

Arab and European Leadership Network in Higher Education (ARELEN)

The Covid-19 Challenge

'Round table' - virtual discussion to priorities needs

1st of July 2020

Arab and European Leadership Network in Higher Education (ARELEN) virtual round table discussion on Wednesday 1st of July 2020 in cooperation with the Association of Arab Universities AARU.

The Arab and European Leadership Network in Higher Education (ARELEN) in cooperation with the Association of Arab Universities (AARU) facilitated a virtual round table discussion on Wednesday 1st of July 2020 to priorities universities needs in the light of covid-19 crisis implications.

Prof Amr Ezzat Salama, Secretary General of the Association of Arab Universities and Chair of ARELEN welcomed the participants in his opening speech and highlighted the importance of the roundtable discussion. Prof. Salama shed light on the challenges that are facing and will face education in the Arab world, as well as the actions that would provide appropriate responses.

13 university rectors from Gulf & MENA countries took part in this facilitated round table discussion, participants share their experiences on their priorities and identified the key challenges faced by their universities under the covid-19 crisis.

Prof. Mohamed Loutfi (Vice-Chair) summarized the challenges faced by participants into two main categories Firstly, the 'here and now', responding to current and potential future challenges in teaching and learning, finance, mobility, government legislations highlighting that the latter is could be more of concern to private universities than the public universities.

Secondly, the 'future' the role of the Universities to the meet the societal needs in what is being defined as the 'New Norm' or the 'Post Covid-19' world, and the need to have 'fit for purpose' leaders to respond to the current and future challenges.

Mr. David Lock the Secretary General of ARELEN moderated the session also invited participants to consider the wider opportunities as well as the shorter-term needs for recovery and the training and assistance that they would value from ARELEN.

Mr. Lock thanked the participants for their helpful and self-reflective remarks. After listening to the discussion Mr Lock had identified that in addition to re-opening in a way that was safe and protected the health of staff and students, there were key challenges that needed to be addressed or opportunities which could be taken.

ARELEN exists to help by providing leadership development opportunities to support and enable the agenda of Arab Universities, drawing on successful practice from around the world Europe in particular.