



# Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

*Revised version, April 2007.*

## Principles and general objectives of education

Education is the ideal means for preparing the workforce needed for the development of the society. It must correspond to its demands, help to solve its problems and enable it to take on its responsibilities. As stated in the Constitutional Declaration (1969), “education is a right and a duty for all Libyan citizens, it is free and compulsory until the end of the preparatory level, and the State is responsible for building and establishing schools, institutes, universities and educational and cultural foundations.”

The education system has its roots in the deep faith of Islam and in the unity of the Arab world. The development and changing of the education and training system should be in harmony with the principles of the revolution, which are freedom, socialism and unity. On the other hand, the education system must reflect the rapid development of society, for example in giving up some notions that used to restrict women’s access to education.

## Current educational priorities and concerns

The Advisory Committee for Educational and Training Planning has suggested a number of goals to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century:

At the basic education level, students should acquire three fundamental skills, i.e. reading, writing and numeracy. They should acquire knowledge concerning cultural heritage, history, geography, capabilities and problems of the Arabic Libyan society in particular, and of the larger Arabic nation in general. They should learn love of and loyalty to the Homeland, be supplied with a suitable religious culture, build their physical and psychological health, and wisely exploit their time.

At the secondary level, the main goals are to assist students in developing a religious and comprehensive moral philosophy to guide their behaviour and ability for logical thinking and objective criticism, as well as furthering the goals fixed for the basic education level.

At the higher education level, the goals are: to train students to follow good religious moral principles, believe in the Arabic nation’s superiority among the nations of the world and be equipped with knowledge and a wide-ranging culture; to discover and encourage the creative, scientific and research capabilities of students and enable them to acquire the necessary skills; to fulfil the society’s need for an educated and well-trained workforce in various fields of development; to achieve scientific and cultural advancement and develop modern sciences and technologies; to take part in strengthening Libya’s scientific, cultural and research relationship with the different countries of the world; to serve the Arabic Libyan society by participating in the restoration and renewal of its heritage and strengthening its Arabic



and Islamic identity; and to achieve its cultural, social, economic and military security, and increase productivity.

Since 1980, the education system has witnessed many changes and transformations. A new educational structure was implemented at the basic and intermediate levels. The curriculum has been reviewed, and there have been innovations in the non-formal sector.

In the 1990s, the curricula for basic and secondary education were reviewed. The subjects of science and mathematics were revised to stay in line with recent technical and scientific developments, and new subjects were added at the basic level, such as technology. Social sciences and humanities were also developed, with special emphasis on Arabic language and Islamic education. English instruction now starts from the seventh grade. These developments took place gradually, starting with first, second and third grades of basic education. Between 1998 and 2001, the new curricula for the fourth, fifth and sixth grades were implemented.

Furthermore, home education in Libya is considered to be a new type of basic education whereby children are taught through the television under the supervision of the family. A special satellite channel was established for home education. Home education is being studied by educational experts and local, regional, and international organizations that are concerned with educational innovation.

In the past, secondary education in Lybia was divided into two sectors: the academic sector (arts and science), and vocational and technical education (agricultural, industrial, commercial, and administrative streams). Since the 1980s, the country has been experiencing social and economic changes which have made it necessary to review this type of organization. The restructuring aims to achieve a complete transformation of the traditional secondary system, replacing it with technical and vocational secondary education, after which graduates would enroll at university education or join the job market directly. However, the traditional secondary school will be sustained until the full transformation takes place in 2005.

The last few years have witnessed great development in the free vocational training and educational co-operatives, both in terms of their number and fields of specialization. Although free education and training co-operations are not a part of formal education, they do follow the goals, structure, content and performance level of formal education, and are under the supervision of the formal system.

To widen the scope of free education and to support the efforts of continuous education, the Open University was established in 1990. In 1999, the university had 17 branches in different areas across the country, and offered programmes in eleven fields of scientific specialization.

Furthermore, the Secretariat of Education and Scientific Research has planned to conduct a number of studies on the following topics: the improvement of education administration; the opening of teacher training centres and the provision of in-service training; the improvement of textbooks; a review of curricula; the introduction of computer studies; the assessment of basic education; the development of women's



education by opening up more fields of study to women and by creating, for the first time in the country, a number of women's vocational centres.

## Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

The most important laws upon which education is based (the majority of which were formulated and issued after the revolution took place in Libya) are:

- The **Constitutional Declaration** issued by the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) on 11 December 1969.
- **Law on Education No. 34** issued by the RCC on 29 October 1970.
- The **Declaration of the People's Authority** of 1977.
- **Law No. 12** of 1977 concerning technical education.
- The **Decision of the General People's Congress** of 1982 concerning the approval of the structure of the education system.
- **Law No. 1** of 1992 concerning higher education.

Although these principles and laws are still valid, the decisions and regulations which derive from them concerning the organization, structure, content and administration of education are changed and amended according to the goals to be achieved in the light of the evolution of the society. The Advisory Committee for Educational and Training Planning prepares the draft of a new educational philosophy which, after approval, will lead to new laws and legislation to be issued, regarding for example the methods of evaluation, the periods of study at each level, educational plans and curricula, the organization of in-service training programmes, etc.

In accordance with current legislation, the nine-year basic (fundamental) education programme is compulsory for all children aged 6-15.

## Administration and management of the education system

The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya includes 32 municipalities (*Shabia*), three administrative districts, and 350 basic people's congresses. In each basic congress there is a member responsible for the management, implementation and follow-up of educational policies within the administrative borders of the municipality, and in each municipality there is an assistant secretary for education.

In 2000, the **General People's Committee for Education and Vocational Training** was dissolved, and all of its responsibilities moved to municipalities. Therefore, the responsibilities of the **municipalities** include:

- elaborating and proposing general policies for education, scientific research and vocational training, and implementing these policies within the framework



of decisions of the Basic Public Congresses, and in the light of the requirements of the development plans.

- putting into place plans and programmes for the implementation of the general policies. The municipalities are entrusted with: the expansion and promotion of technical and applied sciences; performance of research in the field of education and training; close correlation between education and training, on the one hand, and developmental needs on the other; a special emphasis on the role of women and their education; training in the field of traditional craftsmanship in order to preserve the Islamic and Arabic heritage; encouragement of scientific and applied research; promotion of translation, textbook writing and publication (with special emphasis on the Arabic language); the awarding of certificates and their equivalents; the provision of teaching equipment and materials.

At the regional and local levels, representatives of the regional and local Basic Public Congresses participate in setting the general policy for education and making decisions in this field; they also implement this policy and all the decisions and instructions issued by the Secretariat of Education and Scientific Research at the regional level and at the local level (public congress).

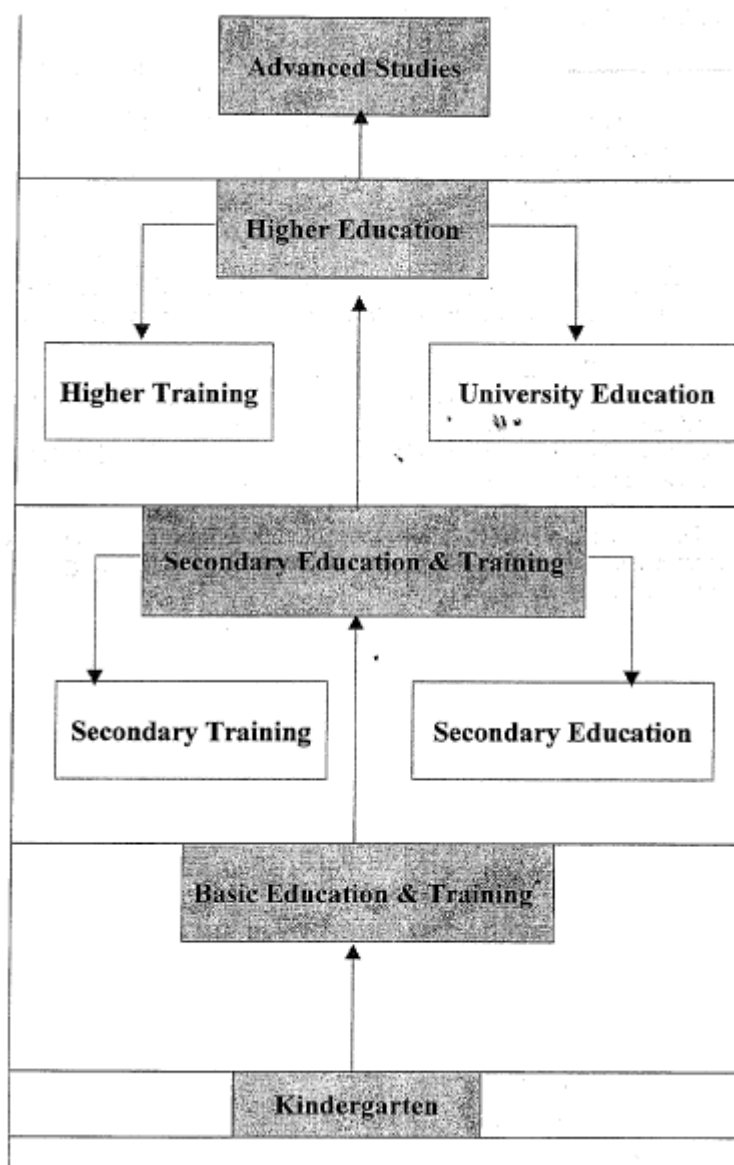
The member for education at the basic public congress directs and supervises, administratively and technically, the various types and levels of educational establishments located within the administrative borders of that congress. The school administration of these establishments is the fourth level in the structure of the educational administration, and it is the executive level which implements decisions and instructions issued by the higher levels in order to achieve the goals set at the central level.

Other Secretariats (ministries) are also involved in education, such as the Secretariat of Health, in charge of nursing institutes, the Secretariat of Treasury, the Secretariat of Utilities that deals with training institutes for municipal guard staff, etc. These secretariats are responsible for setting up curricula and programmes related to their specific subjects.

Non-governmental organizations, such as vocational unions and associations, participate in education offering courses and training workshops for their members.

## Structure and organization of the education system

### Libyan Arab Jamahiriya: structure of the education system



#### Pre-school education

Pre-school education (kindergarten) is not compulsory and lasts two years. Children can enrol at the age of 4.

#### Primary education

Basic (fundamental) education starts at age 6, lasts nine years and is compulsory. Basic education is divided into three cycles: Grades I-IV; Grades V-VI; and Grades VII-IX. At the end of Grade IX, successful students are awarded the Basic Education Certificate.



## Secondary education

Intermediate education (secondary education) lasts three or four years, and students may join this level after they have obtained the Basic Education Certificate. This level comprises of a number of school types: general and specialized secondary schools; vocational training centres; sector-specialized secondary schools and institutes. Studies last four years in technical education schools; three years in general secondary and vocational training schools; and five years in intermediate teacher-training institutes (phased out). Successful students are awarded the Secondary Education Certificate when they complete their course of study, except those in vocational training centres, who are awarded the Intermediate Training Diploma.

At the postsecondary level, teacher training higher institutes offer four-year programmes (teachers of basic education). Higher education comprises three major sections: university education, which lasts four to seven years; university vocational and technical education, lasting three to five years, at the end of which graduate technicians are assigned to work on development projects; and advanced graduate studies, which prepare students for higher diplomas—M.A., M.Sc., and Ph.D. degrees in humanities and physical sciences, together with various other professional diplomas.

The school year consists of thirty-one working weeks at the kindergarten and basic education levels; thirty weeks at the secondary level; and thirty-five weeks at the higher education level.

## The financing of education

The public treasury is the only source for the financing of education. During the 1970s and 1980s, the Libyan economy, thanks to financial resources coming from oil exports, could provide enough funds to the education system, which witnessed an unprecedented expansion responding to the increasing social demand. However, as a result of the international economic recession in the late 1980s, financial resources provided by the public treasury diminished, and the budget expenditure for education decreased as well.

Between 1970 and 1992, the total budgeted appropriations for development of the education and training sector reached 2,889.7 million LD (1 Libyan Dinar = approximately 3 US\$), representing 8.6% of the total appropriations for the development of the national economy. The actual appropriation reached LD2,066.3 million, representing 7.3% of the total expenditure for economic and social development during this same period.

The actual budget went from LD303 million in 1971-76 to LD670 million in 1981-85. It gradually decreased from LD300 million in 1986-89 to LD203 million during the period 1990-93. The average expenditure per student decreased from LD242 in 1981 to LD74 in 1990.

In spite of the fact that the basic education level has the highest proportion of students (80.3% in 1995), it only accounts for 60% of the total resources allocated to





education. The government finances the totality of secondary and vocational education.

Libya is considered as one of the developing countries which spends a great amount of resources on education—more than 20% of the annual operating budget—estimated at 4.2% of the Gross National Product (GNP). Although no detailed information is available on higher education's share of the country's public budget, it is estimated at approximately 0.4% of the GNP in 1992. The total estimated expenditure is about LD42 million.

The financial needs for education are estimated at about LD430 million per year until 2005. This level was never reached, even during the best years. The problem of finding sufficient resources in the future will be compounded with the high population growth. Today, students represent more than 35% of the country's population. In spite of these difficulties, Libya has maintained high enrolment rates, through a rationalization of expenditure on education. However, educational policy-makers in the country are investigating ways of sharing the educational costs between the government and the public. Furthermore, many educational planners think that it is time to find additional financial resources other than the country's public budget. In any event, education should still remain free for low-income families.

Private education (or free education) is a new concept in Libya. It started in recent years in the form of educational corporations or partnerships, and it depends financially on tuition fees paid by the students. No exact estimates are available regarding the sum of money spent on private or free education from the co-operative popular efforts, but it is assumed to be nearly LD2 million (or about US\$6 million). At present (1996), free education in Libya mainly includes basic education and some types of intermediate academic education. In addition, there are some types of free and private schools teaching computer basics and foreign languages, while others teach vocational subjects, such as decoration, sewing, accounting, and medical laboratory. There is no private higher education, although it is being planned for the future. The Open University of Tripoli is the only institution that is highly dependent on fees and the sale of books and educational materials. Furthermore, some faculties receive grants from public and private authorities, companies and industrial establishments for scientific or advisory services, but these grants are nominal and the budget is totally financed by the public treasury.

## **The educational process**

The General People's Committee is responsible for implementing educational policies. The National Academy for Scientific Research plays a role in developing educational content. Regional and international organizations help to evaluate the education system, while the National Center for Educational and Training Research follows up and revises curricula. Experts and teachers at the municipalities also play an important role in revising the curricula and implementing activities.

Specialized technical committees were formed to prepare the curricula for the newly established technical and vocational secondary schools. These were committees for: preparing training programmes; writing textbooks; revising educational and



linguistic components; and evaluating and developing curricula and training programmes.

Objectives of the new curriculum include: (i) instilling in the student a sense of self-esteem and confidence regarding his/her Arabic and Islamic identity, and building his/her ability to actively communicate with other civilizations; (ii) opening the school and its curriculum to its immediate environment, as well as its national, regional and international environments; (iii) ensuring that educational programmes are diverse and encourage continuous self-learning; (iv) making sure that civil society is involved in setting and developing the curriculum; and (v) emphasizing the importance of technical and vocational education.

Teaching and learning methods encouraged within the new curriculum include the following: (i) training learners to acquire the skills they will need for the twenty-first century; (ii) teaching scientific, vocational, social and cultural skills, rather than the more traditional focus on memorization; and (iii) using the project, problem solving, and scientific survey methods in teaching.

### **Pre-primary education**

Kindergartens cater to children from 4 years of age. These establishments help children to cope with the surrounding environment, teach them how to deal and communicate with people around them, according to proper principles, values and customs, and help them in developing their linguistic skills, thus preparing them for school.

Although kindergartens do not have specific educational programmes or curricula, they must aim to achieve a certain number of goals through various activities. These are:

- provide the suitable climate for building the children's personality, create the conditions for developing their creative talents and skills and their independence, as well as help them build good relations with others;
- guide the children's spontaneous activity and energy;
- create and develop good habits and approaches;
- kindle the children's love for reading and help them to discover social and natural phenomena;
- develop the children's learning abilities;
- develop and improve the children's language and communication skills;
- foster the emotional, moral and religious aspects of the children's development;
- prepare the children for school.



Kindergartens do not have a fixed number of daily or weekly hours, and for each activity the programme is flexible enough to adapt to children's needs.

In 1998/99, the enrolment ratio of children in the age group 4-5 years was 7.1% (General People's Committee, 1999). In 1999/2000, it was estimated at 9.7%. One of the most important changes in the pre-school sector has been the expansion of free and co-operative education, which has helped to increase enrolment ratios. According to national statistics, in 2002/03 there were 264 kindergartens with 31,890 children enrolled and 3,693 teachers, mainly women (Libyan National Commission, 2004).

## Primary education (basic education)

Basic education is the cornerstone of the education system. Each grade at this level has a certain number of educational and cultural subjects that the student has to learn during the academic year, and each subject has a weekly timetable.

The number of teaching periods ranges from four to six per day, and from twenty-five to thirty-six per week. Each teaching period at all levels lasts forty-five minutes. The table below shows the teaching subjects and the number of weekly periods assigned to each subject.

**Basic education: weekly lesson timetable**

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade								
	First cycle			Second cycle			Third cycle		
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
Islamic education	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3
Arabic language	8	8	8	7	7	7	6	6	6
English language	–	–	–	–	–	–	4	4	4
Mathematics	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Sciences	1	1	2	4	4	4	–	–	–
Biology	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	2
Chemistry	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	2
Physics	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	2
The Jamahirian society	–	–	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
History	–	–	–	1	1	2	2	2	2
Geography	–	–	–	1	1	1	2	2	2
Technology	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	1
Artistic education	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Music	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Physical education	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2
<b>Total weekly periods</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>36</b>

Note: Each teaching period lasts 45 minutes.

At this level, all subjects are compulsory, pupils have no choice of courses and schools cannot modify the curriculum. The language used to teach all subjects is Arabic. Pupils average 28 per class, although they can reach 60 in regions of high population density. In Grade I, the enrolment rate is about 98% both for boys and girls.



Grades I-III pupils are evaluated during the academic year by their teachers and are given an evaluation card containing their marks three times per year. Performance during the school year is assessed in the three terms as follows: 30% of the marks each for the first and second terms; and 40% of the marks assigned for the final term. No pupil should fail at these grades, unless he/she drop-outs from school or in a case of frequent absence.

In Grades IV-IX, pupils sit two examinations and a written test at the end of each academic year; this test is unified at the school level. The results of the examinations for the first five years of basic education are approved by the headmaster of the school, while the results of the examinations from Grades VI to VIII are approved by the director of the evaluation department in the region. With the exception of Grades I-III pupils, a pupil should receive the minimum mark in each subject to pass, and at least 25% of the marks assigned for the final terminal examination.

Pupils who failed at the first session, or who did not attend the final terminal examination but had an excuse, have the right to attend the second session; those who fail also at this session repeat the same grade. If they fail for two successive years they are moved on to the next year (this is called "posting").

Grade IX pupils sit the first two terminal examinations at the school level, while the final terminal examinations at the end of the academic year are unified at the municipal level. Successful pupils are awarded the Basic Education Certificate. Pupils who fail are dealt with in the same way as Grades IV-VIII pupils. Pupils who fail for two successive years receive a certificate of completion the basic education level.

Educational wastage (i.e. repetition and drop-out rates) at the primary level is estimated at 8%. In 1998/99, the teacher-pupil ratio in public basic education schools was 1:10 (General People's Committee, 1999). In 2000, the enrolment ratio at the basic education level was estimated by national authorities at 100%. According to national statistics, in 2002/03 there were 1,080,834 students enrolled in basic education. In 2003/04, the total number of basic education teachers was 188,553 (Libyan National Commission, 2004).

## **Secondary education**

All students who have successfully completed the basic education cycle are admitted to secondary (intermediate) education. Studies last four years in specialized secondary schools; three years in vocational training schools, and five years in the intermediate teacher training institutions.

Specialized education is divided into six fields of study: basic sciences; engineering and industrial sciences; medical sciences; agricultural sciences; social sciences; and artistic fields such as fine arts and media. These fields of study are in turn divided into 56 different specialization paths forming 24 types of specialized secondary schools. Each section or path in each of these specialized secondary schools, and at the different grades, has its own determined specialized subjects and a class plan.

However, due to the difficulties linked to the implementation of this structure, admission was stopped in 1992 at the secondary schools for medical sciences, social sciences, fine arts, music, archaeology, mining, architecture and building, mechanics, meteorology, veterinary studies, and agriculture. Admission continues only in secondary schools for basic sciences, nautical sciences and media studies. The weekly lesson timetable for general secondary education is shown below:

**General secondary education: weekly lesson timetable**

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each form				
	I	Scientific		Literary	
		II	III	II	III
Islamic education	2	2	2	2	2
Arabic language	5	5	4	8	10
English language	4	4	4	4	4
Mathematics	5	9	10	2	2
Physics	3	4	5	–	–
Biology	3	4	5	–	–
Chemistry	3	4	4	–	–
Social studies	2	–	–	–	–
History	2	–	–	4	5
Geography	3	–	–	4	4
Sociology	–	–	–	3	3
'Explanatory study'	–	–	–	3	3
Psychology	–	–	–	2	–
Political awareness	1	1	1	1	1
Physical education	2	2	2	2	2
Military training	3	3	3	3	3
<b>Total weekly periods</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>39</b>

Note: Each teaching period lasts 45 minutes.

In 1996/97 it was decided to create six specialized secondary schools in the following fields: basic sciences; economic sciences; biological sciences; arts and media; social sciences; and engineering sciences. The duration of studies is usually four years.

Great attention is devoted to vocational and handicraft training, in order to improve specialized services. There are seven fields in vocational education and handicraft training, including: electrical, mechanical, carpentry, architectural, weaving, service, and productive vocations. This type of intermediate education aims at achieving the following:

- Preparing a specialized technical workforce, capable of using and maintaining modern instruments and equipment efficiently.
- Encouraging the acquisition of technical and vocational skills, and providing the proper environment for trainees to engage in production.
- Preparing the necessary trainers and instructors needed for vocational training.
- Providing equal job opportunities for all trainees.



Intermediate teacher training institutions aim at enabling the trainees to gain sufficient skills, making them capable of being a teacher of one specific subject or a set of harmonized subjects, or a teacher for one grade to teach all the subjects. The duration of studies is five years. The programme in the first two years is general. In the last three years specialized subjects are introduced and the programme is composed of three elements: (a) general cultural preparation; (b) vocational and educational preparation; and (c) specialized and academic preparation. The training of teachers at the basic education level is progressively taking place at postsecondary teacher training higher institutes. The duration of programme is four years.

The average class time at the secondary level ranges from 27 to 31 hours per week, except in the vocational training centres, where the range is from 30 to 32 weekly hours.

The evaluation system at the secondary is the same as in basic education, except that 'posting' is not possible, and there is no certificate for students who fail for two successive years. If a student fails in a practical education subject or practical examination at an institution, a technical school or a vocational centre, he/she is not allowed to sit the final terminal examinations. In addition, after approving the examination results students are not allowed to ask for the revision or re-correction of their exam paper.

Successful students are awarded the Secondary Education Certificate when they complete their course of study, except for those in vocational training centres, who are awarded an Intermediate Training Diploma.

In 1992/93, educational wastage at this level averaged 6.3%, and ranged from 1.2% in social sciences to 13.3% in intermediate training centres.

### **Assessing learning achievement nationwide**

Information is not available.

## **Higher education**

Universities and other higher education institutes have witnessed many developments during the 1990s. These have included administrative and organizational changes, the establishment of new scientific departments and faculties, and a reduction in the total number of universities.

After an extensive and detailed study on the status of universities, the Secretariat of Education issued, in 1999, a decision that the number of universities should be reduced from fourteen to nine. Eventually, fourteen university departments were established, subordinated to six main universities, and administratively subordinated to the People's Committee at the municipality.

Higher education in Libya includes three major sections: university education, lasting four to seven years; university vocational and technical education, lasting three to five years; and advanced graduate studies. University education includes a wide



range of fields of study, such as basic sciences, humanities, languages and literature, engineering, industrial, medical and agricultural sciences, economics and commerce, environmental studies, Islamic studies, and studies of international civilization. With recent reforms, education faculties were phased out and replaced with teacher-training higher institutes. These university education faculties were converted into faculties of arts, and the departments of education, psychology, and sociology were all merged into the department of behavioral sciences.

Concerning educational content, many first-year subjects have been unified, and university professors have been given more freedom to design their courses.

In 1995/96, there were 160,000 students enrolled at universities (of whom 40% were women, whereas they were only 21% in 1980/81), and 4,234 teaching staff. About 65% of students were enrolled in literary, arts and humanities courses, and only 21.7% in basic and engineering science courses. In 2002/03, there were 222,976 students enrolled and 6,214 teaching staff.

Since 1990, the Libyan universities have changed their admission requirements. All universities require that a student must have obtained a minimum of 65% (i.e. a general score average of “good”) in order to be admitted to any faculty. Some faculties, such as medicine and engineering, require scores for admission which exceed 75% (i.e. “very good” or “excellent” average). Students who have an average below 65% are admitted to the higher training institutes and vocational training centres.

In 1998/99, there were seventy-nine higher vocational institutes and centers. These included: twenty-six institutes for teacher training, with 25,518 students; ten higher institutes for the training of trainers, with 5,787 students; twenty-two polytechnics, with 11,070 students; and twenty-one specialized vocational centers, with 16,502 students.

Graduate programmes are offered in a variety of fields. In the 1993/94 academic year, 2,355 students were enrolled in M.A. or M.Sc. courses, and 25 were preparing a doctorate. The largest number of these were in medicine (821 students, including specialization and diplomas below M.Sc. level), followed by educational sciences (299 students), and social sciences (287), while 205 students were in economics and finance, and 200 students in engineering and industrial sciences. In 1994/95, 1,735 Libyan students were studying abroad.

In the faculties and higher institutes that adopt the semester system, the subject teacher is fully responsible for grading the student. Usually these grades are calculated through regular and final tests. In the faculties and higher institutes that adopt the academic year system, the year's work grades are divided into scientific activities, research papers, field projects, and regular tests.

In 2004, the existing universities were re-organized into 10 main public universities, in addition to three universities of special nature (such as the Open University).



## Special education

Every person has the right to learn and acquire knowledge, and to develop his/her abilities and experiences. Many institutions and associations in Libya are responsible for the education of special groups. The Secretariat of Health and Social Security offers care and educational services for the deaf, physically handicapped and mentally retarded. The Nur Society is an association for the blind, offering care and educational services. In addition, the Secretariat of Education and Scientific Research gives special care to talented and excellent students.

These authorities are responsible for preparing educational programmes and curricula for the handicapped by coordinating with experts and specialists from faculties of education at the universities, the Secretariat of Education and Scientific Research and the General League of the Handicapped whenever possible. A number of other services are provided, such as psychological, social, medical, vocational and accommodation services.

In 1995/96, there were 42,516 pupils enrolled in special institutions. There were 13 institutions for the deaf and dumb, catering to over 1,505 students assisted by 555 teachers. The length of studies is 14 years (two years of preliminary instruction, nine years of basic education, and three years of vocational training). Four institutions with over 600 students and 284 employees help in developing mental abilities. One institution caters to the needs of 106 physically handicapped children, assisted by 91 persons. There were also five sanatoria for the multi-disabled, with 467 students and 453 helpers. Finally, 14 centres help physically handicapped persons to qualify or re-qualify for jobs.

## Private education

In its recent form, free education and training in Libya is considered one of the latest educational developments that emerged during the early 1990s, competing with public educational establishments in terms of performance rate and methods of implementation. It is also being considered as a factor to reduce costs for the State and as a motive to create new types of qualification and training courses.

The Secretariat of Education is represented by: (a) the National Committee for Free Education and Training, which is responsible for approving the opening of educational and training corporations (*Tasharukiat Tahlimia*); (b) the General Department for Curricula, which approves training programmes and plans presented by these corporations; (c) the Office of Planning and Evaluating Performance Rates for the follow-up of these plans and programmes; and (d) the Office for Evaluation and Examination, which approves the examination results at the end of each educational or training level.

Private (or 'community') higher education institutions rapidly expanded in a relatively short period of time, and reached a total of 214 institutions in 2003 enrolling 15,360 students. In June 2004 many resolutions were issued, by which private higher education was re-organized, and certain standards, including rules in admission procedures, were established.





## Means of instruction, equipment and infrastructure

The Secretariat of Education provides all the approved textbooks and distributes them in sufficient amounts to all pupils and students. The Office of Teaching Media and Equipment provides computers, all the audio and visual teaching media, and the equipment, instruments and tools for training workshops and school laboratories.

The Office is also responsible for printing the sufficient amount of school textbooks, by making an agreement with the printing establishments (official press) owned by the State, inside and outside the country.

The State is responsible for the construction of all the buildings for the educational institutions and the facilities related to them at all educational levels. These buildings contain the necessary classrooms needed to accommodate pupils and students. The total number of classrooms reached 49,078 at the basic education level, 7,291 at the intermediate (secondary) education level, and 4,049 at qualification and training centres.

However, due to the massive expansion of the education system, it has become necessary to occupy classes in two different shifts (morning and afternoon) in the capital city and in regions with high population density.

## Adult and non-formal education

Although the problem of illiteracy is still the main concern for the educational authorities, illiteracy rates have decreased.

The 1973 Census registered an illiteracy rate of 50.9% of the total population in the age group 10+ for both sexes. The rate for men was 30.8% and for women, 72.7%. By the year 1984, the illiteracy rate was 32.5% for both sexes (18.4% for men and 47.2% for women). Measures of all kinds have been taken to solve this problem at all possible levels. A special department for adult education and eradication of illiteracy was established; a comprehensive view of adult education has been adopted, in order to promote the participation of all sectors and segments of the population in a mass-education programme to fight illiteracy and ignorance; a number of decisions and regulations were issued starting from 1980; and multi-purpose programmes have been implemented.

Despite all efforts made, a number of challenges still lie ahead. The rate of illiteracy, though considerably reduced, is still relatively high. The absolute number of illiterate persons in the 10+ age group is increasing. There were 643,000 illiterate persons in 1973 compared with 683,000 in 1984, and about 700,000 in 1992. Financial resources allocated to literacy programmes are not sufficient and many adults, after leaving school, seem to have high rates of regression to illiteracy because the nature of their jobs does not require reading and writing skills.

The long-term programme for the eradication of illiteracy for the period 1994-2015, aims at making literate more than 491,000 persons in the age group 15-50 years. According to recent estimates, the literacy rate of the population in the age group 15+



is 77.5% (87.4% for men and 67.1% for women) (General People's Committee, 1999).

## Teaching staff

The rapid spread and the quantitative and qualitative development of basic education require an improvement of training institutes for basic education teachers. For this purpose, a Committee was formed in 1994/95, in order to evaluate curricula and programmes in the existing teacher training institutes. Accordingly, the system for teacher training was reformed, and put into place in the academic year 1995/96. This system consists of teacher-training higher institutes enrolling graduates of secondary education, and offering a four-year course of specialization. This system is based on a number of educational principles, which emphasize: (i) the importance of the teacher in the educational process; (ii) the need to adopt modern educational technologies; and (iii) the need for vocational and scientific training for the teacher.

There is still a deficit of teachers, especially for some scientific and technical subjects, so the Secretariat of Education contracts a number of Arab teachers. In an attempt to overcome this deficit, the Secretariat of Education created qualifying centres for in-service teachers, admitting the best teachers of basic education. At these centres they receive sixteen months of training in their fields of specialization, and after a final examination, if successful, they can teach at the intermediate education level.

In 2002/03 there were 188,552 teachers at the basic education level (of whom 77% were women) and 47,268 teachers at the secondary level (of whom 64.7% were women).

The approved study plan for teacher training institutions consists of three main types of subjects: (a) general cultural preparation (25% to 30% of total time); (b) vocational and pedagogical preparation (20% to 25%); and (c) specialized and academic preparation (45% to 50%). Students of the kindergarten section must study at least 30% of their course subjects in educational, psychological and vocational sciences.

There are different in-service training programmes, including: improvement courses for teachers whose performance is weak; stimulation courses for the enrichment of the teachers' academic, cultural and vocational knowledge; methodological courses related to innovations introduced in teaching subjects; and qualification courses for teaching at higher class levels. In addition, there are courses to re-qualify teachers in new subjects (i.e. technology) or teachers who take a new job such as school laboratory keepers, etc. According to their specialization, university professors participate in preparing programmes and curricula for these courses, giving lectures and evaluating students and trainees.

Concerning basic education teachers, seven centres for in-service qualifying and training were opened in the academic year 1995/96. The aim of these centres is to improve teachers' efficiency. Courses last 16 months in specialties such as basic sciences, Arabic language, English language, mathematics, chemistry, computer



science, etc. Successful trainees can teach at intermediate education level. The capacity of these centres is 6,000 trainees. In 1994/95, 2,500 trainees were admitted, and in 1995/96 about 1,200 teachers graduated. In any case, the higher teacher training institutes are the basic center for training basic education teachers. The number of higher teacher training institutes during the academic year 98/1999 has reached (44) higher institute, enrolling (25.518) male and female students.

A qualifying and training centre was opened in 1993 to train teachers for technical and vocational basic and intermediate levels, in order to ensure the upgrading of their educational, technical and training abilities according to their performance. In addition, several qualifying and training courses are held inside and outside Libya for upgrading the skills of teachers and instructors for technical studies. There are seven centers for in-service teacher training, and one center for in-service training of technical teachers and trainers, established during the academic year 1992/93.

Teachers who teach all subjects (except for activity subjects such as artistic education, physical education and music) in the first three years of basic education, have a maximum number of twenty class hours per week. The performance rate of an activity subject teacher reaches a maximum of fifteen class hours per week. From Grade IV, subject teachers have a total of twenty-four class hours per week, but a fair number of teachers are part-time.

The nomination rank of the teacher is determined after his/her graduation according to the type of training centre in which he/she has studied, i.e. according to the type and degree of the certificate he/she has gained. University graduates are nominated at the seventh rank, while graduates of teacher and trainer intermediate training institutes are nominated at the sixth rank. Teachers' salaries at the different levels are considered to be good compared to other employees in general, especially because they receive a teaching bonus, have longer annual vacation, and their daily work period is limited compared to other employees' official working time. Therefore, more students every year join teacher training institutions.

## **Educational research and information**

Educational and training research in Libya is conducted by two kinds of institutions—universities and higher and vocational education institutes—and the National Institute for Educational and Training Research, supervised by the Secretariat for Education.

Universities and higher education institutes supervise and conduct a considerable amount of educational research. The results of these studies are used in the follow-up of the learning process and in general planning within the education system. For example, a team of professors from El-Fateh University in Tripoli has conducted an analytic, critical study of teaching methods in mathematics and science at the basic education level. Similar studies are being carried out by other teams in order to find practical solutions to several problems, i.e. the study being performed on the strategies for teacher training (basic, intermediate and vocational levels) until the year 2000, in addition to educational research and psychological and sociological



applications in the learning process, which is carried out through graduate studies at the M.A. and Ph.D. levels in the form of scientific dissertations.

The General People's Committee issued Decision No. 52/1993 concerning the establishment of the National Institute for Educational Research in Tripoli, merging the National Educational Institute, the National Institute for Training and the National Institute for Translation and Arabization into this new structure. The decision also permitted the establishment of research sub-offices and units within Libya and abroad.

The fields of research can be divided into three main complementary research activities.

- Research focused on the learning process, or the processes of training, and the best ways for their development, regarding: the evaluation of current curricula at various levels; the evaluation of teacher training programmes; the efficiency of the education system; behavioural problems in schools and institutions, etc.
- Research on educational and training policies, and methods for their improvement, for example: a comparison of the educational and training system in Libya with similar systems in other Arab and foreign countries; home influence in increasing the students educational achievement and the collaboration with the school in solving students problems; the phenomenon of increase in the ratio of females to males in some higher education institutions (facts, causes and impact), etc.
- Research on the role of education and training in the development of human resources and socio-economic development in general, for example: the new education system; education and the environment; education and cultural development; ethical education; education and rural development; women's education, etc.

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