spanned three days, beginning at lunchtime on a Tuesday and ending early Thursday afternoon, to allow participants who live far from Ramallah the time to travel within the same day. The last workshop took on a slightly different format, spanning one full day, followed by a free day for preparations for the program closing ceremony on the third day. The workshops were as follows:

- **The Education Ecosystem: Jan 30 – Feb 01, facilitated by Mervi Jansson, Anna Helenius and Bob Karlsson.**
  Objective: To encourage participants to look at the bigger picture around education, and all the elements that comprise the education ecosystem on a school, regional and national level.

- **Leadership: Feb 20-22, facilitated by Anna Helenius and Leena Pontynen.**
  Objective: To invite participants to imagine their dream school in Palestine in 2025 and make a concrete plan for how to get there. To underscore the importance of defining a school's values and mission, and then setting a concrete development plan to achieve the mission.

- **The Teacher: March 20-22, facilitated by Anna Helenius and Bob Karlsson.**
  Objective: To redefine the role of the teacher in light of our rapidly evolving world, and explore the notion of a growth mindset and how to instill it in today's students, as well as how to reinforce 21st century competencies.

- **The Learning Environment: April 3-5, facilitated by Anna Helenius and Dr. Teemu Leinonen.**
  Objective: To inspire participants to design their ideal learning environment based on clear pedagogical objectives. To think about the importance of the social and psychological learning environment within a school.

- **Reform: April 24, facilitated by Anna Helenius and Dr. Teemu Leinonen.**
  Objective: To empower participants with the necessary tools to implement positive change through looking at the theory of complex change. To draft the program declaration outlining the vision and recommendations for furthering education in Palestine.

WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

The workshops introduced participants to a range of fascinating theories and concepts that are relevant to education today. As workshops were conducted in an interactive way, participants also experienced first-hand many interesting techniques that can be applied in their own learning environments. This in addition to discussions of many core topics related to education and to the Palestinian context.

THEORIES AND CONCEPTS

Frugal Innovation
The Harvard Business review defines frugal innovation as a way of "seeing resource constraints not as a liability but as an opportunity." Examples of resource constraints in the educational context can be working within a rigid, imposed system, or working with limited financial and material resources. The idea is that these types of challenges should spark a creative impulse in the educators to work around the issues.

Visible Learning
Visible Learning means an enhanced role for teachers as they become evaluators of their own teaching. According to John Hattie, Visible Learning and Teaching occurs when teachers see learning through the eyes of students and help them become their own teachers.

Leadership vs. Management
In a school it is important to distinguish between two types of tasks. Management tasks usually relate to things like filling in forms, paperwork, administrative tasks, "leading things". Leadership tasks usually relate to things like setting a school vision, inspiring staff, "leading people". Pedagogical leadership combines elements of both.

The Golden Circle
A way of looking at teaching a specific concept. The center of the circle is "why", followed by "how" and then "what".
For example:
- Why should they learn percentage calculation?
- How should they learn it?
- What is relevant to them?

Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives
One of the most widely used ways of organizing levels of expertise. It describes 6 different levels of expertise: Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis and Evaluation.

Growth Mindset vs Fixed Mindset
A person with a fixed mindset believes that certain things like intelligence and talent are predetermined, whereas a person with a growth mindset believes that these things can be improved with discipline and practice.

The 6 C's
These are considered to be the core 21st century skills, and they are Collaboration, Citizenship, Creativity, Critical Thinking, Communication and Character Education.

Tiina Mäkelä's framework
Describes the physical school environment in terms of balance between 3 pairs of elements: Individuality vs. Communality, Comfort vs. Health, Conventionality vs. Novelty.

Three Metaphors of Learning
The first is learning as knowledge acquisition, which is an individual process. Then there is learning as participation, in the sense that learning is a socio-cultural process. And thirdly, there is learning as knowledge creation, intentionally producing materials and artefacts. The three metaphors work together and are all needed at the same time; it's important for teachers to strike a balance between all three.

Metamedia
Is the use of digital tools in media creation and has 3 basic characteristics:
It imitate all the earlier forms of media (such as podcasts imitating radio, YouTube imitating TV, etc.)
It can be programmed and run algorithms
It remembers everything and is ubiquitous

Top-down vs. bottom-up theory of change
The idea that change can either be an idea that imposed from officials and authorities, or instead emerge as a grassroots movement from the bottom up. The ideal change process combines both these approaches.

Theory of complex change
This theory states that there are five components one needs to work on at the same time to effectively achieve change: vision, skills, incentives, resources and action plan. All are equally important and if one is missing, change is not possible.

TECHNIQUES

Greeting Circle
An icebreaker activity for workshops or classes, where all participants gather in a circle, and the facilitator asks a question. Each participant in turn answers the question. This helps foster a group spirit and gives everyone the chance to speak and be heard, as well as learn something new about other participants.

Observers
Selecting specific individuals to record their observations of a specific activity or workshop, in order to share these observations at the end.

Speed dating
A way to share ideas among a group of people. Each two people pair up, share their ideas with each other, and then after a beep, they switch to new partners. In this way, many different pairs can be made and ideas are shared quickly and concisely.

Gallery walk
A way of showcasing individual work. Each person hangs their work on a wall or display area, other people in the group walk through and read each display, and if they like it, they can sign their name on it.

Mind map
A diagram used to visually organize information. It shows relationships among pieces of a whole, and usually focuses on a core concept placed at the center of a page. Other ideas and terms are then connected to the central concept.

I promise
A way to help individuals commit to carrying out a certain tangible task. Each person is given a sheet of paper with "I promise" written at the top, they fill it out with a concrete action that they want to undertake, and then discuss it with a partner. After the allotted time period, they meet again with the partner to discuss the progress they made. The exercise helps create focus on a single task, and helps foster accountability.

Digital tools
Digital tools were used both as a workshop technique as well as to demonstrate their usage and encourage participants to use them in their own schools and classrooms as valuable teaching tools.

- **Kahoot.it:** a game-based learning and trivia platform that can be used in classrooms or any other setting. The facilitator creates engaging quizzes on any topic, and then participants all log in and play simultaneously. The App automatically calculates results and displays the answers, creating a high-energy, fun learning experience.
- **Menti.com:** an online, cloud-based solution that allows for real-time engagement and audience participation. It is a polling tool where you set certain questions, and the audience enters their input using a mobile device or other device. Menti then compiles the results and displays them on a central screen.
- **Padlet:** an online platform for collaborative projects where group members can upload content, photos etc..
- **Seppo:** an online educational game where players are divided into groups and given different tasks and questions that take them on a journey to different locations. The game promotes a variety of skills: technology, navigating using GPS, getting to know our surroundings, taking the learning experience beyond the four walls of the classroom into the reals world, etc.

Workshop workbook
A workbook created specially for a specific workshops with special forms for each activity, allowing participants to fill out their own workbooks and have a hard copy of their own thoughts at the end.

Group work

Facilitators may use a variety of fun ways to divide participants into groups. This allows participants to interact with the learning process, move around the room, let off steam and work with new sets of people. Methods of dividing into groups include: Distributing cards with a picture of a family member (mom, dad, boy, girl) to all participants and then asking them to create "families" comprised of four members each. Distributing Legos of different colors and asking participants to group themselves by color.

Yes, and...

A structured discussion technique designed to encourage positive thinking. Participants split into pairs, and the first person makes a statement, to which the second person responds with "Yes, and..." building in a positive way on what was said. This is a good way to counter the natural tendency of saying "No, but..."

Fishbowl discussion

A way of organizing a group discussion. An inner circle is arranged with 4 seats (for example), 3 seats are filled and 1 remains empty. The rest of the discussion participants sit in a larger circle around the center. The 3 inner participants start the discussion, while the outer participants simply observe and listen. If one of the outer participants wishes to join the discussion, he/she sits in the empty chair, at which point one of the 3 active participants move to the outer circle. In this way, there is always one chair empty. The goal of the fishbowl technique is to create a focused discussion and allow space for participants to simply listen.

Learning café

A method for sharing and discussing ideas where several stations are set up, each with a group of participants. The facilitator gives a question or discussion topic, and each group takes some time to share amongst themselves about the topic. After a certain time, the facilitator gives a signal, and one participant remains at the station, while the rest move on to a different one. The remaining participant explains to the newcomers what was discussed previously, and then they build further on those ideas. Key ideas and messages are written on a flipchart for final sharing between all participants. Learning café is an easy-to-use method of creating powerful collaborative dialogue around significant questions.

Hackathon

A hackathon is a brainstorming exercise where participants are asked to come up with as many ideas/solutions about a specific issue or topic as they can. It is a highly creative process and there are no right or wrong answers.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Transversal competencies: Participants discussed the competencies needed in education in Palestine today. Some of the key ideas were the need for skills-based learning, cultural competence, self-expression and public speaking, multiliteracy (the ability to assimilate meaning from a variety of mediums such as the internet and digital media, not just books), and the need to embrace technology in the classroom, rather than prohibit its use.

What is the purpose of school? This simple yet highly relevant question stimulated a lot of discussion among participants. After working in groups, the general idea is that the purpose of school is to help prepare students to thrive in the 21st century. There was a discussion about what's more important in school, learning knowledge, or learning how to analyze it and think critically about it. Some participants embraced the argument that the two cannot be separated and are equally important. They also talked about the skills and competencies needed in schools. One guest pointed out that dialogue, emotional intelligence and how to be human are missing from the competencies that our schools focus on.

What is the role of the teacher? Participants were invited to complete the sentence "The role of the teacher is to..." without using the verb to teach. This allowed them to rethink the role of the teacher in light of today's needs. Participants reflected this shift in the teacher's role through selecting verbs like facilitate, support, monitor, help and lead.

Education Ecosystem: all the components that make up the ecosystem of a certain school or institution, including parents, students, teachers, government entities, clubs and NGOs. It is important to recognize these elements and work to build bridges, partnerships and trust between stakeholders.

School bullying: Participants discussed the topic of school bullying under their discussion of the psychological and emotional learning environment within a school. They discussed incidents they had dealt with and ways of preventing cyber bullying. This led to a discussion of the use of digital devices, and whether this is positive or negative. There was an idea that teaching children how to navigate online is similar to teaching them how to navigate in a big city: they need to learn how to deal with all types of situations that may arise, so that they can gain all the benefits that these tools have to offer.

Schools in 2025: Participants talked about schools in the future, and what they would like to keep versus what they would like to change in current schools. There was a lot of emphasis on creating movable classrooms that are designed in a flexible way with different areas and comfortable furniture. Some participants discussed the need for moving towards more digital/online activities, although the interactive white boards may not be the best use of resources which should instead be spent on LCDs and projectors. There was also the idea of moving away from heavy homework loads and rigid, demanding exams, as well as increasing involvement from parents and community.

Fixed mindset versus growth mindset:
Participants discusses two questions, Do you believe it is possible to switch from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset? And if so, how can you help your students make the shift? During the discussion, participants talked about the importance of moving beyond the concept of "right or wrong answer" and their fear of failure or of disappointing the teacher, as these things ultimately don't allow them to grow and evolve as learners. The facilitator reminded participants that that the things they say as teachers have a lot of power over the students. So instead of saying "you don't know how to do this" we should say "you don't know how to do this yet". This empowers students to believe in their ability to change and grow as part of the growth mindset.

Individual competence plans: participants were asked to assess themselves by listing their own strengths, areas for improvement and how to improve. They did this across 4 major areas: pedagogical competence, classroom management, assessment, work culture and development. Participants then discussed this process as a group. They shared that this process takes a lot of honesty with oneself and it can be quite vulnerable. Some participants appreciated the chance to think about themselves in an objective way and take the time to write a plan for improvement. Because the plan also creates an obligation, it's important to write down when you will try to improve certain areas, to diminish the sense of burden.

CLOSING CEREMONY AND PROGRAM DECLARATION

CLOSING CEREMONY

As a fitting conclusion to HQSF's first program of its kind, we decided to mark the occasion with an elegant and well-designed closing ceremony. The closing ceremony would serve several purposes:

- Looking back over HQSF's 17 years of service to education in Palestine via the scholarship program including presenting statistics about the scholarship alumni.
- Sharing the highlights of Sparking Dialogue on Education as well as the perceived impact of this program.
- Sharing participants' experience of the program and key takeaways through a moderated panel discussion.

- Making an important announcement: HQSF is now evolving into Khutwa, an organization with a broader scope dedicated to promoting lifelong learning in Palestine.
- Sharing the Program Declaration drafted by the participants.

In order to manage an event of this magnitude, HQSF enlisted the services of an event management company to be in charge of the myriad logistical details involved. HQSF was also supported by its community of alumni who participated in the closing ceremony in a variety of capacities: 2 alumni served as MCs, an alumnus who is an animated film designer prepared a video sketch of the program's impact, alumni helped with the ceremony serving as hosts and ushers, etc. All HQSF partners participated in the planning and execution of the closing ceremony, requiring countless hours of meetings, exchanges and effort in order to ensure that all the elements and deliverables of the ceremony were flawless.

In the spirit of the program, which aimed at creating engagement among all stakeholders, the closing ceremony was broadcast live, via Facebook live streaming. HQSF also issued invitations to a number of esteemed educators and colleagues connected to the Palestinian education ecosystem.

The closing ceremony included the following:

1. Introductory remarks by Rana Diab, HQSF Executive Director. Describing the program rationale, thanking all those involved in making it a success, as well as highlighting the achievements of the scholarship program.
2. Overview of the program by Mervi Jansson from OEP. A detailed look at how the program was designed and why the 5 themes were selected.
3. Impact sketch video: an animated video created by an HQSF alumnus. An illustration of the impact of the program on participants themselves, within their organizations, and within the larger public.
4. Panel discussion with 5 program participants, hosted by Lubna Touqan, Director of the Association of Queen Rania al-Abdullah Award for Excellence in Education. Discussion of the importance of dialogue within the education community and some of the key takeaways of the participants.
5. Video sequence of the entire program. A compilation of highlights starting with the preparation phase, Finland trip and workshops.
6. Message from Dr. Nabil Qaddumi, HQSF Chairman. Announcement that HQSF would be evolving into Khutwa, an organization with a broader scope, with the scholarship program remaining one of its supportive pillars.

PROGRAM DECLARATION

After going through the entire program, participants were empowered with the tools needed to implement positive change on the ground. As a first step towards this, they worked together to draft a vision for education in Palestine:

"EDUCATION IN PALESTINE THAT IS INSPIRING, HIGH QUALITY AND LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY CONNECTED"

They also drafted a Program Declaration, which included key recommendations for furthering education in Palestine for all stakeholders. The Program Declaration was unveiled at the closing ceremony as well as being published online in the form of a petition, inviting those who agree to show their support by signing it. The Program Declaration is as follows:

For all Palestinians
• Value and respect the teaching profession and the work done in schools.
• Get involved and support your local school.
• Foster dialogue on education in your social circles.

For parents
• Take an interest in your children's education.
• Get familiar with your children's educational objectives.
• Join your school parent-teacher associations.

For teachers
• Inspire and motivate your students to learn and develop.
• Make learning meaningful.
• Create safe, enjoyable and diverse learning environments.
• Continue to grow through ongoing professional development.

For schools

- Build leadership teams at school for shared leadership and decision-making.
- Build partnerships with other schools and organizations.
- Promote the use of different learning spaces creatively and effectively to expand learning opportunities.
- Trust, respect and empower your teachers.
- Recognize the different needs and abilities of every student.
- Make your school's vision, mission and values visible online.

For educational organizations

- Coordinate a common plan for supporting high quality education in Palestine.
- Raise awareness about the change needed in education.
- Support schools in creating safe, stimulating and enjoyable learning environments.
- Support and empower educators to make their vision come true.
- Bridge the gaps between teachers' practical needs and teacher education programs.
- Create opportunities for piloting new and innovative educational models.

For the Ministry of Education

- Foster dialogue with all stakeholders on the future of education and curriculum design.
- Consider various potential school material publishers that follow the national guidelines.
- Provide up-to-date information about Palestinian education: goals, statistics, facts, etc.
- Adopt well-designed standards in accepting students for educational careers and in hiring teachers.
- Support and invest in the teaching profession.

IMPACT OF THE PROGRAM

Although the long-term impact of the program will become evident over time as the new ideas and knowledge are translated into practice, certain immediate and tangible effects were recorded at the level of participants, their schools and institutions, as well as the public at large. Best practices and new knowledge were shared among participants and within their education ecosystems, creating a ripple effect beyond the immediate scope of the program.

IMPACT

Dialogue was at the heart of the program, and it served its purpose in that it brought the participants closer, created a sense of team work, and opened up constructive discussions about ways to enhance learning and create acceptance of other people's views and perspectives.

The goal was for everyone to sit together to have conversations, exchange ideas and experiences, and foster a sense of commitment and responsibility towards education; and indeed, this is what happened during the program between the participants.

1. Common Vision

Through dialogue and discussion, participants arrived at a common vision of education that is in line with today's world and the skills that youth need to thrive in this world.

2. Sharing best practices and ideas

The program has had a significant impact in terms of participants sharing their best practices and new ideas with their colleagues and schools. In this way, the dialogue encompassed a much wider circle than the core 25 participants, with an impact on students, other teachers, parents and school management.

3. Change that stems from reality

The program underscored the idea that change stems from reality and responds to reality, and can be achieved using simple means and tools. The participants exemplified this through the best practices that they applied within their schools and institutions during the program period.

4. Change is an ongoing process

The program has been able to emphasize the idea that the education we aspire to requires ongoing change, because when we feel satisfied then we have stopped developing, and education needs to be developed all the time to respond to the world of today and tomorrow.

5. Partnerships and connections between different stakeholders in education

The program led to partnerships between different stakeholders in the education system, such as a partnership between a teacher and a private company, or between HQSF and a professional learning initiative. It also shed light on existing partnerships between different education stakeholders in Palestine. This represents a model of how future partnerships can be forged among stakeholders, as partnerships are one of the keys to creating an empowering ecosystem.

6. A dynamic exchange around education in Palestine

The program was able to create a dynamic around education in Palestine: its reality and its future. As the participants discussed different themes in the workshops, people in schools, institutions and and on social media sites also joined in the discussion.

BEST PRACTICES

During the workshops, participants had the opportunity to present one of their "best practices" that they use in their classroom or in running their institutions. They shared something that works already, and that can easily be replicated and scaled in other contexts.
Some participants used techniques or theories learnt from the program workshops within their schools and organizations, such as the Gallery Walk to create an interactive learning experience, or applying the "Khutwa Effect" to a variety of different levels at the school.

Other participants looked at the challenges they face and came up with creative solutions inspired by the Frugal Innovation concept to help their students and overcome these challenges, such as using discarded material to make artwork and practical objects, thus combining creative activities with caring for the environment.

Participants focused on improving the learning outcomes of the students in simple yet effective ways, using for example the Jigsaw technique, where the class solves a larger problem by breaking down into groups to work on each part of the "puzzle"; or project-based learning to look at issues such as water wastage. Another example of Frugal Innovation in practice was one teacher who set the laws of Physics to the tune of popular songs to make them easier to memorize.

In line with promoting 21st century skills among students, one participant encouraged civic engagement through a student-driven volunteer program, while another focused on critical thinking and creativity by using a STEM approach in her class. In another school, students have access to a robotics lab which encourages critical thinking and technology skills. In a direct application of new techniques learned during the program workshops, one participant used the kahoot.it app to create a fun math quiz for his students.

In the spirit of collaboration and building partnerships that was emphasized during the program, one participant created a partnership with an e-book company to introduce digital textbooks at her school.

OUTREACH

Since the program was primarily based on dialogue, HQSF sought to invite engagement from as broad an audience as possible, extending beyond the confines of the program events and reaching stakeholders in the community at large (students, educators, parents, policy makers, etc.) In order to achieve this, it was necessary for the program to be shared and broadcast in real time. To this end, a variety of communication channels were leveraged to reach as many target audiences as possible, including:

1. Social media:
HQSF devised a social media plan including optimal times to post on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Social media posts were varied, including posts announcing the start of each program event, highlights, photo albums and videos for each day of the events, tweets of key ideas and important resources, etc. Posting was done in both English and Arabic to include more people in the conversation both within Palestine and abroad. This was very effective and HQSF social media pages registered a high level of traffic, comments, likes, etc. especially during the real time sharing of program events.

2. Printed material:
a range of physical materials communicating information about the program.

3. Video:
videos were produced on a regular and real time basis documenting the content of the program. To this end, HQSF enlisted the services of a professional videography company and a videographer was present at all times during program events. The videos conveyed the spirit of the program, and brought the public closer to what was happening in the workshops, creating engagement and a sense of excitement about the program's progress.

4. Press releases:
HQSF periodically issued press releases for publication in traditional media outlets to reach an audience that may not be connected to social media.

5. Informative E-mail ads:
periodic informative e-mail ads were sent out to the HQSF list serve of alumni, partners, and supporters, as an additional way to reach people who may not be on social media.

MAIN PARTNERS

Sparking Dialogue on Education was made possible thanks to a huge collaborative effort between a group of key partners, each providing labor and expertise to cover a specific aspect of the program logistics. The partners include

1. **Program design and implementation**
   Omnia Education Partnerships-Finland provided core technical support by designing the program and facilitating the workshops. The workshop facilitators from OEP were as follows:
   - Mervi Jansson, CEO of OEP
   - Annal Helenius, K-12 Programs Manager at OEP
   - Bob Karlsson, Finnish education reform expert
   - Leena Pointenyn, Senior Advisor at the Finnish Local and Regional Authorities
   - Teemu Leinonyn, Associate Professor of New Media Design and Learning at the Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture

2. **Project management company**
   Process&Smith was in charge of organizing the workflow and key processes involved in running the program.

3. **Translation and content creation**
   Tarjama created written material for the program in both languages such as web content, social media posts, materials for workshops and reports/reflections.

4. **Branding**
   Syntax designed all the new branding elements for Sparking Dialogue on Education including logo, visual supports, goodies, etc.

5. **Videography/photography**
   Media specialists provided documentation by a photographer and videographer and created final deliverables in the form of summary videos and high quality photos.

6. **Social media**
   Khaled Al Ahmad, a social media expert, supported the program by guiding the social media plan including best timing and content for posts on HQSF's different social media platforms.

7. **Event planning**
   Pinnacle covered the program design and all logistic needs for the closing ceremony including sound, lighting, physical layout, etc.

PROGRAM CHALLENGES

It is expected that a program of this scope would encounter certain challenges, especially given the socio-political context of Palestine, but also in terms of a few unexpected issues related to logistics or participants that arose throughout the program. One of the key challenges in terms of participant selection was that it was logistically impossible to include participants from Gaza, as they would not be able to travel to Ramallah to attend the workshops. HQSF instead focused on selecting participants from a broad geographical distribution from the West Bank.

Another logistical issue that was encountered during program implementation was that core HQSF team members and other partners were unable to travel to Ramallah because as Jordanian citizens, they don't have entry access to Palestine. HQSF addressed this constraint in two ways, one was enabling team members to work remotely via live broadcasting of the workshops, and the other was enlisting the help of locally-based talent especially by tapping into the HQSF alumni community.

In terms of inclusivity of all stakeholders in the Palestinian education ecosystem in the dialogue, this was unfortunately not realized at the level of this program. In this regard, participation was limited to stakeholders from private and UNRWA schools as well as educational organizations.

Occasionally, participants were unable to attend a portion of the program workshops, usually due to work constraints or in a few cases family issues such as illness. HQSF adopted a flexible approach in this regard, giving participants the freedom needed to attend to these urgent matters, before rejoining the workshop as soon as circumstances allowed.

Overall HQSF adapted to the challenges faced, finding solutions or ways around key issues in order to deliver a smooth and successful program.

CONCLUSION

It is our assessment that Sparking Dialogue on Education fulfilled its core objective of creating a dialogue among stakeholders about the kind of education we aspire to in Palestine. In reality, HQSF did not expect specific outcomes from the program, as these outcomes would be determined by the participants themselves through a journey of discovery. Based on participant feedback,

THE PROGRAM WAS INCREDIBLY INSPIRING, WITH MANY DESCRIBING IT AS LIFE-CHANGING.

Participants came from diverse backgrounds and levels of experience, and it is clear that each of them was enriched and empowered by the program in their own individual way. The fact that the program was held intensively over several months added to the momentum and energy level created around its core mission. Participants came away with an even deeper sense of engagement and responsibility towards education in Palestine, as well as new tools and knowledge to apply on the ground. The work laid out for them is to implement all that they have learned to create positive change within their education ecosystems. As one participant put it, "the program is over, and now the real work begins."

In this way,

THE PROGRAM CREATED A CORE GROUP OF COMMITTED EDUCATORS WHO WILL WORK TOGETHER, IN TANDEM WITH HQSF, TO SUPPORT AND FURTHER EDUCATION IN PALESTINE ON A LARGER SCALE.

HQSF remains firmly committed to building upon the momentum created by Sparking Dialogue on Education, and will do so under the auspices of the newly created organization Khutwa. It is our hope that this program can serve as a model and a blueprint for similar programs in the future, to involve an even larger number of Palestinian educators and create lasting impact within the education system.

THANK YOU!