Assessing / Accrediting LIS Programs in the Middle East : Options and Opportunities

SAJJAD UR REHMAN,
DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE, KUWAIT UNIVERSITY
REHMAN05@GMAIL.COM
Broader global context

East Asia

Southeast Asia

Existing standards and guidelines (IFLA, ALA)

Existing models (CILIP, ALIA, etc.)
GCC Countries

*Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC):*
- Saudi Arabia
- United Arab Emirates
- Kuwait
- Qatar
- Muscat
- Bahrain
Middle East LIS Programs

- LIS programs primarily undergraduate—prevalent model
- Most programs focused on local/regional issues, weak in structure (Kuwait University an exception)
- PhD required of faculty; most publish in Arabic
- Use external evaluators from Western countries
- No professional certification process for graduates
- Most incorporated “information science” into curriculum and research
- Region lacks a professional forum to address quality assessment & accreditation
Review mechanisms used

- Self-study
- External review—other LIS schools
- Accrediting agencies review
Middle East LIS Assessment Challenges

- Distinctions between undergraduate and graduate programs
- Currently predominantly undergraduate programs
- Weak professional meeting culture within and across the countries in the region
GCC LIS programs—
Potential assessment/review options:

- Regional body: Arabian Gulf Chapter of SLA (meets annually)—no current assessment role
- GCC universities forum—too bureaucratic in current form
- Units in ministries of education in the six nations—interest in assessment of curriculum and research
- Regional LIS programs forum—potential as professional culture develops
- IFLA-based accreditation body—existing standards work has potential; anticipates some resistance to outside organization involvement