



# MENA Regional Updates: Challenges, Opportunities and More



**Melissa Deschamps**

EducationUSA REAC

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**REGIONAL INSTITUTE**

Middle East and North Africa 2023

# EducationUSA

Middle East and North Africa



# EDUCATIONUSA: WHO WE ARE



EducationUSA is the State Department's **network** of educational advising centers, staff, and services that promotes U.S. higher education to audiences abroad.





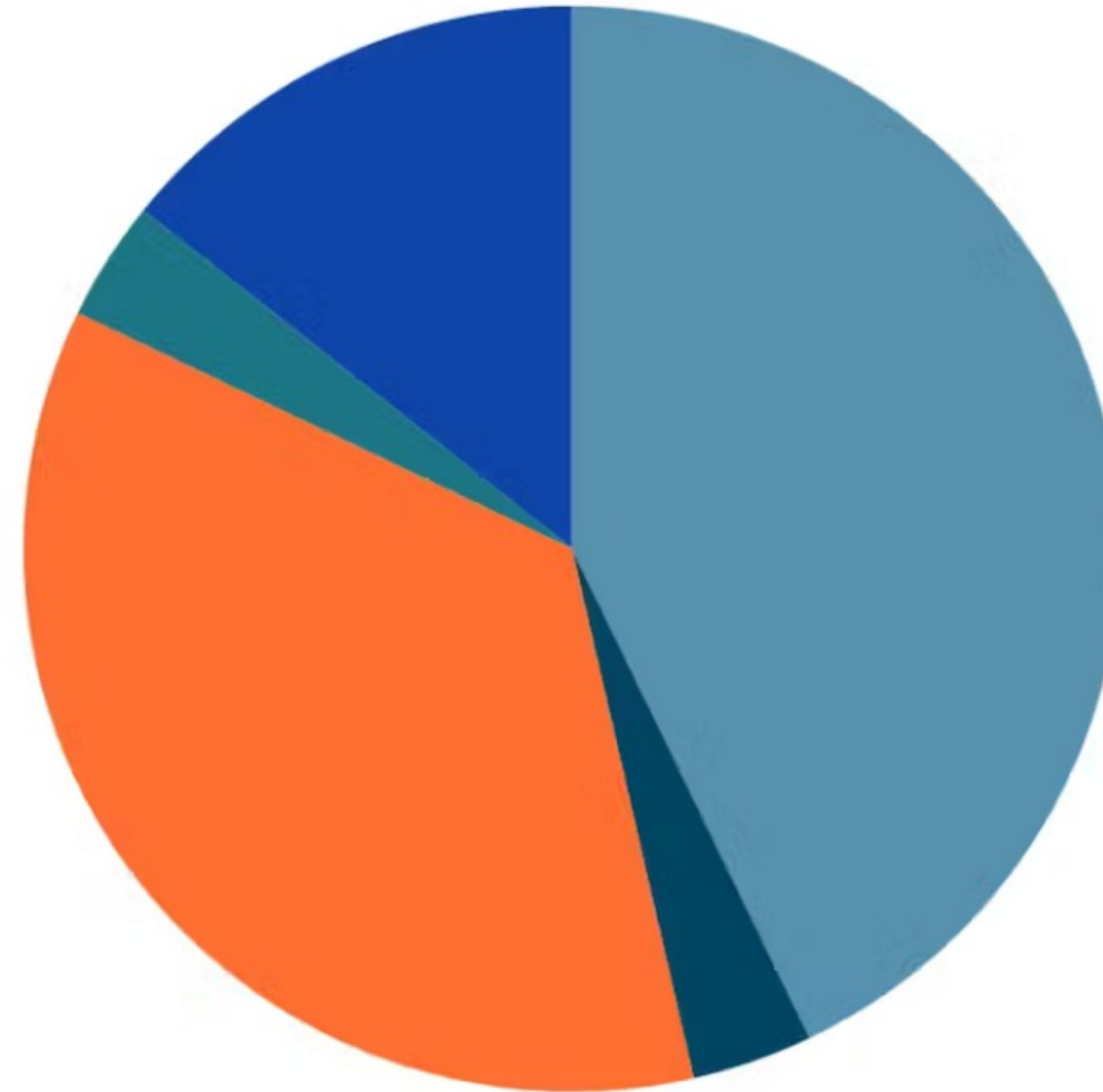
# Diversity of EducationUSA MENA

## Where Centers Are Based

19 Countries

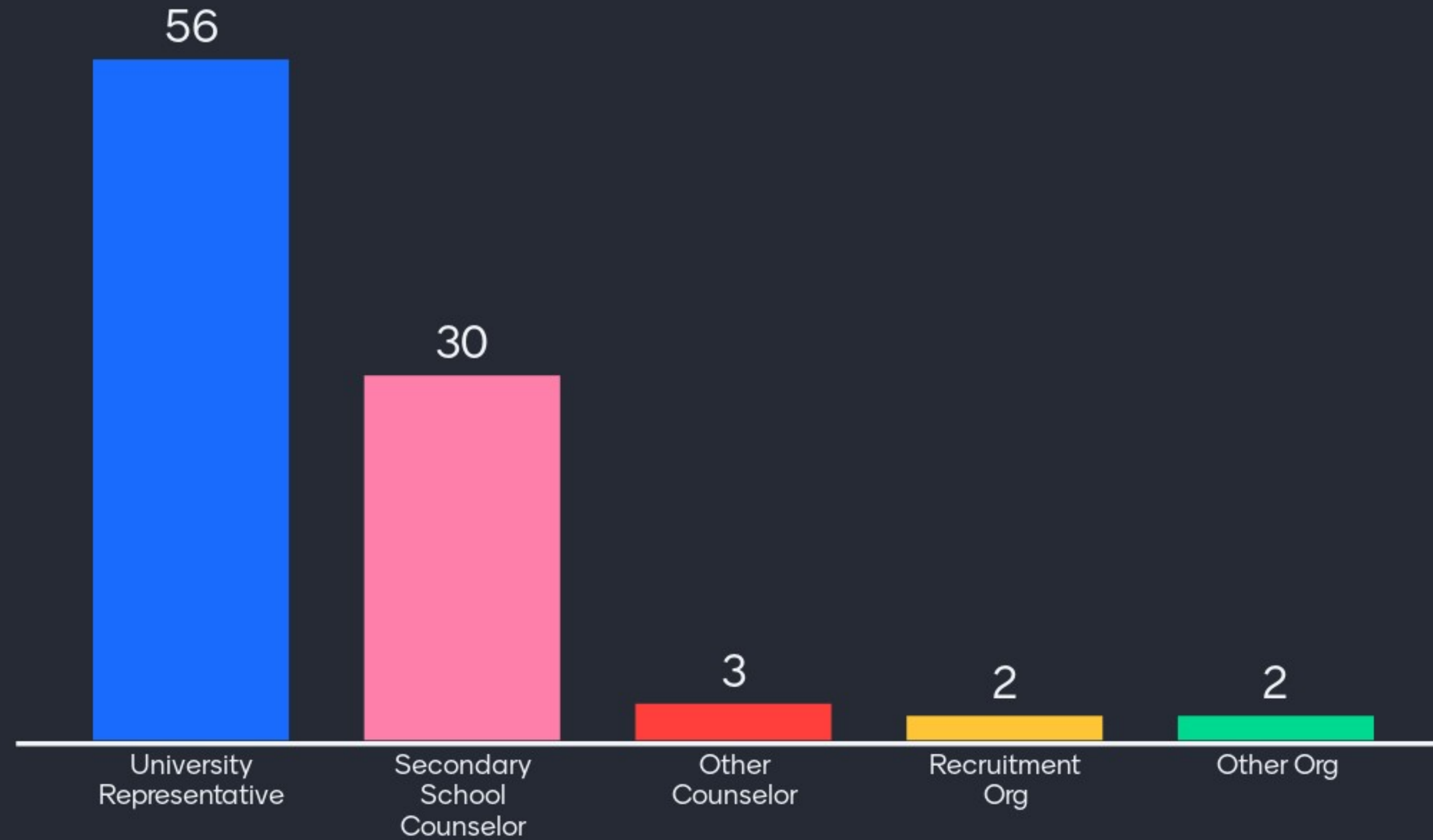
31 advisers

2 REACs



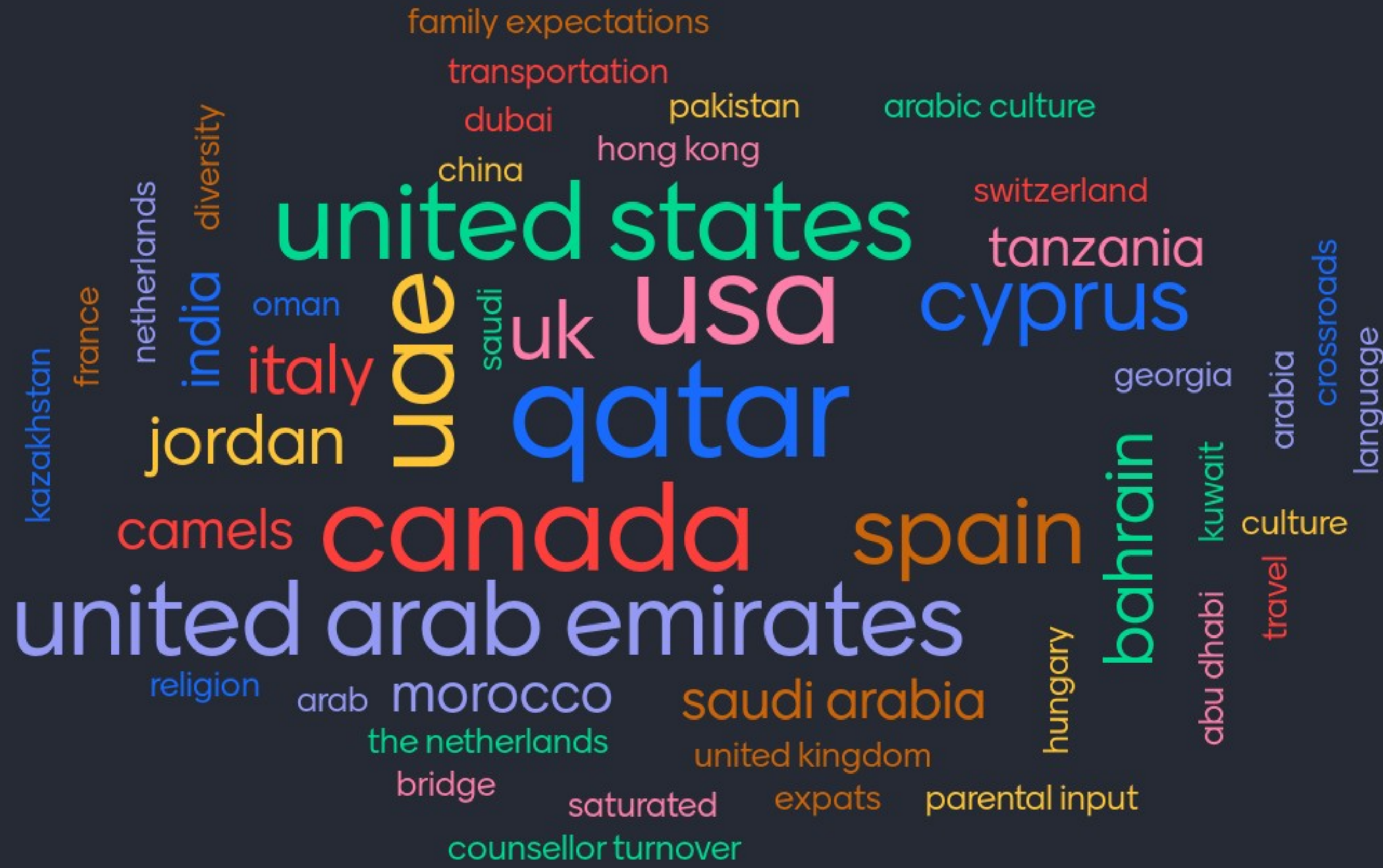
- US Embassy or Consulate
- American Center
- AMIDEAST
- World Learning
- Virtual

# What is your role?



# Which country are you based in?

145 responses



# Session Overview



# MENA Regional Updates: Challenges, Opportunities and More

- The MENA region
- Challenges
- Opportunities
- Fields of Study
- Stay Connected, Stay Informed
- Wrap-up





# The MENA region





# Middle East & North Africa



# Challenges

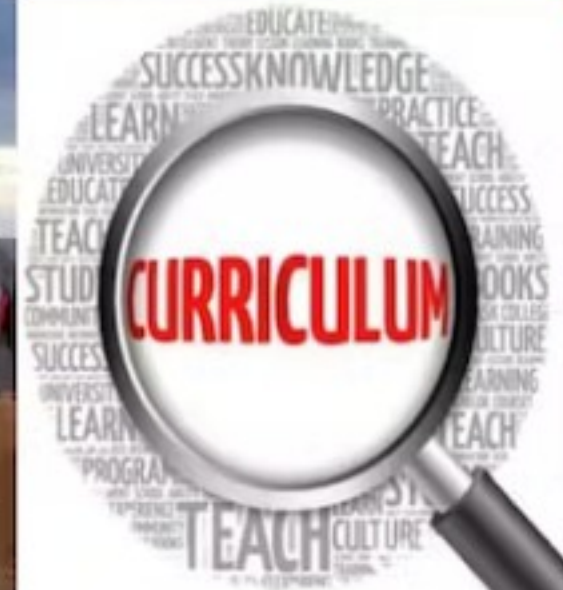


# Challenges

- Conflicts
- Natural & Human-led Disasters
- Currency Devaluation
- Refugee Populations
- Internet/Technology Access
- English Language Proficiency
- Lack of counselors/advisers



French - Arabic  
English



# List additional challenges you encounter with students in the MENA region?

120 responses

Perceptions of security in USA

Pre-requisite courses

Government requirements

Culture shock

Study permit refusals

Parents understanding privacy laws

No Context

Apathy

Different financial needs

17



76



# List additional challenges you encounter with students in the MENA region?

120 responses

Visa restrictions

Dealing with conservative parents.

Parents expectations

Immigration

Arrogance

Parental expectations

Stigma around mental health

Finances

Islamophobia

17



76



# List additional challenges you encounter with students in the MENA region?

120 responses

Mental health stigma

Safety in the USA

Student needs vs Parents needs

Safety concerns

The utilisation of agents and combating advice (because those are free)

Visa restrictions

Lack of response from counselors

Transportation

English proficiency

17



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# List additional challenges you encounter with students in the MENA region?

120 responses

Changes to government funding

Financial and scholarship needs

Scholarship needs

Perceptions of Career Related Programme

Parent education

Lack of money

Different communication styles

-Parental misconceptions about higher education

Visa processing times

17



76



# List additional challenges you encounter with students in the MENA region?

120 responses

Academic preparedness, funding

Parents not wanting to let their children go far

School resources, counseling, conservative parents

Religion

Counsellor turnover

Cost/scholarships

Cultural issues arising from students studying in the West

Financial aid

School visit permissions & increased government regulation of school access in Gulf

17



76



# List additional challenges you encounter with students in the MENA region?

120 responses

Language

Family acceptance

Female mobility and education

Female mobility and education

Some schools don't support students who want to study abroad (not wanting to send transcripts and LoRs to universities)

Passport privilege

Diversity on campus

Funding/scholarships for MENA students

English concerns

17



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# List additional challenges you encounter with students in the MENA region?

120 responses

Not sure on chosen career paths

Finances

Government sponsorships

Accessibility of Mental health services outside of school

Financial Problems

Immigration challenges - constantly changing rules without official notice

Visa issues

Career expectations

Financial aidEnvironment

17



76



# List additional challenges you encounter with students in the MENA region?

120 responses

high financial need

Language barrier

Academic standards

Female accommodation issues

Perceptions of France

Narrow pre-professional focus

Parent influence on career choice - doctor or engineering  
nothing else

Lack of rights

Conservative parents related to study abroad

17



76



# List additional challenges you encounter with students in the MENA region?

120 responses

Expectations and reality

Concerns about US culture & safety

The limitations female students face for their education.

Not necessarily understanding the admission requirements.

Sponsors

FERPA

English proficiency requirements

Application clusers for Competitive admissions

Misunderstanding/lack of knowledge about careers in art & design

17



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# List additional challenges you encounter with students in the MENA region?

120 responses

Poor counselor engagement with universities in some places

Name brand recognition

Arriving with dependent children, non traditional students

Financial aid

Financial need

High expectations with little opportunities to show for

Finding scholarships, preparation for various standardized testing and centers, visa issues

Career choices that don't match the availability of the country of education for international students (eg medicine)

Book sensorship

17



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# List additional challenges you encounter with students in the MENA region?

120 responses

Family conflicts

Diffirent financial needsAphaty

Discovering their sexual orientation during studies which creates stress

Security in the US

Study permit delays

Curriculum censorship

Not prepared to do the work

Lack of going beyond rankings

Opportunities post graduation to remain in country or work towards a new passport

17



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# List additional challenges you encounter with students in the MENA region?

120 responses

Unaware of LACs

Gender

Worldwide conflicts affecting economy of region

Traditional perspectives if parents.

Ministry of Education restrictions

Transition to college

How much MENA representation is on campus, will I be the only one

College requirements such as teacher recommendations in schools where that is not a thing.

Parental input

17



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# List additional challenges you encounter with students in the MENA region?

120 responses

US administrative processing delays

The complexities that come with political conflict it that are hard to understand if you are not actually from that culture, even though you put forth all effort and empathy to do so.

Students are not very participating in college realated events.

Post graduation employment opportunities

Perceptions/fear of racism in the US

Iran and not visiting certain regions

Iran and not visiting certain regions

Rising tuition fees

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# List additional challenges you encounter with students in the MENA region?

120 responses

Rising tuition fees

Not visiting other various busy regions such as Iran

Also external non school counselors that contradict school advice

17



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# Opportunities

# Regional Events and Exposure

- New Industries
- Education linkages
- Job creation
- Sustainability focus
- Study Abroad



# Scholarships & Financial Support



- Local Government Scholarships
- Organizational Scholarships
- Institutional Scholarships
- ‘Top-Off’ aid

# Direct Outreach

- Establishing Relationships and Name Recognition
- Sessions on U.S. study, the application process, personal statements, specific fields of study, etc.
- Sessions for school counselors or teachers
- Virtual or in-person presentations
- School visits
- Social Media highlights
- Alumni student connections



# Institutional Partnerships



- Student Exchange
- Faculty Exchange
- 2 + 2 programs
- Research partnerships
- Dual Degrees



# Fields of Study

# Traditional Fields of Interest

- Engineering
- Medicine
- Business



# Emerging Interests and Market Needs

- Cybersecurity & AI
- Humanities
- Agriculture
- Education
- Social Sciences
- Preservation
- Hospitality, Tourism, Culinary
- Film



Stay Connected  
Stay Informed

# Region Focused Groups

The screenshot shows the NAFSA website with a navigation bar including 'HOME', 'COMMUNITIES', 'NAFSA RESOURCES', 'HELP', and 'NAFSA.ORG'. A banner reads 'CONNECT. COMMUNICATE. COLLABORATE. NETWORK NAFSA'. Below this is a promotional banner for 'NAFSA Membership Helps Your Staff and Colleagues'. The main content area features the 'Middle East Interest Group (MEIG)' with a 'Settings' icon. Navigation tabs include 'Community Home', 'Discussion', 'Library', 'Blogs', 'Events', and 'Subscribers'. A description states the group's mission to provide sessions on Middle East and North Africa topics. Community leaders listed are Karen Bauer (EducationUSA) and Marlyn Miller (Temple University). A '25 YEARS' anniversary badge is visible. Social media links for Facebook and LinkedIn are provided, along with an email list sign-up.

The logo features the NAFSA logo on the left, followed by a vertical line, the text 'MEMBER INTEREST GROUP' in an orange box, and 'Middle East' in blue text below it.

The screenshot shows a Facebook group page for 'Education USA' with a cover image of a globe. The page includes navigation options like 'Joined', 'Notifications', 'Share', and 'More'. It features a 'Write Post' section with options for 'Create Room', 'Photo/Video', and 'More'. On the right, it shows the group name 'EducationUSA - U.S. Higher...', 10,000 likes, and a 'Send Message' button.

The screenshot shows a Facebook group page for 'EdUSA MENA school counselors networking group'. The cover image features the Education USA logo and the text 'Networking group for MENA school counselors and advisers'. Below the cover, the group name is displayed, and there is an 'Edit' button. At the bottom, there is a row of member profile pictures and an '+ Invite' button.

# Region-Specific Resources

## Middle East & North Africa - Education Fairs & Visits 2023

GOOGLE DOCUMENT [LINK](#), last edited: October 5, 2023

[www.educationusa.state.gov](http://www.educationusa.state.gov)

*\*\*These are events happening in our region. We are sharing for informational purposes and inclusion in this list does not mean we endorse or are promoting the event, company or organization.*

### 2023 Events

#### OCTOBER

- 1 Schoolmaster International School Recruitment - Doha, Qatar ([link](#))
- 1-2 Uniranks, Doha, Qatar ([link](#))
- 1-2 USEG - Riyadh, Saudi Arabia ([link](#))
- 2 EdUSA MENA Mini Virtual Fair Undergraduate ([link](#)) (organized by virtual advisers for Iran,Libya, Syria, Yemen)
- 3 EdUSA MENA Mini Virtual Fair Graduate ([link](#)) (organized by virtual advisers for Iran,Libya, Syria, Yemen)
- 3-5 MEETES Fair, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
- 3 Gulf EDU Tours, Kuwait ([link](#))
- 3 Schoolmaster International School Recruitment - Dubai, UAE ([link](#))
- 3-4 Uniranks, Dubai, UAE ([link](#))
- 4-6 Gulf EDU Tours, UAE ([link](#))
- 4 USEG - Kuwait City, Kuwait ([link](#))
- 4 QS Tours Iran | Virtually ([link](#))
- 5 USEG - Doha, Qatar ([link](#))
- 5-6 Uniranks, Abu Dhabi, UAE ([link](#))
- 5 Schoolmaster International School Recruitment - Abu Dhabi, UAE ([link](#))
- 6-8 International ACAC Middle East & North Africa Institute ([link](#)) Doha, Qatar
- 8-12 Uniranks, Cairo, Egypt ([link](#))
- 8 Schoolmaster International School Recruitment - Jeddah, Saudi Arabia ([link](#))
- 8 - 10 NAJAH Dubai - Dubai, UAE ([link](#))
- 9 Gulf EDU Tours, Oman ([link](#))
- 9 Schoolmaster International School Recruitment - Riyadh, Saudi Arabia ([link](#))
- 10 - 12 Gulf EDU Tours, KSA ([link](#))
- 10-11 Simpled - Dubai, UAE ([link](#))
- 11 Schoolmaster International School Recruitment - Amman, Jordan ([link](#))
- 12-13 Simpled - Abu Dhabi, UAE ([link](#))



## Government Scholarship Programs and THE LIST

Bahrain, Egypt, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and UAE currently fund government scholarship programs. These governments maintain lists of approved receiving institutions, which can often be the chief barrier to recruiting funded students from these countries.

REACs and Advisers are often asked about government scholarship programs and how to see if your institution is on the list. We've put together this helpful handout to point you in the right direction. This list will be updated and shared as a Google Doc [HERE](#).

Counselor Networks

# Thank You

# شكرا

