

ABA Delegation Goes to Jordan

By ABA delegates to Jordan, in alphabetical order: Wayne Fisher, Ph.D.; Linda J. Hayes, Ph.D.; Alexandra Logue, Ph.D.; M. Jackson Marr, Ph.D.; and Maria E. Malott, Ph.D.

A delegation from the Association for Behavior Analysis went to Jordan from October 25th to the 30th to explore and promote the long-term development of behavior analysis in the country. Delegations are one aspect of ABA's international dissemination efforts, which have been supported by the Executive Council since 1999. The objectives of international delegations are to disseminate behavior analysis and help movements start in regions of the world where their onset might be difficult without such support. The Jordan delegation was the fourth one conducted in the past seven years; earlier delegations went to Russia in 1999; China in 2001; and Bahrain, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia in 2003. Figure 1 shows a map of Jordan, highlighting Amman and Irbid in the north, where delegation activities were centered.



Figure 1. Map of Jordan.

The Jordan delegation was initiated at the request of Dr. Alexandra Logue, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs at the New York Institute of Technology (NYIT), and was inspired by the first delegation to the Middle East (Malott, et al., 2003). NYIT has three campuses in the United States, two on Long Island and one in New York City. In recent years NYIT has expanded its international efforts, establishing programs in Jiangxi, China; Vancouver, Canada; and Cairo, Egypt. NYIT also has campuses in the Kingdom of Bahrain and Amman (see the Amman campus in Figure 2), and is currently planning to open a campus in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. The Jordan campus has approximately 1,000 students; its computer graphics/art building was inaugurated while the delegates were visiting.



Figure 2. Entrance to the New York Institute of Technology, Jordan Campus.

The NYIT's Middle Eastern Operations (MEO) provided financial support for the delegates' activities, including travel and board while in Jordan; delegates bought their own tickets and donated their time to dissemination efforts. ABA provided in-kind support in helping to coordinate efforts with the MEO. Dr. Betty Leaver, Dean of the Jordan Campus, coordinated the logistics of the delegation from Jordan with the support of Dr. Mohamed Hussein, NYIT Executive Chairman for the Middle East, and his assistant Sahar Al-Tellawi, Office Manager. Dr. Wajih Owais, President of the Jordan University of Science & Technology (See Figure 3), and his staff also contributed in significant ways to the planning and support of the delegation. Dr. Maria Malott coordinated the pre-delegation activities with the delegates.



Figure 3. Dr. Wajih Owais, President of the Jordan University of Science & Technology.

A lesson learned from previous delegations is that dissemination efforts are welcome and create a tremendous demand for behavioral technology. However, in order to satisfy demand while maintaining quality, higher education programs are needed to train practitioners and educators. The creation of higher education programs has been an essential component of development in countries where behavior analysis is well established. Given that a lack of well-trained behavior analysts would make it difficult to support long-term dissemination efforts, the initial goal of the delegation was to explore the possibility of establishing a master's program in behavior analysis in Jordan.

Accomplishments

The highlight of the delegation was a meeting with Her Royal Highness, Princess Muna Al Hussein, the mother of Jordan's King, His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein. The meeting took place at Princess Muna's offices in the Royal Palace. The Princess convened representatives at the highest levels of government to discuss the dissemination of behavior analysis in Jordan, including the Jordanian Ministers of Social Development, Health, Education, and Observation of Government Performance; higher officials of the Jordanian military; Dr. Wajih Owais; Dr. M. Al Sheyyab, Vice President, JUST, and General Manager, King Abdullah University Hospital; and Ms. Da'ad Shokeh, Secretary General of the Jordanian Nursing Council. In addition to the delegates, Drs. Mohamed Hussein and Betty Leaver were also present at the meeting. Figure 4 shows meeting participants with Her Royal Highness.



Figure 4. From left to right: Dr. M. Jackson Marr, Dr. Linda Hayes, Dr. Wayne Fisher, Princess Muna Al Hussein, Dr. Maria Malott, Dr. Betty Leaver, and Dr. Alexandra Logue, outside Princess Muna Al Hussein's office.

Princess Muna opened the meeting by indicating that Jordan needed the help of behavior analysis science and

technologies, and that she had gathered those present to discuss how behavior analysis could be utilized in the service of Jordanian society and its people. After much discussion, the Princess appointed a Steering Committee to conduct a broad needs analysis to identify areas in which behavior analysis could address societal challenges. Members also discussed the possibility of traveling to the United States to review US behavioral facilities, and attend the ABA annual convention as part of the action plan for exchange and cooperation. Figure 5 shows Drs. Alexandra Logue and Mohamed Hussein presenting the Princess an NYIT gift on behalf of the delegates.



Figure 5. From left to right: Dr. Alexandra Logue, Dr. Mohamed Hussein, and Princess Muna Al Hussein.

ABA delegates agreed to assist in the situation study by identifying those individuals known to be working in behavior analysis in areas relevant to the needs of Jordan. Dr. Wajih Owais communicated his plan to establish an undergraduate program in behavior analysis at JUST in the School of Science's Department of Psychology and a master's program in behavior analysis at the School of Nursing, as long-term initiatives.

The delegates visited the campus of JUST (Figure 6) in the city of Irbid, only 4.5 miles from the Syrian border. Since its foundation in 1986, JUST has grown from five faculties to eleven and has 55 academic departments offering 52 undergraduate and 95 graduate programs. Approximately 630 faculty serve over 18,000 students from 41 countries.



Figure 6. Campus of the Jordan University of Science & Technology.

The delegates also presented basic topics on behavior analysis at the King Abdullah University Hospital—a teaching hospital within JUST. Presentations included behavioral treatment of autism and developmental disabilities, by Fisher; behavior analysis in higher education, by Hayes; choice and management, by Logue; organizational behavior management and an overview of the Association for Behavior Analysis, by Malott; and a general overview of behavioral analysis by Marr. The audience included administrators, staff, and students from the hospital.

Delegates toured the hospital facility and met with key administrators to discuss how organizational behavior management and training in behavior analysis could aid performance improvement at the hospital. Figure 7 shows Professor Dr. M. Al Sheyyab, General Manager of King Abdullah University Hospital, with hospital administrators.



Figure 7. From left to right: Mohamed Eobal, Public Relations; Dr. Ziad A. Elnasser, Vice Director, Clinical Microbiology; Dr. M. Al Sheyyab, Vice President, JUST, and General Manager, King Abdullah University Hospital; and Dr. Linda G. Haddad, Deputy Director, King Abdullah University Hospital.

The delegates also met with 12 local psychologists to explore how best to pursue efforts of education and dissemination. The psychologists concluded that a way to integrate dissemination and the efforts of the Princess’s Steering Committee would be to form an affiliated chapter of ABA. The Jordan chapter would, as well, forge a relationship with the Middle East Arab ABA chapter. Figure 8 shows the meeting of ABA delegates and local psychologists.



Figure 8. Meeting with local psychologists.

Additionally, delegates toured the Our Lady of Peace Centre for the care and treatment of children and adults with developmental disabilities, a facility run strictly from private donations. Delegates discussed how behavior analysis might support efforts at the Centre and in Jordan, where there is a substantial need for treatment options. According to the Our Lady of Peace Centre, (2005), of Jordan’s 5.2 million inhabitants, approximately 9.8% have mental or physical handicaps, distributed as follows:

Mentally challenged	125,000	2.5%
Physically challenged	50,000	1.0%
Hearing impaired	50,000	1.0%
Sight impaired	25,000	0.5%
Speech impaired	75,000	1.5%
Dual handicaps	50,000	1.0%
Multiple handicaps	25,000	0.5%
Emotional/aggravation handicaps	45,000	0.9%
Psychophysically challenged	45,000	0.9%

Figure 9 shows the dining facilities at the Our Lady of Peace Centre and Figure 10, the Director and a staff member of the Centre.



Figure 9: Our Lady of Peace Centre.



Figure 10. From left to right: Claudia Grasiene and Cristiana Ceprítani, Director, Our Lady of Peace Centre.

The delegation's activities generated much publicity in Jordan. During the few days the delegates were in the country, eight articles were published in seven Arabic and English newspapers. Muhannad I. Malkawi (see figure 11) coordinated public relations efforts for the delegation.



Figure 11: Muhannad I. Malkawi, Manager, JUST Department of Public Relations, on the ruins of a Roman provincial city prominent in the times of Alexander the Great (333 BC).

In conclusion, the 2005 ABA delegation to Jordan proved to be effective in the dissemination of behavior analysis. It generated strong interest in the field and concluded with solid initiatives for future efforts, including the formation of graduate and undergraduate programs and the establishment of Steering and Executive Committees, supported at the highest levels of Jordanian government, to investigate the opportunities and means for both short- and long-term development.

ABA delegates were delighted to learn during their travels that, while there are still many opportunities in Jordan to establish behavior science and services, JABA has taken over a Jordanian town, as revealed in Figure 12.



Figure 12. Directions to JABA, a town located between Amman and Irbid.

References

- Malott, M. E., Al-Qassab, N., Hayes, L., Marr, M. J., Johnson, K., Williamson, P., & Richardson, S. (2003, Fall). ABA Delegation Works Toward the Establishment of Behavior Analysis in the Middle East. *The ABA Newsletter*, Vol. 26 No. 3, Front cover.
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