International Alumni Spotlight | Global Engagement

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Norah Abdullah Al-Faiz

Norah Abdullah Al-Faiz has transformed educational policy and practice in Saudi Arabia and has become a symbol of female leadership in the Islamic world.

Serving as the vice minister for girls' education since 2009, Mrs. Al-Faiz holds the highest ministerial rank reached by a woman in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The appointment was a significant indicator of the broadening role for women in politics and education in Saudi Arabia. Mrs. Al-Faiz was named one of TIME Magazine’s “2009 TIME 100” for being one of the most influential people in the world. In 2011, Mrs. Al-Faiz received the Distinguished Arab Women Award in Education from the Arab Women Foundation, and, in 2010, she took first place at the 20th Global Summit of Women in China for her Ministerial Round Table Discussion on Countries Best Practices to Broaden Women Employability in Saudi Arabia.

After earning a bachelor's from King Saud University in Saudi Arabia in 1978, Mrs. Al-Faiz came to the United States to attend Utah State University, where she earned a master's in instructional technology in 1982.

Upon returning to Saudi Arabia, Mrs. Al-Faiz worked as a teacher in public schools and was rapidly promoted to education supervisor. She subsequently held numerous management positions in the field of education, including her service as head principal of the girls’ section at Prince Al-Waleed bin Talal’s Kingdom Schools. In 1993, Mrs. Al-Faiz became director general of the women’s branch at the Institute of Public Administration, a position she held until 2009.

Mrs. Al-Faiz still participates in research and has conducted several training programs and executive workshops, presented several working papers and led official delegations to local, regional and international forums and conferences.

Since graduating from USU, Mrs. Al-Faiz has acted as chairman, member, coordinator and consultant for several Saudi Arabian charitable societies, boards and committees, including the Down Syndrome Charitable Association, the Guiding Committee for Neighborhood Schools Program and on the Takafel Philanthropy Foundation.

Mrs. Al-Faiz lives in Saudi Arabia.

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