

BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT - DR. HALEH ARBAB

Haleh Arbab holds a Doctoral degree in Education and Development from the Center for International Education at the University of Massachusetts, a Master's degree in Communications from the Annenberg School at the University of Pennsylvania, and an undergraduate degree in the history of art with a concentration in sociology from Bryn Mawr College. She was born in Iran, educated in the United States, and lived in Colombia, South America from 1982 to 2005. In Colombia she worked with the Foundation for the Application and Teaching of the Sciences (FUNDAEC), and from 1995 to 2005 served as Rector of Centro Universitario de Bienestar Rural, a Colombian university she helped found in 1988. Currently Dr. Arbab lives in Haifa, Israel, where, since June 2005, she is Director of the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity.

Dr. Arbab has extensive experience in education and development of rural populations, and in the development and application of educational materials that draw from science and religion as sources of practical knowledge. She has focused exclusively on research that connects action and reflection, practice and theory, and has as its purpose investigating reality and improving people's lives. The rigor of such research is proven in the capacity of its results to generate replication of successes and identify and overcome potential obstacles to action. An example is her doctoral thesis, which investigated community perceptions of teachers in rural areas and how and why these perceptions change over time. This research strongly informed the development of the curriculum of Centro Universitario's five-year undergraduate degree program in rural education.

Before working with FUNDAEC, Dr. Arbab worked with youth programs and women's groups in Colombia and in the field of non-formal education in various Latin American countries, including research on the role of local participation in appropriate technology projects in Guatemala for the American organization Volunteers in Technical Assistance. She has collaborated in the development of values-based educational materials for youth, pre-youth and children in collaboration with the Fundación Instituto Ruhi in Puerto Tejada, Colombia that are used throughout South and Central America to promote young people's commitment to service, and have been translated and used in numerous countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and North America.

Dr. Arbab has taught numerous undergraduate and graduate courses at Centro Universitario, with an emphasis on education and development, communications and research, and the role of religion and science in development, and has collaborated on projects in education and development and women in development with universities in other regions. She has served as Academic Coordinator of FUNDAEC's Specialization program, which grants graduate degrees in Education for Development in Colombia and other parts of Latin America. FUNDAEC has also offered graduate-level courses via an Internet-based program, using tutors trained by Dr. Arbab and a small group of colleagues, in countries including Costa Rica, Venezuela, Ethiopia, Zambia, Macau, China, India, Qatar, Oman, Canada, the United States, Australia, and England.

The results of Dr. Arbab's research and action are evident in the thousands of children, youth and adults who have participated in non-formal classes she has developed, or have graduated from the high school program, the university and the graduate course, and are serving humanity in unique and effective ways throughout Colombia, Latin America, and the world.

Her recent efforts include a university-level textbook on ethnographic research methods; a USAID-funded country-level feasibility study for the Nicaraguan Ministry of Education with the US-based organization Family Health International in 2003; participation in the production of radio programs for community development in the North of Cauca region of Colombia in early 2004; and participation in the 10-year follow-up meetings to the United Nations Social Summit in Copenhagen. She lives in Haifa, Israel with her husband, Gustavo Correa, and her high school age son; her daughter is an economics and anthropology double major at Bryn Mawr College in the United States.