RASIT
Royal Academy of Science International Trust

Science café
Towards Knowledge Societies

and still developing menu
for public minds

5 years

RASIT 2011 Report
Building Scientific Communities

Is Popularization of Science Possible in Arab States?

Popularization of science is an endeavor to image scientific concepts in such a way that every person (especially non-scientists) can understand the fundamental objectives and have an idea of what science in essence is. Although many Arab scientists are renowned and their fingerprints are so clear in scientific research that led industrial development worldwide, unfortunately a great number of the public in Arab States cannot tell exactly what 'science' is all about. In fact, the gap between scientists and the Arab Societies seems to be huge.

Science Knowledge & Culture to Arab Nationals and every common person in the Arab Countries were and remain to be narrowed to those only studying at universities and to graduates from academic institutions.

Further, the academic tutors in scientific subjects kept their communication with a very minimal slice of the Arab communities within campuses of Arab universities. And the share of scientific knowledge between the academic tutors and every person within the Arab Nations outside the academic campuses remains to be almost nil.

The questions RASIT paced with are as follows:
Is it possible to popularize scientific subjects among the Arab Nations at various levels? And if it is possible to popularize science within Arab States, to what extent will the Arab peoples accept knowledge of Science? And how will the knowledge of science play a role in the Arab human persons day to day livings and culture?

To answer these questions knowingly the poor knowledge of the majority of Arab peoples in science due to the lack of interest in reading scientific publications and books; and due to the ignorance of non-Arabic languages (such as English, French languages) that most of the scientific publications, journals, and books written with; and due to the lack of community educational programs.

Therefore, RASIT introduced “Science Café” in order to interactive the relationship between academic tutors and public within Arab States. “Science Café” was and remains the answer to all questions.

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Yes, it is possible to popularize science to a great extent, by means of raising awareness of how it touches our everyday life. How..., this depends on choosing subjects, fields of public interest, speaker, presenter, place, and the form of delivering it, and the forum of delivering the seminar/ talk in Arabic language by way of defining the scientific terms too. Through “Science Café”, RA-SIT managed to break the academic campuses boundaries that encouraged the public interest in learning more about science.

Yes, it is possible to popularize all specific scientific ideas and concepts from mathematics, chemistry, biology, medicine to geology and nanotechnology, as long as it can be effectively explained one at a time in a very simple language that every person can understand.

It is important that the public should have a basic general understanding of science and appreciation to its impact in their lives. Only “Science Café” can popularize science in Arab States. And “Science Café” has proven to be platform for scientists to share their knowledge with the public as social educational forum.

The key to Popularize Science in Arab States should be through the spreading of “Science Café” programs via local social clubs.

RASIT has designed a special module for such local clubs that will encourage professionals in science to interact with members of the public who shall attend the local social club titled “Science Café”.

Five years for the Science Café program, we serve our audience and scientists within Middle East & North Africa Region in an excellent way. We are grateful to every scientist (Popularizer) who took efforts to present science objectively to the public via “Science Café”.

HRH Princess Nisreen El-Hashemite
BSc MSc MD PhD
Executive Director
Building knowledgeable communities in science by creating ties among diverse groups of scientists and the public lay at the heart of the RASIT’s mission, and the Science Café Program is a significant stride in this vital area.

In an Era of change where modern societies are gradually moving from Information to knowledge base societies, RASIT is working to enhance the social capital of Arab communities. RASIT brings to the Arab world a new way for people to connect. The Science Café program is a place where scholars mingle with the public. It's a forum for exploring new ideas, discussing new concepts and expanding personal horizons. The monthly seminar is creating the biggest platform in Arabic history where scientists, researchers, educators, public, and young individuals interact in a knowledge driven environment.

In the “Science Café” the public find people who play an important part in developing and improving our lives, both behind the scenes and in the spotlight.

The “Science Café” is a human endeavor — with a heart, a rhythm, moods, personality, language and, yes, failures, but so often when telling the story of science, we frame it as a straight forward march to discovery. The details and the context, the circuitous path of research, the process and sometimes the people themselves are neglected.

Each month, the Science Café gives an individual a seat at a table. We developing a menu for his/her mind. Individuals are invited either to "listen in" or, if the mood strikes, join in the conversation by offering comments or suggesting topics.

The Science Café, the First of its Kind in Arab States, aims to:
- Excite widespread interest in science, raising awareness of how it touches our everyday life and how society can play a vital role in helping it to progress.
- Inspire Interest Joy Wonder and Excitement of scientific discovery.
- Increase Access to the best Science knowledge and Communication.
- Invigorate Science Education & Knowledge

In the five years since it was formally organized, the Science Café Program has continued to enhance its commitment to bringing together prominent speakers and the public for interdisciplinary discussions in some of the hottest areas of science, with a total of 38 lectures were held attracting over 3000 attendees.
Program Outcomes

The effects of the program will be further down the road. The expected results of the Science Café program are threefold:
- Enhancing the science understanding and empowering scientists
- Increasing the interest of the public in science and changing their attitudes so that they can imagine themselves in the role of scientists in developing human life.
- Creating long-lasting relationships between the society and scientists

Total No. of attendees increased from 1166 in the years 2007/2008 to 2046 in the years 2009/2010, and to reach 4388 in the year 2011.

To gauge the attendees’ attitude towards the Science Café program, public opinion was collected following every seminar. The information gathered from the attendees’ surveys assists in understanding the effects and outcomes of the Science café Program. The research information is used to continually improve and expand the program to meet the goals: Popularization of Science.

Attendees’ Opinion: How do you rate the Science Café Program?

![Attendees' Opinion Graph](image1)

![Attendees' Opinion Graph](image2)
Attendees’ Opinion
Will you attend the seminar?

“Science in a coffee shop and in Arabic language, at the beginning I thought it is a crazy idea and would not succeed, but now I cannot wait for the next seminar..” - Huda

“I loved the science café because it shows me how scientists make a difference in our lives everyday” - Fadi

“my opinion, Excellent, Successful, we need more of it in many places to educate more people, The Best Program ever in Arab Countries” - Dr Baalbaki

“Never in my life did I think that I would be lecturing in Arabic to the public in a coffee shop about my scientific work. Never in my life did I think that my work would be appreciated by people outside university or scientific conferences. Never in my life did I imagine that VIPs are setting next to ordinary or students and enjoying science. Never in my life did I expect that Arabs would set and talk about anything else other than politics and arts” - Prof. Cortas

"lecturing for the public from a different backgrounds was a challenge, the Science café Program showed me that science also brings joy and satisfaction, makes me more tolerant and patient, and moreover gives me the feeling that you are doing something important and gave me new ideas for my research.." - Dr Majed Khodr

“We have learned a lot through the Science Café, Can you make it every week? Thank you” Mrs Haddad
Promoting Excellence in Science is at the heart of RASIT’s work

“Science cannot develop in isolation. It flourishes through the dialogue of individuals, through the interaction of cultures and communities and through the meeting of minds. It prospers in a soil that is rich in diversity and in a climate that favors diffusion and cross-fertilization. Ideas must migrate to develop, they must be shared to take root, and they must be accessible for all to benefit”

Irina Bokova

5 years

Thank You

We would like to thank all lecturers for their time and efforts. A special Thanks to: Ms Hiyam Sujud who coordinates the program, and other volunteers involved in the program.

2012 and beyond

We have an ambitious range of new and expanded activities that will take us up to and beyond our 4th anniversary in 2012.

We are currently working towards creating long-term sustainability for the program.

With a potential funding options and partnerships, we remain optimistic that the Science Café Program will grow to more Arab States and expand for many more years to come!
Royal Academy of Science
International Trust

Serving education & humanity since 1969

Our commitment forever remain
“whenever & wherever there is a human in need,
RASIT Responds”