

IMPACT-se

United Arab Emirates Moral Education Textbooks

Preliminary Report



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Introduction

Since the early days of Greek philosophers, morality has been an integral part of the world of education. For Aristotle, the aim of education, was to teach intellectual and moral virtues side-by-side in order to develop positive habits and foster “the good”.¹ As in the past, it is still a common belief that the establishment of a moral understanding in children is foundational to creating a functional society. The development of moral character is considered a traditional goal of formal education.²

Moral Education (ME) can be defined as an umbrella term for different pedagogical methods with a common goal, that is helping children and young people to acquire a set of beliefs and values regarding what is right and wrong. This set of beliefs guides their intentions, attitudes and behaviors towards others and their environment. More fundamentally, ME encourages children to reflect on how they should behave and what sort of people they should be.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a federal sovereign state that has been transformed enormously in just two decades in terms of wealth, ethnic diversity, global significance and political influence. Education is seen as a key factor in coping with and building on this transformation, ensuring the necessary social and cultural development, but also ensuring that the UAE might equally contribute to this larger economic and cultural world of which it has become part.³

The UAE *Moral Education* curriculum is an initiative launched under the directive of Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. This initiative was born out of the UAE 2021 vision of creating a knowledge-based economy, preserving UAE heritage and providing wellness and social well-being of citizens and residents.⁴ The aim of ME is that it should help all young individuals become morally autonomous adults by providing them with the competence to judge what is morally right. Secondly, ME should equip young people with the flexibility to adapt to new situations they might encounter in a rapidly changing world.⁵

The prominence of the subject of ME in educational discourse nowadays is often perceived as a response to the moral crisis in modern society, given ‘a widespread perception that, at least in terms of traditional indices, things are going morally wrong’⁶. This exact message was directly

¹ C. Korsgaard, "Aristotle on Function and Virtue," *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 3 no. 3 (1986): pp. 259–79.

² D. K. Lapsley, D. Narvaez, "Character Education." *Handbook of Child Psychology*, 4 (2007).

³ R. Pring, "Development of Moral Education in the UAE: Lessons to be Learned." *Oxford Review of Education*, 45, no.3 (2019): pp. 297-314.

⁴ UAE Cabinet, "Moral Values are Needed in Education System: Mohamed Bin Zayed," 2018, <https://uaecabinet.ae/en/details/news/moral-values-are-needed-in-education-system-mohamed-bin-zayed>.

⁵ Pring, "Development," pp. 297–314.

⁶ C. Wrings, *Moral Education: Beyond the Teaching of Right and Wrong*, (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer Science & Business Media, 2006).

expressed by Maryam Al Zaabi, an Emirati teacher: “The curriculum was focusing only on getting kids more creative and more innovative, and they forgot about how to respect even each other’s innovations”⁷.

In line with Al Zaabi’s words and the concepts above, the UAE Government, in 2016, launched ME as a school subject to introduce universal values and principles that are valid across all communities. At its heart, the ME course aims to teach children to participate in life in a responsible, productive and engaged manner. It is less about instructing students on how to behave and more about enabling them to determine the right course of action on their own. Eventually, the overall aim of this holistically-inspired course is to link all children in the UAE, regardless of nationality, to the common thread of humanity and share with them universal values and morals.⁸

The ME program was initiated with intention that it would be taught in all schools, both public and private, throughout all 1-12 grades all over UAE. It is built around four pillars: character and morality, the individual and the community, cultural studies, and civic studies. Each pillar points to the different virtues which need to be developed through their respective units of teaching: for example, caring for others, honesty with oneself and with others, tolerance and respect for others within a diverse society, resilience and perseverance, equality and fairness, compassion and empathy, thoughtfulness and co-operation.⁹

As a leading research and policy institute, IMPACT-se analyzes schoolbooks and curricula employing international standards on peace and tolerance as derived from UNESCO declarations and resolutions to determine compliance and to advocate for change when necessary. The UAE ME initiative is a unique field of research because of its focus on an explicitly secular and humanistic approach, which aligns with UNESCO standards and UN declarations that serve as a basis for IMPACT-se’s methodology when analyzing school textbooks.¹⁰

This report is a preliminary step in IMPACT-se’s wider future research of the UAE ME program and possibly the entire curriculum. The following pages will present the most prominent examples from the ME curriculum textbooks and teacher guides, showing how the moral theory is manifested in the actual classroom assignments, brought to the students. For this purpose, three topics were selected to constitute the criteria for the thematic division of the examples, and they are: (1) Tolerance and Empathy towards the ‘Other’, (2) Peace and Conflict Resolution, and (3) Equality. All three are included in the same pillar of the curriculum - “Character and Morality”.

⁷ <https://www.thenational.ae/uae/education/moral-education-curriculum-to-be-rolled-out-in-september-1.168959>.

⁸ <https://www.tellalinstitute.com/tellal-talks/moral-education-in-the-uae/>.

⁹ <https://moraleducation.ae/what-is-moral-education/#about-4-pillars>.

¹⁰ <https://www.impact-se.org/methodology-2/>.

Selected Examples

Tolerance and Empathy toward the ‘Other’

This theme is included in several units throughout the curriculum, and introduces the students to the values of tolerance and respect for themselves and others, both national and global. Students are taught to internalize the core tenet of morality as being concern and care for others, away from their own personal desires and interests. They learn that this concern is expressed through care for and empathy with other people. This principle is expounded upon through teaching students about the importance of tolerating the differences they observe between themselves and other people, and treating others with respect, regardless of their beliefs, ethnicity, religion, gender or social status.

1. **Acceptance of the other as a value and a practice** is demonstrated in a story for first-graders in a textbook chapter called "Friendship". The story is meant to teach children how to treat newcomers (in this case, a new Chinese boy joining the school), and is particularly relevant to the UAE which has a wide ethnic diversity.



طالِبٌ جَدِيدٌ فِي الْمَدْرَسَةِ

عندما وصل منصورٌ إلى المدرسة ذات صباح، قابلَ وجهاً غريباً مألوفاً،
 ولَمْ يَفْهَمْ فَرَبْتِ الْجِدَارِ فِي الْمَعْرِزِ الرَّئِيسِيِّ وَيَبْدُو عَلَيْهِ الْفَلْأَقُ. "مَنْ
 هَذَا؟" نَسْأَلُ مَنْصُورَ.
 قَالَ الْفَتَى: "مَرْحَبًا". هَلْ يَمَكِّتُكَ مِنْ فَصْلِكَ أَنْ تُخْبِرَنِي مَا إِذَا كُنْتُ
 فِي الْمَكَانِ الصَّحِيحِ؟ إِنِّي أُرِيدُ أَنْ أُرِيدَ مِنْ الْمَكْتَبَةِ". بَدَأَ صَوْتَهُ غَرِيبًا، كَمَا
 لَوْ أَنَّهُ لَيْسَ مَعْنَاذًا عَلَى التَّحَدُّثِ.
 قَالَ مَنْصُورٌ: "مَرْحَبًا، الْبَغْيِي وَمَسْأَلُكَ". اسْتَرْغَ الْفَتَى يَخْمَعُ أَعْرَاضَهُ
 وَلَحِقَ بِمَنْصُورِ.
 قَالَ الْفَتَى: "مُسْأَلًا لَكَ، اسْمِي شِيَانِجِ. أَنَا مُسْتَجِدٌّ. لَقَدْ وَصَلْتُ مَعَ
 أَسْرَتِي نَوًّا".
 قَالَ مَنْصُورٌ وَفُو بِنَسَمٍ: "حَسَنًا، مَرْحَبًا... مَعْذِرَةٌ لَا يَمَكِّتُنِي نَطْقُ
 اسْمِكَ". ثُمَّ أضاف: "أنا منصورٌ. لست طالبًا جديدًا، لقد أفضيت
 خياني كُلِّهَا هُنَا". ضَحِكَ شِيَانِجِ.
 سَأَلَ مَنْصُورٌ: هَلْ تَعْرِفُ أَحَدًا هُنَا؟"
 أجاب شِيَانِجِ: "لا، لا أأخذ... حَسَنًا، أَنْتَ فِطْ".
 قَالَ مَنْصُورٌ: "مَنْ الصَّغْبِ أَنْ تَكُونَ طَالِبًا جَدِيدًا وَلَا تَعْرِفُ أَحَدًا،
 أَلَيْسَ كَذَلِكَ؟ نَعَالِ، سَأُقَدِّمُكَ إِلَى الْجَمِيعِ".

Moral Education, Grade 1, vol. 3, 2018, pp. 19–20

"When Mansour arrived at the school one morning, he encountered an unfamiliar face. One child was standing by the wall in the main hallway and looked scared. "Who is it?" Mansour asked himself. "Hello," said the boy, "can you please tell me if I'm in the right place? I'm looking for the library." His voice sounded strange, as if he was not used to speaking. Mansour replied, "Hello, follow me and I will show you." The boy quickly picked up his belongings and began to follow Mansour. The boy said, "Thank you. My name is Xiang, I'm new here. I came here with my family recently." Mansour replied with a smile: "Fine, welcome ... sorry, but I cannot pronounce your name", then added: "I am Mansour, I am not a new student. I have been here all my life!". Xiang laughed. Mansour asked, "Do you know anyone here?" Xiang replied, "No, no one ... well, actually just you." Mansour said, "It's hard to be a new student and not know anyone, right? Come on, I'll bring you to everyone."

2. **Awareness towards social diversity** is raised on the opening page of the "Valuing Diversity" unit, where eighth-grade students are asked questions involving issues such as discrimination and treating others with tolerance. The questions are worded in an unbiased way that enables and encourages open discourse. In the background a picture is shown with people of different ethnic, religious and gender identities.



Moral Education, Grade 8, Vol. 2 (2018), p. 2.

*"Why should we be open to the concept of diversity and equality?
 Do you understand others and treat them with tolerance?
 In what aspects of our daily lives do we see expressions of identification with the other?
 Can the media manipulate your opinions and shape them?
 How do you imagine a world without discrimination?
 What steps can we take to eradicate discrimination from our world? "*

3. **Acceptance and respect for different cultural identities** is taught to sixth-graders through a text emphasizing the benefit of these values for society, stressing that they are foundational to working towards global peace. The text also includes a reference to the development of social awareness as children mature, and is accompanied by a world map, filled with small figures of people from different cultures, genders, clothing, color etc.

اقرأ المقال جميعنا مختلفون ثم أجب عن الأسئلة التي تليها.

أينما كنت تعيش في هذا العالم، فلا بدّ من أنك ستقابل أشخاصاً من ثقافات وخلفيات مختلفة. إن معرفتنا بثقافتنا تأتي أولاً من عائلتنا وأصدقائنا ومدرستنا ومجتمعنا. لكنّ تجربتنا في هذه الثقافة، تتعلق بمجموعة عوامل منها النوع، والطبقة الاجتماعية، والقدرات الفكرية والبدنية، والسّن. تتشكّل وجهات نظرنا عن طريق البيئة المحيطة بنا. فعندما نكون أطفالاً صغاراً، نفترض أنّ جميع الأشخاص في العالم يبدون ويفكّرون ويتصرفون مثلنا، ونتقدّد أنّ الثقافة ثابتة وغير قابلة للتغيّر أبداً. لكن حين نكبز، نبدأ بإدراك فكرة أنّ ثقافتنا غير جامدة، وأنّ نمة عوامل تُغيّنها بصفة دائمة، كما ندرك أنّ العالم يتكوّن من خليط متنوع من أشخاص ذوي خلفيات متعددة. إنّ احترام الثقافات الأخرى وتقبلها لا يعني تغيير هؤلاء الأشخاص لبيدوا ويفكروا ويتصرفوا مثلنا. بل يعني استكشاف الاختلافات الموجودة بيننا ومحاولّة التعرّف إليها. فالكثيرون يؤمنون بأنّ مفتاح السلام العالمي يكمن في احترام اختلافاتنا وتقبلها. كثيرة هي الأشياء التي تعلمتها عن ثقافتك من عائلتك ومعلميك.

أ. أكمل الجدول مع مجموعتك.

عناصر الثقافة	الثقافة الإماراتية	الثقافة الأخرى
الملايين والمظهر		
التواصل واللغة		

Moral Education, Grade 6, Vol.3, 2018, p. 5–6

“When you live in this world, it is inevitable to meet people from different cultures and different backgrounds... Our worldview is shaped by our environment. When we are little children, we assume that the whole world thinks and acts like us, and that culture is a permanent thing that cannot be changed. However, as we grow older, we begin to understand that culture is not something that stands still ... Many believe that the key to world peace lies in respecting and accepting the contradictions between us”.

4. **Empathy-driven behaviors towards the ‘Other’** are presented in three examples to fourth-graders in a chapter dedicated to pity, sympathy and empathy. Students are asked to read and discuss the texts to determine if each example indicates pity, sympathy or empathy, which are all reactions to the plight of others. Each example shows a different representative of the ‘Other’ - an animal, an unknown person from a different country and culture, and a close friend from the same community. The behavioral reactions vary from example to example according to the degree of emotional engagement and closeness between the participating characters.



سميرة تطعم القطة المريضة

أ. رأت سميرة قطة مريضة تلهث من التعب بجوار المنزل، فلم ترض أن تتركها وقدمت لها الطعام والشراب، وقامت بذلك يوميًا حتى شفيت القطة وبدأ جسدها يكبر وتعود إليها صحتها.



سيده نيبالية فوق أنقاض منزلها المدمر

ب. شاهدت ناهد فيلمًا وثائقيًا عن ضحايا الزلزال في قريته كومالپور في النيبال خلال عام 2015، وشعرت بالأسف الشديد عليهم، خاصة عندما رأت منازلهم قد تهدمت وهم مشردون في الطرقات.



سيف يواسي صديقه محمّدًا.

ج. سيف ومحمد صديقان منذ الطفولة، يعيشان في الحي ذاته ويتعلّمان في المدرسة ذاتها. مرض والد محمد واعتلت صحته وأدخل المستشفى. بقي سيف إلى جانب محمد وأخذ يكلمه عن الوقت الذي كان فيه والد سيف أيضًا في المستشفى، وعن المشاعر التي كانت تثابه قبل أن يتعافى والده.

Moral Education, Grade 4, Vol. 1, 2018, p. 13.

“A. Samira saw a sick cat panting heavily near her home. She didn’t want to abandon him, so she gave him food and water every day until the cat recovered, began to grow and became healthy again.

B. Nahed watched a documentary about the victims of the 2015 earthquake in the village of Komalpur in Nepal. She felt very bad for them, especially when she saw how their homes were destroyed and they were forced to live on the roads, homeless.

C. Saif and Muhammad have been friends since a young age. They lived in the same neighborhood and attended the same school. Muhammad’s father fell ill and was hospitalized. Saif stayed with Muhammad and told him about that time his (Saif’s) father was in the hospital and the feelings that accompanied him (Saif) until his father recovered”.

5. **Tolerance towards social diversity as a source of national pride** – this message is conveyed in a text presented to eighth-graders. Students are taught that one of the core strengths of UAE is being a home for a diverse and united society, and that their government takes a clear line of tolerance as a fundamental value. Interestingly, the text below details the different nationalities of people who most commonly emigrate to the UAE. This instils an important message of understanding and respect for different cultures and beliefs as well as helping students better understand the Other.



هل كنت تعلم أن مجتمع دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة مجتمع شديد التنوع، وأن العديد من الناس ممن يعيشون هنا قدموا من بلدان مختلفة؟ إذ يعيش في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة الكثير من العرب من بلدان عربية مختلفة، ويعيش فيها كذلك أناس من دول جنوب آسيا (مثل الهند وأفغانستان) وشمال شرق آسيا (مثل الفلبين وفيتنام). كذلك العديد من مواطني الغرب (من الأوروبيين والأميركيين) اتخذوا من دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة موطناً لهم. وقد قدم هؤلاء الناس إلى هنا لأسباب عديدة ولكن في المقام الأول بسبب فرص العمل التي توفرها دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة في جميع القطاعات الاقتصادية. فبفضل تعزيز روح التسامح من قبل

حكومة دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة والسلوك المضياف لشعبها، عُدت دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة مثالاً عظيماً على مجتمع غني في تنوعه وموحد في الوقت نفسه. وقد جعلها ذلك، إضافة إلى مجتمعها النابض بالحيوية نتيجة المزيج بين الثقافة الإماراتية والثقافات الشرقية والغربية، مكاناً جذاباً للباحثين عن مستقر جديد.

Moral Education, Grade 8, Vol. 2, 2018, p.6.

“Did you know that UAE society is a very diverse society and that many people who live here have come from different countries? The UAE is a home to many Arabs from different Arab countries and is home to many people from South Asian countries (such as India and Afghanistan) and Southeast Asia (such as the Philippines and Vietnam). Also, there are many Westerners (European and American) who treat the UAE as their homeland...Thanks to the fact that the value of tolerance is very strong among the UAE government and thanks to its welcoming behavior towards its people, the UAE has become a strong example of a rich, diverse and united society at the same time”.

Peace and Conflict Resolution

These themes introduce students to the ethical issues around conflict in both domestic politics and international relations. Students become aware that, although conflict is an inevitable part of life, there are different strategies that serve as practical tools they can use. The nature of peace is discussed along with causes of conflict and war with an emphasis on considering different peaceful and non-violent means of responding to conflict.

1. **An in-depth discourse on the concept of peace** is encouraged in a fourth-grade unit on “Conflict Resolution”. Students are asked to define and discuss the meaning of peace, not only in theory, but also in a practical way.



Moral Education, Grade 4, Vol. 2, 2018, p. 36.

“What is the meaning of the word “peace”? Think about the concept of peace. What does it mean to you? What does it mean to your society and to the whole world? How can peace be created? Share your thoughts with the class”.

2. **Challenges to world peace** are in the focus of an introduction activity planned for eleventh-grade students. Teachers are instructed to pose a guiding question “Why is peace not universal?” and encourage students to think about possible reasons for conflict.

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

To begin the lesson, you can ask students a guiding question such as ‘Why is peace not universal?’ This may seem a ‘heavy’ question to pose to them, so you can pose a different question. The idea is to get them to think about possible reasons for conflict in the world, considering all the governance and other structures and agencies that exist to promote peace. Give them a minute to reflect on this quietly. They may like to write down a few points. Then ask them to share ideas in **plenary**. You could also ask them to define peace, and you can refer them to the Student Book for ideas.

Moral Education Teacher’s Guide (English Version), Grade 11, p. 162.

3. **Stereotyping as an obstacle to peace and social awareness** are presented to tenth-grade students in the "Being a Responsible Adult" unit. A photo of the California Manzanar Peace Memorial Monument is attached, and explained as a reminder of the danger of stereotypes and lack of cultural awareness. The monument is located in one of the Japanese-American DP camps set up during World War II.



■ يقف نصب مانزانار التذكاري للسلام، في موقع مانزانار التاريخي الوطني في كاليفورنيا، شاهداً على المخاطر التي قد تتسبب فيها القوالب النمطية ونقص الوعي الثقافي في الفترة ما بين عامي 1942 و1945، نُقل أكثر من 110 ألف أمريكي ياباني الأصل إلى مخيمات في مناطق نائية من الولايات المتحدة. وكان أحد هذه المخيمات يقع في مانزانار.

Moral Education, Grade 10, Vol. 3, 2018, p. 67.

“The Manzanar Peace Memorial, at the Manzanar National Historic Site in California, stands as a reminder of the dangers of what stereotyping and lack of cultural awareness may bring. Between 1942 and 1945, over 110,000 Japanese Americans were ‘relocated’ to camps at sites in remote areas of the United States. Manzanar was the location of one of these sites”.

4. **Conflict resolution strategies** are taught in an eighth-grade textbook within the unit “Dealing with conflict”. The definition of each strategy is explained with reference to the circumstances in which it is adopted, and the characteristics of the different parties involved. It is followed by a task in which students are required to choose a strategy for resolving a list of conflict situations. In the top of that list occurs a situation of intolerance.



Moral Education, Grade 8, Vol. 3, 2018, pp. 29–30.

Diagram:

In the middle: “*Conflict resolution strategies*”

The strategies from right to left: “*Competing, Compromising, Collaborating, Avoiding, Accommodating*”.

Accommodating is a situation in which the other side is given what it wants. It usually occurs when one of the parties is interested in peace, or the matter in conflict is a trivial matter.

Avoiding is an attempt to postpone the resolution of the conflict to an unknown date. The adopter party hopes that by rejecting the solution or ignoring it, the problem will be resolved on its own without having to deal with it. Generally, the adopter of this strategy is of low self-worth or is in a certain inferior position in terms of his authority.

Collaborating is an attempt to blend different opinions expressed by many people. The goal is to find an innovative solution that everyone agrees on. Although cooperation is effective, it is not suitable for all types of conflict.

Compromising occurs when all parties make concessions in order to reach a solution that is acceptable to everyone, even if it is not perfect. This strategy is most often used in conflicts where both sides are more or less equal in their power.

Competing is conducted according to the 'zero sum game', in which one side wins and one side loses. Competition strategy is good only for a limited number of types of conflicts, for example when it comes to an emergency situation.

Task:

“How will you react to the following conflict situations:

- a. Intolerance
- b. New laws that you don't like at school
- c. Someone close to you is not acting responsibly
- d. A fire broke out
- e. Finishing a project on time”

5. **The nature of peace and non-violent traditions** are discussed in a unit dedicated to peace and conflict studies, taught to eleventh-graders. The relevant teacher guide states the learning objectives, which emphasize familiarity with peacekeeping NGOs' activities, identifying non-violent actions and defining forms of pacifism.

Learning Objectives

At the end of the lesson, students should be able to:

- ▶ Describe at least one peacekeeping activity of a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO).
- ▶ Identify at least one example of non-violent action.
- ▶ Define at least one form of pacifism.

Moral Education Teacher Guide, Grade 11, 2018, p.30.

Equality

The topic of equality is initially introduced to students as they discuss fairness, and address issues of inequality in interpersonal relationships. Starting by learning to recognize when something is fair or unfair, students progress to learning about the meaning of equality and discrimination on a local, national and global scale. They start to consider questions such as, such as “How do we achieve equality among people?” or “How is fair distribution accomplished?”.

1. **Distributive Justice** is taught to sixth-graders in a unit called “Equality and Justice as Fairness” through a text that discusses various scholarships in UAE American universities. Scholarships are presented as an method towards achieving equal opportunity as they help students with financial difficulties to pay for their tuition and living expenses during their studies. It is emphasized that scholarships are granted to any deserving student regardless of race, nationality, gender, etc. The text is followed by two photos presenting ethnic and gender diversity in UAE academia.



جاء ما يأتي في خانة المنح الدراسية في الصفحة الإلكترونية لكل من جامعة أيوا الأميركية والجامعة الأميركية في دولة الإمارات: تُقدّم جامعة أيوا كل عام منحا دراسية إلى طلبتها، خصوصاً إلى الطلبة الجديرين أكاديمياً، ولا يُوجَد مانع أمام هؤلاء الطلبة من الاستفادة من المنح أو من فُرُوض التّعليم الأخرى التي تُقدّم بناءً على اختيحاتهم الماليّة الفنّينة.



في الجامعة الأميركية في دولة الإمارات، المُؤهلون للحصول على منح دراسية هم مواطنو دولة الإمارات العربية المتّحدة أو المقيّمون ومواطنو مجلس التعاون الخليجيّ. ومن الشّروط اللازمة لتلقّي المنحة الدّراسية:

- إتمام 45 ساعة مُتعمّدة والحصول على مُعدّل عامّ يُساوي 3.6 أو أكثر.
- يجبّى للطلّاب تحديّد المنحة في حال كان مُعدّله العامّ أكثر من 2.5.
- تُفتح المُساعدات الماليّة بصرف النظر عن العرق أو اللون أو الجنسيّة أو الجنس أو الإعاقة، مع ضمان مُعاملة جميع الطلبة على أساس العَدل والمساواة في تحصيل المُساعدات.

Moral Education, Grade 6, Vol. 1, 2018, pp. 75–76.

First Picture:

“The following is listed under the Scholarships tab on the University of Iowa and of the American University of the UAE website: Every year, the university offers scholarships to its students, and especially to academically deserving students”

Second Picture:

“At the American University in the UAE, those eligible for scholarships are UAE citizens or residents, and citizens of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Among the conditions required to receive the scholarship: ...Financial support will be provided regardless of race, color, nationality, gender or any disability, while ensuring that all students are treated on the basis of justice and equality...”

2. **Equality in civil rights** is taught through Martin Luther King’s biography to eighth-graders in the “Valuing Diversity” unit. Students are required to read the text below, and then answer a number of questions. Beyond reading comprehension, the questions require students to empathize with the discriminated party, and to be creative in writing an up-to-date and relevant speech on the subject of equality.



د. مارتن لوثر كنج، الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية (1929-1968))

كان مارتن لوثر كنج أميركياً جريئاً، عارض التمييز العنصري الذي كان يتعرض له الأميركيون من أصول إفريقية. أصبح زعيماً لحركة الحقوق المدنية الأمريكية وحاز على جائزة نوبل للسلام لجهوده. أثار كنج اهتماماً عالمياً حول قضية الفصل العنصري، أي استبعاد الأميركيين ذوي الأصول الإفريقية من جوانب عديدة للمسار المجتمعي العام. كنج نفسه عانى من التمييز العنصري في صغره، عندما توجب عليه الانتقال إلى مدرسة مختلفة بعيداً عن أصدقائه. ثم خاض التجربة مرة أخرى في سن المراهقة عندما توجب عليه التخلي عن مقعده في الحافلة لشخص أبيض البشرة. بدافع من رغبة محمومة في تحقيق العدالة والمساواة في الحقوق أصبح كنج متحدثاً مؤثراً ضد التمييز والتحيز. وقد ساعدته موهبته في الخطابة في توصيف - ببلاغة شديدة - الأذى الذي يشعر به من يتعرضون للتمييز يومياً.

لعل الخطاب الأشهر لـ كنج هو ذلك الذي ألقاه في 28 أغسطس عام 1963، عندما قال للعالم إن لديه حلمًا! حيث رسم بالقرب من نصب لنكولن التذكاري في واشنطن صورة حياة لمستقبل أكثر إشراقًا خاليًا من التحيز والتمييز. ولا تزال كلماته المؤثرة تلهم الناس في شتى حملات من أجل المساواة في الحقوق للجميع.

أ. برأيك لماذا أصبح كنج مناهضًا بهذا الحماس لتحقيق المساواة؟

ب. كيف سيكون شعورك إذا كان عليك الذهاب إلى مدرسة مختلفة فقط بسبب لون بشرتك؟

ج. إذا كنت ستكتب خطابًا اليوم عن المساواة والاندماج، فماذا ستكتب؟

Moral Education, Grade 8, Vol. 2, 2018, p.23.

“Martin Luther King, USA (1929-1968)

Martin Luther King was a bold American who opposed the racism to which African Americans were exposed. He was appointed as the representative of the African American Civil Rights Movement, and won the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts. King attracted worldwide attention to the issue of apartheid...Driven by a deep desire to achieve justice and equal rights, King became an influential spokesman against discrimination and prejudice ... Perhaps King's most famous speech is the one he delivered on August 28, 1963, when he said to the world, "I have a dream!", as he paints a vivid picture of a brighter future next to Lincoln's Monument in Washington...His poignant remarks still inspire people in their struggle for comprehensive equality of rights.

a. Why do you think King fought with such enthusiasm for equality?

b. How would you feel if you had to go to a different school just because of your skin color?

c. If you had to write a speech today on equality and integration, what would you write?”

3. **Gender Equality** is discussed within the framework of a “Global Citizenship” unit, taught to eleventh-graders. Students learn about global female marginalization that starts with the difficulties of accessing education, a right that is often denied to women. They also learn about the Global Gender Gap Report and its rationale, with emphasis on the relation between female education attainment and social wellbeing.

تهميش النساء والفتيات

في الكثير من مناطق العالم، تتعرض النساء والفتيات للتمييز، ويحرمن من الحصول على التعليم وغيره من الحقوق الأساسية التي تمنح للرجال والشباب، وهناك أسباب ثقافية لذلك، لكن من المهم أن نتذكر أن المفاهيم الثقافية أيضاً تُفسر بصور مختلفة لدى الأفراد والمجموعات التي تنتمي لنفس الثقافة، لذا فمن المهم أن نفهم لماذا تتواجد تفسيرات معينة، حتى إن لم تتفق معها، على سبيل المثال، قد تبني طوائف مختلفة ضمن نفس الديانة رؤى وقواعد مختلفة عن أدوار الإناث والذكور في المجتمع.

Moral Education, Grade 11, Vol. 3, 2018, p. 13.

“Marginalisation of Women and Girls

In many parts of the world, women and girls are marginalised and vulnerable, denied access to education and other basic rights that are given to men and boys. There are many cultural reasons for this, but it is important to remember that cultural norms are also interpreted differently by individuals and groups that subscribe to the same culture. It is important to try to understand why certain interpretations exist, even if we do not agree with them. For example, different sects within the same religion may hold different points of view and rules about the roles of females and males in society.”



■ لجميع الفتيات الحق في التعليم، ويرتبط حصول الفتيات على التعليم بتحسين في كل مؤشرات التنمية والرفاه الاجتماعي تقريبا.

تقرير الفجوة العالمية بين الجنسين لعام 2017 في كل عام، يصدر المنتدى الاقتصادي العالمي تقرير الفجوة بين الجنسين وأساس هذا التقرير هو أن عدم المساواة في الحقوق الممنوحة للذكور والإناث تعد عامل خطر على المشكلات الأخرى الخاصة بالتنمية، مثل الرعاية الصحية والاستقرار الاقتصادي. ويقارن التقرير 144 دولة ببعضها من حيث **التكافؤ** بين الجنسين في 4 أقسام أو مؤشرات فرعية تحدها مجموعة من هيئات الأمم المتحدة، وهذه المؤشرات الفرعية هي المشاركة والفرص الاقتصادية، والحصول على التعليم، والصحة، والبقاء على قيد الحياة، والتمكين السياسي ثم يقوم التقرير بتصنيفهم، وهذا التصنيف هو ما يُنشر فيه، ورغم أن هذا النوع من التقارير غير معني بمعالجة عدم المساواة، إلا أنه يقدم أداة مرجعية يمكن للمنظمات والحكومات استخدامها لتسهيل النقاش حول المساواة بين الجنسين.

Moral Education, Grade 11, Vol. 3, 2018, p. 14.

“All girls have the right to be educated. Female education attainment is associated with improvements in almost all other development indicators and social wellbeing”

“The Global Gender Gap Report 2017

Each year the World Economic Forum publishes the Global Gender Gap Report. The basis for this report is that inequalities in rights accorded to males and females are a risk factor for other development problems, such as healthcare and economic stability. The report compares 144 countries to one another in terms of gender parity in four categories or sub-indexes that are measured by a range of UN organisations. The sub-indexes are Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment. It then ranks them, and it is the rankings that are published. Although this type of report does not really do anything to address inequality, it does provide a benchmark tool for organisations and governments to use to facilitate discussion about gender parity”

4. **Powerful women who make change** feature in a lesson entitled “How can global citizens debate, make decisions about and act to promote social justice?”, included in the eleventh-grade Moral Education textbook. Students examine two case studies of influential women- one of the Minister of State for Youth Affairs in the UAE - Shamma bint Suhail Faris Mazrui, and the second of Pakistani Nobel-prize winning women’s rights and children activist - Malala Yousafzai.

معالي الوزيرة شما بنت سهيل فارس المزروعي

معالي الوزيرة شما بنت سهيل فارس المزروعي هي أصغر وزيرة حكومية في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة، ويُعتَقَد أنها الأصغر في العالم، فقد كانت في الثانية والعشرين حين عُيِّنَت في منصبها عام 2016، وتسعى الوزيرة لتمثيل تطلعات واهتمامات الشباب للحكومة، حتى تفهم الحكومة ما هو ضروري لتنمية الشباب كقادة أقوياء ومساهمين في بناء المستقبل، وأكدت معالي الوزيرة على ضرورة أن يجد الشباب آذاناً مصغية، وعلى ضرورة دمجهم في المجتمع وضرورة وجود تركيز قوي على تحديد موهب الشباب ورواد الأعمال في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة، وعلى تقدير الفرص لهم من أجل تنمية إمكاناتهم وأحد الأمور الأساسية التي تعتقد معالي الوزيرة أن الشباب لديه مخاوف بشأنها هو الهدف- أي وجود سبب ذي مغزى للتفاعل والتحرك في القضايا العالمية، وهذا ما تدور حوله المواطنة العالمية.



■ معالي الوزيرة شما بنت سهيل فارس المزروعي هي متحدثة دولية تسعى لتمكين شباب دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة ليكون لديهم هدف ولكي ينموا مواهبهم ومهاراتهم في تنظيم المشاريع.

ملالا يوسفزاي

«ملالا يوسفزاي» هي ناشطة في مجال حقوق المرأة والفتيات، وحاصلة على جائزة نوبل للسلام، ولدت في وادي سوات في باكستان، أسس والدها مدرسة وحرص حُبُّ ابنته للتعليم وصممت ملالا على الذهاب إلى المدرسة وتلقي التعليم، وهو الأمر الذي حظرت به الجماعات الإرهابية في ذلك الوقت، ولتأه عودتها من المدرسة إلى المنزل في أكتوبر عام 2012، أصيبت بطلقة نارية في الرأس أطلقها إرهابي مسلح، لكنها نجت بأعجوبة من محاولة الاغتيال، وعملت حكومة دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة على تسهيل انتقالها إلى مستشفى في المملكة المتحدة لتلقي العلاج. وبعد أن تماثلت للشفاء، صارت أكثر تصميماً من ذي قبل للدفاع عن حقوق الفتيات والنساء حول العالم، وفي عام 2013 ألقت خطبة أمام الأمم المتحدة (في عيد ميلادها السادس عشر)، ونشرت كتابها الأول، «أنا ملالا»، الذي يحكي قصتها، وحجت خطبتها زعماء العالم على الاعتراف بحقوق النساء والأطفال وتدعيمها إنها أصغر الحاصلين على جائزة نوبل للسلام في العالم، وبالإضافة إلى هذا الاعتراف المرموق بعلمها في تعزيز حقوق الفتيات والنساء، حصلت ملالا على العديد من الجوائز الأخرى.



■ ملالا يوسفزاي تتلقى ترحيباً حاراً في زيارة لدولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة في عام 2013.

مصطلحات أساسية

إحدى الإستراتيجيات التي اتبعتها ملالا في دفاعها عن حق الفتيات في التعليم كانت الخطابة أمام الجمهور، قبل محاولة الاغتيال التي تعرّضت لها، كانت قد ألقت خطبة في مدينة بيشاور الباكستانية انتقدت فيها الإرهابيين لسلبهم حقها في التعليم، والإستراتيجية الأخرى التي استخدمتها هي كتابة مدونة لمذبح تلفزيوني ذات الصلة، لرفع الوعي.

Moral Education, Grade 11, Vol. 3, 2018, pp.58, 62.

“Her Excellency, Minister Shamma bint Suhail Faris Mazrui is the youngest government minister in the UAE – and believed to be the youngest in the world. She was 22 old when she was appointed to her position in 2016. She strives to represent the aspirations and concerns of young people to the government, so that it can understand what young people need to develop as strong leaders and contributors for the future...”

Malala Yousafzai is a Nobel-Prize winning women’s rights and children activist...Malala was determined to go to school and to be educated – something that was forbidden by a terrorist group at the time...She gave a speech before the UN in 2013...urged world leaders to recognize and promote the rights of women and children...”

5. **Articles 2 and 23 from the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights¹¹**, are taught to ninth-graders in the “Moral Rules and Assuming responsibility” unit in a lesson titled “Aspects of equality among people”. Students are required to discuss each picture in relation to the human rights article it represents. While the first picture refers to the issues that cause discrimination, the second picture addresses the problem of unequal opportunities and the difference between women and men’s occupations and salaries.

أ. انظر إلى الصور من العالم واقراء البند المأخوذ من شرعة الأمم المتّحدة لحقوق الإنسان. قدّم مثالا من العالم على

مشكلة في المجتمع ناتجة عن عدم الالتزام بكلّ من البنود المذكورة.



Moral Education, Grade 9, Vol. 1, 2018, p. 13.

“a. Look at the pictures from the world and read the article from the UN Declaration of Human Rights. Give an example from the world to a problem in the society resulting from non-compliance with each of the mentioned articles.

Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that every human being is entitled to all the rights without any regard to race, color, sex, language, religion, belief, family background, social status, economic status, nationality, or the land in which he was born.

Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to receive equal pay for equal work (without regard to gender)”

¹¹ <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>.

Conclusion

The ME curriculum is ambitious and it reveals the UAE's considerable effort and motivation to provide a more holistic curriculum that focuses on personal development as well as traditional subjects. Moreover, the ME initiative indicates that UAE links its economic and technological progress to a broader process of modernization—that is, progress comes along with modern and global values—and morals. It also reflects UAE's national strategic ambition to ensure social cohesion in an ethnically and culturally mixed society.

Although what one means by the 'morally educated person' is a philosophical question, material collected in the framework of this report was examined through the lens of IMPACT-se's methodology¹² based on UNESCO-derived standards of peace and tolerance. Within the scope of this preliminary report, we chose to focus on one of the four 'pillars' which constitute the ME curriculum, that is "Character and morality", and within this already narrow framework, we have focused on three topics: tolerance towards the 'Other', peace and conflict resolution, and equality. Subsequently, important issues, such as concepts of morality embodied in the history and culture of the UAE, or regional and cultural practices and views, were left out.

The material observed partially meets international standards of peace and tolerance. On one hand, the textbooks examined promote awareness to social diversity, and foster empathy, tolerance and respect for the individual 'other', a person of another gender, race, religion etc.

However, all 'other' characters found in the material, are solely local, and the question of their different residential status in the UAE is not discussed. Within the topic of equality, which was one of the three examined in this research, the absence of such a discussion is surprising. Yet, in one example,¹³ residents of the UAE may receive scholarships on equal footing with citizens. More importantly, no examples were found of 'other' parties with which the UAE or the Arab world in general are involved in a conflict or are considered as "enemies" or regional rivals. These could be political entities or members of competing religions or creeds. As just a small part of the curriculum was examined, further research is needed to fully examine this statement.

A prominent line of thought in the curriculum, is the concept of recognizing social and cultural diversity as a source of national power and pride. Being tolerant and respectful towards the 'other' as well as having the skills for resolving conflicts in a peaceful manner, are shown to be an inner strength of a person and of a nation. It also is presented to be in the benefit of students, as it makes them responsible parts of the society they live in. Nonetheless, as stated above, some conflicts, maybe the hardest ones to be solved, are not mentioned or even implied.

¹² <https://www.impact-se.org/methodology-2/>.

¹³ *Moral Education*, Grade 6, Vol. 1, 2018, pp. 75–76.

Theory and practice are woven together as part of every unit and lesson in the textbooks. Students are required to not only be aware of definitions and theoretical models, but also being able to implement them in their everyday life. As their body of knowledge grows, they get more project assignments requiring them to forward looking at different social issues and encouraging them to become active citizens of the UAE and the world.

Limited by the narrow scope of the current research, three ‘pillars’ of the ME curriculum (“The individual and the community”, “Cultural studies”, and “Civic studies”) were not examined. These topics include a large amount of material, which requires research in order to fully understand the essence of the ME program.¹⁴

Finally, there is a need to deepen and widen the examination of the “Character and Morality” topic, which was only partially examined within the framework of this report.

¹⁴ Note that the ME program represents a segment of the entire UAE curriculum. A proper IMPACT-se analysis would require the study of the curriculum in its entirety.

List of Examined Textbooks

The following United Arab Emirates Moral Education textbooks were analyzed for the preliminary research in this study. The titles both here and referenced in the text have been translated into English to aid the reader.

1. *Moral Education*, Grade 1, Vol. 3, 2017–18.
2. *Moral Education*, Grade 2, Vol. 1, 2017–18.
3. *Moral Education*, Grade 3, Vol. 1, 2017–18.
4. *Moral Education*, Grade 4, Vol. 1, 2017–18.
5. *Moral Education*, Grade 5, Vol. 1, 2017–18.
6. *Moral Education*, Grade 6, Vol. 1, 2017-18.
7. *Moral Education*, Grade 6, Vol. 3, 2017–18.
8. *Moral Education*, Grade 8, Vol. 1, 2017–18.
9. *Moral Education*, Grade 8, Vol. 2, 2017–18.
10. *Moral Education*, Grade 8, Vol. 3, 2017–18.
11. *Moral Education*, Grade 9, Vol. 1, 2017–18.
12. *Moral Education*, Grade 9, Vol. 3, 2017–18.
13. *Moral Education*, Grade 10, Vol. 3, 2018–19.
14. *Moral Education*, Grade 11, Vol. 3, 2018–19.
15. *Moral Education Teacher's Guide*, Grade 1, Vol. 3, 2017–18.
16. *Moral Education Teacher's Guide*, Grade 2, Vol. 1, 2017–18.
17. *Moral Education Teacher's Guide*, Grade 3, Vol. 2, 2017–18.
18. *Moral Education Teacher's Guide*, Grade 4, Vol. 1, 2017–18.
19. *Moral Education Teacher's Guide*, Grade 5, Vol. 1, 2017–18.
20. *Moral Education Teacher's Guide*, Grade 6, Vol. 1, 2017–18.
21. *Moral Education Teacher's Guide*, Grade 6, Vol. 1, 2017–18.
22. *Moral Education Teacher's Guide*, Grade 8, Vol. 2, 2017–18.
23. *Moral Education Teacher's Guide*, Grade 8, Vol. 3, 2017–18.
24. *Moral Education Teacher's Guide*, Grade 9, Vol. 1, 2017–18.
25. *Moral Education Teacher's Guide*, Grade 9, Vol. 3, 2017–18.
26. *Moral Education Teacher's Guide*, Grade 10, 2018–19.
27. *Moral Education Teacher's Guide*, Grade 11, 2018–19.