



# Summary Report

9 October 2004

Jumeira Beach Hotel

Dubai





## *Middle East Harvard Alumni Convention* Summary Report

### Table of Contents

	Page No.
Overview of Workshops .....	3
Workshop Summaries	
▪ Promoting Education in the Arab World .....	3
▪ Expanding Networking .....	4
▪ Future Conference Planning.....	4
▪ Increasing Interaction Between Harvard and the Arab World.....	5
Convention Participants and contact info .....	6
Convention Sponsors .....	8





## ***Middle East Harvard Alumni Convention*** **Summary Report**

A primary objective of the Middle East Harvard Alumni Convention held in Dubai on 9 October 2004 was to give conference participants the opportunity to help shape the future direction of the Harvard Arab Alumni Association (HAAA) in the Arab World. Participants had the opportunity to do this through their participation in one of four workshops:

- (1) Promoting Education in the Arab World**
- (2) Expanding Networking Opportunities among Harvard Alumni with an Interest in the Arab World**
- (3) Future Conference Planning**
- (4) Increasing Interaction between Harvard and the Arab World**

In each workshop, participants developed ideas for initiatives that they believed Harvard alumni should pursue in the region.

This report includes summaries of the main initiatives discussed in each of the workshops. Local Harvard alumni organizations throughout the region are encouraged to look through these initiatives in deciding on the projects they would like to pursue. The HAAA will also use these proposals as a guide in selecting future initiatives to pursue.

### ***Promoting Education in the Arab World***

1. Develop training programs for teachers in the Arab World in conjunction with Harvard
  - Establish locally certified training hubs that are constantly monitored by Harvard to ensure quality.
2. Establish executive programs with Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) similar in nature to the HBS executive programs
  - 2-6 week training programs for selected teachers to equip them with best practices and give them an opportunity to meet with teachers worldwide to discuss educational challenges and trends
3. Expand Project Harvard Admissions to include:
  - Preparing students to apply to go to Harvard beginning in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade
  - Financing summer programs at Harvard for secondary school students from the Arab World
4. Provide financing or scholarships for students to attend Harvard University or for teachers to attend HGSE





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5. Work with local universities and the private sector to establish “Studying chairs” or Masters programs in under-represented fields
  - In response to the perception of lack of graduate study programs at Arab universities, private sector funds from a specific industry can be pooled to finance the costs of establishing graduate study programs.

### ***Expanding Networking among Harvard Alumni with an Interest in the Arab World***

1. Distribute a newsletter monthly to all members listing upcoming events around the world that may be interesting to HAAA members (e.g., Harvard Alumni Society’s Dr. Clovis Maksoud talk, Leaders Conference in Dubai)
2. Provide an e-mail distribution list for members to contact other members with requests or announcements
3. Organize annual HAAA membership meeting for members in the Arab world
  - Dates should be set far in advance
  - HAAA should partner with a different local Harvard alumni organization each year in organizing their conference
  - Should be a 2-day event
4. Appoint liaison to HAAA from each local Harvard alumni group

### ***Future Conference Planning***

1. Following points should be taken into consideration when planning a conference:
  - Audience appeal
  - Sponsor appeal
  - Keynote speakers
  - Location: The location should be interesting so that the members can bring their families also
  - Duration: Conference should be for 1-2 days linked with the weekend
  - Networking opportunities: such as social events integrated into the conference program to create further networking opportunities.





## ***Middle East Harvard Alumni Convention*** **Summary Report**

- Cooperation: Consider planning events with other organizations and institutions, such as the MIT Arab Alumni Association, Governments, Harvard, local universities
- Exhibitions: To use other mediums for communication/expression.
- Lessons learned: Conference should take into account lessons learned from previous events

### **2. Potential topics for future conferences:**

- Human Resources
- Labour Market
- Islamic Finance & Regional Development
- Micro-finance
- Modern Arab Art
- Tourism
- Harvard & the Arab World
- Education
- Success Stories
- Topics of Entertainment

## ***Increasing Interaction between Harvard and the Arab World***

1. Work with Harvard Business School to develop a Research Centre in the region
  - HBS already has 5 business centres in the region
2. Encourage HBS to develop case studies on companies in the region
3. Encourage local companies in the Arab World to recruit Harvard students





## *Middle East Harvard Alumni Convention* **Summary Report**

### **List of Delegates**

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# Middle East Harvard Alumni Convention Summary Report

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## *Middle East Harvard Alumni Convention* Summary Report

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