Teaching and Learning in the Arab World

Bearbeitet von
Christina Gitsaki

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Education is undergoing significant change globally and locally. In the Arab States, globalization and economic development have had a significant effect on education. The *Arab Knowledge Report* (2009) by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) expressed serious concerns over the state of education in the Arab world which has resulted in the lack of a critical mass of highly skilled professionals capable of responding to the needs of the 21st century marketplace. Even in the oil-rich Gulf States, with over 200 higher education institutions, education is problematic with a notable lack of emphasis on specialized science and innovative learning. The Gulf States are in a race to become ‘knowledge economies’ and as a result they are promoting educational reforms such as the application of bilingual education models and education curricula adopted from the west. However, ‘the lack of extensive public debate in Arab countries, together and individually, on the nature, goal and challenges of education reform, and the dearth of published studies, research, and documents on these issues have caused reform efforts to turn in on themselves, exposing them to the dangers of oversimplification’ (MBRF & UNDP/RBAS, 2009:129). This book is an attempt to fill this gap by providing a collection of studies on the state of education in Arab countries with a special focus on the Arabian Gulf where currently there is increased activity and investment in education.