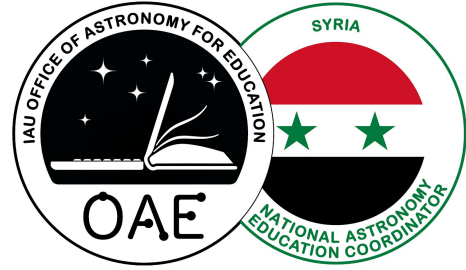


Astronomy Education in Syria



This overview is part of the project "Astronomy Education Worldwide" of the International Astronomical Union's Office of Astronomy for Education.

More information: <https://astro4edu.org/worldwide>

Structure of education: Despite the Syrian Crisis, the educational system still being remained in preserving its good condition. Regardless the damage in a large part of it.

Our country is considered one of the exceptional countries in education, Education in Syria is free for all elementary and middle schools, with low fees for high schools & universities, too.

There is a full primary and middle stage and pre-primary (nursery two years), which is compulsory 9 years, to which 2 years are optionally added before this level (KG1 & KG2), so there are many governmental schools that fully invested in our country, in addition to support by private schools which is supervised by the responsible governmental sector (the Ministry of Education).

Public and private schools adopt the same curricula; but Private schools are distinguished by additional enrichment materials and many extra-curricular activities, without affecting on the educational process and unified curricula, in our Schools there is no distinction, they teach the same curricula despite of sectarian, religious and ethnic diversity.

The registration in schools don't depend on any sectarian difference, and different religions have the right to open private schools at their own expense provided that they adhere to the curriculum of the Ministry of Education and add materials related to their orientations, but their scores are not taken in Undergraduate acceptance rates.

Also, our schools and even our universities still adopt the Arabic language as a basic language of instruction which contributes the activity of translation and Arabization, in addition to two supplemental languages has being taught from the elementary (English and either French, Russian, Japanese, Chinese or German as a second choice).

Education facilities: Because of the severe destruction of many of our schools that led to overcrowding in classrooms, which are often medium to small sizes (about 35 m²), has made the number of students in the classroom huge (about 50 students), in fact at normal cases there comfortable in the spaces, but the crisis has imposed the change and dealing with the educational process, which led to division the students into two shifts once in the morning, and other in the afternoon, to make the classes expanded.

About 40% of Schools' infra-structure in a good condition but other get destroyed because of war, so Unfortunately, most of the schools do not have the Internet, and transportation are relatively expensive, so they cannot provide it. As for water and other facilities are available and monitored by the Ministry of Health.

Governance and organisation: The central government and particularly the ministry of education is the one in charge of putting the curriculum by creating a science commission (and the chair of our NAEC Team is part of that commission) and it follows the implementation of the curriculum and the feedback on it, but in the less than 15% of Syria not controlled by the Syrian government the curriculum created by the ministry is mostly not followed.

Teacher Training: On the matter Concerning the teacher he/she should be graduated from a university specialized in the subject he is going to teach (Physics – Kindergarten – Adult Education – Chemistry – Mathematics – Arabic – English etc.)

And they undergo 2 years in an institution for preparing teachers, after that he/she can teach in schools, and they also have to follow the national center for developing curriculums were they hold courses for teachers annually and seminars throughout most of the summer (while in summer schools have a break), and the center organize a clear and structural plan to deal with teachers each according to their specialty, and connecting every teacher with a specialized scientist or a specialized scientific body.

Astronomy in the curriculum: Astronomy In our schools appears entirely in every educational level, simply in science and physics and in large clear and independent main part in the subject of geography, it takes 25% of the subject in all educational levels, and as we are in the NAEC Team familiar with every word about astronomy in the curriculum, we can assure that astronomy has been included in the curriculum in series, it starts with the first educational level, and by defining earth, the moon, the sun, directions, the seasons, the solar system, reaching the stars, galaxies and it ends where the student take at the third and final year of high school with theories about the beginning of the universe, dark matter and black holes (you can notice the high level of astronomy that a student reach).

Astronomy education outside the classroom: The Syrian Astronomical Association (SAA) is a supplement for schools, where its role appears out of class education through additional lectures to the ones given in school, also many visits and extracurricular activities are happening and also through the school visits to the Syrian Astronomical Observatory (SAO) of the Association, thousands of students visit the observatory annually in a daily basis, so we start the educational year by arranging a program with the schools, and the team of the Syrian Astronomical Association gather volunteering groups in all of the governorates of Syria and work on clarifying astronomy subject in the curriculum through practical applications by telescope observing, tracking astronomical phenomena, various lectures with rich information, fun activities and beautiful movies.

Unfortunately, Syria does not have a stationary astronomical dome to this day.

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