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**To:** Readers of TR-856, *Identifying Arabic-Language Materials for Children That Promote Tolerance and Critical Thinking*.

The Arabic titles and authors of the books mentioned on pages 29, 30, and 31 were inadvertently transposed during the document production process.

The proper spellings are as follows:

*Sheep Don't Eat Cats* (p. 29)

Title: **الخراف لا تأكل القطط**

Author: **خالد جمعة**

*The Story of a Boy Named Fayez* (p. 30)

Title: **قصة ولد اسمه فايز**

Author: **تغريد عارف النجار**

*And on That Night* (p. 31)

Title: **وفي تلك الليلة**

Author: **سمير مالطي**

We regret any inconvenience.

ous and direct was the code: “At least one character acts in a tolerant or pro-social way.” Of the 104 materials reviewed, 62 percent met this criterion. Moreover, within this set of materials, tolerance was often the *central* theme in the work, with the message communicated directly (i.e., employing scaffolding) or through metaphor. Critical thinking was most directly measured using three coding criteria: “Different ways to think or solve a problem are discussed or shown,” “Question rules, authority or societal assumptions while thinking or problem solving,” and “Draw different conclusions from the same information.” In total, 53 percent of materials met at least one of these three criteria, although it must be recalled that extra effort was made in the search process to locate materials with critical thinking themes. In addition, critical thinking was frequently a *secondary* rather than a primary theme in these works.

The limited availability of Arabic language children’s media promoting critical thinking can be explained by three main factors. The first is that the skills needed to think critically do not develop until children reach the oldest of the age groups considered in this study, so it is not surprising that it was rare to encounter the theme in materials aimed at the 4–6 and 7–10 cohorts. Second, critical thinking tends to be a prominent theme of educational materials (see Appendix A); this category comprised a relatively small share (7 percent) of our collection. Finally, critical thinking is a particularly difficult message to integrate into children’s media given that a dominant theme of the works we collected, particularly those written for the youngest children, is actually to reinforce compliant behaviors such as obeying parents. This focus on compliance is consistent with a strong emphasis on such messages in materials produced in the region for young children (e.g., UNDP, 2003). Below, we present descriptions of several works that met our criteria. One work for each of the study age groups is described in some detail.

#### Example from the Collection for Children Ages 4–6

**Title:** *Sheep Don’t Eat Cats*

**Title (Arabic):** الخراف لا تأكل القطط

**Author:** Khālid Jum’ah

**Author (Arabic):** خالد جمعة

**Summary:** This is the story of a family of cats that are frightened by their new neighbors—a family of sheep. The father of the cat family is particularly anxious and forbids any intermingling with the sheep. However, the curiosity of the youngest cat leads to an exchange with the sheep that confirms that the sheep mean no harm to the cats. The moral of the story is not to demonize “the other” and that young people should move beyond the fears and stereotypes of their parents’ generation.

**Author Background:** A Palestinian poet and writer of children’s stories, Khālid Jum’ah lives in Rafah (Gaza). He is a frequent collaborator with both Tamer Institute and various UN organizations including UNESCO and UNRWA.

**Values Communicated:** Acceptance of diversity, positive relationships, tolerant or pro-social behavior, emotional complexity

**Age Cohort:** 4–6 years

**Aimed at Specific Gender:** No, the material is appropriate for both boys and girls.

**Publisher and Date of Publication:** Tamer Institute for Community Education (2005)

**Media Type:** Book

**ISBN:** 9950326230

**Example from the Collection for Children Ages 7–10****Title:** *The Story of a Boy Named Fayez***Title (Arabic):** قصة ولد اسمه فايز**Author:** Taghrīd ‘Ārif al-Najjār**Author (Arabic):** تغريد عارف النجار

**Summary:** Fayeze is a young boy who is preoccupied with his thoughts, earning him a reputation as a daydreamer. The other kids poke fun at him since this leads him to do things like wear two different shoes. In another instance, Fayeze is caught by his teacher staring out the window at clouds whose shapes remind him of animals. Although Fayeze is creative, he does not get good evaluations in art class because the instructor asks the students to do things by rote like reproducing a flower vase. Fayeze makes a vase, but takes artistic license to change its form, which does not please the instructor.

Then, during summer vacation, his father tries to teach him the trade of stone masonry. Fayeze catches on but quickly gets bored by the repetitive nature of the work. One day, while toiling at the workshop with his father, Fayeze imagines a creature that takes him to a dream world where he ends up playing and dancing with the different stones. This daydream convinces Fayeze that carving rocks isn't boring, and he throws himself into the work, hoping that the creature that visited him will return. Soon Fayeze is experimenting and carving rocks into different shapes (fish, horses, cars, plants, etc.). This angers his father, who considers it a waste of time. However, while he is reprimanding Fayeze, the owner of the workshop (a woman) comes by, and she is impressed by Fayeze's work. She buys some of his pieces and asks Fayeze's father if the boy may begin taking art classes at the institute she runs.

The father ultimately agrees, and Fayeze loves the institute where he learns different arts and becomes the star pupil. At the end of the summer, Fayeze wins first place in an art exhibition, leading to an article about him in the newspaper and an interview on TV. He also becomes popular at school, where the students ask for his help with art and he earns the nickname, "Fayeze the Artist."

**Author Background:** Taghrīd ‘Ārif al-Najjār is a Jordanian author who has published over 30 illustrated children's books, including *The Ogre*, which also appeared as a segment on Arabic-language Sesame Street. The author holds a degree in English literature and certificates in education and psychology from the American University in Beirut. Before becoming a writer and publisher, she worked for several years as an educator. She founded al-Salwa Publishing House in 1995.

**Values Communicated:** Acceptance of diversity, positive relationships, tolerant or pro-social behavior, critical thinking

**Age Cohort:** 7–10 years**Aimed at Specific Gender:** No, the material is appropriate for both boys and girls although the story's protagonist is a boy.**Publisher and Date of Publication:** Al-Salwa Publishing House (2008)**Media Type:** Book**ISBN:** 9789957040437

**Example from the Collection for Children Ages 11–14****Title:** *And on That Night***Title (Arabic):** وفي تلك الليلة**Author:** Samīr Mālṭī**Author (Arabic):** سمير مالطي

**Summary:** This is a story about the sons (Walid and Samir) of the shaikhs of two tribes that share the same oasis. The oasis has abundant water, date trees, and pasture for livestock, and Walid and Samir become the best of friends. However, competition between the tribes over water leads to fighting, with the conflict escalating to the point that tribe members are killed in clashes over access to it. This leads the shaikhs of the two tribes to cover up the water source—in order to prevent further conflict—and to cut off contact between the two tribes. Walid’s father warns him against meeting Samir. However, after three days apart, Walid and Samir reunite under the date tree where they had always passed their time. Life becomes very difficult for the tribes because of the water conflict. Nevertheless, two years pass without any reconciliation. Then, winter comes and brings less rain than expected, worsening the situation until both shaikhs are on the verge of moving their tribes out of the oasis. Walid and Samir are unwilling to be split apart, and one night they decide to take it upon themselves to uncover the water source. When they do this, the water gushes forth, awakening the tribe members. The shaikhs of the two tribes take the opportunity to reconcile and the book ends with both tribes celebrating the prospects of a new, conflict-free life in the oasis. Finally, the skies open and it begins to pour rain, symbolizing God rewarding the reconciliation.

**Author Background:** Unknown**Values Communicated:** Acceptance of diversity, positive relationships, tolerant or pro-social behavior, critical thinking, emotional complexity**Age Cohort:** 11–14 years**Aimed at Specific Gender:** No, the material is appropriate for both boys and girls although the main characters in the story are two boys and their fathers.**Publisher and Date of Publication:** Asala Publishing (2009)**Media Type:** Book**ISBN:** 9789953537337**Rejected Works**

Despite careful prescreening of materials through the methods described above, not all of the works collected met screening criteria. Prescreening was not 100 percent effective because book reviews and book summaries were often very short and could be misleading, just as authors’ backgrounds and past publishing records were not always an accurate indicator of the degree to which a given work conveyed messages that aligned with our screening criteria. In total, 68 works, or roughly two-thirds of the collection, were accepted. These 68 works comprise the final repository. The remaining 36 works were generally rejected because of insufficient attention to the values the materials were selected to promote. It should be noted that most of the rejected materials were not promoting intolerance or encouraging blind obedience to norms or rules; the materials simply did not explicitly promote tolerance or critical thinking. For