



DIPARTIMENTO DI STORIA CULTURE CIVILTÀ
SEZIONE DI STUDI ANTROPOLOGICI, ORIENTALI, STORICO-RELIGIOSI



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Dipartimento di Storia Culture Civiltà

Sezione di Studi Antropologici, Orientali, Storico-Religiosi

e

PHaSI - Philanthropy and Social Innovation Research Centre

Dr. Atallah Kuttab

Philanthropy in the Arab region: Tradition and Renewal

Discussant:

Giuliana Gemelli, Omar Bortolazzi

10 giugno 2015

ore 15

Aula Gambi

Dipartimento di Storia Culture Civiltà

Piazza San Giovanni in Monte 2

Bologna



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In our globalized, connected and ever-changing world, it is becoming clear that philanthropy is a universal, yet locally-rooted phenomenon. A major hurdle in understanding the diversity of giving traditions is the lack of documentary evidence in many parts of the world. This lack of data leads many to infer that philanthropy was born with Andrew Carnegie in the late 19th century and consider Western-style charitable giving as the yardstick for the developing world. Meanwhile, contemporary developments in philanthropy mostly come from the United States and are sometimes transferred to other countries without an adequate knowledge of local contexts. In the West, little is known about the long-standing practices of philanthropy in the Arab region, some of them dating from the 9th century. In the Islamic tradition, the equivalent of the endowed foundation, waqf, has been used to develop private hospitals, schools, and shelters for the poor in many countries. Similarly, current fundraising and giving trends in the Arab region have been largely neglected. As the “Arab Spring” brought civil society and citizen rights to the fore, it is interesting to speculate what role contemporary philanthropy has played in the recent uprisings of North African and Middle-Eastern countries, and will play in the future.

Additionally, while the challenges addressed by philanthropy are increasingly becoming more complex and globalized, cooperation and partnership are key to a successful handling of such challenges. Dr. Kuttab will therefore reflect on ways to bridge between philanthropy in the Arab region and Europe. The audience will be asked to actively engage in discussions on the changing landscape of philanthropy, the role of philanthropy in Italian society and cooperation across countries.

Dr. Atallah Kuttab is the Chairman and Founder of SAANED for Philanthropy Advisory in the Arab Region. Since April 2014 he is a Richard von Weizsaecker Fellow at Bosch Stiftung in Berlin. He is a Founding Board member and the current Chairman of the Board of the Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support (WINGS), a global network of grantmaker associations and philanthropic support organizations. He is also a Founding Member of Arab Human Rights Fund, a Founding Member of the Arab Foundations Forum, a member of the Editorial Board of Alliance Magazine, a member of the Board of Resource Alliance and a member of the Working Group on Peace and Social Justice. Dr. Atallah Kuttab holds a Ph.D. from the Imperial College of Science and Technology, University of London.



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