

The Future of Iran

Educational Reform



Monday, 12 November, 2012

Legatum Institute

11 Charles Street
London W1J 5DW

PROGRAMME

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Moderators: Anne Applebaum, Director of Political Studies, Legatum Institute
Sharan Tabari, Senior Advisor, Legatum Institute

9.30 - 10.00 *Tea and coffee*

10.00 - 12.30 **The Mainstream: Education in the Islamic Republic of Iran**

Speakers

Professor Saeed Paivandi, Professor in the Department of Education, University of Lorraine in Nancy, France

Professor Goli Rezai-Rashti, Professor of Education at the University of Western Ontario

Discussant

Professor Cesar Birzea, Professor of Education & Policies at the National School for Political & Administrative Studies in Bucharest, Romania

(Tea and coffee break at 11.15)

12.30 - 14.00 Lunch in the cafe

14.00 - 17.00 **The Alternatives: Civic Education In Iran - Or What Can Be Done Now**

Speakers

Ms Mariam Memarsadeghi, Co-founder and Co-director of the E-Collaborative for Civic Education (Tavaana)

Mr Akbar Atri, Co-founder and Co-director of the E-Collaborative for Civic Education (Tavaana)

Ms Raha Bahreini, Co-Founder of Iran Academia: The Institute for Social Sciences and Humanities

Dr Nazila Ghanea, Lecturer in International Human Rights Law, University of Oxford

Discussant

Mr Ted Huddleston, Consultant in civic and citizenship education; Associate, Citizenship Foundation in London

(Tea and coffee break at 15.15)

BIOGRAPHIES



Anne Applebaum is the director of Political Studies at the Legatum Institute. She is also a columnist for *The Washington Post* and *Slate*, and the author of several books, including *Gulag: A History*, which won the 2004 Pulitzer Prize for non-fiction as well as other awards. Since 1989, her journalism has frequently focused on the politics of transition in Russia, central Europe and other former communist states, but she has also written extensively about British, American and European politics and international relations. She is a former member of *The Washington Post* editorial board, a former deputy editor of *The Spectator* magazine, a former political editor of *The Evening Standard* and a former Warsaw correspondent of *The Economist*. Her work also appears regularly in *The New York Review of Books*, *Foreign Policy*, *The New Republic*, *The Daily Telegraph* and many other UK and US publications. She is married to Radek Sikorski, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland.



Akbar Atri is co-founder and co-director of the E-Collaborative for Civic Education, leading the organisation's strategic vision and outreach. Akbar is a veteran human rights activist and former Iranian student leader. Born in a village in Iranian Azerbaijan, he brings significant varied insight into the Iranian social fabric, from the rural farm to the urban factory to the large university and beyond. Akbar was elected to the leadership of Iran's largest student organisation, Tahkim Vahdat, for 10 years and served as spokesperson. In this capacity he was a regular link between human rights information and international media, engaged in innumerable speeches, civic dialogues, sit-ins and protests at universities throughout Iran. Akbar was one of the original drafters of the Referendum Movement on the Iranian Constitution and has been sentenced in absentia to a minimum of seven years in prison for his human rights activism. Akbar earned his BA in Political Science at Allame Tabatabaie University in Tehran and an MA in Political Science at Mofid University in Qom. In 2011,

Akbar earned another MA degree in Conflict Resolution and Analysis from George Mason University.



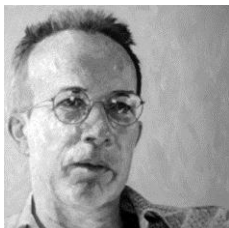
Raha Bahreini is a co-founder of Iran Academia. It was founded with the overall objective to create and facilitate access to social science education in Iran by enabling Iranian youth to develop and apply critical thinking skills to issues of transitional justice, rule of law, peace-building and gender equality. In addition to her involvement in a wide range of Iran-related human rights projects, she has worked as a caseworker in the Refugee Division of Parkdale Community Legal Services in Toronto and as a public interest fellow at Amnesty International Canada. Raha is currently an L.L.M. in International Human Rights Law candidate at the University of Essex and a senior associate at the University of Essex Human Rights in Iran Unit. Raha is a member of the Law Society of Upper Canada. She completed her J.D. degree at Osgoode Hall Law School, York University and her Honours Bachelor in Women and Gender Studies at the University of Toronto.



Cesar Birzea is a professor at the National School for Political and Administrative Studies in Bucharest, Romania. He teaches education and policy courses at Master and Doctorate levels. He is a former director of the National Institute for Educational Research in Romania. Professor Birzea also served as Chair of the Educational Committee of the Council of Europe, President of the Council of Europe project on Education for Democratic Citizenship and President of the National Council for Educational Reform in Romania. He has authored several publications, including *Educational Policies in the Countries in Transition* (Council of Europe Press, 1994), *Education for Democratic Citizenship: A Lifelong Perspective* (Council of Europe, 2000), and *European Citizenship* (Bucharest, Politeia, 2005). Professor Birzea earned his PhD in Education Sciences from the University of Cluj in Romania.



Nazila Ghanea lectures in International Human Rights Law at the University of Oxford. She has been a visiting academic at a number of institutions and previously taught at the University of London and Keele University, UK. Though born in Shiraz, her childhood was spent in Qatar and she has been in the UK since her mid-teens, with periods of time spent living and working in Switzerland and in China. Nazila's publications include nine books, four UN publications and a number of journal articles and reports. She has acted as a human rights consultant or expert for a number of governments, lectured widely and carried out first-hand human rights field research in a number of countries. Her doctoral research was published as a monograph *Human Rights, the UN and the Baha'is in Iran* and, as well as a UN publication on minorities in Iran, she co-authored the Minority Rights Group's *Seeking justice and an end to neglect: Iran's minorities today*. She is a regular contributor to the media on human rights matters.



Ted Huddleston is a consultant in civic and citizenship education and an Associate of the Citizenship Foundation in London. Previously, he worked as a Team Leader in the Curriculum and Resources Development directorate at the Citizenship Foundation. In this capacity, he shared responsibility for the Foundation's work in public policy development, resource writing, professional development and consultancy, and co-ordinated the Foundation's international work. Ted has worked in education in a number of different capacities - as classroom teacher, teacher educator, researcher and writer. In 1985 he was awarded an Honorary Fellowship in the Department of Education, University of Exeter. He has published articles in educational journals and practical teaching materials for use in schools, and has experience of professional training and consultancy in citizenship and human rights education across Europe and the Middle East - including Oman, Bahrain, Ethiopia, Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo and Montenegro - in conjunction with the

British Council, the Council of Europe, the Network of European Foundations and local ministries and NGOs.



Mariam Memarsadeghi is an outspoken advocate for women's rights, civil liberties, civic education and internet freedom, particularly in Islamic contexts. She is co-founder and co-director of the E-Collaborative for Civic Education, whose flagship project, Tavaana: E-Learning Institute for Iranian Civil Society is Iran's open education e-learning initiative on democracy, women's rights, cyber security, leadership, journalism, social entrepreneurship and human rights advocacy. Mariam Memarsadeghi's writings have appeared in *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal* and other publications. She is a frequent speaker at think tanks, a contributor to NPR and has discussed democratisation and civil society issues in reputed television news programmes. In 2007, Mariam Memarsadeghi was recognised by the Bertelsmann Foundation and the German Marshall Fund as a Transatlantic Young Leader for her promotion of democracy and human rights internationally. Her extensive experience includes three years of post-conflict work in the Balkan region. She also oversaw Freedom House's Middle East and North Africa programs.



Saeed Paivandi is professor at the University of Lorraine in Nancy, France. Previously, he was associate professor at the University of Paris 8 for 15 years. His field of academic work is the sociology of education and his research focuses on education in Iran in an international comparative perspective. He began his studies in sociology at University of Tehran. He left Iran after the Cultural Revolution (1980-1982) and completed his PhD in France. He has directed several research initiatives on the experience of the Islamisation of Iranian educational system after 1979. He has published two books and over 40 scientific journal articles and book chapters on education in Iran in French, English and Persian. The major themes of his research are the philosophy of education and

policy in Iran, and textbook discourse. His last book published in the United States, *Discrimination and intolerance in Iran's textbooks* (Washington: Freedom house, 2008), is about forms of discrimination (gender, minorities) in the Iranian curriculum.



Goli M. Rezai-Rashti is professor of Education at the University of Western Ontario. Her research interests are broadly in the field of sociology of education, critical policy analysis and postcolonial studies. She has published numerous papers and book chapters which deal specifically with issues related to gender, race, class, sexuality and schooling and also the impact of neoliberal education reform on the Canadian education. Recent research has focused on women and higher education in Iran and a critique of male teachers as role models. Professor Rezai-Rashti's research has been published in scholarly journals such as the *American Education Research Journal*, *Gender and Education*, *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, and *Curriculum Inquiry and Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies*. Her recent book (with Professor Martino) on *Gender, Race, and the Politics of Role Modelling: The Influence of Male Teachers* was published in 2012.



Sharan Tabari was born and raised in Iran. She studied Political Science and received her MA in Political Behaviour at the University of Essex. Sharan joined the BBC in 1976 and worked there until March 1979 when she returned to Iran. In October 1979 she was employed at the Faculty of Politics and subsequently the department of Politics and Law of Tehran University, as a lecturer where she worked until 1986. She returned to Britain in 1986, and re-joined the BBC as freelancer until 1994, along with working in the public sector. Since 1998 Sharan has been the Chief Correspondent in London for Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty. She has been an elected member of the City of Westminster since 2001 and served the city as Councillor for two consecutive terms.

