


Queen Rania is
widely regarded
as one of the
world's leading
humanitarians



In an age of social inequality, polarised wealth and political unrest, one visionary monarch continues to inspire, motivate and spearhead her vision for global education and empowerment.
Grazia meets the inimitable Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah



QUEEN RANIA OF JORDAN

"WITH GREAT POWER COMES GREAT RESPONSIBILITY," THE FRENCH PHILOSOPHER VOLTAIRE ONCE WROTE. PERHAPS NO CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDS THIS BETTER THAN HER MAJESTY QUEEN RANIA AL ABDULLAH.

The Jordanian monarch is a wife and mother to four children; she is also one of the greatest humanitarians of our age, a formidable and respected woman and a leader whose legacy will be truly exceptional. She works tirelessly to promote education and community empowerment in Jordan and throughout the Arab world. Today, her influence can be felt in every corner of the globe. Here, *Grazia* discusses her vision for future generations.

Queen Rania is acutely aware of the power that she wields and its potential to make a lasting, tangible impact on the lives of Jordanians. "At the end of the day you are living your life for the people that you represent," she once said. "It's an honour and a privilege to have that chance to make a difference – a qualitative difference in people's lives – and it's my responsibility to make the most out of that opportunity."

In Jordan, Queen Rania has adopted a pioneering focus on 'holistic' education; centred on the belief that nurturing a child's potential to learn includes family as well as facilities. In practice, this ethos involves improving classroom quality, raising teaching standards, offering computer access, as well as prioritising family involvement, community investment and health awareness.

In addition, she spearheads the Jordan River Foundation (JRF); a non-governmental organisation (NGO) that improves the lives of the disadvantaged in Jordan through community empowerment programs and training.

This domestic vision is matched by her global work. Queen Rania is an Eminent Advocate for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Honorary Chairperson for the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) and campaigns on behalf of children in need. She is a Board Member of the World Economic Forum and is also committed to encouraging cross-cultural dialogue, particularly amongst young people.

Behind her impressive achievements is a woman much respected and admired. On social media, where she is a voice to her millions of followers across Twitter,

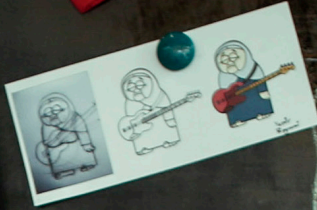


Queen Rania visits the Royal Film Commission (RFC) in Amman earlier this year

No Smoking

JORDAN

OASIS STEPS TO OSCAR DANCE



Good Music



$2+2=5$



<<EDUCATION
IS ONE OF THE BEST –
IF NOT THE
BEST – INVESTMENTS
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Facebook, YouTube and Instagram, she describes herself as “A mum and a wife with a really cool day job.” It is perhaps this natural warmth that is her greatest asset. She remains the people’s Queen; invested in their aspirations for the future.

What are the greatest barriers to education today in the Arab world and what is your vision for unlocking and dismantling these barriers?

Over the past few decades the region has seen impressive progress in school access and completion. But, unfortunately, we’ve trailed painfully behind in terms of quality and relevance of our education systems.

There are many challenges: overcrowded, underequipped classrooms, poorly trained teachers, and of course out-dated curricula that ignore modern-day market competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, initiative, and more. Because of this, we aren’t graduating students equipped to thrive in today’s world, a world

that is characterised by intense global competition and very rapid technological change. No doubt, the escalation of conflict, displacement, and insecurity in many parts of the Arab world has exacerbated the learning crisis in the region. We must recognise that education in the Arab World is in crisis. But that education is one of the best – if not the best – investments we can make, especially in times of crisis!

There’s a lot we can do. Training teachers tops my list; I’ve said before, good teachers teach, great teachers transform! We need to utilise technology to reach more students with more engaging and

interactive curricula. We must bridge the gap between education outcomes and labour-market demands... and much more. Access to quality education can help narrow the widening hope gap in the Arab world for the millions of young people whose lives have been turned upside down by conflict, and the millions more who are reaching out for a better future.

Your work within the field of community empowerment, particularly with the Jordan River Foundation, has been hugely successful. What are the lessons that the foundation can share with other NGOs around the world? One thing we learned is that there is so much we can learn from the local communities themselves; and we are still learning.

There is no fail-proof approach to community development and no one size fits all. Which is why it’s critical that NGOs listen; policies and plans are great but it’s people who can voice their priorities, they know the full story! With



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Queen Rania believes in the transformative and affirming power of education for all



PROMOTING EDUCATION

Queen Rania promotes initiatives which seek to give children in Jordan the very best start in life by offering them access to education. She believes in the power of inspirational teachers and takes a holistic approach to the education system, valuing the input of parents and communities as well as more formal educational organisations



this approach, we give communities the responsibility for their continued wellbeing, which is as important as – if not more important than – giving them resources; it is the only way to truly build capacity and incubate leadership at the local community level.

You continue to be an inspiration to millions of children and adults across the world. What is the greatest piece of advice that you have personally been given in your life that you carry with you to this day and share with others?

When it comes to making decisions, you often get mixed advice: “think it through with a clear head,” or “what does your heart tell you is the right thing to do?”... etc. How do you know which to go to for important decisions? Well, someone once told me that there was a space somewhere right between the two, between thinking and feeling, where all the right decisions were made. I try to go to that place as often as possible. 🕒



Above: Queen Rania takes an active role in community empowerment

Left: Her Majesty discusses Jordan's Children's Museum