## Facts about Arabs and the Arab World

(adapted from al Bustan curriculum)

### What is the Middle East?

The Middle East is a loose term, not always used to describe the same territory. It usually includes the Arab countries from Egypt east to the Persian Gulf, plus Israel and Iran. Turkey is sometimes considered part of the Middle East, sometimes part of Europe. Sometimes the Middle East includes North Africa as well.  Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh are usually described as South Asia.

### Who is an Arab?

“Arab” is a cultural and linguistic term. It refers to those who speak Arabic as their first language. Arabs are united by culture and by history. Some have blue eyes and red hair; others are dark skinned; many are somewhere in between. Most Arabs are Muslims but there are also millions of Christian Arabs and thousands of Jewish Arabs, just as there are Muslim, Christian, and Jewish Americans.

### What is the Arab World?

The Arab World consists of 22 countries in the Middle East and North Africa: Algeria, Bahrain, the Comoros Islands, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. Iran and Turkey are not Arab countries and their primary languages are Farsi and Turkish respectively. Arab countries have a rich diversity of ethnic, linguistic, and religious communities. These include Kurds, Armenians, Berbers and others. There are over 300 million Arabs.

### What is the Muslim World?

There are an estimated 1.57 billion Muslims in the world. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation has 57 member states. The ten countries with the largest Muslim population are: Indonesia (202.9 million), Pakistan (174.1 million), India (160.9 million), Bangladesh (145.3 million), Egypt (78.5 million), Nigeria (78.1 million), Iran (73.8 million), Turkey (73.6 million), Algeria (34.2 million), and Morocco (31.9 million). Of these countries, only three are Arab