

**ARAB STUDENTS IN THE USSR (1950s-1991):
CONNECTIONS AND RELATIONS.**

In collaboration with the German Orient Institut, Beirut (OIB).

During recent decades, interest in different facets of Arab education history has significantly increased. Although recent developments have played a key role in bringing current Arab art and education into wider focus, a gap remains in scholarly discussion of certain aspects, such as education of Arab students in the USSR post-1950. The main guiding question of our project is first of all, to create a database for research that would contain the names of Arab art students, with their brief bios, that came to study in the USSR between 1959 and 1991 and eventually graduated, including all postgraduate Arab students during the same period. It would be also important to contextualize the research and answer such questions as development and formation of Arab education curricular in the USSR, the impact the education had (or had not) on the 20th century Arab history, analysing a portrait of an Arab students group studying in the USSR.

Improved political relations between the USSR and the Arab states were followed by a dynamic growth in cultural sector, which started to develop in 1950s. The Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee was founded in May 1956, and was acting as a semi-official foreign policy institution. A number of students joined various Soviet institutes through this entity. The Committee was also one of the founders of the Patrice Lumumba University in 1960, currently known as Peoples' Friendship University of Russia – that became an alma mater to the thousands of Arab specialists in the fields of engineering, history, philology, medicine, agriculture, physics and mathematics, science, economics and law.

The assignment includes (but not limited to) translation of archival documents, translation and transcript of 1960s documentaries, assistance in archival research, interview of various former Arab students, still living in Russia, search of various archival documents, facts check, research of bibliography, copying and translating various articles, etc.