



Session II B, July 16-18, 2018

24. The Arab World: Meaning, Identity, and Discovery

Who are the “real” Arabs? Fairy-tale rich Bedouins or fanatical terrorists? What else is out there besides the wealth, the violence and the so-called incomprehensible Islam? We will lift the veil of the pervasive reductionist perspectives on the Arab region and its people in these highly polarizing times, by providing deeper insights into the complex experience we call the Arab world. We will explore the kaleidoscope of Arab identities and their core values, learn about the primary communication patterns and negotiation strategies, and compare local business practices of public and private institutions. We will also look at the Western world through an Arab lens. We invite you on an experiential learning journey that will engage your mind as well as your senses. Taught by an Arab Muslim and a Slovakian expatriate in Egypt, the course will use both an anthropological and an intercultural perspective.

Designed for: Anyone interested in a deeper understanding of the Arab region for professional and/or personal reasons: educators and students, business people, administrators, study abroad professionals, and developmental workers, to name a few.

Workshop Objectives

You will have the opportunity to:

- Explore the predominant cultural values, and communication and negotiation styles of the Arab region in order to better understand its people and their realities
- Share your own knowledge and understanding of the Arab world
- Shift from Western to Eastern perspectives through deeper understanding of cultural norms from both points of view
- More clearly decipher world events that involve the Arab region

Learning Activities

- Brief cognitive, visual and other sensory inputs to explore Arab values and other primary cultural concepts in order to better deconstruct and understand the local realities
- Interactive experiential activities and brief simulations to explore the predominant local communication and negotiation styles
- Open dialogue platform to share your understanding (assumptions and knowledge) of the Arab region and its people
- Group discussions and group work to apply the learnings from this workshop



Sherifa Fayez is national director of AFS Egypt Intercultural Education Programs. In 2004, Sherifa spearheaded the organization's restructuring plans as well as growth and development implementation strategies. The organization is now present in 20 cities in Egypt, and she helped facilitate the start-up and development of partner offices in the region (KSA, India, Kenya, and Tunisia). Sherifa holds a Master's degree in Intercultural Relations from the University of Pacific and an Economics degree from the American University in Cairo. She authored chapters in several publications related to intercultural communication, and is passionate about spreading intercultural learning—particularly in school curricula and professional workplaces.

Dr. Jana Holla is a freelance intercultural consultant and trainer with a background in cultural anthropology. Jana's interventions focus primarily on cross-cultural competence building, diversity management, and relocation training and coaching; combining experiential learning with the latest multidisciplinary theories on culture and cognition. She works with clients from both the corporate and non-profit sectors, predominantly in the Middle East and Europe. Jana also lectures at the Ain Shams University in Cairo, Egypt and held the position of president of Young SIETAR.



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