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Towards an Arab Higher Education Space: International Challenges and Societal Responsibilities

**Proceedings of the Arab Regional
Conference on Higher Education**

Cairo 31 May, 1-2 June 2009

***Towards an Arab Higher Education Space:
International Challenges
and Societal Responsibilities***

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Space: International Challenges
and Societal Responsibilities***

Editor

Bechir Lamine

***Arab Regional Conference
on Higher Education
Cairo 31 May, 1 - 2 June 2010***

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FOREWORD

Ten years after the first Arab Regional Conference on Higher Education, held in 1998 in Beirut, Lebanon, there was a need for holding a second Regional Conference to review a decade of developments and achievements in higher education in the Arab region and explore future prospects and challenges in light of developments at the regional as well as the international level. This event is part of a wider exercise initiated in 2008 by UNESCO and covering all five UNESCO regions worldwide. Five regional conferences were held in preparation of the World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE, Paris, 5 - 8 July 2009). This publication contains the proceedings of the Arab Regional Conference on Higher Education (ARCHE+10, Cairo 31 May – 2 June 2009).

ARCHE+10 was attended by delegates from Ministries of Higher Education in the Arab States. A Regional Report was compiled, describing the state and achievements of higher education in the region over a decade, as well as present and future challenges confronting the sector. The Regional Report was based on 17 Country Reports drafted by National Coordinators commissioned by UNESCO's Bureau for Education in the Arab States (UNEDBAS, Beirut) in close coordination with ministries of higher education. The country reports provided a clear picture of the achievements of, as well as the challenges facing, higher education, using a common template designed by UNEDBAS, for increased homogeneity and comparability.

In addition to these reports by national authorities, ARCHE+10 was also an academic forum for educationalists from the Arab region and beyond. Early in the preparation process, UNEDBAS had set up an Advisory Committee entrusted with issuing a call for papers widely disseminated within Arab universities and on the ARCHE+10 website. Out of some 108 submissions, 69 academics were encouraged to prepare papers and, in fine, 44 papers were accepted with some changes. Authors of all 44 accepted papers were invited to Cairo to make presentations to ARCHE+10.

In principle, the accepted papers should have covered all of ARCHE+10's five themes: Learning opportunities; quality improvement and quality assurance; the social responsibility of universities; management, governance and funding; and Arab cooperation. However, in practice, some themes were amply provided for while others were underrepresented. Some of these papers are full-fledged research papers while a few others are more descriptive in nature and others still are analyses and reviews of promising ideas. This diversity was retained as it provides a wider picture of the state of higher education in the Arab States.

Another feature of ARCHE+10 was the student film competition entitled "The University in the Eyes of its Students".

ARCHE+10 was placed under the motto: Towards an Arab Higher Education Space. This was retained as a title for this publication, considering the strategic importance of the topic. While it is true that most academic papers do not deal directly with this issue, they nonetheless give an idea about the Arab space as it currently stands. The publication is also a sweeping review of the most important concepts and issues facing higher education. This is clearly the largest academic work on higher education prepared and published in recent years in the Arab region.

To conclude, I extend my warmest thanks to the Ford Foundation for making a major financial contribution, covering the production of ARCHE+10's substantive material, as well as its publication and dissemination; and also for providing awards for the student film competition.

Dr. Abdel Moneim Osman

Director

UNESCO Regional Bureau
for Education in the Arab States, Beirut

July 2010

A Decade of Higher Education in the Arab States (1998 - 2009): Achievements & Challenges (Regional Report)

Abstract

The draft of this report was presented at the Arab Regional Conference on Higher Education (ARCHE+10), then revised, translated and edited after the conference. The report reviews the achievements of the higher education sector in the Arab States a decade after the Regional Arab Conference and the World Conference on Higher Education in 1998. It is also about current and future challenges facing the sector. It is based on 17 national reports commissioned by UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States in Beirut and drafted by National Coordinators designated by the ministries in charge of Higher Education. According to the TOR set out by UNESCO each report included 1) a narrative report, 2) national data about higher education, and 3) questionnaires addressed to universities, collected, and sent to UNESCO office in Beirut. Whenever needed, additional insight was brought in from the papers included in this book.

I. Main Achievements

Arab countries have stated that they have registered a number of achievements in the past decade, from the 1997 /1998 to 2007 / 2008 academic years. These achievements differ from one country to another, according to prevailing socio-economic and political conditions. They center around four topics, listed below, which we will tackle in this chapter.

- 1) An increase in educational opportunities
- 2) Development of admission and support systems to increase educational opportunities and provide equality and equity
- 3) Diversification of higher education institutions and an increase in their number and geographical spread
- 4) Establishment of quality assurance and control structures

1. Increase in educational opportunities

a. General Increase

The number of students in higher education rose from 2.967 million in 1998 /1999 to 7.607 million in the 2007/ 2008 academic year¹, a jump of 256%, as shown in Figure 1- 1.

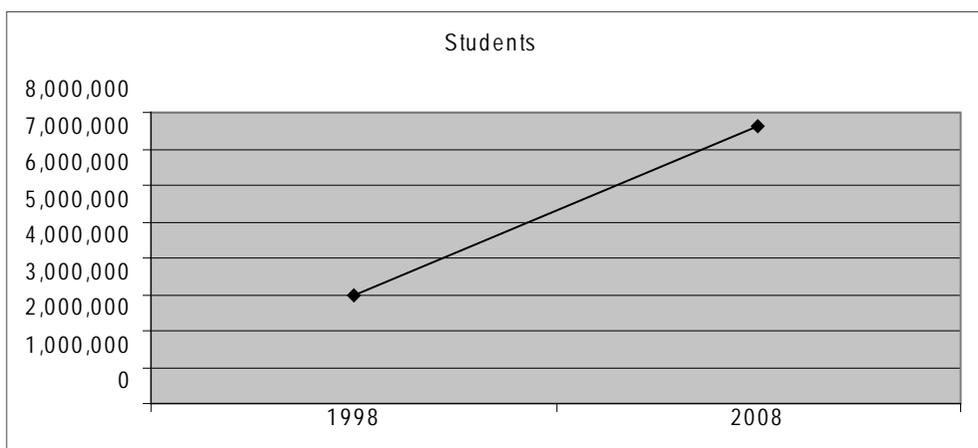
¹ Figures are calculated from statistical annexes (national data) of national reports, and otherwise from sources identified by the author; the number might be slightly higher, due to the inability to obtain complete information.

This is with regard to the absolute increase in the number of students. However, if we take into consideration that populations have also increased, from 229.3 million to 319.8² million (a rise of 139%), this means that roughly half of the increase has resulted from population growth and the rest (256 - 139 = 117) is due to the increase in social demand for higher education. In other words, there are more students who do not leave school at the secondary stage, but instead continue in institutions of higher education.

To estimate the progress that has been made, we calculate the number of students per 100,000 inhabitants on the two dates. Figure 1 - 2 shows that the number has risen from 1,294 to 2,379 per 100,000 inhabitants, an increase of 184%³.

Since the population increase exhibits disparities among age groups, we calculate the increase in the number of students in relation to the population in the corresponding age group (adopting the 18 - 24 category), which is called the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER). In fact, while the demographic increase was 139%, as we noted above, the increase in the concerned age group (18 - 24) stood at 156%, more than the total population increase. This means that the improvement in the GER was not considerable; it rose only from 18% to 22%⁴, as a general average in Arab countries.

Figure 1 - 1: Increase in the number of higher education students, 1998 and 2008

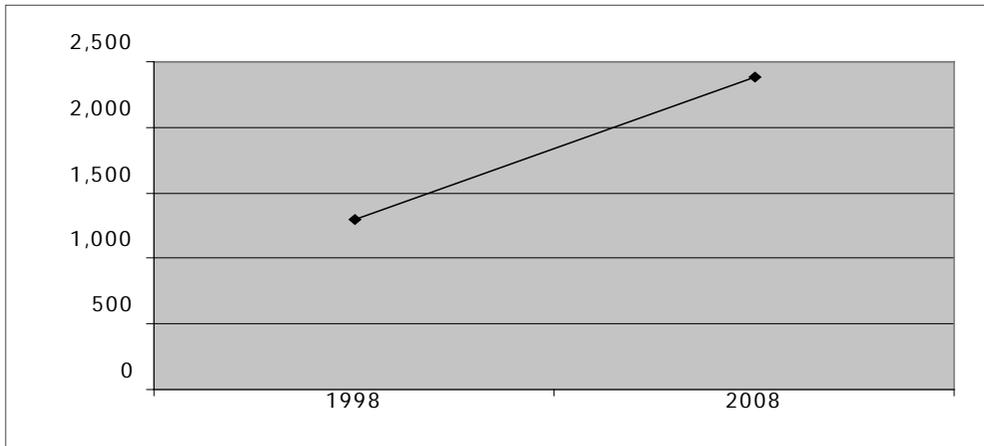


² This figure is also calculated from statistical annexes (national data) of national reports, the UIS however estimates the population in the Arab region to 321 millions in 2007.

³ The number was 2270 in 2007 (UIS).

⁴ For 2007 (www.uis.unesco.org).

Figure 1 - 2: Increase in the number of students per 100,000 inhabitants



b. Regional disparities

Certainly, there are wide differences among Arab countries in the degree access to higher education, and these differences are attributable to economic level, population density, size of rural areas, historical advantages in higher education and other factors. Two indicators can demonstrate these disparities: the number of students per 100,000 inhabitants and the GER. The first indicator is based on information gathered from national reports prepared especially for the Arab Regional Conference on Higher Education (ARCHE+10). The second is based on data provided by UNESCO's Institute for Statistics (UIS) on its website, complemented by national reports in a number of countries⁵.

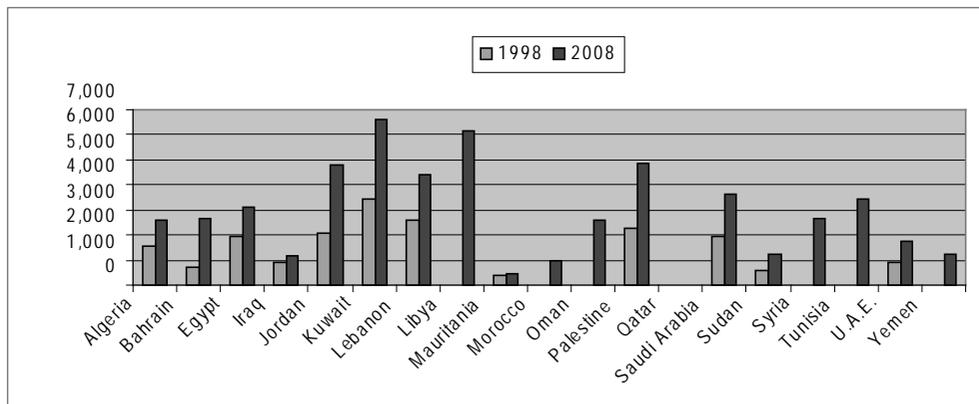
Figure 1 - 3 shows that five countries have exceeded 4,000 students per 100,000 inhabitants: Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya and Palestine. These countries are all small in size. Meanwhile, six countries' averages today are 1,294 (the Arab average for 1998) or less: Iraq, Mauritania, Morocco, Qatar, Sudan and Yemen. Figure 1 - 4, showing GERs, gives us the same result: the first five Arab countries mentioned above have jumped in enrollment to 40% or higher, while in the final six, the rate is still less than 20%⁶.

We should note that the following countries experienced large increases in the last ten years: Algeria (14 - 24%), Kuwait (22 - 49%), Lebanon (33 - 51%), Palestine (25 - 46%), Saudi Arabia (20-34%) and Tunisia (17 - 31%).

⁵ Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Syria.

⁶ We should note that some countries' national reports contained figures that were higher than those in the figure, but the available statistical data did not generate the same result (in Tunisia, for example, the rate mentioned in the report was 36%, while it was 31% according to data from UNESCO's Statistics Institute, and according to our calculations based on national data attached to the National Report, it was 33.8%). Thus, the averages in the figure remain estimates. According to UIS the GER stands at 33% for Bahrain, 17% for Kuwait, and 15% for Iraq,. The difference may be attributed to population estimates (calculating the total population versus citizens only).

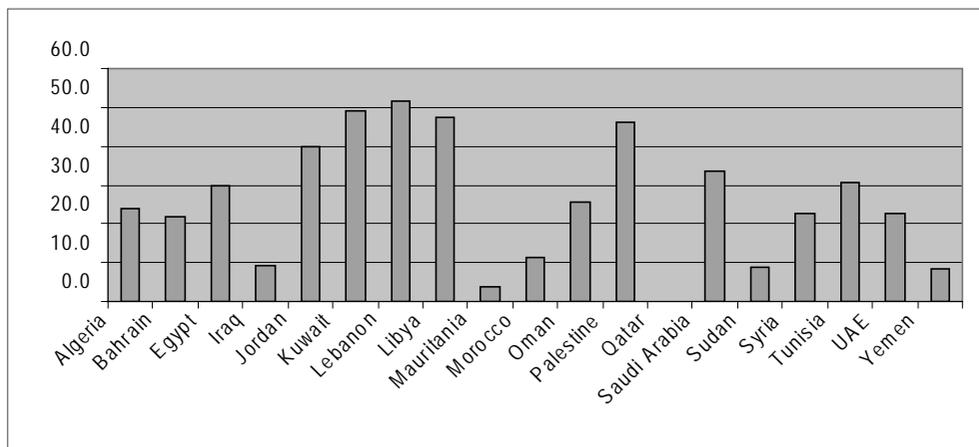
Figure 1 - 3: Number of students in Arab countries per 100,000 inhabitants (2008)⁷



c. Increase in the share of females

The share of females in higher education in Arab countries reached 50% in 2008. Figure 1 - 5 shows that the rate approached or exceeded 60% in Kuwait, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and the UAE. It remains around 40% or lower in Iraq, Mauritania and Yemen.

Figure 1 - 4: Gross Enrollment Ratios in Arab countries (2007 or 2008)



⁷ According to the national Report of Kuwait the population stands at 1,054,598 for the year 2008, while the number of students in all post-secondary institutions stands at 69,591, thus the number by 100,000 inhabitants is 6,599. This figure is different from UIS estimations (only 1500). Also there is difference in the figure of Saudi Arabia.

Figure 1 - 5: Percentage of females out of total enrolled students in higher education in Arab countries (2008)

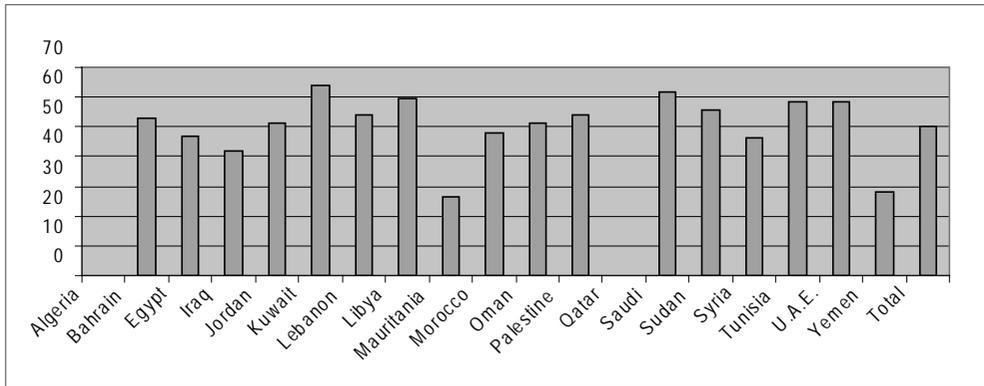
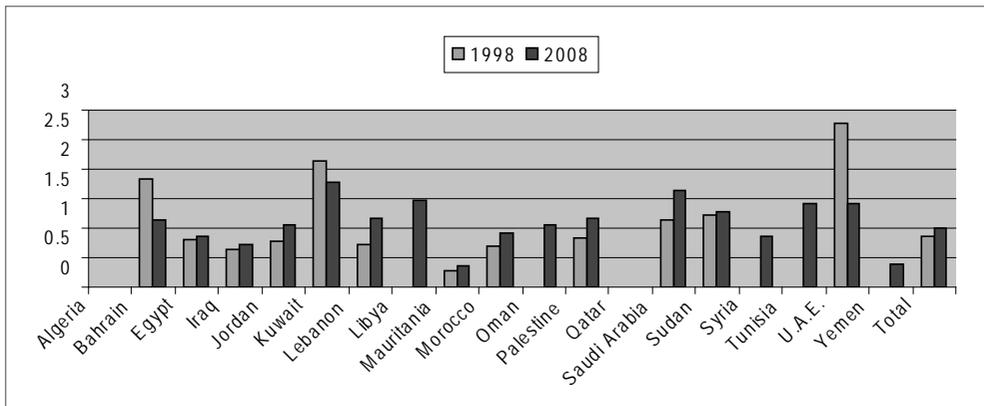


Figure 1 - 6: Gender Parity Index in Arab Countries (1998 - 2008)



To determine the extent of growth in the share of females, we calculate the Gender Parity Index for 1998 and 2008 and display this in Figure 1 - 6. This figure shows that the Index rose from 0.86 to 1, i.e. total parity over the last decade. Most Arab countries achieved progress in this field, particularly Saudi Arabia. However, it is interesting that the share of females fell in the UAE, Bahrain and Kuwait; perhaps this is attributable to non-national male students, since the Index in these countries remains higher than 1.

2. Development of admission and support systems to increase educational opportunities and provide equality and equity

A number of Arab countries regulate admission (and distribution of students) in higher education institutions through a centralized system based on the grade that students obtain for their high school certificate. However, other countries enforce different admission measures, such as open enrollment, entrance exams, or rely on international or national testing, etc. The centralized system provides equality of opportunity because it applies specific criteria to all, without discrimination. However, this does not necessarily secure an equitable distribution of these

opportunities whenever students are subject to the same criteria of selection, while they have unequal geographical and social backgrounds. To confront this situation, a number of steps have been taken, leading to an increase in opportunities, the numbers of students, and equity in distribution.

The increase in opportunities has also resulted from economic considerations, as higher education institutions have sought to open up new tracks in education, which secure additional income for institutions. These two types of measures are detailed below.

Measures to provide equality and equity:

1) Royal donation

“Giving opportunities to students in remote areas for admission in various specializations, at the minimum acceptance level in each specialization, thanks to a Royal Donation that aims at granting students from these regions additional opportunities, to compensate for what they lack in educational and geographical profiles compared to more privileged areas” (Jordan, p. 32)⁸.

2) Geographical admission

“The Higher Education Council in Sudan has issued a decision that assigns special consideration to admission in less developed states, to achieve balanced development in Sudan’s various states, known as geographical admission, i.e. admission and competition take place among the people of a single state. In addition, a special admission percentage is allocated to students from rural and remote regions and war-torn areas in the South and Darfur” (Sudan, p. 26).

3) Scholarships and loans

“At the beginning of 2001, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education established the loan fund system for students in higher education institutions, to help cover the financial needs of students who cannot pay their tuition. From the 2000 / 2001 to 2007 / 2008 academic years, a total of \$90 million in student loans were awarded through the fund, of which \$60 million were offered to students who graduated, and \$30 million to students who were still in school, while loan recipients did not pay off these loans” (Palestine, p. 6).

“The government awards university scholarships and loans that are based on the annual income of the student’s family; these scholarships and loans are a form of social justice. Approximately 35% of students at Tunisian universities receive these scholarships” (Tunisia, pp. 10, 14 and 65).

“The scholarships awarded to students in higher education in Morocco covered 31% of the country’s total number of students (392,610)” (Morocco, p. 23).

“The Ministry of Higher Education provides scholarships to students of families on social insurance and having a limited income to enroll in the Sultanate’s higher education institutions. The ministry has paid attention to this segment of the population since the program began in the 2000 / 2001 academic year, in an attempt to promote its conditions and support it so that families become productive and provide themselves with a decent life, and exiting the umbrella of social security” (Oman, pp. 35 - 36).

Measures to increase opportunities, for economic considerations or due to the limited enrollment capacity at state universities:

4) Parallel education

Accepting an additional number of students in each specialization at state universities, in exchange of fees covering the entire cost of their study (Syria, p. 113; Jordan, p. 31; Yemen, p. 28).

⁸ These sources refer to national reports.

5) Education cost system

Students are accepted at various higher education programs with the exception of medicine, health sciences, engineering and IT, in exchange for a relatively low cost compared to parallel education; instruction generally takes place in the evenings (Yemen, p. 28; Sudan, p. 34).

6) Domestic scholarships

"In Kuwait, a domestic scholarship policy and a plan for 2006 were endorsed, to compensate the inability of the University of Kuwait and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training to increase the number of their students" (Kuwait, pp. 23 - 24).

"In 1426 H (2005), the ministry put forward a scholarship project at non-governmental universities and faculties, with 10,000 scholarships over five years. These scholarships are offered based on the quality of the students' academic performance, in addition to reports on institutional and program performance submitted by the National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment on these universities and faculties. Some are full scholarships and cover the costs of education, while others are partial scholarships, covering part of the tuition in various specializations required by the job market" (Saudi Arabia, pp. 7 and 16).

"The Ministry of Higher Education provides scholarships to the children of emigrants within Yemen or gives scholarships to some students studying at private universities" (Yemen, p. 28).

"The ministry is also making efforts to increase enrollment capacity by offering 4,000 state scholarships annually for enrollment in private universities and faculties in the Sultanate" (Oman, p. 29).

3. Diversification of higher education institutions and increase in their number and geographical spread

Policies and measures by Arab governments over the last decade, and the rising demand for higher education, have led to a considerable expansion in the number of higher education institutions and considerable diversity in the features of these institutions. This diversity has taken several forms: state/private education; national/foreign universities; local programs/partnership programs with foreign universities abroad; short-term/long-term studies, etc.

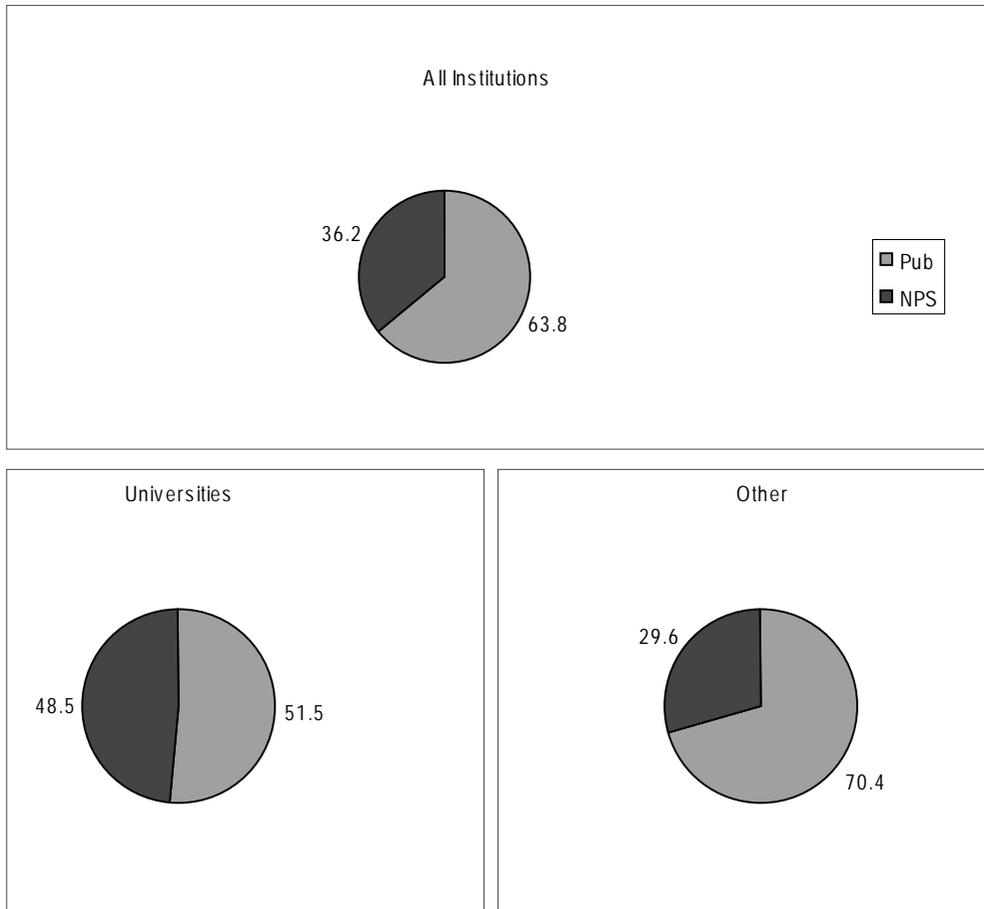
The number of universities active in the Arab region today stands at 398, compared to a mere 174 a decade ago; i.e. the number has more than doubled. If we add the higher institutes, community colleges, teacher-training institutes and other higher education institutions not affiliated with universities, the total number rises to 1,139.

Below we list the achievements by Arab countries with regard to diversification:

7) Non- public universities

Governments have allowed the establishment of non-public higher education institutions, which are sometimes called private or civil institutions, according to the custom followed in each country, or according to the distinction in a given country between profit (private) and not-for-profit (civil) institutions.

Figure 1 - 7: Share of the public and non-public sectors of higher education institutions, 2008

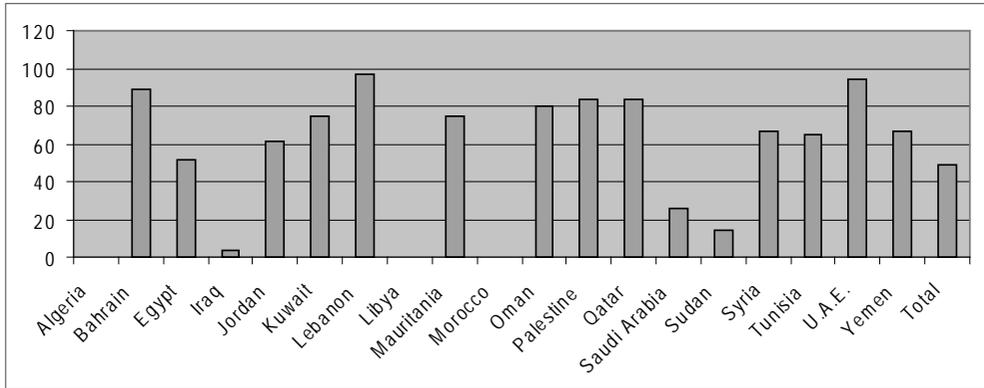


In general, the non-public sector today accounts for about 36% of higher education institutions in the Arab region, as shown in Figure 1 - 7; its share rises in universities compared to other institutions, and it is as if the opening of non-university institutions remains, fundamentally, the responsibility of the government sector.

Arab countries differ strongly in the size of the non-public sector (in universities). Figure 1 - 8 shows that in some countries, the share of the non-public sector's exceeds 80% (Bahrain, Lebanon, Palestine, Qatar, the UAE) while it is below 20%, or reaches zero, in others (Algeria, Iraq, Libya and Morocco).

The non-public sector includes national universities and foreign universities affiliated with the country to which they are administratively and academically linked. Some follow the Anglo Saxon system, for universities based in the UK and the US, and others follow the German, French or Russian systems. Some national universities are based on partnership or twinning agreements with foreign universities, such as the German University, New York University in Jordan, or some institutions in Arab Gulf countries.

Figure 1 - 8: Share of non-public sector universities in Arab countries (2008)



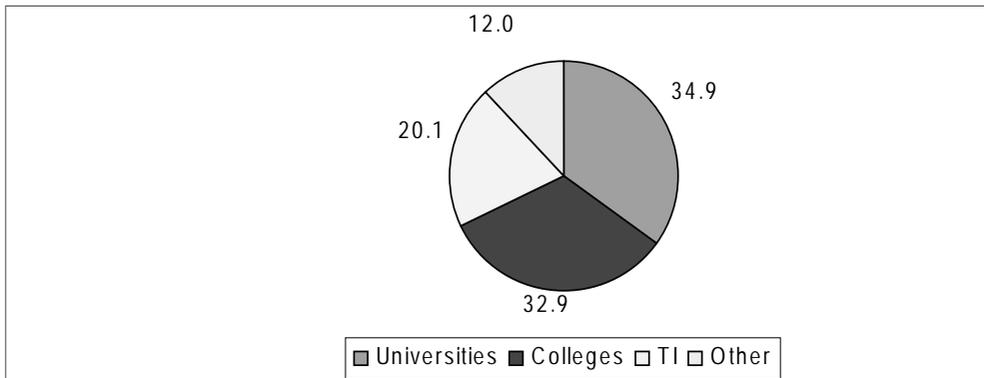
8) Open universities, virtual universities and remote learning

An open university was established in Kuwait, with branches in Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Bahrain and Palestine. The Jerusalem Open University (Palestine) comprises 23 centers in the West Bank and Gaza; it attracts around one-third of Palestinian higher education students. As for virtual universities, we can mention: the Virtual University in Syria, which was established in 2002 and comprises 18 centers; the Virtual University in Tunisia, which offers remote learning and was established in 2002 to employ digital technology, and strives to offer 20% of instructional units in the universities at a non-attendance-base (Tunisia, pp. 20 and 22).

9) Non-university institutions

We have noted above the growing size of higher education institutions outside universities, and Figure 1-9 shows that these institutions are taking different forms, such as colleges (33%) and higher technical institutes and community colleges (20%). Examples of this are colleges of community development in Sudan, which offer short-term programs for rural women, specializing in nutrition, public health, environmental health, and ceramics, and participants receive certificates of attendance (Sudan, p. 33), and institutes for the education of mid-level personnel in technology, business administration, tourism, translation, heritage professions, arts, languages and other fields that meet the need of the job market (Tunisia, pp. 39 - 40).

Figure 1 - 9: Distribution of higher education institutions, by type (2008)



10) Geographical spread

By geographical spread, we mean that a number of new universities, particularly state institutions, have been established in the most remote geographical areas, with an estimated average of at least one per district or governorate (Tunisia, p. 28; Sudan, p. 5; Libya, p. 11; Egypt, p. 5; Saudi Arabia, p. 13). We also mean that many state and non-state universities have established branches in various parts of the country, in order to be close to students and facilitate their enrollment (Lebanon, p. 9; Palestine p. 2, Syria pp. 9 - 10; Egypt, p. 5).

4. Establishment of quality assurance and control structures

a. Established structures

Ten countries have established commissions or committees for quality control and quality assurance.

- 1) **Jordan:** The Accreditation Council was established in 1990 in order to supervise quality control, create criteria to accredit private institutions, to adopt, modify and develop them, and to monitor implementation. On 25 March 2007, a law was enacted, replacing the Accreditation Council with the Higher Education Accreditation Commission (HENC), which enjoys financial and administrative independence. The related standards, regulations and instructions remained in effect until they are modified or amended, while the scope was widened, to include public and non-public higher education institutions (p. 12).
- 2) **UAE:** The Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) was established in 2000. "The Commission's work focused on evaluating the conditions of private higher education institutions, based on licensing and accreditation criteria; this resulted in the closure of 16 private educational institutions between 2001 and 2003, because they did not meet the conditions and requirements stipulated for licensing. Also, a periodic review of all private education institutions is performed annually (institutional accreditation) and academic programs are re-accredited once every five years" (p. 6).
- 3) **Tunisia:** On 29 June 1993, a ministerial decision was issued, regulating the activities of the Comité National d'Evaluation (National Committee of Evaluation, or CNE). During the 2006/ 2007 academic year, the Committee launched self-evaluation activities in all of the country's 190 institutions (faculties and institutes) affiliated with 13 state universities. After the internal evaluation, an external evaluation was performed on each institution, conducted by two or three experts specialized in the concerned program⁹. This Committee is considered the nucleus of and prelude to the National Commission that will be established. "The National Commission of Evaluation, Quality Assurance and Accreditation, whose establishment was stipulated by the new Higher Education Law, and will be created within two years, to supervise the provision of mechanisms for evaluation, quality assurance and accreditation" (p. 81).
- 4) **Saudi Arabia:** The National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA) established in 2004; it enjoys an official legal status and administrative and financial independence and is supervised by the Council for Higher Education. The Commission aims at controlling the quality of higher education and guaranteeing the performance of its outputs, so that they meet the requirements of the labor market (p. 22).

⁹ El-Amine, Adnan (2007), *Report on Higher Education in Tunisia*, UNESCO, unpublished.

- 5) **Sudan:** The High Commission for Evaluation and Accreditation was established in 2003, in order to improve and promote the performance of and guarantee the quality of outputs in higher education institutions (p.14).
- 6) **Oman:** The Oman Accreditation Council (OAC) was established in 2001; it regulates accreditation and evaluation and quality control in higher education institutions. The OAC is managed by an independent commission affiliated with the Higher Education Council (p. 9).
- 7) **Palestine:** The Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission (AQAC) was established in 2004, as an independent body that is administratively affiliated with the minister of higher education. The Commission licenses new higher education institutions, awards accreditation to new programs and performs quality assurance, through work mechanisms and criteria that it develops for this purpose. The Quality Assurance Fund has also been established, in order to improve the management of higher education, provide guidance and ensure quality (p. 8).
- 8) **Kuwait:** The Private University Council is concerned with accrediting private universities; its tasks include: 1) examining applications to establish private educational institutions; 2) specify the requirements of academic accreditation for private educational institutions, accredit their programs, and review their performance, to verify their commitment to the contents of the establishment decrees; 3) adopt criteria and conditions that should be met in the study programs at private educational institutions and review these conditions and criteria; 4) accredit degrees issued by private educational institutions and determine equivalency according to measures decided for this purpose; 5) decide on abolishing, merging, halting the activities of private institutions¹⁰. Kuwait's National Report mentioned a project to establish a Commission on Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance, whose tasks include: protecting state and private higher education institutions through granting accreditation certificates and performing quality control on their educational and specialized programs, guaranteeing the right of investors in and beneficiaries of higher education to high-quality education (p. 78).
- 9) **Libya:** The Quality Assurance and Accreditation Center (QAAC) for higher education institutions was established in 2006; it seeks to design, develop and implement a comprehensive system of evaluation, quality assurance and accreditation for national higher education institutions in order to develop the educational process, and arrive at the highest levels of quality, efficiency and excellence (pp. 29 - 30).
- 10) **Egypt:** A decision to establish the National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education (NAQAEE) was issued in 2006; the body is independent and affiliated with the prime minister (p. 8).

b. Projects and structures underway

Five countries are on their way to establishing national commissions for quality control:

- 11) **Bahrain:** "Article 9 of Law 3 of 2005, on higher education, stipulates that 'an Academic Accreditation Committee' shall be established, formed of a number of experts and specialists in higher education, by a decision by the prime minister, based on the recommendation of the Cabinet; this Committee shall be tasked with setting down academic criteria and making recommendations for the accreditation of higher

¹⁰ Implementation regulations of Law 34 of 2000 on establishing private universities <http://www.puc.edu.kw/index.php?TP=RuleSC2>

education institutions operating in the Kingdom, to be endorsed by the Council.” Measures to establish the Committee are now being taken and the necessary funds are being secured (p. 62). In addition the decree 32 was issued in 2008 to establish the “Association of Quality Assurance and Training» (p. 28).

- 12) **Syria:** The Higher Education Council decided on 10 January 2005 to establish a permanent committee at the Ministry of Higher Education, called the “Higher Committee on Quality and Accreditation,” with the following tasks: adopting ongoing self-evaluation at universities, setting down criteria for quality and academic distinction, establishing a quality assurance system at public and private higher education institutions that shall perform external auditing of quality and adopt criteria for quality and academic distinction and the bases of the government’s recognition and accreditation of degrees, and proposing a suitable organizational structure to establish a Higher Committee on Quality and Accreditation, and determining its administrative subordination (p. 17).
- 13) **Iraq:** “The Independent Commission on Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, at the ministry’s office, is under legislation, in addition to centers and units for quality assurance at Iraqi universities; at present, work is underway on designing an integrated system for computerized quality assurance” (pp. 14, 21).
- 14) **Morocco:** A system for evaluating and accrediting programs is underway (p. 14).
- 15) **Yemen:** A decision to establish a Council on Academic Accreditation was expected in May 2009; the Council will be concerned with improving the quality of higher education in state universities and particularly civil universities; this will represent a big step forward, toward quality in higher education programs (p. 12).

5. Conclusion

The above indicates the huge efforts and many achievements by Arab countries in the last decade (since 1998). These achievements have changed the features of higher education in the Arab region. The number of students has doubled, the number of higher education institutions has more than doubled, and the share of females in higher education has increased considerably. This has resulted from population growth and the rise in the social demand for higher education; it has also resulted from reforms and amendments carried out by government authorities in the field of admissions, support, and the spread of state education institutions into remote areas, in order to increase opportunities and provide more equity and justice in securing these opportunities. The types of higher education have become more diverse and non-government institutions have appeared in big numbers, along with foreign universities or partnership programs with foreign universities.

In addition to educational opportunities, Arab countries have made achievements in establishing national commissions for accreditation and quality assurance. Out of ten such commissions, eight have been established since 1998. However, in the establishment of these bodies, several items stand out:

- 1) the overwhelming majority of them remain oriented toward the “accreditation” of private universities (which is classified as quality control more than quality assurance);
- 2) they all remain in a transitory phase and have yet to arrive at an independent, integrated structure or one that enjoys authority or moral value in the entire sector, compared to their advanced counterparts in the world;
- 3) two out of 17 countries’ national reports did not mention anything about issuing legislation to establish structures for quality assurance (Lebanon and Mauritania), in addition to two

other countries which did not issue a national report by the time of preparation of the regional report (Qatar and Algeria).

In general, the national reports did not mention tangible achievements when it comes to improving quality, the university's social responsibility or administration and management; what was mentioned with regard to financing involved plans and policies. These missing items certainly constitute challenges that Arab countries face in the field of higher education, and these challenges will be dealt with in a separate chapter.

II. Initiatives and Innovations

By initiatives and innovations, we mean the establishment of new forms of instruction and regulation intended to help solve certain problems and improve the performance and management of higher education institutions.

These initiatives and these innovations which took place in Arab countries during the last decade can be classified according to following seven categories:

- 1) Establishing new types of universities
- 2) Establishing new types of faculties and programs
- 3) Creating ICT (information communications technology) systems
- 4) Establishing university networks and databases
- 5) Launching initiatives to enhance the quality of higher education
- 6) Launching initiatives to support scientific research
- 7) Establishing new systems for admission, teaching and evaluating outputs

Below, we outline the relevant findings of national reports.

1. Establishing new types of universities

a. Branches of foreign universities

In the UAE, branches of foreign universities have been established in "free education zones," as the country's Free Zone Authority supplied the infrastructure, in the form of buildings, as well as central student services. The local government authorities supplied practically all of the funding, as in the case of the Sorbonne in Abu Dhabi, Middlesex University in Dubai, George Mason University in Ras al-Khaimah, etc. In Iraq, Saint Clemons University from the UK, the Free Dutch University and the Danish Higher Academy have established branches, while in Mauritania, private universities have appeared as a new phenomenon in higher education; some of these institutions are branches for networks of foreign universities (Mauritania, p. 16).

b. Partnership and cooperation agreements

In Jordan, the Ministry of Higher Education concluded an agreement with Germany's Education Ministry to establish a German-type university in order to educate "students who are able to deal with local, regional and international markets. This (new) university has signed several partnership agreements with German universities to train its students in their final years, as part of the graduation requirements." The university is responsible for all of the resulting expenditures, with the exception of students' daily expenses. Some public universities in Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Oman have concluded partnership and cooperation agreements with a number of foreign universities, to carry out joint instruction programs, especially for post graduate studies, or in order to grant joint certificates.

2. Establishing new types of faculties and programs

The following are examples of such initiatives:

a. Faculties

In Bahrain, the Bahrain Teachers' Faculty was established in 2006; its mission involves the pre-service and in-service training of teachers under an agreement with the National Institute of Education in Singapore as its international partner. This program is free of charge, and students also receive a monthly stipend; in addition, the Faculty's graduates are provided with job opportunities in the Ministry of Education. In Oman, five faculties of education (out of seven) have been converted into applied science faculties, due to the surplus in graduates majoring in education. In these applied faculties, the following is stipulated: 1) the period of study is five years (a preparatory year and four years to receive a Bachelor's degree); 2) study should be linked to internationally-recognized academic institutions; 3) the majority of the curriculum should be in English, and e-learning should be adopted as a method of study. In Sudan, a ministerial decision in 2003 commissioned a study on Model Faculty in various specializations, and established suitable criteria for conducting comparative studies on existing and proposed faculties; the model faculty should be employed as a norm for similar faculties in Sudanese universities (Sudan, p. 12).

b. Short-term programs

In Tunisia, short-term studies with a vocational emphasis have been developed to train people for small- and medium-sized businesses, in the domains of technology, business administration, tourism, translation, heritage professions, the arts, artisanal production and languages. These short-term studies are offered via a network of applied educational institutions, whose task is to prepare students for these professions (pp. 37 - 38). In Sudan, short-term programs for rural women have been established; these focus on nutrition, public health and environmental health (p. 33). In Kuwait, the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training is organizing short-term training programs in technical sciences, commercial and health sciences, computers, the humanities and psychiatry (Kuwait, p. 17). In Sudan, the Technical Education Commission offers, through its faculties, a 12-week training program on various topics that are directly linked to the job market (Sudan, pp. 19 - 20).

c. Doctoral Institutes

At the Lebanese University, three doctoral higher institutes have been established, with the following responsibilities: coordinating research plans; activating and developing research activities; follow-up and periodical evaluation; proposing research topics or projects to establish research centers and review them; managing and following up measures to obtain the HDR certificate (Habilitation to Direct Research); proposing and following up research cooperation programs between LU and research universities and institutions in Lebanon and abroad; proposing and managing doctoral programs and following up work on doctoral thesis topics (Lebanon, p. 14).

3. Creating ICT (information communications technology) systems

a. National Information Technological Center (NITC)

The Center is considered the executive reference-point for IT in government institutions with regard to all topics related to purchasing, employing and using IT resources, according to established criteria, and assisting in the drafting of budgets for all IT resources, from equipment and software to information and human resources activities (Jordan).

b. National Information System

All institutions active in the public and private sectors participate in this decentralized system; the system uses the internet to transfer, display and exchange information (Jordan).

c. Intranet

The program provides e-communication between the minister of higher education and the presidents of universities and directors general, to discuss topics of mutual concern (Tunisia).

d. System of academic and financial Links (AF-Link)

The AF-Link system was established to regulate academic and financial matters for grantee students who are studying abroad or in the country (Oman).

e. Geographical Information System (GIS)

The GIS system provides information such as the location of higher education institutions; demographic information; commercial, industrial and agricultural activities; networks of roads and airports; and other statistical information necessary for all higher education institutions, in order to take decisions based on sound information (Saudi Arabia).

f. Government portals/e-government

E-portals allow one to discover a country through various topics and methods: learning about state administrative officials, examining the country's need for employees, relevant bureaucratic measures, degree conversion and contact with virtual universities for remote education, and continuing education for employees to improve their expertise in various areas, in a way that suits their working hours (Mauritania). The Federal E-Government Project (UAE) is an important strategic project, as are local governments in the various Emirates. In fact, the huge and rapid internet-related development in communications technology has been reflected in attention to the higher education sector. In Iraq, the implementation of the National E-Government Project at the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research has continued throughout various stages; students, teachers, civil society institutions and various state sectors, in addition to citizens, may access the Ministry's website. In Saudi Arabia, MOHE has prepared 21 e-programs and systems for financial and administrative operations and procedures, while a new data center has been established and all administrative units and administrations at the ministry have been linked to an integrated e-network (p. 4). In Jordan, "knowledge stations" serve as a practical step on the road to adopting IT applications in local communities, as a prelude to improving the usages of e-government in serving citizens where they live and work."

4. Establishing university networks and databases

a. Higher education network

In Tunisia, the National University Network (Réseau National Universitaire-NRU) links all higher education institutions in an advanced national network that is linked to the Khawarzami Center, which represents the backbone of the national university high-capacity network, which in turn links the Center's branches and Tunis Telecom with the internet and the European Research Network, via Tunis' Internet Agency. In Tunisia also, the Administrative Communication System at Universities aims at supporting media systems among universities, particularly through the creation of networks of university libraries, the generalization of remote registration, and guarantee of the flow of scientific media among universities. In Sudan, the higher education network links higher education institutions in various parts of the country and establishes a virtual library system, which contains a unified index, sites of local and international academic periodicals, and free international databases in all academic inquiries, in addition to connections to Arab and international libraries, connections to library associations, and information networks. In Syria, the Syrian Higher Education Network (SHERN) links universities networks, institutes and research centers with each other and with the internet. In Morocco, the Marwan Network provides media and communications systems to educational institutions and their linkage to networks of international institutions of education and research (Morocco, p. 33).

b. Linking with the Euro-Mediterranean Network of Education and Research

This project aims at linking National Networks of Education and Research (NREN) in Mediterranean countries with each other, and linking them to the Higher European Network of Education and Research (GEANT) (Syria, p. 125).

c. Scientific research databases

The idea to establish research databases arose a short time after the birth of the Scientific Research Council and was included in the organizational chart of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education at the beginning of 2003; it embraced the idea of establishing such a body and creating a public administration for development and scientific research; this began at the end of 2003 (Palestine, p. 6).

d. E-Library

At the beginning of 2008, state universities in Jordan completed “the biggest federation of libraries project in the Arab world, based on applying unified library management systems in all state universities” (p. 47). In Egypt, a central unit for digital libraries and automation of university libraries has been created; this also includes establishing a gathering of Egyptian universities to subscribe to digital library databases. This system allows searches for a holding and the identification of the libraries from which it can be borrowed, the subscription to digital library databases, and the automation of work systems for university libraries (p. 8). In Iraq, the Iraqi Virtual Science Library project has been implemented, by securing sources and scientific reference materials through local and international networks, and by using available databases from international publishing houses. This project was carried out in seven Iraqi universities during its initial stage (p. 26).

5. Launching initiatives to boost the quality of higher education

Arab States have established centers and institutions to support higher education and scientific research and others to boost adequacy between higher education and the job market. The following are some examples of such initiatives:

a. The Fund for Quality Development

The Fund for Quality Development is part of a the Higher Education Project, which aims at improving the management and orientation of higher education and assuring its quality, boosting internal and external efficiency for a higher education system, creating incentives, and providing the necessary foundations to improve the efficiency and quality of institutions of higher education (Palestine, p. 8).

b. Hussein Fund for Creativity and Excellence

The Fund was established following an initiative by 25 banks and financial institutions operating in Jordan; it seeks to encourage excellence and support creativity and leadership for individuals and institutions in the public and private sectors. The Fund’s work focuses on quality assurance in higher education institutions (Jordan).

c. University Observatory

An Observatory is to be established in every university; it will be based on gathering information linked to the institution and its social-economic milieu, so that the university can undertake the analysis necessary to help it conduct prospective studies to link the university to economic institutions, in order to achieve relevancy between educational programs and the needs of the labor market (Tunisia and Morocco).

d. King Abdullah II Development Fund

The Fund functions as an NGO and it aims at encouraging citizens to establish economic projects

and supports them by increasing productivity, through taking part in the training of citizens (Jordan).

e. National Center for Human Resource Development

The Center improves relevance between the outcomes of the training and educational program and the requirements of development, in addition to continuing to evaluate development programs in the entire educational system (Jordan).

f. A Doctor for Every Factory

This project aims to make industrial firms benefit from the expertise of faculty members to identify the opportunities for establishing cooperation and development programs between these institutions and faculty at universities of applied sciences and technology; it also provides students with training and job opportunities after graduation (Jordan).

g. Incubators

Incubators receive the ideas of innovators and convert them into projects after performing feasibility studies and providing an integrated services bundle for these ideas that includes location; technical, marketing and administrative support; consulting; and financing methods, so that they become fully-integrated projects that can grow, and are able to overcome initial operations difficulties (Kuwait, Tunisia, Morocco, Lebanon).

6. Launching initiatives to support research

a. Scientific Research Commission

This Commission was established in 2008 to carry out the regulation of scientific research activities at existing public and private higher education institutions and fund individual and national research projects in priority areas (UAE).

b. Centers of Excellence in Scientific Research

The Ministry of Higher Education has supported the establishment of a number of centers of excellence in research, in a number of universities, in order to create an effective and active system of scientific research. In establishing these centers, the Higher Education Ministry has followed a competitive method based on criteria and specifications of centers of excellence in international arbitration and full funding for five years, with periodic evaluation (Saudi Arabia).

c. Scientific Research Chairs

Chairs of scientific research are a type of community partnership in supporting the research system in strategic scientific fields; at King Saud University, for example, there are 80 such chairs. At King Abdel-Aziz University there are 15 and King Fahd University has 14 (Saudi Arabia, p. 19). Chairs of scientific research are used to arrive at inter-cultural understanding, which leads to spreading a culture of peace and cooperation among nations. These chairs are also used to help us arrive at a contemporary international community that lives in peace and present contemporary viewpoints, to highlight Oman's cultural heritage in an era of globalization (Oman).

d. Nanotechnology Research

The ministry has established four research centers on nanotechnology at King Saud University, King Fahd University for Petroleum and Minerals, King Abdel-Aziz University, and Taibah University. The ministry has performed follow-up with these institutions to complete infrastructure and launch their programs (Saudi Arabia, p. 14).

e. Science Council

The council was established in 2005 in order to regulate scientific research issues and encourage and support research through various financial and other means; the Center is the most important authority in this field. It coordinates among institutions and groups interested in scientific research,

and is responsible for preparing an integrated national strategy on scientific research, following up the strategy, upgrading it, and identifying priorities and supervising implementation (Oman).

f. Scientific Associations

The MOHE has launched competitive programs among associations to encourage them to offer creative activities that meet their goals, develop the bases for implementation and the standard of related technical and administrative regulation, improve their frameworks, diversify sources of funding in support of their activities and programs, and establish international alliances with them. The ministry is also supporting associations through funding the establishment of a headquarters that will enable it to become independent in its activities and develop its professional work. There are 123 scientific associations at universities in Saudi Arabia (p. 14).

7. Establishing new systems for admission, instruction and evaluating outcomes

The following initiatives have been identified by the national reports:

a. Unified Admission Center

The Center was established in 2006, to regulate the process of submitting admission and enrolment forms in higher education institutions for graduates with a general certificate or the equivalent degree. The Center aims at achieving equal opportunity for all students who apply to higher education institutions, offering orientation information to students and parents about the opportunities available and terms of admission and providing statistical reports on students who have been accepted (Oman).

b. Higher Education Number

This refers to the student's registration number with the General Secretariat of the Higher Education Council; it is assigned to each student in private higher education in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The number is part of the admission and registration procedures for the student in these institutions. The higher education number is also used in student transfers from one institution of higher education to another. The number is required to allow the student to take examinations and is used in documents and certificates and to follow up the student's study performance and attendance; it allows the student to obtain all services offered by the General Secretariat of the Higher Education Council (Bahrain, p. 30).

c. Regulating Centralized Tests of Students' Aptitude in Secondary Education

The Ministry of Higher Education has developed a national test for English-language and math abilities, to measure aptitude of secondary school graduates and use the results of these tests as an indicator for admitting students into state universities (UAE).

d. National Center for Measurement and Evaluation

The National Center for Measurement and Evaluation in Saudi Arabia was established in 2000 in order to specify and implement criteria for admission and measurement. Its work includes: testing the general aptitude of high school graduates in two languages; achievement test; testing the general aptitude of university students; testing the general aptitude of female students; English language testing; and testing the general aptitude of talented students (Saudi Arabia, p. 9). In Kuwait, the Center for Measurement and Instruction Development prepares academic aptitude tests and administers these tests three times during the school year. Correction takes place in standardized fashion and the results are analyzed statistically; the Center sends them to students via SMS and announces the results on the center's website. The Center performs a periodic evaluation of curricula and faculty performance, via a questionnaire (p. 19). In Syria, work is underway on the establishment of a National Center for Evaluation and Measurement in

Higher Education, to function as a center for distinction in research and studies on the needs of higher education in the field of measurement, evaluation and admission policies (p. 21).

e. University Graduate Competence Exam

Students at state and private universities take a normative evaluation test in each specialization at the national level, reflecting the competence of graduates and universities that award program certificates; taking the test is a condition for certification of the degree that a graduate receives, but not for graduation. The competence test aims at: 1) conducting a normative evaluation of the scientific aptitude of graduates of Syrian private and public universities, and 2) providing the concerned university with information that it can use in evaluating and developing curricula and improving teaching methods (Syria, p. 19).

f. Remote Student Services Systems

IT systems for providing higher education-related services cover the following: 1) providing remote registration services to students in government higher education institutions through a single website, designated for enrollment; and 2) guiding successful high school graduates in the selection of universities that match their aspiration, via an orientation website that employs fairness and transparency (Tunisia).

g. Scholarships

A large-scale scholarship program has been launched in Saudi Arabia with the goal of achieving a qualitative jump in the outputs of higher education and the specializations needed by the country at the bachelor's, Master's and Ph.D. stages and medical fellowships, and improving these outputs to international levels. The program began in 2005 with 2,800 scholarship recipients and now counts 50,000 scholarship recipients in vital specializations, and leading universities in a number of countries, including the US, the UK, Germany, Italy, Spain, Holland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, France, Japan, Malaysia, China, India, Singapore and South Korea (Saudi Arabia, p. 7)

h. LMD System

This European system has three levels: L (BA/BS, or «licence», three years); M (Master's, two years) and D (doctorate, three years). Four Arab countries – Tunisia, Morocco, Mauritania and Lebanon, have adopted this system.

i. Digital Pedagogy Content

The Tunis Virtual University has opened digital units in various specializations and has worked to modernize these units and review their pedagogical and technical content, and create a unified structure of affiliated units in all scientific specializations; a number of these digital units are now on-line (RPL) (Tunisia).

j. Language Village

A language village was established in Tunisia in 2008; it functions as a university center for language training, based on training students specializing in languages in sound communication and rhetorical skills, supervised by native speakers of the languages; its educational programs cover scientific, cultural, entertainment and sports activities. The center opened its doors to the public as part of continuing education and educating those who want to improve their language ability.

K. Teacher Incentive System

This system was established in 2007; it covers a wide array of financial incentives for faculty in return for scientific activities that they carry out, and specifies the foundations for sending some instructors to international institutions to complete scientific research or learn about the latest developments in their fields of specialization (Syria).

L. Contractual Education Programs

Institutions of higher education contract with the state to develop the specialized programs that

meet the needs of plans, programs and projects, such as educating 10,000 engineers every year, up to 2010, and other education initiatives for medicine, new professions and social work (Morocco).

m. Spreading Institutional Culture

Spreading an institutional culture aims to support the participation of universities in creating institutions in general, and particularly the creation of institutions in new sectors. This takes place by incorporating institutional culture as a compulsory education unit taken by all registered students in the LMD system (Tunisia, pp. 26 - 27).

n. Educating Students about Rights and Obligations

“Registration models” for new students have been prepared; they designate the rights and obligations of students and the institution. These models are co-signed by officials from the institutions, the student and his/her parent/guardian (Bahrain, p. 57).

o. Incorporating a Help Cell into Vocational Integration of Students

This cell assists students in finding work; it advises and provides guidance to students, along with job offers and expected developments about their education. This cell is expected to become the ideal mediator for socio-economic partners and productive institutions at the local and national level. Its tasks also include developing permanent partnerships with institutions, through concluding agreements and playing the role of a strong mediator with local and national employment agencies (Tunisia, p. 79).

8. Conclusion

This chapter has allowed for reviewing 34 initiatives launched by Arab countries in an attempt to develop higher education frameworks, and perhaps solve a number of problems. These initiatives are, in some cases, inspired by international experience or based on developments witnessed during this period in the field of ICT, or from foreign offers (such as the establishment of new universities) or other developments. If we view these initiatives from the standpoint of the areas that have occupied the Arab Regional Conference on Higher Education (ARCHE+10), we notice that these initiatives are located in the domains of educational opportunities, quality of education and (technological) management, but none falls with the area of social responsibility of the university, financing of education, governance and the inter-Arab cooperation.

III. Development Policies

This chapter reviews the most important information reported by National Reports with regard to policies adopted in order to develop higher education.

Such policies usually take several forms: regulations and legislation; strategies and plans; projects and programs. We will not outline these policies according to form, but by country, in a way that demonstrates integration among them. We will point to the extent to which each country has approved these policies and put them into practice.

1. Jordan

Strategies: producing a National Strategy for Higher Education and Scientific Research, 2007-2012 (p. 33).

2. UAE

Projects: Establishing and developing a National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The state has begun establishing this framework in cooperation with the Ministry of Higher Education

and Scientific Research. Higher education institutions are expected to begin developing their curricula to match the classification at each level of the NQF (p. 16).

3. Bahrain

Laws: Enacting a Law on Higher Education in 2005 (p. 25).

Future Projects¹¹:

- 1) Enacting a national admission system in higher education institutions,
- 2) Improving investment opportunities in higher education,
- 3) Relying on assistance from higher education institutions as houses for expertise for the state and private sectors,
- 4) Following up the outputs of higher education,
- 5) Project on academic accreditation for higher education,
- 6) Coordination Committee for Academic Accreditation in GCC States project.

4. Tunisia

Laws: Enacting a Higher Education Law in Tunisia on 25 February 2008 (p. 49).

Projects: Quality Support Program. This project is based on competition among universities to win financial allocations set aside for the project. It requires universities to submit projects for quality support with clear goals, components and results for improving quality in the fields of training, financial and administrative management and in methods of administrative, financial and pedagogical management, including the acquisition of software for scientific, administrative and pedagogical management, which aims at improving quality and the administrative efficiency at the university level (pp. 32 - 36).

5. Saudi Arabia

Plans: Preparing a future plan for developing university education that includes developing all aspects of higher education (pp. 16 - 17).

Projects: Creativity and Excellence Project. Due to the importance of improving the standard of faculty in Saudi universities, the Ministry of Higher Education is completing the Creativity and Excellence Project for faculty, launched in 2006. This project comprises a group of programs, such as communications and academic leadership skills, strategic planning, thought engineering, and the use of the internet in education (p. 10).

6. Sudan

Projects: Reverse Emigration Project, Knowledge and Technology Transfer Project, Experts and Qualified People Register project, Comprehensive Census Project (p. 40).

Future projects: ICT Project. This project aims at making sources of knowledge available to students, professors and researchers. The project deals with the networked links between higher education institutions in using fiber-optic technology and providing subscriptions to international e-libraries and university indexes at Sudanese universities, and creating databases of theses. The project is expected to result in the provision of a virtual library service in addition to internet and email services. Project to develop technical education. This project aims at attracting students to technical studies and following technological developments, to meet the needs of the job market. The project covers the establishment of new technical faculties in the governorates of Sudan, support infrastructure (factories and workshops affiliated with it) and develop and modernize curricula, in order to meet the latest technological developments (pp. 46 - 47).

¹¹ For the next five or ten years.

7. Syria

Strategies: Authoring a strategy and implementation policies for the 10th Five Year Plan for the Higher Education Sector (2007 - 2012) (p. 29).

Projects: The 10th Five Year Plan for the Higher Education Sector (2006 - 2010) contained a group of projects. The largest in scale was the Project to Develop the Higher Education System. A funding agreement was signed with the European Commission in Syria in June 2007 for a four-year program, with a budget of 10 million euros. With this assistance for the project, the Ministry of Higher Education will be able to lay down a framework for creating the suitable conditions for improving quality and efficiency in the higher education sector in Syria, which will in turn help boost human resources, to guarantee economic growth and social development (p. 145).

8. Iraq

Laws: Preparation of a draft law on the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in place of Law 40 of 1988 (p. 16).

9. Oman

Strategies: Authoring a new strategy for higher education in the Sultanate of Oman (p. 48).

Projects: Comprehensive Survey of Private Higher Education Graduates in the Sultanate of Oman: The project comprises a survey of the number of private higher education graduates since the sector's inception in 1995 and up to the 2007 / 2008 academic year. The graduating classes since then are 11 in number; the project evaluates the internal and external efficiency of the education system by assessing outputs of this system in terms of skills, knowledge, aptitude and the relevance of programs and specializations for the job market. The project began in August 2008 and it is hoped to be concluded in April 2010 (pp. 50 - 53).

Statistical System for Higher Education in the Sultanate of Oman: this project is one of the national e-projects being carried out by Oman's Ministry of Higher Education. It gathers and publishes detailed data on higher education at the end of every academic year; this data covers students, academics and administrators in all of Oman's higher education institutions, and Omani students studying abroad on scholarship, in addition to financial information on each higher education institution inside the country and on students after their graduation. The Unified Acceptance Center manages this system and also verifies documents and provides data to higher education institutions, government bodies and concerned research and studies centers (p. 54).

10. Kuwait

Projects: establishment of a Professional Qualifications System. This project seeks to create a system of standards that will improve the aptitude of those practicing various professions in various economic sectors in Kuwait, and boost opportunities for Kuwaiti national in the job market, by establishing a system of criteria and specifications for improving service, via the following steps: 1) design a software for professional qualifications; 2) preparing professional standards for 100 professions; 3) preparing tests for these professions; 4) program and test design, to conduct the required tests on the work force (p. 23).

Kuwait's national report contains a list of future development projects at the University of Kuwait and a second list for the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training.

11. Lebanon

Strategies: National Strategy for Education in Lebanon 2007 (pp. 76 - 193).

12. Libya

Future projects: University Campuses Project. This development project to establish and equip 23 university campuses, distributed throughout the country, will cost LD3.6 billion. Contracts for the construction of 19 campuses have been signed and work has commenced; the period of implementation ranges from 36 months for 15 campuses and 24 months for four others. Steps are now underway to conclude contracts for the construction of the remaining four campuses (p. 78).

National Project for ICT in the Higher Education Sector. The Libyan government has signed an agreement with UNESCO for this project, which will cost \$72 million. UNESCO will design and execute networks and train employees on them (p. 85).

13. Egypt

Strategies: Setting down a strategy for defining the chief objectives of the higher education system (p. 3).

Projects: In 2002, Egypt launched the Higher Education Enhancement Project (HEEP), with a loan from the World Bank, in addition to partial funding from the Egyptian government and other sources. The project's six sub-projects are: 1) a Higher Education Enhancement Project Fund (HEEPF) a regular, competitive mechanism that takes place every six months, which was established with help from universities and higher education institutions, to finance a special development program for each institution; 2) the Faculty Leadership Development Project (FLDP); 3) a project for developing information and communications technology (ICTP); 4) the Faculty of Education Project (FOEP), 5) the Egypt Technical Colleges Project (ETCP); and 6) the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Project (QAAP)¹².

Projects to develop the infrastructure of higher education. Some of these projects are being carried out in cooperation with Mediterranean countries, and with the participation of universities and Egyptian educational institutions. Others are being carried out in cooperation with France, Germany and the European Union (pp. 18 - 20).

14. Morocco

Laws: Authoring a National Covenant on Education, which represents a plan to reform the education system; this has produced a project to reform higher education by issuing Law 00 - 01, to regulate higher education and scientific research (p. 12).

Future projects: the national report mentioned that an urgent program containing a list of 23 projects in order to accelerate the implementation of reform, of which nine projects concern higher education, encouraging a spirit of initiative and distinction in secondary, preparatory and university education and in confronting horizontal problems in the education system.

15. Mauritania

Laws: Issuing Law 2006 - 2007, to regulate higher education (p. 9)

Projects: Development of Higher Education project, which was launched in 2004 and is principally directed toward the University of Nouakchott, has three major goals: 1) modernizing programs and developing faculty, setting down an accreditation system; 2) using ICT in teaching and research; and 3) institutional support for higher education institutions (p. 6).

¹² See ElMahdi Said, Mohsen. *The Impact of Reform Projects in Higher Education: The Case of Egypt* (Paper submitted to ARCHE+10) and published in this book.

16. Yemen

Strategies: Preparing a National Strategy on Higher Education and Scientific Research (p. 4).

Projects: At the beginning of 2004, work began in the framework of a cooperation project with the Dutch government (NPT Program), on: a) preparing an ICT policy for higher education; b) designing a higher education information network, comprising a central network, a separate network for each university, including search services, remote education, e-education and training end-users on the network (students, faculty, administrators) and training technicians who will run the network at the center, and universities; c) the designs were completed in 2005, with the cost of establishing and running the network and training employees and users was estimated at 20 million euros; d) a search for funding was launched and part of the amount was secured from government's budget and the Chinese and Dutch governments; and e) an ICT Center for Higher Education was established and began its work in supervising the creation of an ICT infrastructure at universities, training technicians at state universities, improving the aptitude of employees at the Center and at higher education institutions by training managers and the assistant technical staff in how to coordinate, train and follow up implementation of ICT activities at the Center and at all higher education institutions (10 in number).

Future projects: Project to Establish a Higher Education Network. Work began on the project in 2004, as part of the cooperation project with the Dutch government; the designs were completed in 2005 and the project's cost at the time estimated at 20 million euros. The project is being implemented gradually, based on the availability of funding, which has reached 10 million euros as of the end of 2008; a search for the remaining funding for the completion of the network is underway (p. 8).

Competitive Development Project. This project will be carried out with \$10 million in funding from the World Bank. A certain amount will be allocated to each state university, with each institution asked to submit its academic priority list, and submit approximately three development projects for various academic programs, in light of the priorities. The Ministry will study these projects and endorse what it deems suitable, via a joint, ministry-university committee, using clear and precise criteria that are agreed to beforehand. The project covers the development of existing academic programs or the development of new programs (p. 28).

Project to Develop Higher Education (Stage 2). The Yemeni Republic, represented by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, has obtained a \$10 million grant from the World Bank and \$570,000 from the Japanese government, to fund Stage 2 of the Project to Develop Higher Education. Currently, the project's design is being completed; it aims at improving the quality of programs that are selected at universities and maintaining the momentum for long-term reform to the funding and management of universities (p. 42).

Project to Boost the Capacity of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. This project aims at restructuring the ministry and boosting the capacities of its employees to supervise, develop and follow up work in the higher education sector (p. 42).

17. Conclusion

This brief review of the most important items reported by the National Reports shows that only one country has recently enacted a law on higher education (Mauritania, 2007). Three countries have mentioned specific laws and legislation, but they are either relatively old or remain in preparation, (This section does not mention laws related to the formation of quality assurance commissions, already reviewed in Chapter One). This means that the legislative activity aimed at modifying or amending higher education laws and systems remains very limited.

IV. Prospects for Cooperation to Establish an Arab Space for Higher Education

One of the huge challenges faced by Arab higher education is the issue of Arab cooperation in order to establish an Arab space for higher education and constitute an academic force that can face these challenges.

The authors of the National Reports were asked to put forward proposals on the opportunities and forms of Arab cooperation in order to create an Arab space for higher education; below are the highlights from these reports on this topic.

1. Proposals regarding the Forms of Arab Cooperation

1) Exchange of study grants

(Jordan, p. 95; Saudi Arabia, p. 33; Sudan, p. 51; Kuwait, pp. 92 - 93; and Libya, p. 63)¹³.

2) Exchange of training courses for students and general staff

(Jordan, p. 95; Kuwait, pp. 88 and 93).

3) Exchange of academic programs for training students

(Jordan, p. 95; Saudi Arabia, p. 166; Oman, p. 56; and Kuwait, p. 88).

4) Cooperation in research and academic fields

(Yemen, p. 50; Saudi Arabia, p. 33; Syria, p. 166; Jordan, p. 95; Kuwait, p. 93; Mauritania, p. 24)

5) Joint supervision of graduate students

(Jordan, p. 95; Kuwait, p. 93; Iraq, p. 23; Syria, p. 166; Sudan, p. 51; Mauritania, p. 24)

6) Establishing an Arab zone for scientific research

Creating an Arab zone for scientific research and innovation is the result of special attention paid to graduate studies program in an Arab space for higher education. Attention to the courses of graduate studies within this space will create a generation of young researchers in Arab countries (Syria, p. 164).

7) Exchange of periodicals, publications and books

(Jordan, p. 95; Kuwait, p. 91)

8) Sabbaticals

This proposal is related to spending sabbatical years in universities across the Arab countries. (Jordan, pp. 95 and 97; UAE, p. 25; Syria, p. 166)

9) Exchange of expertise and information among scientific research centers

(Jordan, p. 95; Libya, p. 70; Kuwait, p. 89)

10) Participation in academic conferences

(Jordan, p. 95; Kuwait, p. 89; and Syria, p. 166)

11) Establishing an Arab university database

All cooperation depends on the availability of information and data that are correct, precise, modern and homogenous; it is necessary to supervise the production of this information by a unified management, to secure this homogeneity (Jordan, p. 97; Tunisia, p. 94; UAE, p. 24; Yemen, p. 49; Oman, p. 55; Sudan, p. 51; Syria, p. 165; Mauritania, p. 24; Iraq, p. 23; Lebanon, p. 50 and Saudi Arabia, p. 33). In this regard, the establishment of a permanent Data Warehouse is proposed, to guarantee access to agreed-upon data, including a standardized methodology updated annually; this has become easier with the use of electronic databases and direct electronic communication (UAE).

¹³ These sources refer to national reports

12) Recognizing certificates (or recognizing their equivalence) and establishing a unified Arab council or committee for degree equivalence

The basis of cooperation and integration in the Arab world in the field of higher education and socio-economic fields lies in the acknowledgment of higher degrees by various Arab countries. This recognition will help the mobility of students and academics. It is recommended to establish an Arab coordinating council on degree equivalence among all Arab states, similar to what currently exists among GCC states, in order to exchange information and expertise and set down unified bases for recognizing foreign degrees (Tunisia, p. 91; UAE, p. 24; Yemen, p. 49; Sudan, p. 50; Syria, p. 165; Kuwait, p. 89; and Saudi Arabia, p. 33). This comprises unifying the names of degrees and certificates awarded by higher education institutions or homogenizing them (Sudan, p. 49; Syria, p. 163).

13) Establishing an Arab framework for qualifications

The goal of this framework is to set down the general foundations for measuring various levels of degrees, to resemble for example the framework for qualifications set down by European states that have signed the Bologna Agreement; establishing this framework will make it easier to recognize degrees and recognize their equivalence and move from one country to another in order to follow up study or work (UAE, p. 26; and Syria, p. 163).

14) Establishing a unified Arab center for patents

(Jordan, p. 97)

15) Producing an Arab protocol on the security of information and intellectual property

(Jordan, p. 97)

16) Academic networking among Arab private and state universities

(Lebanon, p. 49)

17) Establishing joint Arab universities

This project aims at facilitating the mobility of professors and students, and can help in establishing universities that offer rare specializations (UAE, p. 26; Yemen, p. 50; Bahrain, p. 65; Mauritania, p. 24; Kuwait, p. 90; Iraq, p. 23; Syria, p. 166). In this context, the Sudan National Report proposes establishing a model university for establishing a common Arab university in the future; professors from various Arab countries would teach at this institution, which would be managed financially and administratively by individuals from various Arab countries. The Iraq National Report proposed conducting a feasibility study to establish common sub-regional universities, such as joint universities for GCC states, or a gathering of Arab Maghreb or Arab Mashreq countries (Iraq, p. 23). Libya's National Report proposed the creation of joint scientific, educational and cultural programs, such as the Learning City or graduate studies university, or Arab commission for scientific research, Arab Council for Science and Technology, or Arab city of Science and Technology (Libya, p. 67).

18) Joint education programs

This proposal regards the creation of joint education programs among existing universities, as a prelude to granting joint certificates from participating universities to students who are studying at more than one university (Yemen, p. 50; Kuwait, p. 93; Syria, p. 168).

19) Facilitating joint Arab investment in higher education

This involves efforts to create guidelines and procedures for facilitating joint Arab investment in higher education, whether through establishing common Arab higher education institutions or joint higher education programs. All Arab countries should participate, according to their available means and competitive expertise, which will lead to integration and boosting of Arab efforts (Bahrain, p. 64).

20) Publishing joint scientific periodicals

A group of professors from Arab countries assist in editing these periodicals (Sudan, p 52).

21) Authoring and implementing an Arab project on translation

Arab universities and research centers would participate in this project (UAE, p. 27; Sudan, p. 52).

22) Establishing and developing an Arab digital library

There are many sources, books and manuscripts that concern researchers from Arab countries and elsewhere. Supplying these materials and sources in digital form will facilitate access. This proposal requires linking the available digital libraries in the Arab world in an integrated fashion; it will be supervised by a central body that supports the project (UAE, p. 27).

23) Documenting successful experiences in Arab universities

This covers the dissemination of successful experiences to reap the maximum benefit and publicize them at official meetings for presidents of Arab universities or Arab higher education ministers (Bahrain, p. 65; Yemen, p. 48)

24) Establishing an Arab association for faculty at higher education institutions

This body would allow teaching faculty to exchange expertise and information as well as create the guidelines and procedures for easing their movement among higher education institutions in the Arab world, as visiting professors or in various fields of scientific research at these institutions (Bahrain, p. 64; Sudan, p. 52).

25) Exchanging information on graduates among Arab states

Disseminating and exchanging information about graduates in each field of specialization between Arab countries to boost integration between them (Bahrain, p. 65).

26) Activating the Arab network for quality assurance

(UAE, p. 24; Yemen, p. 49)

27) Quality assurance and accreditation at the Arab level

This involves establishing unified Arab committees or councils to set down the guidelines and criteria for specialized accreditation, particularly for professional programs such as medicine, engineering, education and business administration. It also comprises cooperation in producing criteria for academic accreditation for the programs that are particular to the Arab region and those in which there are no professional accreditation institutions, such as Islamic civilization and history, Arabic language and literature (UAE) and creating an Arab commission on quality assurance and accreditation (Syria, p. 163).

28) Unifying standards

This involves setting down Arab quality standards (Kuwait, p. 87), Arab cooperation in accreditation (Lebanon, p. 50), agreeing to common standards for quality and accreditation, based on international norms and standards (Sudan, p. 50), preparing a unified Arab guide to quality in higher education, which would include a common minimum level among Arab states and acceptable to all Arab states with regard to the quality of higher education. This will assist in creating a common mechanism for Arab states to recognize academic qualifications (Bahrain, p. 64).

29) Facilitating academic mobility for students

Academic mobility for student mobility is linked to the excellence of Arab universities and the existence of a basis for mutual recognition of programs and degrees; this includes boosting the movement of students among universities and spending a period of their study at other universities. This will improve the preparation of students for work in various environments or countries, in line with the globalization of work in companies and institutions (UAE, Syria).

2. Initiatives in Arab Cooperation

a. Establishing a fund to support scientific research

The Mohammed bin Rashed Al Maktoum Institution established a fund to support scientific research in 2007, and allocated 1 billion Dirhams in funding. The fund's activities cover all Arab countries and include a project for translating resource materials into Arabic, at a rate of one per day (365 books annually), and a project to support sending young people from various Arab countries for graduate studies at leading foreign universities, along with organizing various projects for scientific research (UAE, p. 18).

b. Regional ICT center

The Education Ministry in Bahrain is preparing the establishment of a regional ICT center affiliated with UNESCO, to serve Arab Gulf states and Yemen; this will aid in the development of the Arab region by exploiting the use of ICT. The Center's goals are: 1) boosting innovation, creativity and practical applications of ICT by capacity building and developing lifelong professional skills; 2) enabling the design, preparation, production and distribution of knowledge products to achieve sustainable development goals; 3) encouraging the creation and dissemination of Arab digital content; and 4) facilitating the gathering of resources, technical knowledge and private sector participation in applying ICT (Bahrain).

c. Arab information network on education (Shamaa)

The Lebanese Association for Educational Studies, a Lebanese NGO, has taken the initiative to establish this network, which will soon become an Arab institution. The network provides, through correspondents in all Arab countries and other sources, bibliographical information about all published Arab studies on education (books, articles, university dissertations and theses) in three languages (Arabic, French and English)¹⁴.

3. International-Arab Cooperation

Most National Reports noted that channels of Arab cooperation should be opened with various countries of the north and south, and particularly European Union states, North America, South America and Asia, in addition to international organizations, especially UNESCO. This would take place via academic agreements with universities and scientific institutions, and include grants to students and researchers. In this regard, the following was mentioned: 1) encouraging research centers in the Arab world to build academic ties with their European counterparts; 2) promoting networks that link Arab higher education institutions with academic libraries in Europe; 3) authoring a strategic plan to train and educate faculty in various academic disciplines with leading academic institutions in Europe; 4) supporting Arab participation in academic gatherings organized by European states (Syria); 5) following up this cooperation and subjecting it to ongoing evaluation, so that it produces the desired results (Tunisia); 6) making efforts at bilateral cooperation between universities; it would be better to see cooperation among more than three universities at the same time in academic specializations with priority status in the Arab region, and in exchanging faculty and jointly supervising doctoral dissertations and creating joint degrees; 7) Arab universities should come together in groups to take part in international research projects such as the European Framework Program for Research and Development (PCRD) (Programme Cadre pour la Recherche et le Développement) and Europe's Tempus and Erasmus, etc.; and 8) using competition with foreign universities to develop capacities at Arab universities (Tunisia, p. 98).

In this domain, namely joint programs with Europe for instance, we can distinguish between the

¹⁴ See: www.shamaa.net.org

two following methods: 1) joint Arab-European programs model, which relies on one or more European providers and several beneficiaries, as is the case with some projects derived from the TEMPUS program; and 2) the single provider and single Arab partner model, which has a number of beneficiaries, as is the case with the Master's program in economic transformation, which is being set up at the University of Damascus in cooperation with Germany's Marburg Universities, which accepts students from Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Yemen, and Tunisia, in addition to a number of German students. Similar to this program, there is a Master's program in renewable energies in Egypt, with funding from the German government (Syria, p. 170).

4. Conclusion

The proposals put forward in National Reports on Arab cooperation have highlighted three conclusions: 1) a strong concern with Arab cooperation in the field of higher education; 2) there are many proposals and ideas that are being discussed (29 proposals); 3) these proposals have been put forward by all Arab countries, meaning that Arab countries appear agreed on cooperation among themselves.

If we gather these proposals into wider categories, they can be distributed among the following six areas:

a. Quality assurance and criteria

Quality assurance and accreditation at the Arab level; unifying quality standards.

b. Degree equivalence and recognition, joint classification of qualifications

Recognizing degrees (or degree equivalence); establishing an Arab council or committee to perform this task; establishing an Arab framework for qualifications.

c. Exchange

Exchange of study grants; training courses for students and staff; exchanging academic programs for training students; exchanging periodicals, bulletins and books; academic sabbaticals; exchanging information and expertise among research centers; participating in academic conferences; exchanging information among Arab countries, facilitating the academic movement of students among Arab higher education institutions.

d. Joint programs and projects

Joint supervision of graduate students; offering joint programs; creating a unified Arab center for patents; setting down an Arab protocol on information security and protection of intellectual rights; establishing an Arab zone for scientific research; creating joint Arab universities; starting joint education programs; publishing joint academic periodicals; producing an Arab project for translation and its implementation; establishing an Arab association for faculty members in higher education; and facilitating joint Arab investment in higher education.

e. Networking

Cooperation in academic and research fields; academic networking among Arab universities, both private and public; documenting successful experiences at Arab universities, making the Arab network of quality assurance agencies effective.

f. Databases

Establishing databases for Arab universities; establishing and developing an Arab digital library; establishing a database for research on education in Arab countries.

Based on the abundance of these proposals, and their focus on various levels and fields of cooperation, it is not difficult to move ahead, theoretically, with establishing an Arab space for higher education. Certainly, the European space for higher education, which started practically with the Bologna process, is based on elements similar to what is proposed here.

Creating an Arab space for higher education is one of the top goals of the Regional Arab Conference on Higher Education, but it appears to be a distant one at present. In its declaration, which was read at the end of the gathering, the Conference called for the establishment of this space, and adopted a number of the abovementioned proposals. However, the measures and plans for creating this space remain unknown. Perhaps it would be better to determine the obstacles and difficulties that work against the establishment of this space, and describe and analyze previous experiences with cooperation, in order to benefit from these lessons, avoid negative aspects and accentuate positive ones.

V. Main Challenges

Arab countries have scored achievements, launched many initiatives, authored policies and legislation, carried out projects and planned for new projects for the next five to ten years. However, “taking stock” a decade after the 1998 Conference on Higher Education tells us that higher education in 2008 continues to face many challenges, which require huge efforts if they are to be successfully overcome. We should also bear in mind that Arab countries have disparate conditions when it comes to the magnitude of these challenges and ability to confront them. In this chapter we rely on the National Reports and attached statistical information. However, since these reports do not necessarily cover all of the topics of the Conference, we will also rely on a number of papers that were submitted to the Conference, and on some other sources.

1. Educational Opportunities

The National Reports attribute the existing problems of educational opportunities to the fact that population and social demand for education are quickly growing, at a faster rate than the enrollment capacity of higher education institutions. This problem becomes intractable in countries with large populations, high population growth rates, or a low level of economic resources (See Box 5 - 1).

a. Unsatisfactory enrollment rates in higher education

We have already mentioned that the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in Arab countries remains at around 22%. Hence, the Arab region is ranked sixth out of the world’s eight regions (See Figure 5 -1). We have already noted that ten out of 19 Arab countries continue to have rates lower than 30%.

Box 5 - 1 Factors that inhibit the growth of higher education opportunities

Egypt: “The population increase in Egypt is one of the leading challenges to the development process. Despite the efforts made to limit this problem, the average population growth rate remains high. The population increase reduces work opportunities available and is considered one of the most important reasons for unemployment and the failure of enrollment rates to reach satisfactory levels” (P. 17).

Yemen: “The sharp pressure on higher education institutions is attributed to the rise of social demand for higher education, and is also connected to the population growth increase, especially with the inability to meet the demand of all applicants,

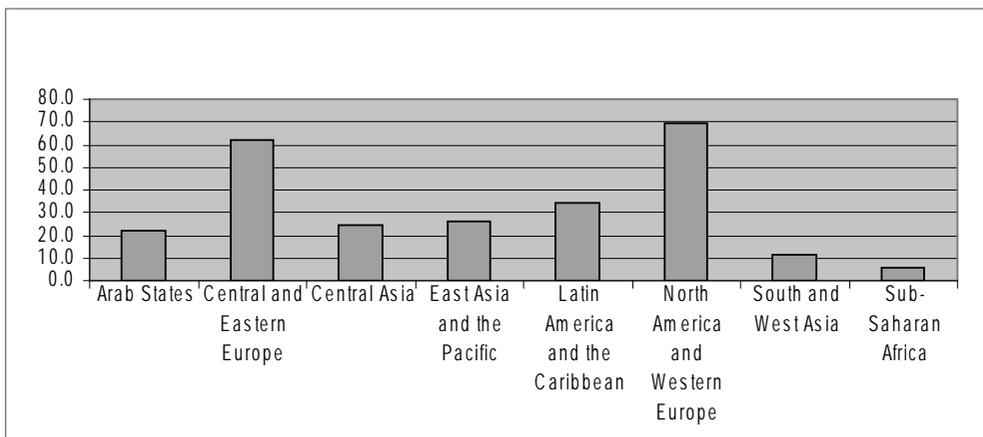
due to limited enrollment capacity. According to this capacity, public universities are permitted an average of around 55 thousand students, while the number of students in 12th grade (scientific and humanities tracks) in 2007 stood at 178.4 thousand, meaning that students enrolled in state universities, according to their absorptive capacities, form around only 30% of the students registered in the last year of high school” (p. 14 - 15).

Kuwait: “The continuous increase in the outputs of public education, the wide gap between aspirations and conditions on the ground, the increasing trend toward higher education in general, at rising rates that move more quickly than the possible growth in enrollment capacity or space available to higher education institutions” (p. 25).

Syria: “The increase in the number of students passing high school greatly exceeds the increase dictated by expectations based on population growth rates; the number of passing students in 2008 rose to 169,890, compared to 71,060 students in 1999, an increase of 139% in ten years” (p. 22).

Morocco: “Developing higher education faces a severe problem: the enrollment capacity is insufficient, which is a huge challenge, linked to the need to provide satisfactory conditions in order to confront the huge increase in the number of students in the coming years. As for the 19 university dormitories’ enrollment capacity, which stands at 35,000 beds, only 35% of current students can be accepted, even though additional supply provided by private universities in recent years; we should mention that only nine university dormitories contain university restaurants” (p. 19).

Figure 5 - 1: Gross Enrollment Ratio in Higher Education, by Region (2007)



Source: UIS

b. Poor rates of equality and equity in educational opportunities

If the Gender Parity Index (GPI) is positive in the general total of Arab countries, and positive in 11 out of 17 countries about which gender-related information is available (See Part 1), then this index remains negative in six countries (Egypt, Iraq, Mauritania, Morocco, Syria and Yemen), even though Egypt and Syria have come close to reaching gender parity.

However, if the GPI is positive, this is not the end of the story. If the GPI rises above 1, it means there is a drop-off in males seeking higher education; this is a problem in many Arab countries, where the percentage of males is only 30 - 40% at times. A study submitted to the Conference demonstrated that this represents a worrying trend, since it accumulates in the pre-university education¹⁵.

Meanwhile, the social inequality of educational opportunities is common, and has become sharp in the poorest countries (Box 5- 2). One paper submitted to the ARCHE+10 contained statistical evidence about an Arab country¹⁶.

Moreover, one of the papers submitted to the Conference showed that admission policies are usually centralized and seek to provide equality, but usually lead to two results, depending on the conditions of the countries: 1) the lack of equitable distribution, since students with varying conditions are subject to unified criteria, 2) a rise in the number of students that exceeds the institutions' capacity, and excluding a group of students whose grade averages fall below the required level¹⁷.

Box 5 - 2: Social Inequality in Educational Opportunities

Morocco: Most of the differences observed in higher education, whether in terms of gender, social groups, or rural-urban populations, are due to the differences in the spread of primary and secondary education (p. 19).

Yemen: The percentage of students from urban areas who obtain a university education is more than six times higher than the rate for rural inhabitants, while female students in higher education focus on their presence in educational areas that have a lower social status and economic return (p. 19).

c. A lack of balance in enrollment among specializations

Enrollment in the humanities and social sciences is predominant; their students constitute about two-thirds of the total, compared to less than one-third who are enrolled in pure and applied sciences (Figure 5 - 2). Among the first group, students are fairly balanced in terms of education and literature/arts and business administration/social sciences (Figure 5 - 3). See also Box 5 - 3.

¹⁵ See: Fatma Abdulla and Natasha Ridge. *Where are all the Men? Gender Participation and Higher Education in the United Arab Emirates*. (Paper submitted to ARCHE+10, and published in this book).

¹⁶ See: Mona El Baradei. *Access, Equity and Competitiveness: The Case of Higher Education in Egypt*. (Paper submitted to ARCHE+10, and published in this book).

¹⁷ See: Rafica Hammoud. *Admission Policies and Procedures in Arab Universities*. (Paper submitted to ARCHE+10, and published in this book).

Figure 5 - 2: Distribution of Students in Higher Education, by Broad Fields of Study (2008)

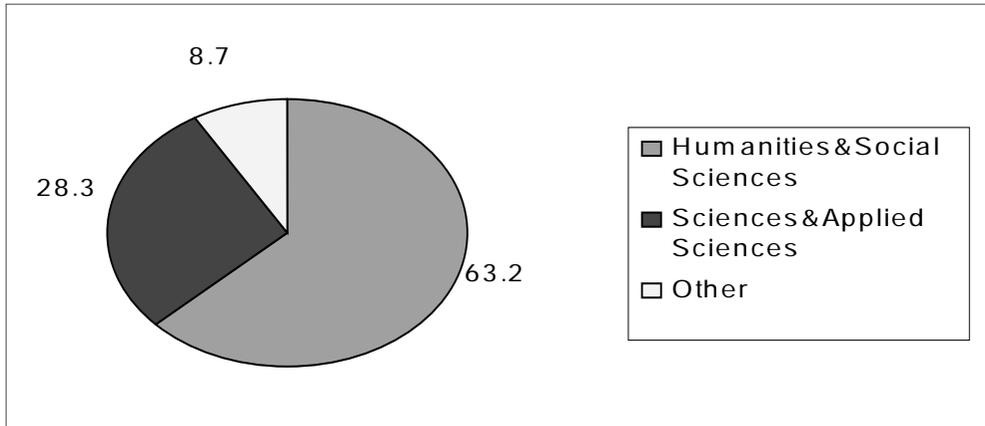
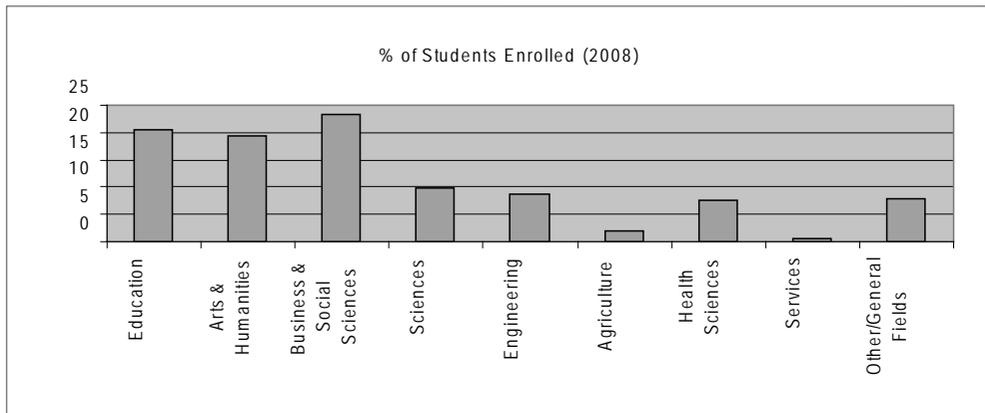


Figure 5 - 3: Distribution of Students in Higher Education, by Specialization (2008)



Box 5 - 3 “Scientific Desertification”

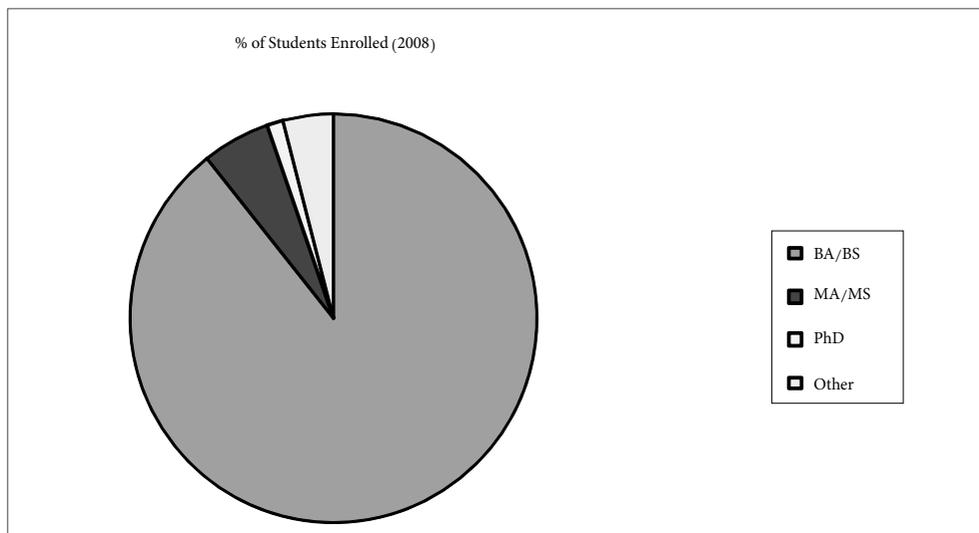
Palestine: The field of human sciences has the highest number of students; education programs covered more than one-third of students enrolled in higher education, due to inputs to higher education three-quarters of which are from the literary branches. In addition, these specializations overlap in universities, reflecting a lack of coordination and planning upon their creation (p. 11).

Syria: Between 1999 and 2008, the number of students passing high school in the literature track increased by 286%, compared to 43% for the scientific track (p. 26).

d. Small Size of the Graduate Studies

Arab universities remain teaching-oriented; they have failed to make progress in developing graduate studies. Master's degree students form only 5.4% of the total (this rate stood at 4.9% in 1998), while Doctoral students make up only 1.3% (0.9% in 1998) (See figure 5 - 4). Out of five million students, with identifiable degrees, there were (in 2008) 63,900 students enrolled in a Doctoral program and 273,200 students in Master's degree programs.

Figure 5 - 4: Distribution of Students in Higher Education, by Degree



e. Gap between enrollment and graduation

No statistical information is available about the distribution of students based on years of study, or rates of graduation. However, the evidence from National Reports indicates a gap between the numbers of enrolled students and graduates (Box 5 - 4). This is due to many reasons, such as students with unsuitable specializations (whether because of the poor choice of the student or the centralized system of admission), discouraging educational conditions and quality, or enrollment in university due to social pressures, etc. Thus, first-year courses at some faculties are overcrowded with new and repeating students. This reflects a low internal efficiency of university education and inflates enrollment to unrealistic levels.

f. The non-state sector's share of providing educational opportunities remains limited

We mentioned above that the non-state higher education sector represents 36.2% of the total. In fact, these institutions today remain unable to absorb more than 11% of students, as shown in Figure 5 - 5. This is calculated for 5.023 million students. The share of females is 44%, compared to 51% in the state education sector. If this sector's share of the total number of students stands at 11%, its share drops to 10% at the Master's and Doctoral degree levels; Figure 5 - 6 shows this low quantitative share.

Box 5 - 4: Staying at University

Morocco: Rates of repetition and failure to graduate from higher education reach 17% in all tracks and 30% in tracks with open access (p. 18),

Lebanon: The high numbers of students in the first year at open faculties, and the sharp drop in graduation rates at the Lebanese University, (are due) to the acceptance of large numbers of students in the first year in open faculties, the drop in promotion to the second year, the lack of available educational programs, limited resources, the absence of a sound educational environment, the lack of a guidance and orientation system for students, and the drop in educational attainment. In general, and despite the exceptions, higher education lacks ability and readiness to offer support services to students that improve the chances of their enrollment and pursuing their studies (pp.23, 28).

Libya: The drop in graduation rates indicates a series of key problems, connected to the quality of instruction and the readiness of students for education. Estimates by Garyounis University on the ratio of graduates to enrolled students dropped to 3.9% in economics and engineering, 6.5% in sciences and high rates of 24% in letters (p. 38).

Figure 5 - 5: Distribution of Students in Higher Education, by Sector

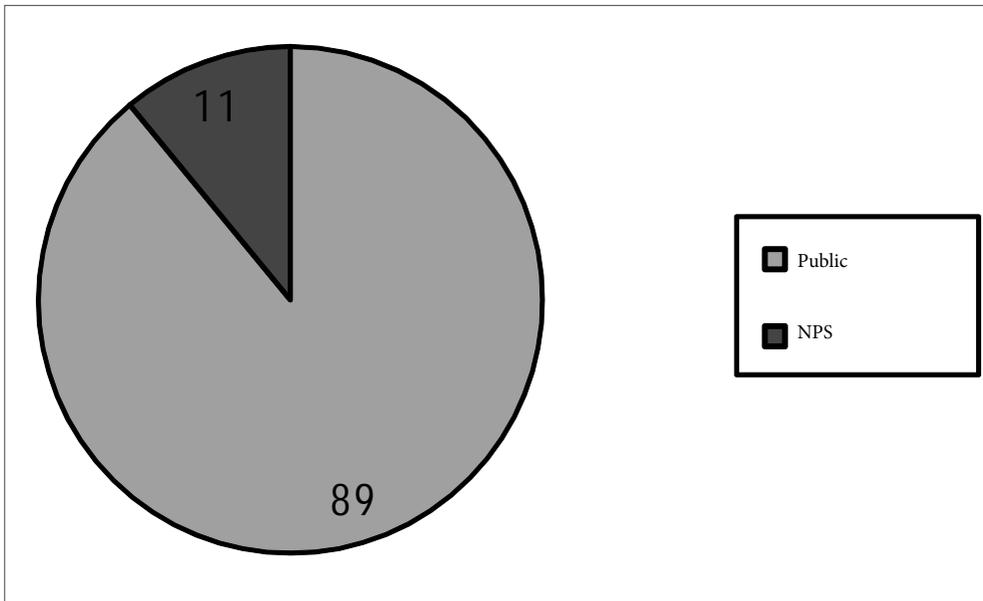
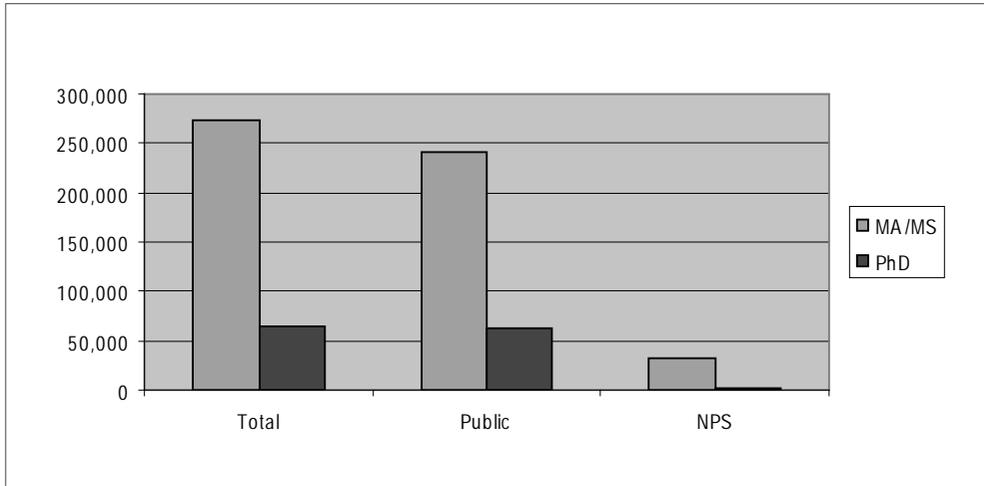


Figure 5 - 6: Distribution of Students in Master's and Doctoral Programs, by Sector



2. Quality of Higher Education

The challenges related to the quality of higher education are wider and more profound than those related to educational opportunities. The solution to problems in terms of opportunities (quantitative) has often exacerbated problems related to quality; several National Reports acknowledged that quantitative growth had taken place, at the expense of the quality of education (Yemen, p. 14; Jordan, p. 26; and Syria, pp. 5 and 14).

Below, we outline various aspects of the qualitative challenges, taken from National Reports and their statistical appendices¹⁸.

a. Student density: many students and few facilities

Naturally, quality in education drops with an increase in students that exceeds the amount of resources and enrollment capacity. This covers lecture halls, seats, laboratories and libraries, etc. not only in terms of their number/amount, but also in terms of their actual condition, since more frequent use and little maintenance reduce the age of material used and exhausts them more rapidly (Box 5 - 5).

Box 5 - 5: Many Students and Few Facilities

Palestine: Facing this pressure, universities began a policy of accepting more than their enrollment capacity, seeking a reduction of per student costs; they established parallel education as a way to increase fees and tuition; moreover, other universities began to appear and the number of applications for licensing private higher education institutions grew. This year, two non-state universities were licensed, along with two independent non-state faculties (pp. 10 - 11).

¹⁸ For more details on quality in higher education in Arab countries, see: El-Amine, Adnan (2009), «Higher Education in Arab Countries: Issues and Future Prospects», *First Report on Cultural Development*, Arab Thought Foundation (second edition), pp 103 - 128

Mauritania: There is a clear lack of resources, in terms of quantity and quality, an absence of a university textbook prepared on the basis of curricula; this is a problem that continues to force students to take courses in the manner of summaries dictated by the teacher (p. 13).

Yemen: The problems become more acute when it comes to infrastructure, libraries, and learning resources at regional universities, whose infrastructure remains incomplete; this is despite the great strides taken in this field, and particularly at Dhamar, Ibb, and Hodeidah Universities. The problem becomes even more acute at five new state universities, whose establishment was mandated in 2008, before the huge drop in oil prices and the global financial crisis. In general, expansion in building universities, despite the importance of quantitative expansion, will have a negative impact on improving quality, if not accompanied by an increase in the financial expenditures required by expansion (p. 17).

b. Weak academic standards for general education graduates

There are complaints about the weak abilities of graduates from pre-university level, especially in English and math, in addition to their weakness in critical learning and thinking skills, which reflects negatively on their university attainment (UAE, p. 49; Oman, p. 27).

c. The quality of programs and curricula

Some National Reports complained about the weakness of educational curricula and their unsuitability in terms of time scale; there were also complaints that they had not been upgraded, to match scientific and technical progress (Libya, p. 24); some conference papers described the curricula in a number of specializations, pointing out their weak points¹⁹.

d. Shortcomings of faculty and their need for professional development

The challenges relating to faculty hinge around the lack of teachers holding the required degrees and specializations in sufficient numbers, as shown in Box 5 - 6.

Only a few reports mentioned problems in the educational standard or aptitude of the faculty. The implications of student density on faculty members were unclear in the reports.

Conference papers put forward a number of items that require consideration of the issue of quality. These include university pedagogy²⁰, the weakness of incorporating graduate degree holders arriving from abroad into existing academic systems²¹. This weakness indicates the gap between foreign and local universities in terms of concepts and criteria related to quality and the university climate. Moreover, one of the papers showed that efforts made by Arab states with regard to a professional track for teaching faculty members are insufficient, in terms of quantity and quality. There is a critical need for a radical change in the existing conditions, if faculty members want to play an effective role in confronting the challenge of quality higher education in Arab countries²².

¹⁹ See: Awashriya ASaid. *Higher Education Curricula in Algeria: Indicators of Fragility and Means of Improving their Quality. The Case of Psychology, Education and Orthophony*. (Paper submitted to ARCHE+10, and published in this book).

²⁰ See: Nada Moghaizel-Nasr. *Le Laboratoire de pédagogie universitaire de l'Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth*. (Paper submitted to ARCHE+10, and published in this book).

²¹ See: Rami Ayoubi, Hiba Massoud, Hanan Al Maghout, *Culture Shock or Shocking Culture: An Exploration of the Main Obstacles Encountering Syrian Newly Returned Academic Staff from Abroad*. (Paper submitted to ARCHE+10, and published in this book).

²² Ramzi Salame. *Career Path of Higher Education Teaching Personnel in the Arab States and the Quality Challenges*. (Paper submitted to ARCHE+10 and published in this book).

Box 5 - 6: Shortcomings in Faculty

Libya: There is a deficit in the number of teaching faculty in some science specializations and specializations that are new worldwide (p. 36).

Palestine: Doctoral degrees are held by 37% of the teaching faculty at Palestinian universities, and more than 50% hold a Master's degree (Higher Education Database, 2006). The higher the academic degree, the lower the percentage of females represented; it should also be noted that the percentage of non-full time members of the teaching faculty approaches 45% (p. 10).

Oman: Relying on professors from abroad is a form of challenge, since it has a negative impact on the continuity of teaching faculty at universities, and does not guarantee the ongoing development of programs (UAE, pp. 9 - 10) and in the Sultanate of Oman, it is believed that this continuing deficit will become dangerous in the future, with the lack of attention paid to professional development of the teaching corps (p. 27).

d. Failure to meet the requirements of the economy / Unemployment

This was mentioned by many National Reports; the complaint focused on the lack of planning student enrollment based on the needs of the labor market, i.e. the central bureaucracy must be responsible for confronting this challenge (Box 5 - 7).

Box 5 - 7: Failure to Meet the Requirements of Development

Most higher education institutions are unable to meet all of the needs of the labor market, because the relationship between the world of business and universities is either severed or weak (Syria, p. 25; Libya, p. 24).

The lack of relevance between students' specializations and the needs of the job market result from ad hoc admission policies at universities, which do not take the labor market's needs into consideration, and this leads to inflated numbers of university graduate who are unemployed (Jordan, pp. 25 - 26; Kuwait, p. 26).

The sharp crisis, in both quantitative and qualitative terms, indicates unemployment, masked unemployment, and emigration (Lebanon, p. 41).

The percentage of employment of those who graduated in 2003 /2004 was estimated at 14%, 18 months after graduation. This rate differed among higher education institutions, as 14.7% of the total were from university graduates in general, while the rate did not exceed 7.5% of graduates from the Higher Institute for Islamic Research and Studies (Mauritania, p. 13).

Strengthening partnership and cooperation between universities and their economic surroundings helps produce and develop specialized programs that suit economic needs and help students enter the job market and avoid unemployment (Tunisia, p. 30).

e. The weakness of research structures and culture

There is a general acknowledgement by the National Reports of the weakness of research structure and paucity of research opportunities. This takes several forms: an expansion in programs (particularly at the graduate level) with fewer research requirements such as laboratories and technicians; a weakness of a research culture among public and private sector institutions; weak links between current research projects in universities and socio-economic development plans and issues in productive economic sectors; a paucity of laboratories, modern equipment, materials, books, resources, periodicals and means of publication; weak contact with regional and international science institutions; weak financing and expenditure on research; the lack of clear guidelines for managing and assessing research; the lack of support for research, consulting and participation in conferences by some higher education institutions; a high number of teaching hours for academic faculty; the emigration of qualified, educated people abroad; the failure to provide an enabling environment and build researchers' capacities (Syria, p 28; UAE, p. 11; Oman, pp. 26 - 27; Sudan, pp. 19 - 20; Yemen, p. 15; Palestine, pp. 16 - 17; Libya, p. 24; Mauritania, p. 13; and Morocco, p. 19).

Two papers submitted to the Conference, on research conditions in the social science fields, showed that national guidelines for supporting and encouraging such research are weak, and that research activity has shifted from universities to civil society organizations, as concerns dictated by international organizations funding this research win out²³.

f. The absence of institutional assessment and weakly-rooted quality assurance procedures

Traditions associated with assessing higher education institutions have yet to become strongly rooted. A number of Arab countries (Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Tunisia, etc.) have launched activities in the context of accreditation and quality assurance. These activities cover producing self-assessment reports and setting down development plans on their basis; these countries have established quality assurance units at universities. However, these activities have remained "trial" projects, with a somewhat formal character. They are taken on by "specialists" in quality or "full-timers" in this field; or, they are dependent on certain (temporary) financing projects. Although ten countries have established structures for quality assurance and accreditation, none has become an independent institution with moral authority and a significant impact on state education institutions, and their criteria do not become an intrinsic part of university life, or in classes, or in the management of higher education, etc. In many cases, they have become part of the bureaucratic system, in terms of work mechanisms, and at times they have become bureaucratic arms for monitoring quality at private sector institutions and punishing institutions that are violating the regulations in force. International organizations aprograms (like Tempus, UNDP, etc.) have undertaken some activities, and produced considerable amounts of evidence, reports and documents, or translated them. However, there is no strong evidence about the impact of these activities and documents on the extent to which the quality assurance system is rooted in the higher education system as a whole. This evidence was not presented by either the National Reports or a recent feasibility study by UNESCO on 13 Arab countries²⁴. This evidence

²³ See: Jacques Kabanji. *The Status of social scientific Research in Lebanon in a «Globalized» Context: Attempt to Understand its Components, Conditions and limitations*. (Paper submitted to ARCHE+10 and published in this book).

Sari Hanafi. *The Social Sciences Research in the Arab East Dilemmas of the Research Centers outside the University*. (Paper submitted to ARCHE+10 and published in this book).

²⁴ See: El-Amine, Adnan, and Salame, Ramzi (review) (2008). *Feasibility Study on Methods of Joint Work on*

did not appear in regional or local reports, either²⁵.

g. Differences between public and private education sectors

This section compares state and non-state sectors, through three indicators:

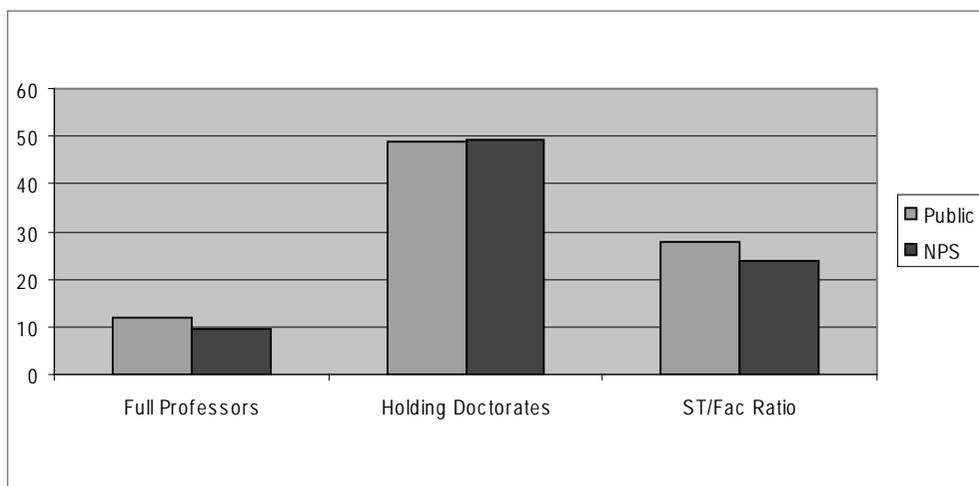
1) Teaching staff

Figure 5 - 7 shows that there are no significant differences between the two sectors in terms of percentage of doctoral degree holders or share of professors, and the rates are weak in both cases. Perhaps their similarity is due to the fact that private universities rely on professors from the state education sector, during their careers or after retirement.

2) Student to teacher ratio

The same Figure shows the students to professor ratio is better in the private sector, a natural result of overcrowded conditions in the state sector, to which we have referred previously.

Figure 5 - 7: Percentage of Doctoral Degree Holders and Share of Full Professors; Student to teacher ratio in both State and Non-state Sectors



Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Arab Countries, Beirut, UNESCO regional office for Arab states.

²⁵ The UNDP has authored a number of regional reports on the results of a project entitled Enhancement of Quality Assurance and Institutional Planning in Arab Universities. Each report deals with a program that has been assessed. These reports provide a diagnostic view of the given program, but do not indicate its impact on the ground. Although the “impact” of the Higher Education Enhancement Project (HEEP) has been assessed in Egypt, the paper presented to the ARCHE+10 about this assessment showed that the process took place based on normative-referenced evaluation, i.e. a test of the degree to which the objectives that the project has identified for itself are met, based on an opinion survey. See Mohsen Elmahdy Said, *The Impact of Reform Projects in Higher Education: The Case of Egypt*. (Paper submitted to ARCHE+10 and published in this book).

Figure 5 - 8: Distribution of Non-teaching Units, by Topic

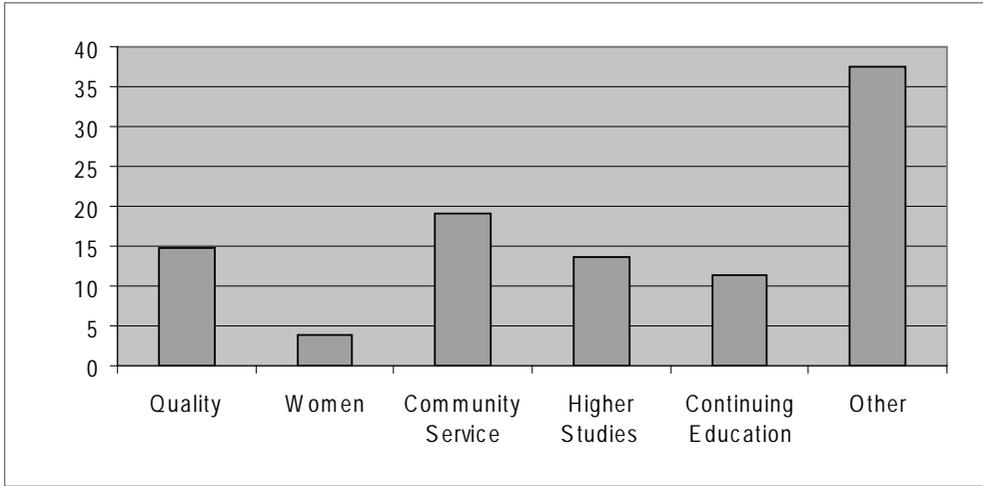
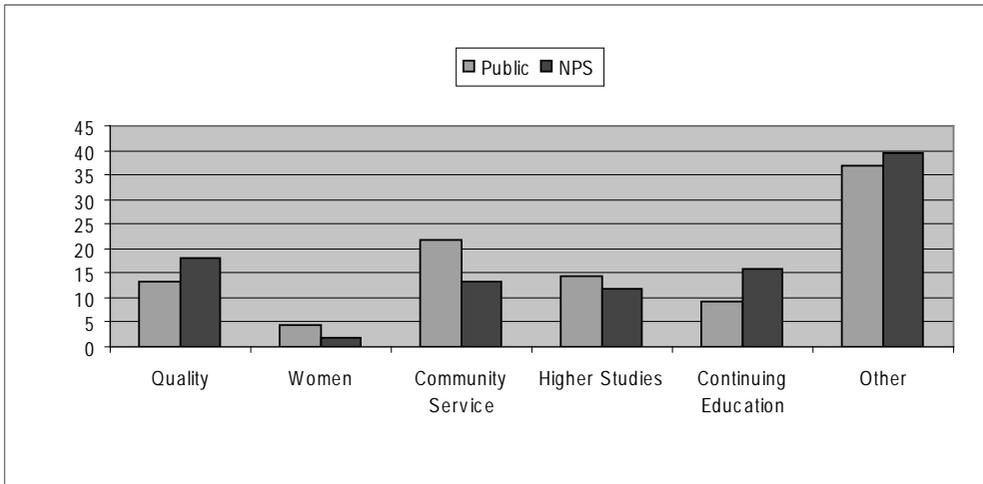


Figure 5 - 9: Percentage of Non-teaching Units, by Topic and Sector



3) Non-teaching units

Non-teaching units are centers or faculties established with an interest in specific topics that the university believes require care and support. A number of faculty members usually join these units, but they do not comprise registered students, since these units do not award degrees, even if students can take part in activities based on their interests. These units usually denote quality, as they are a horizontal expansion that enriches university life in various ways.

Information was gathered on these units at 250 universities. We found that they contain 1,167 non-teaching units, with a mean of 4.7 per university. These units are distributed among various topics, but those can be classified with clarity fall into five categories: quality,

women, community service, graduate studies and continuing education. Figure 5 - 8 shows that the biggest portion lie in community service (19% of the total), and women's studies centers have the lowest share (3.8%). The difference between the public sector and non-public sector (NPS) appears in two forms. The first is the mean number of these units in a single university (six in the state sector and three in the non-state sector). This indicates that the non-state sector is heading toward restricting its activity to teaching, which is evident in the difference in quality, in favor of the government sector. The second item involves the fact that the state sector contains more community service, graduate studies and women's studies units than the private sector. It is worth noting that the non-state sector includes more quality units than the state sector. Perhaps we can attribute this to the conditions imposed on the non-state sector when it comes to quality control. We have mentioned above that national accreditation commissions in Arab countries remain oriented toward quality control, which means that the difference here is administrative in nature, and not necessarily an indicator of quality (Figure 5 - 9).

3. Social Responsibility in Higher Education

This issue was one of the core issues at the Conference (Box 5 - 8). Papers submitted to the Conference raised a number of related issues as well as various ideas about the problems that universities face in assuming this responsibility: disputes resulting from a disparity between culture acquired in the university and traditional social values²⁶, and the weakness of participation in forming civic and political orientations among university students²⁷. Other papers put forward models of how universities can become involved in community affairs and exit their closed environment²⁸.

Box 5 - 8: Social responsibility at university in the Conference Announcement

The question of the social responsibility of universities is currently being addressed at a global level and Arab states are, perhaps, suffering the most in this field. Furthermore, some of the Arab states have, in recent years, witnessed internal crises and conflicts or challenges related to, among others, freedom, democracy, governance, human rights, and terrorism.

Higher education provides society with graduates equipped with a number of values and skills as well as with the necessary general knowledge to play their different social roles, both through their occupational function and through their broader status as citizens. In this context, the ARCHE+10 explores the extent of the contribution of higher institutions as a whole, through all programs, to the dissemination of general and social culture in terms of values, knowledge and skills related to citizenship, tolerance, the acceptance of others, ethics, sexual and

²⁶ See: Meriem Bouzeid-Sababou. *Les universitaires tourage, vers la normalisation des institutions traditionnelles ou leur réforme?* (Paper submitted to ARCHE+10, and published in this book).

²⁷ See: Nadine Sika. *Private Universities in Egypt: Are they Venues for Democratic Attitudes and Behavior?* (Paper submitted to ARCHE+10, and published in this book).

Moahad Rahal, *The Lebanese University and the Issue of Social Integration: An Analytical Survey Study*. (Paper submitted to ARCHE+10, and published in this book).

²⁸ See: Cynthia Myntti, Rami Zurayk, Mounir Mabsout. *Beyond the Walls: The American University of Beirut Engages its Communities*. (Paper submitted to ARCHE+10, and published in this book).

social discrimination, as well as in terms of intellectual skills. It also engages with the role played by higher education institutions as cultural spaces that construct bridges between academia and society. Furthermore, the ARCHE+10 addresses community service programs related to, for instance, the contribution to health care or literacy campaigns, concern for the environment and the participation of faculties in public councils, social programs or in voluntary organizations.

Alternatively, higher education encompasses programs that are specifically orientated towards the training of “social professions” and towards the training of academic elites in a number of human and social fields, as is the case for the training programs organized for teachers, managers, media professionals, historians, linguists, philosophers, sociologists, economists, psychologists, etc. It must be noted that these disciplines generally attract more students while attracting the minimum resources and usually face many problems at the qualitative level compared to science and technology studies. Worldwide, serious concern is being expressed about the deterioration of higher education in the fields of human and social sciences, which has driven some regions and states to establish special strategies for the development of teaching and research in these fields. From this perspective, the ARCHE+10 involves the status of human and social sciences programs in the Arab States in terms of teaching or in terms of research, resources, methods, contents, orientations and outcomes²⁹.

4. Management and Financing

a. Lack of a satisfactory level of quality control in private education

The diversity witnessed by higher education is a big challenge to controlling admission criteria, the outputs of education, and systems of student transfer (UAE, p. 10). Most notably, higher education faces constraints related to the rules upon which private education works. One of the papers submitted to the Conference noted that despite the relative spread and development in systems and rules for licensing and follow-up in many Arab countries, we find that these rules are not applied in many cases, while there are shortcomings in follow-up. Likewise, the rules and regulations that are discussed at the Arab level should be developed and modernized to keep up with regional and international developments³⁰. Some examples of the inability to control quality at times are the “higher education zones,” as in the UAE. A number of institutions do not abide by the standards that have been adopted, which prompted the regional government in Dubai to create its own control unit, while free zones in Ras al-Khaima and Sharjah continue to operate independently (UAE, p. 30).

b. Dispersion and weakness of guidelines for managing higher education

The National Reports complained about the many bodies that oversee higher education and the dispersion of efforts and non-optimal use of financial resources (Oman, p. 25). They also complained about old systems governing private higher education and the systems that govern state universities (Lebanon, p. 33), the bureaucratic and desk management of universities, which often delays academic work, especially in terms of research and developing knowledge production programs (Libya, p. 56).

²⁹ ARCHE+10, Conference Guide, pp 12 - 13

³⁰ Abdel Bagi A.G. Babiker. *Licensing and Supervision of Private Higher Education Institutions in the Arab States*. (Paper submitted to ARCHE+10, and published in this book).

c. Low rate of expenditures on university education and difficulty of securing sources of financing

This is a general issue about which most Arab countries have complaints; it results in various consequences, at several levels, particularly educational opportunities and quality of education (Box 5 - 9).

Box 5 - 9: Financing Problems

Jordan: The low rate of expenditure on university education and the difficulty in securing sources of financing that are sufficient and durable have led to a growing indebtedness on the part of universities and their inability to carry out development strategies according to specific time-tables; they are unable to meet a minimum level of quality requirements, such as increasing the number of teaching faculty, maintaining a minimum number of qualified staff, halting their emigration, supplying the needed advanced teaching equipment, increasing allocations for scientific research, intensifying student scholarship programs, and completing infrastructure works (p. 24).

Sudan: The lack of financing has led to the following consequences: development projects at higher education institutions have stalled; teaching faculty have turned in a less-than-adequate performance; professors have left the country in increasing numbers or left to work at institutions inside the country; faculty have resorted to moonlighting to support themselves; a suitable educational and research environment for students has deteriorated due to the lack of resources for their training in various fields (pp. 20, 22).

Syria: The biggest challenge is represented by financing, which in higher education is considered a primary tool for confronting other challenges, particularly horizontal expansion and the increase in admission rates at educational institutions (pp 29 - 30).

Oman: The total estimated expenditure on the education sector reached only 13% of total public expenditure. Alternative sources of financing must be located in investment in higher education, by having those who are able pay educational fees or create a special fund for funding higher education (p. 24).

Egypt, Yemen: The shortfall in financial resources is a chronic problem. Despite the increase in allocations by the state for higher education, they are still considered insufficient (Egypt, p. 16; Yemen, p. 16).

Palestine: The reduction in state support for covering the operating expenses of higher education institutions has a negative impact on several aspects, such as: accepting students on the basis of "parallel education," where the student pays higher fees; the irregularity in paying teacher salaries; the use of savings funds to secure continuity; "false" reductions in per student costs, by not increasing the number of faculty to suit the increase in student numbers; reducing expenditures on libraries; increasing the burdens on faculty members; increasing the number of non-full time staff; reducing expenditure on attending academic conferences and reducing scientific research budgets; and reducing opportunities for scholarships abroad, etc. (pp. 10, 13).

5. Conflicts and Occupation

a. Iraq

The security, political and economic ramifications of the war led to looting educational institutions and targeting professors and a number of prominent academic figures, some of them emigrated, while the rest live in fear and move around only in order to teach. Meanwhile, students have encountered conditions of psychological and domestic instability due to the threats, which has hampered their ability to attend classes regularly and led to deterioration in the quality of higher education. These are examples from a long list of problems (Iraq, p. 21). One of the Conference papers presented statistical reports on the impact of war on the faculty's research performance in Iraq³¹.

b. Lebanon

The Lebanese university and private universities have been affected by the political conditions the country experienced in from 1975 - 1990, particularly in developing human resources or retaining them, amid the loss of competent staff and their emigration. The negative aspects of this phenomenon were felt primarily at the Lebanese University, with the rise in the average age of the faculty, due to the limited opportunities for full-time employment or contracting with new professors (Lebanon, p. 15).

c. Palestine

The National Report mentions that the course of research has been affected by the Israeli military occupation, with the shutting of higher education institutions and research institutes, and ongoing attempts by the Israeli authorities to impede their development (Palestine, p. 12).

6. Social Issues

a. Brain drain

Jordan's National Report indicated that emigration by the work force in recent decades has had a positive effect on the national economy, thanks to remittances sent by those abroad, and a fall in unemployment rates. However, it has been noticed in the last decade that the emigration by these workers has begun to include growing numbers of faculty members with high aptitude and rare specializations, due to their low local salaries and benefits, compared to other countries (p. 78). Tunisia's National Report noted the government's efforts to benefit from the large numbers of human resources that are abroad, especially in Europe (Tunisia p. 67).

b. Unemployment

Jordan's National Report said the unemployment rate among high school degree holders is usually higher than the national average (Jordan, p. 80). In Mauritania, the National Report said that it is not easy for graduates to enter the job market, with the rate not exceeding 14.7%, and that growing numbers of graduates have begun to form alumni leagues that search for work, and sometimes these groups include people with high qualifications, graduated from foreign universities (Mauritania, p. 21). Meanwhile, unemployment in Sudan has risen in the last decade, with the average for 2001 estimated at 15% (Sudan, pp. 16 - 17).

c. Social life

This issue was raised in Lebanon's National Report, with regard to areas of social mix for university students in Lebanon over the last ten years. It said there was a low number of organized activities and joint programs among universities and of interactive professional activities among the

³¹ Sawsan Shakir Majeed. *Impact of Crises on Scientific and Research Activities of Faculty Members: a Comparative Study (Iraq and Jordan)*. (Paper submitted to ARCHE+10, and published in this book).

teaching faculty, and limited opportunities for providing students with knowledge and values of living together and building convictions and practices associated with these knowledge and values (p. 40).

7. Arab Cooperation/Arab Space

a. Mobility among Arab universities

Out of 3.76 million students enrolled in Arab universities, information about their nationalities was available; 3.6 million are citizens, or 96.3%. Meanwhile, there are 109,000 students from another Arab country (2.9%), while non-Arabs account for 28,816 students, or 0.8%. This data shows clearly that student mobility among Arab countries is practically absent, while student mobility from other regions to Arab countries is practically non-existent.

It is interesting that (non-national) Arab students are not present primarily in Egypt, which has traditionally been the biggest recipient of students. The biggest numbers of non-national students are in the following countries, in order: Jordan (22,600), UAE (19,800), Lebanon (19,600) and Egypt (12,000). We have reservations about these figures, since not all universities in these countries responded to the questionnaires, and not all universities that responded provided complete information about the nationalities of students.

Likewise, the mobility of faculty takes the same pattern, with a slight increase in favor of both Arab and non-Arab professors: 7.3% are from other Arab countries and 2.8% are non-Arabs. Saudi Arabia is the leader here (32.5% are non-Saudi Arab professors and 6.2% are foreigners), followed by the UAE.

In fact, the picture is dramatically different in the UAE, which has a high percentage of Arab professors (48%) and non-Arab professors (43%), compared to very low levels of Emirati professors (only 9%). Likewise, the distribution of students in this country is different than the pattern mentioned above: 33.8% of the total are Arab students and 14.4% are foreigners, compared to 51.8% Emirati students. We have reservations about these figures as well.

b. Establishing Arab quality control organizations and networks

There are no Arab (regional) agencies for quality assurance as of yet. This is despite the decisions taken in this regard at conferences of higher education ministers, particularly the 11th Conference of ministers responsible for higher education and scientific research in the Arab world (Dubai, 5-6 November 2007), which recommended support for the idea of establishing an Arab institution for quality assurance of programs; it also recommended publishing the regional report prepared by the UNESCO Beirut office on the topic, and distributing it on a wide scale in the Arab world³². With regard to networking, the Arab Network of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANQAHE) has been established. It is an NGO that works in cooperation with the international network INQAHEE and in partnership with the Association of Arab Universities. Internet users might locate a second Arab network, entitled ARQAANE³³.

c. Recognizing degrees

In 1978, an agreement on degree recognition among Arab countries was signed by 14 countries (out of 22). It is interesting that this agreement has not been re-evaluated, despite the profound

³² The Association of Arab Universities established the Council on Quality assurance and Accreditation in the Arab World (2007), and the available information does not indicate that it has become an effective organization.

³³ «The Arab Quality Assurance and Accreditation Network for Education (ARQAANE) is an international non-profit independent association established in July 2007 with the fundamental objective of raising the quality of education in the Arab world. http://www.aqaan.org/HTMLWebsite/index_ar.html

changes that higher education has witnessed in these countries over the last decade³⁴. This coincides with a decline in trust among Arab countries vis-à-vis degrees that are granted by others. However, this has not led to a clear agreement about an initial list of “degree mills,” even though references to these degrees and the institutions that grant them has become commonplace in other countries and other parts of the world.

Establishing an Arab space for higher education remains an advocacy; it has not become reality because we lack three conditions mentioned above: coordination between degrees and their recognition, quality assurance, and student and academic mobility. Meeting these conditions permitted the establishment of a European space for higher education, for example.

8. Conclusion

From what we have highlighted above, we can deduce that the challenges faced by higher education in the Arab world are many, and disparate in terms of their importance and depth.

We find the lowest level of challenges in the area of educational opportunities; the road is still a long one in a limited number of countries, while other countries have taken big strides forward. However, we should bear in mind that the problems of social inequality remain significant, with the exception of gender parity, and remember the importance of the private sector’s contribution to increasing educational opportunities remains limited.

The most difficult challenge lies in the area of quality; this includes several components of this quality, such as teaching methods, curricula, faculty and research, while this problem has accumulated in social sciences and the humanities. Perhaps this aspect explains the clear shortcoming in seeing higher education institutions shoulder their social responsibilities.

Challenges related to quality are linked to challenges related to management and finance. If the challenges of finance exhibit disparities among various countries, based on the disparity of their resources, management-related challenges are practically similar; they also inhibit opportunities for confronting quality-related challenges.

Finally, the challenge related to establishing an Arab space for higher education is of a different nature, since it requires joining forces in terms of efforts and intentions, at the Arab regional level as well as the sub-regional level (Maghreb, Mashreq, Gulf, etc.)

³⁴ The committee in charge of applying the agreement of degrees recognition in the Arab countries held two meetings, the first in Damascus (2003), where it agreed to update the Arab Agreement; the second in Beirut (2005), where the first draft of the project was discussed and representatives of some Arab countries submitted some written remarks on it. Al Awit, Henri, intervention made at ARCHE+10.

Cairo Declaration on Higher Education in the Arab States

Preamble

We, the participants in the Arab Regional Conference on Higher Education (ARCHE + 10) in Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt, from 31 May to 2 June 2009, hereby

- 1) **Recalling the terms** of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which stipulates that higher education should be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit (Article 26 - 1), and that education should be aimed at achieving “the full development of the human personality and the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms” (Article 26 - 2), and the terms of the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), which stipulates that signatory countries pledge to make higher education equally accessible to all on the basis of individual capacity (Article 4),
- 2) **Affirm** that lifelong learning should be based on four pillars: learning to live together, learning how to acquire knowledge, learning how to act, and learning for life; and that it is a duty of higher education institutions to conduct research that helps solve the most important problems faced by nations,
- 3) **Take** into consideration the recommendations of the United Nations, through:
 - a) An *Agenda for Peace*, which contains guidelines and proposals for preventive measures that safeguard peace, in addition to practical steps to restore peace after the eruption of unavoidable conflicts.
 - b) An *Agenda for Development*, which sets down the basic concepts of strengthening the opportunities of sustainable and durable human development; we affirm the region’s need for a just and comprehensive peace, which allows education for all and paves the way for development,
- 4) **Note** that Arab states, while enjoying a common history, language, cultural heritage and traditions, are widely diverse in terms of population size, economic capacities, and cultural and educational traditions.
- 5) **Note** that the globalization of the economy and professional services, and the rapid growth in information and communication technologies, have led to increasing demands, in all fields, for specialists who can maintain high-level qualifications which boosts the role played by higher education in the development and prosperity of societies,
- 6) **Affirm** the recommendations of the conferences of ministers of higher education and scientific research in Arab states, which have been sponsored by the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization since 1981, and **Commend** the efforts by UNESCO, ISESCO and ALECSO, citing the documents and projects launched by ALECSO, tasked by the Arab League, especially the plan to improve education in the Arab world (Tunis, 2008), and
- 7) **Recall** the Beirut Declaration of 1998 on Higher Education in Arab states for the 21st Century, and the document’s recommendations, and the Arab Plan of Action for Science and Technology, which was approved by the Arab Socio-economic Council,

Therefore, we point to the following:

1. Developments in Higher Education in the Arab Region, 1998 - 2008

Higher education in the Arab region has experienced huge developments in the last decade, since the convening of the **Arab Regional Conference on Higher Education** (Beirut, 1998) and the **World Conference on Higher Education** (Paris, 1998). These developments have included large increases in the numbers of students at universities and the various types of institutes of higher education, as well as changes in the features of higher education. Many Arab Governments have allocated additional resources and launched development programs to this effect. In many countries, new legislation has been adopted and national bodies for accreditation and quality assurance have been established. The following summarizes the current situation, focusing on nine major points:

1. Access
2. Equality of educational opportunity
3. Quality
4. External efficiency
5. Societal responsibility
6. Management and governance
7. Financing
8. Arab and international Cooperation
9. Scientific research

1. Access

- Total enrollment in the higher education system in the Arab region as a percentage of the age group rose from 16% in 1998 to 22% in 2008, while the number of students rose from 1,294 to 2,379 per 1,000 people at first-degree university level or equivalent.
- Despite increases, enrollment rates in Arab countries are still lower than the world average (25%) and lower than the rates recorded in 2006 in other regions, such as Latin America (34%), and considerably lower than North America and Europe (70%).
- There is also a disparity in enrollment among various Arab countries, as the rate ranges between 8% in one country and 49% in another.
- There is an imbalance in the distribution of students enrolled in higher education between the humanities and pure and applied sciences, as those enrolled in the latter make up only 30% of the total, which hampers development, research, innovation and technology management in Arab countries.
- The number of those enrolled in Master's degree programs has doubled, while those enrolled in Ph.D. programs has trebled; the total share of students enrolled in graduate studies has risen from 5.8% to 6.7%.
- Despite the clear increase in the numbers of those enrolled in Master's and Doctoral programs, the percentage of those enrolled in graduate studies remains low compared to other regions in the world; this has a negative impact on the production of knowledge, research and innovation, and on training academic and research staff at institutions of higher education and in the production and services sectors of the economy.
- Higher education institutions are diverse and include universities, institutes, technological faculties, community colleges as well as distance learning institutions; with universities accounting for 35% of their total number of higher education institutions (1,150).
- The increase in the number of non-governmental universities has not been accompanied by an expansion in the sector's student population; this sector accounts for 36% of all

institutions but takes in only 11% of students. This means that the models and cost of non-governmental education are insufficient measure to expand educational opportunities.

- Admissions policies and procedures in a number of Arab countries continue to face several challenges in balancing between the rise in study opportunities and the drive to maintain quality and secure equal opportunities and equity in the distribution of these opportunities.
- Distance, virtual and open educational systems and the concepts of continuing and lifelong education continue to lack sufficient attention and recognition in most Arab countries. This limits their ability to attract students and to effectively contribute in generating creative solutions to problems of access to higher education.

2. Equality of Educational Opportunity

The total share of females enrolled in higher education has seen a noticeable rise, to around 50%, compared to 37% in 1998. It is worth noting that this percentage is rising in public institutions of higher education, reaching 51%. In some Arab countries, there has been a noticeable drop in male enrollment in higher education.

Meanwhile, a number of Arab countries have not been able to achieve the required progress in guaranteeing a fair distribution of higher education opportunities between rural and urban areas, or among upper-, medium -, and lower-income groups in the same society.

3. Quality

There are clear efforts as well as a clear will in most Arab countries to improve the quality of higher education. This can be seen at several levels:

- the launch of promising sector-wide projects to improve higher education.
- the creation of frameworks for quality assurance and accreditation. Ten Arab states have established national committees and bodies for this purpose and most countries are in the process of establishing such bodies or are spreading a culture of quality, and establishing quality assurance offices and programs at universities.
- A number of Arab universities have received institutional or program-based accreditation by well-known international bodies.
- Participation in quality assessment programs conducted by a number of specialized international institutions, and in related international activities and conferences.
- Developing new legislation, plans and strategies whose implementation helps improve the quality of higher education in some states.

Despite the huge efforts made to improve the quality of education, there are still many shortcomings. The expansion in access to higher education, which was considered a huge achievement by some Arab countries in the last decade, has led a deterioration of quality in certain States. This is because higher education institutions have been unable to meet the conditions required to secure high-quality education quickly and in line with the average increase in access. This disparity between quantity and quality appears in areas such as student density as well as a lack of infrastructure, qualified faculty and financial resources. Some Arab countries have resorted to parallel education or other models, which gives room to the acceptance of providing higher education at lower standards.

As for quality assurance, the efforts here are at a standstill with regard to the general or regulatory frameworks; they haven't reached the "sensitive" areas in universities, i.e. the classrooms and laboratories, where instruction and research take place, and where quality issues confront true

challenges. This is due to:

1. A reliance on bureaucratic models in quality management and assurance.
2. A direct borrowing from systems used in countries or organizations outside the region without serious attention to establishing foundations and frameworks that are specific to the Arab region and suit this part of the world.

4. External Efficiency

Noteworthy efforts have been made in Arab countries to improve the relevance of the outcomes of higher education to the requirements of development and the job market, through various methods, such as:

- A. formulating national strategies and plans on education and employment
- B. establishing systems for partnership between the economy's productive sectors and institutions of higher education
- C. designing programs to encourage expatriates to return
- D. establishing university incubators

There are no statistics that offer a clear picture or evidence about the extent to which this relevance is being achieved; however, its weak points remain in effect and appear in unemployment rates, brain drain and lack of skilled work force in a number of specializations.

5. Societal Responsibility

Worthy of note in this regard is the fundamental role played by the higher education sector in developing Arab societies and forming human capital, which has led the development process in these countries; however, there are four areas of imbalance in this regard:

- A. Institutions of higher education in a number of Arab States have fallen short in performing the task of serving society; there are few universities that require participation in such activities as part of the successful completion of programs or in their faculty recruitment. In fact, some universities fail to interact positively with local communities in terms of culture, development or the environment.
- B. A number of states have failed to enact policies aimed at incorporating common university requirements into higher education curricula, extending on an equal basis to students from human as well as pure and practical sciences. These would comprise a general culture component that covers citizenship, human rights, religious tolerance and acceptance of others and other values that help build social cohesion.
- C. The devalued status of social and human science specializations, as existing admissions systems, especially centralized ones, require high grade averages for pure and applied sciences, pushing students with lower marks into humanities disciplines. Also, public policies tend to favor pure and applied sciences in the distribution of available resources. The negative features resulting from these policies are evidenced by the profile of the elite and of those practicing certain social professions (teachers, administrators, media, etc.).
- D. In the same context, it is worth noting, in a number of Arab states, the low standard of performance in using the Arabic language in higher education.

6. Management and Governance

Although the establishment of ministries of higher education in various Arab countries has helped spur progress in this field, we have yet to arrive at academic, organizational and financial

independence for institutions of higher education; here, we should note the importance of strategic planning, information systems and electronic management and the participation of stakeholders and beneficiaries in higher education.

7. Financing

Budget allocations to higher education in the Arab world have increased; their share of the state budget rose from 3.64% in 2000 to 6.38% in 2008, and their share of GDP has also increased, from 1.42% to 2.02%. A number of Arab countries are diversifying their sources of financing by various means, such as partnership with the private sector, providing consulting services and conducting research activities, endowments, etc. However, financing continues to constitute one of the biggest problems for all Arab countries.

Despite the many efforts and initiatives, the problem is becoming sharper due to the challenges of international competition, which requires that we tackle the issue of world-class quality of education and research. This requires additional resources and better use of available resources.

8. Arab and International Cooperation

Cooperation among Arab states and international organizations improved in terms of the benefit from services and expertise provided by the latter. However, shortcomings remain, as inter-Arab cooperation has yet to prepare sources of documented information that meet international standards, which can be relied on by any party interested in or researching the topic of higher education in Arab countries.

With regard to student mobility, Arab non-national students only make up 2% of the total number of students in the Arab world. As for teaching staff, the rate reaches 6% of total faculty in Arab institutions of higher education. Non-Arab teachers only account for 1% of total faculty.

Inter-Arab cooperation in education and scientific research has been on the rise over the last ten years; there is high-level bilateral cooperation between Arab states and European and other universities. The League of Arab States have also been developing a higher education strategy.

The positive orientation toward proposing an integrated framework for the development of higher education in the Arab region, by the Arab League (which has been tasked with this by summits of Arab heads of state), is one of the positive, forward-thinking policies aimed at creating an integrated strategic framework. However, it still requires policies, mechanisms and implementation plans that are binding on Arab League member states.

The decision by the 2008 Arab Summit in Damascus, to adopt a plan for improving higher education in the Arab world, should be considered an important step toward boosting joint Arab action in enhancing Arab education, and particularly higher education. Moreover, work on the details of this plan and implementing mechanisms will certainly boost opportunities for inter-Arab cooperation in the field of higher education.

9. Scientific Research

Scientific research in institutions of higher education is considered one of the components of a philosophy of higher education; at the same time, it is one of its goals and mandates, since higher education institutions are centers of knowledge production, research and innovation. This field has experienced developments on several levels:

- A. Developing systems, providing funds, offering awards and overseas scholarship programs in order to improve scientific research; participating in regional and international research projects; establishing modern systems of communication and documentation at

universities; linking university libraries to international documentation systems.

- B. Launching various types of initiatives in Arab countries, such as knowledge stations, scientific research databases, quality enhancement funds, scientific research bodies, research centers of excellence, scientific research chairs, scientific associations, etc.
- C. However, the financing of scientific research activities is weak; the average expenditure here is less than 0.2%, compared to 1% in a number of developing countries.

However, this sector was confronted to a number of crises, which have a range of causes: a paucity of resources, weak cooperation between research bodies and the service and productive sectors; Arab countries are still low in international rankings for scientific production.

Recommendations

Based on the principles, conclusions, and issues reviewed in the Declaration on Higher Education in Arab States, "Towards an Arab Space for Higher Education: International Challenges and Societal Responsibilities," as adopted by the Conference, and in view of the need for boosting higher education systems, based on the concepts of education for all and life-long learning, and preserving cultural diversity, sustainable development, transparency, accountability and the participation of all concerned parties, the Conference has adopted the following recommendations:

General Recommendations

- Prepare a periodic (biennial) report on the state of higher education and scientific research in the Arab region, based on national reports that use documented and updated databases; create the IT infrastructure at a regional level for higher education and scientific research.
 - Initiate the development of policies, work frameworks and implementation plans to achieve the goals of the Development Plan for Higher Education in the Arab World, which was prepared by the Arab League and approved at the 2008 Arab Summit in Damascus; identify the phased, quantitative and qualitative objectives, and performance measurement indicators to implement the plan within a specific time-frame.
 - Launch detailed studies and propose legislative and regulatory frameworks and the required national decisions to establish an Arab space for higher education; and submit these to political decision-makers in this domain.
 - Develop benchmarks for quality systems in the Arab region, to guarantee unified concepts; agree on the foundations of quality and professional qualifications required for these organizations to discharge their functions; and coordinate relations and exchange expertise among them.

Specific Recommendations

1. Access

Continue to expand access to higher education, in line with the population density of each Arab country, while devoting increased attention to open, distance, and electronic education.

Strive to boost higher education enrollment rates in the Arab world to reach 30% of the concerned age group, and no less than 20% in any Arab country, over the next ten years.

2. Equality of Educational Opportunity

1. Guarantee equality of opportunity in higher education for all segments of society, especially

those with fewer educational opportunities, irrespective of gender, social category, or geographic location.

2. Diversify types of institutions of higher education and their geographic distribution, to guarantee equal opportunity for all segments of society in Arab countries.

3. Quality

Implement quality assurance and accreditation systems in at least 50% of faculties, institutes and institutions of higher educations, both public and non-public, in each country over the next ten years; focus on disseminating a culture of quality in the higher education system of each Arab country.

4. External Efficiency

Adopt partnership programs between higher education and productive and service-oriented economic institutions, aimed at developing mechanisms for cooperation, relevance, identifying the needs of development, providing opportunities for practical training, upgrading, and research at the local and regional level.

5. Societal Responsibility

Reinforce the societal role of higher education, to serve society and disseminate a culture of citizenship and tolerance while highlighting the central role of social and human studies in developing society.

6. Management and Governance

Produce or develop legislation that guarantees the academic, administrative, and financial independence of higher education institutions (including their right to invest their funds), with the commitment by higher education institutions to the public policies, laws, principles and objectives set down by the State, along with the development and implementation of systems of accountability that guarantee the achievement of these goals.

7. Financing

1. Make maximum efforts to increase allocations to higher education, while using and managing these allocations properly.
2. Diversify sources of funding and encourage institutions of higher learning to develop their own sources of funding.
3. Determine the budgets of institutions of higher learning, based on the actual per student cost, in the various specializations and levels of education, with due regard to criteria of quality.

8. Arab and International Cooperation

1. Work towards the establishment of a regional system of qualifications and degree recognition.
Encourage student and academic mobility among institutions of higher learning within countries and among Arab states.
2. Strengthen cooperation among Arab, regional and international organizations concerned with education and higher education; encourage joint cooperation in project implementation and the exchange of expertise and experience.

3. Promote UNESCO Chairs in Arab higher education institutions and help them exchange expertise and expand.

9. Scientific Research, Innovation and Development

1. Increase allocations for scientific research in Arab states to not less than 2% of GDP during the next 10 years.
2. Set down programs for joint scientific research among Arab states and create mechanisms for this.
3. Encourage the creation of joint scientific research networks in the Arab region
4. Propose the organization of a “Year of Science, Technology and Innovation” at the level of Arab states, to be held at regular intervals in a different Arab state, in order to increase contact and cooperation in the Arab region, and monitor progress in scientific and technological research in various Arab countries.

10. Follow-up mechanisms

Set up a committee comprised of the heads of delegations, gathered by UNESCO in order to set down mechanisms for follow-up and implementation.

*Educational Opportunity
and Students' Mobility*

Admission Policies and Procedures in Arab Universities

Rafica Hammoud¹

Abstract

This paper reviews the main requirements and procedures for admission to first degree programs (Bachelor /Licence) in the Arab countries, in terms of: coordination mechanisms (central coordination at state level, or decentralization by leaving decisions to the higher education institutions themselves); type of qualifying certificate required; minimum admission score required for admission; competitive selection on the basis of student ranking; duration of validity of certificate; and aptitude tests, or competitive entrance examinations, or personal interviews, etc. The paper then reviews in detail and compares examples of admission policies and procedures at a selection of public and private universities and their various colleges (depending upon available data) in a number of Arab countries representing the various geographical regions (Jordan, Bahrain, Sudan, Tunisia, Lebanon, Egypt, Yemen).

The most prominent examples of best-practice admission policies are then discussed, such as: standardized testing for ensuring equity and equal opportunity at entry level; use of more than one criterion for admission; granting concessions to certain disadvantaged groups and less developed geographical areas; and providing more than one admission opportunity in a year. The most prominent challenges are also discussed, such as: low rates of enrolment in higher education; educational imbalances resulting from admissions based on sole criterion (e.g. secondary-school final examinations); having "parallel sections" in some government colleges levying higher tuition fees to the detriment of equal opportunities; unjustified positive discrimination in favor of some groups; and the large proportion of students opting to study humanities and social sciences in preference to scientific disciplines.

The paper concludes with numerous suggestions for developing higher-education admission policies and procedures in the Arab countries.

I. Introduction

During the past decades, higher education has gained increased importance globally. Different countries started to develop this type of education and improve it, so it could take up the great challenges in society in order to pave the way for a well-educated and competitive generation of students.

* Translated from Arabic

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Higher education has expanded quantitatively throughout the world, albeit with varying levels between regions. In Arab countries also, students' enrolment rates in higher education have increased during the last decades. Nevertheless, gross enrolment rates are still much lower than in the developed countries. In 2006, the average rate in Arab countries was 22% with big differences throughout the region, for example, 48% in Lebanon and Palestine, 39% in Jordan and 9% in Yemen compared to 67% in developed countries and 70% in North America and Western Europe (UNESCO, 2008, p. 332 - 338). Unfortunately, universities in Arab countries are fewer compared to countries having similar population density. For example, we find around 3500 higher education institutions in the USA compared to 395 in Arab countries (El Amine et al, 2008). This is regrettable because each person who is intellectually able to learn is entitled to higher education.

In this regard, higher education admission policies and procedures are vital to select the students to be enrolled and prepare them for their future roles in societies. The more efficient admission policies are the more higher education helps enhancing socio-economic development as well as social mobility. Therefore, taking stock of admission policies models adopted in higher education and discussing their strong and weak points help governments and policy makers choose the best policies and procedures suitable to social conditions and capabilities, and allows, as much as possible, to achieve justice, equality and equal opportunities for all students.

Furthermore, studies show that admission policies, conditions and procedures vary enormously from one higher education institution to another throughout the world, according to the circumstances and capacities of these institutions and their leaders' convictions. A study prepared by Robin Matross Helms for the World Bank (Helms, 2008) concerning undergraduate admission policies, standards and procedures in governmental universities in different countries, indicates that many universities basically rely on the results of the last secondary school exams of prospective students. Some other universities look into students' results throughout the whole secondary cycle for all academic disciplines or some specific disciplines that the person intends to study in higher education. Some institutions organize standardized aptitude tests to evaluate more cognitive abilities such as reading comprehension and deductive thinking along with other skills outside their academic attainment. Other universities organize exams in specific academic disciplines according to their majors. Moreover, some institutions might ask for letters of recommendation and presentation from teachers, tutors, civil servants and others. Some institutions ask their candidates to present registration forms along with various documents such as summaries of their previous educational attainment, art works and contributions in extra-curricular activities. Furthermore, some practical and art majors such as sports, music, theatre etc. require different credentials. In other cases, practical performances are required and personal interviews are conducted with candidates. Each admission standard has its own importance, as defined by the institution. Moreover, some universities take into consideration the demographic characteristics of some groups such as their gender, race and socio-economic situation as well as their physical health. The most vulnerable are entitled to some privileges such as a certain number of seats allocated to them, or lowering grades for admission, so that justice and equal opportunities prevail.

Most of the time, admission procedures are coordinated centrally. A specified authority is in charge of defining vacant seats and the minimum average of grades in the General Secondary Education Certificate (GSEC) for admission in each university and degree course. Students are then distributed according to these criteria. In some cases, enrolment applications are submitted to a central authority. However, final admission procedures are undertaken in the universities

where applications are sent. They decide to accept or not the applicant according to their own standards, as is the case in the United Kingdom. In other cases, universities specify the number of students that will be accepted. However, in others a central competition authority is in charge of accepting students and distributing them according to the averages/grades they obtain at the end of the secondary cycle along with the majors they chose, as is the case in Ireland. Sometimes, universities themselves define the conditions of admissions and specify the number of students.

What are the Most Widespread Admission Policies and Conditions in Arab Universities?

In the following paragraphs, we will discuss admission policies and procedures in governmental and private Arab universities and their different faculties (when data are available) for undergraduate levels (licence/bachelor). We will consider the general policies, procedures and conditions in all Arab countries from the following angles: type of required degree and minimum admission score. In case of competitive selections, these standards are applied according to the hierarchy of certificate results, duration of validity of certificate, aptitude tests and other competitions exams, personal interviews as well as other additional conditions (health, fitness, age etc)

We will then present in detail some models of admission policies, requirements and procedures in some private and governmental universities and their different faculties in some Arab countries representing the diverse geographical regions i.e. Jordan, Bahrain, Tunisia, Sudan, Lebanon, Egypt and Yemen, taking into consideration the disparity of information about the universities depending on their availability in universities guides or on internet sites.

After this presentation, we will shed light on the strong and weak points of admission policies, conditions and procedures in Arab universities. In conclusion, we will set forth recommendations to enhance these policies and requirements.

II. An Overview of Admission Policies and Procedures in Arab Universities

The main trends in admission policies could be summarized as follows:

- All Arab universities consider secondary education certificates or their equivalent a basic standard for admission, with different designations such as: baccaureate, general secondary education certificate (GSEC), general certificate, (I'dadiya/preparatory - Iraq).
- Some faculties impose specific sections of SEC as a condition for admission in their majors such as medicine, pharmacy, engineering and science. To be accepted in these faculties, the applicant should hold a scientific GSEC. Other faculties such as arts and education accept all sections of GSEC. When their averages are lower than the required admission score in pure science and practical majors, holders of a scientific GSEC enroll in humanities and social sciences faculties. For example, governmental Yemeni universities have an admission score of 90% in dentistry, while a 70% score is required in humanities and education faculties.
- Students' admission coordination and distribution to various faculties in governmental universities is a central process in most of Arab countries such as Jordan, Tunisia, Sudan, Syria, Iraq, the Sultanate of Oman and Egypt. This process could also be undertaken within universities themselves in some other countries such as Qatar, Bahrain and private universities, or in each faculty alone, as it is the case in the Lebanese University.
- The number of students that will be accepted in each faculty is set before beginning with admission and registration procedures as well as the minimum admission score

depending on the major. Applicants are accepted on a competitive base according to their averages in GSEC exams and their choices in conformity with the threshold of students. This is the case in most of Arab universities except in the Lebanese University where students, in most faculties, are accepted according to their scores in competitive entrance examinations.

- In some Arab countries, namely Egypt and Yemen, private universities accept lower scores than the ones set by governmental universities.
- Some universities such as Egyptian governmental universities accept working students, provided that they obtain a certificate of regular attendance, whilst some others preclude workers from enrolling in courses (Sultanate of Oman).
- Most Arab countries, such as Oman, Kuwait, Libya and Egypt, specify a validity period of around one year for the secondary education certificate (SEC) for admission in higher education institutions. It is also the case in Tunisia and Sudan, but in exceptional circumstances, students can apply one year later. This validity period ranges from 2 to 5 years in UAE, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Yemen and from 5 to 10 years in Egyptian private universities. Each year, Jordanian governmental universities allocate a maximum of 5% of their seats to holders of GSEC or its equivalent from previous years. For the Lebanese University, the validity period of the GSEC is not a condition for admission.
- Some universities in Arab countries organize general aptitude tests such as the University of Bahrain, Tunisian universities in some majors, Saudi universities², Sultanate of Oman universities and Qatar University as well as some private universities. Others organize entrance examinations like the Arab Gulf University, some faculties of the Lebanese University, Algerian Universities in some majors, Libyan Universities and Yemeni governmental universities, as well as some private universities. In addition, some universities organize personal interviews as an admission requirement such as the University of Bahrain, the Arab Gulf University, Tunisian universities in some majors and the University of Kuwait. Moreover, some private higher education institutions ask for the students' school records in the secondary educational cycle such as Texas and Carnegie Universities in Qatar, while others ask for letters of recommendation like Carnegie University in Qatar.
- Some universities set an age threshold for admission, such as the Arab Gulf University which has 24 years as a cut off and 25 years in the universities of Oman.
- Some universities prioritize the applicants living in the regions where higher education institutions are located (Oman). They can also allocate some seats to the least developed and most deprived groups of some regions and disabled people or grant them some privileges in admission scores (Jordan, Sudan).

III. Detailed Models of Admission Policies and Procedures in Universities in some Arab States

In the following paragraphs, we will review admission policies and procedures for enrollment in

² General aptitude tests in Saudi Arabia evaluate the analytical and inferential ability of the applicant. Importance is given to his ability to learn regardless of his/her skills in specific disciplines. This ability is evaluated according to his/her: reading comprehension, ability to understand logical relations and resolve problems based on mathematical fundamentals, deduction ability and calculation abilities (2009) www.qeyas.com/Qiyas/exams/ accessed March 15.

first degree (license/bachelor) in some Arab States which could be useful in discussing admission policies in the Arab universities.

1. Admission Standards in Jordanian Public Universities³

a. General Conditions

Before the beginning of the academic year, the Deans Council specifies the number of students to be enrolled in each faculty/major during the coming year in light of Jordan's needs and the university's capabilities. Students are accepted in Jordanian public universities according to the following conditions:

- The student must hold a Jordanian GSEC or its equivalent.
- Scientific GSEC holders can apply to various majors: science, humanities, social sciences and Islamic studies.
- Holders of GSEC in arts and Islamic studies can apply to the following majors: humanities, social sciences, Islamic studies and administrative information systems.
- Holders of GSEC in computer science can apply to various majors in literature and science pursuant to the regulations.
- General vocational secondary certificate holders can apply to specific vocational majors provided they study two additional disciplines defined by the relevant vocational section such as industry, trade, domestic economy, hotel management, agriculture etc.
- Students are accepted in various faculties of the university according to their choices and their grades in the GSEC or its equivalent.

b. Special Conditions

Pursuant to paragraph "a" above, some students from specific groups are accepted in faculties and universities if they fall under the following categories:

- A defined number of seats in universities and faculties are allocated to specific groups as follows: for each governorate (muhafaza), students with the highest scores from the scientific section, first applicants from each district and students who are at the top of their classes in each district.
- A defined number of seats are allocated in each faculty of Jordanian universities to children of specific civil servants such as: armed forces, general security, intelligence services, civil defense, civil servants in the Ministry of Education and members of the teaching staff as well the university personnel etc.
- Each university can, according to its needs, accept a specified number of outstanding students in: sports (for example, a player in a Jordanian national team or a national school team that has already represented Jordan, or a player who has been in the first three ranks of an official championship in individual sports, as well as arts and music (according to the university's needs in a specific artistic activity).
- A specified number of seats in faculties of medicine, dentistry, pharmacy and engineering are allocated to the children of the Jordanian teaching staff working in public universities where these majors are not available.
- 300 seats are allocated in Jordanian universities to students from Palestinian refugee camps.
- The Board of Trustees in the university shall accept a specific number of disabled and visually-impaired students.

c. The unified coordination admission office is in charge of the admission procedure.

³ Jordan University, 2008

2. Students Admission Standards in the University of Bahrain⁴

a. General Conditions

In order to be accepted in the University of Bahrain, a new applicant must fulfill the following criteria:

- Hold a GSEC or its equivalent with a minimum cumulative GPA of 70%. Have passed a competitive entrance examination based on the academic programs receiving capacities and his/her average results based on the GSEC exams, admission tests and personal interview.
- Hold the GSEC or its equivalent in not more than the previous two academic years.
- Take the aptitude test of the university.
- Successfully pass any test or personal interview decided by the University Council.
- Be in good health.
- Have a good reputation and behavior.

b. Faculties Admission Requirements

- A GSEC section such as arts, science and trade, etc. that is suitable with the faculty's major.

3. Admission Standards in Tunisian Universities⁵

a. Orientation System: Objectives and Core Principles:

- The Tunisian university orientation system allows all baccalaureate holders to join any higher education institution according to their results and to the receiving capacity in different majors.
- Applicants to each major are sorted differentially according to their scores and classified into three groups:
 - First group: 30% of best ranking applicants
 - Second group: 40% of applicants ranking after those of first group.
 - Third group: 30% of other applicants.
- The Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Technology makes sure application forms are available to all baccalaureate holders through the website: www.orientation.tn. Besides, dates of application submission and admission results are specified. Orientation and admission process occurs in three rounds:
 - First round: applicants of the first group (30%).
 - Second round: applicants of the second group (40%) and those of the first group who have not been oriented or accepted.
 - Third round: applicants of the third group (30%) and those of the second group who have not been oriented or accepted.
 - Final round: all applicants who have not been accepted in a university in the third round.

For each round, applicants get a Receiving Capacity Guide (available seats for each major) and fill application forms on the Internet depending on the dates of each round. Admission results are published on the website or sent by SMS.

The Baccalaureate degree is valid for the same academic year only. Registration may be postponed for an additional year for health or personal reasons.

Furthermore, some majors require taking special tests such as the bachelor degree in arts and

⁴ WWW.uob.edu.bh, accessed January 20, 2009.

⁵ Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Technology, 2008.

music sciences and admission in higher institutes for theatre, arts, etc. If the applicant fails the entrance examinations of the first chosen major, his/her other choices are examined and his/her score compared to the score of the last applicant accepted in the other chosen major.

Some majors require the study of specific academic disciplines such as physical education for physiotherapy and functional therapy.

In case the applicant is not accepted in the major of his/her choice, he can take part (during the second semester of the next academic year) in baccalaureate reorientation competitive tests for most majors and sit for written tests organized by universities in March of each academic year. If he/she succeeds, he/she benefits from a registration for the beginning of the next academic year. This procedure aims at enhancing the university orientation system as competitive tests are considered a core element of the orientation system reform process. The latter process allows the applicant to change his/her academic curriculum- in case he/she failed to enroll in his/her favorite field because of bad results-and benefit from another opportunity. Fifteen percent of the major's receiving capacity is dedicated to these competitive tests.

b. Promoting Geographical Proximity

There is 7% added to the total score of the applicant to a higher education institution, if the required major is available in his/her province or in the nearest location. In doing so, the applicant has a greater chance to enroll in an institution near his/her place of residence and avoids moving to a farther location. This initiative aims at alleviating the pressure on the education institutions in big cities, especially the capital, and eases the financial burden on students and their families.

4. Students Admission Standards in Sudanese Universities⁶

The applicant specifies the major and institution of his/her choice according to his/her scientific qualifications and interests. It is preferable for the students and their families that applicants of Sudanese states submit their application forms in their own states.

a. Admission Requirements:

To be accepted in Sudanese universities, applicants must:

- Obtain the secondary education certificate (SEC) or its equivalent.
- Submit their registration forms in the same year just after obtaining the SEC. If for some reason, the student is not able to register in university after being accepted, he/she is given another chance to sit for admission tests within one academic year and after fulfilling all admission conditions.
- Applicants are accepted on a competitive basis, after completing the secondary cycle with success, passing the four compulsory disciplines (Arabic, English, religious studies, general and specialized mathematics) and the three disciplines specified by the relevant faculty depending on the major. The averages of these seven disciplines are added according to the percentage given by each faculty to these disciplines in conformity with the university admission requirements.

b. Admission Procedures

Candidacy and admission follow the following procedures:

- The applicant submits his/her candidature to universities according to the priorities set in the registration form.
- Admission results in all institutions are announced via the public media.

It is important to note that students cannot enroll in two degree courses at the same time.

⁶ www.mohe.gov.sd/daleel, accessed February 21, 2009.

c. Admission of Special Groups in Sudanese Universities:

- 50% of the seats in the universities of the least developed states are allocated to applicants from these states. Moreover, seats are allocated to these applicants in rare majors in the universities of their own states, provided that they originate from the states where they live with their families, that they also obtained their SECs from one of their schools and that they pledge to work in these states for five years after graduating. Students can neither transfer from one university to another nor from one major to another.
- 5% of the least developed states university seats are allocated to applicants coming from demarcation and exodus regions such as: Kaysan, South Kordofan, Abyay, Halayeb, etc.
- In addition, Umm Durman Islamic University allocates seats in its faculties to applicants coming from multilingual regions such as: the Southern states, the Nuba Mountains etc.
- Disabled students are accepted according to their scores in competitive exams and they are exempted from tuition fees. Children of martyrs who are accepted after passing entrance examinations are also exempted from scholastic fees in all governmental universities.

Each university can annually accept an additional number of students at their expenses, provided that the seats allocated to these students do not exceed 25% of the total amount of seats in each faculty. Non-Sudanese students are also accepted on scholarships, provided that their percentage does not exceed 5% of the total number of applicants accepted.

Other groups could also be accepted at their expenses such as: children and wives of people working in higher education public institutions, children of people working in the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, children of retired people who used to work in higher education institutions, children of researchers in the Ministry of Science and Technology and research centers and children of members of university councils. When admission requirements are fulfilled in governmental universities, such students enter these universities for free.

5. Admission requirements in the Lebanese University (governmental)⁷

a. General requirements

Applicants to the Lebanese University must fulfill the following requirements:

- Hold a Lebanese baccalaureate degree (second section) or its equivalent (some faculties specify the required baccalaureate section according to their majors).
- Pass the entrance examination in the relevant faculties.
- Applicants are accepted according to their passing grades and the defined number of students in each major and faculty.

Furthermore, entrance examinations and test disciplines vary according to majors⁸.

⁷ Lebanese University 1993 - 1994, Lebanese University 2002.

⁸ Lebanese University faculties use different terms to indicate the evaluation designations used in the admission procedures in line with their objectives :

Entrance competition: is a competitive test aiming at choosing the number of applicants with the best results defined by relevant faculties after sorting scores in descending order (faculty of education, languages and humanities centre at faculty of art, faculty of economics and management, faculty of tourism and hotel management, faculty of media and documentation, faculty of engineering, faculty of agriculture, technology institute, institute of economy and applied sciences, and faculties of medical sciences, dentistry and pharmacy).

Admission Test: aims at assessing the student's aptitudes in specific disciplines. Applicant must obtain a minimum score to be accepted (i.e. languages test in the faculty of literature and humanities)

Admission exam: defines whether an applicant succeeded or failed in the tested disciplines. Applicants who succeeded shall only be accepted (i.e. faculty of health sciences)

6. Admission Standards in Egyptian Universities

a. Admission Standards in Egyptian Governmental Universities⁹

1) Admission Requirements

- At the end of each academic year, the Supreme Council of Universities specifies the number of students that will be accepted in each faculty or institute during the next academic year based on the recommendations of the universities councils after consulting the various faculty councils.
- In order to be accepted in an undergraduate level, the applicant must have a GSEC degree or its equivalent. He/she will be accepted according to the hierarchy of results. Holders of a secondary education certificate (SEC) in business are accepted in business faculties. Holders of a SEC in agriculture are accepted in agriculture faculties. Holders of a SEC in industrial engineering are accepted in engineering faculties. Holders of the latter certificates are accepted in other relevant faculties according to the regulations and conditions specified by the Higher Universities Council after consulting the councils of the concerned universities.
- An applicant cannot register in more than one faculty at a time.

2) Admission Procedures

- An applicant submits via the internet a registration form to the central e-coordination office after sorting faculties and majors depending on his/her order of priorities.
- Admission procedures in the coordination office occur in three phases of about one week each according to applicants' scores in the general baccalaureate. The best ranking applicants are accepted first followed by lower ranking applicants.

Furthermore, some faculties in Egyptian governmental universities have opened special departments teaching in foreign languages, namely English. Students can register in these departments after being accepted through an ordinary coordination process. However, they have to pay higher fees for these "special" services.

3) Main Admission Problems in Egyptian Governmental Universities and Potential Solutions

Given that the scores of the GSEC exams are the only admission standard in higher education institutions in Egypt, applicants compete fiercely to obtain the highest scores, so enabling them to enter the faculty of their choice. This situation has led to the "epidemic" outbreak of private lessons for prospective university students. This phenomenon was stirred up after the GSEC exams started to take place during two semesters of the last two years of the secondary cycle. Thus, students stopped attending their classes at school so they can go to the relevant centers offering this type of lessons. This gave rise to an illusive soar of secondary cycle scores which was accompanied by the so-called "Nerds Crisis". These people obtained scores as high as 95% without being able to enroll in the faculty of their choice. Thousands of students having a 70% score saw their chances of enrolling in higher education institutions dwindle. Therefore, the secondary cycle became a great source of concern and tension for students and their families; the fear of results driving some of them to suicide. Social pressures to get high scores have given rise sometimes to cheating using the new types of technology, leaking of exams questions and selling them. (See articles in: Al-Ahram 2008, Part 1, Al-Delengawi 2009).

For all these reasons, improving the secondary school exams and admission procedures in Egyptian universities was, during the last years, the subject of much research, studies and discussions in

⁹ General Organization for Government Printing Office, 2008, 140 - 142

various conferences and specialized councils. In 2000, for example, the National Conference on Higher Education was held to discuss this problem. However, according to the report of the commission in charge of improving university and higher education, admission procedures in universities through the central coordination office are still the most suitable solution for Egyptian society. Furthermore, better results can be achieved when admission results are based on students' predilections and abilities that can be unveiled through aptitude tests, not necessarily related to secondary cycle academic discipline. (Ministry of Higher Education, 2000 b).

The above mentioned commission suggested many alternatives to improve admission procedures in higher education institutions, such as:

- **Alternative 1:** Improving secondary school exams so they reveal the real aptitudes of students, thus admission in universities will be based in proportion in the following elements:
 - * Student secondary cycle score,
 - * Student scores in qualifying disciplines defined by each higher education department,
 - * Student grades in "high level disciplines"¹⁰
- **Alternative 2:** holding aptitude tests or competitive entrance examinations in faculties for some disciplines. Competent applicants are enrolled in the relevant university according to their predilections and others are oriented towards higher vocational institutes (See: Ministry of Higher education, 2000-a and 2000-b).

Discussing the problems of the SEC in Egypt is ongoing, as it represented a path leading to higher education. Thus, a second conference, The National Conference on Improving Secondary Education and Admission Policies in Higher Education was held in June 2008. Hundreds of leaders and specialists in the education field took part in this conference which was marked by deep discussions. Then, education, academic and popular groups examined the conference recommendations in seminars and dialogues covered by the local press, in order to achieve a minimum social consensus concerning the issue.

There were many recommendations suggested, including going back to the one-year exam to obtain the GSEC instead of two, in order to limit the phenomenon of private lessons. It was also suggested to hold a second round of exams in August, to accept applicants in universities twice an academic year in September and February, extend the GSEC validity period to three years when it comes to applying to higher education institutions and maintain the central coordination office as a body that guarantees equal chances and a just distribution of students in higher education institutions.

The importance of holding aptitude tests was highlighted by some to accept applicants in a higher education institution, while others suggested entrance examinations in specific disciplines within faculties and specialization departments.

Moreover, some others suggested, instead of the abovementioned tests, giving a greater importance to the applicant's qualifying specialization disciplines (amongst SEC academic disciplines) to enroll in the relevant faculty or higher institute (See: Al-Ahram articles, 2008, parts 1 and 2).

There were many who opposed holding aptitude tests after the secondary cycle exam, arguing that it was impossible to have the aptitudes required by each faculty and that some aptitudes could thrive during the tertiary cycle. Besides this, there is a lack of specialized scientific

¹⁰ High level disciplines are disciplines taken by students in addition to the compulsory ones such as languages. Students get extra-grade points that will be added to their scores in secondary certificate. This is why some students have scores exceeding 100%.

bodies to prepare quality education tests each year. In addition to the relevant administrative, organizational and financial difficulties encountered, there is unnecessary repetition along with, the outbreak of the private lessons phenomenon and an increasing moral and financial burden on Egyptian families.

Many consider that these tests are an instrument of exclusion that will defeat equal opportunities and free education; because poor groups will be the first victims due to rich applicants (representing a limited category of Egyptian society) will join private higher education institutions which the poor cannot afford.

If the aptitude test was to be held anyway, it was suggested to add it to the secondary cycle exam with a specific percentage for each test. Moreover, a written test could be added to assess the scientific or cultural achievements of the applicant and his/her ability to write a structured text and think in a structured way. This helps discovering the scientific and cultural knowledge of the student and his/her other aptitudes. (Read articles in: Al-Ahram, 2008, parts 1 and 2, and series of articles by Hamed Ammar published in Egyptian newspapers).

The Ministries of Education and Higher Education lately presented a new project to improve secondary cycle education and admission policies in higher education institutions and it should be discussed and adopted soon.

This project suggests cancelling the two-year secondary exams system that is being implemented and replace it with a one-year system (third year only), in addition to decreasing the number of common compulsory disciplines studied by all students from 6 subjects to 3 subjects (Arabic, English and civic education). Furthermore, 3 qualifying disciplines (2 compulsory i.e. chemical sciences and biology for faculties of sciences and medicine and mathematics and physics for engineering, and one elective) are required to enroll in various faculties in accordance with the student's predilections and choices. The project also suggests extending the GSEC validity period to several years (Al-Ahram 19 /1 /2009, Al-Fajr 16 /2 /2009, Al-Ahram 2 /3 /2009).

b. Admission Standards in Egyptian Private Universities¹¹

The executive decrees concerning the establishment of private universities in Egypt were issued in 1992¹². Pursuant to these decrees, the council of private universities was created with the Minister of Higher Education at its head and two presidents of governmental universities and two presidents of private universities as well as many officials, consultants and experts in higher education as members.

The Private Universities Council is in charge, among others, of elaborating general policies for private tertiary education that are in line with the country's needs. It also completes the following tasks: examines the applications for private universities, in order to establish that they fulfill the required standard; submit recommendations to enhance the exam process; specify the number of applicants to be enrolled in private faculties and institutes, in accordance with available human and financial resources; monitoring and assessing private universities activities and performances; and conducting studies about the equivalent scientific rankings provided by these universities.

¹¹ Ayoub, 2003, Ministry of Higher Education (Arab Republic of Egypt), 2004 (a) and (b), and Executive Decree on private universities, in: General Organization for Government Printing Office, 2008, p 3414 - 348.

¹² Pursuant to this decree, the following universities were established: October 6 University, October University for Modern Science and Arts, Misr University for Science and Technology, Misr International University, the French University, the German University, the British University in Egypt, Al-Ahram Canadian University and Nile University.

Furthermore, the admission office of private universities was created in 2003 to guarantee the implementation of the various council decisions. Private universities made an admission guide available to students in order to inform them about the various opportunities found in each faculty and the relevant enrolment conditions.

1) Admission Requirements

To be accepted in private Egyptian universities, one must fulfill the following conditions:

- Obtaining a general secondary certificate or its equivalent.
- Succeeding in the qualifying disciplines of the desired faculty.
- Obtain the minimum admission score as defined by the relevant faculty in accordance with the Private Universities Council annual decisions based on the GSEC results and available seats¹³.
- Respect admission requirements set by the council of the concerned university i.e. participating in tests required by some faculties.
- Respect the number of accepted students set by the council of the concerned university according to the receiving capacity of the faculties, departments and institutes and in line with the financial and human resources to guarantee the smooth functioning of the educational process.
- In addition, holders of GSEC or its equivalent from the same academic year or previous years shall be accepted after a period of a maximum of 5 years for applicants to scientific faculties and 10 years for applicants to theoretical faculties provided, they succeed in the qualifying disciplines and obtain the minimum required score.
- Holders of the GSEC who succeeded in “high level” disciplines obtain extra points from the grades they got in these disciplines.
- Best ranking students in sports obtain extra-bonus points according to their ranking in schools and sports federation championships, provided that these rankings are respectively verified by the Ministry of Education and the Championship Department of the Ministry of Youth.
- Holders of a technical and vocational certificate are accepted in the relevant faculties with the same minimum score required from other GSEC holders, after removing the grades of practical disciplines.
- Holders of Al-Azhar SEC are accepted in relevant faculties, provided they succeed in the qualifying disciplines and obtain the minimum score, after removing the grades of the religious disciplines.

2) Admission procedures:

- The applicant presents the requested documents to the relevant university, which verifies that the given data fulfill the admission requirements in compliance with the Private Universities council's decisions for the new academic year. Furthermore, universities undertake an internal coordination of applications and organize tests in faculties where it is necessary to do so.
- The applicant's data is sent to the private universities admission office and reviewed

¹³ The minimum admission score for different majors in private universities is often much lower than the minimum admission score in governmental universities for the same majors. However, some private universities breached the terms as they accepted many applicants who did not obtain the minimum admission score, holding non-recognized diplomas and lacking the qualifying disciplines necessary for their faculties. Thus, disciplinary measures had to be undertaken and the creation of the Private Universities Admission Office (2003) contributed in avoiding such breaches (Ministry of Higher Education, Arab Republic of Egypt, and 2004 A).

according to the Private Universities Council's decisions.

- The Private universities admission office is in charge of admission procedures in faculties. The university distributes students within the departments according to the academic groups system. An applicant is accepted only after a confirmation of the private universities admission office.
- Each new Egyptian applicant over 22 years must present proof that he completed the required military service or was exempted from it.

7. Students Admission Standards in Yemeni Governmental Universities¹⁴

a. General Conditions

- The applicant must have a general or specialized secondary cycle certificate.
- The applicant must have the secondary cycle passing grade required in the faculty/major of his/her choice.
- The applicant can only choose two majors/faculties within a university in his/her registration form. He/She sits for each admission test separately.
- Admission is made on a differential base according to the students' passing grades in the GSEC exams and admission tests grades (50% - 50%), in line with the faculty receiving capacity.
- A maximum GSEC validity period of 5 years starting from the year of the examination.
- The applicant must be entirely dedicated to his/her studies.
- The applicant must pay the fees specified in the list e.g. Tuition fees for the faculties of medicine, pharmacy, health science and engineering in Aden University amount to 3 000 USD, while they can reach \$US 5 000 for dentistry and \$US 2 000 for law, agriculture and education.

b. Minimum Required Scores and Entrance Examinations Disciplines in Yemeni Governmental Universities

The Higher Council of Universities sets each year the minimum required score for each department. These scores are 5% to 10% lower in private universities.

IV. Strong and Weak Points in Admission Policies and Procedures in Arab Universities

Admission policies and requirements are the key to enter higher education and benefit from its important socio-economic privileges. Thus on the one hand it is vital to study its strong points to take advantage of them and therefore on the other hand, to address its weak points. The following summarizes the strong and weak points of higher education admission policies and procedures as practiced by Arab universities.

1. Main Strong Points

a. Central coordination and adoption of secondary final exam results

Various Arab countries adopted the central coordination system and a single standard for admission in higher education institutions, namely the results of GSEC exams taken by all students at the same time.

¹⁴ Secretariat General of the Supreme Council for Education Planning (SCEP), unified regulations for students' affairs in Yemeni universities, via: Secretary General of SCEP, Sana'a-Republic of Yemen.

Many consider, especially in Egypt, that this process promotes equality of chances as all students are subject to the same conditions.

b. Addition of other Criteria to Secondary final exam results

A number of other Arab countries reckon that adopting a single standard to determine the student's future is inefficient. They suggest additional criteria (such as general ability tests, competitive exams, personal interviews and the applicants' secondary cycle records) which give a broader idea of the applicant's abilities and characteristics. The additional information takes into consideration the applicant's performance during the secondary cycle, enabling the relevant authorities to orientate the applicant towards the most suitable major.

c. Granting privileges to some of the poorest groups

Some Arab countries, in an attempt to achieve justice, allocate seats in higher education institutions to some of the deprived groups with limited income. They also lower the required passing rates and add additional points to their scores, enabling them to enroll in higher education (e.g. in Jordan and Sudan). Some other countries grant scholarships to these groups and pay their fees (e.g. Oman, provided they meet the minimum requirements). Countries such as Jordan and Sudan allocate seats to disabled and visually-impaired students in addition to Palestinians from the refugee camps (Jordan).

Furthermore, some countries, such as Jordan, Sudan and Oman, grant privileges to groups in isolated and less developed regions. The latter groups benefit from priority in admission or seats are allocated to applicants living in the location of the higher education institution. Applicants willing to enroll in a higher education institution in their place of residence benefit from a bonus score of 7% to encourage them to stay in their regions and not move to big cities. Thus, this alleviates the pressure on institutions in these cities and the financial burden that applicants and their families bear. This initiative helps people stay in their regions and ultimately to contribute to the area's development.

d. Provide second chance to enroll in universities during a single academic year

Some universities in Arab countries allow students to submit application forms twice in an academic year. The American University of Beirut (AUB) accepts, for instance, applicants in the fall and spring. In addition, private Egyptian universities accept students during the second semester if the defined number of students was not reached during the first semester. Therefore, applicants can seize the opportunity and avoid waiting for the next academic year.

2. Main Weak points

a. Opening "special departments" in some governmental universities with high enrolment tuition fees compromises justice and equal opportunities

"International degree courses" have been established in Jordanian universities and some faculties in Egyptian governmental universities launched special degree courses or "Foreign languages departments". These are especially in faculties such as medicine, engineering and business that teach in a foreign language to attract students. It is important to note that foreign languages have become an important competition factor in the labor market. Therefore, students pay very high tuition fees, which just rich people can afford, to benefit from the above-mentioned degree courses. Students following such courses are considered luckier than their counterparts in the ordinary system who are following courses in Arabic, as they then have broader work opportunities and higher wages (Zaytoun, 2005).

In Egypt, these applicants are accepted in various faculties in line with the central admission system. Once applicants are enrolled in faculties providing courses in a foreign language or

having a foreign languages department, they submit registration forms. Of these students, very few are chosen according to their scores in GSEC and foreign language. Students have then to pay very high tuition fees (thousands of Egyptian pounds) as the required courses allegedly provide students with additional services such as, courses in English or French, computers (not available in the main faculties), air conditioning and fewer students in common majors, etc. Many reckon that such courses compromise free education in governmental universities and equal opportunities, because they exclude poor and limited-income groups, depriving them of the chance to excel. These groups, deprived of such an education, are thus oriented to public faculties with low tuition fees, making “elite” education linked to money rather than to students’ intellectual capacities. This reality adversely affects justice in the educational system and the ability to take advantage of preponderant talents in times of globalization and market culture. It also aggravates social discrimination issues and deepens the gaps between the different groups. Many others have concerns about the potential imbalances in the governmental higher education system. Such a system could lead to two kinds of education in the same faculty and thus to two kinds of graduates. For example a “common” doctor and an “elite” one; rich students are able to afford study fees and obtain a degree in “elite medicine” and poor students who obtain a degree in “common medicine” in spite of them getting a score of 97% on the GSEC (Zaytoun, 2005, Al Baradei and Al Sayyed, 2007, Al Wafd newspaper 17 -09 -2008, in: Al-Ahram, 2008, part 2). Imposing high enrolment fees in governmental higher education institutions, in Yemen for instance, compromises equal opportunities. Therefore, only rich students will be able to enroll in such institutions while poor students are excluded (even though they may have better aptitudes) unless they have access to scholarships granting them greater opportunities.

b. Lower admission scores in private universities than in governmental ones

Some private universities in the Arab countries (e.g. Egypt and Yemen) require lower admission score than governmental ones. The private universities council in Egypt, for instance, set in years 2008-2009- the minimum admission score in private faculties of medicine at 90%, dentistry and pharmacy 80% and engineering 70%. Those scores were way lower than the required scores in governmental faculties (Alam Al-Yawm (World Today) newspaper 22008-08-, in: Al-Ahram 2008, part 2). In Yemen, admission scores in private universities are lower by 5 to 10% compared to governmental ones.

In addition to what has already been stated, private universities are profit-making institutions which impose high tuition fees, hence, only students from wealthy backgrounds are able to join them. Therefore, a large number of students from limited income groups are not able to benefit from the relevant courses that are most suitable in the labor market. This reality compromises equity, social justice and equal opportunities.

c. Positive discrimination for some groups of students

Governmental universities in Jordan and Sudan, for instance, allocate some seats to children of university teaching staff and workers in universities and the ministry of higher education. In addition, universities in Jordan allocate seats to children of Armed Forces personnel, General Security and Secret Service members, in addition to children of retired staff in higher education institutions. This clearly goes against the principles of justice, equity and equality of educational opportunities for all.

It is noteworthy to say here, that the executive decree on governmental universities in Egypt allocated a number of seats in each faculty to children of the teaching staff and workers without taking into account the required scores. However, the Supreme Constitutional Court deemed these practices unconstitutional in the year 1985.

d. Preferring pure and applied sciences to humanities and social sciences

Some universities in Arab countries tend to promote pure and applied sciences and allocate seats relevant to these majors to applicants with the highest secondary cycle scores. Such majors are enhanced and benefit from financial support, while the wide majority of applicants who have the lower grades are oriented towards humanities and social sciences field which lack enhancing and support. Those fields are thus marginalized and deliver a relatively poor quality of education. Officials in the Arab region tend to neglect humanities and, to prove this point, Arab ministries of higher education and scientific research did not pay due attention in their conferences to humanities and social sciences. Besides, on the one hand, the development of pure and applied sciences have generated an “ideology” which is highly valueing this field and giving it great importance in the new labor markets, and on the other hand, humanities and social sciences are relegated to the background. However, prestigious universities such as Yale, Harvard and Princeton, pay special attention to the latter fields of humanities and social sciences, due to their respect of the tight relationship of the following areas in society: social cohesion, democracy, national security, to values and culture, to name just a few. These are necessary to understand the world and modern societies. Furthermore, selection systems in Western countries and Japan, classify universities and not majors. Thus applicants with the highest scores enroll in prestigious universities while lower score holders enroll in other ones. Accordingly, literature degree holders graduating from Harvard University (one of the best 10 ranking universities in the United State) feel superior to graduates from medicine or engineering faculties of a university ranking in the 150th place, for example (cf. El Amine et al , , 2008, pp. 127 -158).

e. Rising educational and social imbalances due to the single admission standard in many universities in the Arab countries, namely secondary certificate exams scores

Many universities in Arab countries have adopted a single admission standard, that being secondary certificate exam scores. Such an exam raises educational, social and economic issues which result in “crisis” in most Arab countries due to the fierce competition amongst students to obtain the highest scores.

In Egypt, for instance, among about a million students, this situation led to the “epidemic” outbreak of private lessons in most academic disciplines. Despite the high costs of such additional lessons, students take them hoping to get the high scores required which will enable them to enroll in their desired universities. This practice shows that education has deviated from a process of acquiring knowledge, developing analyzing aptitudes and critical thinking to a meaningless race for grades, where memorizing and spoon-feeding prevail (i.e. teachers give typical answers to questions that could be asked in exams and students learn them by heart). Moreover, students are neglecting school and not attending classes, but instead are preferring to take private lessons in “specialized centers”. Parents are also aiding their children in missing school and are presenting fake medical certificates to justify their absence. Private lessons have thus become a bad social practice, and at the same time all members of the affected Egyptian households are incurring a heavy financial burden because of this. This is shown by the great concern and tension the family have when one of them enters the secondary educational cycle. All of this contributes to an “illusive” increase in secondary cycle scores, as thousands of students obtain a maximum score in different academic disciplines, whose numbers exceed the maximum allocated for elective disciplines. For example, the minimum admission score for the year 2008 in faculties of medicine was of 98.7% on the GSEC. Nevertheless, in spite of this incredible score, Egyptian reports and articles show high failure rates amongst students enrolling in “elite”

faculties (medicine, pharmacy and engineering) In addition, private lessons hampered equal opportunities because only rich students have the ability to be well prepared for exams and get the high scores which enable them to enroll in elite universities (Al-Ahram 2008, part1 and Al Delengawi, 2009).

The high scores phenomenon has caused irrational conditions in Egypt and a “Nerds Crisis”. Thousands of students, having a total score of about 95%, are frustrated each year because they fail to enroll in their preferred faculties and are forced to study majors which do not suit their predilections and real capacities. This has also led to thousands of students who obtain an overall score of 70% seeing their chances of enrolling in higher education lowered (Al-Ahram 2008, part1 and Al Delengawi, 2009), which in turn has led to the state being unable to achieve the required human development of their people.

The fate of a student can be decided on the basis of an exam which only lasts a few hours and which could also be a misleading standard of their capabilities. Indeed, the student’s results may be influenced during the exam period by his/her health, social conditions or the examiner’s subjectivity if there is an essay test. However, the students’ results are influenced in this manner and thus their future at the same time.

f. Students abandon scientific majors for literary majors and humanities

The above-mentioned situation has driven secondary school students to change their academic studies from scientific to literary. For example, at the end of the second year of secondary school, 27% of students passed the first cycle and then registered in the scientific section, compared to 73% in the literary section. Students tend to prefer the literary section in order to avoid studying sciences and take very expensive private lessons. In addition they anticipate that they will only be able to enroll in humanities faculties. This all threatens the human development element; a large number of students graduate with a higher education degree in literary majors and humanities and the labor market cannot absorb those new entrants. This is in addition to the fact that the country needs an increasing number of engineers, scientific experts, doctors and many other professionals, who can only be trained after obtaining a scientific secondary certificate. Furthermore, this goes against any society’s ambitions to promote science and technology in an era where scientific knowledge prevails.

V. Recommendations to Enhance Admission Policies and Procedures in Universities and Higher Education Institutions

Many reports and studies point to the need to enhance admission policies and procedures in universities and higher education institutions in some Arab countries. This need was echoed in many Egyptian reports; in the note sent by the director-general of the Studies, Planning and Follow-up office of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in the province of Kurdistan (Iraq) to the UNESCO office in Amman; and in an assessment study conducted by the faculties of education in the Syrian Arab Republic (Hammoud, 2008). This enhancement must be at the heart of any attempt aiming to develop or reform universities and higher education institutions in Arab countries.

In this regard, it is worth noting to say that, given the wide diversity in admission systems, policies, requirements and procedures among universities and higher education institutions throughout the world, there is, as yet, no single appropriate system. Thus, recommending the best system is not an easy task since its efficiency depends on its social, political and economic conditions as well as its labor market conditions and the prevailing culture in each country where it is adopted. Many

recommendations should therefore be submitted and each country can choose the ones that are in line with its various conditions and capacities, taking into consideration its strong and weak points and discussing all their factors in detail. The members of teaching staff, parents, industry and trade stakeholders, both governmental and non-governmental organizations, parliaments, media and civil societies and all relevant parties should participate in these discussions.

The admission policies in universities and higher education institutions should be flexible and should be developed when the socio-economic conditions and national priorities change in order to meet any new needs. When necessary, SEC exams must be changed as well as admission standards.

When looking for the most appropriate system or trying to develop the existing one, it is important to discuss some main issues that help define the most efficient admission system (See: Helms 2008). For example:

1. Which method is better: Admission Procedures under Government Control or Admission Procedures under University Control?

a. admission Procedures under Government Control:

Governments can control admission procedures to universities through the following methods:

- Specifying the number of available seats in each university or degree course
- Organizing the central coordination of admission procedures
- Organizing SEC exams or entrance examinations

When the government is in charge of these three processes, its control would be strong. This is the case in China and Egypt. Some other governments exert partial control over admission procedures, leaving the remaining responsibilities to universities themselves or other independent bodies, as it is the case in Ireland.

Theoretically, the more control that governments can have over universities “inputs” via admission procedures, the more they can control “outputs” that can help to achieve national strategic and economic objectives. This could be realized when students are accepted in each major according to the market needs. In the event that there are more graduates in a particular field, or conversely, if a shortage of qualified workers exists, the government can increase or decrease the number of students admitted. The number of graduates is thereby adjusted and the imbalance is corrected within a few years.

Governments can also establish admission policies that encourage secondary school graduates to enter tertiary education in order to prevent them from entering the labor market at a very young age and without being properly prepared.

Another potential advantage of government involvement in the central coordination of admission policies is that it can remove a significant administrative and organizational burden from universities and higher education institutions, so that they focus their time and money on other strategic priorities.

Many consider that the admission system, via a central coordination office which is supervised by the government, as in Egypt for example, helps achieve equal opportunities. On the contrary, the decentralization of secondary school exams and admission coordination in universities and higher education institutions, and the organization of relevant examinations in each province/state undermine justice and equal opportunities.

b. Admission Procedures under University Control

When universities themselves are in charge of controlling admission procedures and specifying their standards, they can choose candidates that best suit the requirements of their degree courses.

In this regard, one should take into consideration the available financial resources of governments and universities. It is also important to know how efficient universities and higher education institutions are in organizing admission procedures.

2. Objectivity of Standards and Subjectivity of Judgments

In theory, when all candidates take the same tests, answer the same questions and are graded on the same scale, the results are more objective and their comparison is simpler. This standardization represents an important advantage, particularly in contexts where corruption and bribery are common and personal connections often determine access to opportunities and resources. Therefore, examination scores (preferably one identical examination) ensure a measure of fairness and equity of opportunities in the admission process.

It is important to note, however, that examinations, regardless of their types, are not necessarily entirely objective because subjectivity can play a very important role. Correcting essays can be subject to the examiner's viewpoints, values, beliefs, or even mood at the time of grading, as well as the conditions prevailing during the examination period.

Moreover, adopting additional standards for admission, other than the unified examination, provides a broader picture of the candidate's abilities and qualifications. These standards can include the students' academic records in secondary schools where grading, no doubt, differs from one school to another, evaluation of extra-curricular activities and personal interviews. However, these additional factors increase the subjectivity of the process.

When determining admission procedures and standards, the prevalence of corruption and bribery, and the power of personal influence should be a key consideration in decision-making. In the context of widespread corruption, it would be fairer to organize a unified examination on the national level which takes place at the same time and then undertake a central coordination process for admission. When civil servants themselves are corrupt, a decentralized admission process organized by the universities could mitigate the influence of corruption.

3. Enhancing Standards Reliability and Results Validity

Of critical concern for any admission process, are its reliability and validity, including how well the process actually predicts candidates' academic success in higher education in general, and in their majors of predilections in particular. Often, exam results used during the admission process in universities can be inappropriate, as exams themselves may not have been adequately tested. Therefore, it is important to conduct detailed studies on the correlation between the grades of entrance examinations in universities and higher education institutions and the cumulative grades of students in tertiary education.

However, even in situations where an examination instrument has been rigorously tested and the results proven valid and reliable, a variety of circumstantial factors may influence a student's performance. For example, a student's health, living conditions and anxiety level can have a significant impact on his/her performance which will not then accurately reflect actual achievement and potential capacities. Conversely, there may be situations in which a student's score in an examination is higher than his/her academic ability because of coaching for exams or entrance examinations, which in fact has become very widespread. (from: Helms, 2008). This is at present the case in Egypt where private lessons coach students on the questions asked in exams rather than let them understand the discipline. This is why their grades in secondary school can reflect more their coaching, than their actual attainment in academic disciplines.

In this regard, essay-based examinations that focus on writing ability and analytical thinking,

rather than multiple-choice tests, may be more effective in predicting academic success in higher education. Moreover, school records and letters of recommendation may help institutions better understand applicants' capacities.

4. Achieving Justice, Equal Opportunities and Equity in the Admission Process

It is true that higher education is a right for each student capable of pursuing it, however it is important to treat fairly and equally all applicants during admission. The same standards must be applied to all of them and each one should reach the position he/she deserves based on their individual abilities and effective competences

At first glance, it might seem that it is very easy to fairly compare the results of all applicants when the examination is the same. However the content of examinations may be biased against certain groups. For example, if it draws on cultural knowledge or experiences to which they do not have access, it is then to be deemed unfair. Such grades, even in case of a single objective examination, do not provide a fair picture of applicants' actual merits.

Moreover, examinations might be biased against some population groups which, unlike others, did not have the chance to be well prepared. Indeed, students who attend lower quality schools are less likely to succeed than those who attend high-quality prestigious schools. Moreover, students who cannot afford private tutoring are less likely to succeed than the ones taking expensive private lessons, as is the case in Egypt, for example.

Thus, many admission systems worldwide take demographic factors into consideration in order to realize justice. Many exam-based systems set differential cutoff scores for particular groups, such as ethnic minorities, low-income and disabled people. Some other institutions established quotas that designate a certain number of seats allocated to these groups. Therefore, justice must be at the heart of any admission system in higher education institutions, so that consideration can be given to the various groups among candidates.

In addition, the following recommendations are submitted to enhance and minimize respectively the abovementioned strong and weak points.

1. When necessary, keep the central coordination system with more than one standard test in the admission process. In Egypt, for example, many reports, meetings and national conferences reiterated the importance of keeping the central coordination office because it helps in achieving equal opportunities in admission in higher education institutions. However, it was also suggested to enhance the office work and adopt admission standards other than the students' scores in the GSEC according to the country's conditions and capacities. Multiple standards help reveal the students' capacities, abilities and predilections and facilitate his/her orientation in line with the admission requirements of each major. In this context, we recommend the following:

- Organizing general ability tests or/and entrance examinations according to the major and taking into consideration two scores: the applicant's score in the general baccalaureate exam (60% – 70%) and in the entrance examination (30% - 40%).
- Calculating a "weighted average" based on the general baccalaureate results with a weight assigned to the grand total of the student in secondary school exam and a bigger one assigned to the grades obtained in the same exam for disciplines related to the major of predilection (i.e. 60% or 70% to the average obtained in GSEC and 30% to 40% for specialized disciplines).
- Organizing ability tests or general knowledge tests (essays) during and not after the

secondary educational cycle. These tests will be graded and considered as an admission standard in addition to the score obtained in the GSEC exam. This method aims at avoiding spending a lot of money and time on centrally organizing such tests after the secondary certificate exams, particularly in large countries.

- Taking into consideration the student's academic record and his/her different activities during the entire secondary cycle.
- Organizing serious personal interviews.

2. Change trends that consider humanities and social sciences of less value compared to pure and applied sciences, given the impact of these majors on the economy, society, politics, thought, values and culture. These sciences are also an essential component of general knowledge for any person, regardless of his/her major. In order to do so, universities must change the grading system they adopt in admission procedures as, they set lower scores for these majors than the ones required for enrolling in pure and applied science majors.

3. Establish a mechanism for grants, financial aid and student loans, in order to put an end to the inequality of opportunities caused by the tuition fees required to enter some departments in governmental faculties and in private universities. Such a mechanism can help limited-income applicants to enroll in these faculties and to benefit from their services, just like the wealthier students. Such a mechanism can also promote social justice and solidarity along with alleviating the social and moral burdens on students and their families, given that higher education is often the only means for poor families to get a job in the labor market. It also generates much more revenue than a pre-tertiary education job, and this extra income is needed to realize social mobility and to obtain a prominent position in society.

4. Provide justice, as far as possible through the adoption of admission policies in universities and higher education institutions that grant privileges to the most deprived students. These sectors include people such as women who have less education opportunities in some countries and geographical regions, ethnic minorities, limited-income students and disabled people. Such policies should allocate a specified number of seats (quotas) for these groups and lower the minimum admission score in order to compensate for the deprivation they are suffering from. Moreover, privileges wrongly granted to some groups (e.g. children of the teaching staff and higher education institutions and ministries personnel) should be abolished because they go against justice and equal opportunities.

5. Disseminate higher education institutions among different regions, to allow students living in remote regions to enroll in them and to achieve equality of chances and social mobility. This also helps rural populations occupy a prominent socio-economic position and put an end to the rural-urban migration of students, alleviating the financial and moral burdens they bear once moving to another place and easing pressures on cities. Not to mention that an equal geographical distribution bolsters the development of regions for a comprehensive social development.

6. Allow students to sit for secondary exams and enter universities and higher education institutions more than once a year (at least twice), thus increasing their chances to fulfill their desires and enroll in the majors of their choices without wasting their important time waiting for a second chance.

7. Open secondary certificate validity duration, or at least a longer one, so the student can enroll in the required higher education institution, when he/she can, in line with the permanent education principle.

8. Revise admission policies and find new standards to increase the enrollment rates in higher education institutions in the Arab states, in order to enable all secondary certificate holders with the required aptitudes and abilities (no matter what their social origins and financial situation are) to pursue their higher education. Higher education is a right, an instrument to develop thinking aptitudes, an essential factor in developing society's scientific and cultural capital, an instrument to bridge the knowledge gap between Arab and developed countries and a way to meet the social demand in this regard. In 2005, the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization recommended a quantitative enhancement of the number of applicants enrolled in higher education institutions in Arab countries and an increase of the registered students' rates so it can rise by twofold by year 2015.

This all requires expanding higher education and diversifying it in accordance with the requirements of the labor market and the needs of society. It could be achieved by increasing the number of higher education institutions, their receiving capacities and enrollment rate in order to provide greater opportunities to applicants in compliance with their capacities. It is also vital to provide financial and human resources to preserve the quality of education which magnifies the required social output in the era of knowledge, globalization and market culture. Moreover this enables universities and higher education institutions to face the various considerable challenges and allow graduates to be more competitive in the market.

9. Revise higher education admission policies in order to raise enrolment rates in fundamental and applied science fields, which are essential to the labor market nowadays. It also should aim at defining the number of students to be enrolled in different majors according to the outcomes of continuous studies, according to supply and demand trends in local and foreign markets and in line with development and socio-economic plans requirements.

10. Provide, or foster, guidance and counseling educational, psychological and vocational services during the secondary educational cycle and first years of higher education. This is in order to help applicants acquire aptitudes and capacities. This enables them also to be aware of both the academic and work fields and to invest in majors that best suit applicants and development requirements.

11. Provide sufficient budgets to regulate the admission process in universities and higher education institutions. Such budgets aim also at mobilizing the human resources, professional skills, organizational and management activities needed in the admission procedures. Then, governments, universities and higher education institutions will be able to live up to their responsibilities,

12. Establish an efficient admission and registration database, which provides the information needed to review admission standards on a regular basis. Governments and/or universities and higher education institutions are thus able to assess the efficiency of admission policies and procedures in achieving socio-economic objectives, on the one hand, and to define how and when changes and improvements occur, on the other hand.

13. Promote coordination and cooperation between universities and higher education institutions on the national, regional and international levels. This allows the transfer of skills, studies and good practices (related to higher education in general and to admission policies and procedures in particular) in order to benefit from useful experiences.

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On Building an Academic Space for the Arab Region The Possible, the Probable and the Hoped For*

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Abstract

The paper addresses the problematic issue of identifying the actual extent of the future need for building an Arab higher education region; that is, a space comprising a network of universities aimed at facilitating regional mobility of students and researchers. The problematic is placed within the context of diminishing student and researcher mobility in the Arab region, at a time when international university clusters and spaces are emerging. After reviewing the experience with Arab university and academic networking (the Association of Arab Universities and the Federation of Scientific Research Councils, etc.), as well as international experiences (the European Barcelona Process), the paper proposes diagnostic indicators of scientific and student mobility in the Arab countries; and identifies shortcomings, through the partial results of a survey of regional student mobility in the Arab region (2009). Hence, the paper recognizes the obstacles to the establishment of the required space and the appropriate measures for overcoming them, such as ensuring the independence of universities and recognizing them as independent actors, and the need for initiating possible and applicable experimental trends.

I. Introduction

Paving the way for the future, while assuming that it is an identical replica of the present would be erroneous, for we do not know for sure what lies ahead, or what the individual needs of it will be. Based on the lessons learnt from the past, we can only assume what should not be done. When it comes to the future of the Arab region in terms of higher education, what should not be done is undoubtedly to ignore the importance of the vital space required by all educational systems, i.e. the human, social and political geography requirements and their relation to education and to environmental imperatives. Equally, the new projects in this field should not be seen merely as official decisions ready for execution, because such projects can only be successful if implemented through a gradual process, or else they are doomed to fail. When real indicators of the globalization of higher education systems were becoming clearer (through the marketing of university services and the equivalence of credits in preparation for the globalization of certificates and educational curricula), we had written on the occasion of the

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Association of Arab Universities' meeting (Tunis, 2000) that the educational cooperation between these universities in the Arab world could inch toward a state of isolation or "balkanization"². This was despite the remarkable efforts to modernize and improve the quality of the outputs and despite the increasing number of these institutions. This would be due to the sudden entry of Arab universities into this new era without any preparation and any academic or university space. They would need assistance to allow them to deal independently with the complicated situations that occur in higher education. These situations arise as a result of the quantitative expansion on one hand, and on the other hand because of the private foreign universities which have been brought in to the region, particularly to the Arabian Gulf (Ben Hafaiedh, 1999). This has happened because of the marked decrease in the international mobility of Arab students, due to security fears in the wake of September 11, 2001.

Some say that it is hard to project the evolution of the educational situation in universities for more than twenty or thirty years, but there is a prevalent belief that the near future could bring specific signs. Among these, the most important would be the monopolization of educational activities by the increasing number of foreign universities, and the shift in dealing with students, from the professional-citizen level, to the "highest bidder education" level. The clearest sign of this situation is undoubtedly related to the bifurcation of university services, stemming from the emergence of what is currently known as higher education cartels. Such preoccupations have brought some people to believe that "an increasing number of enclaves based on sub-national (ethnic and religious considerations), due to the expansion of university "balkanization" (Clark, 1995, 62), is expected." Nowadays, it has become clear that the two concepts of financial economy (investing in higher education according to a defined profit base) and knowledge economy (transforming knowledge into a generator of economic value in the medium and long run) are intertwined. This interconnection between the two concepts has become problematic by reason of the multiplicity and globalization of higher education spaces. In addition, this topic is no longer restricted to mere theoretical research in international conferences. At first, the critical approach toward knowledge economy and the requirements of academic and research skills mobility has evolved solely based on the importance of technology use, teaching and innovation. However, it has begun to gradually engulf all specializations, including the territorial construction of knowledge (Husson, 2009).

Alvin Toffler, a researcher in future studies, published a book entitled "Revolutionary Wealth" in which he states that in the future, the material economic space will not be the only fertile ground for economy and power in the world, given the growing importance of the "non-financial, non-material space", especially the force of creativity in research and learning. The former is a finite, non-renewable space, such as oil which runs out as we consume it, while the latter is infinite and unlimited, for knowledge is constantly enriched and expanded as we devour it (Toffler, 1997). The importance of creative knowledge as a wealth for the researcher lies in its separation between the internal learning brain and the external knowledge-stocking brain, through the modern institutions and techniques used in the transfer of knowledge. The internal brain has a limited knowledge assimilation capacity, whereas the external brain expands within the scope of a net, through accumulation (Toffler, 2008, p. 15).

In connection with the current and daily perspective, the recent financial crisis and its repercussions have revealed that the Arab Wealth System excludes knowledge as a source of power and depends heavily on financial wealth, even if the Arab region lacks a common economic space.

² The concept of "University Balkanization" was used for the first time during the consultation meeting called by the UNESCO (UNESCO - NGO, 1994)

This is all taking place “here”, in our region, while the situation “there”, in the rest of the world, is going in totally different directions. As a matter of fact, competition in building knowledge spaces through universities and higher education is becoming very similar to economic and financial competition. In 2001, a European parliament committee issued a report on building a space of knowledge and universities (European knowledge space, 2002), calling for the establishment of a “Green Book” that defines the future of the “European House of Universities”, in order to face Japanese and American competition.

This tendency falls under what is currently known as the Bologna Process, launched in 1999 and aimed at creating the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) before the end of 2010. Nowadays, higher education worldwide spaces have evolved simultaneously with markets and economic partnership spaces. In Asia, Japan is moving strongly in this direction through some projects such as the Exchange Program for East Asia Young Researchers. This is an attempt to guarantee academic and student mobility among allies, neighbors and nearby countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia, the Philippines and India. Amidst linguistic and cultural stakes in Central Asia and the dissolution of the Russian Commonwealth, we find Turkey and Russia engaged in a confrontation to secure cooperation routes in the mid-continent; a polarization that seems to be dominating the scene. Under the mandate of former Russian president, Boris Yeltsin, the cultural and educational dimension of this showdown unfolded, in a bid to preserve whatever was left from the former soviet linguistic and cultural hegemony.

In Latin American states, the need for an educational cooperation space was left as clearly as in other countries. This tendency was clearly reflected through the rigorous work of the Union of Universities of Latin America and the Caribbean, with the objective of creating a space similar to the European Higher Education Area.

In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, the indicators of Arab-European or Arab-American academic and student mobility declined, along with the number of study visas granted to Arab students. However, that was only the tip of the iceberg, as in fact, the Arab-Arab academic and student mobility has witnessed a steep fall since the late 1980’s. It seemed impossible to survive the scars of the regression of Arab students’ international mobility which was exacerbated by the absence of a strong regional negotiator capable of catalyzing that mobility, as was the case in some countries like China, India and South Korea (Ben Hafaiedh, 2005, p. 34). Nowadays, international mobility patterns are recovering and Arab academic and student mobility is regaining its pre-2001 momentum. Still there has been no sign of any change in the regional mobility patterns, despite the increasing number of agreements, protocols and bilateral memoranda between countries and universities.

It is noteworthy that the levels of student exchange remain, to this day, lower than ever. Similarly, Arab researchers still find it extremely difficult to obtain a visa to enter some countries, even if they are only travelling to give a scientific lecture or to participate in a symposium or a conference. Sometimes this can be an impossible mission, especially when it comes to our colleagues from war torn hotspots or those suffering under the yoke of occupation, as is the case of professors or students coming from universities in Sudan, Palestine, Iraq, Lebanon or even Algeria. This situation affects professors and students alike. One must note that no updated data are available on the size of educational exchange between professors, or that of Arab-Arab student mobility. Nevertheless, the latter can be specified through general trends. According to the data provided by ALECSO (Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization) in 2000, nearly 68,000 students, i.e. 33% of the total number of Arab students enrolled in higher education institutions, were studying outside their native countries. They were distributed as follows: 31% in Lebanon, 19% in Syria, 14% in Egypt, 13% in Saudi Arabia and 7% in Jordan.

Table 1: Arab Student Mobility based on most popular destinations

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Algeria						4677	5343	5863	5709
Bahrain					1331		797	672	(-)
Jordan		12155			15816	23242	21481	21509	(+)
Lebanon	15596	14008	14770	15186	12210	13930	14073	17199	22674
Morocco	4190	4502	4502		5125	6393	4958	6049	7029
Qatar			1617	1645	1633	1170	2378	...	2487
Saudi Arabia	6086	7561			11046	12199	12999	13687	(+)
Tunisia	2719	2756	2535	2487	2265	2338		2500	(+)

Source: Unesco database & The working documents of the Eleventh Conference of Higher Education and Scientific Research Ministers in the Arab World (Dubai, 2007)

According to recent estimates, in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, one can relatively say that the data of the year 2002 has changed into a negative function (the Arab Maghreb). In some cases, the levels of student mobility hit rock bottom, while in others, their numbers climbed to relatively high figures (Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon). This is a result of the shift in Gulf student mobility towards private Arab universities, along with the visa granting difficulties students encountered. This is especially true for student visas to the United States (Table 1), despite the current thaw in the situation.

Table 2: The decrease in student mobility by country of origin and destination (the case of the Arab Maghreb Union)

	Morocco 1987	Mauritania 1987	Algeria 1987	Tunisia 1999	Tunisia 2002
Morocco		505	105	638	171
Mauritania					65
Algeria	152	104		405	20
Tunisia	583	163	75		

Source: (Ben Hafaiedh, 2005, p. 135)

This situation which currently necessitates public, civil and academic institutional work could be depicted through many factors, some of which follow:

1. The regression of scientific exchange and student missions as a result of a certain economic and regional climate. This is in addition to the decrease in scholarships among Arab countries, since mobility has been reduced to private universities (in Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt).

2. The increasing isolation of Arab public universities, due to the concentration of cooperation in the private education sector. This relative isolation has many negative repercussions on research as well as on the emergence of an active and effective intelligentsia.
3. The extent to which the quality of education and research is affected by the lack of such a space especially at the level of research frameworks (PhD), and the sinking levels of competition.
4. The lack of legal frameworks that facilitate and encourage the mobility of researchers in order to promote cooperation in research and science.
5. The lack of coordination structures to organize and document academic research particularly in terms of outputs, scientific articles and PhD theses.

II. The challenges and impediments facing academic mobility in the Arab region

Higher education spaces include three types of academic mobility: national students and academic mobility of research skills (which includes faculty staff), regional mobility which takes place under regional agreements, and finally international student mobility. The success of mobility is generally assessed based on the ability of countries and regional groups to combine these three types of mobility, by ensuring the added value resulting from the transfer of knowledge and expertise. China, India and South Korea are among the countries that benefit the most from international student mobility. This has a guaranteed added value of ensuring that a large part of the skills that are gained abroad returns to the country of origin, as activating regional mobility leads to repatriated knowledge. Many Asian countries (including Indonesia) are currently making strenuous efforts to develop their university spaces and markets, thus becoming prominent attraction centers for many Arab students over the past few years. This situation is based on the definition given by an expert in the educational situation of the region: for the future battle where the Arabs could be absent will not only be about who will guarantee education for cheaper prices, but also about who will be the main hub for knowledge industry, or in another term, universities (Rayan, Jalal, 2009).

The main indicator for the presence of such spaces is not as much about the abundance of scientific meetings and seminars (all the activities of Arab academic unions and institutions such as the Federation of Arab Scientific Research Councils and the Association of Arab Universities concentrate on holding seminars and events), as it is about creating an open space to accumulate the benefits of innovation, creativity, scientific exchange and the capacity for development. Nowadays, we see Arab universities hosting a large number of scientific seminars and conferences. This phenomenon, described by some as "intense seminarizing" (Al Bizri, 2005, p. 56), is huge in terms of the number of meetings and gatherings. However, it is vain in its content and it lacks the ability to accumulate or create a critical mass in order to lay the proper foundations for a solid relation between the academic researcher and scientific research. Moreover, we can rarely find one database that can disseminate information about these kinds of activities, which often repeat the same topics. In addition, no estimations are available concerning the budgets allocated for these scientific events by Arab universities or by Ministries of Higher Education in the region. Basically, these events are redundant in terms of topic, and poorly funded in terms of publication and knowledge dissemination. In addition, the levels of arbitration are extremely low. All of these factors show the regression of scientific accumulation and the degree of isolation among universities in the Arab region.

In this context, the isolation of the academic space in the Arab region may be depicted by a number of indicators among which the most important would be the reality of academic isolation between different countries and institutions, and even academics themselves. That is because “academics in the region know too little about each other, and grow further apart due to the divergence of educational curricula and the methods in the Arab universities. In fact, the universities that established their educational curricula and methods based on the Anglo-Saxon academic system are different from those that were inspired from the French universities” (Al Hawat, 2006, p. 15), along with the bifurcation and the differences at the level of the language and administration.

Likewise, this applies to students and to research skills, as shown below, by an electronic survey comprising 836 students from 14 Arab universities. The main obstacle to student mobility between countries still lies in administrative procedures of acceptance and the absence of scholarships (when it comes to student mobility in the Maghreb, the levels are lower among Maghreb and Arab Gulf students, especially in terms of mobility from GCC countries towards Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt).

The Arab region rapidly opened its doors to the international educational environment, through hosting foreign universities. This was not necessarily through sending out students with scholarships, for there were no more spaces to open to in the region, not even territorially at the local level. This happened so hastily, as if commodifying higher education (the logic of the market) had prevailed over the logic of geography or that of the vital space which allows educational activity to expand. This was an economic activity rather than a materialistic one. If one supposes that higher education is the first loop, the Arab academic environment the second and the international environment the third, it can be said that the current internationalization of Arab higher education is not based on interconnected and successive local, regional and international spaces. It is more like separate spaces that lack the ability to negotiate (with external parties and in the formulation of agreements) or to achieve development (both at the local level and at the level of rationalizing development). However, it should be stated that these are abilities of great significance for universities in their reform process.

The main advantage of a knowledge economy lies in its capacity to enlarge the circles of alliances and partnerships in a rapid manner, but also to introduce the necessary changes to the system of knowledge production, beginning with higher education. Greater attention must be given to evolving skill standards as opposed to certificate standards, which is the criterion that defines the competitiveness of such a space, as well as its ability to enhance the educational and research quality. Such events occur in the material economic sector, just as they occur in the knowledge industry. While in the former case the role of universities is based on the economy of certificates, in the latter the priority is given to skills and the permanent mobility of scientific and research skills. This is due to the certificates’ equivalence value, which is viewed nowadays as one of the main characteristics of reform programs (LMD - license, masters, and doctorate). All of these factors and others, probably just as important, constitute the driving force behind numerous initiatives aiming at inciting governments (because universities have yet to become autonomous actors) to consider designing an approach for higher education, as a transnational and distinguished field of action or functional space.

Simultaneously, the Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education launched an initiative, along with a suggestion calling for the creation of an Arab zone for higher education. In 2009, the relevant documents were submitted to the Arab League Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ALESCO). These activities reflect to a certain extent the awareness of the importance of such

a space, which is generally established according to certain needs and requirements, including the urgent need for transfer channels. In the case of material economy, such channels allow a rapid and efficient mobility of commodities inside the common space. One may say that the same basis could apply to academic and educational spaces, where the main characteristic of knowledge economies, at the level of higher education, is the absence of transfer channels or bridges which are at the very core of any academic space. The main attribute of such bridges or channels is their ability to promote the flow of student mobility within the region and to generalize the interchangeable value of certificates, scientific skills mobility and researchers' mobility. This is with the knowledge that the Arab region faces numerous difficulties in terms of student circulation among countries and visa requirements. In some cases, it is just as hard to obtain visas within the Arab region as it is if the researcher's destination was the Northern hemisphere. The difficulties of geographic mobility (study visas or academic visits) can be tantamount to the difficulties encountered in collaborative research. Even though international collaborative research expanded in the Arab world from 32% (1990) to 35% (1995), nevertheless, regional cooperation remains at its lowest levels. For example, out of 2,716 articles published by Arab Gulf universities, 25% were completed in collaboration with foreign researchers, as a result of the reliance of Gulf universities on foreign academic facilities. As for Morocco, 804 (65%) out of 1264 articles (1995) were completed in collaboration with foreign researchers, and only 11 articles were published in collaboration with researchers from the region (Zahlan, 1999). Thus, these data from the late 1990's are being confirmed today with the beginning of the new millennium (Ben Hafaiedh 2006).

III. The Arab academic space - More than cooperation... Less than reform

It is true that scientific collaboration is predominant in the Arab discourse; nonetheless it has never encompassed the notion of an academic space or region in a practical way. In fact most of the collaborative policies were predominantly governmental with an absence of private initiatives and a lack of autonomy, even relative, in collaborative decision-making. In principle, one might say that collaborative action in the field of higher education has garnered the official Arab interest since the creation of the Arab League (1945). The Arab Cultural Pact (1964) was the first milestone in this direction and the first institutional formula of the "common Arab action" in the field of education, thus excluding higher education in particular. It was not until 1970 that ALECSO was established as a specialized organization whose mandate covers education at all levels. Furthermore it is the first Arab institution that created the Arab Center for Higher Education Research in 1982, entrusted with the mission of rethinking the collaborator's methods and structures, even at the level of universities. Moreover, it is noteworthy that the Association of Arab Universities (AARU) was established and committed itself to be "*a regional institution with a distinguished role in terms of enhancing collaboration among Arab universities and institutes of higher education, as well as coordinating its efforts aiming at upgrading the academic education and scientific research, in addition to practical research focusing on educational problems*" (Bechara, 2007). The Association undertakes numerous complementary activities including degree equivalence, educational personnel exchange and information sharing. It also supervises numerous seminars and meetings such as the seminar of peer faculties which enhanced integration among the concerned faculties. Furthermore, it plays a significant role by way of the meetings of its General Conference, in terms of coordinating efforts among universities

and addressing common issues (Bechara, 2007, p. 11). In addition, efforts are being exerted by the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States (ABEGS) which coordinates between affiliated higher education institutions in the Gulf area, and translates and publishes a number of books that concern universities and higher education institutions, in cooperation with ALECSO and ISESCO (Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization).

The main characteristic of most of these institutions is that they are completely linked to public and semi-public organizations that were unable to involve public universities as an active or a consultative player in their activities. This also included scientific associations and private universities and relationships with authorities. Some academic and university networking covered faculties and institutes as well, including in particular the Arab Society of the Faculties of Business Administration³ established in 1998 within the plan of the Arab universities Federation to create peer scientific associations for different faculties in Arab universities. This was in order to undertake scientific and academic activities in the Arab region based on different specialties.⁴ To date, there is still a lack of assessment of the action of such associations which are closely linked to ministries and institutions of higher education. Nevertheless, the main characteristic of such associations is that they continuously work (or are obliged to work) to determine their activities and agendas in conformity with the official public guidelines whose assessment is mainly limited to various unions. In this context, we may refer to the experience of the Federation of Arab

³ We might refer to the experience of The Arab Organization for Quality Assurance in Education (ARQAANE), which is an international non-lucrative association established in Belgium in 2007, with the objective of upgrading the quality of higher education in general, while concentrating on the Arab world in particular. According to its bylaws, the association:

- Coordinates with local Arab accreditation agencies regarding accreditation norms and standards.
- Spreads awareness regarding Excellence in Education in educational institutions in the Arab world.
- Provides accreditation services to respectable Arab higher education institutions that are an epitome of excellence in education.
- Supervises the establishment of a quality rating system for Arab universities.
- Creates a network specialized in quality of education that allows interaction and regular meetings between peers to exchange and assess experiences.
- Disseminates reciprocal learning and good practices throughout the Arab world and globally.

⁴ Based on its bylaws, this network seeks to:

- 1) Coordinate and develop curricula in faculties
- 2) Enhance cooperation in terms of preparation, translation and publication of curricula
- 3) Publish a scientific magazine specialized in covering the latest developments in the fields of Business Administration and Commercial Studies
- 4) Publish a scientific thesaurus related to Business Administration and Commercial Studies in Arabic, English and French
- 5) Give advice and provide expertise regarding the scientific foundations of new faculties of Business Administration and Commercial Studies in Arab countries
- 6) Coordinate between scientific centers for services and research in faculties and institutes of Arab Business Administration and Commercial Studies
- 7) Organize seminars and specialized scientific conferences and hold a scientific conference every two years at least, to discuss the major developments
- 8) Encourage the exchange of researchers, instructors and trainers
- 9) Encourage coordination in the field of graduate studies in terms of common topics and supervision
- 10) Encourage researchers to undertake common scientific research between faculties and institutes of Business Administration and Commercial Studies
- 11) Publish a comprehensive guide for member faculties and academic cadres in Arab countries
- 12) Establish a network of information and seek to enhance relationships between the association and its peers worldwide

Research Councils, which were mainly active in the pre-Gulf War period. In fact, this Federation has enjoyed the full support of Arab governments, being an institution encompassing official Arab research councils, whose members were mostly appointed by ministries of higher education or scientific research. During its presence in the Iraqi capital, Bagdad (before moving to Khartoum, its current headquarters), it focused on holding conferences and seminars related to population, environmental and scientific research along with globalization issues. This organization was mainly criticized for being politically and ideologically orchestrated, while it excluded, in its early stages, the Arab Gulf universities. This was due to the political disagreement prevailing between Bagdad and Arab Gulf capitals. However, there was a modest participation from Arab Maghreb universities. Furthermore, the repercussions of this regional situation on the activities of the Federation were double fold in terms of its effectiveness and scientific efficiency, given that the volume of its reports has been gradually decreasing since the late 1990's.

IV. The common academic space and the future of global competition

Given the progress of international relations and economic agglomerations, it is expected that there will be no room left for small and isolated university units in the coming few decades. This therefore requires determination in the future of knowledge and innovation industries, as well as the level of its local ownership, along with the fate of certain languages. This of course being the case of Arabic, as language is the physical vehicle of knowledge and scientific research. Moreover, huge challenges will arise in terms of the market absorption of knowledge makers, researchers and academics, given the uneven development of educational institutions on one hand, and their outputs and the requirements of the small national scientific markets on the other. In addition, there is the ensuing rise in unemployment in the scientific field and the detachment of universities from their institutional geographic environment. Needless to say that globalization today appears to be the extension of the sub-region and region rather than being a separation from them. The OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) is currently working on establishing a wide network of universities that concentrate their efforts geographically and regionally while promoting the capacities of international cooperation, with the total absence of Arab universities (figure 1).

Figure 1: Universities and regions under review within the OECD program



Source: www.oecd.org/edu/imhe/regionaldevelopment

One of the local observers of the mobility of academic skills in the Arab region diagnosed mobility as follows: *“given that a professor at a university is treated according to his local nationality (rather than his Arab belonging), a member of the educational personnel who wants to work and undertake research in a university, even if it is the one from which he has moved, does not find the opportunity to do so. Thus, the Arab world witnessed the emersion of an unfair unemployment phenomenon in the scientific field. Furthermore, the mechanism of migration and free Arab skills flight outside the Arab world went on. In addition, university administrations which do not believe in democracy and in academic freedom and have long been hoping for a homogenized landscape that indicates their ability to curb the will of the university campus where they reign, saw their wish come true”* (Mustafa, 2005, p. 23).

Arab collaborative action in the field of higher education reflects Arab cooperation in general, namely a bouquet of noble projects suffering from the lack of resources, opportunities, and means of implementation. This reality is proven by examples such as the agreement for the establishment of the Arab Maghreb Union in 1989. This stipulated the foundation of the Maghreb Academy of Sciences, the Maghreb University, the Arab Maghreb University, as well as the projects of Arab universities and academies in various specialties and cognitive fields. All of these are mentioned in numerous Arab bilateral and regional agreements, but most of these projects remain fictitious (Al Hawat, 2006, p. 27). In this regard, no agreements are available to either organize student mobility or Arab research skills mobility. In addition, there are many bilateral, tripartite and quadripartite agreements that organize a small number of student exchanges. Unfortunately, most of these agreements are never implemented. But above all, the main problem remains the absence of a regional negotiator who contributes to the upgrading of the participation level of Arab universities in other international academic spaces.

This gap has only been bridged by the bilateral agreements concluded between some Arab countries and the European Union countries. The most prominent example of this would be the “Ibn Rushd Program” which falls into the first phase of the Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window Program funded by the European Commission. This is working on the development of cooperation between universities in the European Union and Arab Maghreb universities in particular. The main attribute of this program is that it seeks to upgrade cooperation between students and instructors in the region covered by the program. Those represented in this scheme are the French university, Montpellier II, in collaboration with 11 Arab Maghreb universities which include: the University of Tunis, the University of Sfax, the University of Sousse, the University of Oran, the University of Bejaia, the University of Constantine, the University of Rabat, the University of Tetouan and the University of Marrakech. Moreover, the collaborative network comprises at least 17 local, regional and international socio-economic institutions that provide this recent space with the necessary assistance to accomplish its mission. So far, the program has implemented 326 mobility processes including 256 from the Maghreb region to Europe and 72 in the opposite direction, so as to accomplish the program’s objectives which can be summarized as follows:

- Exchanging expertise and success stories between European and Maghreb higher education institutions in order to enable the latter to complete their upcoming reform programs.
- Enhancing cultural and economic relations through student exchange between European and Maghreb higher education institutions.
- Facilitating the procedures of degree accreditation and university education between the same institutions in order to upgrade skills, competencies and capacities according

to the Bologna Process in regards of foreign universities, i.e. those of non-E.U member countries.

- Developing communication capacities among higher education administrations in different institutions, with the aim of spreading awareness and disseminating information about various new programs.

In this regard, one might refer to the role of Arab universities that are concerned with an increasing number of mobility programs with the cooperation of the Agency of Francophone Universities. This Arab cooperation with the Agency goes back to the establishment of the Agency. As a matter of fact, in 1959, an initiative was launched by the University of Montreal in Canadian Quebec in collaboration with Mohammad Al Fasi, then President of Maghreb universities, who bestowed the new academic and university space with the title “Francophone or Semi-Francophone Universities”, in order to encourage the participation of Arab non-francophone universities, i.e. non-Maghreb Arab universities.

Later on, the International Fund for University Cooperation was established to provide proper funding for the new academic partnership. Then this structure matured and enlarged and in fact, from 1978 to 1984, it experienced a phase of effective networking and expansion, engulfing an increasing number of Arab countries. This then lead to the emersion of the Agency of Francophone or Semi-francophone Universities (AUPELF).

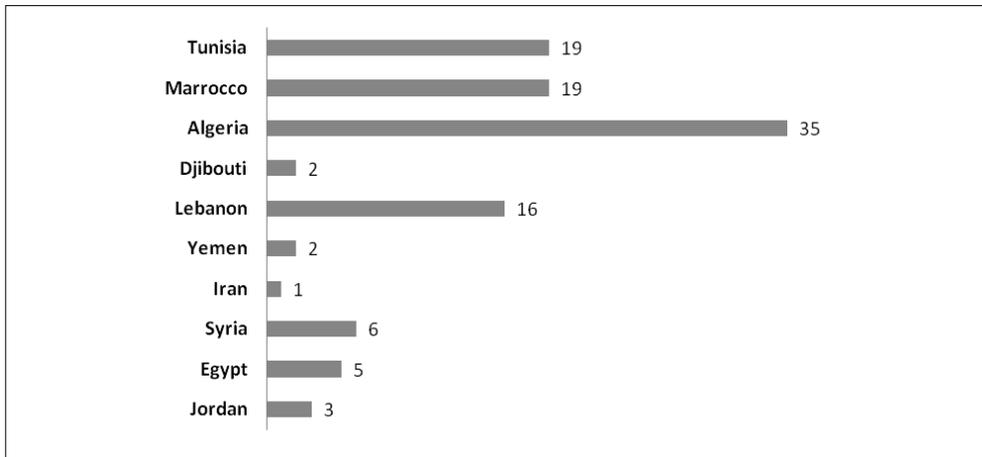
Table 3: The division of mobility orientation into three targeted groups in the framework of the “Ibn Rushd Program”

Targeted Group	Beneficiaries	Mobility Pattern
Group 1	Registered or working students and education officers in Consortium-member universities	License, Masters, post- PhD Research, academic officers.
Group 2	Students and researchers from countries outside the Union and in the geographic scope covered by cooperation.	Masters, PhD, post-PhD
Group 3	Students within a critical geographic scope. The mobility may include students seeking political asylum or who were unjustifiably expelled from university, for religious or gender-related reasons.	License, Masters and post-PhD

Source: www.network.averroes.com.

In 1993, the Exchange University Project (Université des échanges - UREF) was added to this institutional structure, paving the way for the establishment of some kind of consortium called AUPELF-UREF. These steps prepared for the emersion of the Agency of Francophone Universities during the meeting of the Consortium’s General Assembly in Beirut (Lebanon) in 1998.

Figure 2: Arab universities and higher education institutions that are members of the Agency of Francophone Universities



Source: www.auf.org

V. Introduction to results and goal-related tools...

Academics in the Arab region (as well as students) suffer from a lack of relations with others within the region and between its institutions. However, the individual relations between academics are far better at the international level than at the national and regional ones (Al Hawat, 2006 p. 28). In this context, one can notice that international relations in the field of education provide better cooperation, support and funding tools than the ones available in the Arab world. Furthermore, the existing common projects between Arab Maghreb countries and European Union universities, or between Gulf universities and North-American ones, are far more abundant than common research projects that are conducted by Arab researchers or research groups. The inevitable consequence of this situation was the aggravation of the bifurcation between Arab Maghreb universities and Levant universities, because the latter are content with the support given by partnership programs with the European Union or donor organizations in the Levant. Such conditions could be a prelude to shrinking opportunities for scientific communication and dialogue, despite the numerous seminars and conferences that are being held. In this regard, such a result could be considered inevitable given the low levels of networking and scientific association building; two key elements at the core of each academic space.

It is hard to establish an academic space in the Arab region out of the blue. In other words, it is not just a matter of public decision. It is rather a process that allows everyone to interact, especially universities, academic instructors as well as their representatives. In order to develop the space and to facilitate academic mobility in the region, a number of conditions must be fulfilled, among which the most important would be the presence of an official who will blaze the trail for this state of mobility; an official who goes beyond the technical sense of cooperation. Besides the establishment of an economic space or zone, the presence of an independent market must be presupposed. The same rule applies to the academic space which requires higher education universities and institutions, which if not independent, must be at least armed with a good administration.

Similarly, a knowledge economy requires an effective “dialogue with development institutions, as well as diagnosing their problems, their aspirations and the issues that can be solved by universities according to their current potentials. In this regard, university members can launch initiatives that place universities at the highest rank of the development process, through multi-disciplinary units and groups (... at the common Arab level). This will soon push Arab universities to seek more than just public sources of revenue, and thus involve the private sector seeking advisory services from foreign experts” (Mustafa, 1995, p. 32) or through transnational endowments. In this context, the Moroccan thinker Mohammad Abed Al Jabri notes: We have always demanded judicial independence, and we still do. But it has never occurred to me to rally for the autonomy of education. What I mean by autonomous education is unlike what many Arab countries are currently witnessing which is the orientation towards the privatization of education. For the motivation behind decision making to adopt such solutions is not a future vision, but rather the urgent and timely need. This need is expressed by governments in a bid to justify such measures, claiming that their budget can no longer cover education expenses given the permanent growth of this sector, and that they are incapable of dealing with “unemployment among university graduates” on their own. This vision is too narrow to encompass the outlines of the present and lay the foundations for the future” (Al Jabri, 2007). Good administration is a necessary condition and a step towards autonomy that may enable universities (and not only ministries of education) to play a major regional and educational role. As a matter of fact, autonomy is meaningless and remains incapable of developing effective regional cooperation, without a good administration that reflects first and foremost the orientation of university administration, then ministries of higher education. Autonomy can also contribute to the adoption of new values, such as competition, assessment of the efficiency of administration and empowerment. It also allows dealing with the recipients of educational services as customer/citizens, as well as ensuring impartiality amidst government and public pressures (Bashshur, 2004, p. 64).

Many international experiences (especially the European one) have shown the extent to which a regional academic space can improve university administration. Generally, this administration is divided into two levels. The first level is of administrative boards and is currently known as Supervisory Boards or strategic advisory boards. The second level is reflected in Europe, through the Spanish experience which sought to involve facilities from foreign universities and their countries of origin, in order to benefit from their expertise. These included the ones that belong to the European space, in order to upgrade the administrative performance of universities. A good university administration is the most appropriate condition for autonomy, which remains absolutely meaningless if universities do not undergo strenuous tests that allow them to demonstrate their administrative capabilities. This condition is in turn linked to the ability of universities in the Arab region to interact with their regional and international environment. For instance, it would be excellent if one day the administrative board in a Moroccan university, for example, includes professors from the United Arab Emirates, Syria or Sudan, etc. Having examined the governing laws of academic institutions in Arab countries, one notices that these institutions are not easily capable of networking, and that their bylaws are dissimilar, just like their conception of academic and research collaboration. Centralization is indeed the most obvious common denominator in the majority of these texts and relevant applications. It can even be said that in the past five years, the content of these laws has been slightly modified to emphasize the importance of university decentralization and autonomy. This varies from one country to another and yet still remains below international standards, even if this same issue raises numerous discussions in some European societies (e.g. the case of France through the 2009 university reform project).

In this context, it's worth noting that the applications remain slow, in particular when it comes to dealing with or collaborating between two Arab universities from two different countries. In terms of the completion of the democratic process for example, or the administrative reform, there is a tendency towards autonomy at the level of the university governing bodies. Moreover, we may add to this the decision-making related to collaboration which takes place in most cases within bilateral committees or bilateral cooperation protocols. These are government agreements and often subject to central decisions (excluding the improvement manifested through dual supervision agreements related to university theses). In this context (as an introduction), the result is the implementation of any project must go through administrative procedures to get the needed approval. However, such approval of the scientific project in terms of implementation, adoption and financing might take months and even years, or might indeed never take place... The most prominent example of such bureaucracy is the backlog in scientific research projects submitted by professors to their faculties or research centers; as these scientific projects to be adopted, a series of formalities, approvals, meetings and accreditations are needed. The project might even perish in the last phase of preparation, before commencement, under the pretext that the financial means of the university, the faculty, or the research institution do not allow its completion.

VI. Conclusions and future pathways

How can the future of the structure of this space be defined, based on the possibilities and probabilities of academic mobility orientations? The prospective study conducted by the French Planning Commission and published under the title *Global Student Mobility 2025* suggested three possibilities for the evolution of international mobility orientations. These orientations encompassed various regions of the world, including Middle Eastern societies. These possibilities are constituted by three scenarios: the likely scenario (3), the minimum scenario (2) and the maximum scenario (1). According to the variables that affect the orientations of mobility, the possibilities were formulated based on convenient and inconvenient contexts, in addition to considerations related to the levels of global demand and supply and their possibilities of evolution.

The study shows a series of results related to the rapid growth of mobility fluxes in Asia and more precisely China. It also gives low percentages related to the future of student mobility in the Middle East, defined according to a minimum probability (around 4%), a medium probability (4.5%) and a maximum probability (5.2%). No matter the orientations and the contexts, it is expected that in the worst case scenario, the volume of student mobility in the Middle East will increase remarkably. Whereas the maximum and the medium scenarios are based on the increase in academic mobility demand in the Arab region, in a context marked by a growing global demand on new specializations, and a sustainably increasing number of students. According to the study, it is also possible that the percentages of students who are likely to participate in those cases of mobility, could double, even in the worst case scenario (3) which estimates that this mobility will increase globally by 4%. Among the most important results expected for mobility fluxes, based on the minimum probability, we see the rapidly increasing number of applications. In addition there is the possibility of related numbers of some Arab countries, with the exception of Gulf countries, in terms of the correlation between student and skills mobility, or what is known as brain migration. This in turn is expected to be related to the levels of student mobility and the stability or decline in job prospects in some countries. Whether it is a matter of probable, maximum or medium possibility, one may speak of hoped-for, probable and possible scenarios.

The hoped-for possibility is that this expansion goes hand in hand with the upgrading of official and unofficial collaboration capabilities (on a dual basis between governmental programs and independent university institutions in a decentralized context). This is in order to intensify mobility opportunities in appropriate circumstances that would enable the reintegration of the Diaspora elite in the developmental cycle within the countries of origin. In addition, it would complete the aim of turning knowledge and learning abroad into an added value and a source of revenues (in the case of China). This scenario operates according to a dual dynamic which encourages independent scholarship programs and governmental programs, in addition to individual mobility initiatives and international and regional cooperation programs. This begins with an Arab higher education pilot zone.

As for the probable possibility, it is particularly related to the increase in the total number of students in the region concomitantly with the increase in student mobility within precise or globally, regionally and nationally demanded learning subjects. This increase takes into account important issues including the volume of non-return to countries of origin and its direct cost on educational systems (lack of revenues and added value resulting from mobility) given the expected impact on the budgets and quality of public education as well as on technology updating and transfer, and research development. This possibility is mainly characterized by the weak performance of the academic sector and informal institutions that may seek to enhance networking between universities in countries of origin and students, and promote skills outside the countries of origin. This possibility could be the closest to the reality of higher education in the Arab region, which already suffers from excessive centralization in the field of collaboration. It is worth noting that this situation varies from one country to another. Some countries are currently working on combining the four parameters to optimize benefits in this field (Morocco, Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan) in order to maximize mobility opportunities, and provide additional opportunities for scholarships and formal and informal mobility programs. Other countries rely on formal and governmental programs, including national programs, taking into consideration the profits and losses in view of the increase in skills mobility. The most probable scenario is the minimum possibility, i.e. the decline in Arab mobility and stagnation locally and regionally. This does not only entail isolating universities and higher education institutions from their regional and global vital space (including the institutional environment), but also from their direct geographical surrounding. This possibility, which is the worst, characterizes several Arab countries that still consider university as an administrative structure governed first and foremost by political considerations.

The hoped-for seems to be inevitable despite the encountered difficulties. Thus the need for an Arab higher education zone can be conceived of as a logical consequence of developments related to more active and independent universities in the Arab region. Nevertheless, the recent past shows the need for thinking about it as a path and a composite building process aiming at supporting researcher and student mobility, regionally and internationally. It is also a milestone towards serious thinking about the future of "University House" in the region, within a context characterized by the vulnerability of common regional political institutions. And since it is a long term process, the informal, academic and university community should play a significant role. There may be an Arab process similar to the European Barcelona process which can be one day called the Cairo, Beirut, or Rabat process... No matter the place and the nomination, the terms and conditions must be taken into consideration to avoid the past mistakes.

The project of creating an Arab university and academic space is one of the priorities that only lack importance due to the absence of mechanisms that make ambitious objectives enforceable

ones, such as the autonomy of university institutions and the affirmation of institutional credibility in the face of the failure of all common Arab actions. In this regard, it is important to determine the local, national, regional and international roles to build such a process that does not lack means or justifications. From the human perspective, the Arab region is endowed with integrated characteristics that enhance the possibilities of creating such a space. Needless to say that 65% of the region's population are young and aged below 35 years. Moreover, the rapid increase in the number of higher education institutions and students, in particular post graduate students, in addition to the increase in the number of graduates and obstacles to their mobility, are evidence that call for more focus on higher education, thus increasing relevant expectations and outputs.

From the structural perspective, there is a need for a less ambiguous academic space, for there are densely populated countries, like Egypt, Morocco, Algeria and Sudan, and other low density countries with abundant financial resources that enable them to upgrade their educational infrastructure, such as laboratories and advanced technology. Such a space can be a remedy for the negative aspects by maximizing or fructifying positive ones, through linking capabilities to human resources and linking material to non-material economy i.e. knowledge economy.

As for the always possible, it is mainly related to difficulties and to the need for mitigating risks or failures. Thus there is a need for finding mechanisms, partners, roles and achievable realistic objectives, even for a transitional or an experimental period. For example selecting a pioneer group of universities from some Arab countries as a pilot group and waiting for a ripple effect. This can be achieved in collaboration with other international and academic spaces. The general political and intellectual climate in the region has been marked by a proliferation of texts, legislations and conventions, so instead of finding new or alternative projects, efforts are being focused on activating and enforcing these legislations. Such a general psychological state prevailing in our universities makes us talk about the hoped-for, which is an Arab space or zone for higher education that represents a controversial response to the scientific elite in the Arab world. This is with regard to the failure of some previous university and scientific coordination projects in the face of challenges... For he who does not harvest shall have others eating his crops.

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The Contribution of Private Universities in Higher Education Equity in Kuwait*

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Abstract

It has become imperative to find a way to absorb rising numbers of students at Kuwait University, for several reasons. First, Kuwait University is the only state university in the country. Second, there is the goal of achieving social justice for Kuwaitis, and offering them the opportunity to receive high-quality higher education. Third, there is a need to avoid any negative impact on the University's mission and the standard of its graduates, due to the growing numbers of seekers of university education.

This paper addresses the issue of equal educational opportunities for qualified secondary school graduates in the State of Kuwait. A plan to take advantage of available capacity at private universities, through a system of internal scholarships, was launched during the 2006 / 2007 academic year, with 1,205 B.A. and M.A. scholarships. Employing a statistical methodology, the paper explains how the plan was derived. It also describes the participation program by private universities which, by providing tuition-fee support, was able to expand admission numbers by 20%, and has stepped up plans to absorb the additional demand.

The internal scholarships program addresses the numerous obstacles faced by the State of Kuwait in providing equal opportunities in higher education in view of the growing numbers of secondary school graduates. The costs of internal scholarships are low compared to the costs of scholarships to foreign universities or to establishing a new state university. Moreover, through state support for disciplines that meet the needs of the labour market and serve the community, the program achieves the objectives of the private universities law, as well as the goal of community development.

I. Introduction

In order to review the general framework of the University of Kuwait's strategic plan and the

* Translated from Arabic

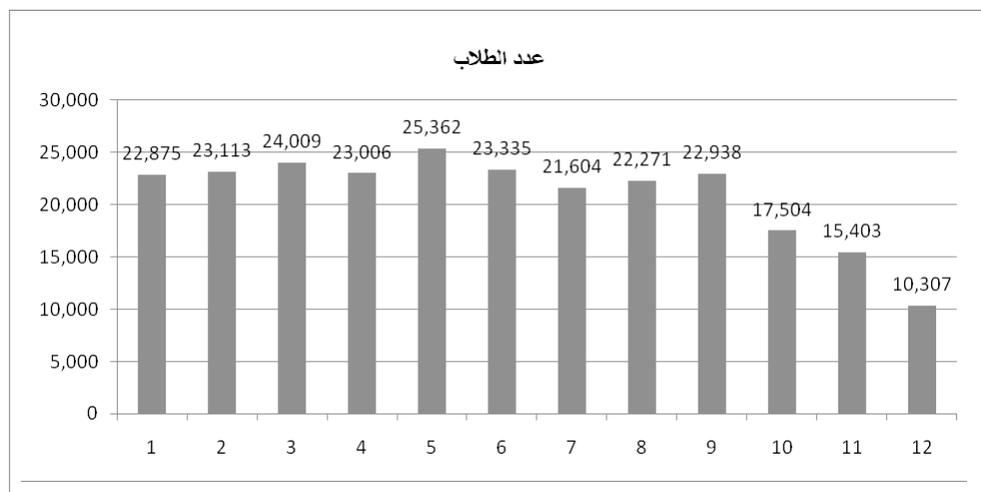
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short-term proposed admission plan (2005 / 2006 - 2009 / 2010, Kuwait University, 2005) an inventory of the enrolled students in all governmental schools (disregarding private schools where numbers are low compared to governmental schools) in Kuwait (from grade 1 to grade 12) has been assembled in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The numbers of students enrolled in governmental schools by grade (2006/ 2007)



Source: Ministry of Education's statistics

According to the Ministry of Education's statistics, the number of students able to fulfil admission conditions to the University of Kuwait in the coming years is increasing year-by-year. An analysis of the student numbers exceeding the absorption capacity of the University of Kuwait was carried out; it noted that the forecasted increase varies between 55% and 63%. See Table 1.

Table 1: Students numbers exceeding the University of Kuwait absorption capacity for three years

University year	High school graduates expected to graduate*	KU absorption capacity (according to the Plan)	Surplus (exceeding absorption capacity)	Surplus ratio
2008 /2009	7,635	4,910	2,725	55%
2009 /2010	7,912	5,005	2,907	58%
2010/ 2011	8,322	5,100	3,222	63%

* fulfilling University of Kuwait conditions for admission

The expected surplus of Kuwaiti graduates fulfilling admissions conditions is 8,854 students in the above mentioned three year period, with an average of 2,931 students yearly.

The University of Kuwait, established in 1966, is the only governmental university. It has begun to

implement an ambitious construction plan to absorb 40,000 students in the future as indicated in the strategic plan. However, the plan's application was delayed and drastic changes in the absorption capacity became noticeable before 2014, the date marking the university's transfer to the new campus in the Shadadiya region. Therefore, the Kuwaiti legislature in 2000 agreed to allow the establishment of private universities through the promulgation of law number 34/2000 and its executive regulations. The law's explanatory note justifies the establishment of private universities by the fact that the University of Kuwait's absorption capacity is limited, and that the project wishes to increase students' chances of access to higher education.

The goals of the private universities law were to achieve social justice among citizens; to give students the opportunity to access higher education, while ensuring a quality education; and to avoid any negative effects stemming from the increase in numbers on the university's educational mission and on the level of its graduates. It was necessary, therefore, to find a solution to accommodate these continually increasing numbers. The University of Kuwait attempted to address the numbers' issue in 2001 by raising admission grades, thus leading to the decline in the number of Kuwaiti high school graduates being accepted from an average of 42% to 32%. See Figure 2.

Figure 2: Comparison between high school output and university input

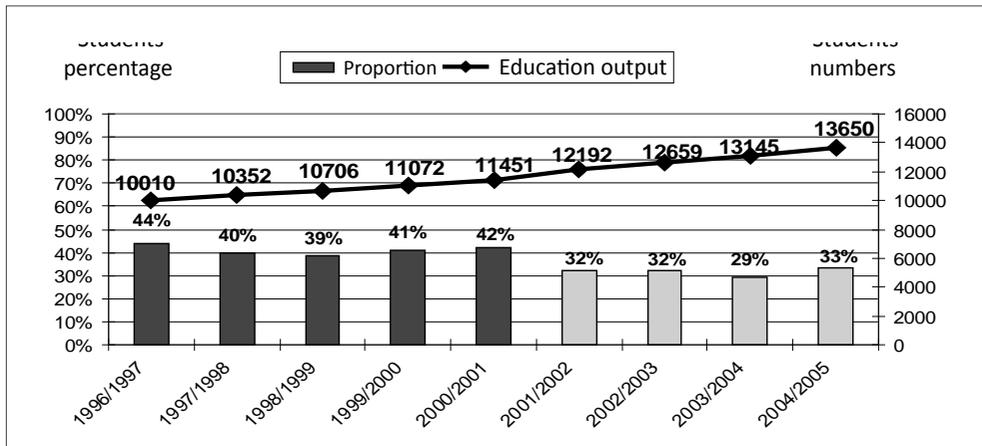


Table 2: Numbers of students admitted to enter the University of Kuwait

1996/1997	1997/1998	1998/1999	1999/2000	2000/2001	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005
4406	4122	4147	4536	4841	3921	4045	3855	4559

The plan took into consideration the absorption capacity available in private universities and was presented to the government, through the scholarships system that came into force in the 2006/2007 academic year, and consisted of 1,205 students in the baccalaureate and diploma levels. The private universities financially contributed to this program by paying 20% of the tuition, by providing additional seats yearly for scholarships, and by enhancing their construction plan to absorb the number of applicants.

This program aims at addressing the problem the State of Kuwait faces in relation to opportunities for higher education as a result of the increase in the numbers of high school graduates. In addition, the costs of these students are low compared to that of using foreign universities or to the costs of establishing a new government university. The program aims also to meet the objective of establishing private universities to achieve community-based development through government support to university disciplines oriented toward the labour market and community service. It also aims to give students who satisfy the admission criteria the opportunity to choose between public education and private education; this has meant that all students have equal opportunities to make their choice, and refutes the idea that private education, because of its high cost, is monopolized by affluent students.

II. Private universities in Kuwait

1. Historical overview

In 1999, Royal Decree 56 /2000 allowed private universities to be established. A committee was established in October 1999 to prepare the decree's executive regulations (Ministerial Decree 99 /199) and this was followed by the Decree-Law 34/ 2000, issued in July 2000, for the establishment of private universities (Private Universities Council, 2006). The law gave the government six months to issue the executive regulations, but the Minister of Higher Education, Dr Youssef Al-Ibrahim, anticipated this by issuing the Decree 26 /2000 in May 2000 which established the executive office of the private universities and defining its prerogatives i.e., inter alia, following the development of the law's executive regulations.

It was necessary to strengthen the Private Universities Council's executive role, so the Council of Ministers issued the Decree 1179/ 2006 which added an article to the executive regulations defining the General Secretariat's task i.e. to implement the Private Universities Council's decisions, and gave the Secretariat and the Council special authority over their financial budget within the Higher Education Ministry's budget. It also authorized the Secretary General to have deputies to help carry out some of the responsibilities.

The next Minister of Education and Higher Education, Dr. Mousaed Al-Haroun, established the Private Universities Council (Council of Ministers' Resolution 359 /2001) to address private universities' issues according to rules stipulated by the law's executive regulations. The Council was presided over by the Minister of Higher Education, and contained members with experience and competence as stipulated in the regulations. The Council was re-established by the Council of Minister's Resolution 428 /2004. The Council of Ministers' Resolution 411 /2007 renewed the Council's establishment with the same members. Since then, the Council has given twelve licenses for private educational institutions through Princely Decrees. The first private university was opened in September 2003 and the first college in September 2004. Today, private education institutes educate more than 12,000 students in institutions that have obtained academic accreditations at national and international levels.

2. Private universities activities in Kuwait

Private universities in Kuwait include various types of licenses. There are universities operating on the baccalaureate and postgraduate levels like the Gulf University for Sciences and Technology, the American University of Kuwait, the Arab Open University, and the Middle East American University. There are faculties working at the diploma level such as the Middle East American College, and the Boxhill College for Girls. There are also educational institutions that offer programs at diploma and

baccalaureate levels for students who have finished the diploma program, such as the Australian College in Kuwait. The current licenses encompass disciplines such as the sciences, humanities, business administration, medicine, medical assistance, and engineering. Table 3 shows the licensed private universities and colleges in Kuwait and the licensed disciplines.

Private universities in Kuwait started to receive students from 2003 with the opening of The Gulf University for Sciences and Technology and The Arab Open University. Today, there are eight functioning higher education institutions and four licensed institutions under planning and construction. Table 4 shows private universities and colleges enrolled students by nationality. Table 5 shows enrolled students by gender.

Table 3: Licensed universities and colleges in Kuwait and their programs of study

University/college	Degrees and disciplines granted
1. Gulf University for Sciences and Technology	Bachelor degree in English Language, Administrative Sciences, Computer Sciences, Master's in Business Administration
2. American University in Kuwait	Bachelor degree in Engineering Sciences, Business Administration, Humanities and Sciences.
3. Australian College in Kuwait	Diploma degree in Marine Sciences, Applied Engineering, Management. Bachelor degree in Management, and Applied Engineering.
4. Kuwait-Maastricht Business Administration School	Master's degree in Business Administration
5. Middle East American College	Diploma degree in Information Technology, Nursing, Business Administration, Hospitality Management, Hostelry, and Engineering Techniques.
6. Boxhill College for girls	Diploma degree in Business Administration, Art Design and Construction Techniques, Information Systems, Libraries, Applied Sciences.
7. Arab Open University (Headquarters Agreement)	Bachelor degree in English Literature, Computer Sciences, Business Administration.
8. Kuwait Technical College	Diploma degree in Business Administration and Information Systems and Technology
9. Middle East American University	Bachelor degree in Engineering Sciences, Business Administration, Health Sciences, Hotel and Hospitality Management, Social Sciences, Information Technology, Computer Sciences, Medicine, University Hospital, Master's in Business Administration and Health Sciences.
10. Aviation Technology College	Diploma degree in Aviation Engineering and Technology
11. Kuwait Institute for Sciences and Technology	Bachelor degree in Computer Sciences, Information Engineering and Technology, and Communication Technology.
12. Law Kuwaiti Universal College	Diploma in law – BA in Law – Master in Law

Table 4: Students enrolled in private educational institutions by nationality 2008 /2009

University / College	Kuwaiti		Non- Kuwaiti		Total
	Number	%	Number	%	
Arab Open University – Kuwait branch	2,005	40%	2,970	60%	4,975
Gulf University for Sciences and Technology	2,109	85%	366	15%	2,475
Kuwait-Maastricht Business Administration School	211	68%	99	32%	310
American University of Kuwait	1,431	73%	518	27%	1,949
Australian College of Kuwait	1,742	81%	404	19%	2,146
Boxhill College for girls - Kuwait	314	90%	35	10%	349
Middle East American University	257	87%	37	13%	294
Middle East American College	250	95%	12	5%	264
TOTAL	8,319	65%	4,441	35%	12,762

Table 5: Students enrolled in private educational institutions by gender 2008/ 2009

University/College	Males	%	Females	%	Total
Arab Open University – Kuwait branch	1,941	39%	3,034	61%	4,975
Gulf University for Sciences and Technology	1,189	48%	1,286	52%	2,475
Kuwait-Maastricht Business Administration School	194	63%	116	37%	310
American University of Kuwait	921	47%	1,028	53%	1,949
Australian College of Kuwait	1,182	55%	964	45%	2,146
Boxhill College for girls - Kuwait	0	0	349	100%	349
Middle East American University	146	50%	148	50%	294
Middle East American College	136	52%	126	48%	264
TOTAL	5,709	45%	7,051	55%	12,762

III. The functions of the Public Universities Council

1. Form of management and governance

The Council is an administrative body for control and governance (Governance body). It aims at ensuring global excellence in Higher Education Institutions. In order to meet this goal, the Council regulates the private higher education's market and activities. To meet its goals, the Council uses a specifications system, an evaluation and accreditation system, a scholarships system and a research and development system. The Council's specialized committees are responsible for these systems and the systems operate in a parallel and overlapping manner. For example, the implementation of the specifications system requires the activation of the evaluation and accreditation system during the licensing process, through consultations held between the applications committee and the accreditation committee during the application evaluation. When looking at the admission policy and the scholarships system, the Council needs to be assured that the qualifications of admitted students meet the university's objectives. Also the licensing system needs to be referred to in order to check the names of the degrees and the licensed programs. The Council also needs to check the financial position of the institution along with its capacity to absorb the expected numbers. All this realizes the goal of organizing the market of inputting students.

In this respect, the Council's system is similar to the other State regulatory body systems, such as the Kuwait Central Bank in its supervision of the monetary system and the banks; the Public Authority for Industry in its supervision of industrial activity; and the Credentials Market Commission in its supervision of licenses for market inclusion, trading organization, supervision of registered companies activity according to each system's law. This model or work system is in compliance with the provisions of Law 34/ 2000 and its executive regulations. The Princely Decrees concerning the private educational institutions stipulate that the universities are under the supervision of the Private Universities Council in all the provisions of laws and its executive regulations, and the provisions of the decree licensing these universities. This confirms the legislator aim to provide an integrated control body. In addition, the Council implements the principles relating to Public Private Partnership. The effectiveness of this was seen in the activities of accreditation, scholarships (both external and local) paid in part by the educational institutions attest to the effectiveness of this. The Public Private Partnership can be regarded as a solution to many of the problems facing large scale higher education provision (Charafeddine, 2006).

2. Achievements of the Private Universities Council and its General Secretariat

In this part, it is appropriate to summarize some of the achievements of the Council which have reassured the supervisory body and the government and led it to embark on the scholarships programs. We will limit ourselves to the most important projects or programs:

- a. Licensing system and applications reviews started in the executive office in 2000 and it was ratified by the Council in the first session and implemented in 2001. Accordingly, 12 Private Higher Education Institutes were licensed. The Gulf University for Sciences and Technology was opened in 2003. In 2004, the Australian College in Kuwait and the American University of Kuwait were opened. The Boxhill College for Girls began operation in the 2007/ 2008 academic year. During the 2008/ 2009 academic year, the Middle East American College and the Middle East American University began operation. The courses are expected to begin in the remaining colleges - the Kuwaiti Technical College, the

- Aviation Technology College, the Kuwaiti Institute for Sciences and Technology, and the Kuwait International Law College - upon completion of their construction.
- b. Quality assurance system and institutional and programs accreditations started in the accreditation committee in 2002, was completed in 2003, and was ratified in the Council. Five educational institutions have been accredited and others will be accredited during the second session. Many private educational institutions have obtained international accreditations for their programs. The Private Universities Council became a full member in the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) in 2006, and an associate member in the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) in 2008; it also became a full member in the Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANQAHE) in 2009. In addition, the Private Universities Council is registered as an Accrediting Agency in the register of the American Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The private universities' success in the realization of institutional accreditation reassured the Council of the quality of the universities, and in their ability to provide high levels of education in-line with the needs of society and encouraged it to embark on the scholarships programs. (Alatqi and Al-Harbi, 2009).
 - c. The internal scholarship system started in 2004, was ratified in the Council and its budget adopted in 2006 /2007 with 1,086 scholarships for Bachelors and Diploma programs being granted. 1,250 scholarships were offered in 2007/ 2008 and 1,750 in 2008/ 2009. The Ministry of Finance covered the surplus numbers stemming from these scholarships, as will be explained later.
 - d. The Research and Development system started in 2005 and was ratified by the Council in 2006. Its first program, the professional development program using the 6th sigma methodology, was implemented in 2008/ 2009. Also, extensive research was conducted at the university level with the encouragement of the Private Universities Council.

3. The global assessment of the private universities system in Kuwait

- a. The private universities acquisition of international academic accreditation in record time is a notable feature of the private university system in Kuwait. The Arab Open University has obtained the accreditation of the Open University Validation Services (OUVS), the Maastricht Business Administration School was accredited by the Association of MBAs (AMBA), and the Australian College was recognized by the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF).
- b. The Observatory for Higher Education has considered the licensing and accreditation system in Kuwait as moderately liberal.
- c. The Secretary General presented the activities of the Council and private universities to a UNESCO seminar on Higher Education, held in Rabat (Morocco) in May 2007 (Alatqi and El-Azma, 2007). At the end of the seminar, the scientific committee of UNESCO experts adopted a recommendation that the private university system in Kuwait should be seen as an example to other Arab states, and that the vitality of these universities and their ability to continue operating in the long term make the system suitable for replication.
- d. Through the efforts of the Private University Council General Secretary, the State of Kuwait became the only Arab State to participate in the OECD feasibility study on the Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcome (AHELO).

IV. The program of external and local scholarships in Private Universities Council

Law 34 /2000 which established private universities stipulated in its second article: “The aims of private universities are to contribute to the fulfilment of Higher Education and the applied education goals, in order to realize the coordination between these objectives and the evolving needs of society.” The law’s explanatory note stated that the law was passed to address the issue of the limited number of places at the University of Kuwait which was, therefore, unable to accommodate the increasing numbers of the high school graduates who wished to pursue university studies.

Articles 3 and 6 of the law’s executive regulations concern the Private Universities Council’s competence related to the establishment of rules and procedures for students’ admission to private educational institutions, tuition fees, and the scholarships system. The law’s provisions and executive regulations filled the legislative gap in the Ministry of Higher Education’s decree which limits its authority to scholarships outside Kuwait only.

Accordingly, the Private Universities Council issued its decision concerning the local scholarships’ policy and its plan in its 24th meeting held in March 2006. This was in light of a study prepared for this purpose to meet the goals of the law in which the private educational institutions were to pay 20% of the tuition fees.

1. External and local Scholarships in the light of the state’s budget:

It should be noted that the state’s budget has more than doubled during the last five years while, during the same period, the number of seats available for the students admitted yearly in the University of Kuwait and in the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training combined has increased by no more than 25%. This constitutes a major threat to the national workforce meeting labour market needs, to the state’s budget and to development in general. This has prompted the government to give priority to student scholarships in its educational program for the new academic year and to provide an appropriate budget for it.

The scholarships program allows the state to save 50% each year on the alternative costs of funding additional governmental educational institutions or foreign scholarships. In light of the delay in the taking over the University of Kuwait’s new headquarters in Al-Chadadiyah, planned for 2014, the scholarships program seems to be the only available cost-effective solution to absorb high school graduates.

2. Local scholarships and social objectives:

The scholarships program fulfils core social objectives regarding the homogeneity of society and helping to combat the phenomenon of education for only the elite. The long-term stability of the state depends on reducing social class disparities and promoting cohesion and social justice by providing equal opportunities to experience excellence in education.

This program promotes justice and provides students with the freedom to choose disciplines oriented to the labour market and to those needed for development. It enables future generations to carry on with their studies, and this in turn, strengthens feelings of national belonging and brotherhood. This program has reduced pressure on the University of Kuwait and on the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, by absorbing 4,595 students in local scholarships. The Higher Education systems in many countries of the world have been criticized for the lack of equal opportunities in Higher Education provision, favouring affluent students at the expense

of students from lower-incomes. For example, Ali Al-Hawat (2007) says that HEIs are facing a funding crisis manifested, inter alia, in the lower-income students' incapacity to participate in the available learning opportunities. Al-Hawat suggests ways to support education like the Public Private Partnership in financing students' tuitions fees.

3. Admission development to local scholarships

The Private Universities Council began accepting applications for local scholarships in the first 2006/ 2007 academic semester. Table 6 shows available places and the number of applicants and admitted students to scholarships. Table 7 (a-f) shows the evolution of admission scholarships by categories and educational institutions participating in this program. These tables show the private universities' applicants and the growth of admitted students for three consecutive years at a rate of not less than 15% annually. The University of Kuwait itself has increased its number of places in comparison with its aforementioned plan, and now takes in more than 6,000 students annually. Nevertheless, private universities are clear popular with students whose grades enable them to enter the University of Kuwait and this enhances the private universities' competitiveness capacity amid equal learning opportunities.

Table 6: Number of applicants admitted to local scholarships versus available seats

School year	Available seats	Total number of applicants	Total number of admitted applicants	Admitted %
2006 /2007	1,068	1,568	1,205	77%
2007 /2008	1,250	1,839	1,461	79%
2008 /2009	1,750	2,354	1,929	82%
TOTAL	4,068	5,761	4,495	78%

Table 7a: Number admitted to local scholarships for the first semester 2006 /2007

University / College	High-school certificate holders	Diploma certificate holders	Outstanding students	TOTAL
Gulf University for Sciences and Technology	211	25	46	282
American University of Kuwait	202	25	25	252
Australian College in Kuwait	302	Not applicable	10	312
TOTAL	715	50	81	846

**Table 7b: Number admitted to local scholarships
for the second semester 2006/ 2007**

University / College	High-school certificate holders	Diploma certificate holders	Outstanding students	TOTAL
Gulf University for Sciences and Technology	71	20	22	113
American University of Kuwait	70	13	17	100
Australian College in Kuwait	132	Not applicable	14	146
TOTAL	273	33	53	359

**Table 7c: Number admitted to local scholarships
for the first semester 2007 /2008**

University / College	High-school certificate holders	Diploma certificate holders	Outstanding students	TOTAL
Gulf University for Sciences and Technology	296	36	46	378
American University of Kuwait	194	48	36	278
Australian College in Kuwait	324	12	25	361
Boxhill College for Girls	30	Not applicable	*	30
TOTAL	844	96	107	1,047

**Table 7d: Number admitted to external and local scholarships
for the second semester 2007/ 2008**

University / College	High-school certificate holders	Diploma certificate holders	Outstanding students	TOTAL
Gulf University for Sciences and Technology	77	0	27	104
American University of Kuwait	63	23	25	111
Australian College in Kuwait	102	29	28	159
Boxhill College for Girls	40	Not applicable	Not applicable	40
TOTAL	282	52	80	414

**Table 7e: Number admitted to external and local scholarships
for the first semester 2008 /2009**

University / College	High-school	Diploma certificate holders	Outstanding students	Transferred	Sons of diplomats	Persons with special needs	Total
Gulf University for Sciences and Technology	282	40	24	1	14	0	361
American University of Kuwait	172	44	19	1	8	0	244
Middle East American University	173	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	0	1	174
Australian College in Kuwait	132	26	39	0	6	1	204
Boxhill College for Girls	217	Not applicable	*	0	1	1	218
Middle East American College	242	Not applicable	*	*	1	0	244
TOTAL	1,218	110	82	2	30	3	1,445

**Table 7f: Number admitted to external and local scholarships
for the second semester 2008 /2009**

University / College	High-school	Diploma certificate holders	Outstanding students	Transferred	Sons of diplomats	Persons with special needs	Total
Gulf University for Sciences and Technology	104	18	22	0	0	2	146
American University of Kuwait	40	10	18	1	2	0	71
Australian College in Kuwait	79	30	49	0	0	2	91
Boxhill College for Girls	89	Not applicable	Not applicable	0	0	2	91
Total	330	58	89	1	1	4	484

V. Conclusion

The private universities' law in Kuwait was passed to meet the increase in demand for higher and applied education seats, in the light of the limited number of seats available in governmental institutions. Private educational institutions started operating in 2003 and obtained academic accreditations and global quality assurance certificates. This allowed officials to start thinking about a local scholarship system in Kuwait in order to diversify higher and applied education sources. In addition, it provided equal opportunities for students qualified to enrol in HEIs, and encouraged choice to compete for free education services provision in private universities, governmental education and other forms of private education.

The three years during which local scholarships were applied have shown that the demand for them has exceeded the designed plan by a rate of not less than 15% annually. However, an average of 20% of students who applied were not admitted. Accordingly, we can say that the surplus in demand compared to the supply in scholarships' places reached an average of 20%. This reflects the acceptance of private universities and colleges by Kuwaiti society. This program has given unique educational opportunities to students who do not wish to study abroad, but wanted an educational environment and educational programs similar to high quality universities and colleges in developed countries.

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Where are all the Men? Gender, Participation and Higher Education in the United Arab Emirates

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Abstract

The issue of access to higher education in development literature has been largely examined from the perspective of unequal access for women. Global trends reveal that although some countries continue to lag behind others in female representation in higher education, the majority shows higher female participation. In the Middle East, a region traditionally associated with male privilege, women's participation in higher education has also been increasing at far greater rates than that of men, to the point where over 70% of students in tertiary education in the United Arab Emirates are women.

While research has been conducted on male participation rates in some OECD countries, very little research has been conducted in the Middle East despite even lower male participation rates. This paper covers the case of the United Arab Emirates and uses the literature on access to examine male participation in higher education from an economic and sociological perspective. It explores why so many Emirati men are failing to enroll in higher education. Key factors for the low male participation rates identified in this paper include the disconnect between educational effort and probable rewards, social and educational stratification and poor prior academic attainment of Emirati men. The paper concludes by recommending further research into the causes of low male participation rates in higher education in the UAE with particular attention to socioeconomic influences on student achievement.

I. Introduction

The global expansion of access to post secondary education is clearly one of the most important trends in education worldwide. Higher education enrollment has been steadily on the rise in almost every country in the world, with the increase resulting in greater access for individuals and groups that were previously excluded from higher education systems. Nowhere in the world has the increased access to general education and subsequently higher education been more pronounced than in the countries of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC).

In its short thirty seven years the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has made significant investments in

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educational infrastructure which have resulted in an increase in the general literacy rate from 60% in 1970 to over 97% in 2006 (UNESCO, 2008). No place has this investment been more evident than in the education of females. Although women in the UAE had access to education almost two decades later than their male counterparts, today women are surpassing men in both their presence and performance in secondary and tertiary education (Ministry of Education, 2007). At the secondary level, girls are outperforming boys across the majority of subjects (Ministry of Education, 2007) and in higher education women make up over 70% of all students in UAE universities (UNESCO, 2008).

A recent study on the motivations of Emirati women in pursuing higher education found that higher education has become a social and familial expectation (Abdulla, 2007). That is, families expect their daughters to pursue higher education both because of its accessibility and the fact that it enables young women to achieve greater social and economic mobility. Mothers in particular advocate for their daughters to pursue higher education as an insurance policy for the future. With an education, women are less dependent on their husbands for financial support and, in the case of divorce or abandonment, education enables women to seek employment to support themselves and their families (Abdulla, 2007). While women have taken advantage of the opportunities for social and economic mobility offered to them through higher education, the situation for men is vastly different. With higher education enrolment rates for men at around 27% (NAPO, 2005) it is evident that males are opting out for reasons that so far have not been explored.

This paper asks the question “Where are all the men?” While research has been conducted on declining male participation rates in higher education in many OECD countries, very little research has been done in the Middle East to explore this phenomenon. This is despite even lower male participation rates in many of the oil-rich Gulf States as compared to OECD countries. This paper examines the case of the United Arab Emirates and uses literature on access to explore male participation in higher education from both economic and sociological perspectives.

II. Economic variables

The use of economic rationales as an explanation for increased participation in higher education is not new. The link between education and economic growth has been studied extensively by both economists and educators. The relationship between the two is often cited as the primary reason for increased investment in higher education by countries both in the industrial and developing worlds. Becker’s (1964) seminal work on human capital is one of the most important theories used to explain this relationship. Becker (1964) and Schultz (1971) posited that increased levels of education and training lead to greater national productivity and higher earnings. The implication of this theory is that demand for education should be higher when returns exceed opportunity costs of foregone earnings, assuming that individuals are rational beings that are making choices based on all available information. Although empirical findings from a number of economic studies support the human capital theory, limitations to the theory have also been identified. These limitations include the inability of the theory to explain the greater economic returns realized by higher socioeconomic classes perhaps due to the social and cultural capital that they possess (Otero, 2007). Later studies on the links between education and economic growth are also not definitive and find mixed results. Carnoy (1995) finds that there is essentially a positive relationship between an individual’s level of education and his/her earnings, however this relationship does not hold for all regions.

1. Perceived returns to education

In the Middle East, there is scant literature examining returns to education. The World Bank 2008 MENA Report on Education cites a study by Pritchett (1996) who found that while education had a positive impact on economic growth in Asia and Latin America, in the MENA region it produced a negative impact. A further study by Fattah et al (2000) also found that the initial level of education was not a significant determinant of growth for the MENA region. The World Bank Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Report (2008) however stated that it was difficult to accept that there was no positive association between education and economic growth. It suggested that one of the explanations for the lack of evidence of a relationship may have a lot to do with the quality of education which includes the capacity of workers to innovate or adopt new technologies. Another suggested explanation was the distribution of workers among different economic activities. It is therefore difficult to definitively state that education has no impact on economic growth because of the dearth of studies that look at complicating factors associated with returns to education in the Middle East and more particularly in the Gulf States.

What the general literature does suggest though is that if there are positive returns to higher education; therefore more people, including men, should be opting into it. There are a number of problems with this assumption in the Gulf States and the UAE. In the case of women, a large percentage of those who have completed higher education do not enter the labor force either due to their inability to obtain suitable employment or the demands of family and motherhood. Those that do join the workforce tend to earn salaries less than those of men with comparable or less education (Abdulla, 2007). The latter is true in countries around the world and numerous theories have emerged to explain why women continue to pursue higher education despite the lower returns they receive from their education. Two plausible explanations to this phenomenon arise; the first states that women look to other women and not men as a point of reference when evaluating returns on their education because they are aware of their relatively diminished position in the labor market in relation to men (Mickelson, 1989). And the second, which is even more relevant to the Middle East, states that women's access to higher education transcends the basic acquisition of knowledge and skills and is viewed as emancipating, thus explaining why women continue to pursue higher education across cultures despite wage disparities.

With regard to male participation in higher education, Fattah et al (2000) state that, in societies where the quality of education is low and public sector employment high, individuals often make distorted educational choices. One significant factor that could be affecting the decisions of males regarding attending higher education is a perceived lack of economic benefits from undertaking higher education. In a study of the reasons why admitted males do not show up to public higher education institutions in the UAE, it was found that the largest percentage were going to the police or military and the next largest group were looking for work or staying at home. In total, over 60% of male students who did not show up were either employed or looking for some type of employment within the public sector.

It seems that Emirati males perceive that the nominal gains achieved through higher education are not enough to offset the rewards of going directly into employment. Although there is no empirical evidence to support this assertion, it is plausible that perceived returns to higher education are low relative to available public sector employment opportunities.

Table 1: Reasons for Male ‘No Show’ in Higher Education in the UAE

Reason for ‘No Show’	Percentage
Military and Police	33
Staying at home or looking for work	30
Attended other institution	27
Started employment	5
Studying abroad	5

Source: National Admissions and Placement Office for Higher Education, 2005

2. The impact of a rentier state

Another explanation for why choices become distorted and why therefore Emirati males would choose not to undertake higher education is offered by studies on rentier or rent-seeking behavior that has been thought to characterize resource-rich nations. Minnis (2006) believes that educational underachievement in the Gulf States may be linked to a rentier mentality which is characterized by a disjunction between educational effort and probable reward. In rentier economies, rent refers to financial income that is not matched by corresponding labor or investment. Minnis (2006) states that in the Gulf States, ‘the relationship between the citizen and the state is fundamentally different from that found in non-resource based societies’ p.985. In the Gulf States the extraction of oil accrues rents to the ruling families who, in turn, distribute this wealth to their citizens in the form of education, housing, healthcare and other benefits. This, in turn, could tend to distort the work-reward causation (Beblawi and Luciani, 1987). This means that the reward for labor, income, is no longer connected to work effort.

The bloated public sector in the Gulf States is testament to work creation projects for nationals and the preferences of nationals to work in the public sector due to higher wages, shorter working hours and early retirement benefits. In the GCC it has been reported that nationals in the public sector account for 58% of total nationals employed in 2007 (Arab Times, 2009). In the wider MENA region Fattah et al (2000) state that in the early 1990s the average share of public sector employment was around 17.5% compared to less than 9% for developing countries as a group. In addition public sector wages on average in the MENA region amounted to 10% in the same period, which was double the world average. In the United Arab Emirates 86% of nationals are employed in the public sector which is one of the highest percentages within the GCC countries (Arab Times, 2009). This over-investment in the public sector distorts the perceived returns to education and can lead to the lower productivity and educational attainment in countries, such as the UAE, where competition for public sector jobs is low. It has the effect of de-linking educational attainment and employment and it leads to an uncompetitive labor market. This, coupled with sociological variables, has a negative impact on male participation in higher education and on education in general.

Therefore, In addition to economic variables, there are sociological factors which may also be contributing to the poor participation of Emirati males in higher education and it is important that these factors are not overlooked in creating a more complex explanation for male under-participation in higher education in the UAE.

III. Sociological factors

Various theorists have studied sociological variables that influence higher education participation. Some have focused on access and discuss the impact of selectivity through examinations and prior attainment on access (Broecke et al, 2008). Others view social inequality or stratification (Buchmann et al, 2001) as a precursor to educational inequality which leads marginalized groups to undervalue education by overestimating costs and underestimating benefits. Both these theoretical approaches can be applied to understand the low higher education participation of Emirati men in higher education.

1. Prior attainment

Broecke and Hamad (2008) in a study on male under-participation in higher education in the United Kingdom (UK) found that prior attainment was the greatest factor explaining why males in the UK did not continue to higher education. Poor achievement in secondary school was, they stated, the most significant factor in explaining why males did not choose to go on to university. They found that if prior attainment was controlled for then gender differences disappear. In the Gulf and the UAE in particular, males have been performing poorly across all subjects and grades. As schools are segregated by gender it has been relatively easy to isolate and identify these gender differences. In the emirate of Ras Al Khaimah the Ministry of Education reported that in the 2006 / 07 academic year girls outperformed or equaled boys in every grade and subject, see Table 2 below. Even in subjects typically associated with male advantage such as Mathematics, girls were still found to be doing better.

Table 2: Pass Rates by Gender and Grade in the Emirate of Ras Al Khaimah 2006 /07

Subject	Grade 10		Grade 11 Science ³		Grade 11 Arts		Grade 12 Science		Grade 12 Arts	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Arabic	77	96	99	100	88	98	94	100	79	93
English	84	97	98	99	68	81	93	99	56	82
Mathematics	62	87	95	99	92	100	92	98	82	98
Biology	79	96	100	100	94	99	88	96	82	97
Geography ⁴	80	96	n/a	n/a	95	98	n/a	n/a	90	97

Source: Ministry of Education, 2007

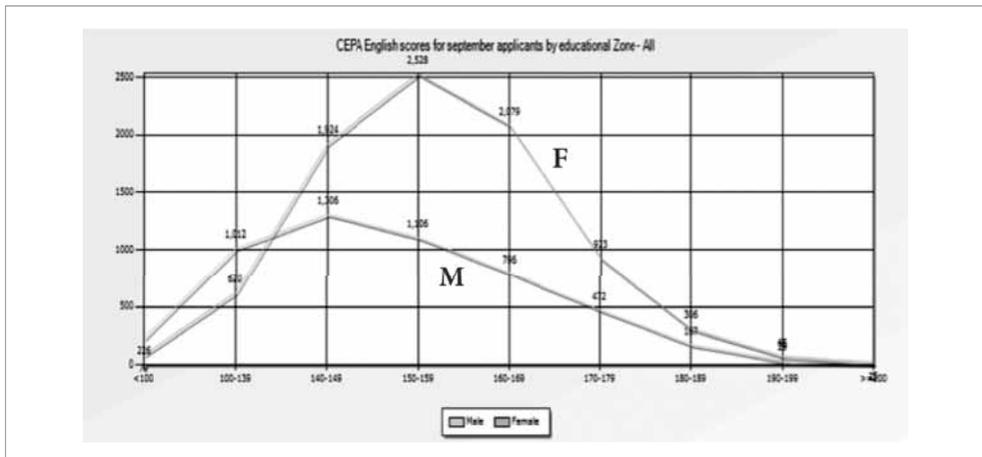
A study by Ridge (2008) also found that 14% of boys dropped out in Grade 10 in Ras Al Khaimah, which is troubling as it means a significant percentage of males do not even have the option to consider higher education. Coupled with the high no show rates at the higher education level

³ In the UAE, Grades 11 and 12 follow two separate sections, an arts section and a science section, which students select at the beginning of Year 11. Commonly, less able students will select the arts section, while the more academically-minded will select the science section.

⁴ Geography is not taken by science section students.

for admitted males this presents a worrying picture. Those males that choose to continue their education tend, as a result, to be behind girls in terms of academic performance throughout the final high school years. They are most behind however in terms of English where it can be seen that, especially in the Arts streams, girls are passing at much higher rates than boys. The poor level of English for males is confirmed by the results of the CEPA (Common English Proficiency Assessment) test. CEPA is the first national standardized test of Grade 12 students and assesses English and Math, it also illustrates the differences between the achievement of boys and girls, with girls performing better than boys on both English and Math tests. In Figure 1 below it can be seen that male CEPA English scores in general are skewed to the left, showing a more negative distribution, while female scores follow a more typical normal distribution.

Figure 1: CEPA English scores comparing males and females



Source: National Admissions and Placements Office

CEPA scores are used to stream students into university versus technical/vocational education and are also used to further stratify applicants into Diploma versus Higher Diploma streams at the technical college level. Only a tiny percentage of students achieve high enough CEPA scores to enable them to enter directly into their educational programs, bypassing one to two year long foundations or remedial coursework.

The low English language levels of government school graduates are of particular concern especially as English is the subject in which boys perform the worst, with just over 50% of male tenth graders passing the standard English exam in Ras Al Khaimah schools. Underperformance in English has a significant impact on young men who wish to enroll in higher education because English is the language of instruction in the public higher education system in the UAE. Poor performance in English further reduces chances that males will enroll in higher education and can also have a negative impact on persistence for those who do enroll.

The issue of male underperformance in English is linked to the poor quality of male English language teachers in government schools (Ridge, 2008). These teachers often either do not have a teaching qualification or they have an extremely poor command of the English language. Findings of a recent study in boys' schools indicate that very little English is used during English language classes, which is one of the reasons for the poor performance of boys in English (Ridge,

2008). In addition male students are required to do very little in terms of homework and the majority of students reported that English was their least favorite subject (Ridge, 2008).

The ramifications of this negative association and performance in English, formed in secondary school, on the decision of students to pursue higher education should not be overlooked. While there have been frequent papers presented at conferences in the UAE, such as at the annual TESOL Arabia conference, regarding the poor English language levels of students in higher education these presentations have failed to attempt to identify the root causes of this issue. In addition there are no studies that examine the fact that males who opt out of higher education in the first place have an even poorer command of the English language and the impact of this on future work and life opportunities.

The lack of career counseling at the high school level may also be an important contributing factor to low male enrolment. Forcing students to make decisions about their degree or majors upon applying for post-secondary education with little or no career counseling markedly reduces student options, particularly for those who are first-generation high school graduates and who have no role models to assist with making career choices. The inability of students to change majors because of system rigidity and the linear nature of the educational curriculum further compounds the problem and forces students that lose interest in a particular major to drop out. For males whose English levels are low decisions about which courses to take may change once they have reached a certain competency in English but at that stage they may be unable to change and thus opt out.

Prior attainment therefore could play a significant role in explaining the low participation rates of boys in higher education. In a survey of 250 Emirati students Ridge (2008) found girls and boys reported enjoying school equally in general, however when it came to how much they liked their particular school 45.7% of girls rated their school as excellent while only 26.8% of boys gave their school the same rating. As boys are demoralized within schools and unmotivated to learn, their perception of the benefits or enjoyment of higher education will almost certainly not contain the positive association that it has for girls.

2. Social and educational stratification

Stratification literature with regard to education examines the ways in which social strata related to family, community, and society interacts with education to either change or maintain the status quo. There has been much debate in the USA about the role of the family in determining academic success. The now infamous Coleman Report (Coleman et al, 1966) stated that schools had very little impact on the success of students and that family played a much more integral role. In contrast, research on the role of family in determining the academic success of students conducted in developing countries has found that in these countries family background was less important than school factors. The same studies also concluded that the poorer the country the greater the impact of the school and teacher compared to that of the family (Heyneman & Loxley, 1983). In the Middle East there has been little research done on the impact of family factors on educational attainment. However, numerous studies by researchers in other countries have found a positive correlation between the socioeconomic status of the family and educational attainment (Filmer & Pritchett, 1999; Massialas & Jarrar, 1991).

In the United Arab Emirates there are several applications for this literature to the question of male participation. Income differences between local citizens in different emirates seem to have a relationship with school achievement and university enrollment. While extremely understudied, a look at CEPA scores, per capita incomes, and university no-show rates by emirate offers some insights.

When emirates are looked at individually, see Table 3 below, it appears that less urbanized, poorer emirates in general tend to have lower CEPA English scores. With regard to no shows the picture is not as clear. Males in Fujairah have the highest no show rates in the UAE at around 61% but it is not clear where these males are going or if there is some form of government program in Fujairah that offers males an alternative. At the other end, males in Ajman, which has the lowest per capita income, have the second lowest no show rates, comparable to Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Overall however, it could be argued that males in the five poorest emirates; Um Al Qawain, Ras Al Khaimah, Sharjah, Ajman and Fujairah are therefore more at risk than males in Dubai or Abu Dhabi, who are comparatively wealthier and have higher test scores and lower numbers of no-shows.

Table 3: Inter-emirate differences in income, test scores and no-shows

Emirate	Per Capita Income AED (2006)	Average Male CEPA English Scores	% Male No Shows (2005)
Abu Dhabi	141,696	153	42%
Dubai	123,017	159	36%
Fujairah	53,808	140	61%
Sharjah	52,177	145	53% ⁵
Ras Al Khaimah	51,981	143	55%
Um Al Qawain	49,960	145	51%
Ajman	35,382	144	40%

Sources: Ministry of Economy (2006), National Admissions and Placement Office (2005)

A study by James (2001) looked at the effects of geographical location and socioeconomic status on access to higher education in Australia. While he found that higher education participation for people in rural and isolated areas may be less affected by location than by socio-economic status, the two variables are often interlinked. In the UAE students in the more remote Northern Emirates and rural areas have access to technical and vocational education through the Higher Colleges of Technology which has campuses in every Emirate in the UAE. However those who wish to pursue a university education need to travel significant distances to one of the three public universities which are only located in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Al Ain. This lack of convenient access to universities could pose an additional obstacle for disadvantaged male students to participate in higher education. When considering the issue of low male participation in higher education in the UAE it is important therefore to consider that males in the UAE are not a homogeneous group. While Emirati males in general are at risk of not participating in higher education, males from the poorer and, more isolated emirates are at an even greater risk.

Students from the wealthier emirates are also more likely to have attended private schools where the language of instruction is usually English. In Dubai approximately 85% of students are enrolled in private schools and while these cater mainly to the large expatriate population they also include the children of middle-and upper-class Emiratis. The 2007 Trends in Mathematics

⁵ This is slightly misleading as in Sharjah there are two locally-funded universities, the American University of Sharjah and Sharjah University which many students from this emirate choose to attend. As such they are not opting out of higher education just the federally-funded institutions.

and Science Study (TIMSS), in which Dubai participated as a benchmarking state, revealed a nearly 100 point difference in test scores between government and private schools in Dubai. This testified to a significant difference in quality of education between the two systems. In addition to the benefits of a better quality education, private school students also associate with peers of similar socio-economic status and values. As a result of both the higher quality of schooling and the social capital that accrues from being around more motivated students, national male students who attend private schools are probably more likely to attend higher education than males from government schools.

The first generational status of the vast majority of students in higher education institutions in the UAE is another important factor which is likely to create stratification and barriers to student enrollment and retention. Research in the area of college aspirations and career expectations have used the notion of “social capital” to understand and explain why students with educated parents have an advantage over first-generation students both in education and in socioeconomic attainment. In his article “Forms of Capital” Bourdieu (1986) expands the notion of capital beyond economic capital to include cultural and symbolic capital. The social capital associated with educated parents who understand the importance and value of education cannot be underestimated. Studies have consistently shown that parental educational levels are positively correlated to the educational achievements of their children. Children of college-educated parents have better access to social and cultural capital through family relationships. Consequently, compared to their peers with highly educated parents, first-generation students are more likely to experience difficulty in accessing and understanding information and attitudes relevant to making the right decisions in relation to the importance of obtaining a college degree, which institution to attend and what to major in (Pascarella, et al, 2004).

First generational status is likely to be another major contributing factor for the high no-show (students that are accepted but fail to enroll) rates for higher education among both male and female students in the UAE. Again this is exacerbated in the poorer emirates where years of formal schooling are much lower than in more urbanized areas. In Ras Al Khaimah data gathered on parents’ levels of education revealed that on average fathers had 9 years of formal education and mothers had 8 years of formal education (Ridge, 2008).

Males are also more likely to be affected by cultural and social norms that place the burden of financial provision solely upon male members of the family. This is an important characteristic of family expectations in patriarchal societies and a factor that should be considered when attempting to explain the low enrollment rates of men. On exploring reasons for the no-shows among men, a survey conducted by the National Admissions and Placement Office for Higher Education (NAPO) in 2006 found that over 60% of the men who opted out did so in order to pursue income-generating activities. This supports the notion that males are preferring paid employment to higher education, perhaps in order to meet family needs and expectations. In contrast the NAPO (2005) figures for female no-shows reveal that only 1% of females went to paid employment or was seeking work.

IV. Conclusions

General literature on access and participation in higher education shows that prior attainment (Broecke and Hamed, 2008) and socio-economic status (James, 2001) are two of the biggest determinants of participation in higher education. In addition to these factors, studies on resource-rich countries find that rentier states provide further disincentives to participation in higher education.

In the United Arab Emirates, we can find evidence to support the notion that the poor prior attainment of boys in schools is consistent with low male participation in higher education. With dropout rates for boys in the tenth grade as high as 14% in some Emirates (Ridge, 2008) and girls outperforming boys in all subjects and on standardized tests such as the CEPA, it is clear that the public education system is failing young men. The high dropout rates and poor performance of boys need to be addressed to enable greater higher education participation. For the young men that persist in school past Year 10, the poor quality of English language instruction in particular means that they are ill-prepared for the switch to a full English medium institution. This further compounds the problem and leads to greater male attrition rates in higher education.

The role of the state in job creation and the tacit bargain that is made in rentier states between the citizens and those collecting the rents has resulted in an implicit trade-off that has potentially undermined higher education as a means for social or economic mobility. Evidence from the UAE is consistent with the opinion that males view connections in pursuit of employment opportunities as more potent in achieving social and economic mobility than attainment in higher education.

Distortions in wages and benefits created by a preference for public-sector employment for nationals may have also decreased returns to education (Minnis, 2006). The relatively higher wages and better conditions in the public sector, especially in the military and police, evidently have had some impact on the educational choices that young males make. These two sectors accept males who have only completed high school or less and continue to attract large numbers of males. In order to increase higher education participation rates, public-sector salaries and in particular those sectors which are favored by males, need to reward educational attainment and create incentives for young men to obtain a college education. With regard to socio-economic stratification, it is clear that young men in the northern emirates have higher drop-out and university no-show rates than those in Abu Dhabi or Dubai. As these are relatively less affluent emirates, it is important that policy makers are aware of inequalities so that programs encouraging young men to pursue higher education can be implemented in these areas in particular.

V. Implications for future research

In general there is a lack of research on the topic of males and education in the UAE. Future research should explore more fully the reasons behind the choices that young men are making with regard to their education. The argument has been made that most young men are studying outside of the UAE for their tertiary qualifications, but the high drop-out rates of students in Grade 10 indicate that a large number of males are not completing high school and are therefore unlikely to be venturing overseas to study.

Future research should also examine the returns to education at all levels in the United Arab Emirates to determine the economic incentives that have resulted in low higher education participation by males. At this stage it is only possible to conjecture as there is little data upon which to base conclusions and policy prescriptions regarding participation of males in higher education. Throughout the Gulf, the stereotype of the privileged Gulf male who has a job guaranteed for him may not always hold especially in disadvantaged areas such as the Northern Emirates of the UAE. There needs therefore to be more examination of the differences between and within emirates with regard to socio-economic status, family background and parental levels of education in order to fully understand the complexities involved in understanding higher education participation in the UAE.

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Undergraduate Admissions, Equity of Access and Quality in Higher Education: An International Comparative Perspective

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Abstract

This study looks into undergraduate admissions to higher education from an international perspective involving seven countries selected on the basis of their representation of centralized and/or decentralized admissions models and types, on the basis of their diversified higher educational systems, and their representation of four geographical regions, i.e., East Asia, North America, Europe (including West and Central Europe) and Eurasia. The countries selected are: Japan; the United States of America; the United Kingdom; the People's Republic of China; Austria; France, and the Republic of Georgia. Data and information were obtained from a host of sources including policy papers of Ministries of Education, refereed journal articles, websites of selected higher educational institutions, the International Association of Universities (IAU), UNESCO, and the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), and many others. A frame analysis which is most commonly used in journalism was employed in analyzing information derived from websites and building thematic frames for systematic analysis.

Rather than reporting one typology for admission composed of type and model as provided by Helms, this study yielded different typologies of admission consisting of: (i) a typology of models and (ii) a typology of types and their patterns in higher educational institutions in the countries selected for the study. The country with the most wide-ranging admission system was the U.S. with 4 different models of admissions though applied differently across higher educational institutions. The type was pervasive in all countries studied. Further, in terms of procedure all variations appeared among the seven countries compared, excepting the U.K. which had a distinct procedure worth emulating. Expansion, massification, and the increasing number of entrants to higher education were discussed. These were further examined in relation to quality in higher education.

I. Introduction: Framework and Objectives of the Study

Perhaps one of the most 'untidy', yet vivacious areas in comparative educational research is admissions to higher education. Its 'untidy' nature rests with the multiplicity of often confounded

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models and types encapsulating a wide range of policies and practices within and among countries. This diversity has implications on equity of access and quality in higher education. Despite the untidy nature of undergraduate admissions, the subject becomes vivacious when approached from a comparative perspective.

This study looks into undergraduate admissions in seven countries selected on the basis of their representation of centralized or decentralized systems, diversified higher educational systems, and representation of four geographical regions, i.e., East Asia, North America, Europe and Eurasia. These countries are: Japan; the United States of America; the United Kingdom; the People's Republic of China; Austria; France, and the Republic of Georgia.

The study is organized as follows: definition of key concepts; method for collecting information; undergraduate admissions and equity in each country; a comparative discussion revealing the lessons learned, and finally an overall summary.

1. Definition of Concepts

This section defines the following key concepts used in the study: admissions; equity of access; quality in higher education, type and models.

a. Admissions

According to the code of practice of the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in the U.K. in 2006, admissions encapsulates all activities, policies, procedures and practices involved in admitting students to higher education. Another definition is provided by (Helms, 2008) who equates admissions to entrance as a process through which students are selected to enter higher education. In this study, admission is used to refer to the types and models derived from policies and procedures to admit or select students to higher education or to defer them.

b. Equity of Access

In concert with the literature on equity of access (e.g., Helms, 2008; James, 2007; Harman, 1994), equity refers to justice in admission processes, involving certain measures which provide additional opportunities (e.g., scholarships, appeals, lower cut-off scores in case of entrance tests, reaching minority groups etc...) to those who did not get them from the system of opportunities for access, particularly minority groups including female students, people with special needs, those with a low socio-economic status, minority ethnic/racial groups, and many others such as farmers and people in remote areas as is the case of China and Georgia.

c. Quality in Higher Education

The term 'quality' in higher education looms large and according to Parri (2002), the term lacks a standardized definition that could be applicable to all fields. However, quality in higher education is equaled to special (Lomas, 2002). In this study, quality is discussed in terms of measures used to assure that students who are admitted to higher education also have access to quality education.

d. Type and Model

Helms (2008, 7) provided a "typology of admission systems" that consists of "types", which lay emphasis on test scores, and "models" that encompass non-test factors for admission (e.g., the applicant's portfolio, activities, interviews, and recommendation letters). Within "types", Helms established a typology derived from admission systems worldwide that categorizes test scores into 5 types that comprise 17 subtypes as follows:

Type 1: Secondary leaving exams

- National exam score only
- National exam score, plus secondary school performance

- Regional score/state score, plus secondary school academic performance
- National exam score plus application dossier

Type 2: Entrance exams

- National exam score only
- National exam score, plus secondary school academic performance
- Institutionally administered exam scores only
- Institutionally administered exam scores, plus secondary school academic performance

Type 3: Standardized aptitude tests

- Standardized aptitude tests scores or secondary school academic performance
- Standardized aptitude tests scores, plus application dossier

Type 4 : Multiple exams

- National entrance exam score, plus institutionally administered exam scores
- National entrance exam score, institutionally administered exam scores, and/or secondary school academic performance
- National secondary school leaving scores, plus standardized aptitude test scores
- National secondary school leaving scores, plus institutionally aptitude test scores
- Multiple exams administered by multiple entities

Type 5: No exam

- Secondary school academic performance
- Application dossier does not require exam scores

2. Method

a. Data Collection

Data were obtained from: Wikipedia; policy papers downloaded from Ministry of Education websites, as available; journal articles; websites of selected higher educational institutions; the International Association of Universities (IAU); the British Council; UNESCO; the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) in the U.S.; and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the U.S.

b. Validity of Information

The validity of information was checked by comparing information derived for similar topics from different sources. Although Wikipedia's accuracy and credibility are debated (e.g., Read, 2007), its use in academic research is becoming more accepted (Guess, 2008) due to continuous refinement by users.

c. Analysis

A frame analysis which is most commonly used in journalism was used in analyzing Wikipedia and information from websites. According to (Jamieson et al, 2002, xii), frames are "structures underlying the depictions that the public reads, hears, and watches". Frame analysis is of two types: "episodic frames" which revolve around the personalization of events and "thematic frames" through which a researcher can systematically explore an issue, and explore its place in a broader social or political context (Bennett, 2005, p. 213 - 214). In this study, keywords, phrases, facts, announcements, and sentences were clustered for analysis and discussion.

d. Limitations

This study encountered several limitations. First, in some of the countries selected for the study (e.g., U.S., U.K, Japan, and the People's Republic of China) there was a wealth of up-to-date information, while this was not the case in other countries (e.g., Georgia). Moreover, data related to ethnic and minority group access to higher education are not disclosed as is the case for

France, Japan, China, Georgia, and Austria. In addition, higher educational institutions, whose websites published material in languages with which the author is not familiar such as Chinese, Austrian, or Japanese, made understanding quite arduous due to the need for translation. In addition, because higher education in the countries selected is so diverse and complex, any standard description of case-by-case may misstate much about individual higher educational institutions in these countries. Therefore, not all individual countries selected are presented and analyzed in the same depth and breadth.

II. Undergraduate Admissions in Higher Education

1. East Asia

This section concerns two countries, Japan and the People's Republic of China.

a. Japan

Undergraduate admission in Japan is represented in the type and the mixed model-type requirements.

1) The Type

The type relies on the national entrance test and other tests that may be required by many individual higher education institutions, particularly the elite ones. Whether in public, national, or private universities, admission requires the Upper Secondary School Certificate of Graduation (Kotogakko Sotsugyo Shosho) and, in most cases, is based on the highly competitive National Center for University Entrance Test which is administered throughout Japan over a two-day period each year. The overall score on the test determines the specific institution which the student is eligible to join (Helms, 2008). Other tests are administered by the individual universities. This type is mostly entrenched in what Hawkins et al (2008) described as first- and second-tier institutions, which, besides the national test, started to use a new common test (Mori, 2002). Practically, a number of private institutions started to use the new common test as of 1985, based on the recommendations of the Council for Reform in University Entrance Examination (CRUEE).

The environment of these tests is described by the Japanese as the "exam hell", being fierce, competitive and stressful (Mori, 2002). Although it is becoming less severe, admissions are still competitive (about 1 in 3 test takers will get a place at the university of their choosing) and in any given year about 20% of the applicant pool is comprised of <non-students>—, <ronin> (master-less samurai) who are kept out of higher education for one or more years for another attempt at entrance examinations. These ronins enroll in private schools called Juku where they undergo preparation for the entrance test.

At some tier-one universities, such as the University of Kyoto, students who make the <cut off> on the Center Test scores are then asked to start from scratch and compete against all the other people taking a particular university's own test. Other universities, typically lower-ranked ones or second tier, combine the Center Test score with their own test scores in order to determine admissions for specific programs (Japan Time Online 2009, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp>).

At community colleges, like Aichi Bunkyo Women's College, admission policy, as described by the institution's website, "superior quality" and "academic ability" are requisites for admissions. For admitting students, an additional local test is administered.

2) The Mixed Model-type Requirement

This encapsulates wide-ranging requirements for admissions including tests, interviews,

school reports and letters of recommendation. According to Arai (1999), the diversification of admissions in Japan has increased greatly since the late 1980s. As of 1998, the proportion of undergraduate students who submitted recommendation letters as part of their admission evaluation was 9% in national universities, 14% in public (excluding national) and 34% in private institutions. The aim behind adding more requirements can serve two purposes; one for selection, while the other to lessen the competition caused by a single entrance test score. In three tier-one Japanese university websites surfed (Hiroshima University, the University of Tokushima, and Kanazawa University), admission centered on ability and willingness of students to acquire skills. However, different requirements and procedures were identified. At Hiroshima, applicants must pass the national test. Then, those who pass the national test are required to complete the following: report, letter of recommendation and applicant's self-assessment. Then, applicants listen to a 20-minutes lecture and compose an essay about the lecture. Finally, applicants are also interviewed (http://home.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/admicen/nyusi/ao_qa0019-.html). Different weights are given to each assessment area prior to admission decision.

At the University of Tokushima, applicants are selected according to the following: the results of their national entrance test; academic achievement tests conducted by the University; and the application documents that the applicant sent to the University. The subjects of examination and all subjects of the test are specified by the University Center according to the applicant's major (http://www.tokushima-u.ac.jp/pdf221/bosyu_ippan.pdf).

At Kanazawa University, admission centers on the national test results, the separate academic achievement tests held by this university and the screening of the applicants' dossiers.

As for Chiba Keiai Junior College, A and B systems are used for admissions: the A format requires tests in English and mathematics as well as interviews. The B format has entrance tests in the Japanese language and mathematics plus an interview. These two formats represent the general admission requirements at the college where students can choose either format, based on the major to which they apply (<http://www.u-keiai.ac.jp/prepstu/tandai2005nf.pdf>).

Unlike universities or junior colleges, colleges of technology admit graduates of lower secondary schools. At these colleges students who have completed the upper secondary school join the program in the fourth year. Graduates of the five-year program are awarded the Koto Senmon Gakko Sotsugyo Shosho (Technical College Graduation Diploma) and are considered to be trained technicians. Virtually, applicants to the colleges of technology take an entrance test in the Japanese language plus an interview.

To join specialized training colleges, students should complete either lower or upper secondary education. Some of these colleges require the national central test while other specialized training colleges have recently come to admit students on the basis of recommendation letters from upper secondary school principals, and a thesis or interview only (http://www.jagam.org.my/05_student/05_student02.html).

b. The People's Republic of China

Admission to higher education is stated in Article 19 of the higher educational law, which provides that graduates of senior secondary school education or those with an equivalent educational level shall, upon passing the examination, be admitted by institutions of higher learning and obtain the qualification for admission as specialty students or undergraduate students. Thus, two requirements are identified by the law: passing the exam and students' status of admission; hence representing a type and a model.

1) The Type

The Chinese education system and Chinese citizens are extremely test-results focused (Dunrong, 2007). All higher educational institutions follow the test type. All students who finish 12 years of schooling are eligible to apply to higher education. These students take the National College Entrance Test (NCEE)², or Gaokao in one of the two categories: (1) humanities or (2) sciences and engineering. Gaokao comprises three compulsory subjects (Chinese, English and mathematics) and one extra subject, i.e., a foreign language. Although applicants specify the institutions and programs they wish to enter in order of preference, student admission is assigned by the government based on their test scores and preference of the institution and the majors intended based on Article 32 of the Chinese higher educational law which assigns the percentage of admission to departments and disciplines in accordance with the requirements and demand of society, conditions for running the institution and scale of the institution should be verified by the state. The MoE sets cut-off scores for admission to each department in key universities, but in the case of universities situated in the provinces, the minimum score for admissions is determined by the provincial education office (Mullins, 2005). Workers, peasants and soldiers are often given preferential treatment in admissions. In addition, students who pass the minimum score for admissions undergo a physical examination and an investigation into their social behavior and moral character (<http://www.index-china.com/index-english/education-s.htm>).

2) The Recommendation Model

This model is new in China, specifically offered where secondary school graduates are all assigned jobs including transfer to the countryside for work. Anyone who has two years of experience in the workplace can apply to university admission provided that he/she has academic knowledge equivalent to secondary schooling (China Education Newspaper, 2007). The practice of recommending is selective for outstanding upper secondary school graduates skipping national entrance tests for admission to higher education. Thus, only outstanding students are exempted from the national test. A separate admission is organized for some special disciplines or fields needed by the state (OECD Report on China, 2007).

2. North America

a. The United States of America

Most undergraduate colleges and universities maintain the policy that students are to be admitted to higher education or rejected from the admission to the entire college, not to a particular department or major, unlike graduate admissions. Some students, rather than being rejected, are «wait-listed» for a particular college and may be admitted if another student who was admitted decides not to attend the college or university. There are a number of tests used by these institutions, including the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT). The SAT is a three-hour exam intended to measure basic skills and aptitude (Carton et al, 1997). Most universities look for student SAT scores in addition to high school certificates. Students must also list academic qualifications and extra-curricular interests. They can also be asked to complete a number of essays. Character and academic references are also required. Undergraduate admission in U.S. varies as shown below.

1) The Open-policy

This connotes open admissions, specifically in two-year community colleges which award

² A special agency appointed by the state educational authority to be responsible for mapping out the test content in line with national testing guidelines.

associate degrees at the completion of two years of full-time study, where many students transfer to a four-year college or university to complete their bachelors' degrees.

2) The Type

The type in the U.S requires one or more tests for undergraduate admissions. According to the National Association for College Admission Council (NACAC) in 2006, 94% of four-year colleges and universities considered the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), or the American College Test (ACT) scores in their undergraduate admissions. SAT-I is required for all undergraduate admissions and SAT-II is required for specific majors. Also, TOEFL is required for international students seeking higher education in the U.S. Although the requirement of the secondary school report and transcripts (report cards) for the final tests, application form, and letters of reference (<http://www.infozee.com/usa/app-procedure-ug.htm>) is a mundane practice for admission, the major weight is given to test scores. Within the type, many elite four-year colleges require additional testing such as the Career Programs Assessment test (CPAT), or the College Board's ACCUPLACER (Douglass, 2007). These additional admissions requirements are requested by selective colleges and universities.

3) The Application Model

This model does not rely on entrance tests for admissions. Instead, a holistic set of admissions requirements replace tests scores which are optional to students to take and submit to the college or university where they intend to enroll.

Students can apply to some community and liberal arts colleges using the Common Application (informally known as the Common App) which is an undergraduate college admission application which applicants may use to apply to any of the 346 member colleges and universities in the U.S. It is managed by the staff of a not-for-profit membership association (The Common Application, Inc.). Its mission is to encourage college «access» by promoting holistic admission (the use of subjective criteria like essays and recommendations alongside objective criteria). (College admissions in the United States).

4) The Comprehensive Model

This relies on school grades, activities and other non-test requirements. An increasing number of higher educational institutions such as the University of Oklahoma, Arizona State University, and a number of highly selective private liberal arts colleges such as Bates College and Bowdoin College in Maine only consider SAT scores if the applicant so wishes. The main admissions requirements at these institutions are students' high school records, extracurricular activities, applicants' essays, interview and letters of recommendation.

3. Europe

This section describes undergraduate admissions in the United Kingdom, Austria, and France.

a. The United Kingdom

In the U.K., students are eligible to apply to higher education after completing 13 years of pre-university education (<http://www.liv.ac.uk/>). The General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), which is part of a single examination covering England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, is a prelude to deciding whether students go to Advance Level Courses (A-Level)³. A-level is the gate to higher education in the U.K being designed to screen students for their specialization. Those who opt for university education are required to take 8 to 10 subjects in

³ A-Levels are two-year courses taken just before the university, right after completion of the secondary school, i.e. after a General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) is obtained. Usually, students that attend A-Levels are 15 - 16 years old.

the A-level while those considering the vocational track study fewer A-level courses (Carton et al, 1997). In terms of organization of admissions, Section 10 of the Code of Practice (Admissions to Higher Education) of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in 2006, is intended to help institutions to assure that policies and procedures they use to attract, recruit, select, admit and enroll students are clear, fair, explicit and consistently applied. The Code of Practice recognizes that many higher educational institutions make use of admissions schemes, particularly the Universities and College Admissions Services (UCAS), which coordinates applications for admission to full time undergraduate courses while each institution retains its autonomy in admitting students.

Applicants submit an application dossier to UCAS consisting of A-level scores, intended course, or predicted score for applicants who are still in school, a personal statement about purpose of applying, a letter of reference from the school, along with six higher educational institutions to which the applicant seeks to apply. Each application is sent to the selected institutions, each of which decides whether to accept the applicant or not based on its standard criteria for admissions, i.e., conditional or unconditional acceptance. Conditional, where an applicant may accept two offers, of which one is their firm (first) choice, the other made by the institution, usually with one with lower conditions attached, is their insurance choice (one of the rest of choices). Conditional acceptance is when A-level scores are not published yet for the respective applicant. On the other hand, unconditional acceptance means that the applicant has been accepted. The third decision is "decline" where applicants who receive no offers or did not meet admission requirements can elect to enter the UCAS EXTRA system from late February. The EXTRA system offers guidance for students to prepare well for A-level tests. In terms of admissions decision, this is made by Admissions Tutors at the institution, and later verified by the Admissions Officer who makes sure that the decision made by the Admissions Tutor complied with general admissions requirements such as the applicant's completion of certain academic levels. Undergraduate admissions in the U.K. adhere to the test type.

1) The Type

The type followed in the U.K. is A-level. Virtually, all higher educational institution's websites stated in their admission policy full compliance with Section 10 of the Code of Practice (Admissions to Higher Education) of the QAA, and other legislations including the Disability Act of 1995, the Race Relations Act of 1997 and its amendments, the Sex Discrimination Act. Some of these institutions such as the University of Liverpool in England and the University of Glasgow in Scotland offer a one-year preparatory program designed to overseas students. There remain differences within the admission type, particularly between elite and less prestigious institutions (Greenbank, 2006). Most elite institutions identified as HEI-10 which is a Russell Group⁴ request higher grades than less prestigious institutions. At Cambridge University, additional tests might be required such as the "Thinking Skills Assessment" (DFES, 2003).

2) The Open-policy

The open-policy applies to the Open-University which has no entrance requirements.

3) The Supplementary Model

Other supplementary requirements for undergraduate admissions are set by a number of higher educational institutions across the U.K. such as the University of Glamorgan in Wales. One of the requirements at Glomorgan is the validity and relevance of the applicant's

⁴ The Russell Group is a group of 19 self-selected research universities considered to be the most prestigious in the U.K.

information submitted to the University which is checked for verification. Admissions at Oxford University emphasized merit and ability. In addition, students who passed the A-level are re-distributed based on availability of seats and further interviews with selected candidates are conducted.

b. Austria

Before the Bologna process, admissions required 17 years of schooling. Then after, the Fachhochschule split its program into undergraduate and graduate studies offering about 40 different programs, requiring completion of 12 years of schooling (<http://www.fh-ooe.at/fh-oberoesterreich/international/admission>). Different admissions exist between the Fachhochschule, other public, and the private sector.

1) The Type

At public universities, admission requires the national test which is a secondary school-leaving examination called Reifeprüfung/Mutra. Students take the national test at the same time simultaneously across the nation. (Wadsack et al, 2004). Applicants are required to submit proof of artistic aptitude in case of arts studies and proof of aptitude for physical/motor skills when wishing to enroll in teacher training in physical education (Leibeserziehung) and for the sports science (Sportwissenschaften) (The Federal Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture, 2004). Persons who did not take the Reifeprüfung/Mutra have the possibility of taking the university entrance qualification examination (Studienberechtigungsprüfung) for a specific major. In art studies, an entrance exam is required as a proof of artistic aptitude and the Reifeprüfung/Mutra is required for a number courses in these institutions.

2) The Model-type Mixed Requirement

This model exists in Fachhochschule Eintritt or (admissions). Admission is based on availability of seats in the majors offered. Thus, standard admissions requirements are set, and supplementary requirements are added to allocate seats, taking into consideration the highest achievers. The general requirements are:

- High School diploma;
- Written application submitted by June 30 for the following academic year;
- An on-site entrance examination and personal interview are required;
- Proficiency in the German language (intensive German courses are offered).

An additional entrance examination is required or an additional admission procedure whenever the number of applicants exceeds available seats. The model-type mixed requirement is observable in private higher educational institutions which administer their own entrance tests and interviews as is the case of Modul University Vienna (<http://www.modul.ac.at/>). Additional requirements may be set such as the Webster University Vienna which is a U.S. university branched in Austria (http://www.akkreditierungsrat.at/cont/de/privatuni_03.aspx).

c. France

In France there are: (1) the test type, and (2) the model-type mixed requirement.

1. The Type

After completing high school, students have three choices to enroll in higher education; universities or technical institutes within the university. For the university, students who obtain a passing score on the nationally administered essay-based baccalauréat examination have open access to most programs (majors) and higher educational institutions without any further examination or admission requirements outside those pertaining to regular application forms.

2) The Model-type Mixed Requirement

This is represented in prestigious higher educational institutions which are allowed by law to have special admission requirements (e.g., Instituts de Technologie, or Classes préparatoires aux Grandes écoles). These institutions often require, besides the baccalauréat, school grades and interviews, while recommendation letters are not used as an admission criteria (Helms, 2008; Carton et al, 1997). Also further entrance test (concours) is requested, particularly in Grandes Ecoles.

4. Eurasia

a. The Republic of Georgia

University admission in the Republic of Georgia is based on a newly introduced National Examination Center (NEC) which is modeled after the SAT. The purpose of the entrance test was to curb rampant corruption in admissions. From reviewing undergraduate admissions documents, the test model is identified in the public sector and the mixed model-type requirement in many private institutions.

1) The Type

Students must pass entrance tests in order to accede to higher education. Minimum scores are determined yearly by individual higher educational institutions. After test administration, the NEC sends an institution a ranked list of candidates who have attained the minimum score for admission. Institutions must admit students based exclusively on these lists (MOE, the Republic of Georgia, 2004).

2) The Mixed Model-type Requirement

This was observed in one private higher educational institution, namely, the Georgian American University (<http://gau.caucasus.net/eng/admissiondoc.php>), where in addition to the national entrance test scores, students go into further evaluation through interviews for selection.

III. Equity of Access

This part reviews equity of access measures in light of the diversified models and types in undergraduate admissions in the countries selected.

1. East Asia

Article 9 of the Chinese law promulgates that all citizens shall enjoy equal opportunity of education regardless of their nationality, race, sex, occupation, property or religious belief. In addition, the state shall help all minority nationality regions develop educational undertakings in light of the characteristics and requirements of different minority nationalities. Despite this law, unbalanced development of regional economies and a wide income gap among different social classes makes equity of access problematic.

According to OECD (2007), inequity of access is reflected in the disparity between urban and rural areas, particularly that students from rural areas have less access to higher education and fewer financial resources than their counterparts in cities. Despite this, China has stridden towards providing equity of access in higher education.

a. Lowering Cut-off Scores

Admissions in China give preferential treatment to the disabled, the disadvantaged and ethnic minority people in remote areas. According to the MoE in 1980 which is still applicable to the present (2009), the minimum score requirements will be lowered for minority applicants from

border areas, mountain regions, pastoral areas and other areas populated by minorities. All higher educational institutions are open to minorities whose test scores are lower than the cut-off score.

b. Changing Test Dates

In 2003, entrance test days were changed from July to June when the weather was more comfortable (Finnish National Board of Education, 2007). The aim was to give equal chances to peasants and people from agricultural areas.

c. Lifting Age and Marital Status Restrictions

In April 2001, the MoE lifted restrictions on marital status (the requirement to be single) and age (a maximum age of 25 years) (National Center for Education Development Research of the Ministry of Education of the P.R. of China, 2007), allowing for greater equity.

d. Financial Allocations

The Chinese government has taken proactive measures to better promote equity through providing loans to students from impoverished families (Finnish National Board of Education, 2007). Commercial banks appointed by the government provided loans to needy full-time students.

2. North America

Equity measures in the U.S. are outlined along affirmative action, remediation, re-admission, and financial aid.

a. Affirmative Action

Affirmative action in the U.S. represents a tutelage for policies and programs that take race/ethnicity and gender into account. Affirmative action programs provided bonus points for, and/or financial assistance to, students. Many courts ruled against using reservation or quota systems in higher education. For instance, in the Regents of the University of California vs. Bakke (1978), the Supreme Court held that the UC Davis Medical School violated the “equal protection clause” of the XIVth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution by fixing quotas for underrepresented minorities. According to this verdict, race and ethnicity could be considered as “one factor among many”, but not as “a dominant factor”. One can give some weight to race or gender or any other factor, but that cannot be the sole criterion for admission to a college or university in the U.S. (Douglass, 2005). These can be reflected in measures of equity which concern the different groups that attend higher education. With the exception of Texas which provides access to all students to prestigious higher educational institutions provided that they were ranked in the top percentile of their high school graduating class (Clancy et al, 2007), students can appeal to revoke an unfair admission decision.

b. Admission by Remediation

All (98%) of public two-year colleges and 80% of public four-year institutions offered at least one remedial in reading, writing or mathematics in fall 2000. (<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/200311252003/11/.html>).

c. Re-admission

Where students applying to a certain higher educational institution can later shift to another major, but not the original major for which they were not granted admissions, unless re-admissions is considered based on fulfilling the specific admissions requirements for that particular major. In addition, students who were not successful in getting admitted to a certain major, usually hard sciences, are given the opportunity to enroll in another less grade-demanding major, such as humanities, social sciences and business administration where the students have already set the schools they wish to enter by priority in the application form (<http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/ugcat0708/admission.cfm#readmission>).

d. Financial Aid

Equity in U.S. higher education encompasses financial aid which consists of work-study grants, loans, and scholarships. Certain requirements on the part of the financial aid applicant are required such as proof of good point average and need (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2007, <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs20042004075/.pdf>).

3. Europe

a. The United Kingdom

Equity of access is protected by the Disability Act of 1995, the Race Relations Act of 1997 and its amendments, the Sex Discrimination Act and other legislation. Despite these, there have been concerns in the U.K. about the low participation rates of lower socio-economic groups in higher education since the 1960s (e.g., Robins Report, 1963). Today, the issue of equity of access in the U.K. engages higher educational institutions and policymakers with the aim of remedying inequalities of access, particularly among students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Equity measures in the U.K. are represented in clearing, Deliberate Action, and financial allocations.

1) Clearing

Within the national admissions process in the U.K. undertaken by UCAS, an important factor in placing students in higher education is based on matching enrollment demand to higher education, where there is capacity, i.e. available seats even if it was not the student's first choice identified in his/her application to UCAS. This process is called clearing and seeks to provide a seat for students who passed A-level somewhere in the system of higher education.

2) Deliberate Action

Deliberate Action in the U.K. focuses on expanded outreach programs to minority groups, particularly the "underserved" (Douglas, 2005), with substantial autonomy given to higher educational institutions to alter admissions policies to increase students' diversity. Existing research (e.g., Greenbank, 2006) argued that the practice for lowering standards for minority groups is observed more frequently in "recruiting" institutions than in "selecting" institutions.

3) Financial Allocations

In 2004 the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) was established to widen access in U.K. higher education. The OFFA signed a five-year "access agreement" with 124 higher educational institutions that charge fees above £1,225 for home students. The widening participation allocation is distributed to higher educational institutions by the Higher Education Funding Council for England, Scotland and Wales (HEFCE). These allocations seek to encourage students from areas that have low participation in higher education to apply.

b. Austria

Equity measures in Austria differ based on sector of education, where all passing students are given access to public institutions and other opportunities are provided in the private sector for those who fail or whose grades were not high enough to guarantee a seat. This later is most applicable in Fachhochschule institutions where seats are barely available for all students. Equity measures are re-admission and financial allocations.

1) Re-admission

Admissions to the Fachhochschule are highly competitive. Applicants who do not qualify for admissions because of their grades and other admissions criteria have two options, either they reapply the following year (Leitner, 2004), or may begin university study in any discipline in the public sector. At the public sector, access is given to all students regardless of background, provided they meet the required admissions criteria.

2) Financial Allocations

Higher education students in Austria pay fees. However, study grants are provided to the needy and females. Only in the case when the parent's income is not high enough and if the student can prove that she/he will successfully complete his/her study, then, a study grant is provided. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Austria#Higher_education). It is worth mentioning that public funding to finance some Fachhochschule is based on the record of recruiting females (Kottmann, 2008).

c. France

Access to higher educational institutions is free. It is known that all students pass through an attrition period in their first year of enrollment where classes in certain majors might be overcrowded; thus, the first year final examination weeds out failing students. While admission is free, a second path admission that seeks to widen participation of minority groups in elite institutions is remarkable.

Second Path Admissions: Grandes écoles can use a second admissions path to widen their student body. According to (Clancy et al, 2007), these strategies included building links with high schools in poor areas, registering a higher number of immigrant students by offering them scholarships based on merit and also by preparing them for the different examinations and requirements needed to enroll in Grandes écoles.

4. Eurasia

a. The Republic of Georgia

The only equity measure in Georgian higher education is preparation for success in the entrance test and remediation in the private sector.

1) Preparation for Success in the Entrance Test

According to Helms (2008), free classes are provided to prepare students in minority regions for the national entrance exam. Thus, this policy suggests a step towards equity in preparation for the national-based entrance test.

2) Remediation

In the private sector, remediation is offered to students who need additional skills in languages and mathematics for pursuing normally in their respective majors based on their entrance exam results.

IV. Comparative Conclusion

Several conclusions emerged from this study. Although the three regions (East Asia, North America, and Europe) are not representative of all continents, they still provide lessons that can serve policymaking processes in Arab higher education. The presentation below compares undergraduate admissions and equity of access with quality implications in the seven countries.

1. The Type

The test-type was the most dominant criterion for undergraduate admissions in the seven countries. In the European countries (France, Austria, and the U.K), the dominant type for undergraduate admissions was the nationally administered school-leaving examination, with the exception of some elite institutions such as Russell Group institutions in the U.K. and Grandes écoles in France, and in the Fachhochschule sector in Austria where additional testing and/or screening was required. Thus, two types emerged; single test (school-leaving examination), and multiple testing in elite institutions for selectivity (U.K. and France) or

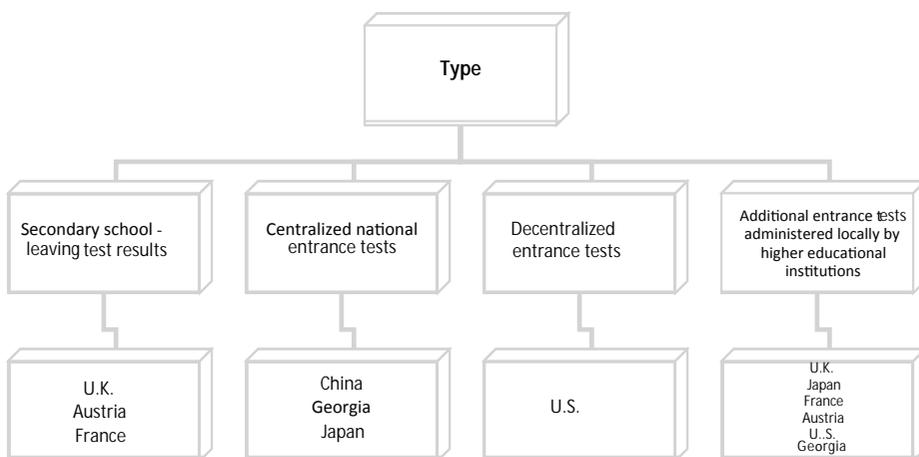
selectivity because of limited seats (Austria).

In East Asia and Eurasia the type was mainly the national entrance test in the absence of school-leaving nationally administered tests. A similar pattern emerged in a non-centralized country, the U.S. where according to (Alon et al, 2007) 94% of all institutions considered the SAT for undergraduate admissions in light of absence of national school-leaving examination. Using a single test or multiple testing was observed in centralized and decentralized countries, mainly attuned to either selectivity or availability. For instance, some Ivy League⁵ institutions in the U.S. require either SAT or ACT scores without further testing, while further scrutiny is conducted for selectivity. To quote Harvard University: “The Admissions Committee continues to consider test results in light of students’ educational opportunities”, where the percentage of applicants admitted in 2008 was 7.7% only, <http://collegeapps.about.com/od/collegerankings/tp/most-selective-colleges.htm>. The reason of this low admission rate is that students are only admitted in case they scored very high in SAT or ACT tests. Other elite institutions in the U.S. require further testing of aptitude and ability of students (Douglass, 2007). Thus, within the type in the U.S., either a single test is considered, or multiple-testing. The general rule is that elite institutions relying on a single-test require very high scores for admissions, and also other elite institutions require multiple testing for selectivity. A similar pattern emerged in Russell group institutions in the U.K. where either a single test is required (A-level) but students are selected based on highest scores, or further testing as in Oxford. A difference was observed in elite institutions in Japan where in addition to the national test scores, further testing is required for selectivity as in Tokyo University of Science (private) (see <http://www.sut.ac.jp/en/admis/>) or Hokudai University (<http://www.hokudai.ac.jp/bureau/nyu/english/en/admissions01.html>).

In China reliance was on the national test score only without further testing. In another centralized country, i.e., Georgia, besides the national entrance test, further testing is required in many private higher educational institutions for placing students.

Within the type, diversity was pervasive in the countries studied as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Typology of test-type in seven countries



⁵ The term also has connotations of academic excellence, selectivity in admissions, and social elitism.

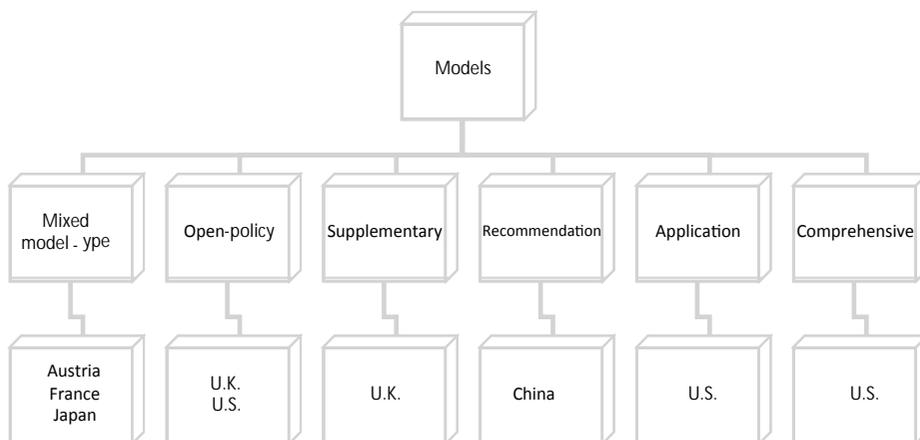
2. Models

Five models and one mixed model-type requirement were identified. In three centralized countries (Japan, Austria and France), the mixed model-type requirement was dominant. This mixed model-type is mainly employed by elite institutions in Japan and France for selectivity whereas in Austria's Fachhochschule for securing seats. Two decentralized countries (U.K. and the U.S.) adopted an open-policy admissions where retention overshadowed admissions, i.e., all students are admitted as is the case of two-year community colleges in the U.S. and the Open University in the U.K. where students undergo a period of 'trial', either they pass their courses, or discontinue their education due to failure.

The remaining four models are: the supplementary model in the U.K, the application model and the comprehensive model in the U.S. and the recommendation model in China. In the U.K. the supplementary model is not widespread, and is used particularly in England and Wales where an interview only is required besides A-level, and is mostly employed in elite institutions. The application model in the U.S. follows a rolling admission, i.e., there are no set deadlines for applying unlike the rest of countries where admission has set dates. In this model, admissions relies on the application itself which requests students' high school record, SAT or ACT scores, extracurricular activities, applicants' essays, interview and letters of recommendation. This model corresponds to the mixed-model type requirement only when test scores are presented and is unique since it is limited to a few institutions which are members of not-for-profit association known as the Common Application, Inc. The third model is the comprehensive one which is used by many elite institutions in the U.S. The fourth model is the recommendation model which relies on a letter of recommendation and used exclusively in China on a very low scale. It is worth noting that the U.S. has the highest diversity of undergraduate admission models.

In brief, adding to Helm's "type" and "model" typology of admissions, this paper identified 'kinds' of types and models that are used in the seven countries selected for the study (see figures 1 and 2).

Figure 2: Typology of models of undergraduate admissions



In the countries studied, both centralized and decentralized, the dominant factor for undergraduate admissions was the type (see figures 3 & 4). It is worth noting that diversification of undergraduate admissions including both types and models was higher in decentralized countries than in centralized ones with the U.S. scoring the highest diversity (see figure 5).

Figure 3: Typology of admissions

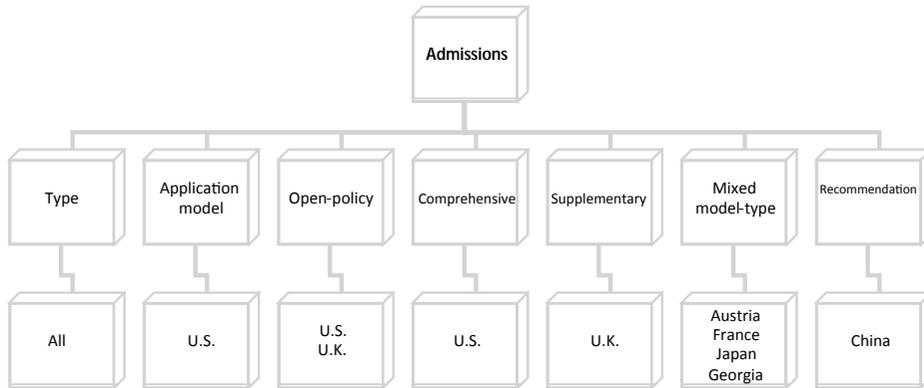


Figure 4. Distribution of admission kinds synthesized from the seven countries

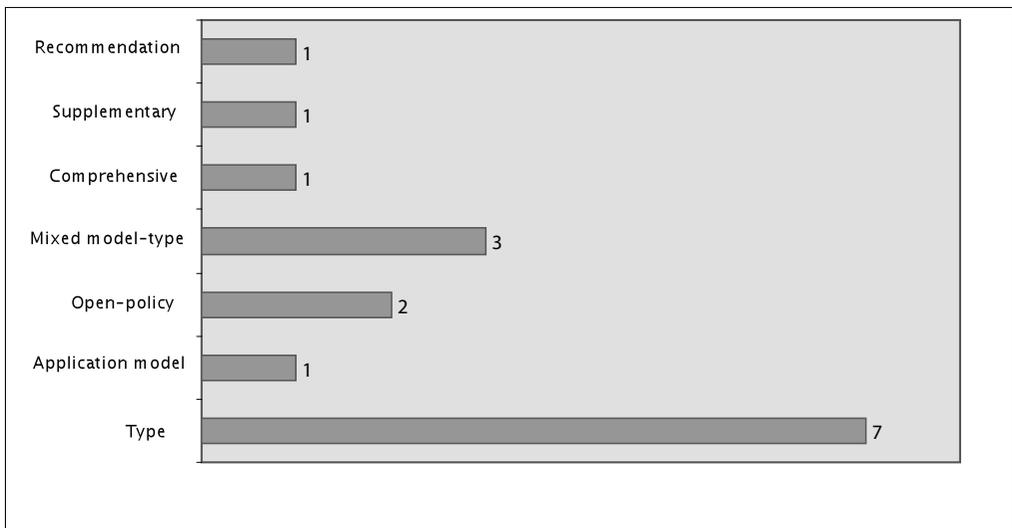
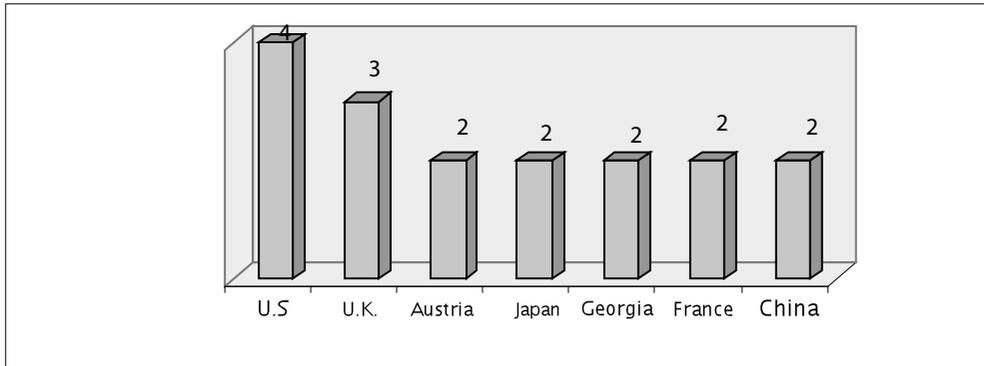


Figure 5: Diversification of admissions typology synthesized from the seven countries



3. Equity of Access

In all studied countries, opportunities for access were evident in most higher education institutions. In geographical terms, higher education is made accessible to remote areas in Japan and China and more seats are allocated in Austria. Despite these developments, two pertinent issues are worth discussing in a comparative perspective. The first concerns whether or not types and models in undergraduate admissions in the seven countries offer additional opportunities targeting what is described in the U.K. as the underserved or the underrepresented in U.S. parlance, or minority groups as in China and France, and females and the economically disadvantaged as in Austria. The second issue is whether equity measures, such as lowering cut-off scores and remediation in test-type sacrifice quality on the altar of justice.

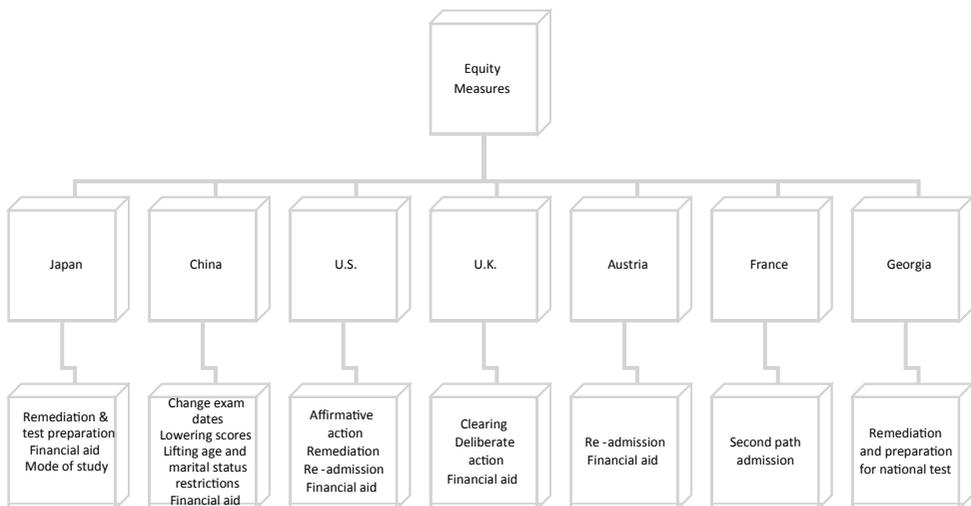
Equity measures were evident in undergraduate admissions, although with different weights given in each country. In Georgia, equity measures concerned remediation in the newly growing though with a quick pace private sector where low grade students in the national exams can take remedial courses and ultimately find a place in private higher education as is the case of the Georgian American University (see <http://gau.caucasus.net/eng/admissiondoc.php>). In the public sector, free classes are provided by the government to prepare students in minority regions for the national entrance exam (Helms, 2008), although minority access to higher education under the former Soviet Union was not an issue of concern. Turning to financial aid, in the private sector there is mentioning of finances to students such as the Georgian American University but not in other institutions such as the International Black Sea University <http://www.ibsu.edu.ge/index.php/Student-Affairs/Admission-and-Tuition.html>. Thus, access to the private sector in Georgia is limited to financially capable individuals. In Austria, equity measures were mainly giving students another chance to enter the Fachhochschule, or transfer to state universities in the same major. Moreover, gender equity was observed in the conditional financing of the Fachhochschule where money is given by the government based on recruitment of females. In the public sector, financial aid is allotted to poor students.

In France, a distinguishing feature is the reaching out of elite institutions to embrace minorities through creating cooperative links with schools in remote areas populated by immigrants and socially disadvantaged groups. In Japan equity measures taken concerned the preparation

for the national entrance test and the establishment of Juku to accommodate for the ronins; hence providing additional opportunities to have students enroll in higher education based on achievement and merit. A similar pattern emerged in Georgia and the U.S. where one equity measure was remediation in the U.S. and Georgia in the private sector. Another characteristic is shared between Georgia and Japan, i.e., establishing preparatory schools for the national entrance test. The difference with Japan however, lies in that preparation in Japan was attuned to success while in Georgia it was for curbing corruption. With the exception of Georgia, a common feature in the countries studied was the financial aid allocations to students as one of the equity measures provided. In Japan financial aid was attuned to high achievers, in the U.S. for high achievers and minority groups and needy individuals, in the U.K. for the underserved and for high achievers in elite institutions, and in Austria for the needy in general. In China, financial aid packages including loans were provided to the needy and minority groups as well. From another perspective, the only country which provided the opportunity for appeal against a possible unfair decision in undergraduate admissions within Affirmative Action was the U.S.

In the comparative analysis, equity of access relating to test-type appeared in three countries; namely, China, the U.S. and the U.K. through lowering cut-off scores of tests but only for certain groups and only in less prestigious institutions, specifically in the U.S. and the U.K. Demographic equity measures were found in China which was the only country studied which seemed to have restricted access in the past to single marital status. Lifting age and marital status restrictions together with changing national exam dates provided equity of access to peasants, married students and older students in China; hence established a broader platform of diversity of access based on age, marital status, social class, and gender. Figure 6 summarizes the various equity measures adopted in the seven countries in relation to undergraduate admissions.

Figure 6: Typology of equity measures in the seven countries



Turning to quality, with the exception of Georgia, all countries studied had quality assurance mechanisms mostly addressing the institution's performance and adherence to quality standards whose detailed discussion is marginal in this study. Only three countries seem to have been concerned with quality of undergraduate admissions related to the test-type, i.e., the U.S., Japan, and Georgia. In the U.S. the concern is over the trustworthiness of SAT and ACT, their predictive validity on students' performance in higher education, and their possible discrimination against minority groups. These concerns had implications on many institutions which started to move away from the test-type to the comprehensive model. In Japan, one quality measure related to the test-type was evident in narrowing the gap between the content of the national entrance test and the school curriculum through establishing Juku schools for preparation. In Georgia quality issues concentrated on curbing cheating in entrance exams and bribery and established measures such as installing surveillance camera in exam halls to control the exam environment (World Education News and Reviews <http://www.wes.org/eWENR/05dec/feature.htm>). The aim of these measures in the three countries was to promote or strengthen equal opportunities for access in higher education based on the test-type. However, in the seven countries studied, no evidence existed with regard to assuring quality of models used and their prediction of students' success and performance in higher education.

V. Overall Summary

From the above, it appears that undergraduate admissions are not static; they keep evolving in line with labor market demands and emerging social and political circumstances. This paper has shown patterns of change in undergraduate admissions, particularly in centralized countries (France, Austria and Japan) which started to move towards more diversity in their undergraduate systems, though such measures served three purposes, selectivity in Japan, availability in Austria, and alternative routes in France.

Ensuring equity of access in relation to quality was more attuned to the test-type while non-existent for models. Perhaps, this represented a double role of quality; one concerned with the institution as a whole through which admitted students benefit from quality education, where the other was limited to the test-type and in three countries only.

There remain issues worth considering in the countries studied which might have implications on undergraduate admissions in Arab higher education institutions. Among these issues is the concern over the predictive validity of entrance tests whether in centralized or decentralized countries. Do entrance tests predict students' success and performance in higher education? In the U.S. there is growing concern regarding the validity and reliability of SAT or ACT scores and also regarding their predictive validity. Further, does the national entrance test in Georgia assure assessment of the students' knowledge and abilities in pursuing specific majors in light of rampant corruption which is also a characteristic of many other developing nations? Moreover, are entrance tests reflective of the school curriculum?

The above have implications on higher educational institutions in Arab states, where there is a distinct paucity of evidence with regards to the continuity between school-leaving exams and the curricula requirements of higher education. Moreover, it is known that many higher educational institutions that model after the American system in Arab states, particularly in Lebanon consider SAT scores and TOEFL. Are there measures of predictive validity of SAT or TOEFL in these institutions? Further, are these same institutions considering models rather than types, or a combination of both? From the preceding presentation, there seems to be a trend of change

and reform in higher education with a tendency leaning towards granting autonomy to public higher educational institutions. This issue raises the concern regarding the need to grant public higher educational institutions in Arab states, considerable autonomy in running their academic affairs away from political intervention.

We have seen that undergraduate admissions in many of the countries studied consider equity of access measures to increase diversity and widen the participation of the underprivileged groups. In light of this, one might ask about the equity measures used in Arab higher education. These questions are left to policymakers and researchers in Arab states. Overall, undergraduate admissions between equity of access and quality remain important issues for further exploration in Arab higher educational landscape.

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Access, Equity and Competitiveness: The Case of Higher Education in Egypt

Mona El Baradei¹

Abstract

For decades academics and policymakers alike have recognized the importance of education in developing human capital, alleviating poverty, improving income distribution and in more recent literature, enhancing national competitiveness. Higher education in particular is playing a larger role than ever when it comes to national prosperity. Egypt has made significant progress in improving access and enrollment in institutions of higher education. College enrollment has risen steadily from 6.9 percent in 1970 to 20% percent in 1995 to 27.5 percent in 2005. However, access is not equal among all segments of society – to the detriment of Egypt's national competitiveness.

This study seeks to examine the link between equal access to higher education, and national competitiveness in Egypt. Data from household income and expenditure surveys from the years 1994 /1995 and 2004/ 2005 is used to shed light on the progress in access during the past ten years. Emphasis is placed on the distribution of educational opportunities according to a) income groups b) gender and c) geographic regions. It is shown that access to higher education is biased against poor income quintiles and rural geographical regions. A key conclusion is that quality and equality in higher education are mutually reinforcing goals that are necessary for competitiveness. With a relatively small portion of the Egyptian population receiving quality higher education future prospects for growth and prosperity will be jeopardized.

I. Introduction

Education is an important tool in any country's national development strategy. It provides an important mechanism through which to reduce poverty and generate growth that is long-term and equitable. Higher education in particular is playing a larger role than ever when it comes to national prosperity. This is because of its unique role in creating a skilled workforce able to innovate and stay up to date with the latest scientific and technological advancements.

Contemporary value chain analysis offers key insights as to why this is the case. In order to benefit from globalization countries must first insert their industries into global markets and commodity chains, then upgrade to higher value added activities (Kaplinsky, 2000). In today's

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markets value added within these chains comes more and more from intangible activities that are knowledge and skill based, including research and development, technological applications, product design and marketing (Gereffi, 2002). These sources of value depend heavily on the capabilities that only higher education and advanced training can provide.

National competitiveness reflects the ability of a country to maintain high and rising living standards for its citizens. It provides a useful framework through which we can understand economic performance and explain the global variation in development levels. Higher education, because of its role in industrial upgrade and generating value added, is an important source of national competitiveness. A strong system of higher education, characterized by quality instruction and equal access, can provide the human capital necessary for a productive economy. This study seeks to examine the link between equal access to higher education, and national competitiveness in Egypt. Data from household income and expenditure surveys from the years 1994 /1995 and 2004 /2005 is used to shed light on the progress in access during the past ten years. Emphasis is placed on the distribution of educational opportunities according to a) income groups b) gender and c) geographic regions. The research also seeks to provide a descriptive analysis of the reasons behind the unequal educational access and its impact on national competitiveness. A key conclusion to be drawn is that quality and equality in higher education are mutually reinforcing goals that are necessary for competitiveness. With a relatively small portion of the Egyptian population receiving quality higher education future prospects for growth and prosperity will be jeopardized.

Sections two, three and four will describe the current system of higher education, patterns of public spending and higher education enrollment trends in Egypt. The fifth section will examine the persistence of highly unequal access to higher education despite the relatively good enrollment rates and despite “free education.” It is argued in section six that a major cause for the disparity is the low quality of education. Finally section seven discusses the correlation between unequal access and Egypt’s low national competitiveness followed by a conclusion that draws important lessons and policy recommendations.

II. The Higher Education System in Egypt

The Egyptian higher education system is composed of public and private universities as well as a number of medium and higher institutes. Total enrollment across all higher education institutions reached 2,752,761 in 2006. There are 17 public universities with 302 different faculties, making up 61.1% of total higher education enrollment (1,680,812 registered students). Al Azhar University is somewhat unique as the country’s largest government-funded religious university. It is administered by the Ministry of Religious Endowments. Public universities are the central focus of the present study.

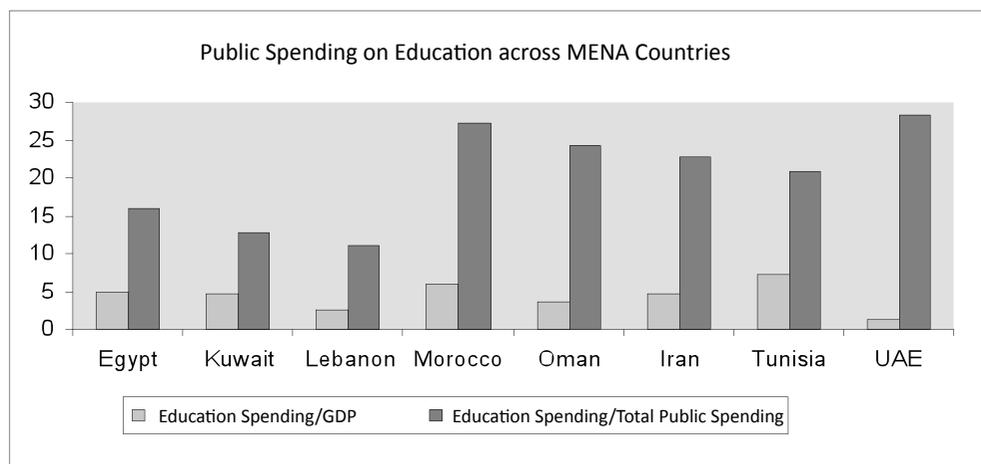
There are also 14 non-governmental private universities in Egypt enrolling just 1.8% of students. The American University in Cairo is an example of a long-established private university however most are relatively new and tend to be concentrated in the Greater Cairo area.

Medium and higher institutes offer technical or vocational degrees in lieu of a university education. Higher institutes are four years while medium institutes are only two years. According to government statistics, there are 107 private higher institutes in Egypt, 11 private medium institutes and 57 government medium institutes. Together they attract 602,622 registered students or 21.9% of higher education enrollment (Abdel Hameed, 2007).

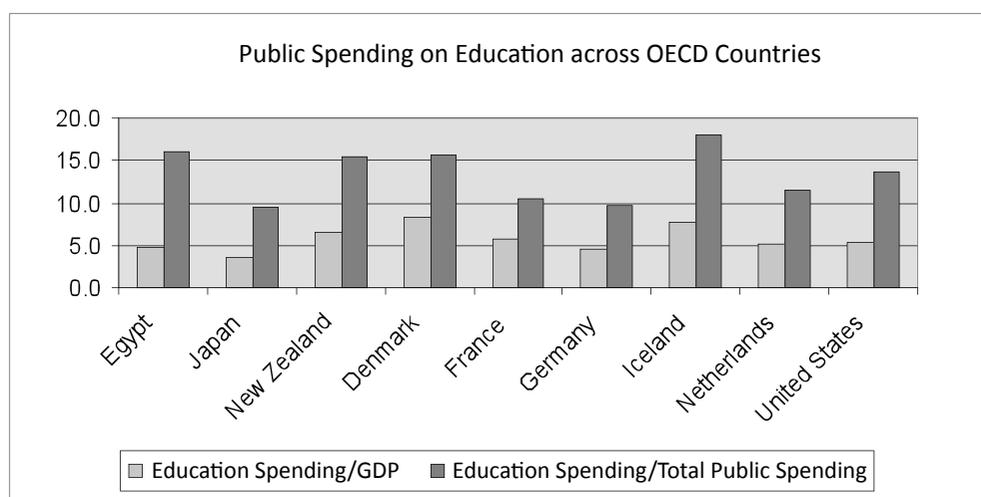
III. Public Spending on Higher Education in Egypt

Public spending on education in Egypt as a share of total public spending and of GDP is quite high, reaching 16% and 4.8% respectively in 2005 (UNESCO website). These figures are slightly higher than the MENA average (although lagging behind regional neighbors such as Morocco, Oman and the UAE) and comparable to many OECD countries. This large allocation, however, comes after several decades of drastic underinvestment in education (El Baradei 2004). During the late 1970's and 1980's budgetary allocation to education decreased steadily in real terms causing long-lasting damage to the quality and efficiency of the education system. By 1990 education was only 9.5% of total public spending (World Bank 2008).

Figure 1: International Comparison of Public Expenditure on Education, 2005

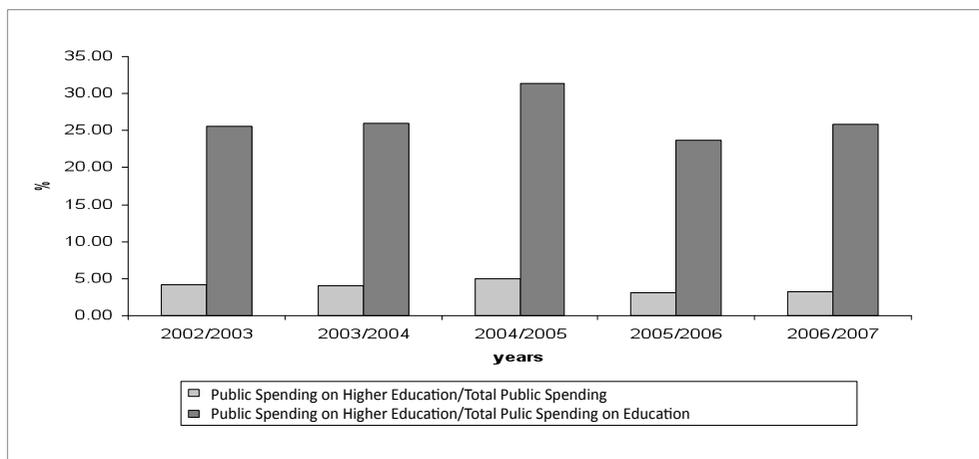


Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics website. Countries selected according to data availability.



Higher education receives a sizable share of the government budget. Expenditure on higher education in Egypt has risen steadily from 1992 /1993 to 2006 /2007 with the exception of notable drops in 2002 /2003 and 2005 /2006. Government spending on higher education as a share of total government budget and as a share of the education budget also peaked in 2004 /2005, reaching 5.02% and 31.42% respectively, before falling drastically in 2005 /2006 to 23.69% and 3.12% respectively. In 2006/ 2007 these ratios increased but were still lower than 2003 /2004 and 2004 / 2005 levels.

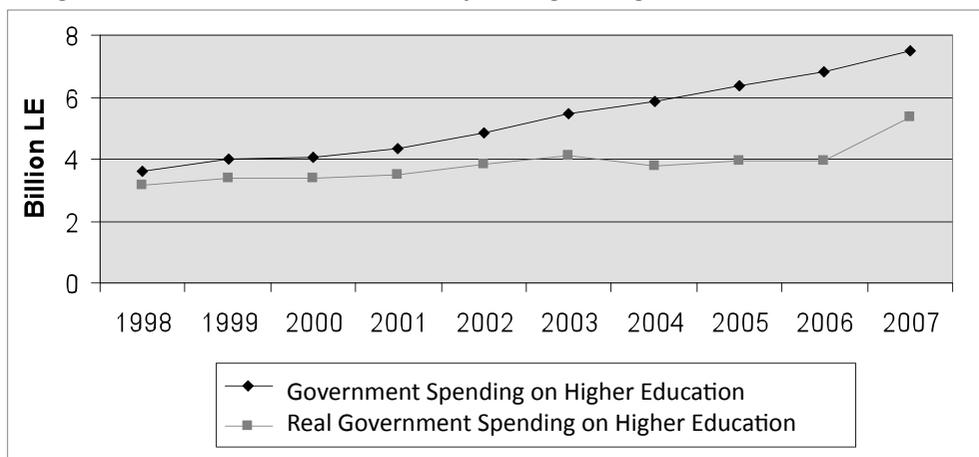
Figure 2: Public Spending on Higher Education as a Percentage of Total Public Spending and of Public Spending on Education, 2002 /2003 – 2006 /2007



Source: Calculated from the Functional distribution of the Government budget 2006 /2007, Ministry of Finance.

Nominal and real public spending on higher education has been increasing albeit at a slower rate since 2004. In 2007 public spending on higher education reached 5.33 billion LE in real terms.

Figure 3: Nominal and Real Public Spending on Higher Education 1998 - 2007



Source: Ministry of Higher Education and CPI data

The share of public expenditure on higher education as a percentage of the government education budget is quite high in comparison to other countries in the MENA region and even quite similar to some OECD countries such as France, Germany and the United States.

**Table 1: Share of Public Expenditure on Higher Education
(as a Percentage of Total Public Expenditure on Education) Across Countries**

Country	Share of Public Expenditure on Higher education (as a percentage of total public expenditure on education)
Middle East and North Africa	
Djibouti	14% (2005)
Iran	15% (2005)
Lebanon	29% (2005)
Morocco	17%(2005)
Tunisia	24%(2005)
Egypt	26% (2006)
Europe	
Italy	17%(2004)
France	21%(2004)
Germany	25%(2004)
Sub-Saharan Africa	
Eretria	55% (2005)
Rwanda	31% (2005)
South Africa	15% (2005)
High Income Countries	
United States	27%(2004)
United Kingdom	19%(2004)
Kuwait	35%(2004)
Japan	18%(2004)
Israel	16%(2004)

Source: World Bank Edstats

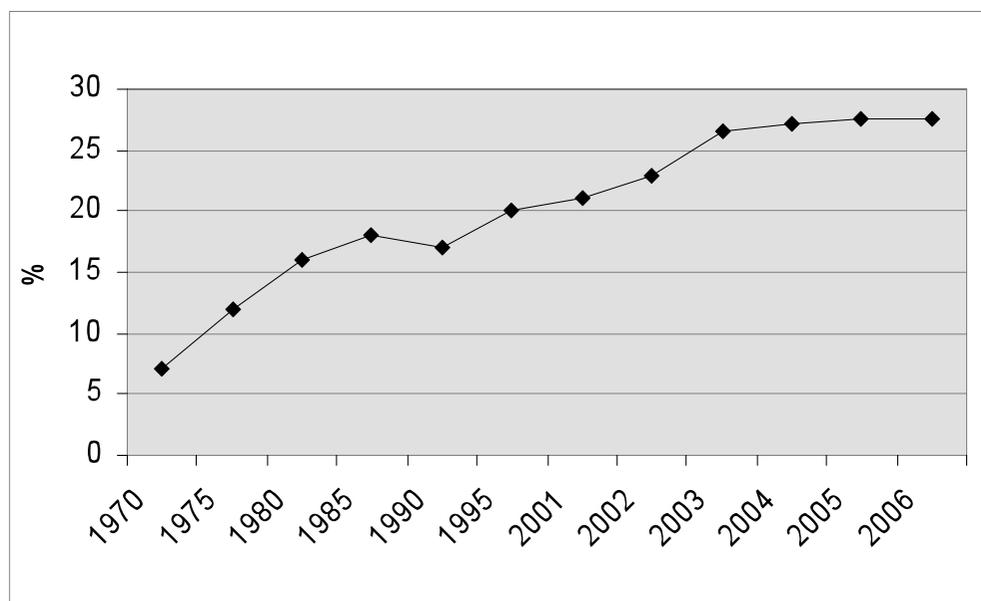
IV. Enrollment in Higher Education in Egypt

Under the 1961 Constitution, all education levels, including secondary and university, was made free of charge to ensure more equal access across various segments of the Egyptian society. This resulted in a large surge in secondary school enrollment during the 1960's and set the stage for a similar increase in university enrollments in the following decade. University enrollment increased by nearly three fold between 1970 and 1985 (Richards, 1992).

Gross enrollment rates have increased across all education levels. At the tertiary level gross enrollment rates went from 20% in 1995 to 27.5% in 2005, a 28% increase over the past decade (Abdel Hameed, 2007)². In 2004 /2005 the net tertiary enrollment rate was 24.1%.

Tertiary enrollment in Egypt continues to exceed the MENA average; however, Egypt's enrollment in higher education is much lower than OECD countries including Denmark, Finland and France, all with enrollment rates above 50% (Abdel Hameed, 2007).

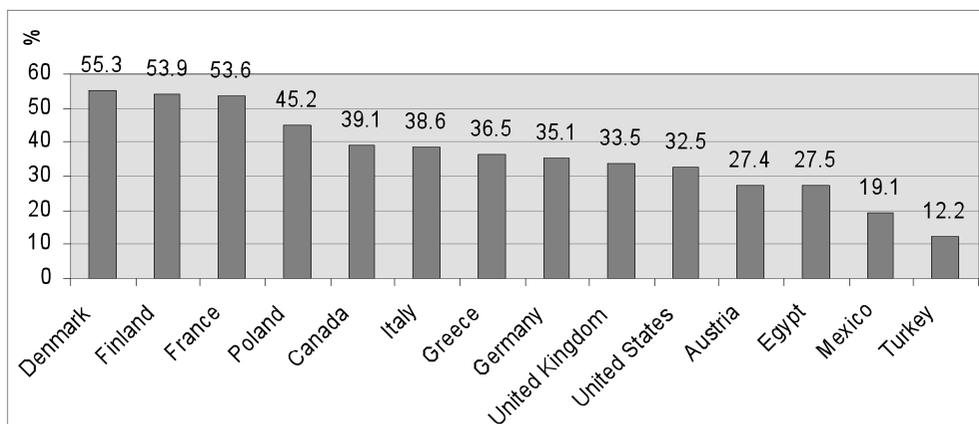
Figure 4: Gross Tertiary Enrollment Rates in Egypt 1970 - 2006



Source: Ministry of State for Economic Development website; 2003 -2006 figures are from Abdel Hameed 2007

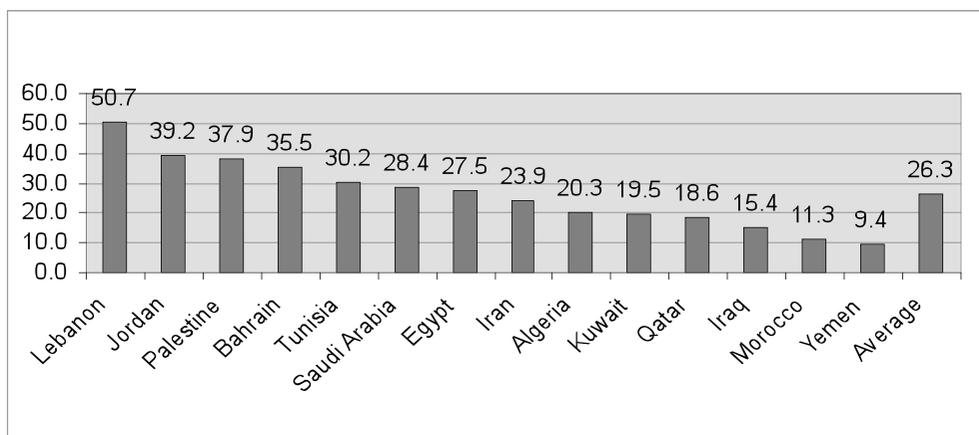
² Gross tertiary enrollment rates include all higher education institutions in Egypt and are calculated as a percent of number of individuals between the ages of 18 - 23.

Figure 5: Gross Enrollment in Higher Education across a Sample of Countries, 2006



Source: Abdel Hameed 2007

Figure 6: Gross Tertiary Enrollment Rates in Arab Countries, 2005



Source: World Bank 2008; Egypt figures from Abdel Hameed 2007

V. Access to Higher Education in Egypt

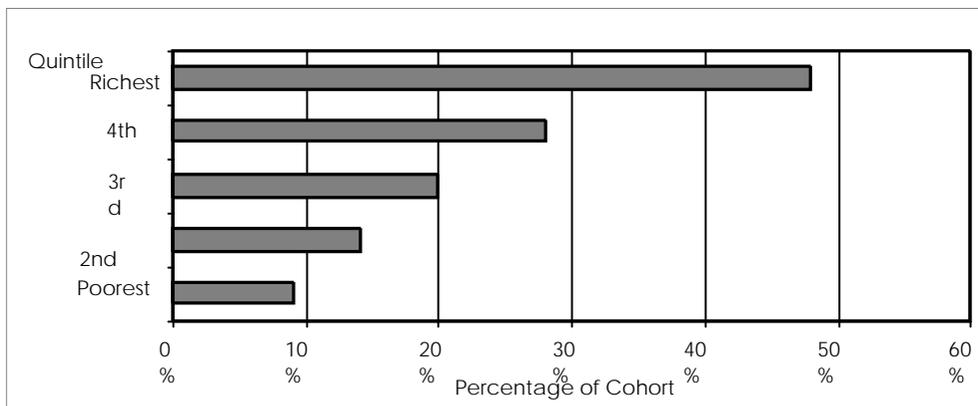
Access to higher education, as measured by enrollment rates, is increasing in Egypt. However, less is known about the distribution of opportunities within the higher education system. This begs the question: how is access to higher education distributed among income groups, regions and gender?

1. Access to Higher Education by Income Group

Access to basic education is relatively equal across income quintiles. In 2004, 85.15% of children in the poorest quintile completed basic education, just 6.41% less than the richest quintile. This is not the case with higher education. While the net university enrollment rate for the richest quintile reached 47.95% (up 6.74% from 1995) the poorest income quintile had a net university enrollment rate of just 9.07%.

Unequal access to higher education also represents an unequal distribution of benefits to public spending on higher education. The benefits of education subsidies accruing to each income group will depend on their enrollment rates. The richest quintile, with the highest university enrollment rate benefits the most from public spending on higher education. The poorest quintile with the lowest university enrollment rate benefits the least. This means public spending on higher education in Egypt is regressive in nature.

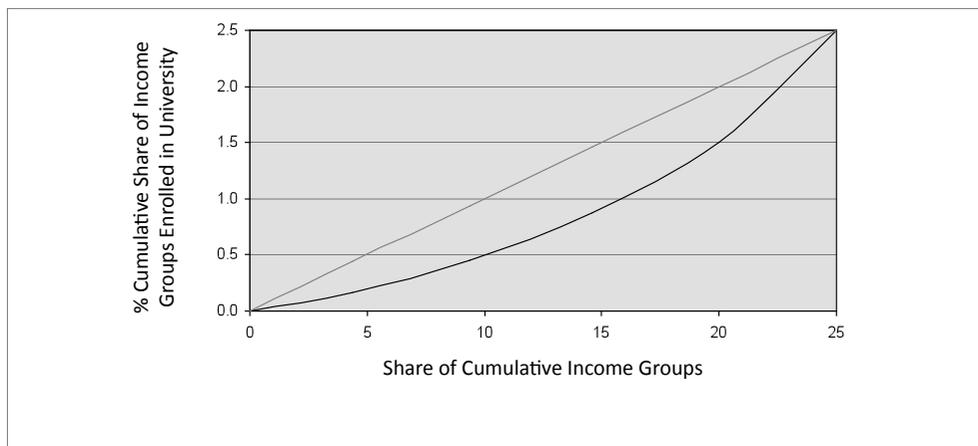
Figure 7: Net University Enrollment Rates by Income Quintile 2004 /2005



Source: 2004 /2004 HIECS

A Lorenz Curve can be used to show the degree of inequality in university enrollments. The line at the 45° angle represents a perfectly equal distribution of university enrollments across income groups. The curve, which represents the actual distribution, indicates a fair amount of inequality in the distribution of university enrollments.

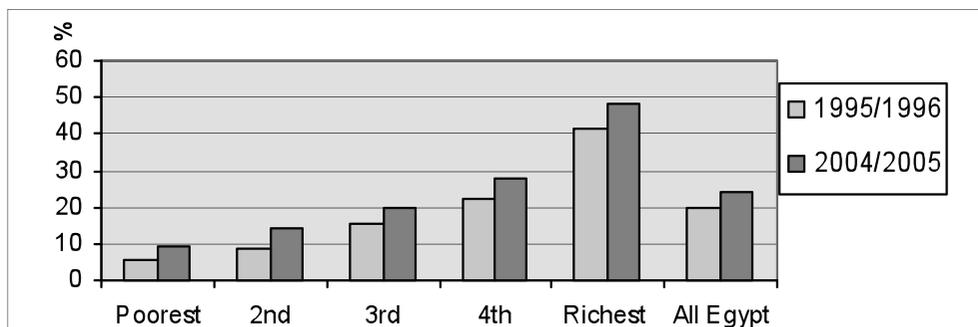
Figure 8: Lorenz Curve of Percent Cumulative Share of Income Groups Enrolled in Universities 2004 /2005



Source: Calculated from 2004 /2005 HIECS

Inequality of university access has increased between 1995 /1996 and 2004 /2005. The poorest quintile had the smallest percent increase of enrollments at the university level – just 3.55% over the decade. On the other hand, the richest quintile experienced a 6.74% increase in enrollments. Thus, not only is access to higher education skewed toward the rich, this inequality has in fact risen since 1995. Figure 9 shows how university enrollment rates have changed for each income quintile between 1995 /1996 and 2004 /2005.

Figure 9: Net University Enrollment from 1995 /1996 and 2004 /2005 by Income Quintiles



Source: Calculated from the 1995 /1996 and 2004 /2005 HIECS

2. Access to Higher Education by Region

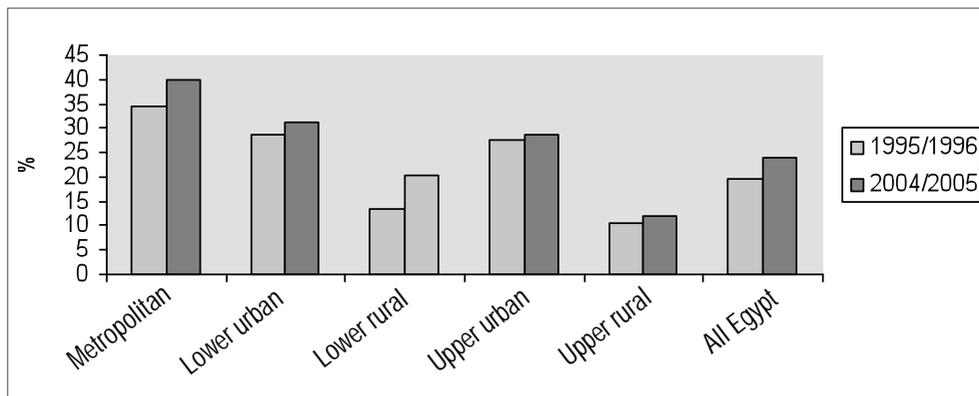
Across all education levels, enrollment rates are lowest in rural areas, particularly upper rural, and highest in metropolitan areas. The difference is greatest at the university level where metropolitan enrollment is 29% higher than upper rural. Over time, however, regional inequality in higher education access has been declining. In all regions university enrollment increased from 1995 /1996 to 2005 /2006, but the largest percent increase 35.4% was in lower rural Egypt, followed by metropolitan (14.1%) and finally upper rural (11.2%) Egypt.

Table 2: Net Enrollment Rates by Region 1995 /1996, 2004 /2005

	Net enrollment rate in 1995 /1996			Net enrollment rate in 2004 /2005		
	Basic education	Secondary	University	Basic education	Secondary	University
Metropolitan	85.24	63.49	34.36	95.6	65.7	40
Lower urban	84.17	63.3	28.55	95.6	65.4	31.3
Lower rural	80.2	51.7	13.25	93.2	61	20.5
Upper urban	83.29	59.62	27.76	93.7	62.8	28.7
Upper rural	69.09	41.5	10.57	85.9	48.7	11.9
All Egypt	78.36	53.21	19.74	91.6	59	24.1

Source: 1995 /1996 and 2004 /2005 HIECS

Figure 10: Net Enrollment Rates in Higher Education by Region 1995 /1996, 2004 /2005



Source: Calculated from the 1995 /1996 and 2004 /2005 HIECS

The persistence of unequal access between geographical regions is often related to income – more so than other variables such as university proximity or quality. University enrollment rates are lowest in Menia, Fayoum, Beni Suf and Beheira governorates and highest in Cairo and Alexandria. This corresponds to the findings that in 2004 /2005 Menia had the highest number of poor persons across all Egyptian governorates followed by Beni Suf and Beheira (UNDP, 2008). The general underdevelopment of rural regions and high levels of poverty behind the regional disparity in enrollment may also explain the unequal male and female enrollment rates in rural regions examined in the following section. Although gender enrollment rates are relatively equal across urban and metropolitan regions, rural areas lag behind in terms on gender parity. This is because socio-economic status has a large impact on gender equality and female enrollment rates. Specifically, wealth can increase the gaps in female and male education among the poor (Filmer, 1999). In Egypt, the percentage of poor and near poor is highest in upper rural regions, more than three times than metropolitan regions. However once poor females complete basic education they are more likely to complete their education than males - who often drop out at secondary and tertiary education levels in order to find work (El Baradei, 2002). In other words, although income constraints may lower female tertiary enrollment in rural areas, the high completion or survival rate among females can offset this tendency.

Table 3: Percentage of Poor and Near Poor by Region

	1995/1996	1999/2000	2004/2005
Metropolitan	35.6	19.6	18
Lower Urban	33.5	27.7	27.2
Lower Rural	57.1	42	41.1
Upper Urban	44	28.9	28
Upper Rural	65.3	63.5	64.6
All Egypt	51.4	42.6	40.5

Source: World Bank, 2008-b

3. Access to Higher Education by Gender

As a nationwide average, female enrollment is higher than male enrollment at the basic education level. At the university level, female enrollments are 0.94% less than male. However the female university enrollment rate increased by 19.5% between 1995 /1996 -2004 /2005 compared to16.9% for male enrollment, marking significant progress.

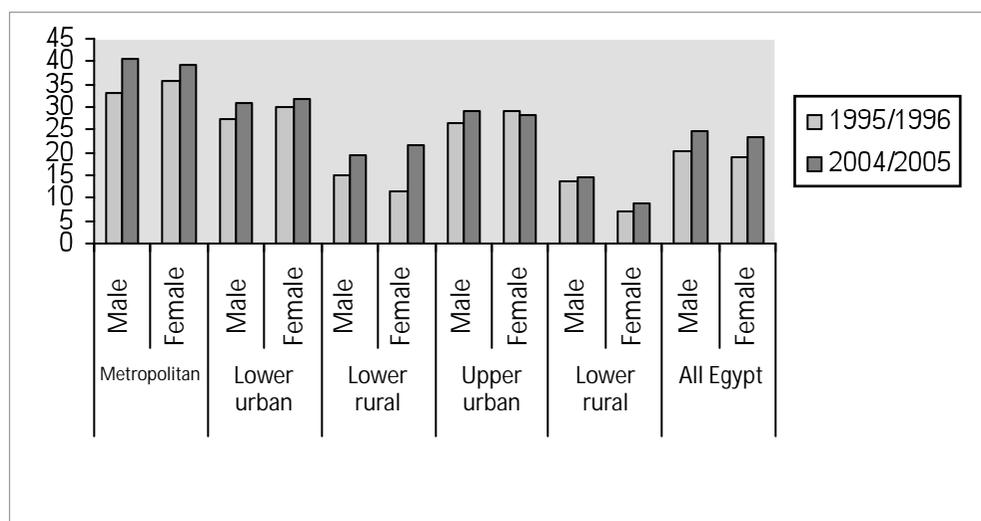
Table 4: Changes in Net Enrollment between 1995 /1996 and 2004 /2005 by Gender

	Basic Education		Secondary Education		University		
	1995/1996	2004/2005	1995/1996	2004/2005	1995/1996	2004/2005	% increase
Male	81.34	84.8	54.29	60.63	20.39	24.54	16.9
Female	75.16	89.79	52.10	57.22	19.01	23.62	19.5

Source: 1995 /1996 and 2004 /2005 HIECS

Female university enrollment rates have grown significantly in both urban and rural areas over the past decade. In rural regions, especially upper rural, female enrollment rates are still much lower than male. In all other regions female university enrollment rates are much closer to male enrollment rates. Also, since 1995 /1996 female enrollment has improved at much faster rate than males' across Egypt, meaning the gender gap has been narrowing over the past decade. In upper rural areas female and male university enrollment grew by 19% and 8% respectively while in lower rural areas enrollment grew by 48% and 23% respectively.

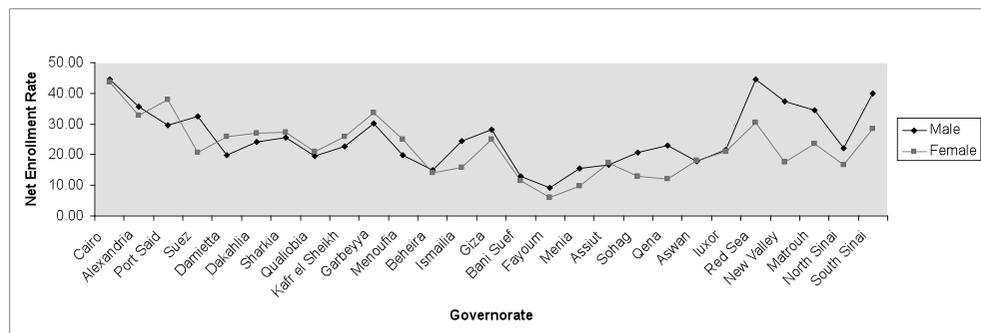
Figure 11: Net Enrollment Rate by Region and Gender 1995 /1996, 2004 /2005



Source: Calculated from 1995 /1996 and 2004 /2005 HIECS

Across Egypt's governorates, female university enrollment is the same or higher than male enrollment in 14 out of 27 governorates. Female university enrollment is lowest in the rural governorates of Fayoum, Beni Suef and Menia, overlapping with the previous findings of generally low enrollment in these governorates. Low female enrollment in rural regions can be attributed to the higher poverty rates as well as cultural or social barriers. However, studies have shown that being poor is a bigger obstacle to female enrollment as girls from wealthy or non-poor families receive schooling regardless of region. The level of disparity, however, is greatest in the Red Sea and New Valley and Matrouh governorates.

Figure 12: Net University Enrollment Rate by Gender and Governorate, 2004 /2005



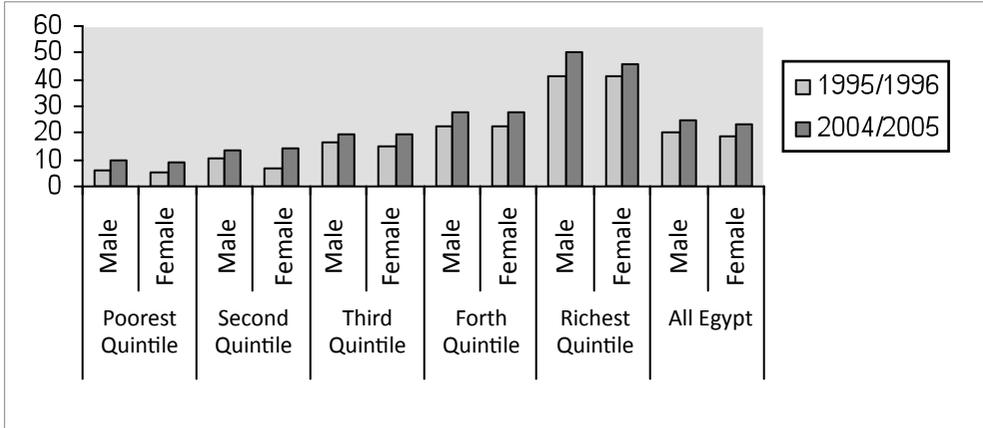
Source: 2004 /2005 HIECS

Among income quintiles, females have only slightly lower university enrollment rates in the poorest quintile. Interestingly, the largest disparity between male and female enrollment is in the richest quintile where male enrollment is 4.6% higher. This could be due to the fact that females at poor income levels, once past the basic education stage, tend to have lower drop out rates than boys (El Baradei, 2002). Males on the other hand, due to the high opportunity cost of secondary and higher education, often leave school to find work. Because males in higher income quintiles are not under as much pressure to find employment their enrollment rates continue to be high. Between 1995 /1996 and 2004 /2005 female university enrollment rates grew at a faster rate than male for the second, third and fourth income quintiles. The opposite was true at the poorest and richest quintiles where male and female enrollment grew at 40% and 38.8% respectively and 18.3% and 10% respectively. In general, access to higher education is becoming much more equal for males and females with some slight exceptions. This marks a drastic improvement from past levels of gender inequality and indicates increasing interest in higher education on the part of females.

Key findings of this section include:

- Access to higher education is highly unequal among income groups. Tertiary enrollment is 47.95 at the richest income quintile and only 9.07% at the poorest. Most importantly, this inequality has also grown in the period between 1995 /1996 and 2004 /2005.
- Enrollment in higher education is unequal among regions. Metropolitan and urban regions continue to have higher tertiary enrollment than rural regions. Upper rural areas have the lowest tertiary enrollment rates (29% lower than metropolitan enrollment rates) indicating a correlation between regional enrollment patterns and the level of poverty and development. This inequality has, however, decreased in the period between 1995 /1996 and 2004 /2005.

Figure 13: Net Enrollment Rate by Gender and Income Quintiles 1995 /1996, 2004 /2005



Source: Calculated from 1995 /1996 and 2004 /2005 HIECS

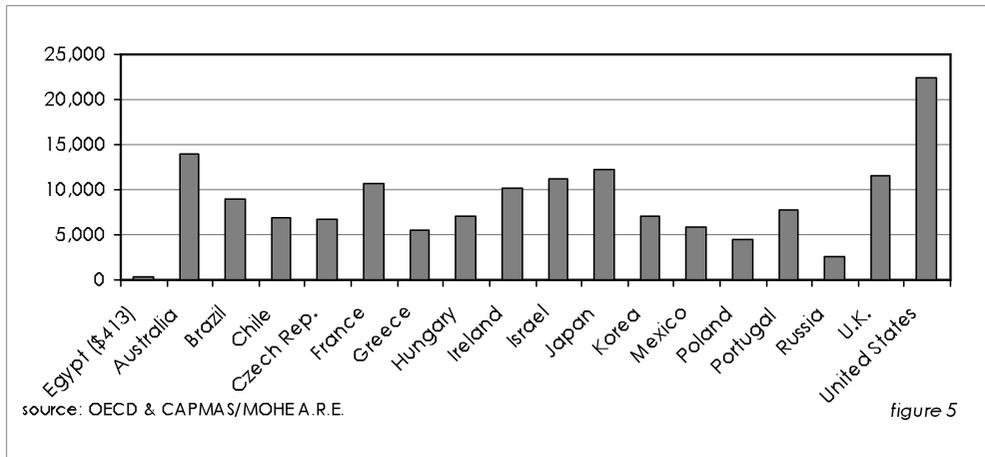
- Female tertiary enrollment rates have improved across most income quintiles and all regions since 1995 /1996. The largest disparity exists at the richest income quintile and in rural regions. Upper rural regions in particular have the highest disparity between male and female tertiary enrollment.

VI. Reasons for Inequality in Higher Education Access in Egypt

It can be concluded that although Egypt's tertiary enrollment has grown over the past years, so has inequality of access. The preceding analysis shows that students from poor families and/or rural regions are disadvantaged by Egypt's higher education system. There are several reasons for the unequal access to higher education among income groups and regions, a number of which are briefly explored below.

The principal reason behind the exclusion of low income groups from higher education is the generally poor quality across all levels of education. Since the decision to expand the education system and make education free of charge, Egyptian schools and universities have been overwhelmed. Public spending on education in the 1970's and 1980's was very low. As a result not enough schools and universities were built and the entire system witnessed significant deterioration both in terms of infrastructure and teaching quality. The government is still struggling to reverse the damage done in earlier years. The poor quality affects both the internal and external efficiency of higher education institutions. One indicator of internal efficiency is the extremely high students to faculty ratio. The average ratio across 24 fields of study is 77.25:1 (Abdel Hameed 2007). While medical faculties have the lowest ratio of 8:1, faculties of law have an alarming ratio of 321:1. Per student expenditure is another widely used proxy indicator of internal quality. Egypt spends an average of US\$ 413 per student which is excessively low especially when compared to OECD countries which spend over US\$ 10,000 per student (Lewis 2008).

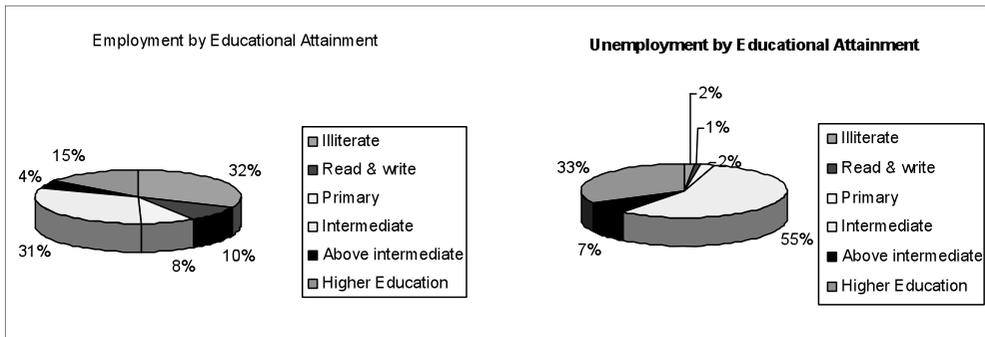
Figure 14: University education: Expenditure per Student (2004 constant prices, \$USD)



Source: Lewis, 2008

The external efficiency of the higher education system is reflected in a significant mismatch between education outcomes and labor market needs. As shown below, higher education graduates constitute 33% of Egypt's unemployed compared to just 15% of the employed workforce.

Figure 15: Employment and Unemployment in Egypt by Educational Attainment, 2007

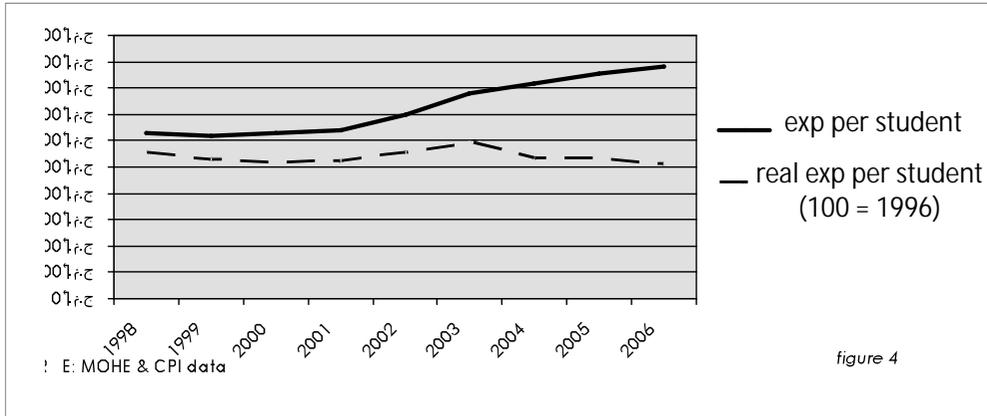


Source: Egyptian Labor Market Panel Survey 2008

While the unequal access can be attributed to poor quality at all levels of education, the declining quality of higher education poses a particular threat for the nation's competitiveness. In the Global Competitiveness Index Egypt's rank in terms of quality of the educational system under the Higher Education and Training pillar got progressively worse over the last three years. Egypt ranked 106 out of 128 in 2007, 119 out of 131 in 2008 and finally 125 out of 134 in 2009. The deterioration of quality was caused by a) decreasing levels of real government expenditure per student and b) a misallocation of public spending on higher education.

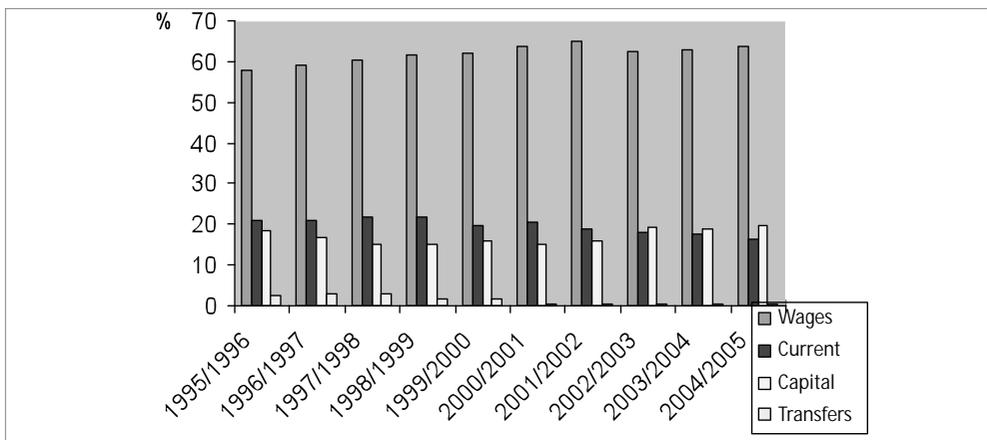
The higher education system suffered from shortages of financial resources well before the 1990's when public spending on higher education increased significantly. It is important to note that the deterioration that took place in the 1980's continues to affect the quality of the system today. Also, despite the fact that between 1998 and 2006, the gross budget for higher education in Egypt increased by 24% in real terms, real expenditure per student fell by almost 8%.

Figure 16: Gross v. Real Government Expenditure per Student



The Misallocation of resources is another reason for the poor quality of higher education in Egypt. Firstly, there is a strong bias toward current expenditures and in particular wages and salaries. The misallocation peaked in 2001 /2001 when wages and salaries received 64.92% of public spending on higher education, other current expenditures received 18.83% and investment or capital expenditures received just 15.82%. In 2004 /2005 wages and salaries constituted 63.6% of public spending, other current expenditures received 16.25% while 19.61% went toward investment or capital expenditures. Between 1995 /1996 and 2004 /2005 wages and salaries increased by 8.8% compared to a 5.9% increase in investment expenditures.

Figure 17: Allocation of Public Expenditure on Higher Education, 1995 /1996 -2004 /2005



Source: Abdel Hameed, 2007

Second, in Egypt the lion's share of wages and salaries goes to non-academic staff. In 2006/2007 the ratio between academic and non-academic staff was 1:1.07 an improvement on past years, but still quite high. The result is that professors in Egypt are highly underpaid and unmotivated which jeopardizes the quality of instruction (World Bank, 2007). The lack of investment spending has also led to inadequate teaching facilities including assets, maintenance and infrastructure. This is particularly problematic in science, engineering and medical faculties where high-tech laboratory equipment is essential to a high-quality education.

Third, government educational expenditure is not only unequal across educational stages but also between universities. It was previously shown that rural regions, particularly in the south, have the lowest tertiary enrollment rates. Besides being poor, one possible factor for the low enrollment in these regions is the geographic distribution of resources and facilities. Cairo University enrolls 16% of university students yet receives 20.1% of the government university budget. Ain Shams and Alexandria Universities, also in metropolitan cities, receive 16.2% and 11% of the budget respectively. In contrast the rural universities of Tanta, Zagazig, and Helwan all received a smaller percent of the government budget than the percent of students they enrolled. The more limited funding for universities in rural regions could mean lower quality, higher non-tuition costs and a generally lower private rate of return for the poor (El Baradei, 2007).

The poor quality of the education system is reflected in the rising household expenditure on education, low private returns to education and the increased demand for humanities. Each of these is explored in more detail below.

1. Rising Household Expenditure on Education

Despite education being free of charge household expenditure on education has increased since the 1980's. The growing expenditure on education is caused by increases in school fees and private tutoring as well as other education related expenditures such as textbooks, uniforms and school supplies. Fees and tutoring expenditures in particular have grown consistently in real terms and as a proportion of household expenditure.

According to 2004/2005 HIECS data, the average Egyptian household spends 8% of total household expenditure on education. This figure varies greatly according to income quintile. The richest quintile spends approximately seven times more than the poorest quintile on education. As a share of household expenditure the poorest and richest quintiles spend about 4.8% and 11.8% on education respectively. Over the past decade household educational costs have doubled. In 1995/1996 the average household spent 498.4 LE on education in comparison to 1051 LE in 2004/2005. The growing costs of education can be prohibitive for many poor Egyptian families. As a result, it is common among the poorest income quintile to pursue only basic schooling. This is one very early cause for the unequal access to higher education.

Private tutoring is a particularly notable obstacle - especially at the preparatory and secondary stages where tutoring costs peak across all income quintiles. There exists a large variation in the amount of spending on tutoring among the richest and poorest income quintiles. According to El Laithy (2006) "the richest quintile spends about six times as much as the poorest quintiles on private tutoring, yet private tutoring represents 19% of education expenditure of the richest quintile, compared to 24% of the poorest quintile." In addition, the poor spend a larger share of their income on books, transportation and fees while wealthier families spend a larger share on tutoring and private lessons. Because they have less private tutoring, children from low-income households are disadvantaged in terms of being accepted into secondary schools and university. A majority of students from low-income households do not achieve the minimum grades that

would qualify them for a general secondary degree due to the high tutoring costs at preparatory stages. They are instead funneled into government funded technical and vocational schools.

Table 5: Annual Average Private and Group Tutoring by Education Levels and Quintiles (L.E.), 2004 /2005

	Poorest Quintile	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	Richest Quintile	All Egypt
Primary	34.45	69.03	94.11	133.73	211.08	97.11
Preparatory	57.89	106.53	156.42	232.98	445.91	177.87
Secondary	74.71	174.98	268.02	425.33	1114.85	427.15
University	0.82	1.73	5.79	20.72	175.07	42.43
All levels	79.16	185.81	267.56	389.9	820.8	344.85

Source: El Laithy 2006

The Egyptian Ministry of Education launched the Technical and Vocational Education program to reduce enrollment pressures on secondary schools. Students who perform poorly on their preparatory exams (equivalent to American junior high or pre-secondary schooling) have since been funneled into vocational/technical tracks. Vocational education in Egypt is considered very inferior to general secondary and university degrees. It has been widely criticized for its irrelevant syllabi, inadequate teaching facilities and very low caliber of students (Abdel-latif, et al. 2006). In Egypt about 60% of secondary students pursue vocational degrees. This is very high in comparison to other MENA countries. Research confirms that most vocational track students are from low income households and that poorer governorates have a larger percent of vocational students than wealthier regions (ETF 2005). In fact, poor students constitute 55% of enrollment in technical schools, compared to 37% in general secondary schools (El Baradei 2001). Many of these students are also female.

Once on the vocational track very few students meet minimum university admission requirements. However some do enroll at higher technical institutes in lieu of college. One reason for the general failure of vocation and technical education is inadequate funding. Vocational school costs 10 to 15% more than general secondary school but receives the same amount of government spending (El Baradei, 2003). The result is that there is not enough money to upgrade equipment, provide teacher training and update the curriculum to reflect new developments in the respective fields. Finally, tutoring costs are also problematic at the secondary level which determines university access. For those who gain admission into general secondary schools, doing well on the final ‘thanawiya amma’ exam (needed to earn a secondary degree) is once again a matter of being able to pay for private tutoring. Although the system is in theory merit-based, poor families, unable to afford good quality private tutoring are greatly disadvantaged in terms of gaining university admission. As a result, access to general secondary education and university education has become dependent upon academic achievement as well as family income.

2. Household Higher Education Expenditures

The household costs of higher education, despite higher education being free, have grown even more than primary and secondary education. Between 1995 and 2000, expenditure on higher education grew by 38.9%. Most of this increase has to do with the growing need for private

tutoring and supplementary classes at the tertiary level. It is likely that expenditure will continue to rise as educational quality deteriorates.

**Table 6: Change in Household Spending on Higher Education
1995 /1996 – 1999 /2000**

Year	Higher Education Spending
1995/1996/ (current LE)	246.9
1999/1996/1995) 2000/ constant LE)	343
Percent change	38.90%

Source: World Bank, 2002-b

Not everyone can afford the costly supplementary classes demanded by the Egyptian higher education system. In fact, the level of private spending on higher education increases, in both absolute and relative terms, at higher income quintiles. In 2004 /2005 the richest quintile spent 75% of household education expenditure on higher education compared to just 1.8% at the poorest quintile. The richest quintile also spent about 200 times more on tutoring costs alone (see Table 7). These high and rising indirect costs of education are a major obstacle for most low income households leading to skewed tertiary enrollment rates.

**Table 7: Distribution of Household Spending on Higher Education
by Income Quintiles 2004 /2005**

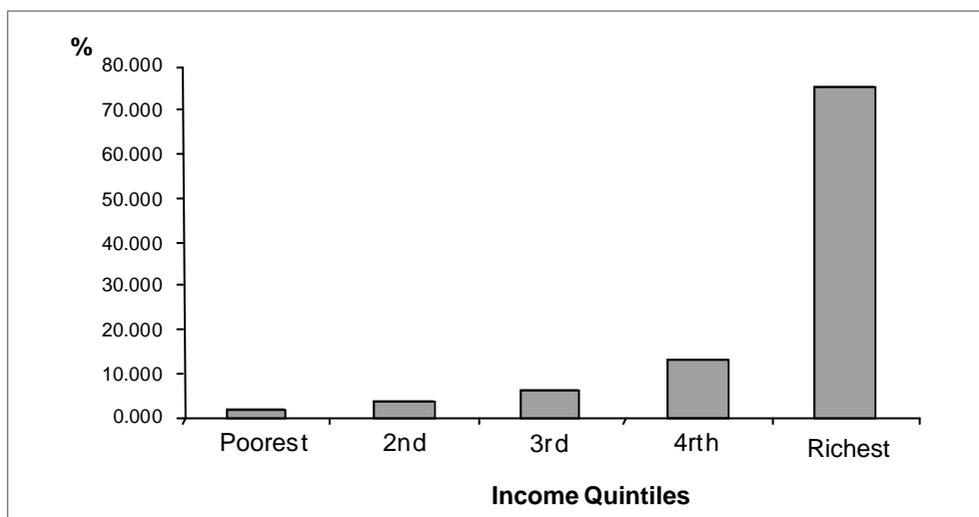
Income quintiles	% of total spending on higher education
Poorest	1.788
2 nd	3.621
3 rd	6.268
4 th	13.244
Richest	75.079

Source: Calculated from 2004 /2005 HIECS

3. Low Private Rates of Return to Higher Education

Because of both the poor quality and rising costs of education, private rates of return continue to be very low. In 1999 /2000 the average rate of return for basic, secondary and university education were -3.39%, 0.67% and 7.1% respectively. Although the return rates increased between 1995 and 2000 to -.11%, 2% and 8% respectively, this is still very low in comparison to other countries especially for university education where the rate of return is usually between 10 -12% and can reach 30 or 40% (El Baradei, 2003).

Figure 18: Distribution of Total Household Spending on Higher Education by Income Quintiles 2004 /2005



Source: Table 7

Table 8: Private Rate of Return to Education in Egypt 1995 -2000

	1995 /1996	1999 /2000
Basic Education	-3.39	-0.11
Secondary	-0.67	2
University and Above	7.1	8

Source: El Baradei 2003 p. 9

The low rates of return are caused by poor educational quality as well as rising educational costs. Opportunity cost is an important part of these costs. In Egypt the opportunity cost of learning is too high for many young adults that work to contribute to household income. Average forgone earnings for university students reached 11780.97 LE in 2000 (El Baradei, 2003).

Table 9: Forgone Earnings by Level of Education (LE), 1995 /1996 and 1999 /2000

	1995/1996	1999/2000	% Increase
Basic (illiterate)	10497.4	8672	(-18)
Basic	9245.8	10894.7	17.8
Secondary	5871.8	6882.5	17.2
University	8974.7	11781	31.1

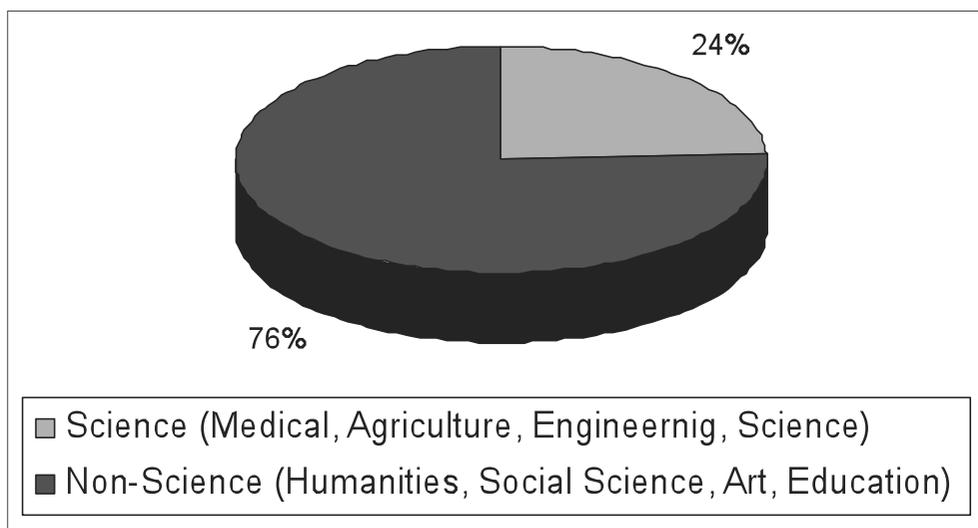
Source: El Baradei, 2003 p. 22

Even after graduation, the prevalent misalignment between labor market needs and educational outcomes means finding employment can be yet another obstacle. This is supported by the fact that 90% of the unemployed population falls under the category of first time job seekers and according to the 2004 Household Income, Expenditure and Consumption Survey (HIECS) unemployed youth account for 70% of total unemployment. According to one study, university education had a private rate of return exceeding 10% in 1988 before dropping significantly in 1998. In 2006 the rate of return was about 8.5% (Said, 2007).

4. Increasing Demand for the Humanities versus Science

A final notable outcome of the poor quality higher education in Egypt is a large deficiency in the number of science and engineering fields. These disciplines often take longer to complete - for example five years for an engineering or pharmaceutical degree and seven years for a medical degree. There are greater education costs associated with books, materials, and private tutoring. In addition the “thanawiya amma” scores needed to gain admission into science and engineering schools are very high – most students who achieve these scores rely on costly private tutoring at the secondary level. The result is that a minority of students - only 24% - graduate from these fields which are especially important for technological upgrading and innovative capacity.

Figure 19: Tertiary Students Enrolled in Science vs. Non-Science Fields



Source: Abdel Hameed 2007

VII. Competitiveness of the Egyptian Higher Education System

The Global Competitiveness Report defines competitiveness as “that collection of factors, policies and institutions which determine the level of productivity of a country and that, therefore, determine the level of prosperity” (WEF, 2008). The report’s Global Competitiveness Index, developed in 2004 by Professor Xavier Sala-i-Martin, seeks to aggregate the variables

influencing national productivity in order to create a metric with which to assess and compare the performance of countries. It combines both micro and macroeconomic factors into what is known as the 12 pillars of competitiveness³. Each pillar encompasses a number of sub-variables (a total of 113) and is weighted according to the country's level of development.

In the 2008 /2009 Global Competitiveness Report Egypt ranked 81 out of 134 countries in terms of its international competitiveness. This represents a significant decline since 2006 /2007 when Egypt ranked 65th out of 128 and 2007 /2008 when it was 77th out of 131. Egypt had varied performance across each of the twelve pillars that make up the Global Competitiveness Index. The main reasons for the decline are Egypt's poor performance in the labor market efficiency, macroeconomic stability and higher education and training pillars where Egypt ranked 134, 125 and 91 out of 134 countries respectively. Higher education and training also experienced the largest deterioration in rank falling 11 positions from last year.

The report highlighted weak human resources as a major obstacle to Egypt's competitiveness. In higher education and training Egypt ranked 91 out of 134 countries, just below countries like Morocco, Peru and Kenya. Specifically, the country placed 125th in terms of the quality of the educational system and 92 for tertiary enrollment. Egypt's performance along this pillar has progressively gotten worse since 2005 /2006 when it ranked 62 out of 117 countries. Also notable is the rapid deterioration in the quality of math and science education which is measured independently by the index. This variable fell by 10 positions each year and reaching 116 out of 134 countries in 2008 /2009.

Table 10: Competitiveness and Higher Education and Training Rankings 2006 -2009

	2006/7 Out of 128	2007/8 Out of 131	2008/9 Out of 134
Overall competitiveness	65	77	81
Higher Education and Training (Total)	77	80	91
Secondary enrollment	61	65	97
Tertiary enrollment	57	59	92
Quality of the educational system	106	119	125
Quality of math and science education	96	106	116
Quality of management schools	89	100	109
Internet access in schools	NA	82	111
Local availability of research and training services	80	83	110
Extent of staff training	84	81	120

Source: Global Competitiveness Reports 2006 /2007, 2007 /2008 and 2008 /2009

³ The 12 pillars are: Institutions, Infrastructure, Macro economy, Health and Primary Education, Higher education and training, Market Efficiency, Technological Readiness, Labor Market Efficiency, Financial Market Efficiency, Market size, Innovation and Business Sophistication.

The low competitiveness of the Egyptian higher education system is caused by the pervasive problems of poor quality and higher levels of inequality. Rising private tutoring and educational expenditure, large class sizes and high student-teacher ratios, all symptoms of the poor quality, are creating a vicious cycle of low rates of return – especially for the poor. Moreover, the labor market is now saturated with educated but unskilled labor that is overqualified for manual blue-collar jobs and insufficiently qualified for salaried professional jobs. The resultant mismatch between the higher education system and the labor market and diminished earnings are detrimental to the competitiveness of the education system and the nation as a whole.

1. The Effect of Unequal Higher Education Access on National Competitiveness

Egypt's generally low competitiveness scores and inadequate levels of human capital may have a lot to do with the unequal access to higher education and the resultant unequal distribution of skills. This section discusses the mechanisms through which inequality in higher education enrollment and national competitiveness might interact.

An obvious ramification of Egypt's unequal distribution of tertiary education is the reinforcement of existing social inequalities. The nation's poor cannot afford to invest in their own or their children's human capital due to a credit constraint – a situation where anticipated future earnings or human capital cannot be used as collateral for student loans. The result is diminished social mobility and an intergenerational cycle of poverty, unequal capital accumulation and income inequality. Without government intervention, the state of the poor will only get worse. As international and local labor markets demand more highly skilled labor, better incomes will be even more dependent on higher education and, as the costs of higher education grow, even fewer will be able to afford it.

The correlation between unequal distribution of skills and income inequality is by no means unique to Egypt. Trickle down approaches to human capital accumulation have also failed in other parts of the world, especially in Latin America (Birdsall and Londono, 1997). As such, even with continued GDP growth, if access to higher education does not become more equal Egypt can expect persistently higher poverty rates and little improvements in living standards for the poorest quintile.

Several hypotheses exist about the relationship between inequality and economic performance. Classical economists have popularized the view that equality may be an important social goal but can be compromised at the early stages of development in order to allow for more rapid capital accumulation. There exists, they argue, an initial trade off between equality and efficiency which evens out over time as efficiency gains trickle down (demonstrated by the well known Kuznets curve). This perspective encountered extensive criticism. Classical economic theories are now being challenged by empirical findings illustrating the negative impact that inequality can have on productivity growth (Lloyd-Ellis, 2003). While in the short term an equity-efficiency tradeoff may exist, equality is an important way of ensuring that economic gains are not concentrated in certain sectors and dependant upon the productivity of a small segment of society with little or no reduction in poverty. This is critical for national competitiveness which is not about short term growth, but long-term improvements in living standards.

Thus unequal access to higher education can reinforce, or worsen, a skewed distribution of income (and productivity) which is in turn correlated to slower rates of growth and lower competitiveness. Recently, a supplementary body of literature has emerged testing the direct

relationship between unequal educational attainment and growth (Galor and Zeira, 1993). Using data from 108 countries over five year intervals from 1960 to 2000, Castello and Domenech (2001) found that human capital inequality had a statistically significant negative effect on growth mainly by lowering the average investment rate. The findings further support the argument that income inequality and unequal access to higher education, whichever comes first, can harm national competitiveness by causing slower and less even economic growth.

2. Distribution of Skills, Innovation and Productivity

Greater equality in skill distribution can generate long-term dynamic externalities that have a positive effect on growth and productivity rates. Conversely, unequal access to higher education can have a negative impact on competitiveness by limiting these externalities. First of all, the exclusion of large segments of society from tertiary education greatly reduces the overall availability of skilled labor. Only a small segment of society has the opportunity to build the human capital necessary for a competitive economy and, with the exception of a limited number of well-educated elite, the workforce will remain far below its productive potential. On the other hand, in countries like South Korea, Israel and Taiwan having a large and relatively well distributed human capital base has been a key factor behind their impressive competitiveness rankings (WEF, 2008 /2009). In Egypt, on the other hand, unequal access to higher education is creating a very limited pool of skilled labor. This problem is further exasperated by the presence of technical institutes. Created to reduce enrollment pressure on Egyptian universities, these institutes offer low quality instruction and have little credibility in the labor market. In addition to deflecting students away from college education, the poor quality of education provided at these institutes generates unskilled graduates with negative rates of return.

The distribution of skills in an economy can also have a significant effect on the rate and type of innovation that takes place (Romer, 1990). Because R&D, the returns to R&D investments depend on the size of the workforce able to use the new technology. If not enough skilled labor is available fewer investments in innovative capacity will be made. In other words, an insufficiently skilled workforce will hinder the introduction and dissemination of new technologies to the detriment of long term productivity growth (Lloyd-Ellis, 2000).

Another dynamic explored by Lloyd-Ellis (1999) is the rise in wage inequality associated with an unequal distribution of skills. It was observed that as new technologies are introduced into an economy, wages of those with the most skills will rise dramatically, particularly if they are in short supply. This rise in skilled labor wages in turn drives up the relative costs of R&D. The result is a decline in R&D investments and innovation growth rates. Although limited empirical evidence exists to support this argument, it presents a useful example of the types of dynamic externalities that more equal access to higher education can have.

VIII. Conclusion

Despite growing tertiary enrollment in Egypt and universities being free of charge, access to higher education is highly unequal among income groups and regions. This inequality has also been increasing over the past decade. Gender inequality, however, has fallen significantly. The current distribution of skills in the Egyptian economy perpetuates existing income and wealth inequalities and can damage national competitiveness. With the government effectively subsidizing a small group of highly skilled elite, the productive potential of the rest of the population remains largely untapped. As a result, smart and talented youth often cannot afford

the costs of higher education. They have no access to credit or scholarships since the education system is already “free,” and creates a workforce that is largely composed of low-wage unskilled labor. In addition to this inefficient distribution of resources, the lack of highly skilled graduates, especially in the sciences, means the country loses out on dynamic externalities related to innovation and technology adoption. The short supply of qualified workers will reduce the incentive to invest in new technologies. The shortage may also drive up wages that will in turn raise the costs of R&D in Egypt.

The government of Egypt must work to widen access to higher education instead of just focusing on increased enrolments. This requires universities to diversify their sources of funding. A suitable combination of both private and public resources is needed to cover the costs of increased enrollment rates while simultaneously reducing inequality. A number of options exist. Intellectual property and patents, endowments, philanthropic fundraising, rent on property, consulting services and, most notably, fees and tuition are all examples of non-governmental sources of funding that universities world-wide are turning to. In particular, the gradual introduction of tuition will ensure that those receiving the benefits of higher education – prestige and higher incomes - are the ones paying for it. A standard tuition fee will also reduce the perverse incentives created by the system of private tutoring.

With more alternative sources of funding, government expenditure can be redirected toward merit-based or means-tested grants, scholarships, student loans and financial aid schemes, which will improve the chances for students from low-income households to receive a high-quality tertiary education. A greater share of public budgets can be used for capital investments and upgrading the quality of instruction at Egyptian universities.

In sum, reforming higher education in Egypt and making access more equitable is an important goal for long-term national competitiveness. The problem of unequal access to higher education can no longer be seen as separate from national competitiveness and economic welfare.

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Identifying Potential Stressors of University Students and Ways to Enhance University Climate: The case of the University of Balamand

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Abstract

Current research indicates that the prevalence of stress is increasing among college students and impacts student achievement and student retention, both issues integral to the mission of any university. Consequently, identifying potential stressors that may interfere directly or indirectly with learning, achievement, and the well-being of students becomes of major importance to the university. This paper presents the results of a case study conducted during the academic year 2007 - 2008 on a representative sample of University of Balamand (UOB) students (N = 584) living on the UOB campus. It analyzes the stressors as perceived and lived by the students in relation to their gender and age. Methodologically, a new way to identify potential stressors is proposed which is in concordance with a theoretical approach that considers the person from a holistic point of view. A blend of qualitative and quantitative techniques is used.

Results of the study indicate that the main source of stress is related to personal issues and considered highly stressful. The two most stressful events identified by students were Lebanon's political instability and the level of superficiality in the culture. Males were significantly more stressed than females, and older than younger. Suggestions for developing appropriate programs to help students cope effectively will be addressed.

I. Introduction

Attending a university can be a stressful experience for many college students, impacting their sense of well-being. Stress related researches have not viewed the general student body as a priority population as most researches have focused on specific occupational fields such as law and medicine (Benton, Robertson, Tseng, Newton, & Benton, 2003; Robotham & Julian, 2006; Smith & Renk, 2007). Current researches indicate that the prevalence of stress is increasing among college students and impacts student achievement and student retention, both issues integral to the mission of any university. If university administrators want to effectively support students,

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they need to know the types of stress students experience and how it impacts their sense of well-being and academic performance. The identification and evaluation of stressors affecting students is important for developing appropriate programs to help students cope effectively. Stress management programs can teach students techniques to help prevent or reduce the negative effects of stress and contribute to a sense of well-being (Cooper & Dewe, 2004).

This study was designed to investigate and identify the most prevalent stressors experienced by students at a private university in northern Lebanon and to make recommendations to the administration regarding intervention strategies that could be implemented to support students in reducing stress and fulfilling their educational goals more effectively.

II. Theoretical Framework

1. Definition of stress

Defining stress is a crucial matter when one tries to identify what a subject is going through when encountering difficult situations. What, when, and for whom an event can be called a stress? Researchers have approached these questions in different ways. For some, stress was defined as the stimulus that produces uncomfortable reactions (Chambel & Curral, 2005; Karasek & Theorell, 1990; Shannon, 1999). For others, these responses can be physiological (Selye, 1956); emotional (Dantzer, 1989) or socio-cultural, and are called stress and reflect the perturbation of the adaptation state of the person (Chrousos & Gold, 1992). The stimuli inducing these stressful responses are called stressors. These two approaches view the relationship of the person to the stress from a stimulus-response perspective ignoring the role of the person as an agent in defining what is stressful for him.

A third approach (Dantzer, 1989; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) is transactional; it considers stress as a “dynamic, mutually reciprocal, bidirectional relationship” between the person and the environment mediated by the “cognitive appraisal” and coping. These latter processes allow the person to evaluate if a particular encounter is exceeding his own resources and endangering his well-being. In concordance with this last approach, a huge focus was put on the study of the cognitive processes of the person-environment transaction, called by Lazarus (1966) the primary and secondary appraisals of events (Devonport & Lane, 2006; Folkman, Lazarus, DeLongis, & Gruen, 1986; Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, & Gruen, 1986; Nonis, Hudson, Logan, & Ford, 1998; Robotham & Julian, 2006; Towbes, 1995). Although these approaches insisted on the construction of the meaning of the event by the person, the emotional processes were mostly considered as responses showing the discomfort induced by the stimuli, or as aspects of the coping processes. The social processes were mainly viewed as stress-inducing events or coping resources.

In our approach we focus on the person, considered in his integrity as the central agent of the stress system. We consider that for an event to be a potential stressor it has to be perceived as a source of stress by the person who is experiencing it. This perception is not purely cognitive but holistic. The person who is “living” a specific event gives it a special meaning. This meaning is a personal construction induced by the somatic, cognitive, and emotional responses of the moment, the all being anchored in the socio-cultural representation of the event and in the developmental history of the person. Therefore, the activation of the stress response is not induced only by a cognitive appraisal of the event, but by the “organismic experience” resulting from the process of living the event. This “organismic experience”, in its Rogerian connotation (Rogers, 1995), involves the person in his integrity and implies physical, emotional, cognitive,

and social manifestations or feelings. It can sometimes induce a stressful response even before the person becomes conscious or aware of it, depending on the person's "openness to his own experience".

2. Measuring Stress

In concordance with the different approaches of stress different types of scales were developed. One category inquires about life events that are considered as stressful a priori. Scales in this category ask the subject if they have been through certain events (called hassles, stressors, etc.) or not, without examining if these events were perceived as stressful or if the subject was actually stressed or not after being exposed to these events. One of the most known scale in this category is the Social Readjustment Rating Scale or SRRS (Holmes & Rahe, 1967).

Another category uses a symptomatic approach. It assesses stress through its presupposed psychosomatic, emotional, and behavioral symptoms. Scales in this category aim to inquire about the reaction to stress, they ask the subject to designate one stressful situation and then they inquire about the reaction to it. They also sometimes evaluate one group of subjects considered to be under stress and measure their actual level of stress. Example of these scales is the TSS (Toulousian Scale of Stress) (Nahas, 2001).

The last category assesses the perception of stress, it inquires about negative emotions resulting from a general feeling of lacking control over one's life, time, and resources. These kinds of scales do not relate the perception of stress to specific life events but tries to discover a general state of perceived stress in a population under a potentially stressful situation. In this category we also include scales about the appraisal of stress. One of the most frequently used scales in this category is the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) (Cohen & Williamson, 1983).

In our case and in concordance with our theoretical approach, we developed a new way to identify potential stressors. Difficult events are not considered stressful a priori. And, the evaluation of the event as stressful is not based on its cognitive appraisal but on the "organismic experience" resulting from "living" the event. In fact our scale presents the subject with a number of events or situations formulated more or less in a neutral way. For each event that the subject encountered he reported on a Likert scale his "organismic experience" related to the event in terms of physical, emotional, cognitive, and social manifestations. Therefore, for an encountered event to be considered as a stressor for a subject it must induce, to a certain degree, at least one of the organismic experiences, otherwise even when difficult and frequently encountered, the event remains normal or neutral for this specific subject. The more aversive organism experiences it induces, and with a higher degree it does for each one, the more an event is considered as potentially stressful. In this scale the subject is faced with his memory of what he has been through when encountering specific events.

III. Stress at University

1. Stressors for University Students

Research has documented that college students typically face a unique set of stressors. The environment of college life can be quite different and difficult from the types of stress experienced by non-students. For example, there is a constant pressure to perform and achieve good grades which is monitored by continuous evaluations such as exams, papers, or projects. There may be communication problems with faculty regarding expectations for classroom participation, assignments, and evaluation or grading criteria. Students must make adjustments to having more

independence and less supervision which requires new levels of initiative and self-monitoring. University often brings new living arrangements, eating and sleeping habits, and the need to establish a new support network. Researchers have identified areas of typical stress for students which includes: economic well-being, social relationships (peer, family & romantic), academic adjustment, time management, career goals, and physical appearance and health (Kearns & Gardiner, 2007; Lowe & Gayle, 2007; Magaya, Asner-Self, & Schreiber, 2005; Murff, 2005; Pope & Simon, 2005; Robotham & Julian, 2006; Simmons, Aysan, Thompson, Hamarat, Steele, 2002; Towbes & Cohen, 1996).

An important factor to consider is not only the source of stress but to distinguish between stress that may be considered positive from that which is experienced negatively. The demands of university life are not inherently negative or positive. A certain level of tension can be seen as helpful and beneficial (eustress) and may provide the needed motivation to accomplish goals. Negative stress (distress), on the other hand, is detrimental in that it impairs working memory and can affect health and academic performance. Negative stress has been defined to occur when the situation is appraised as threatening or otherwise demanding and insufficient resources are available to cope with the situation. Academic stress combined with low control and low support can lead to psychological strain, anxiety, and poor physical health and is also associated with a variety of negative health outcomes, including depression, social dysfunction, and physical illness (MacGeorge, Samter, Gillihan, 2005; Morrison & O'Connor, 2005; Nonis et al., 1998). Stress can lead to undesirable coping strategies such as drinking alcohol, smoking and using illicit drugs, social withdrawal, and excessive eating or sleeping (Oliver, Reed, Katz & Haugh, 1999; Pierceall & Keim, 2007). Such a decline in general well-being often results in poor academic performance. (Chambel & Curral, 2005; Iglesias et al., 2005; Misra et al., 2000; Moore et al., 1992; Zakowski et al., 1992).

Thus, it is when the demands of the university are no more considered as challenges but lead to real physical, emotional, intellectual and social impairments that they become potential stressors.

2. At-Risk Populations

Freshmen are especially at risk and susceptible to stress as they make the dramatic transition from high school and must adjust to being away from home (perhaps for the first time), and they must make adjustments to a new social and academic environment (Chickering & Havighurst, 1988; D'Zurilla & Sheedy, 1991; Towbes & Cohen, 1996). International students, in particular, face unique challenges which include cultural adjustment issues, language barriers, and social isolation (Olivas & Li, 2006). Gender issues also exist with females generally reporting higher levels of stress, concerns with weight and physical appearance, and greater need for social support. Females are more likely than males to seek help, but all students were more likely to share their worries with informal sources of assistance (i.e., family or friends). Those students who did seek formal assistance most commonly make initial contact with campus medical services. (Baker, 2003; Magaya et al., 2005; Meijer, 2007; Oliver et al., 1999; Weckwerth & Flynn, 2006). Student support strategies therefore, need to be differentiated and tailored to specific student needs

IV. Methodology

1. The Interviews

Methodologically, a new way to identify potential stressors is proposed and it is in concordance

with a theoretical approach that considers the person from a holistic point of view. A blend between qualitative and quantitative techniques is used. In the first phase, researchers conducted 18 individual interviews with faculty and professional staff involved in the daily lives of students on and off campus. This included two representatives (one male and one female when possible) from each of the five major academic divisions on campus. The academic division included faculty from: Arts and Social Sciences, Engineering, Science, Business, and Fine Arts. Staff from the Infirmary, Office of Student Affairs, and the Library was also interviewed.

In the second phase, we interviewed students and asked them to identify stressors from their perspective. Student interviews were held to ensure that no areas of concern were left unidentified before surveying the student body at large. Both sets of interviews were conducted in a qualitative, open-ended question format. Faculty and staff were asked, "What stressors have you observed in students? What stressors have been directly reported to you by students?" Students were asked, "What do you find stressful in your life as a student?" Interviews were conducted by both primary researchers, each recording the material independently. Each researcher coded their notes and later compared them to establish an inter-rater reliability of the information obtained. Trends and patterns were then systematically assessed to identify the major themes and patterns of student stressors identified by faculty, staff, and students.

2. The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed by incorporating specific topics from the two major areas identified: academics (56 items) and personal issues (28 items). Academic issues were then further coded into the specific categories of skills (AS 7 items), requirements (AR 6 items), exams (AE 10 items), student and faculty relations (SF 7 items), campus time (CT 5 items), campus space (CS 13 items), peer relationships (PR 3 items) and personal consideration (PC 5 items). Personal issues were coded into the specific categories of skills (PS 4 items), future (PF 1 item), personal peer relations (PRP 4 items relations, family issues (FI 8 items), cultural issues (CI 3 items), and finances (M 8 items).

The different topics were then expressed in 84 simple, clear statements reported in two languages (English and Arabic). Each statement was then associated to a possible uncomfortable "organismic experience" in terms of physical, emotional, cognitive, and social manifestations. The indicators considered for the physical manifestations are feelings of, exhaustion and depression. The indicators considered for the cognitive manifestations are feelings of distraction and powerlessness. The indicators considered for the emotional manifestations are feelings of being pressured by time and preoccupied. And the indicators considered for the social manifestations are feelings of irritation, offense and annoyance. Students were requested to mark the statements that apply to them on the questionnaire as never, sometimes, and frequently, and then to identify how they experienced this encounter negatively, if they did, by marking for each of the four possible manifestations (physical, cognitive, emotional/affective or social) if it applies to them from 0 (it does not apply at all) to 5 (it applies a lot). The alpha of Cronbach calculated on the 84 items of the questionnaire returned a value of 0.89 which reveals that the questionnaire has good internal consistency reliability.

The demographic information collected included: age, gender, socio-economic status, year of study, place of residence, religious affiliation, and cumulative grade point average.

3. Sample

The target population was the undergraduate student body of the university's main campus,

approximately 2,000 students. Seven hundred and ninety-two questionnaires were administered during required Cultural Studies and English Language courses. These courses being required for all the university of Balamand students, they allowed us to gather randomly a representative sample of our population. Completion time was approximately 60 minutes. Five hundred and eighty-four usable questionnaires were received. See Appendix for the demographic characteristics of the participants.

4. Procedure

In order to know how stressful the encountered events were for those who lived them, we calculated a stress score for each event by adding the scores on the four categories of feelings associated with the event. The level of stress for each event for each subject could therefore vary between 0 and 16. An event scoring a level of stress between zero and 3.99 was considered as not stressful. An event scoring between 4 and 7.99 was considered low stress. An event scoring between 8 and 11.99 was considered highly stressful and an event scoring between 12 and 16 was considered extremely stressful. The comparison of the means of the stress score for events allows us to understand which events were the most stressful for our population. For this paper, we will identify the students' level of stress on each event, the circumstances of that stress (i.e., university or personal stress), and how experiencing stress relates to age and gender. The plethora of additional variables available in our data will be evaluated in future manuscripts.

V. Results

1. Stress Levels

The first question to address is the students' level of stress in relationship to the encountered events. Eighty-two events were encountered by at least 11 % of the population with only 2 encountered at 5 and 4%. In our perspective, the mere encounter with the event is not sufficient evidence of it being stressful. This is why we examined the stress score for each event to determine which events were lived as stressful by our population. In fact, in our data, the level of stress for each event varies between low stress (score between 4 and 7.99) and high stress (score between 8 and 12). No events scored a no stress level or an extremely high level of stress. All events showed a certain level of stress, which confirms the reliability of the interviews.

Twenty-eight events were experienced as highly stressful (score between 9 and 12). Fifty-six events were lived as low stress (score between 4 and 8). We can note that among these 28 events reported as the most stressful, more than half (15) were not related to university issues either in terms of academic issues or in terms of management issues. In fact only 13 out of 56 events (22%) were related to the university issues and were considered stressful, while 15 out of 28 personal issues (54%) were scored as highly stressful (level of stress higher than 8). On the other hand, among the 23 academic issues (skills, requirements and exams) only 3 were recorded as highly stressful while the other 20 scored low on stress. This means that the source of stress for our population is more personal than academic and it is mainly a developmental issue.

a. University Issues

Among the 13 events related to university issues, eight events were related to campus management in terms of space, time and bureaucracy. Three of these events were related to the living conditions in the dorms (items 32, 40 and 41). Another three address issues such as noise in exam rooms (item 48), bureaucratic hassles (item 54), and having personal property stolen (item 42). The remaining 2 events concerning the space are very specific to the university

of Balamand situation being isolated on a hill (items 39 and 34). Being stressed by these events reveals the lack of adaptation skills in our population who find it hard to cope with such logistic problems. Is it a developmental issue, a socio-cultural issue or an economical issue? Further studies need to explore this matter.

Three events were related to academic issues; specifically, exams (too many exams scheduled at the same time (item 19) or too much material covered (item 14)) and a preoccupation about failing were prevalent (item 17).

The last 2 events were related to personal conflicts: discrimination on campus (21.7 %) (item 55) and personal conflicts with professors (21.8%) (item 28). This also directs us toward looking in the developmental arena. Trainings in social skills and conflict resolution would be advised for those who encounter such stress. It is interesting to note that among the 23 purely academic issues; only three were reported as highly stressful, while the other 20 scored as low stress.

b. Personal Issues

Among the 15 personal issues:

Seven out of eight events were related to financial issues and scored highly stressful. This means that almost all the financial issues were rated as highly stressful by all the population, no matter the age, gender, religion, faculty, or year of study. Only students with low socio-economic status reported extreme level of stress (mean =12.2) on the item of paying tuition. These findings are in concordance with the previous studies on student stress levels (Gadzella, 1991; Kohn & Frazer, 1986) Five of the 15 events were related to family issues. Conflicts over spending money (item 70) or over love relationships (item 67) were the most frequently encountered. This may indicate that young adults still seek parental approval on issues of love and money. Or, perhaps parents in our middle class society seek to control their offspring through money and love. Is it a question of dependence or support? This question needs to be examined in future studies.

Pressure in choosing a major (item 73) was not encountered as much as expected (11.4%), but it is still, as expected, considered highly stressful. Parents' marital problems (item 68) (15.8%) or family violence (item 72) (5.3%) were not commonly reported but for those living it, it was experienced as highly stressful. Living away from home and high family expectations scored low on the stress scale, contrary to what one might expect. Is it a process of self affirmation by denying the negative (Nahas, 2001) that push the late adolescent young adult to deny the stress of being away from home and the expectation of the family when expressed explicitly?

Two items were related specifically to Lebanon. One is the political instability which was reported by 66.1 % of the population. The other, a cultural manifestation, is the issue of "being judged based on superficialities" (item 75) which was encountered by 84.4 % of the population. It is to be noted that these two encounters scored the highest level of stress among all of the events. The high stress level on this event reveals that our young students feel somehow trapped by their own attitudes. A sense of loss of authenticity is suspected and need to be explored. Is it due to socio-cultural issues showing the impact of a chaotic globalization and influencing the image of the self? One event was related to personal skills, specifically time management and was encountered by almost half of the population.

2. The Age Factor

The second question considered was if these levels of stress varied with age? A t-test was used to compare mean levels of stress according to age. The number of students for the ages 25 and over being very small, this category was eliminated in the comparison. Our study revealed that students 22-24 years of age were clearly more stressed and highly stressed than those aged 16-

18 and 19 - 21 by the following events: finding classes boring, feeling professors concentrated the students' worth in a grade, and smoking in public areas. The relatively older students (aged 22 - 24) are also the most stressed by having to switch among professors and teaching styles, and by experiencing conflicts with professors, and experiencing discrimination. It is interesting to see that 4 events out of the 7 events related to teacher student relationship are affected by the age with the older students being highly and more stressed than the younger students who showed only low stress levels on these items See Appendix for results according to age.

3. The Gender Factor

The third question asked was if there was a difference in stressful events or levels of stress related to gender. ANOVA was used to compare levels of stress among the two groups on each item. Our results demonstrated that whenever the differences in means were significant, males overall reported more stress than females. In some cases, an event would be rated as highly stressful by the men when it was only reported as low by females. In fact, among the 28 events identified as highly stressful, 10 showed a significant difference in the level of stress between males and females. Among these 10, only two events (paying tuition and too many exams scheduled at the same time) were experienced as highly stressful by females while the other eight were considered as low in stress. Moreover, males identified another nine events as highly stressful not identified by women. All in all, males identified 37 events as highly stressful whereas females identified only 20.

It is interesting to note that the differences in the way males and females experienced an event was particularly pronounced when the events involved social issues implying acceptance, like choosing a major (item 73), experiencing discrimination (item 55), personal conflicts with professor (item 28), appreciation by professors (item 26), being part of a group (item 50), participating in social activities (item 38), experiencing disrespect (item 53), or being judged by a professor (item 29). Another interesting note is that events related to assuming responsibilities showed a significant difference in the appreciation of stress between males and females. Males found it more stressful to be responsible for themselves (item 60) and to be living away from home and the family (item 66) than do females. In addition, males found it more stressful to assume responsibility for managing time and space in order to get to the university (item 34), find technological resources (item 37), reach the cafeteria (item 44), or locate vending machines (item 43). See Appendix for results related to stress and gender.

V. Discussion

A review of the literature revealed a wide variety of studies on gender differences related to the experience of stress but there was no consensus. Research conducted by Kudielka, Buske-Kirschbaum, Hellhammer, & Kirschbaum, (2004) demonstrated that females had higher levels of stress response than males, age notwithstanding. In contrast, findings by Deane, Chummun and Prashad, (2002) demonstrated that young or pre-menopausal women had lower levels of stress response, which they suggested might be due to a benefit of the hormone estrogen. College-aged specific trials demonstrated females generally reporting higher levels of stress (Baker, 2003; Magaya et al., 2005; Meijer, 2007; Oliver et al., 1999; Weckwerth & Flynn, 2006).

A study on subjective well-being among college students in Lebanon showed that males scored higher on positive affects than females (Ayyash-Abdo & Alamuddin, 2007), while our study revealed that males were more stressed than females which leads us to consider two possible hypotheses:

The first one is in relationship to the education of males and females in our society. The model of learning through guided participation in the socio-cultural environment developed by Rogoff (1991) suggested that the structured activities that children participate to influence their development. When we look to our results from this perspective, and since females in Lebanon are educated to be the primary caretaker, they may think that they are better prepared than males to take care of themselves and to manage the different tasks of day to day life, while men are more accustomed to having someone take care of them. Therefore, it may be less stressful for females to handle the responsibilities of young adulthood and the demands of university life than it is for males.

On the other hand, we may also hypothesize that due to the same societal pressures or expectations, male students feel more under pressure to succeed (i.e., become the breadwinner) than female students (Faour, 1998) so they are more concerned and therefore, stressed about their education and future. According to our research, male students seem more concerned about making mistakes than female students (item 71), and they are also more stressed than females by issues of grading (items 16 and 15) and studying (items 4, 9 and 10). Financial issues were also more stressful for male students such as the cost of the materials (item 84), need to work while studying (item 78), and family responsibilities beside work (item 71).

As for the age variable, the result of a review of the literature was very mixed with some studies reporting younger, others reporting older, and still others reporting middle-aged adults experienced more anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress (Kudielka et al., 2004; Mazure & Maciejewski, 2003; Norris, Friedman, Watson, Byrne, Diaz & Kaniasty, 2002a; Suar, Mishra, & Khuntia, 2007). Other researchers found no difference between younger and older people (Livingston, Livingston, Brooks, McKinlay, 1992; Geonjian, Najarian, Pynoos, 1994) in response to stress.

What is interesting in our findings is that we expected students to gain in their ability to adapt with age but our results reveal a certain rigidity and dependence of students on the professors' judgment. Upper classmen ranked the following as stressful: difficulties in switching among professors and teaching styles, conflicts with professors, experiencing discrimination, finding classes boring, stressed over writing essays. Is this because they are upper classmen and about to graduate, or because they feel they cannot change the system? Curiously, younger students appear to be more empowered, or are they more indulged?

VI. Implications and Recommendations

Levels of stress exhibited by students, especially the younger students, may be important in facilitating their transition, adjustment, and retention at the university. In general, we can say that the students in our sample were more affected by personal, maturational, economical and socio-cultural issues than by issues specific to academic policies or procedures. Prior research has identified specific areas that improve levels of stress which include: social support, time management, goal setting, academic advising, stress monitoring, relaxation techniques, and integration into the academic community (Friedlander, Reid, Shupak & Cribbie, 2007; Iglesias et al., 2005; Nonis et al., 1998; Pope & Simon, 2005; Rayle, & Chung, 2008; Sellars-Mulhern, 2000; Thompson, Orr, Thompson & Grover, 2007). Informational and emotional supports have been identified as effective preventative resources for stress (Lambert, McCarthy, Gilber, Sebree, Steinley-Bumgarner, 2006; MacGeorge et al., 2005; Pritchard, Wilson & Yamnitz, 2007). Teaching simple stress-reducing strategies can positively influence students' sense of well-being, improve academic performance, and reduce dropout rates.

Sellars-Mulhern (2000) identified “four R’s” to help teach students to cope with stress and improve academic achievement. The “four R’s” describe a program of cognitive restructuring helping students to reevaluate their perceptions and responses to stress. College personnel need to consider developing such stress management training in orientation activities, especially for new students and incoming freshmen (Brown & Ralph, 1999; Nonis et al., 1998; Ross, Niebling, & Heckert, 1999).

To review, the top academic concerns for students in our sample were: too many exams at the same time, too much material covered, and a preoccupation about failing. University issues included: campus management in terms of space, time and bureaucracy, and conditions of living in the dorms. Students reported discrimination on campus and experienced personal conflicts with professors. Personal issues double students stress, these issues are mostly related to financial issues, to family issues and to socio-cultural issues (political and being judged based on superficialities). The students clearly experience stress and could benefit from strategies to reduce it.

The following recommendations are for campus administrators as they develop systems of psychological support for students.

- 1) Create awareness about the role of professional counseling in university settings. Almost half (49.3 %) of the student body recognized the need for professional counseling services. In fact counseling may still be considered as a taboo in Arab societies although with modernization its need is becoming more urgent, which makes it a delicate task for professional of mental health to adapt their practices to the mentalities of the environment they are serving.
- 2) Expand counseling programs to include regular, long term, didactic support groups for students to share the impact of stress and explore and practice coping methods. There could be mixed or single-gender groups depending on the topic. Male students appear to be in the greatest need of support and direction.
- 3) Create an open forum in times of crisis where young people can express their concerns and worries.
- 4) Develop more availability of groups on specific topics as financial aid, career development and choice of major, and time and money management.
- 5) Develop workshops to explore and remedy the “culture of superficiality” that many young people feel trapped in and that may be the result of a chaotic globalization impacting the image of the self.
- 6) The male population is of specific concern and will benefit from tailored outreach efforts.
- 7) Reevaluate the organization, scheduling, and timing of exams. Consider replacing some formal exams with other methods of evaluating students’ achievements (i.e., portfolios, projects, presentations).
- 8) Streamline the financial aid system to minimize the stress resulting from financial concerns.
- 9) Develop research based on narrative methods to explore the sources of stress among students in greater depth. And in more general terms, develop longitudinal studies to explore the adaptation and the development of the autonomy of the person in Arab societies from a psycho-socio-cultural perspective.
- 10) Develop comparative studies amongst Arab universities exploring stress for a better understanding of risk factors and resilience and for a better enhancing of university climate.

Universities have a history of dedication to academic excellence, but institutions of high learning must also provide the student body with effective psychological support. The academic and personal topics that create stress as identified by students are best mitigated in a supportive and educational manner. To reiterate a quote from earlier, to reduce stress we need to provide students with a feeling of control over their education by providing them with information, support, and feedback. Providing students with quality education and counseling services will go a long way in developing well-grounded and productive students.

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*Quality of Education:
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Implementing the LMD System: Experience of the Philosophy Department in the Cadi Ayyad University in Marrakech*

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Abstract

In Morocco, the adoption of the LMD system in its new form, derived from the Bologna Process (1999), began in 2003. The Moroccan university community had mixed reactions toward the development, ranging from rejection, under the pretext that it was a purely western product, to acceptance, albeit with a great many reservations about its general structure. Thus, appropriateness of the system to Morocco in the future was regarded with substantial suspicion.

This paper attempts to address the issue through a case study of the Philosophy Department at Cadi Ayyad University in Marrakech. The "Philosophy and Science in the Islamic West" research group of the Department of Philosophy at Cadi Ayyad University started contemplating research into higher education as a field for theoretical endeavor, with the aim of carrying out precise scientific studies, using rigorous methodologies, of the conditions of Moroccan universities after 2003. This paper presents the personal experience of the author as a member of this group, within which he assumed the responsibility for completing a study based on outlining a "jurisprudence of knowledge about higher education". Theoretical work in this regard is based on two concepts that he believes should be usefully combined: the "self-made university" and the "local project."

The paper argues that management on the basis of local conditions is a strategic choice for higher education that enables creating procedures for rational self-evaluation. This goes hand in hand with pedagogic and curricular reform of higher education. Such a project can be achieved through linking local specificity with the rules of internal operation of the educational system. It reveals that the credit system derived from the Bologna Process is a correct system at the level of internal workings, as it establishes a network of linkages between the superstructure and the base that is responsible for implementation: faculty, students and administrative staff.

I. Introduction

In 2003, Moroccan universities adopted the so-called LMD system (Licence=Bachelor; Maitrise= Master; Doctorat= doctorate). Experts described this transformation as a turning point for high-

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quality higher education. In fact, the new system brings a new perception of the function of universities in Morocco, and enables faculty members to actively contribute to the improvement of national education, through collective participation in organizing educational affairs at all levels². (Ayshan, 2000)

This study sheds light on collective work, as a key mechanism in the new LMD system, based on the experience of the Philosophy Department within the Cadi Ayyad University. I have personally experienced the importance of collective work within faculties under the LMD system, based on organized cooperation between different educational departments, on the one hand, and independent research groups on the other. The first project of this study puts forth suggestions about the participation of departments, in full coordination with research bodies, in assessing and streamlining the highly-complicated higher education reform project.

This process is driven by the deep belief that local efforts ought to be deployed to improve higher education. In fact, working groups shall conduct concrete scientific studies, providing solutions to issues that are hindering the improvement and modernization of universities, in line with international standards. Experts unanimously agree that the most important problem remains the detachment of universities from their socio-economic environment. This environment increases their isolation and reduces the practical value of their majors.

The first part of the paper intends to motivate LMD stakeholders, by shedding light on the importance of experience-sharing to organize higher education in the Arab region. For this purpose, the paper reviews part of a model experience by a working group, which has been active for two years now within the Philosophy Department of the Cadi Ayyad University. It is entitled, *Thinking in the Islamic West*³, and is in fact, an independent research unit, which was established upon the implementation of the new academic organization. This was per the internal regulations of the LMD system, with both a legal and financial perspective. The second project mentioned in this paper examines the importance of coordination between the working group and the Philosophy Department, through its Chair or committees. Suggestions presented by the working group, upon practical assessment of the Faculty of Literature and Human Sciences in the Cadi Ayyad University, are examined below. The importance of this cooperation is verified when examining the practical benefits of changes brought by the LMD implementation, in two examples of cooperation between the aforementioned working group and the Philosophy Department.

The first experience reviews the results of common efforts to assess the Bachelor in Philosophy as per the form suggested by the Ministry of Higher Education for 2009 / 2010. This new project was completed after the National Coordination Committee and took into account remarks and suggestions of working groups that have been operational since 2003. In this part of the study, I review the stances of professors in the Philosophy Department in Marakkech of the determined processes, which for the first time in Morocco, provide for a philosophy curriculum in line with modern international standards. The second experiment is of a practical nature, and is related to a Professional Bachelor degree aimed at training pedagogic managers for schools. The main target behind this Bachelor degree is to prove the importance of practical training in philosophy and human sciences. It then refutes the accusation that philosophy is an isolationist major, trapped in theories rather than being in touch with reality.

² The National Pact for Education in Morocco reflects the unique experience of Morocco in tackling education problems. It also includes several solutions and suggestions determined by faculty members since independence, by examining the pitfalls of classical educational systems adopted before 2003.

³ This concept (Islamic West) refers to Maghreb and Andalusia during the middle ages under the rule of AlMouahiddin and Almurabitin.

II. Role of Working Groups in Reforming Higher Higher Education through Accurate Scientific Studies

Teaching is undoubtedly not an exact science, with relative principles varying according to time and place. As teaching is part of the epistemological category of “practical sciences”, it is based on two pillars (Abd Al-Halim, 1988). This aspect, I believe, should be constantly mentioned as an introduction, when analyzing education in the Arab region in general, or when developing programs to reform conventional systems unable to keep up with innovations within globalization (Lucas, 1999).

The first pillar⁴, namely theory, is the teaching of theoretical knowledge pertaining to the specialization in higher education and was specifically defined by faculty members. Therefore, the analysis of conditions of LMD implementation in the Arab region relied on the deduction method, after reviewing the outcome of direct daily inspection, based on “participant observation” as a research method (Jones, 1999).

Professors at the Philosophy Department, who were members of the Working Group, have constantly adopted the observation technique, in every field of higher education. Once this activity was completed, they wrote books on the results of direct field inspection of the new teaching trends in universities after LMD implementation, by providing a thorough organization of these trends with pyramids for structural trends and others for technical trends.

The second pillar, namely practice, was the testing of scientific conclusions from the aforementioned examination, in universities, by the authority or city in charge of the university. The target was to test the usefulness and operability of the European educational model, imported as a complete model, and utterly different from the Moroccan and Arab reality. (Koehn, 2002)

For two years, I have worked within the programs set by the working group. As I was double-tasking as a member of the working group and Chair of the Philosophy department, I realized that behind the scientific attention paid to the changes after LMD implementation in universities, there were three interrelated targets that remarkably changed the teaching of Philosophy.

For the first target, the working group analyzed the problems faced by Philosophy in higher education, after accurately examining direct data on pedagogies, education, organization and knowledge. Based on the observations, the second target was to prepare complete files to be submitted to the committees in charge of coordination between the philosophy departments and the Ministry. These were to contain all relevant information to support projects submitted by Philosophy departments via the Faculty and the University Boards. Beyond philosophical studies, the members of the working group participated in national programs to find practical solutions guaranteeing operational benefit from the new European LMD. These programs aimed at determining ways to enable the Cadi Ayyad University to meet local needs, rather than blindly cling to a literal application of the credit-based LMD system issued by the Bologna process. (Coombs, 1971).

⁴ The teacher-researcher plays a primary role in implementing the theoretical and practical pillars in research projects. Unfortunately, the role of the professor is not clear in the Arab region, and is often restricted to “teaching”. Yet, the teacher is certainly an important player in any social project to reform higher education. Faculty members should therefore be involved in the reform process from start till end. For new perceptions of the teaching profession, refer to the “Green Book” (French National Ministry of Education, 2008)

III. Working Group Findings for 2007/ 2008: How is the Reform of Higher Education Measured and how Important is a Regional and Local Approach in University Organization?

A few months after the research was conducted, the model experience of the Philosophy department in Marrakech concluded that careful examination of the changes in Morocco, as of 2003 when the LMD system was first implemented in universities, leads to two paradoxically interrelated facts:

1. Assessing the strength of the European model in university management outside Europe is very complicated, and requires more time so that national authorities can take into account all types of possibilities. This process is crucial to determine accurate standards for the results of compatibility between European and national universities, as they could be completely different from Western universities. It is worth noting in this regard, that issuing a general judgment is not possible, as some universities within one country succeeded in implementing the LMD system where others failed. The success was due to having a more mature and appropriate management in some facilities than others apparently had.

In this connection, I have reviewed some OECD reports (OCDE, 2008) confirming that some Eastern European countries required a careful approach before implementing the LMD system in their universities. This was through studies that were conducted over a long period of time, before making a final decision on a number of issues that might not at first have seemed complicated. I believe we should benefit from this experience in our Arab region, as there are many external factors guiding higher education, inherent to our Arab society which is structurally different from Western societies⁵.

2. Reforming higher education is a long-term project, for it has educational, sociologic and human dimensions, and is not achieved by a mere literal implementation of imported systems from the developed world. I believe that chairmen of national councils, who firmly reject any amendment to the system, have placed a primitive bet that education systems in the Arab region and in Europe are in harmony, which is not currently the case. As the situation is similar in universities throughout the Arab region, the Moroccan example is an interesting model illustrating the issues faced by Arab countries that have decided to implement the same European system.

IV. Achieving Reforms by focusing on the Local Model: New Training in Philosophy and the Professional Bachelor degree

Based on the aforementioned outcome of theoretical studies, and the attention of the working group to obstacles hindering the LMD system benefits (based on daily follow-up of problems within the Philosophy department of the Cadi Ayyad University), the studies conducted by professors within the group were compiled in the local project of the university and considered a priority. Three research fields were determined: the first was to develop a strategy for further openness to society; the second was to develop training programs aimed at promoting practical

⁵ In the Arab region, we are in dire need for such organizations in which specialists from different backgrounds regularly meet to assess national policies; economic situation and education, and then develop programs for experience sharing.

skills in the first place, to help graduates in the labor market; and the third was to develop plans to convince economic actors of society to invest in specific market-oriented training programs, in partnership with the administration of universities, departments and research units.

After studies were conducted in all three fields, with the generous help of advanced students and higher education independent researchers, faculty members determined the results guiding the partnership within the research group (with members from the Group on Philosophy and Science in the Islamic West on the one hand, and the Philosophy Department on the other) towards two topics of interest for this paper:

- Achieving total harmonization between the three-year educations provided under the LMD system and the integration of the university in its local environment. Therefore, the socio-economic characteristic of the environment was a main guideline to choose career-oriented training.
- Paying further attention to Professional Bachelor degrees, as a means to reject the accusation that literary education produces unemployed graduates.

Based on the research for both fields, theoretical aspects of the objective of the working group were defined, based on a constant comparison of the local situation in Marrakech and the link between some French cities and their universities. Researchers have accurately examined results of studies as the outcome of two years of collective efforts, and these results are practically useful. Results are divided into three categories. First, it is necessary to promote a decentralization policy in higher education even in training programs. As the Moroccan economy is not evenly distributed in all cities, with the desert in the South and the North close to Europe, it is no longer useful to impose the same training programs in all regions. Second, the university plays a pivotal role in building a knowledge society. It would not be wrong in this regard to consider universities responsible for the quality of training of pre-baccalaureate teachers, and students in training centers and teaching schools. The last part was destined to look for new initiatives to attract foreign material and moral support, to provide a healthy university environment to transform practical scientific research of teaching specializations into a continuum of the training in the L-M-D, so that this system can adapt to the needs of the socio-economic environment in specialized competencies⁶ for specific jobs.

The Philosophy Department, convinced of these findings, firmly rejected the idea that the credit system was another curriculum ready to be implemented, and rather sought to highlight its positive aspects through practical local activities. This experience was based on two objectives: determining the differences between the LMD system and the old system, as several professors were nostalgic, and classical educational systems were usually more appealing, though outdated in education and training. The second objective was to indicate that it is important for universities to benefit from changes linked to the LMD system, whether through the elaboration of specific programs to implement a decentralization policy promoting openness of higher education to its environment, or controlling the quality of training. Determining the differences between the LMD system and the classical system adopted in Morocco since independence, could underline the benefits of the European system, namely the liberation of university activities from the constraints of horizontal management (table 1).

⁶ As already mentioned, the general outline of this project was defined during the 21st Conference of the Al-Tamimi Association of Computer Science and Information Technology in Tunisia, in cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Association on 5 - 7 February 2009. Conference documents are available on the website of the Abd-Al-Jalili Tamimi Association. Al-Tamimi is a pioneer in developing pillars of academic work in the Arab Maghreb via his private scientific association. He is also a perseverant man.

Table 1: The differences between the old system and the new system

New system	Old system
Department committees are in charge of registration based on the choice of students after an accurate examination of their files. The Committee then interviews students for an oral examination to determine those who are enrolled	Random registration of students with no prior organization
Students have the freedom to switch majors anytime during their studies, through a standardized process, thanks to cooperation between departments and respect of the student's choices to enroll in purely professional majors	Students do not have the freedom to switch majors, or are allowed to, but through a difficult process and without standardization.
Departments provide students with all necessary information on the major they choose during determined meetings before the start of the year	Students start their studies with no introduction or preparation
University education is a continuum of secondary school education	Large gap separating university training from secondary school education
Students have the freedom to choose the major that suits their personality, provided they prove their choice is right based on their previous competencies	Students are forced to choose majors in university that are related to the type of baccalaureate they obtained
Majors are flexible and allow for free movement of students, which does not hinder student assessment	Majors are closed units
More flexible rules, allowing students to pass their courses, and students are given another chance to sit for exams just for the credits they failed to earn.	Strict regulations for success are imposed for courses, a large number of students are unable to make it through the first year and have to drop out of university
Students have the freedom to benefit from credits provided in all the faculty sections	Students are restricted to one major, with no possibility to develop their skills in other fields
Students are encouraged to take personal initiatives through continuous assessment of their performance through various means	Students only sit for one exam at the end of the year
Reducing the timeframe between the Bachelor and the Doctorate : Bachelor: 3 years i.e. 6 semesters, Master: 3 years Doctorate: 2 to 3 years.	Time frame between Bachelor and Doctorate : Bachelor : 4 years, DEA : 1 or 2 years, DESS : 3 to 5 years, Doctorate: no time frame, can last a lifetime

Continuous learning centers are open for different social categories wishing to achieve self-development, which promotes the openness of the university	Not available
Professional bachelor degrees are provided as independent majors for outstanding students from all majors	Not available
Centers for Doctorate are available, with an independent management, working on projects from active research linked to their specialties	A structure for Doctorate training is unavailable
Research structures are an independent system within the university, organizing working groups, and overseeing the implementation of material and moral support for working groups	No available structure
Bachelor system is continuously reviewed every 3 years	System is operational all the time
Annual material support is regulated, whether for research structures or continuous learning projects, or professional bachelor degrees, based on objective assessment of their activities	Arbitrary support

As both educational systems are widely different, the aforementioned working group is constantly coordinating with the Philosophy Bureau, to benefit from the LMD system, to determine results of a pragmatic approach adopted in line with procedures that are based on practical data. Since the LMD system is an integrated unit of strategies, after 2003, the Cadi Ayyad University has managed to achieve considerable benefits from it which have changed the daily life of students and teachers alike, and have had a positive impact on the university's ties with the socio-economic environment.

Teachers have increasingly become interested in collective work with their colleagues, within specialized research structures. The LMD system has helped in developing scientific research by encouraging creativity among teachers.

Regarding students, teachers have unanimously agreed that the relationship between students and the university has improved. The university is no longer a simple closed educational framework, but has rather become an interesting field for development of competencies, by acquiring new skills. The LMD has encouraged outstanding students to take initiatives, and allowed them to access purely practical majors, through professional bachelor degrees or continuous learning programs. This process has achieved two interrelated objectives, namely, ensuring strict quality standards through the system for continuous monitoring of the students' performance, and actively contributing to their integration in the labor market.

Moreover, regarding the environment, the credit system has changed the image of the university within society, after the professional education built bridges between the university and the economic environment. The experience of the Cadi Ayyadi University has proven that as the LMD system is flexible, it can swiftly adapt to all human aspects surrounding the educational

process, through main majors, or the Masters, Professional bachelor degrees, Doctorate Centers or continuous learning centers.

After the studies conducted by the working group, within open workshops, had determined underlying causes and results of differences between the classical and the LMD systems, the improvement in training in higher education in Morocco is undoubtedly a direct result of the interaction between universities believing in this new system. These universities have realized they had a specific role to play in the improvement of the European system and to promote its interaction with the local environment. The following part of my study examines this issue, based on models of success achieved by the cooperation of the Philosophy Department and the Working Group in Philosophy and Science in the Islamic West.

1. Bachelor in Philosophy for 2009 - 2010

Developers of higher education curricula face perhaps the most daunting task of drafting applicable material adapted to the local situation of universities. This is a time-consuming task, which depends on the concerted efforts between the faculties and the ministerial committees in charge of drafting the programs. It is then necessary for departments taking part in developing the LMD system to have the courage to deal with suggestions issued directly by the ministry, whether through the national coordinator or different educational committees.

Developing the program for the Bachelor in Philosophy has been through many changes in Morocco since 2003, a heavy yet important task. Programs for the Bachelor in philosophy have been regularly reviewed and philosophy professors have realized the importance of the change that has occurred. These changes have been in the content of the units, or to granting departments a larger freedom to adapt their training to the student needs. It is worth noting that these benefits were achieved thanks to the important role of working groups in philosophy and human sciences within the process of reviewing the general structure of the Bachelor, i.e. the nature of units, the content of courses in the units, and the distribution of courses between the six semesters of the Bachelor. For this purpose, during March last year, the working group on "Philosophy and Science in the Islamic West" organized a seminar on the links between philosophy and cognitive sciences in determining the limits of philosophical studies for Arab societies. The National Coordinator for Philosophy Training took part in the meeting, with a group of professors specialized in different philosophical fields. The event provided an opportunity to share experiences and ideas on the future of philosophy in modern Arab societies.

After six years of constant review by working groups, department bureaus and national preparatory committees, the new program for the Bachelor in Philosophy was drafted.

The general structure for the Philosophy Bachelor is completely new, a qualitative leap in the improvement of Philosophy training in Morocco. The new program suggested by the Ministry brought about changes in five levels, guaranteeing freedom for faculties to guide the program according to local needs, and focusing on practical philosophy of direct benefit to students.

First, changes have affected the internal economics of the philosophy training which has become more practice-oriented. The new program includes units for all six semesters covering diverse topics from classical to modern schools of thought in philosophy. It has achieved serious integration between the history of philosophy on the one hand, and modern philosophy on the other, namely through applied studies.

Second, based on practical responsibilities, special attention was given to building a methodological approach with students, instead of feeding them with information, such as in the classical system. The new Bachelor program allocated, for the first time in Morocco, four

complete units, including courses specific to the curriculum and technical tools. This step aimed at putting an end to the domination of the theoretical aspect in philosophy training; instead it became more practice-oriented, so that universities have become more open to their environment. This is by creating positions in the labor market where a Philosophy diploma holder would be required to coordinate between graduates and employers. The following three changes translate the practical approach sought by the new Bachelor to involve students and departments in determining practical learning objectives, and highlight the importance of local efforts in managing higher education.

Third, the new program underlined the importance of the graduation project, which is the research paper developed by the student at the end of his university studies. Two units (instead of one unit in the old system) were developed under the new program. The second unit, in its last half, provides for internship according to the topic of the student's research. This strategy, in my opinion, would create a new dynamic, encouraging student, through a practical approach, to choose practical majors, instead of being imprisoned in mere theoretical research, unable to perform practical tasks of collective benefit.

Fourth, it is clear that the new program focuses on languages and IT, for the students to consolidate their personal skills with high linguistic and technical skills. As this matter is crucial, the new program determined language and IT courses as a common branch between all faculties of literature and human sciences in Morocco. Five units were determined (117-13-9-5-), and divided through practical fields to benefit from philosophy in matters directly linked to reality.

Last, and most importantly, the departments were granted the freedom to organize the courses according to the local environment. In fact, philosophy departments were given the authority, through their presidents and bureau committees, to determine the contents of the courses for units of the fifth and sixth semesters of the Bachelor, which are the last two semesters. These two semesters (covering a year) include 6 units, each unit covering two courses.

This strategy promotes the role of local stakeholders in managing higher education, as departments have the right to decide which training they would like to provide for their students, based on the environment. On the one hand, the European system, favoring Professional Bachelor, has restricted this type of education to the last year of university. On the other hand, the new program creates this same dynamic of integration between several majors, as the professional Bachelor is provided through independent coordinators, to attract outstanding students from different specializations (Bringer, 2006).

2. The Professional Bachelor Linking the University to Its Environment: The Example of the Philosophy Department

Based on the practical trend in the new program of the Philosophy Bachelor, and as I am a firm believer in the strategic importance of professional Bachelor, I have personally sought to involve the scientific community in the project of a Professional Bachelor, of which I presented this year as training coordinator. The project will enter into effect next year, once approved by the Faculty Board, the University Board, and the Ministry of Higher Education, which should allocate financial support.

The Bachelor is entitled: Training Specialized Educational Counselors for Preparatory and Intermediate Schools (from childhood until 15 years). The working group within the Philosophy Department determined the direct objectives of this license, which were found to be two interrelated objectives: renewal of the philosophy program by promoting further openness to

the developed world, and educational integration of departments within the Literature faculty, in developing a multidisciplinary approach.

For the renewal of the philosophy program, the proposed Professional Bachelor aims at rejecting accusations that philosophy and human sciences are mere theoretical shells and proving instead they serve education in society. The program aims, as already mentioned, at training professionals specialized in education, working in public or private schools, or civil society institutions training special categories of students, such as associations for the mentally disabled. Regarding the second goal of multidisciplinary training, the program, for the Bachelor, determined a new way to promote openness rather than isolation of departments of the Literature and Human Sciences Faculty. The Bologna process stipulates that a Professional Bachelor shall achieve integration between all literary fields by involving outstanding students from different backgrounds in a market-oriented specialized training.

It would be wrong to believe that a university can integrate into its environment unilaterally, where it would graduate students only armed with theoretical knowledge, who can only access the labor market with personal efforts after graduation⁷.

However, as the issue is far more complicated, the solution would be to transform the university into an open space for continuous training, for all social categories. I believe a program entitled "Back to University" would be vital to promote the role of higher education in society. Within the aforementioned Professional Bachelor, university professors, of different relevant specializations, school practitioners such as teachers, supervisors and directors, child psychologists and social workers would be in charge of the two-semester education. IT professionals, image and sound systems' experts, developers of school material and educational leisure would also be involved in the training of these educational counselors.

V. Conclusion

Changes occurring in higher education in Morocco, after 2003, were undoubtedly the direct result of interaction of universities believing in the importance of LMD implementation, and then fulfilling their specific roles in developing the European system, to promote quality of education, and establish ties with their local socio-economic environment. It can be concluded that the changes brought about by the LMD are not automatically stipulated in its legal and organizational structures, but completely depend on local implementation of the LMD. As a research professor, I am aware of the situation in Moroccan universities both before and after the European system was implemented. I am deeply convinced that if Arab universities were to take part in developing the LMD system, courage and patience are required, as reforming higher education is a very complicated modern process.

On the other hand, the success of universities in this modern project depends on the involvement of governments by providing financial support for higher education. Yet, Arab States to this day are still lagging behind in budget allocations to this vital section of education (Coombs, 1971). As a result, the physical structure of universities is still fragile, and teachers- researchers are still disadvantaged due to a lack of resources, which is a major obstacle hindering the success rate of the implementation of the European system in Arab universities⁸. (Unesco, 2007)

⁷ For this reason, teaching remained the only profession attracting graduates from the Faculty of Literature.

⁸ "When national decision-makers determine objectives for their education systems (for example, expanding access or improving the quality of education), they must take into account necessary resources and assess these objectives in comparison to other demands. They are increasingly relying on international comparison

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to determine whether sufficient resources are invested in education, and whether these are used efficiently". (Unesco, 2007).

Higher Education Curricula in Algeria: Indicators of Fragility and Means of Improving their Quality. The case of Psychology, Education and Orthophony*

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Abstract

This paper deals with the current status of higher education curricula in Algeria, taking psychology, education and orthophony as examples. It aims at revealing the extent and symptoms of fragility of curricula in these fields, and proposing the most effective ways of protecting and improving them.

The most prominent findings are that psychology, education and orthophony curricula are fragile, as revealed by a set of symptoms comprising: indolence, naiveté, ritualism, reductionism, alienation, a dichotomy between the curriculum and the needs of society, the dominance of theoretical over practical knowledge, arbitrariness, and irrational regulation. In conclusion, the paper recommends adopting the DACUM method for designing psychology, education, orthophony, and other humanities curricula, outlining DACUM's characteristics, philosophical principles and basic phases.

I. Introduction

Curricula, with their various components, are undoubtedly considered as one of the essential inputs in any educational system. The design of higher education curricula in Algeria often relies on the instructors themselves and is therefore entrusted special committees, a central team or a semi-permanent central committee. However, while this applies to academic programs, the situation is radically different for applied programs, be it for professions in the technical sectors such as electricity, trade, agriculture etc., or for professions in the humanities such as education, school administration, production management etc., because emphasis in institutions concerned with this kind of curricula is to train qualified professionals ready to work in the professions targeted by their education. This should take place without having to retrain them or bridge any professional gaps that might appear after being in service.

Thus, it can be said that those charged with designing the higher education curricula find it exceedingly difficult to do so, especially when faced with the issue of including all the necessary knowledge needed in the labor market in the educational content. This difficulty is due to the

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academics having little direct field experience because of their commitment to academic work which in turn prevents them from being up to date with the real problems and issues in the workplace. Accordingly, we consider that any improvised attempt to include specific knowledge in the curriculum will inevitably lead to a series of educational symptoms, highlighting the system's fragility.

Proceeding from this premise, and after analyzing the higher education curricula in Algeria, we realize that they have not been spared from improvisation. This is clearly demonstrated by the knowledge fragility indicators detected by a relevant analysis. Therefore, we believe that we need to make an in depth review of this knowledge and determine its fragility indicators. This will help promote the quality of higher education curricula in the future, in Algeria as well as in all Arab countries.

On that basis, this research paper intends to review the different knowledge fragility indicators in the higher education curricula in Algeria and to propose a series of recommendations in order to improve knowledge quality. For this purpose the paper will deal with the cases of higher education curricula in Psychology, Education and Orthophony, and will apply a descriptive analytical approach.

II. Definitions

1. What is higher education?

Higher education is defined as: «the highest level of education. It encompasses educational studies and programs at the level of universities and related colleges, institutes and centers.» (Friwan, 2008, p. 787).

It is also defined as: «all academic programs designed for education and research at the post-secondary educational level at a university or any other educational institution recognized by the qualified government body as a higher education institution». (Abdouni, 2004, p. 193).

The education system in Algeria combines the higher education system (HES) and the national educational system. HES is formed of higher education institutions including universities, centers, colleges, and grandes écoles. They constitute a total of 58 institutions, of which 27 universities (including the University of Continuing Education, which has branches in nearly all districts), 16 university centers, 5 national schools, 6 institutes and 4 grandes écoles. (Hakemy, 2008, p. 742).

2. What is a curriculum?

There are several definitions for the curriculum as a concept, but all agree on the following principles summarized herein by (Alghazily et al., 1992, p. 5):

- 1) The curriculum: is a series of planned activities designed to educate the learner. It comprises objectives, progress evaluation as well as tools and preparations designed for instructors in order to ensure a proper education.
- 2) The curriculum: is related to all the components of the didactic process (in terms of objectives, content, activities and evaluation).
- 3) The curriculum: offers a more extended pedagogic planning than that of a program. It extends beyond course programs to include pedagogic and educational objectives as well as learning and training approaches.

Based on these definitions, curricula can be defined as: (Bou abdelah lhasan, 1995, p. 187)

- 1) A plan designed for the educational process including the objectives, content, activities and evaluation methods.

- 2) A comprehensive concept that goes beyond the content of the educational course and that determines educational tools, methods and activities based on the ultimate goals.
- 3) A logical structure of the content's elements, namely the units, which are interlinked and interdependent.

3. What is knowledge?

a. Definition of knowledge

Knowledge is the sum of facts, concepts, principles and theories that should be assimilated by the trainees in order to undertake learning activities related to their practical vocational skills. Furthermore, knowledge constitutes a full-fledged system based on the linkages between its different components. (Hamdan, 1991, p. 128).

While knowledge has different facets, its use can only have two categories: (Hamdan, 1991, p. 128):

- Theoretical: generally expressed orally or in writing.
- Applied: directly related to the use of students' skills and kinetic behaviors.

b. The difference between knowledge and information

As a term, knowledge has a wider scope than information. In fact, the information available in books or on the internet becomes knowledge, once read, assimilated and used. (Majdal Ahmad et al, 2005, p. 193 - 195).

Some analysts go even further and differentiate between data, information and knowledge as follows:

- Data: the raw material, the untapped source from which information is extracted. Data is the basis of information.
- Information: «the factor leading to shifts in an individual's behavior and thoughts as well as leading to decision making».
- Knowledge: it is the outcome of the hidden interaction between all information, experiences, perceptions and the judgment capacities of an individual. This interaction also includes results and decisions as well as assimilating new concepts or establishing old ones. («BouJalal, 2002, p. 106).

Accordingly, there is a clear difference between the terms knowledge, information and data. In the informational hierarchy, data comes at the bottom, being the basis of information on which facts, knowledge and judgment are founded. Information is next which combines data interpretation and analytical description. At the top, we have knowledge which constitutes the different creative applications of information in a well defined context.

4. Definition of the knowledge curricula in Psychology, Education and Orthophony

Since Psychology, Education and Orthophony are specializations characterized by a variety of primary and secondary branches, their courses are just as diverse. Hence, we shall limit our discussion to the courses of the primary branches. However, some courses of the secondary branches could be cited in our analysis.

a. Common-core syllabus of Psychology, Education and Orthophony

The common-core syllabus of Psychology, Education and Orthophony includes a variety of knowledge that is divided into eight courses. A lecture and an application session are reserved for each course on a weekly basis, with the exception of foreign languages (French and English) which are taught in one weekly session. A session usually consists one and a half hour long. The courses are listed in table1. (MOHE, 1999/ 2000, p. 5- 13).

Table 1: Courses included in the curriculum of the common-core syllabus of Psychology, Education and Orthophony

	Course	Nature of teaching
1	Introduction to Psychology	Lecture + Application
2	Introduction to Educational Sciences	
3	Anthropology	
4	Introduction to Orthophony	
5	Methodology	
6	Social Psychology	
7	Statistics	
8	Foreign Language	Practice

b. Psychology common-core syllabus

The Psychology common-core syllabus consists of seven courses. A lecture and a tutorial are reserved for each course on a weekly basis, with the exception of foreign languages (French and English) which are taught in one weekly session. A session usually lasts one and a half hour. The courses are listed in the table 2. (MOHE, 2000, p. 4 - 6).

Table 2: Courses included in the Psychology common-core syllabus

	Course	Nature of teaching
1	Psychometrics	Lecture + tutorial
2	Guidance and counseling	
3	Introduction to Psychology of Organizations and Work	
4	Introduction to Psychopathology	
5	Physiological Psychology	
6	Developmental Psychology and Personality Theories	
7	Foreign Language	Application

c. Education Common- core syllabus

The Education common-core syllabus consists of seven courses. A lecture and tutorial session are reserved for each course on a weekly basis, with the exception of foreign languages (French and English) which are taught in one weekly session. A session usually consists of one and a half hour. The courses are listed in table 3. (MOHE, 2000, p. 21 -22).

Table 3: Courses included in the curriculum of the Education common-core syllabus

	Course	Nature of teaching
1	Educational Psychology	Lecture + tutorial
2	Applied Measurement in Education	
3	Research Methods in Education	
4	Child and Adolescent Psychology	
5	Biology	
6	Evolution of Educational Thought	
7	Foreign Language	Application

III. Indicators of knowledge fragility of higher education curricula (in Psychology, Education and Orthophony as examples)

1. The value of knowledge in higher education curricula

The value of knowledge in higher education curricula should go beyond the mere accumulation of data, information and facts in order to create renewable knowledge. In this context, it is noteworthy to mention David Perkins' explanation of knowledge value which he summarizes under three interrelated circles (Perkins, 1992):

- a. Acquiring knowledge: it is the acquisition of information, facts, principles etc.
- b. Understanding knowledge: creating a meaning which is a combination of the different kinds of knowledge by activating the operations of thinking and observation.
- c. Utilizing knowledge: using the knowledge in order to take decisions and to solve problems in all kinds of life situations.

According to the use of knowledge and education in the 1996 UNESCO report entitled Education, that hidden treasure, education has four objectives (Al-Asar, 2001):

- a. Learn to know.
- b. Learn to be.
- c. Learn to act.
- d. Learn to live together in peace.

A question remains: To what extent have these objectives been achieved through knowledge in the Psychology and Education major in Algerian universities today?

If the curricula of the higher education system lack consistency and coherence in the content choice and organization, then, knowledge included in this content becomes fragile. Additionally, if we consider that the Psychology and Education major has its own curriculum as is the case for all other majors, then we shall concentrate our study on their efficacy and fragility. Thereafter, we shall determine, through an analytical approach, any fragility indicators.

To answer this question it is necessary to look for the indicators of fragility. But before doing this we have to define knowledge fragility.

2. Knowledge fragility

a. Definition of knowledge fragility in curriculum

Knowledge is considered fragile when it doesn't affect its recipient or allow him to achieve the

desired goals. It is often due to the loss of internal and external consistency in the educational curricula. Knowledge fragility is any kind of knowledge that is deprived in terms of choice and organization, of the necessary scientific standards.

Knowledge fragility can be illustrated, for example, when a student has learned the four mathematical operations, but is incapable of solving a calculus related problem because he can't find the link between what he knows and the cognitive requirements of that problem; he is unable to use his knowledge to solve the problem. While this example might be simplistic, daily situations are far more complicated and complex. Even more so for Psychology and Education students, who are trained to deal with even more complex and intricate cases.

Another example about knowledge fragility is related to instructors themselves. Indeed, much of their assimilation of learning and teaching concepts incarnate their own knowledge fragilities. While they lecture about individualistic differences, they treat their students similarly. While they preach about encouraging talent and creativity, they refuse any deviation from the text (Al-Asar , 2001).

b. Knowledge fragility indicators

Perkins considers that there are four knowledge fragility indicators (Perkins, 1992):

- Absent knowledge: the kind of knowledge apprentices lack because it was originally absent from their educational programs and activities in a curriculum.
- Inactive knowledge: ephemeral knowledge that leaves little impact. It is the kind of knowledge students acquire in order to give typical answers in an exam and it is the result of a system of lectures and rote learning.
- Naïve knowledge: all types of non scientific explanations and interpretations of phenomena despite the existence of scientific ones.
- Ritualistic knowledge: to successfully repeat scientific concepts and views, but in a meaninglessly manner. The operation remains a pointless and futile behavior.

Knowledge fragility indicators, include:

- Missing knowledge: an apprentice's incomplete acquisition of the integrality of a program in any course, whatever the reason may be. (Awashriya, 2008, p. 257).
- Separated knowledge: it is double-faceted, as it is knowledge separation that could be vertical and horizontal. The former consists of losing the linkages between the essential elements of a curriculum. Whereas, each concept is supposed to be taught in different stages, thus, gradually gaining more depth and complexity. As for the latter, it is the discontinuity of educational courses. ("Alghayad, 2005, p. 39). It is also relevant to mention the separation between knowledge as included in educational curricula and the needs of the environment.
- Alienated knowledge: all kinds of knowledge that are entirely irrelevant to the targeted society. In this case, students learn about far away geographical environments and different cultures. That is because students are subjected to imported educational curricula, which do not reflect the students' social and culture national conditions. (Awashriya, 2008, p. 258).
- Incomplete knowledge: it refers to partial knowledge, which means that the student doesn't identify any unity or continuity in the knowledge he acquires, be it between the covered themes by a single course or between different courses. (Fathi et al, 2004, p.101).
- Unbalanced knowledge: all kinds of knowledge lacking balance between the logical classification of a course's content and the psychological state of the student. Hence, it is the absence of balance among the different aspects of the cognitive, emotional and

psychomotor content as well as between the different branches of scientific knowledge. ("Alghayad, 2005, p. 40). This sort of knowledge can be divided into two types:

- Arbitrary knowledge: it surpasses the learner's cognitive and emotional capacities and skills.
- Knowledge not rationally organized: it is the kind of knowledge presented to the student without any logical sequencing.

3. Descriptive and analytical study of knowledge in the Psychology, Education and Orthophony curricula in Algerian universities

Based on: 1) the analysis of courses that are included in the curricula of some branches of Psychology and Education at different levels of the classical Algerian university system, 2) the observation of some of these courses in a number of Algerian universities, such as the university of Batna, the University of Sétif, the University of Biskra, and the University of Annaba, and 3) on the author's own experience, the following series of knowledge fragility indicators were identified:

a. Absence

Any observer of the knowledge value in higher education, which is supposed to be guaranteed by any training system, can expect that the apprentice would be qualified to understand his own culture, as well as important events, influential personalities and cultural components. Ultimately, this understanding is supposed to allow him to play an active role society (Al-Asar, 2001). As a matter of fact, an observer of graduates in Psychology and Education notes that they lack much of that knowledge. The graduates often find themselves incapable of performing their functions, although they have degrees attesting their acquisition of such qualifications. If we try to explain this, we would at first, face a deadlock. However, an analysis of the educational content they received, allows us to spot the absence of information and knowledge that were supposed to be included in the curriculum as basics of the major.

When analysing the content of first year statistics in the common-core syllabus of Psychology and Education, and the material taught in classrooms, one concludes that this content is more suited to students in economics and business. Just as clear is the rare presence of Psychology and Education material in that content. Students in Psychology and Education are nowadays required to master the use of statistical analysis tools. Although, all experts and scholars are well aware of this reality, the content of the syllabus, as designed by the governmental authorities in "statistics", seems to overlook it.

Furthermore, some of the courses that are common to different branches such as the course entitled "Student's Characteristics and Learning Problems" which is required to the fourth year of "Orientation and Guidance" and to the fourth year of "Evaluation and Curricula" suffer from the same problem. If the ministerial guide of contents refers to the same content themes in both branches, reality shows each branch has specific needs from this course. So even if we accept to adopt the same content, its use and objectives should be tailored for each branch. This is exactly what the ministerial team omitted, as did many instructors. I believe this leads to the absence of a necessary knowledge for the student who, in contrast, acquires unnecessary knowledge or simply keeps that gap unfilled. This is due to the fact that the interested parties do not properly analyze the scope of the task, which means that they do not take into account the requirements of the major.

b. Inactivity

The efficiency of knowledge is greatly affected by its acquisition method. For instance, the

learner could recall the conditions of a healthy environment when answering an exam question. Yet, in discussion outside the school these conditions would never come to his mind (Al-Asar, 2001). While Psychology and Education students may master certain theories, they would fail to resolve an issue requiring the application of such theories in real situations. Even though many instructors' conceptions about education and training incarnate this knowledge incapacity, they still lecture about individualistic differences, while they treat their students in a similar manner. This indicates that inactive knowledge is superficial knowledge and has an expiry date, thus the trainee only exerts it in a single exam or so. It is the natural result of a "combining system" based on knowledge delivery, lectures and recitation, where students receive the content of the educational curriculum without understanding or assimilating it. This ultimately impedes all application or employment of this knowledge. (Al-Asar, 2001).

Many Psychology instructors have themselves studied courses they teach such as: "Educational Evaluation" and "Docimology". However, having analyzed many of the achievement tests prepared by those instructors, it is clear that they lack the minimum conditions of a respectful achievement test, which is due to the instructor's inactive knowledge.

While supervising a large number of graduation research papers in psychology, the author encouraged students to prepare a questionnaire. However, it has been observed that students lack the necessary knowledge to design a questionnaire although they passed the second year exam in "Psychometrics" and "Design of Psychological Tests". Experience shows that the knowledge expires soon after the exam.

It is noteworthy that a full knowledge acquisition cycle includes the following five stages: 1. Access to information, 2. Organizing information 3. Knowledge inference, 4. Knowledge application, 5 Generation of new knowledge. Based on table 3 we may say that emphasis in psychology and education curricula is found in the area highlighted by a solid blue line, while higher education should shift interest to the area highlighted in a dashed line. (Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, 2002, p. 71).

Table (4) cognitive levels targeted by the Psychology and Education curricula

					Data content
					Data processing
					Data diffusion
Generate New knowledge	Apply knowledge	Deduct knowledge	Organize information	Access to information	

c. Naivety

Naïve knowledge becomes apparent among Psychology and Education specialists, when discussing scientific or social issues using concepts they acquired from non scientific sources. Although, these scientific and social issues were covered by the educational programs and were subject of a scientific explanation, naïve knowledge that was acquired from non scientific sources was in no way replaced. In addition to that, whenever a trainee is asked to recall these issues, he would succeed brilliantly, but if he were to give an explanation or an analysis of these same issues, he would soon fall back on naïve interpretations. (Al-Asar, 2001).

A first year student in Psychology and Education studies in the module "Introduction to Orthophony" a scientific interpretation of what is called "cry of birth". However, during our

observation to students exams we noticed some non scientific answers to this question. Thus, we can consider that naïve knowledge is the result of inactive knowledge that was incapable of obliterating all types of knowledge acquired by the student from non scientific sources at different stages of life.

d. Ritualism

Psychology and Education students acquire scientific terminology and use it with ease; they even repeat scientific concepts and viewpoints which entitles them to succeed in their exams. But in fact, for them, these concepts are known in vain and are meaningless. They are more of the intricate rituals that they repeat, not because they understand them, but just to “row with the flow” (Al-Asar, 2001). With this in mind, a psychological expert could evoke human nature, learning difficulties and a case study when analyzing. However, if asked about the meaning of these concepts, he would fail to answer, and might even choose a specific reasoning or theory without having the tools to backup his choice. Moreover, he could undertake several evaluations and follow-ups without a specific objective for each evaluation. Finally, this specialist might adopt a training pattern in his teaching methods with no rationale.

Psychology and Education students might refer to scientific terms such as pedagogy and docimology using a terminology that is more complex than their own understanding. Hence, when asked to elaborate and explain this terminology, they would be unable to do so.

Thus, ritualistic knowledge can be considered as the result of the inactive and naïve knowledge acquired by the learner.

e. Deficiency

An analysis of the content of the different courses in Psychology and Education reveals a large amount of work in comparison to the academic timetable. This encourages instructors, at certain stages, to concentrate on teaching some kinds of knowledge instead of others that were meant in accordance to their own expertise and personal experience. Consequently, they might overlook specific kinds of knowledge that may be part of the basic professional requirements. Thus, we end up with trained psychologists or educationalists with knowledge gaps. (Awashriya, 2008, p. 257). Actually, if you analyze Psychology and Education students’ acquisition of knowledge and compare it with the original course contents, you notice that in many cases, the required level isn’t respected. It is systematic that an entire theme or more is deleted from the program due to time constraints and because the instructors have other occupations or are overwhelmed with exams. In addition, a comparison of students’ knowledge acquisition in the same major in two or more universities would rarely show concordance between them, qualitatively or quantitatively. This proves that at least one of the universities did not entirely cover the predefined curriculum’s content, which leads to the learner’s knowledge deficiency. This is a deficiency that will impact on that learner’s life, not only in that year, but also the following year, especially in the case of interlinked curricula.

f. Separation

Psychology and Education students take several courses and each includes a set of knowledge components. However, students may not clearly find a correlation between the different kinds of knowledge in a single course on the one hand, and between the knowledge included in several other courses, on the other. This is because they think that these courses are not linked, which makes their education partial and not complete. Thus, students become unable to find the links between the types of knowledge and fail to invest what they learnt in everyday life. In addition, they can’t reproduce knowledge when necessary since the absence of linkages prevents them from producing composite knowledge (Awashriya, 2008, p. 257- 258).

It is also noteworthy to mention that students of Psychology, Education, and Orthophony majors are taught many statistical methods in the “statistics” course during their first year and they pass them. Yet this course has no horizontal links with other courses within the same academic year, nor linked, vertically, to other continuing courses in the following years, such as “Applied Measurement in Education” and “Psychometrics” (second year), etc.

g. Alienation

No one denies that modern science was born in the west and has been deeply influenced by western culture. Thus, modern science blended with human sciences to a great extent, which for Arab students is a hurdle they have to overcome. This is because they must make the distinction between modern knowledge and the elements of western culture it blended with. In this context of a training based on western knowledge, Arab trainees can become alienated from the society they live in. (Awashriya , 2008, p. 258)

Most theories studied by those majoring in Psychology and Education emanate from studies and research conducted in western environments. This includes for instance: learning theories, the theory of Needs, the developmental and personality theories, etc.. These knowledge components which are an essential part of the courses studied in Psychology and Education majors during the different academic years, find their origin in the west, and are the result of studies and research conducted in societies that are relatively different from Arab and Muslim societies in general. Moreover, these theories were first published in the mother tongues of their authors and then translated into Arabic. As we all know, languages are the vehicle of cultures. Hence, the act of translation becomes the greatest challenge facing the efficacy of knowledge in Psychology and Education curricula in Algeria and in all Arab countries. This is also true ofr the psychological tests and standards taught to students.

h. Dichotomy between the curricula and the needs of the environment (labor market)

It is a fact that higher educational institutions ought to meet the needs of the economic sector at the greatest possible speed. For this sector is in dire need of a capable and skilled workforce in order to catalyze development in the country. This need can be accomplished by linking educational knowledge with national realities, by putting knowledge at the service of dealing with everyday problems and by using education to channel students towards needed majors in the national economy. However, many studies (Alhage 1992, and Bou Abdallah, 1993) indicate that the link between the contents of curricula and real practice is very weak and even absent in some cases. This is due to the separation between higher education institutions and productive institutions. HEIs have been unable to study the problems of the productive sector, while on the other hand productive institutions were also incapable of seeking help from educational institutions in order to solve all kinds of problems. (Mokdad, 1995).

In fact, profound changes in the labor market stemming from political, social and economic changes in society were not met by adequate development and modernization of the educational knowledge. This prevented higher education institutions from meeting the needs of labor markets. (Bou Abdallah , 1995).

i. Predominance of theoretical knowledge over applied knowledge

After examining the courses of Psychology and Education majors, and although the curriculum reserves two sessions weekly for each course (a lecture and a tutorial) except for foreign languages, it becomes clear that in many cases, a dichotomy exists between lectures and tutorials, since each teacher deals with a particular theme. Hence, theoretical knowledge could not be applied. Additionally, most tutorials are based on research, and specific themes are distributed

to students who have then to collect relevant information. In the great majority of cases, this operation happens without any guidance, field visits or even any attempt to use the theoretical information students received from their professors or from theoretical research.

In addition, if you reconsider the content of Psychology and Education curricula, you will realize that despite the curriculum's designers intention to take into account the practical dimension by suggesting a new course "training sessions" at the penultimate year of the academic period for all the major's branches, reality shows that these sessions are predominantly field trips to professional institutions rather than training sessions. Moreover, students are often denied internships in these institutions or are granted a maximum of a two-week internship.

j. Arbitrary and irrational cognitive organization of knowledge

An analysis of the course entitled "Introduction to Orthophony", which is programmed by the ministerial guide as a first year course and part of the Psychology and Education common-core syllabus, was found beyond the students' cognitive level. At the initial phase, this course should have been limited to basic concepts related to Orthophony, as a prelude, before the students delve into diagnosing disorders and conceiving treatment plans. Similarly, a study revolving around this major's second year curriculum shows that this course is also programmed for the second year in Orthophony. However, while the two courses share the same title, their content differs. This shows the arbitrariness with which the curriculum's designers in defined and organizing this course according to the students' cognitive level. This abuse becomes even more acute knowing that most of the students in this major have literary backgrounds while "Introduction to Orthophony" is a scientifically oriented course.

The above mentioned examples are just a few symptoms and indicators that we were able to identify, based on our analyses of some courses related to branches of the studied major, as well as our modest experience as teachers in this major. We estimate that our findings are enough to determine the different aspects of fragility in the knowledge of the curriculum related to the analyzed major.

IV. Enhancing knowledge in higher education curricula (Psychology, Education and Orthophony as examples)

All the mentioned indicators, and others, highlight the need for enhancing the quality of knowledge in higher education, but what does quality in higher education exactly mean?

Quality is mastering a job and performing it correctly. Theoreticians evoked the concept of quality from many angles according to a plethora of viewpoints. In higher education, for instance, quality can be discussed from five angles:

- Linking the concept of quality in education to its objectives.
- Linking the concept of quality to inputs and operations.
- The term quality as a benchmark: assess the level of quality in educational institutions according to a series of criteria.
- Determine the quality of educational institutions based on matching the needs of society and emphasizing comprehensive development.
- Quality vs. Quantity, which is to judge the quality of a system or an educational curriculum based on the opinion of the majority.

According to these elements, quality in higher education can be defined as: a highly effective educational service by ensuring the performance of all educational services, from inputs and operations to outputs. In turn, these effectively contribute to the efficiency of performance as

well as the satisfaction of beneficiaries and the fulfillment of their needs. (AlSayed, 2007).

In order to ensure high quality knowledge in higher education, many methods have been employed, of which the most important and effective is a system based on understanding the essential and secondary tasks undertaken by professionals, especially in the workplace, i.e. the Dacum system:

1. The Dacum concept

Dacum is an abbreviation for “Developing of A Curriculum”. It is the structural development of educational curricula in a new and unconventional way. This is by organizing a symposium or a workshop to analyze and discuss notes and skill acquisition levels, as defined by specialists in a certain profession. The ultimate objective is to construct an applied educational formula called the “Dacum”, which then becomes the expression of a concept, approved by the labor market actors and the experts who will actually be using this formula from one aspect, and the designer of the training curriculum from another. (Daoud, 2004).

2. Specifications and assumptions of the Dacum system

a. Specifications of the Dacum system

The Dacum system is characterized by the following (Daoud, 2004):

- 1) It minimizes or fills the gap between theory and practice among learners.
- 2) It generates the highest level of enjoyment and enthusiasm among learners.
- 3) It adopts a realistic approach and is thus more effective than other systems in achieving the educational objectives.
- 4) It exempts the apprentice from internships or any prior professional experience.
- 5) It is time and cost efficient in its preparation and application.

b. Philosophical assumptions of the Dacum system

The foundations of the Dacum system are the following (Daoud, 2004):

- 1) A practicing professional offers the best and most precise job description.
- 2) This job description should be organized according to objectives, content, means, methods, evaluation etc.

Based on that, these foundations lead to the following:

- 1) Determine the profession which is being targeted by the educational curriculum such as: “blacksmithing, guidance-counselor, psychologist, etc...”
- 2) Unveil the anticipated professional objective required from the practitioner by employers.
- 3) Designate work standards according to work types and obligations.
- 4) Classify professions by degree of difficulty, the time needed for each partial operation or task, sectors etc.

3. The steps of the Dacum system

The steps of the Dacum system can be summarized as follows:

- a. **Step 1:** Survey the needs of the labor market: This consists of the detection of professions needed by society, in order to link knowledge in Psychology and Education’s curriculum to the labor market. This is achieved by ensuring an effective training in terms of quality and quantity, in the required professions. On the one hand, the link should be created without having to resort to arbitrary and improvised decisions, or to just imagination in training individuals in professions which aren’t needed by society. On the other, this survey is also a way to determine, accurately profiles or types of psychologists, educationalists and

orthophonists, as desired by employers. This is only possible if a continuous relationship exists between institutions educating psychologists, educationalists and orthophonists, and the labor market. In order for these institutions to create linkages with the labor market, the following norms are a requirement (Ahmad, 2001, p. 234) :

- Identify a functional relationship between training institutions and the places of work and production. This interactive relationship is supposed to continually guarantee the possible participation of employers in the evaluation and development of knowledge in higher education curricula.
- Ensure the employer's participation by convincing them to embark on the task of training by executing programs in cooperation with training institutions. In addition, there should be continuing contact with workplaces according to pre-established procedures.
- Make sure that higher education institutions have enough flexibility and freedom of action to modify the knowledge included in the higher education curricula and other components. This is in order to swiftly respond to changes that might occur in the work environment. This would also enable us to link this knowledge to the needs of the labor market by making curricula flexible and applicable.

In this context, it is convenient to note that if higher education institutions were unable to meet the present and future needs of the labor market, as well as the aspirations of rehabilitating the national human resources, it is because this rehabilitation requires a continuous coordination with the labor market in order to determine its needs. In addition, this depends, to a great extent, on cooperative training which represents the common efforts of training institutions and facilitators in the private and public sectors. These efforts would allow the trainee to use his knowledge and skills which is the most effective means to develop settlement program mechanisms and the work force. It would also give them the chance to truly get in touch with the nature of the labor market in the private and public sectors, so they can ultimately find correlations between these sectors and the theoretical and applied sciences. Ultimately, students would be able to complete the required fieldwork and thus, conclude their training. (Asioui, 2007).

- b. **Step 2: Job Description:** This is the enumeration of the tasks and practices that are crucial for specialists in the execution of a profession. A job description doesn't necessarily define all conditions and criteria pertaining to the execution of a profession, or the qualities of employees. In fact, these definitions are psychological and procedural aspects included in another step, which is job analysis. (Hamdan, 1991, p. 30).

If for example, the profession for which the training program will be specifically tailored is "student counselor", then the choice of knowledge to be included in the training curriculum will be decided in a special meeting of professional counselors active at the time of the symposium. These professionals are then asked the following: question "What are the major tasks of a school counselor?" this is the basis of the Dacum system.

Then, a series of discussions would take place based on the answers provided by the counselors, and detailed tasks are then developed. Afterwards, each task is noted in details, and finally written down on a large card with all relevant details. (Daoud, 2004).

- c. **Step 3: Organization and Classification of the Job description:** As previously mentioned, the second step ends with an organization of tasks according to those consecutively entrusted to school counselors.

The organization of tasks can be done according to the level of difficulty, starting with the

hardest task (Daoud, 2004). Moreover, in order to make the concept of task accessible and facilitate the enumeration of its relevant behaviors, through the job description, as well enable the definition of necessary knowledge for training; it is possible to classify these behaviors into two types of smaller behavioral units: the Task and the Action.

The profession is considered as the total sum of the employees' actions during the provision of services or the production of a commodity. Whereas, the task is the total sum of actions that constitute a sub-unit of a given behavior adopted by the worker to fulfill a part of, or the integrality of an independent or a semi-independent obligation within the single occupation. As for actions, they are consecutive behaviors adopted by the employee to fulfill functional tasks. In view of the diversity and multiplicity of a behavioral job structure, the tasks are undertaken successively till the achievement of desired results in the case of a simple occupational structure, or indeed is the result of its practical obligations, in general. (Hamdan, 1991, p. 30).

- d. **Step 4:** Job Analysis: This is a final review of the validity of any suggested occupational tasks and actions in the light of real data and requirements. Afterwards, the job analysis consists of detailing human, psychological, financial and administrative requirements related to the occupational performance in constructive practical conditions, in order to produce the desired services or commodities. A job analysis fulfills three main objectives:
- Updating the behavioral content of the occupation in accordance with new performance requirements, this is also a common objective with those related to job description.
 - Carry out the occupation by determining all kinds of human, psychological, financial and administrative requirements.
 - Design educational curricula related to the occupation. Design comes after analysis. Analysis comes after job description. This is an operation of behavioral enumeration of the occupational content. (Hamdan, 1991, p. 30).

Job analysis is possible by forming a development team including designers of curricula and some of the professionals participating in the professional debates. This team concentrates on the tasks mentioned in the job description of "school guidance-counselors", and then formulates them as educational/ procedural objectives. The designer shall take into account the following question: In order to train an individual, what are the necessary means and requirements? (Daoud, 2004). Actually, these measures are applicable to all majors; however, in the case of the humanities majors, more specifically, in majors with human aspects, it is possible to adopt the abovementioned approach by adapting some of its details to the previous steps.

V. Conclusion

From the above information, it is possible to conclude that the knowledge included in Psychology, Education and Orthophony majors is fragile, according to a series of indicators: absence, inactivity, naivety, ritualism, deficiency, separation, alienation, dichotomy between the curriculum-related knowledge or environment-related needs, predominance of theoretical knowledge over applied knowledge, the imbalances between theoretical and applied knowledge, in addition to cognitive arbitrary and the irrational organization of knowledge.

In order to improve higher education curricula in general and those of Psychology, Education and Orthophony, in particular, curriculum designers should abide by the following standards:

- Analyzing the occupations and include all their requirements in their specific curricula.
- Shifting from an educational system based on data and information dictation to one based on modifying behaviors and exploiting and producing knowledge.
- Eliminating naive knowledge from the contents of curricula and seeking to modify or remove this kind of knowledge among learners.
- Unveiling the wisdom behind all types of knowledge so they do not remain mere rituals.
- Applying the principles of continuity and consecutiveness in the organization of knowledge.
- Localization of psychological and educational sciences.
- Linking higher education institutions to their environment.
- Creating a balance between theoretical and applied knowledge.
- Taking into account the cognitive, emotional and skill development of the learner.
- Achieving the logical organization of knowledge.

In order for curriculum designers to respect these standards, they need to involve other stakeholders in choosing and organizing curriculum-related knowledge. These should include experts and in the labor market. Furthermore, they should adopt the Dacum system, not only in Psychology, Education and Orthophony, but also in all the other majors, especially those characterized with a human aspect.

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Assessment of the Post-Graduate Program at the Faculty of Mass Communication. Case Study*

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Abstract

This study evaluates the graduate program of the Faculty of Mass Communication at the University of Sana'a, from the viewpoint of students, faculty and administration, through a survey of a sample of 130 students and 16 faculty and all administration members.

The study reveals numerous shortcomings that plague the program. The most notable from the viewpoint of the students are inadequacies in the physical and academic infrastructure, and various instruction and research drawbacks. The students expressed a "medium" degree of satisfaction with the program, and felt that it has at best met their prior expectations to a "good" degree. Meanwhile, academic staff levelled numerous criticisms at the program, centred on lack of adequate planning and lack of involvement of all faculty members, professionals and practitioners in its design. They regarded the program to be "weak" and indicated a low level of satisfaction with it, calling for its review, so that it may be redesigned on a scientific basis, similar to the latest comparable programs, and in line with recent developments.

I. Introduction

Higher education is currently facing many changes and challenges, which imply a new phase of change and development in this sector (Al Ghamidi, 2008). The contemporary global social discourse reveals that higher education will be an arena of conflict between global powers, especially in a world where people are more interrelated and interdependent (Mohammad, 2009). In addition, the evolution of technology and knowledge has led to an increased demand for high-quality skilled human resources. The nature of the major changes affecting all areas has made the quality of education one of the main concerns in our world. Moreover, one of today's educational priorities is to control the quality of education by assessing its outputs, monitoring the performance of teachers and institutions, as well as the quality of the educational product and the level of graduates. This is the right way to reach real human development (Mounir & others, 2008). Furthermore, quality assurance in education is one of the most urgent issues to be discussed in a world where information flows intensively, and competition is high among economic and educational institutions. It is needed in order to access this market and educate

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graduates in an assured quality manner (Zimam & Malika, 2009), and to ensure continuous development and competent performance from higher education institutions. This is so they can gain the confidence of the community through their graduates' knowledge on the basis of an internationally recognized assessment mechanism. (Al Khariji & Mahran).

Public, civil and private universities in Yemen are currently introducing post-graduate programs (PhD, Master, and Diploma) in their academic courses, without taking into account the availability of the program's requirements, starting from the infrastructure and ending with the educational programs themselves. These requirements should correspond with the concept of higher education quality, including the functions and activities it implies such as curricula, educational programs, research, students, buildings, equipment and facilities, provision of services to local communities, internal self education, as well as identification of internationally recognized comparable quality criteria (Mohammad, 2009).

The fact is that post-graduate programs in public universities are not designed and based on the needs of the society and the job market for post-graduate specialties. Some of these universities may even launch this kind of program and, after a short period, discontinue it (High Council for Education Planning, 2005 / 2006, p. 71). Hence, the assessment of post-graduate programs is a highly important issue, since assessing these programs is now an integral part of the worldwide educational process and an essential condition set by all academic accreditation bodies for achieving quality assurance. Many intellectuals have described this century as the century of quality, for quality is no longer a luxury, but an urgent necessity imposed by the dynamics of contemporary life and a proof of the survival of the educational institution (Al Hawli, 2004).

The assessment process aims at reaching specific value judgments for the university programs and activities, by using some reference measurements that help to understand and realize the link between all the assessment elements. The assessment is based on specific criteria that govern all the measurable elements of the university's work, so we can judge the university's performance and its ability to fulfil its mission as stipulated in its stated objectives (Abou El Che'er, no date).

Due to the expansion of the university education sector in Yemen, and the rising number of university graduates, post-graduate programs are becoming more popular, as is shown by the increasing numbers of students applying for admission every year, sometimes surpassing the capacity of these programs. For example, 1,104 students were enrolled in post-graduate programs in 2005 / 2006, compared to only 403 in 2002 / 2003 (High Council for Educational Planning, 2005 / 2006, p.72). These growing numbers reveal the need to adopt an overall quality strategy in university education, for overall quality is the driving force towards the community of knowledge (Mohammad, 2009).

Eighteen years after its establishment, the Faculty of Mass Communication at Sana'a University is amongst the faculties that have recently reincorporated the post-graduate program in their curricula. In fact, in the 2007 / 2008 academic year, the faculty started to accept applications for Master's and Diploma degrees in journalism, radio/ TV, and public relations and advertisement. However, the public relations and advertisement majors were cancelled due to the unavailability of staff in accordance with the stipulated regulations (Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, 2008, p.3). In the following academic year, 2008 / 2009, a «professional diploma» program was launched in this specialization.

The post-graduate program drew the attention of the press². Public opinion on the launching

² The concern of the press regarding the post-graduate program mainly refers to the two weekly-pages published in Al-Thawra newspaper, which is the widest daily publication in Yemen, dedicated to media affairs, including the affairs of the College of Mass Communication. In addition, the majority of enrolled

of the program was divided. The controversy is still going on³ due to the various problems the program is facing and this needs to be addressed. An assessment should be carried out at several levels in order to determine the extent to which they are achieving their goals, especially in serving the community.

II. The problem of the study, its methodology and tools

1. The problem of the study and the rationale

Amid the debate on the post-graduate program at the Faculty of Mass Communication in the newspapers and web pages and among the teaching and administrative staff, there is a need to assess the components of the program from the point of view of the students and the officials in charge, in order to have a scientific basis for addressing the program deficiencies.

a. Importance of the study

The study is important for it:

- 1) Provides information on the program in the form of positive and negative feedback.
- 2) Provides the academic decision-makers at Sana'a University with a scientific assessment of the program from the point of view of both students and academic staff.
- 3) Shows the staff at Sana'a University the importance of assessing the whole academic process, and the necessity to conduct these assessments on a regular basis.
- 4) Highlights the importance of scientific planning for these programs and the necessity to involve all the parties concerned in this process.

b. Aims of the study

The main objective of this study is to assess the post-graduate program at the Faculty of Mass Communication, and examine to what extent it meets the requirements of the educational process. The study also aims at:

- 1) Revealing the reasons behind the enrolment of students in post-graduate studies.
- 2) Finding out how the students heard of the post-graduate program at the Faculty of Mass Communication.
- 3) Discovering why the students chose to enrol in this program.
- 4) Identifying trends and degrees of satisfaction about the program, and determining its strengths and weaknesses, from the point of view of both students and the academic staff.

c. Research questions

The first set of questions asked in the study was directed at the students, while the second was directed at the academic staff. These questions were:

- 1) What are the most important characteristics of the students enrolled in the post-graduate program at the Faculty of Mass Communication?
- 2) What are the reasons behind their enrolment in the program?
- 3) How have the students heard of this program?
- 4) Why did they choose to enrol in this program?
- 5) What are the attitudes of the students concerning the program?
- 6) What are the teaching methods adopted in this program?

students in this program either work in the press or are graduates from this college.

³ The post-graduate program is facing many problems. This resulted in the Rector of San'a University to establish a committee to develop this program.

<http://www.althawra.net/newsdetails.aspx?newsid=53441>? access on February 2, 2009.

- 7) To which extent has the program responded to the students' expectations?
- 8) What is the students' assessment of and degree of satisfaction with this program?
- 9) What are the main strengths and weaknesses in this program?
- 10) How fluent are the internal communication mechanisms in the Faculty of Mass Communication from the students' point of view?
- 11) Are the enrolled students willing to continue their studies until they obtain a Masters degree?
- 12) What are the trends of the academic staff concerning the post-graduate program?
- 13) What is their assessment of and degree of satisfaction with the program?
- 14) What are the main strengths and weaknesses in this program from their point of view?
- 15) What do they suggest in order to develop this program?

2. Literature review

Post-graduate programs gain their importance from the fact that they are related to the scientific research process and the preparation of university teachers. Hence, researchers show great interest in monitoring and assessing it.

Many scientific studies have been conducted in this field, such as of Fayad (1994) that tried to determine the extent to which the post-graduate programs at Sana'a University meet the required criteria. This study was conducted through surveying a sample of faculty members involved in the post-graduate programs at Sana'a University and students enrolled in these programs. The main findings of this study were that the post-graduate studies at Sana'a University do not meet 67 criteria related to the goals, content, teaching and learning, and assessment.

A study by Al Tarek (1994) aimed to identify the level of the Sana'a University assessment of faculty performance, through a survey directed to a sample of students from various faculties. The study showed that the overall students' assessment was «medium» in range.

A study by Al Sane'e (2007) tried to determine the degree of satisfaction of the students about the teaching methods adopted. The survey covered a sample of 170 of level 4 students in the scientific departments. The study showed a «very low» degree of satisfaction of these methods.

A study by Al Hawli & others (2004) aimed to assess the post-graduate programs at Gaza Islamic universities, through questionnaires directed to a sample of students from 4 different faculties. The findings of the study were that these programs are highly responsive to the students' needs, the academic supervision is very competent, the teaching methods are very effective, and new types of technology are being used in the teaching process. However, the study showed that the library and the services it provides need to be developed.

The Al Salahi (2008) study aimed to assess the final tests in humanities and theoretical specialties at Sana'a University, during the first semester of the 2004 / 2005 academic year, in order to determine the extent to which they meet the scientific criteria required in such tests. This study was conducted over a sample of 85 test papers, and reached the conclusion that many of these tests disregarded important technical aspects and focused on essay tests.

A study by Uthman (2008) aimed to evaluate the methods of students' assessment at Taiz University by surveying the opinions of the faculty and students, and assessing samples of the tests conducted at the university. The study showed that all teachers focussed their assessment on knowledge, did not follow good standards in test preparation, either at the level of the form of the tests, or at the level of the content. In addition, they relied on essay questions. The Al Aghbari (2007) study depicted a profile of the university teacher in general, and the Arab teacher in particular. It reached the conclusion that the teacher should be trained at the scientific, academic, and educational levels, and should be aware of many sciences related to the teaching profession.

A study by Al Hamadi (2008) aimed to identify problems related to the professional performance of teachers and the obstacles hindering development based on documentary analysis. This study identified many individual and institutional shortcomings concerning the performance of teachers and factors influencing their development.

A study by Mounir & others (2008) showed how to achieve overall sustainable development, through the development of the higher education sector, and the improvement in the quality of higher education leading to the achievement of sustainable economic and social development. The study reached the conclusion that quality in higher education is the way to human development.

3. Methodology

a. Study sample

The population of the study consisted of all 264 students, both male and female, who were enrolled in the post-graduate program in 2008 / 2009 in Diplomas and Master's Courses, in all three specialties available at the faculty. The study was conducted on a random sample of 130 students, both male and female, who were divided into categories according to their educational level and specialization. This took place during the last week of the first semester of the 2008/2009 university year.

b. Study tools

This study used the «questionnaire» method which is considered as the most widespread means of data collection in the survey method, and the most suitable to study public opinion (Abdul Hamid, 2000, pp. 158 - 158). A questionnaire form that included questions related to the discussed issue was designed for the purpose of this study. In fact, the researcher designed two questionnaire forms: one for the students, as they are at a stage that enables them to judge the effectiveness of the teaching method being used with them, according to Remmers (Al Tarek, 1994, p.12), and the other for the faculty staff. The E-mail system was used as a tool for data collection.

III. Higher education at Sana'a University⁴

Higher education is very recent in Yemen. In fact, university education started in Yemen with the establishment of Sana'a University in 1972 and Aden University in 1975 (National Information Centre, 2006). However, today there are now 21 government and public universities in Yemen (High Council for Education Planning, 2005 /2006, p. 3).

The first post-graduate program at Sana'a University was launched at the Faculty of Letters, in the English language major in 1984. The degrees were at first specialized diplomas delivered in some of the university faculties. Then, in 1985, the deanship of higher education and scientific research was established in order to promote higher education studies and to implement the university's plans and projects. And in the early 1990's, the university launched post-graduate programs in more than 10 new specialties, in general or specialized diploma programs, Master's and PhD programs. Today, all the faculties at the university provide post-graduate programs, with the exception of the Faculty of Dentistry. In the 2007 /2008 university year, there were 50 such programs, found in 11 faculties and two specialized centres.

⁴ Statistics cited in this part were obtained from Department of the Higher Studies, Sana'a University.

IV. The post-graduate program at the Faculty of Mass Communication

The Faculty of Mass Communication is amongst the most recent faculties at Sana'a University. It was established in 1991 as a media department at the Faculty of Letters, giving Bachelor's Degree courses and post-graduate studies for one academic year. It was designed for individuals who work in the media, even though they may have graduated from programmes not related to media. The program was operational for three years before being closed for restructuring and development purposes. It became operational again in 2007.

The Faculty of Mass Communication was re-established in 1996. It now includes three departments: journalism, radio/ TV, and public relations and advertisement. The faculty delivers a 4-year Bachelor's Degree in each of the aforementioned specializations (Faculty of Mass Communication, 1998/ 1999 -A, p.8). The faculty teaching staff consists of 35 members of various academic ranks⁵.

The post-graduate program, in its two tracks of Diploma and Master, aims at achieving a number of educational goals. These include providing an opportunity for students to continue higher education studies, meeting the needs of the media institutions, the university and society in general by providing trained individuals who are able to use diverse media techniques, as well as enhancing and developing the level of scientific media research (Faculty of Mass Communication, 1998/ 1999-B), (Faculty of Mass Communication, 1998 /1999-C).

Even though the university had an early experience with post-graduate studies, no lessons were learnt from this experience, and now, more than 15 years later, it appears to be a similar story of just forging ahead. It should also be mentioned that the post-graduate program had been a matter of debate in the faculty since the ending of the first program – the high diploma – in 1994 until the launching of the new one in 2007 /2008. Since its inception, this program has provoked controversy both inside and outside the faculty. In fact, the previous administration opposed the implementation of the program due to a lack of appropriate resources. A new administration decided to reopen the program and advertisements for the program were published in the Yemeni press. 131 male and female students were offered places in the program after having successfully passed the admission and selection procedures. The faculty was again providing post-graduate studies, although little consideration had been given to the availability of the required resources. The program is now operational with varied strengths and weaknesses.

V. Description of the study sample

Students' sample:

The students' sample was composed as follows:

- Males represented 76.9% of the total respondents, while females represented only 23.1%. They were distributed as follows: journalism, 37.7%; public relations and marketing, 34.6%; and radio/TV, 27.7%.
- 66.2% of students were enrolled in the Diploma courses, and 30% in the preparatory Master's courses.
- 65.4% of students were married, compared to 30% who were unmarried; the married percentage of males was higher than that of females (79% v/s 20).

⁵ These ranks include, three professors, four associate professors, 19 assistant professor, two assistant lecturers, and seven instructors, distributed among the three department of the College.

- The Faculty of Mass Communication graduates ranked first amongst the students enrolled in the program (30%).
- 77.7% of students were working, compared to 17.7% who were non-working; the percentage of working males was higher than that of females (81% v/s 66.7%)
- 68.5% of students were full-time, compared to 31.5% of part-timers.
- 66.2% of students attend their classes “regularly”, while 33.3% attend their classes “sometimes”; females attended more regularly than males.

VI. Results of the survey study

1. Results of the students

a. Reasons behind the enrolment of students in post-graduate programs in general

1) General trends

It can be said that the students showed positive attitudes towards higher education and its importance. Love of studying and the desire for continuous learning were the main reasons they cited (70%), followed by the conviction of the importance of getting a post university qualification (40%).

Even though these results are important, students also mentioned other reasons when asked about their enrolment in the program. In fact, the reasons ranked 3 to 9 (with the exception of the ranked 5 – 28.5% - and ranked 8 reasons -13.8% - relating to the activation of the educational memory and the cheap tuition fees to enrol in the post-graduate studies), were about the expected higher revenues they would receive following successful completion of the course. The desire to improve their financial situation ranked 3 (32.3 %), followed by the desire to achieve a better social status (29.2%), then the desire to achieve a better position at work, the desire to get a promotion, or a bonus, the desire to obtain a higher education degree, the desire to get a job, and finally the desire to fill their time with a fruitful activity.

2) Gender differences

The percentages of the above-mentioned reasons were very close for both sexes. However, for eight of the reasons, the percentages of males was higher than those of females, such as getting a promotion or a bonus after having obtained the degree. The females stated three different reasons than males, such as the desire to fill their time with a fruitful activity and reasonable tuition fees. The percentages were similar concerning one reason, i.e. the necessity today to have a post-graduate degree.

b. Means through which the students knew about post-graduate programs at the Faculty of Mass Communication.

1) General trends

The answers given by the respondents highlighted the importance of personal communication in the context of this study. Word of mouth communication ranked first amongst the means through which students knew about the program. In fact, friends and co-workers were classified as number 1 (62.3%) in relaying information, followed by the advertisement published in the Office of Higher Education at the university (26%), then the advertisements published in newspapers (23.8%). This last means can be explained by the fact that Yemeni newspapers are not very widespread; for example only 35,000 copies of «Al Thawra» newspaper, which is the most widespread in Yemen, are published everyday (Central Statistics Body, 2004, p.301)

2) Gender differences

The three means mentioned above about knowing about the post graduate programs were

cited by both males and females. However, the percentages of these reasons varied according to gender: 70% of females heard from friends and co-workers, compared to 60% for males. As for the percentage concerning the advertisement published in the Office of Higher education, the response was 27% from males and 13.3% from females. The percentages for the other reasons were almost identical.

c. Reasons behind the enrolment of the students in the post-graduate program at the Faculty of Mass Communication.

1) General trends

Amongst 50 other programs offered by Sana'a University, the first reason given by students was their desire to study a different major than the one they studied previously at university (38.5%), followed by their need for this major in their current job (33.8%), and then the fact that they are Mass Communication graduates (31.5%). This reason was only rated third because the students enrolled in this program are not all Mass Communication graduates, and this was provoked complaints from Mass Communication graduates. Some of the respondents said that the program *increases the chances of students from other faculties at the expense of Mass Communication students in this field of expertise. This was said to be especially true in the preparatory year for Master's degree, and allows other faculty graduates to work in their field of study.* Other respondents even stated, while talking about the weaknesses, that the program's *focus on theory provides students from other faculties with an unfair advantage, and at the expense of Mass Communication graduates and people working in the media and journalistic fields.* The importance of media studies today was ranked 5th amongst the reasons stated by the students to explain their enrolment in the program, followed by the desire to work in the media field, and the desire to obtain necessary information about their field of specialization.

2) Gender differences

Responses on the enrolment in the post-graduate programs varied with gender. The percentages of females were higher than those of males concerning the following reasons: the desire to study a major different from the one studied previously at university; the requirements of their current job; the importance of media studies today; the desire to obtain necessary information about this program; and the requirements of the Yemeni job market. However, the percentages given by males exceeded those of females regarding other reasons, even though the differences were slight, with the exception of the first reason (56.7% v/s 33%).

The respondents also cited among the reasons the fact that they were unable to enrol in the post-graduate programs offered by the faculty they graduated from because: they do not have the necessary financial means, their major is not required by the job market, the faculty they graduated from does not offer post-graduate studies, or the Information major is the one which was most related to their previous major.

d. Students' trends concerning the post-graduate program at the Faculty of Mass Communication

The «agreement» trends were higher than other trends for 15 out of 19 measurement statements, while «disagreement» trends surpassed the «agreement» trends in 2 statements only: *the program does not respond to the students' media interest, and the program focuses on practice more than theory* - with percentages reaching 51.5% and 43.1% respectively. The «neutral» trends were dominant in one single statement – *the central library at the university does not offer the students the required services* (39.2%), while the «agreement» and «disagreement»

trends were equal in another – the central library at the university provides the students with the necessary books to conduct scientific research – with a percentage of 37.7%.

The «agreement» trends were dominant regarding deficiencies in the faculty library and the central library (working hours, services, and references), the insufficient advertisement for the program in the media, the program provision of new media and communication skills to students, the scientific benefit of the program, the program response to the media learning needs of the students, the easiness of the registration and enrolment operations, the lack of cooperation between students and teachers, the lack in the provision of the required research skills for students, the deficiencies of the program at the research planning stage, and the transparency and fairness of the selection procedures among those willing to enrol in the program. The «agreement» percentages varied between 35.4% at their lowest levels to 72.3% at their highest. After having reviewed the weighted mean values, it was clear that it outweighed the «agreement» trends over other trends in four of the measurement statements: *the working hours of the faculty library do not suit the students' schedules, the program provides me with new media and communication skills, the program provides me with great scientific benefit, and the advertisement of the program in the media was not sufficient*. The coefficient value of these statements was 2.73, 2.61, 2.58, and 2.54 respectively. The «neutral» trend was dominant at the level of the other statements, taking into consideration that the highest value of this coefficient reached 2.5, while the lowest value was 1.70.

e. The students' assessment trends regarding the teaching methods

Data revealed deficiencies in the teaching methods used by the instructors. The percentage concerning the methods used by «some of the teachers» was dominant for all 9 statements, with 76.9% of the respondents saying that «some of the teachers» clearly state the goals of the academic courses. These results match those reached by the Fayad (1994, p.86) study which states that the post-graduate program at Sana'a University does not meet the criteria concerning informing the students about the plans of the courses, so they can understand the objectives, content, assessment mechanisms and references. No specific, clear, and achievable goals are stated by either the faculty or university.

The shortcomings in the educational process were also confirmed by the response of more than 70% of the students who affirmed that some teachers do not present the content of their courses in an organized and comprehensible way. In addition, they use teaching methods that do not promote thinking in students. 67.4% of the respondents also mentioned that “some teachers” encourage discussion and dialogue, which matches the results of the Fayad (ibid.) study concerning a lack in the use of discussion to achieve interaction between the students and teachers. Further, 59.8% of the respondents said that “some teachers” connect the content of their courses with the situation in Yemen whenever it is possible. On the other hand, few teachers take into consideration ability differences among students. The use of modern technology in teaching is absent, whatever teaching method is used. These two observations are in line with the results of the Fayad (Ibid.) study.

The weighted mean values confirmed the opinions mentioned above, because all these values were in line with the “some of the teachers” trend and varied between 2.30 and 2.9, with the exception of the statement concerning the use of dictation as a teaching method which had a value of 2.74, indicating that this is the most widespread method of teaching in the post-graduate program. The overall results indicate that instructors should reconsider their current teaching methods, and the university management should work to provide modern technology.

f. The extent to which the post-graduate program responds to students' expectations

1) General trends

Concerning the extent to which the post-graduate program at the Faculty of Information responded to students' expectations, prior to their enrolment, the highest response was "medium", with a percentage of 44.6%, then "high" (26.2%), and third "weak" (11.5%), while the percentage showing a "very high" degree of satisfaction was low.

2) Gender differences

Females' dissatisfaction with the program fulfilling their expectations was greater than for males. None of them classified this fulfilment as "very high", while 20% described it as "very weak". There was also a low response to the first option amongst males (9%). Males and females responded to the "medium" option (49%).

3) Majors' differences

Results showed that "high" student satisfaction of the program's fulfilment of their expectations was low in the three majors. The public relations and advertisement courses proved to be the best in meeting expectations, with 51.1% of the respondents giving a "high" response, while 28.9% described it as «medium», 11.1% as "very high", and 2.2% as "very weak". For the journalism and radio/TV majors, the students' ranking was almost the same with just slight differences in percentages.

g. The extent to which the students are satisfied with the post-graduate program

1) General trends

The highest response on the degree of satisfaction with the post-graduate program at the Mass Communication faculty was "medium" at 56.2%. This was followed by "dissatisfaction" (12.3%), "low degree of satisfaction" (11.3%), "very high degree of satisfaction" (10.8%), and "complete dissatisfaction" (5.4%).

2) Gender differences

Males and females expressed the same degrees of satisfaction from ranks 1 to 3. In fact, the "medium degree" of satisfaction ranked first for both sexes, with 61% for males and 40% for females, followed by "dissatisfaction", with 10% for males and 20% for females, then "low degree of satisfaction", with 10% for males and 16.7% for females. Gender variations were noticed at the level of other degrees of satisfaction.

3) Majors' differences

Most of the students in all majors expressed a "medium degree of satisfaction", varying from 44.4% to 63.3%, while variations were noticed among the other degrees of satisfaction. The journalism students seem to be the least satisfied with their program, for "dissatisfaction" occupied the second place (14.3%), followed by "low degree of satisfaction", and "complete dissatisfaction" (8.2%). The radio/TV students expressed "low degree of satisfaction" with a percentage of 22.2%, which means that this degree of satisfaction ranked 2nd, followed by "dissatisfaction" (13.9%), "very high degree of satisfaction" (11.1%), and "complete dissatisfaction" (5.6%). Public relations and advertisement students showed higher degrees of satisfaction, for the "very high degree of satisfaction" ranked 2nd (20%), followed by "dissatisfaction" (11.1%), "low degree of satisfaction" and "complete dissatisfaction". This is mainly due to the fact that there was a better designing process for the "professional diploma" courses than that for the journalism and radio/TV majors' courses.

h. Students' assessment of the post-graduate program.

1) General trends

The highest response of students to the post-graduate program at the Faculty of Mass

Communication was «good» (44.6%), followed by «very good» (25.4%), then «weak» (14.6%), «excellent» (6.9%), «very weak» (5.4%), and finally «undetermined».

2) Gender differences

Both males and females describing the post-graduate program put «good» in first place (48% for males and 33.3% for females). However, there were percentage variations at the level of other assessments, with males giving higher percentages than females. These assessments were of the same order as in the «general trends» paragraph, with females evaluation of the program as «weak» ranking 2nd (23.3%), followed by «very good» (16.7%), «very weak» (13.3%), and «excellent» (6.7%).

3) Majors' differences

The «public relations and advertisement» major was the most appreciated by students with 42.2% of them describing it as «very good», 33.3% as «good», 15.6% as excellent, and the rest as «weak», then «very weak». As for the two other majors, students ranked «good» in first place, with 51% for journalism and 50% for radio/TV. However, there were variations at the level of other assessments.

i. Main strengths of the post-graduate program from the students' perspective

The students were able through this question to express their opinions of the post-graduate program at the Faculty of Mass Communication in its three components: the curriculum, the instructors, and the teaching process. Many digressed on this subject, and some were so disappointed that they accused the program of having no strengths. Others even mentioned teachers by name and talked about specific courses, both positively and negatively, which revealed some of the real problems that students were suffering from and needed to be addressed.

1) Strengths:

- The very launching of the program in the faculty
- The availability of Yemeni specialized teaching staff, as well as the competence and commitment of some teachers.
- The diversification, concentration, and specialization of the courses, and the conformity of some of these courses with the latest developments in the teaching field.
- The program helps to understand the situation of the media in Yemen, and to be aware of other countries experiences.
- The program depends on the students' efforts even though most of them have other occupations.
- The program stimulates the students to seek information on new communication techniques and other issues.
- The program rectifies some wrong practices in the workplace.

2) Weaknesses:

- The curricula are old or outdated, they do not keep up with technological developments, they suffer from improper terminology, and include courses unrelated to the media. These results are in line with those found in the Fayad (1994, p.86) study which revealed that the terminology does not conform to the goals of the post-graduate program at Sana'a University, nor achieves the standard required for the terms included in the latest scientific developments.
- The semester is too short given the extent of the curricula and the large amount of assignments.
- Teachers do not comply with the lectures' schedule, some display inappropriate

behaviour with the students some lack appropriate qualifications, and some do not exercise the necessary control.

- No specific mechanism for post-graduate studies is available at the faculty, nor clear and fair regulations, to allow differentiation between amateurs and specialists.
- No system of library hours is available, and the library does not provide the books and booklets on a fixed date.
- Some Bachelor's Degree courses are also being taught at Master's degree level, and some topics are repeated in more than one course.
- A studying environment is absent.
- The number of teachers is insufficient, particularly those with higher degrees.

j. Students' opinions on the smoothness of the internal communication mechanisms.

1) General trends

According to the students the smoothness of the internal communication mechanisms at the faculty that teach communication skills and the students training on how to use them effectively are «good» (32.3%), «acceptable» (21.5%), «weak» (20%), «very good» (13.1%), and «excellent» (7.7%).

2) Gender differences

Females showed less satisfaction on this issue than males. In fact, females classified those mechanisms as «acceptable» and «weak» in first place with 26.7%, followed by «good», «very good», and finally «excellent» with very low percentages. The males' classification was similar to the one appearing in the «general trends» paragraph, indicating that the internal communication mechanisms are more responsive to the needs of males.

k. Level of the students' desire to continue with their Master's Degree studies

1) General trends

Most of the students are willing to continue their post-graduate studies, with a percentage of 86.2%, compared to only 5.4% who were not willing.

2) Gender and majors' differences

90% of males were willing to continue their post-graduate studies while only 73.3% of females willing to do so. There were high percentages of agreement in the three majors offered by the faculty. «Journalism» students ranked 1st with 89.8%, followed by «radio/TV» students with 86.1%, and «public relations and advertisement» (80%), which indicates that the students enrolled in the professional diploma are not well informed of the goal behind the launching of this diploma.

3) Education level differences

The answers given by the students were in line with their previous responses concerning their will to continue their post-graduate studies, whether it was from the gender perspective or from the specialization and educational level perspectives. 87 % of the students enrolled in the professional diploma expressed a desire to continue their studies, followed by their colleagues in the preparatory year for Master's Degree (84.6%), then by those who has completed the preparatory year.

The students insisted in their answer to the open question at the end of the «questionnaire», that there must be a serious will to preserve and improve this program, and to address the related deficiencies. The main issues raised by the students were:

- The necessity to review the program, starting from redesigning it according to the latest developments, explaining the criteria for students' success, and establishing regulations that clarify admission criteria and enrolment conditions.

- Giving special attention to the concentration of the specialized courses and to their application.
- Launching the «Master's Degree» program in the «public relations and advertisement» major.
- Keeping the faculty library open for longer hours.

2. Results of the faculty staff

a. Faculty staff trends concerning the post-graduate program

Faculty staff' attitudes concerning the post-graduate program were all against the program, particularly with regard to the Masters degree. Their attitudes were negative toward the planning and design of the program, the availability of the required resources, the implementation mechanisms, and the staff performance. More than 90% of the respondents "agreed" that the program is facing various administrative problems, and that the faculty is not equipped with adequate classrooms. More than 80% of them also "agreed" that the program suffers from a lack of adequate pre-planning, a non conformity to the admission criteria, a lack of practice training, poor distribution of the disciplines according to the teachers' fields of specialization, a lack of references in the library, and a lack of objectivity in the test questions. This result is in line with that reached by the Al Salahi (2008, p.275) study concerning the non-conformity of the tests conducted at Sana'a University in humanities with regard to the diversification of the questions and the different thinking levels.

50 - 70% of the respondents "agreed" on the following statements: it was important to launch a Master's degree program at the faculty; the program suffers from a lack of adequate pre-planning; the program suffers from various scientific shortcomings; the program does not address the needs of the media job market in Yemen, or the needs of Yemenis to study media and communication in their communities; the program does not achieve the scientific goals stipulated in the regulations; an appropriate scientific library is not available in the faculty; and the tests suffer from various deficiencies.

The weighted mean value was also in line with a number of these attitudes, for it outweighed an «agreement» attitude in 21 statements with values varying between 2.56 and 2.88, while it outweighed n «neutral» attitude in 23 other statements with values varying between 1.50 and 2.50, and an «opposition» attitude in one «statement» only.

Hence, it can be said that the deficiencies in the post-graduate program have resulted from a lack of adequate pre-planning by professionals and experts. If the planning stage is dealt with seriously, the program and output of the program will be of good quality which will enable graduate-holders to help tackle the burdens of their community.

b. Assessment of the faculty staff of the post-graduate program

The assessment of faculty staff of the program was in line with their previous attitudes. In fact, they described the program level as «weak» or «very weak» (33.3% for both options), and finally as «good» with a response of 25%. However, none of the respondents classified the program as «very good» or «excellent», which revealed the poor scientific and academic levels of the program.

c. Degree of satisfaction of the faculty staff of the post-graduate program

The expressed degrees of satisfaction concerning the program were a natural result of the previous assessment operation. In fact, results revealed dissatisfaction in all its degrees, with «complete dissatisfaction» ranking first (50%), followed by a «low degree of satisfaction», which highlighted the clear weakness of the program.

d. Main strengths and weaknesses of the post-graduate program

Most of the faculty staff mentioned various strengths and weaknesses in the program, and agreed on a number of them. The answers given by students and faculty staff, were almost the same concerning the strengths of the program. In fact, some respondents said that the program had no strengths at all, and others rejected the view that some of the instructors are outstanding; while others considered that the very launching of this program at the faculty is one of its strengths. The weaknesses stated by both students and faculty staff were an unclear vision concerning the goals and usefulness of the program; a similarity between some of the other courses. This similarity related to the professional diploma degree and the Master's degree, while for students it covers graduate and post-graduate studies. The results are in line with those found in the Fayad (1994, p.85) study which revealed that the post-graduate program at Sana'a University does not meet the standard of setting clear, specific and achievable goals at the faculty and university levels.

However, the faculty staff had divergent opinions on the curricula and the faculty members. Some of them described the curricula as modern, and that it conforms to «the latest media curricula in Arab universities», in line with «new communication and teaching technology», and is responsive to the students needs. However, others described the curricula as “old and non-corresponding to the Information Age”, and rejected the idea that “there was an availability of a clear curriculum similar to the post-graduate programs' curricula at other Arab universities”. As for the faculty members, some respondents stated that the faculty has appropriate staff for this program, such as «young professors who have the will, the capacity and the conviction to make the program successful», and “who have the complete belief” in making it succeed; while others said that the faculty does not have appropriate staff for the «Master's» program in all its sections and majors, in addition to their “lack of experience in this domain”, the “academic weakness of some of them” and “that weakness of the whole teaching staff”. Moreover, it was stated that the number of professors who have the right to supervise Master's and PhD theses is limited.

Although the respondents have cited various weaknesses and strengths in the program, the main problem lies in the weakness of admission criteria and the high number of students admitted to the program. This is a fact on which almost all of the respondents agreed, with some describing it as «absurd», and others as «awful» and «inconsistent with higher education requirements». All this is due to the weakness of the admission mechanism, and the high number of students admitted. In fact, the admission mechanisms “do not set rigorously the number of students to be admitted, according to the by-laws». The admission system is not based on «strict scientific criteria», such as a university evaluation, as some students with a «low» classification, rather than the required «excellent» or «very good» are admitted.

The following are some of the most important statements given by the respondents concerning this matter:

1) Strengths

- The program encourages scientific research and higher education in Yemen.
- Scientific research is conducted by the students, and the themes of the Master's theses are diverse. This result is in line with that of the Fayad (1994, p.85) study concerning the students' preparation of research and articles that deepen their knowledge of the discipline.
- Enhances the scientific position of the faculty among media institutions and other faculties at the university, and increases its competitiveness with private universities.

- Creates scientific competition between faculty members, which stimulates some to develop their scientific skills.
- The research gives priority to the study of Yemeni media.
- Gives personnel in the Yemeni media the opportunity to pursue post-graduate studies.
- The teachers are enthusiastic and the university administration is providing the necessary support.
- Some of the enrolled students are enthusiastic and willing to conduct the required research.

2) Weaknesses

- The program infrastructure is weak, the technical, administrative and financial requirements are unavailable, the faculty is not equipped at all levels, and the building is too old.
- The departments are not being integrated in the process of putting in place an overall vision of the post-graduate program, their decisions are not respected and they are not consulted on matters related to the program.
- The program lacks organized management, and it has been adopted in a rush without organizing any discussion workshops which involve people working in the media, academic personnel from the faculty and from other faculties.
- The attendance of students is not well controlled.
- The time dedicated to practical training is insufficient.
- The by-laws are weak and unclear, and there is no commitment to their implementation.
- Some faculty members do not respect the description of the academic courses.
- The study hours set in the program are not respected, taking into account the working conditions of some students.
- The teachers do not receive adequate financial and moral returns for their work.
- The faculty members do not enjoy all their rights, and face delays in payment of their salaries.

e. Ways through which the post-graduate program can be improved from the perspective of the faculty staff

The respondents made several suggestions to address the program deficiencies. Some of these suggestions were concise, such as «to eliminate deficiencies», while others were straight forward, such as «to stop the program, involve all faculty members in its development, and invite a group of experts to participate» in this specialized scientific work. One of the respondents even suggested to study and scientifically evaluate the current situation of the faculty, in order to determine its capacities and identify the necessary requirements on how to launch a post-graduate program.

1) Suggestions concerning the administration, and the provision of the necessary requirements:

- Establish an organized and adequate regulation for the program, in line with the levels of higher studies in other countries.
- Ensure an effective, decisive and competent administration, capable of implementing the by-laws and overcoming all difficulties.
- Provide the faculty with a new building and equip it with modern teaching means and communication techniques.
- Provide the program with the necessary requirements, especially the establishment of a specialized library where references and internet service are available, and open it during evening hours.

- Provide the program with all necessary scientific and technological conditions, and facilitate administrative procedures and overcome all difficulties to improve the program and make it successful.

2) Suggestions concerning admission procedures

- Accept a limited number of candidates, as do the faculties of Mass Communication at other Arab universities.
- Apply the admission criteria stipulated by the higher studies regulation on all candidates, and avoid double standards and exceptions.
- Be stricter in the application of the admission criteria, and only accept candidates with "very good" and "excellent" scores.
- Oblige higher studies candidates to study full time and to attend the classes.

3) Suggestions concerning curricula, the teaching and the supervision processes:

- Conduct a comprehensive scientific study of academic courses, the related terminology and teaching methods, and identify their negative aspects.
- Benefit from the experiences of other countries in this field, and redesign the program according to the latest specialized scientific programs in the media and communication fields adopted in international or Arab universities.
- Place faculty members in the appropriate courses, according to their academic specialization and the effectiveness of their performance.
- Review the assessment and examination instruments adopted in the program.
- Invite some visiting professors from other similar faculties.
- Benefit from the associate professors and professors, and respect the rules organizing the academic process.
- Give special attention to the teachers, invite them to participate in refresher sessions, pay them all their dues, and raise their allowances for teaching hours.
- Control the students' attendance, warn those who are absent, and regulate their registration according to the rules.
- Set a strict time schedule and oblige all students to comply with it. If not, the program should be interrupted to preserve the reputation of the university.
- Only allow teachers who hold the title of «Professor» to supervise the Master's theses.
- Assess the program on a regular basis.

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Teacher Preparation: Issues and Trends in International and Arab Frameworks*

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to provide teacher educators and policymakers with a research-based framework for examining teacher education in the Arab countries in the light of international developments, trends and innovations. Key themes and issues of teacher education are addressed, such as: applications for and admissions to teacher education; the role of governmental and professional institutions in the organization and control of various aspects of the teacher education process, such as types of institutions entrusted with teacher education, terms of admission and graduation and types of certification; curricula of teacher education programs, both in terms of organization and content; practical training during formation; quality assurance of educational programs; and the academic accreditation system. These issues are addressed within two frameworks. The first is the global framework that includes the most prominent international developments, trends and innovations. This international framework was examined through a review of relevant literature, as well as through reports issued by governmental and professional bodies. The second is the Arab framework that involved a review and assessment of the experiences of Arab countries in light of international developments and trends. This Arab framework was examined mainly through regional and national reports, in addition to available literature.

I. Introduction

Almost all educators agree that preparing skilful and qualified teachers is the key to the success of the educational process and to the success of efforts aimed at reforming, developing and promoting the education sector. In this regard, well designed buildings, modern equipment, advanced curricula and efficient administrative systems, though important, cannot contribute to success of the educational process unless the teacher is well qualified and possesses the required knowledge, skills, experiences, and professional and human values. As everyone seems to agree that a good teacher is the building block of good schooling, the most important questions to be asked then are the following: What are the factors that contribute to the preparation a good teacher? How can we educate qualified teachers so that they have the required competencies? In order to answer these questions, it would be useful to set forth a model showing the different

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stages of the teacher education process and the roles of all parties involved in every stage. This would make it easier later on to identify the influential factors relevant to each stage and each party.

1. Stages of Teacher Education

Contemporary teacher education literature agrees that the teacher education process involves three stages:

- a. Initial preparation within teacher education institutions (pre-service).
- b. Induction into the teaching profession during the first critical years in teaching.
- c. Maintenance of the teaching profession and opportunities for professional development (in-service).

2. Partners Involved

Main partners involved in the teacher education process are:

- a. Teacher preparation institutions including university and non-university levels.
- b. Cooperating schools regarding the practical field experience occurring during the pre-service preparation stage.
- c. Schools where a teacher begins his/her professional life and the local communities within which schools operate.
- d. Governmental and professional institutions which initiate and determine laws, general policies, procedures, and standards.

Teacher education, preparation, and training require a high degree of cooperation, coordination and partnership between governmental and professional institutions on the one hand and preparation institutions and schools on the other. This partnership is important because each of these parties plays a key role in the different stages ranging from preparing teachers to entering professional life and practising the profession.

3. Research Methodology and Limitations

Although all three stages of teacher education are important and are linked to factors influencing the quality of teaching and teachers' qualifications, this research will focus only on the pre-service preparation stage and the related role of the three above mentioned parties. Other research in the future will hopefully study the two remaining stages. This study will accordingly address a range of issues and developments within two frameworks:

- a. The international framework which is comprised mainly of developments, trends and innovations relative to international experiences. In this regard, relevant literature was reviewed along with reports issued by governmental and professional institutions.
- b. The Arab framework in which Arab experiences were assessed and reviewed in light of international developments and trends. This part of the study was mainly based on reports issued by regional and national institutions in addition to available literature.

Therefore, this study focuses mainly on the following issues:

- a. Applicants and entrants to the teacher preparation programs.
- b. Control and governance in teacher preparation programs: centralization or decentralization of the education system.
- c. Institutional framework for teacher preparation.
- d. Teacher education curricula: organization and content
- e. Practical field experience during the preparation period.

- f. Quality assurance and enhancement in the preparation programs and the academic accreditation system.

II. Applicants and Entrants to the Teacher Preparation Programs

1. International Qualifications and Abilities

Knowledge about the volume and quality of applicants and entrants to teacher preparation programs may give a preliminary view about the quality of the pool from which future teachers will be drawn.

While it is true that there is no direct link between the quality of applicants and entrants to the programs and the quality of teaching, it is, nevertheless, reasonable to say that the quality of the pool of applicants can reflect the ability of preparation programs to attract large numbers of qualified students (Sutherland, 1997).

In the United States, for example, students who apply for teacher preparation programs tend to have lower average scores on entrance examinations than other university students in general. However, by graduation, students who have completed teacher preparation programs have higher average scores than the general pool of students entering university. The underlying reason is that more applicants with lower ability exit preparation programs due to admission or graduation problems than do higher ability students. Furthermore, even though teacher education students have slightly lower average scores than university graduates in general, students preparing for secondary teaching have test scores comparable to other university graduates (Cochran - Smith & Zeickner, 2005).

In England, some reports show that students admitted to teacher preparation programs have lower average scores than expected. Furthermore, the overall volume of applicants to some main programs (such as teaching mathematics, sciences, technology and modern foreign languages at the secondary cycle) is lower than is required for these specialization fields (Sutherland, 1997). In Hong Kong, applicants accepted to teacher preparation programs get lower grades on university entrance examinations than do their counterparts accepted in other programs (Ingersoll, 2007). Another study conducted in Europe which included 27 European countries showed that 57% of those countries face difficulties in attracting qualified applicants to teacher preparation programs. Countries in North and Central Europe were the most affected, followed by countries in East and West Europe (Jacobsen, et al., 2006).

In contrast, the situation is different in East Asian countries such as Japan, Korea and Singapore, as well as in Ireland, where teacher preparation programs attract highly qualified students with relatively high achievement scores. (Ingersoll, 2007; Jacobsen, et al., 2006).

Overall, the capacity of teacher preparation programs to attract highly qualified students differs from one country to another due to factors related to the social status of the teaching profession and the working conditions of teachers. For instance, in Eastern Asia and Ireland, teachers have high social status compared to other professions and work within supportive and positive professional conditions concerning wages, job stability and professional development opportunities (Ingersoll, 2007; Jacobsen, et al., 2006).

2. Arab Qualifications and Abilities

In Arab countries, the situation is closer to that of the European countries than to those in Eastern Asia. Salama and Wahba (2008) noted that young people in seven Arab African countries have, since the 1970s, been avoiding the teaching profession. Further, loose and light

admission standards were being adopted in teacher preparation institutions under pressure to provide schools with the required number of teachers. The same study noted an increase in unemployment rates in the more competitive vocational sectors. Thus, students who were unable to compete in programs related to these competitive domains started to head to teacher preparation programs where admission was comparatively easy and a minimum temporary income was guaranteed at graduation and hoped to pursue their preferred profession in the future when the opportunity arose.

Jarrar (2002) noted that governments in Arab countries have lowered the admission standards to teacher preparation programs because of the great lack of qualified applicants. For example, in Egypt, applicants are admitted to university programs according to their scores in the high school graduation certificate. Thus, students with the lowest scores are oriented toward education and Islamic studies faculties, whilst those with the highest scores are oriented toward the medicine, engineering, law and business faculties. According to a recent Arab Human Development Report, the underlying reasons of this phenomenon seem to be linked to the low social status of the teaching profession and to low wages and poor working conditions for teachers (UNDP / RBAS, 2003). However, Jarrar (2002) highlighted the attempts of some Arab countries such as Egypt, Syria and Morocco to enhance the level of applicants in preparation programs by offering scholarships and by guarantying employment in governmental schools after graduation. These policies may help to attract high quality students to the teaching profession.

3. How to Attract Good Students to Teacher Preparation Programs?

As long as the teaching profession does not get the social, economic, and national status it deserves, high quality students will not be attracted to teacher preparation programs. Further, the rising rate of unemployment accompanied with a lowering of admission standards to the preparation program attract young men and women with moderate abilities looking for easily accessed job opportunities to these programs while keeping away those students with higher abilities seeking lucrative and competitive job opportunities.

Furthermore, lowering admission standards to meet the growing demand for new teachers will ultimately exacerbate the problem. Considering that the objective is to provide good education to school students, this policy will lead to lowering their educational level and thus undermining developmental policies, as the human resource is the cornerstone of the success of such policies. In this regard, it is important to improve the social status of the teaching profession, enhance working conditions, provide professional development opportunities and increase wages. Only then would it be possible to raise admission standards and the requirements needed to enter the teaching profession to teacher preparation programs. These suggestions are, however, insufficient if they are not accompanied by policies and developmental plans leading to an increase in job opportunities and a decrease in unemployment rates.

III. Governance of Teacher Preparation Programs

The governance of teacher preparation programs addresses the relationship between state authorities, teacher preparation institutions, and sometimes a third party, namely governmental or independent national bodies. Governance in this paper will focus on the centralization/ decentralization issue of the education system.

1. International Centralization/Decentralization in Teacher Preparation

Governmental institutions around the world deal in different ways with the regulation and monitoring of aspects related to their teacher preparation process.

For instance, the United States adopt a decentralized system, where local authorities and institutions in each state deal with issues related to teacher preparation and certification. However, this trend created large discrepancies between states, so during the last few years, local authorities have called upon teacher preparation colleges and institutes to obtain an accreditation from a national² or local body in order for the relevant authorities to grant certification and licensing to graduates of such programs (Wang, et. al, 2003). In this regard, it is important to clarify some concepts (Roth & Swail, 2000):

- *Certification*: is a process of determining that an individual meets the minimum standards of competence required in a specific profession.
- *Licensing*: is a legal process to permit an individual to practice a specific trade or profession after obtaining the required certification.
- *Accreditation*: is a process of determining that a program in a specific field meets the professional standards and qualifications in order for the program to be approved by relevant professional bodies.

Consequently, licensing in the USA depends on certification which has become increasingly dependent on obtaining the appropriate professional accreditation. Moreover, the intervention of the federal government in educational issues has been steadily increasing in the past decades. This federal role culminated in the 2002 “No Child Left Behind” Act, which was considered to be the most comprehensive and influential federal education reform in the history of the United States (Goss, 2005; Ingersoll, 2007). The act stipulated that all teachers in public schools must be «highly qualified» by the end of the academic year of 2005 / 2006. All states, accordingly must present evidence showing their commitment to the Act. According to this Act, «highly qualified» means that teachers must hold a university bachelor degree, have obtained a state-issued certificate, and show evidence of competency in the subject matter they intend to teach (Goss, 2005; Ingersoll, 2007).

Similarly, Australia has a decentralized system for regulating educational issues. It is up to each state and each district to define the required standards in order to grant certification or licensing. The two latter processes are carried out by statutory teacher registration bodies in each state, which grant certification to teachers based on university test results (Wang, et. al, 2003). Furthermore, in the last few years, three states enacted new legislation stipulating that teacher preparation programs obtain approval or accreditation from a local governmental institution (Ingvarson, et. al, 2006).

However, many other countries implement a central system for regulating educational issues, including teacher preparation programs. For instance, the ministries of education (or their equivalent) in Japan, Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore and China organize all aspects of teacher preparation and certification. As a result, under such a centralized system, teacher preparation conditions and requirements in one region are brought into line with those of other regions in that same country. Further, in England, national and governmental institution share, through a centralized system, the responsibilities of granting accreditation to programs, and requirements for admission, graduation, and certification (Ingersoll, 2007; Wang, et al., 2003).

² National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education NCATE is the largest and most important organization in the United States.

As for other European countries, the general trend until the 1990s was to give more autonomy to teacher preparation institutions regarding teacher education. Many earlier legal procedures were then replaced by broad general guidelines allowing preparation institutions to rapidly meet the labour market requirements. However, when the Bologna Process was adopted and signed in 1999 (45 countries from both inside and outside the European Union are now signatories to this process), state authorities intervened more and more in teacher preparation issues by enacting additional legislation and procedures aimed at enhancing the quality of preparation programs and at adopting a unified program structure in Europe (Ingvarson, et al., 2006).

2. Arab Centralization/Decentralization in Teacher Preparation

The centralized system prevails in Arab countries in higher education institutions including teacher preparation ones. The Arab Human Development Report, issued by the United Nation Development Program (UNDP), showed that Arab universities as a whole suffer from their dependency on the political regime of the state. This state of affairs adversely affects their autonomy and hampers their capacities to plan, research, and teach (UNDP / RBAS, 2003). Similarly, another UNDP report assessing the quality of education programs in Arab universities indicated the presence of governmental pressures that sometimes involve determining the design, content and assessment methods in teacher preparation programs. The report also noted the presence of centralized governmental or university demands regarding admission, curricula and assessment methods. Such demands could hamper the ability of education faculties to attract high quality students and provide them with appropriate opportunities to develop the required skills (UNDP/RBAS, 2006).

3. Where Are Arabs Compared to International Trends?

During the last decades, the international educational scene has witnessed an increase in the strategic intervention of federal or local governmental institutions in planning and administration, while at the same time preserving the autonomy of university preparation institutions regarding the design and organization of curricula and the management of human and financial resources. Furthermore, independent or governmental national institutions played an increasing role in quality assurance and accreditation of preparation programs. Indeed, governmental, professional and higher education institutions all play important and complementary roles in the preparation, training and professional development of teachers.

The Arab universities' lack of autonomy and the numerous governmental pressures and demands go against international trends. In fact, governmental, professional and higher education institutions should play their required role without interfering in each others' affairs.

While the decentralized system is the most common in the United States and Australia, the centralized system is the most widely used system in the world. This does not mean that one is better than the other. In this regard, it seems best to closely examine factors and practices that make the role of governmental authorities or national and local professional bodies a positive factor in serving the preparation program goal of preparing teachers with high competencies and good qualifications. Official Arab institutions are required to adopt ambitious educational policies at national and regional levels to institutionalize and coordinate efforts, determine standards, set strategic goals and design practical plans to achieve these goals within a specific timeline. At the same time, it is important to maintain the academic and administrative autonomy of universities and provide them with the required human and financial resources to enable them to best accomplish their mission.

IV. Institutional Framework for Teacher Preparation

1. International Institutional Framework for Teacher Preparation

In most countries in the world, teacher preparation takes place at the college level where institutions that prepare teachers are mostly faculties or departments of education within universities (Al-Amine, 2009). However, in some cases, there are differences between teacher preparation for the elementary and secondary levels.

For instance, the United States, Japan, Korea, Australia, Canada, and Britain require a minimum of a bachelor degree to teach in the different cycles, whereas other countries such as Singapore and Hong Kong allow students with two years of post-secondary education to teach in the elementary cycle. In China, a high school degree is the minimum required to teach at the elementary level, two extra academic years for the intermediate level, and a bachelor degree for the secondary level. In Thailand, elementary and secondary teachers must complete a five-year university program (Al-Amine, 2009; Ingersoll, 2007). However, China, Singapore and Hong Kong have been working to raise the elementary teacher preparation level to that required for the secondary level (Ingersoll, 2007; Lai, 2007).

In Europe, almost all countries prepare their teachers in university programs extending from four to five academic years, except for Belgium and Denmark, where some preparation programs are still classified as pre-university programs (Eurydice, 2002).

2. Arab Institutional Framework for Teacher Preparation

In the Arab world, earlier reports show that different institutions provide teacher preparation programs for elementary and secondary levels. Indeed, teacher preparation in Arab countries occurs in two types of institutions. The first type includes pre-university institutes where the study period ranges from one to three years and the second type includes university programs where the study period is four years. Generally speaking, pre-university institutes prepare elementary teachers only, while university programs prepare both elementary and secondary teachers. For instance, in Tunisia, Algeria, and Mauritania it is still possible to find pre-university institutes for elementary teacher preparation. However, in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Arab Emirates and Lebanon, recent legislation has mandated that teacher preparation for all levels must take place at the university level (Jarrar, 2002; Salama & Wahba, 2008; Electronic Learning, 2007). A more recent report (Al-Amine, 2009) noted that most Arab countries, including Algeria and Mauritania, are moving toward university teacher preparation, except for Bahrain and Tunisia which are transferring preparation from universities to institutions affiliated with their ministries of education.

At the secondary level in Arab countries, the most common pattern of teacher preparation is either a four-year university program for high school graduates or a one to two-year program for holders of a bachelor degree in natural sciences and humanities (Jarrar, 2002).

3. Where Are Arabs Compared to International Trends?

When comparing international and Arab institutional frameworks for teacher preparation it can be seen that Arab countries are in-line with international trends. It seems that both are moving toward university teacher preparation. Arab countries that are lagging behind are called to pass the required legislation to enhance teacher preparation in accordance with international trends.

V. Teacher Education Curriculum

1. International Teacher Education Curriculum

a. Organization and Structure of Teacher Preparation Programs

The structure and organization of teacher education programs differ from one country to another; as such, programs can either be concurrent or consecutive. In concurrent programs, subject matter courses/are studied concurrently with professional courses such as foundations of education, teaching methods, educational psychology and practical field experience. This system is the most common in undergraduate teacher preparation programs. As for consecutive programs, subject matter preparation is first required in the relevant university departments, followed by professional preparation in education faculties (Eurydice, 2002).

Concurrent programs are the most common amongst teacher preparation programs worldwide. In Europe, for instance, most countries follow the concurrent model for elementary teacher preparation programs, except for France and Germany, where the consecutive model is implemented, while some other countries implement both models. Similarly, most European programs for secondary teacher preparation are concurrent, except in Greece, Hungary, Italy and Ireland (Ingvarson, et al., 2006). In Hong Kong, England, and the United States, both concurrent and consecutive systems for elementary and secondary teacher preparation programs are available (Ingersoll, 2007; Scannell, 1999).

Some educators believe that the main benefit of the concurrent model is that it provides students with a greater opportunity to receive integrated learning (i.e. subject matter and teaching courses are delivered concurrently). However, the concurrent model requires students to take early decisions about entering the teacher preparation program and the teaching profession. The consecutive model provides students an opportunity to receive a good academic preparation relevant to their specialization field with highly qualified teachers. However, such a model provides few opportunities for integrated learning. Given that each model has benefits not present in the other, it is best to provide both models so the student can choose the one that suits them best (OECD, 2005).

b. Teacher Education Curriculum Content

The majority of teacher education curricula include three main components: general education, a specialization area and professional education. In general, undergraduate preparation programs for elementary teachers usually comprise of more courses in general education and professional education, whereas undergraduate preparation programs for secondary teachers usually comprise of more courses in the specialization area. Furthermore, graduate preparation programs for both elementary and secondary teachers mainly focus on professional education, as the accepted student has already acquired the specialized academic preparation in other relevant faculties. For instance, in the United States, most undergraduate preparation programs require from 120 to 135 credits over a four-year period. In this regard, general education and specialization area courses are typically delivered during the first two years, whereas professional education courses are delivered during the last two years. Further, some higher education institutions also provide undergraduate five-year integrated teacher preparation programs, although such programs are less common than the four-year ones. In the five-year programs, the fifth year is usually dedicated to courses in teaching fields, pedagogy and practical field experience (Scanell, 2002).

Wang et al (2003) reported a similar situation in Korea, Japan, Singapore, Honk Kong and Holland, where courses are distributed across general education, a specialization field, and professional education.

The National Academy of Education (NAE) in the United States has recently sponsored a national panel of experts in teacher education to examine the teacher education curriculum. Panel leaders of the committee made recommendations about what should be included in the core curriculum for teacher preparation programs (cf. Crocker and Dibbon, 2008). These recommendations point out that good teacher preparation requires curricula that enable prospective teachers to know and understand the following:

- 1) The nature of developmentally appropriate educational practices.
- 2) Learning theories and learning methods for students.
- 3) Students' language development.
- 4) Subject matter expertise and pedagogical content knowledge.
- 5) The nature of students' diversity.
- 6) Appropriate assessment practices.
- 7) The social context of education.
- 8) Classroom management

In the same context, Darling-Hammond (2006), who was one of the two NAE panel leaders mentioned above, studied seven exemplary teacher preparation programs in the United States and concluded that such programs share the following features:

- 1) All course-work and practical field experiences reflect a common, clear vision of good teaching.
- 2) Well-defined standards of performance and practice are used to guide and evaluate course-work and practical field experience.
- 3) Curriculum is grounded in good knowledge of child and adolescent development, learning, social contexts and subject matter pedagogy, taught in the context of practice.
- 4) Extended and well developed practical field experiences that are well integrated with course-work.
- 5) Clear strategies to help students in preparation programs to confront their beliefs and assumptions about learning and students, and to learn about the experiences of people from different cultural backgrounds.
- 6) Strong relationships based on common knowledge and beliefs between faculty of education professors and school teachers involved in practical field experience.
- 7) Teaching methods and educational practices that encourage the application of academic learning to real problems in practice, namely: case studies, action research, performance assessments and portfolio evaluation.

2. Arab Teacher Education Curriculum

The Salama and Wahba study (2008), which included an assessment of teacher education institutions in seven Arab African countries, pointed out differences in the organization and structure of their preparation programs. Whereas Morocco adopted the consecutive model, Tunisia, Libya and Mauritania adopted the concurrent (integrated) model. Furthermore, Sudan and Egypt apply both, using the concurrent model for undergraduate programs and the consecutive model for post-graduate programs.

Further, the design and content of the teacher education curriculum in Arab countries differ according to the nature of the preparation institution and the level of entrants to that institution, with university-based programs being more demanding than pre-university ones (Salama & Wahba, 2008). The same study pointed out that academic preparation in pre-university teacher preparation programs in Tunisia, Algeria and Mauritania add little to the initial knowledge of

students because such programs seem to repeat the courses taken previously in elementary or secondary levels. In addition, the same study criticized the curriculum quality in the faculty of education in one of the seven universities for providing academic and educational courses at very low levels and with very simplistic approaches. Moreover, the UNDP report on assessing the quality of education programs in Arab universities highlighted many issues requiring attention and improvement. The report pointed out a lack of intellectual stimulation in teaching of courses and the presence of overlap and repetition between professional education and academic preparation courses. Moreover, the report noted a lack of integration between these courses and the presence of many weaknesses related to the updating of curricula and university books that were out-of-line with modern programs and research requirements. On the other hand, the report noted some positive aspects in programs such as enabling students to acquire intellectual, practical, professional and general skills. In addition, it noted a good balance between theory and practice in half of the programs reviewed (UNDP/RBAS, 2006).

The same report also noted that the intended learning outcomes (ILOs) of programs and courses were poorly defined. It concluded that even though most programs had made progress in, for the first time, specifying ILOs during the process of academic review sponsored by UNDP, such progress was not enough to begin using those ILOs and the programs' general objectives as a starting point to determine the structure and content of the preparation programs, and to develop standards and tools required in the assessment and evaluation processes (UNDP/RBAS, 2006). Here, it should be noted that by "intended learning outcomes" we mean the knowledge, concepts, and skills students acquire at the end of a course or program.

Both the Salama and Wehba study (2008) and the UNDP Arab Human Development report (2003) agree on the absence of an educational philosophy or a clear vision that defines the educational choices and guides the preparation process.

3. Where Are Arabs in Comparison to International Trends?

Various reports point out several shortcomings in Arab teacher education curricula. The main weakness may be the absence of a clear philosophy of education rooted in society's culture, needs and ambitions both at national and regional levels. Another important weakness is related to the absence of clear intended learning outcomes for both programs in general and specific courses.

Regarding structure and organization, it is possible to make both concurrent and consecutive systems available within preparation programs to attract more qualified students. The concurrent integrated system might be more suitable for elementary teacher preparation, whereas the consecutive system may be more suitable for secondary teacher preparation. As for curricular content, there is an almost consensual agreement about the necessity to achieve a balance between good academic preparation, educational preparation and professional preparation. Furthermore, we need more coordination and integration among curricula components and courses on and among the different partners in teacher education, particularly universities and schools.

Finally, it is also vital to continue learning about major advances made in teacher education and teacher preparation, and to continually update courses based on research carried out on curricular content, teaching methods, assessment and evaluation methods, while taking into consideration the cultural characteristics of Arab societies. In this regard, the UNDP report assessing the quality of education programs in Arab universities (UNDP/RBAS, 2006) recommended that more effort be made to ensure that teacher education curricula is more in-line with current international standards and practices.

VI. Practical Field Experience in Teacher Preparation

1. International Practical Field Experience in Teacher Preparation

All teacher preparation programs include practical field experience as one of their components, but may differ in their duration, monitoring and assessment. For instance, in the United States, practical field experience gradually progresses from observation to practice teaching throughout the program. A university faculty member supervises and evaluates the student's work in collaboration with a school teacher (or director). Moreover, the field experience duration differs from one state to another, ranging from a minimum of six weeks in some states to a minimum of twelve weeks in others. This variation in duration is also found in other countries where field experience can extend from three to six weeks in Japan and Korea, and eight to ten weeks in Hong Kong and Singapore. In Australia and England, the practical field experience can exceed a year with a minimum of respectively 16 weeks and 24 weeks (Wang, et al., 2003).

Furthermore, additional questions about practical field experience have also been addressed, such as its quality and ability to achieve the intended goals. Various studies found evidence pointing to the importance of timing and organization of the practical field experience. Practical field experience that begins early in the program and extends gradually under good supervision has positive influences on trainees' performance and self-confidence (Crocker and Dibbon, 2008). In addition, effective practical field experience is characterized by being coherent and well integrated with the academic and professional components.

Another important issue in practical field experience is related to the quality of cooperating school teachers who are often chosen due to administrative considerations or on a voluntary basis. Further, some cooperating teachers do not get adequate orientation about their role in the practical field experience, and may suffer from inadequate communication with the university preparation team. All this will undermine the ability of the practical experience program to achieve its intended goals (Crocker and Dibbon, 2008).

One of the most important initiatives in the last two decades on the importance of developing relationships and integration among components of teacher preparation programs was the Professional Development Schools (PDS) project, launched by the Holmes Partnership which includes the deans of the biggest American research universities (Ornstein and Levine, 2006). This project aims at linking universities preparation programs and local school sites in order to create a collaborative research and learning environment for pre-service teachers, university professors and school teachers. The intention is that Professional Development Schools, which are modelled partly on medical teaching hospitals, will be leading institutions for research, training and practice, and will establish communication and integration between academic preparation, educational preparation and practical field experience (Crocker and Dibbon, 2008). The PDS concept has become more widespread, especially in the United States, where more than one thousand PDS schools were in place by 2004 (Ornstein and Levine, 2006).

2. Arab Practical Field Experience in Teacher Preparation

The available reports on practical field experience within teacher preparation programs in the Arab countries show differences in the training level, duration and integration with academic and educational preparation. According to Jarrar (2002), the practical field experience component, along with teaching methods, is a main weakness in Arab teacher preparation programs. In the same context, Salameh and Wehbe (2008) consider that the practical field experience in seven Arab universities included in the study (Tunisia, Algeria, Sudan, Libya, Egypt, Morocco, and

Mauritania) suffer from various common problems. These include:

- a. Inadequate duration both designed and performed for practical training.
- b. Time periods dedicated to practical training are dispersed and the biggest share is devoted to observation.
- c. There is little coordination between instructors of theoretical courses, supervising instructors and cooperating schools teachers.
- d. There is no clear, objective, and comprehensive program to assess trainees' performance and the influence of this performance on the learning of school students.

In Jarrar (2002), additional problems are mentioned about the programs in Arab universities. These are:

- a. There is no clear guide for practical field experience programs.
- b. Supervising university faculty members are not doing a good job due to a high teaching load and the large number of students to be supervised.
- c. Sometimes ministry employees or senior teachers are required to monitor interns with little preparation being offered for this task.
- d. The training period is often too short and coordination between the different training supervisors is often weak.
- e. Current training programs need revision and improvement to organize the training process and to ensure that they offer trainees with real and valid school experiences.

Moreover, the UNDP report assessing the quality of education programs in Arab universities (UNDP/RBAS, 2006) concluded that the practical field experience is good in ten universities, acceptable in seven and unacceptable in six. The report especially praised the quality of such training programs in Qatar University and Jordan University. It also pointed out the lack of integration between educational and academic preparation in some programs.

3. Where Are Arabs in Comparison to International Trends?

The three above-mentioned reports clearly point out the presence of several shortcomings in the practical training component of teacher preparation programs in Arab countries. In light of the presented international experiences, it is possible to conclude that a good practical field experience needs the following:

- a. An extended period of time throughout the program during which the trainees gradually participate in teaching practice.
- b. The training curriculum must clearly determine goals and ILO's and the means to attain them in accordance with the broad goals and ILO's of the teacher education program.
- c. It is important to have a clear, objective, and comprehensive student performance assessment system during the training.
- d. Cooperating teachers in schools should be chosen on the basis of their expertise and teaching and communication skills and should enjoy a high degree of coordination with supervising faculty members.
- e. It is important to enhance integration between academic preparation courses, professional education courses and practical field experience programs.
- f. It is worthwhile to undertake a viability study regarding the implementation of the "Professional Development Schools" project which has become widespread amongst teacher education programs in the biggest American research universities.

VII. Quality Standards and Accreditation System

1. International Quality Standards and Accreditation System

Teacher preparation aims at training good and qualified teachers. But what are good teaching standards? Who guarantees that the preparation program is good and has the required characteristics? How can we control and assure quality in preparation programs? How can we be assured that teacher education graduates have the required qualifications for the teaching profession?

Almost all countries in the world have passed legislation and introduced procedures to regulate the preparation and entry of individuals into different professions including teaching. For instance, in the United States, governmental authorities in each state certify the individual qualifications and their compliance with minimum competency standards for the teaching profession (Roth & Swail, 2002). In light of this certification, the state authorities grant licensing to individuals who are then permitted to practice the teaching profession. Moreover, the certification process requires that the individual has a degree from an approved or accredited teacher preparation program. Although all states have a local system to grant program approval, an increasing number of them specify that teacher preparation programs must obtain additional accreditation from an independent national body such as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). The NCATE has the approval of the U.S. Department of Education to grant accreditation to teacher education and other education-related professions (Ingvarson, et al., 2006).

In brief, licensing is based on certification, which in turn depends on getting at least local approval coupled very often with national accreditation. Even though different states may have different licensing and certification requirements, most of them agree that graduates of teacher programs should fulfil the following criteria (Roth & Swail, 2000):

- a. Obtain at least a bachelor's degree.
- b. Graduate from an approved or accredited education program.
- c. Have a major or minor in education (for elementary teachers).
- d. Have a major in the subject matter intended to be taught (for secondary teachers).
- e. Have a strong background in liberal-arts courses.
- f. Pass a state test assessing knowledge and skills related to teaching.

Moreover, the standards required by preparation programs in order to be accredited have shifted in the last decades from focusing mainly on programs' characteristics such as curricula, resources and training (programs' inputs) to focusing also on graduates' abilities, skills and knowledge (programs' output) (Goss, 2005). Such shift is clearly reflected in the new standards proposed by NCATE as a basis for reviewing and accrediting programs (NCATE, 2000). It is worth mentioning that accreditation occurs periodically, approximately every five years, which means that preparation programs are in a continuous process of self-evaluation and improvement.

In Europe, most countries have a national body in charge of reviewing university programs, including teacher preparation programs. Some countries also have specialized bodies in teacher education accreditation. In England, the Teacher Development Agency (TDA) grants certification and licensing by giving graduates from accredited preparation programs a certificate of "Qualified Teacher Status" based on standards in three areas (Ingvarson, et al., 2006):

- a. Professional values and practice;
- b. Knowledge and understanding;
- c. Teaching.

Further, the assessment of graduates is based on data gathered from different sources, including trainers, school teachers, university professors and graduates. The graduates also sit a test on skills organized electronically by the Agency. Accreditation of programs, however, is handled by a different body, the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), whose role is to make sure that the programs meet four groups of requirements, namely:

- a. Admission requirements to the programs;
- b. Training and assessment;
- c. Management of the initial teacher training partnership;
- d. Quality assurance.

Interestingly, one of the criteria for accrediting programs is the percentage of their graduates who obtain the “Qualified Teacher Status”.

Moreover, following the signing of the Bologna Process in 1999, the Bergen conference in May 2005 for ministers of education in Europe established a new European independent body to determine standards and regulations for quality assurance in higher education institutions in Europe³. This general framework will include all higher education institutions involved in teacher preparation in Europe.

In Australia, there is as yet no national accreditation institution for teacher education (Ingvarson, et al., 2006). The different states use different legislation and regulations related to accreditation, certification and licensing. However, only three states have legislation requiring formal approval or accreditation of teacher education programs. Further, only two states have implemented formal processes of program review and approval. The state of Queensland, which is recognized as the leader in this domain, passed a teacher registration act in 2005 requiring all initial teacher education programs to be approved by the “Queensland College of Teachers” for graduates to be granted teacher registration in the state.

To conclude, the international scene has become increasingly interested in issues related to standards of good teaching and the establishment of national and local bodies charged with working on quality assurance and accreditation of programs as a basis for granting graduates certification or licensing. Furthermore, there is a general international trend for accreditation to focus on standards related to graduates’ skills, abilities and knowledge (program output) in addition to standards related to programs’ characteristics or input.

2. Arab Quality Standards and Accreditation System

Jarrar (2002) pointed out that certification and licensing concepts for the teaching profession are not in evidence in the Arab world. Moreover, there are no Arab bodies specialized in quality assurance and accreditation for teacher education programs (Al-Amine, 2008). However, Al-Amine (2008) described six local “accreditation” institutions for quality assurance in Arab countries.

These institutions are located in Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Sudan and Palestine. Al-Amine (2008) added that these institutions are not autonomous as they are all affiliated with ministries of education or higher education. Most of them focus on quality control and not on quality assurance, while their scope of work is often limited to the private sector. However, the National Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions in Saudi Arabia is distinguished by covering both private and public sectors, and by focusing on both quality control and quality assurance. In addition, Al-Amine admired the

³ «The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education» (ENQA, <http://www.enqa.net>).

efforts made by the national committees for quality assurance and accreditation in both Egypt and Tunisia, which are paving the way to the establishment of national institutions in the two countries.

3. Where are Arabs in Comparison to International Trends?

The last decade has witnessed a dynamic movement toward establishing and promoting national and Arab institutions in charge of determining standards, frameworks and processes required for quality assurance and academic accreditation. In 1998, a regional UNESCO conference held in Beirut jump-started a wide range of efforts and activities that were later reinforced by the recommendations of the Conferences of Arab Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research between 2001 and 2005. As a result, many academic conferences were held, many comprehensive studies were conducted, and many initiatives were launched to establish Arab institutions and networks for quality assurance (Al-Amine, 2008). Such efforts must continue and should focus more on planning implementation processes and practical mechanisms aimed at establishing and developing national and regional institutions for quality assurance and accreditation in higher education institutions in general and in teacher preparation programs in particular.

VIII. Conclusion and Recommendations

The UNESCO Institute for Statistics Report (2006) stated that Arab countries will face a severe shortage of teachers in elementary schools by 2015. It will thus be necessary to increase the teacher reserve by 26% and enrol about 479,000 new teachers (in addition to teachers who are already in the profession) in a period of ten years. For instance, Saudi Arabia will need to enrol 137,000 new teachers and compensate 187,000 teachers expected to retire by 2015. Only four Arab countries (Algeria, Lebanon, Syria and Tunisia) do not need to increase their teaching workforce, although they still have to compensate retiring teachers. The challenge of providing the required number of teachers is accompanied by another of similar importance, namely the preparation of high quality teachers who can provide good teaching to school students. This paper has tried to contribute to this challenge by providing decision-makers in the area of teacher preparation with a research-based framework within which teacher preparation in the Arab countries is assessed in the light of international research, trends and advances. The main conclusions and recommendations proposed by this paper regarding the above-mentioned issues refer to:

- a. Applicants and entrants to the teacher preparation programs.
- b. Control and governance in teacher preparation programs: centralization or decentralization of the education system.
- c. Institutional framework for teacher preparation.
- d. Teacher education curricula: organization and content.
- e. Practical field experience during the preparation period.
- f. Quality assurance and enhancement in the preparation programs and the academic accreditation system.

1. How to Attract Good Students to Teacher Preparation Programs?

Summary: As long as the teaching profession does not receive the social, economic and national status it deserves, high quality students will not be attracted to teacher preparation programs.

Further, the rising rate of unemployment accompanied with a lowering of admission standards to the preparation program attract young men and women with moderate abilities looking for easily accessed job opportunities to these programs and keep away students with higher abilities seeking lucrative and competitive job opportunities. Furthermore, lowering admission standards to meet the growing demand for new teachers will ultimately exacerbate the problem. Considering that the objective is to provide good education to school students, this policy will lower the educational level and thus will undermine developmental policies, as the human resource is the cornerstone of the success of such policies.

Recommendations:

- a. Offering financial incentives to entrants in the preparation programs (teaching grants, job guarantee).
- b. Enhancing the social status of the teaching profession in Arab countries, improving work conditions, providing professional development opportunities and increasing wages.
- c. Raising admission standards to teacher preparation programs and entrance standards to the teaching profession.
- d. Designing developmental policies and plans aimed at increasing jobs and decreasing unemployment rates (or else the above-mentioned suggestions will be insufficient).
- e. Increasing and improving efforts to attract students to preparation programs, especially students with high abilities.
- f. Attracting non-traditional students to the teacher education programs such as professionals or businessmen desiring to change their profession or people seeking to return to the labour market such as early-retired people and housewives.

2. Centralization or Decentralization of the Educational System

Summary: During the last decades, the international educational scene has witnessed an increase in the strategic intervention of federal or local governmental institutions in planning and administration, while at the same time preserving the autonomy of university preparation institutions regarding the design and organization of curricula and the management of human and financial resources. Furthermore, independent or governmental national institutions have played an increasing role in quality assurance and accreditation of preparation programs. Indeed, governmental, professional and higher education institutions all play important and complementary roles in the preparation, training and professional development of teachers. The lack of autonomy in Arab universities and the numerous governmental pressures and demands go against international trends. Governmental, professional and higher education institutions should play their appropriate roles without interfering in each others' affairs.

Recommendations:

- a. Activating existing national and Arab cultural, educational, economic and political frameworks to design ambitious educational policies at the regional and local levels. It would then be possible to organize and coordinate efforts, define standards, set long-range goals and put practical plans in order to achieve these goals within a specific timeline.
- b. Establishing national professional institutions for quality assurance and academic accreditation of teacher preparation programs and promoting the role of existing institutions.
- c. Preserving the autonomy of university preparation institutions regarding the curriculum design, organization and management of financial and human resources.

3. Institutional Framework for Teacher Preparation

Summary: When comparing international and Arab institutional frameworks for teacher preparation it can be seen that Arab countries are in-line with international trends. It seems that both are moving toward university teacher preparation.

Recommendations:

- a. Arab countries that are lagging behind must adopt legislation to enhance quality teacher preparation and be more in tune with international trends.
- b. Arab countries, which have adopted the required legislation, must enforce and implement it in practice.

4. Teacher Education Curricula

Summary: Most countries in the world seem to be working actively at improving their educational institutions in general and teacher preparation programs in particular. However, the core problem at the Arab level is the absence of a clear educational philosophy derived from society's culture, needs and ambitions at both national and regional levels. Addressing this would make it more feasible to determine the general structure, organization and content of teacher education programs.

Recommendations:

- a. It is important to establish an educational philosophy stemming from our culture, needs and ambitions at both national and regional levels.
- b. Preparation institutions must define clear intended learning outcomes related to the program in general and to specific courses. They must also use these outcomes, in addition to the program's general objectives, as a basis to determine the structure and content of the teacher education curriculum and to develop the standards and tools required in the assessment and evaluation processes.
- c. In terms of structure and organization, the concurrent system seems to have benefits and characteristics that the consecutive system lacks. That is why it is important to make both systems available in preparation programs, so they can attract a larger number of able students. The concurrent system (integrated) may be more suitable for elementary teacher preparation, whereas the consecutive system may be more suitable for secondary teacher preparation.
- d. In terms of content, there is a general consensus that curriculum content and teaching methods are more important than structure and organization. It is important, therefore, to find a balance between a good academic preparation and a good educational and professional one. Moreover, it is crucial to focus on subject matter teaching methods.
- e. It is vital to coordinate and integrate the different components of the curriculum with theoretical and practical courses.
- f. The different partners in the teacher preparation process, especially universities and schools, must coordinate and integrate their work.
- g. It is important to follow the latest developments in the teacher preparation field. It is also vital to continually update courses and programs, according to the results of recent research in curriculum content, teaching methods and assessment and evaluation methods, while taking into account the cultural characteristics of Arab communities.
- h. More efforts should be made to ensure that the teacher education curriculum is in tune with known international standards and practices.

5. Practical Field Experience in Teacher Preparation

Summary: Available reports about practical field experience in teacher preparation programs in Arab countries show various and common problems, namely:

- a. Inadequate duration both designed and performed for practical training and allocating the biggest share to observation.
- b. There is little coordination between instructors of theoretical courses, supervising instructors and cooperating schools teachers.
- c. There is no clear, objective, and comprehensive program to assess trainees' performance and the influence of this performance on the learning of school students.
- d. There is no clear guide for practical field experience programs.
- e. Sometimes ministry employees or senior teachers are required to monitor interns with little preparation being offered for this task.
- f. Current training programs need revision and improvement to organize the training process and to ensure that they offer trainees with real and valid school experiences.

Recommendations:

- a. An extended period of time is needed in the program to enable trainees to gradually participate in the teaching practice.
- b. The training curriculum must clearly determine goals and ILO's and the means to attain them in accordance with the broad goals and ILO's of the teacher education program.
- c. It is important to have a clear, objective, and comprehensive student performance assessment system during the training.
- d. Cooperating teachers in schools should be chosen on the basis of their expertise and teaching and communication skills and should enjoy a high degree of coordination with supervising faculty members.
- e. It is important to enhance integration between academic preparation courses, professional education courses and practical field experience programs.
- f. It is worthwhile to undertake a viability study regarding the implementation of the "Professional Development Schools" project which has become widespread amongst teacher education programs in the biggest American research universities.

6. Quality Standards and Accreditation System

Summary: The international scene has become increasingly interested in issues related to standards of good teaching and the establishment of national and local bodies responsible for quality assurance and accreditation of programs as a basis for granting graduates certification or licensing. Furthermore, there is a general international trend for accreditation to focus on standards related to graduates' skills, abilities and knowledge (program output) in addition to standards related to programs' characteristics or input. Furthermore, the last decade has witnessed a dynamic movement toward establishing and promoting national and Arab institutions in charge of determining standards, frameworks and processes required for quality assurance and academic accreditation.

Recommendations:

- a. These Arab efforts must continue and should focus more on planning implementation processes and practical mechanisms aimed at establishing and developing national and Arab institutions for quality assurance and accreditation in higher education institutions in general and in teacher preparation programs in particular.
- b. National institutions must be more autonomous and must extend their efforts to include quality control and assurance in both the private and public sectors.

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The LMD Higher Education System in the Maghreb Countries: The Example of Algeria*

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Abstract

Observation of the performance of higher education in Algeria reveals a preoccupation with quantity, as is evident in the annual or periodic statistics compiled by the ministry, or university records of accomplishments, which emphasize advances in facilities and infrastructure needed to accommodate students. The problem of balancing quantity and quality was not acute in the sixties and seventies, when Algerian university graduates proved themselves in both the labor market and in further studies pursued at foreign universities. With reforms of higher education in the early eighties, involving programs and evaluation, and in the late nineties, involving restructuring, as well as with the continuing increase in the number of students, the balance between quantity and quality began to waver; levels of student achievement started to decline, and the gap between training and market requirements progressively widened. To accommodate the influx of large numbers into universities each year and improve outcomes, higher education officials began considering new reforms based on the Bachelor / Master / Doctorate system.

This paper will address the following questions: What are the intellectual and objective bases of this system? What are the solutions it offers to the problem of balancing quantity with quality? What are the reactions of faculty and students to such systems and what are the obstacles faced during its implementation?

I. Introduction

It wouldn't be new to affirm that higher education was and remains the cornerstone of any genuine development drive. Examples of this are many, for the correlation between the level of higher education and development rates in any society is strong. The results of research and studies conducted by international bodies indicate that investing in this sector cannot be overlooked by countries aspiring to join the knowledge society.

A look at the order of the Maghreb universities in Islamic countries shows that they occupy the fourteenth rank after Benin, Nigeria and Oman in terms of the production of published scientific articles, as revealed by the Organization of the Islamic Conference-OIC Report on Academic

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Ranking of Member Universities. With regard to the order of these countries amongst each other, we find that they rank as follows: Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Libya and Mauritania. Although Algeria leads the Maghreb countries in the number of published articles (an estimate of 1682 articles), it comes in third place after Tunisia (1490 articles) and Morocco (807 articles) given the number of universities it has compared to them (OIC Report on Academic Ranking, 2007).

It is common knowledge that Arab universities, and Maghreb universities in particular, still suffer from weaknesses on several levels, including aspects of management, staffing, pedagogy, quality of structures and conditions of student admissions, etc. In order for the Maghreb countries to play their role in transferring, producing and implementing knowledge, a rehabilitation process is called for. This is what the Maghreb countries aspire to do through the successive reforms of higher education.

II. Higher Education Reform in Algeria

Algeria is considered to be one of the countries that have adopted an education policy that is open to all the categories of society. Through its choice of education democracy principle which started with its independence, Algeria adopted free education at all levels as a national mandate. Furthermore, the State takes upon itself the responsibility of providing student services such as accommodation, transport and grants. Additionally, any student who obtains the secondary school leaving certificate, the «Baccalaureate», is immediately offered a seat at the University.

These major strategic goals have given the state the great responsibilities of ensuring completion of projects that accommodate the number of new students arriving each year to the University, and the ensuring requirements and needs for training cadres, providing pedagogical support, etc. Those observing the performance of higher education in Algeria can record that the primary concern is the quantitative aspect. This is clearly reflected in the annual or periodic results recorded by the Ministry, or even those recorded by the universities. These are based on achievements that serve to ensure the accommodation of students by facilities and infrastructures.

Algeria inherited, at its independence from colonialism, one university, which is the University of Algiers. Established in the year 1851 as a medical institute, it was created to meet the needs of the settlers. This was followed by the establishment of institutes of law, arts and economy. In 1909, the university was reorganized on a college basis to include four faculties: the Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy, the Faculty of Law and Economic Sciences, the Faculty of Arts and Humanities and the Faculty of Exact Sciences. A look at the number of students enrolled in these faculties clearly suggests that the university was established to serve the settlers.

Table 1 clearly shows that higher education in Algeria after independence was serving the settlers, as the total number of foreign students (4557) far exceeded the number of Algerian students (549), who represented only 11% of all students.

A comparison of the development that took place in the higher education sector from independence until 2007 shows that the number of universities in the year 1962 was limited to just one, namely, the University of Algiers. However, by 2008 more than sixty Higher Education (HE) institutions, including 34 universities, 13 HE centers, 13 HE institutes and 4 teacher training institutes had been established. From a mere 103 in 1962 the number of teachers reached 30,510 in 2008. Furthermore, the number of students jumped from 5,106 to 979,949 and will exceed a million in the next few years.

Table 1: Number of students, Algerians and Europeans, enrolled in the University of Algiers, after independence in 1962

Faculties	Number and Percentage of European Students		Number and Percentage of Algerian Students		total
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy	1110	89%	134	11%	1244
Faculty of Law and Economic Sciences	1528	90%	179	10%	1707
Faculty of Arts and Humanities	1157	87%	172	13%	1329
Faculty of Exact Sciences	762	92%	64	8%	826
Total	4557	89%	549	11%	5106

Source: adapted from Massouda (2002)

The reforms that the higher education sector underwent are diverse and touched upon organizational and pedagogical aspects. They can generally be summarized in three reforms; the 1971 Reform, the 1999 Reform and the 2004 LMD Reform. However, before going further into detail, it would be pertinent to mention the situation of higher education before these reforms came into effect; directly after Algeria's independence.

1. Pre-Reform Period

This period extends from 1962, the year of Algeria's independence to 1971. It witnessed the establishment of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, which was entrusted with the task of supervising the promotion of higher education. The French organization remained in effect during this period, and educational studies were carried out according to three cycles: The first is a three-year, post-baccalaureate (high school diploma) cycle. The second cycle is one-year long or more and awards the successful student a Diplôme d'Études approfondies. The third stage, through which one can obtain a Doctorat de Troisième Cycle and then a Doctorat D'État, is accessible to holders of a Doctorat de troisième cycle

This phase was characterized by Algeria's quest to achieve the following objectives:

- Ridding curricula from colonial ideas, especially programs of social sciences, human sciences and law which were full of colonial ideas offensive to Algerian society.
- Abolishing French educational administration and replacing it with Algerian educational administration.
- Making education a right for every citizen.

2. The 1971 Higher Education Reform

The following characterized this period of reforms:

- a. The progressive process of adapting curricula, especially in the social sciences, to Arab and Algerian cultures through Arabization and "Algerianization".
- b. Training individuals capable of being integrated directly into the labor market.
- c. Diversifying training paths so as to provide for the needs of economic, social and service sectors.
- d. Training the maximum number of individuals at the lower cost.

- e. Combining theoretical and applied training by opening of the university onto its economic and social environments.
- f. Abolishing the Certificate system and introducing a four-year Bachelor system, as well as the Master's and the Doctorat d'Etat.
- g. Introducing the system of semesters and modules.
- h. Changing faculties into institutes.

3. Phase of Returning to Faculty System

This period, which started in 1999, became known as a structural reform of the University because the Ministry went back again to the faculty system instead of Institutes. This was done by placing together different majors under one faculty (in most cases with no solid framework), to the extent that one might find that the majors of the same faculty differed from one university to another. It should also be noted that these reforms did not depend on an evaluation of the existing system in order to identify the pros and cons and benefit from such findings in the future reform. In spite of this restructuring, the management maintained the institute 'mentality' it previously had and did not fully benefit from its financial and pedagogical autonomy.

4. The LMD Reform

The reform known as the LMD System (License, Master, Doctorat or Bachelor, Master, Doctorate) came about in 2004. It kept the structure of the University and faculties as they were, but made radical changes to the pedagogical process. This reform is considered the focus of this research, and it will be dealt with through its philosophy, goals, structure, implementation and results.

III. The LMD System

1. The Bologna Process

On 19 June 1999, a group of countries belonging to the European Union ratified mechanisms for developing higher education in Europe. This was due to knowledge being considered as an indispensable factor in the process of social and human development along with it being an essential component in the strengthening of European citizenship. It was deemed necessary to give citizens the necessary competencies to meet the challenges of the new millennium with an awareness of common social and cultural values that would develop a mutual social and cultural outlook.

In an LMD System (a system of Anglo-Saxon origins), higher education was entrusted with facing this scientific, social and cultural challenge in Europe, relying on a set of principles which includes:

- a. Guaranteeing university autonomy, to ensure continuous consonance with the changing needs of society and knowledge along with cultural advancement.
- b. Promoting European higher education on the global level.
- c. Linking higher education to the work requirements of the community.
- d. Promoting European labor and making it more competitive globally.
- e. Strengthening student mobility dynamics and taking advantage of the opportunities for learning, training and professional services.
- f. Promoting European cooperation in the field of learning quality.
- g. Promoting the European learning dimension through program contents, skills and competencies.

2. LMD Objectives in the Maghreb Countries

Through the commissions that worked on evaluating higher education in Algeria, a number of imbalances in its functional performance were detected. Abdelhamid Djekoun (2006) summarized the most important difficulties facing higher education as follows:

- A large number of students with poor attendance.
- A great failure and dropout rate along with cost effectiveness.
- Weak dynamics when it comes to program renewal.
- Weak relations between the university and its social and economic environments.
- Strong centralization as a means of managing university life.

To deal with these difficulties and problems, Algeria adopted the LMD System as a ready made European system as had all the other Maghreb countries. It can be pointed out that these countries have adopted major objectives inspired as a whole from the European system, and features of its implementation were apparent in the following:

- a. Improving the quality of higher education.
- b. Compatibility of the training with the global system and European standards in particular.
- c. Diversifying training paths and linking them to the economic and social needs.
- d. Seeking to ensure employment.
- e. Modernizing management and pedagogy.

3. Structure of the Study Plan in the LMD System

It is common knowledge that the study in the LMD System consists of three cycles, which are: License (Bachelor), Master and Doctorate. The first being the Bachelor or License stage includes three years of post- secondary education, undergraduate study and is divided into six semesters. Success requires obtaining in 180 credits at a rate of 30 credits per semester.

The Bachelor is offered in two programs: Academic Bachelor and Professional Bachelor. The Masters is considered the second level after the Bachelor and requires 2 years of study, i.e. baccalaureate +5 years. The first year is allocated for studying a range of modules that amount to 120 credits and culminating in a certificate called Master 1. During the second year, the student prepares a research project and also attends some supporting lectures, which are usually provided by visiting professors, in order to receive a certificate called Master 2.

The third level, or the Doctorate, is the culmination of university education and lasts at least three years after the Master, and ends with a thesis that is to be defended before a jury.

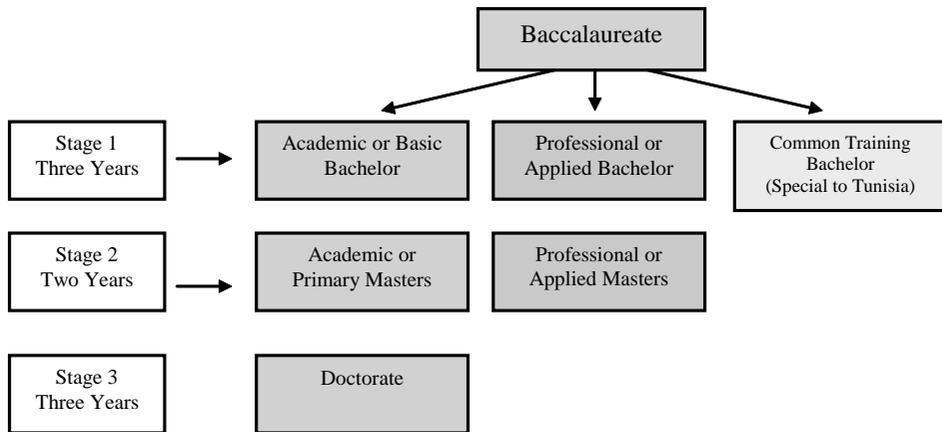
It is worth noting the existence of a parallel structure called Doctoral schools on which several universities are gathered to offer a training program at the level of Master and Doctorate.

Before addressing the effects and results of implementing the LMD System, it would be useful to refer to the contents of this system in its various dimensions, which can be identified as follows: program building, evaluation, transfer and progress of students, learning sources, relation with professional institutions, relation with foreign scientific bodies and education quality.

a. Building Training curricula

The process of building curricula is considered the cornerstone of any educational work, and the training success in this system depends on this process, because the right knowledge, skills and competencies that match the requirements of modern education and the needs of the community are transmitted through it. The added value of this system is the way it gave a kind of autonomy and flexibility to universities in developing and building their training programs. This meant the responsibility was handed back to the professors, which is a positive gain.

Figure 1: The Structure of the LMD Based on the Structures Adopted in the Maghreb Countries



However, there are required procedures and preparations to be implemented before the training program is adopted. In turn, this process requires educational and scientific expertise in building and preparing the programs. This is because presenting the program to be provided requires completion of a standardized form which demands knowledge and expertise in curriculum design such as in:

- Identifying the general objectives of the training program
- Suggesting core, transversal and discovering teaching units. Credits are distributed amongst these courses in such a way that the greater number falls under the core courses. For example, assuming there are eight courses per semester, four of these should be core courses, and the rest is divided amongst the other units.
- Suggesting the weekly study time for each module and distributing it amongst lectures, practical sessions and personal work.
- Proposing a number of credits for courses as well as a weight for each model. This is usually done by calculating 15 work hours for each credit, meaning that the course containing four credits has a time estimate of 60 hours per semester. These are then distributed amongst lectures, practical sessions and personal student work.
- Proposing methods for knowledge evaluation.
- Listing the contents of each course and giving a description of the objectives it achieves.
- Listing the references that support the contents.
- Pointing out the societal sectors that are likely to employ students in the future.
- Pointing out the physical potential of the learning resources available to students in the training program.
- Pointing out the list of those in charge of the training program as well as determining the responsibility of each one of them.

The map of training programs in the three Maghreb countries took irregular steps in terms of the launch year of this academic project, with Morocco coming first and followed by Algeria and finally Tunisia. However, Algeria leads the three in terms of training programs, including the Bachelor and Masters (Table 2). But despite this number of accredited training programs, the

number of students following the previous system still exceeds the number of students following the LMD System.

Table 2: Training programs in the Maghreb Universities in the LMD System

Countries	Year of Adopting the LMD	HEIs	Academic Bachelor	Professional Bachelor	Common Bachelor	Academic Master	Professional Master	Total
Algeria 2008/ 2009	2004	64	133	59	–	364	83	703
Morocco 2007/2008	2003	18	25	30	–	122	18	213
Tunisia 2007 /2008	2005	14	76	303	26	Not available	Not available	419

Source: Rehabilitation Decrees from the Ministries of Higher Education in the Three Maghreb Countries: Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia

b. Evaluation

Evaluation is based on a set of indicators such as continuous monitoring, final exams and students' personal work, as these all contribute differentially to the course's final grade. Students benefit from the compensation system for the courses belonging to the same unit and between different units. The general average of the semester is obtained through the averages of the courses it's comprised of. A student is considered to have passed if she/he gets a total average of 1020/ or more. A student who gets less than that average fails. He has the right to a catch up session at the end of semester. The catch-up session concerns only the theoretical component within the courses, the student's mark on the practical component of the course remains. A period of two months must separate the regular exam and the catch-up exam. If the student fails after the catch-up session, she/he retains the modules in which she/he succeeded. We also note that the LMD System has kept the compensation system that was common in the old system.

30% of the final score is allocated for continuous monitoring and 70% for the final exams in the regular session and the catch-up. Students also benefit from the system of compensation, meaning that a student can pass the courses by adding up grades of the unit models, disregarding the failure in some models and the success in other. The student has to get an average of 1020/ on the unit total.

c. Student progression

Although teaching is based on semester, student's progress from one year to the next is annual. Therefore, the student who acquires a passing average or at least 30 credits, i.e. 50% of all the credits, is allowed to move up to the second year after her/his results are approved by the pedagogical committee. It also allows the student to shift to the third year if she/he acquires a passing average or 80% of the first and second years' credits, provided that she/he had passed the core courses. It should be noted that there are some minor differences between the different countries of the Maghreb in defining the required credits for the transition. For example: in Tunisia, promotion from the first year to the second requires the student to acquire 45 credits, which amounts to 75%, as opposed to the 50 % required in Algeria (Table 3).

Table 3: How students pass from one year to another

Countries	From First to Second Year	From Second to Third Year
Algeria	Acquiring 30 credits following the opinion of the pedagogical committee	Acquiring 80% of the credits of the first and second years
Tunisia	Acquiring 45 credits (75% of the first year credits)	Acquiring 45 credits (75% of the second year credits)

Source: Extracted from the LMD system regulations in Algeria and Tunisia

d. Learning Resources

Based on the philosophy of the LMD System (that is founded on accompaniment and self-learning) small groups of students should work together, which in turn calls for a large number of tutors, study rooms, laboratories, libraries, media rooms and Internet.

e. Relation with the Environment and Community

Training programs require the identification of community needs in terms of competencies and skills that are needed by economic and social institutions. There is also a need to engage these institutions in the training process through their supervision of student fieldwork and trips. In order to adopt training programs, especially professional ones, the system emphasizes the agreement between the training team and these institutions on the proposal of training programs.

f. Relation with Foreign Countries

As declared by the Bologna Process, the implementation of LMD System is to be spread globally. For this, a number of agencies and organizations have been established to strengthen and promote the system at the European level first and in the other countries that have adopted the System, including the Maghreb countries. Among these programs, Erasmus Mondus, Tempus and some others are the most important, and all of them aim to establish cooperation in building training programs, students and professors' mobility, and making financial provisions available. They also work towards a joint monitoring of the academic accreditation of the training programs and financial, pedagogical and scientific accompaniments in order to ensure the quality of higher education. Furthermore, they aim to attract highly-qualified professors and students and facilitate mobility in both directions between Europe and Third World countries, at least in theory.

g. The Quality of Higher Education

There is no doubt that the quality of education is the outcome of several requirements that include the various aspects that have been already addressed. These consist mainly of providing training programs, accreditation procedures and accompanying support means such as libraries, laboratories and Internet services. It also requires developing regulations in great detail and ensuring the quality development through experienced foreign and national independent specialized centers.

As mentioned previously, the European formula brought forward by Erasmus Mondus and Tempus is considered part of the attempts to create systems that monitor the quality of higher education.

III. Critical Review of the LMD System

Even though the LMD System was only implemented recently, it is advisable to highlight and discuss the difficulties and constraints it's encountering in the field. However, it's preferable to speak first about the public perception of this system in the Maghreb countries, Algeria in particular, through the major principles it's built on.

1. The Philosophical Aspect

This system is based on the idea of using higher education as a mechanism for scientific, social, cultural, economic and professional education, in order to enhance integration and promote citizenship on a large European scale.

This is not perceived in the adoption of this system by the Maghreb countries, despite the existence of a Maghreb Union capable of creating a similar philosophy that uses higher education as a tool for promoting the Union, and stresses the importance of cooperation in the preparation of programs and strengthening student and professor mobility. In Maghreb countries, the process seems individualistic and eager to merge with Europe's outlooks, which facilitates the brain drain and promotes dependency on the French language.

Of the severe criticism addressed to the conditions of the adoption of this system, there were references made to the absence of a genuine evaluation of the previous educational stages and of a state report on the reforms that were carried out in order to benefit from, and build on, their positive aspects. Furthermore, the LMD System is defined as a simple, technical procedure that seeks rehabilitation in a global education outlook (Aissa, K. 2008).

Training programs that are developed using scientific and educational methods enable the system to adapt them to the needs of the society as well as to the student's professional needs. This could only happen through the participation of the active players in the economic and social fields. This system is considered positive in terms of the eight-year training length required to acquire a doctorate, although it is a short period when compared with the previous system, where doctoral studies had no time limit. This reduction allows the student to devote more time to post-doctoral research projects, or to practice her/his professional activity at an early stage.

Furthermore, the tutoring system is considered an important pedagogical component in guiding students, strengthening their abilities and compressing the projects of their lives. Added to that is the flexibility of this system in transferring the student from one training path to another without the loss of any credits she/he'd passed, and the student's ability to transfer from one university to another.

2. Implementation Problems

a. On the Student Level

The influx of students arriving to the university every year is one of the fundamental problems of this system. This was and remains an obstacle in terms of admission, follow up, support means and accompaniment structures, making it difficult to implement this system in the current conditions. The lack of students and administration understanding matters such as student transition and progress in their training paths has often led to protests and conflicts between them. Therefore, seeking students' awareness before they come to the university and during their registration, as well as providing them with information about the system may reduce these problems.

On the topic of students' evaluation, the governing law recognizes that 70% of the overall assessment will be based on final exams and 30% on continuous monitoring, which in turn is subdivided into 90% for controlled assignments and 10% for other assignments. This means that the final assessment depends on 95% of the controlled exams, whereas the remaining 5% is allocated for the work the students do in the form of assignments, such as oral exams or presentations. This assessment procedure goes against the principle of self-learning, which values the student's initiatives and holds her/him responsible for her/his training and learning. Compared with the previous system, the number of examinations in a semester was reduced from two exams to just one for each module, with catch-up examinations being kept and

comprehensive sessions cancelled. In effect, this procedure provides more time for teaching instead of overloading teachers with correcting exam papers. In addition to that, the concept of continuous monitoring was introduced for the first time, along with the final assessment. This type of assessment has important educational dimensions both for the professor and student, because the learner's strengths and weaknesses are found during the learning process with its help. This aids the professor to change, modify or maintain the teaching method used.

It is also observed that the compensation system, which allows the student to pass the unit by compensating the modules she/he had failed in with the module grades he had passed, lead them in many cases to compensate core modules with secondary modules. This situation caused a negative impact on the students' training quality, as they became focused on modules they consider easier and expect to get high grades with minimal effort. We can also mention that the students whose grades fall short of the general average and are in danger of failing, are the ones who end up seeking their professor's assistance in the hopes that they would help them by adding a few grades, so as to achieve the required passing average. This compensation system has had the same effect in the previous system, and one researcher (Labeled, N. 2007) points out that, "The compensation system is a pedagogical cemetery", because he found it leads to destroying all motivation in learning and instead focuses on skim-learning and searching for easy ways to reach the average that allows transition to the next year.

In addition, a large portion of students who use the compensation system to their benefit may move to the following year while not being able to understand the information related to the modules they failed in. In general, this type of evaluation has created a mindset focusing more on transition rather than improving achievements.

b. Curriculum design and teaching

The Higher Education Ministry's encouragement to universities to move into the LMD System, has often resulted in rushing in to present premature training programs that were based on a hasty drafting of old programs or by using programs that were copied from foreign universities. This goes against the philosophy of the LMD System in the building of training programs, which take into account local needs and modern scientific developments at the same time. In terms of approving training programs, it has been noted through the practice of regional evaluation committees, that the focus is usually oriented on whether this program respected the formal requirement. Since the programs are usually submitted to experts of other majors. Also, one can find that the same training program could be approved by committee A and refused by committee B.

It has also been noted that the LMD System was faced with some resistance, since it expanded faculty requirements at the expense of department requirements, which results in subjects or modules being studied for almost two years as a part of the faculty's requirements and one year as part of the department's requirements. This is being justified since it gives the student an opportunity to switch to other majors without losing the credits she/he acquired; a situation that has somehow been rejected by professors who prefer to have department requirements over faculty requirements.

c. Means of Support

The economy in the Maghreb is still young and suffering from rehabilitation difficulties. Privatization or the dismantling of several public sectors can also be seen in Algeria in particular. Since the philosophy of this system requires that economic institutions be involved in the training programs, it is difficult to find genuine partnerships in the current circumstances. Thus, we notice that the majority of the presented training programs are of the academic type (Table 2), because of the lack of interaction between the university and its environment.

If cooperation with foreign institutions is important and primordial in higher education with respect to science and the provision of financial resources, there are some questions to be asked about what can be achieved from this cooperation in terms of endorsing cultural and linguistic subordination. This is because most of the training programs in scientific and technological fields and some programs in social sciences are taught in French.

Speaking from the principle of self-learning on which this system is based, the availability of learning sources such as laboratories, libraries, media rooms, computer labs and substructures suitable for learning are considered the basis of this system's success. Here we can point to the big shortage in these resources in many universities, and this is without mentioning the disparity in the number and quality of professors from one university to another, since high-ranking professors station themselves at major universities located in major cities.

3. Prospects

a. Quality of Education

The ambition of any educational institution is to become professional in order to reach efficiency, and subsequently to produce high quality outputs. For this objective to be attained, various factors are needed. These areas are substantive, educational, legislative and managerial, and the process of controlling these is often faced with obstacles; such as resistance to change and clinging to old and familiar methods. In this context, agencies specialized in quality of education intervene to break this stiffness about wrong customs and practices. It is believed that organizing forums that are attended by representatives from different countries, together with representatives from Algerian universities, is part of internal and external assessment to improve the quality of education in the LMD System (Haraoubia,R. 2007). New work methods based on self-assessment and external expertise should be adopted in the preparation of programs.

In order to achieve this goal, and in addition to holding forums that allow exchange of expertise, specialized bodies that supervise and observe the training process, in its various aspects, should be established at local, regional and Arab levels. The following are some examples:

- Quality Assurance Council with the aid of independent external bodies.
- Commission for Observing Internships and Relations with the Environment.
- A joint commission between the university and the world of business to monitor community needs.
- Using the Bachelor diploma called the "Common Training" Bachelor (that is in force in Tunisia) as a model, to be generalized among all Magrebian universities due to its ability to combine the community institutions' needs and university services.
- A commission which undertakes raising awareness in parents, students and even professors about the contents of this system and its objectives.

b. Good Governance

These prospects remain incomplete or figments of one's imagination, if the governance, or what's known as good governance, of higher education institutions is not dealt with. The main demand might just be the way in which a university is governed, which is currently characterized by strong centralization by the concerned ministry. This has made many academics connect the future of universities to how daring the political decision can be with respect to decentralization, independence and the consequent procedures and methods of selecting leaders. Those in charge, such as heads and deans of universities and colleges, should be chosen according to generally accepted international standards that are not controlled by personal or political recommendations. Today, The University of Algeria in particular needs

to stop listening to the speeches talking about quantitative achievements, like the multitude of substructures and the number of new students and the like. These are achievements that can't be renounced. It should listen instead to what is considered deeper and essential in the process of promoting its output, bypassing the cost of the graduating students to the quality of their knowledge level.

In order to implement this good governance, attention must also be paid to pedagogy and all matters related to the accountability of professors and managers alike. It is unreasonable to allow a professor to teach however she/he wants, and not hold her/him accountable for the official learning times as well as teaching methods. However, justifications can be offered in these situations, such as poor salary, lack of faculty offices, etc. Nevertheless, this situation is considered unacceptable and must be changed. This could be achieved by activating pedagogical committees and scientific councils at the levels of departments and faculties. In addition to this, by developing clear follow-up and assessment methods that enable the manager to perform her/his job in order to make objective decisions regarding study progress, the contents of the programs and professor accountability. This means, when talking about the LMD System, that problems related to professors remain the focus of this reform, and success or failure can be determined through it, to a large extent.

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Support for distance language learners at the Syrian Virtual University

Hala Dalbani¹

Abstract

There has been a vast growth in Syria in the number of learners seeking higher education and, consequently, in the corresponding channels of providing it. Due to the constraints of the traditional educational sector, distance learning is providing Syrians with an alternative means of education. One such example is the Syrian Virtual University (SVU), which offers students the opportunity to gain education through an online learning environment based on the latest technology. Since Syria is a country where English has become an important educational requirement, the teaching of English has therefore entered the arena of distance learning. Though studying at a distance offers learners flexibility, it puts a great deal of demands on them too; hence the importance of efficient support systems.

The objective of this paper is to make a first-hand evaluation of how successful has the SVU's support system been in laying the ground for effective distant English language teaching and learning. It draws on students' perceptions in order to evaluate the efficacy of the existing support system in helping learners achieve successful learning outcomes.

Within a conceptual framework that has been built upon models of teaching and learning at-a-distance, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used for data collection and analysis. Although the major forms of support provided were found to be relevant to students, the study highlights the need to improve the current level of student satisfaction. This can be achieved by taking a number of steps: increasing the technological infrastructure and services to match the rapid growth of this young university, maximizing autonomy through teaching learning skills side by side with language skills, introducing a radical change of tutors' perspective and practice in teaching to incorporate constructivists' approaches, and exploiting the multimedia to enhance students networking and group learning.

I. Introduction

1. The Syrian Virtual University (SVU)

Inaugurated in 2002, the Syrian Virtual University (SVU), the first online university in the Arab region, is a public institution fully accredited and endorsed by the Ministry of Higher Education.

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The benefits that this university promised to offer were a greater access to learning, a greater flexibility of learning, cost savings, learning that is more effective and lifelong learning in the age of globalization and technological revolution.

The SVU offers its students the opportunity to gain education through an online learning environment based on the latest technology. With its logo "Education anytime anywhere", the SVU's flexibility helps to meet the aims and ambitions of many young Arab high school graduates who otherwise, due to high entry requirements at state universities, will be unable to pursue higher education.

Since Syria is a country where English has become an important educational requirement, the teaching of English has therefore entered the arena of distance learning. With the growth of this university from around 200 students in 2003 to around 7000 in 2009, the number of students enrolled on its English language courses grew steadily to around 1000 students in the academic year 2008- 2009.

2. Learner support and autonomy

Murphy (2008) contends that there is more to distance learning than just the flexibility in time, pace and place of studying, 'Distance learners may be assumed to be learning autonomously because they control a number of aspects of their learning. These may include the time, the pace, what to study and when to study, but this does not necessarily mean they take responsibility for setting goals, planning or evaluating learning.'

Learning a second language is generally perceived by learners to be 'different from learning other subjects, and to involve more time, more practice and different mental processes' (Victori, 1992, cited in Cotterall, 1995). Sussex (1991, cited in White, 1994) maintains that learning languages at a distance is more challenging than learning other subjects due to the complex combination of skills and information needed for mastering the language.

According to Hurd (2000), 'those learning at a distance do not have the standard university infrastructure to call upon when in difficulty: teachers or language advisors on site, classes to go to, ready access to other students to compare notes or to ask for advice.' Hence, the importance of learner support systems. Tait (2000) defined student support as 'the range of services both for individuals and for students in groups which complement the course materials or learning resources that are uniform for all learners, and which are often perceived as the major offering of institutions using ODL [open and distance learning]'. Services such as tutoring, counseling, organization of study centres, interactive teaching, mentioned by Tait (2000), are crucial in the context of distance education systems both in developed and developing countries.

As to the value of support systems, Dillon et al. (1992) maintain that 'One important means of analyzing the effectiveness of the teaching learning experience in a distance education system is through the analysis of the learner support system.' Hodgson (1986) posits that 'Support systems contribute to the «process» of a course as do the learning materials' and when support systems are developed in recognition of student needs, they help the distance learner become competent and self-confident in learning, social interactions and self-evaluation (Rae, 1989).

At the SVU, several collaboration support systems are used for teaching and learning mainly the asynchronous and the synchronous tools. Whilst most international online learning projects concentrate on asynchronous tools, the Syrian Virtual University (SVU) added the synchronous tools to create a classroom based ambiance. However, the challenge lies here, as it might be quite possible that the traditional classroom practices are indirectly being carried into the virtual environment and are thus turning the virtual classroom into a traditional one that is merely

employing techniques formally associated with non-conventional modes of learning. A similar observation was made by Keegan (1993) and also by White (2005) who states that the 'problem of replicating traditional classroom models in distance education is not new, nor is it unique to the Web as a technology used in distance education. Traditional tenets of teaching tend to be transferred to distance education, creating the same discontinuities in distance education that are present in traditional learning environments'. Thus, 'If higher levels of learning are to be achieved in Web-based distance education, there is a need to expand our perspectives of teaching and learning beyond what occurs in traditional classrooms.' (White, 2005)

This leads to the conclusion that e-tutors and e-management should be aware that the culture of self-learning or independent education need to be cultivated and sustained regardless of the mode of instruction. Besides, in higher education today, autonomy is seen as a 'marker of graduateness' (Railton and Watson, 2005) as manifested in the British Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) benchmark statements on the outcomes of graduate study. The QAA requires from UK students of languages and related studies a degree of learner autonomy and responsibility for the development of language competence through independent study (QAA 2002, section 2.5). Virtual education has a short history in Syria and little research, if any, has been carried out on the teaching of languages online. The present paper reports on a study that aimed to examine the quality of support services provided by the SVU as part of the university's QA procedures and the extent to which these services meet the needs of English language students and promote learner autonomy. This is based on the premise that an evaluation of this kind can lead to enhancing the quality of English language teaching offered at the SVU.

II. Research design and methodology

The study used both quantitative and qualitative evaluation approaches. A survey questionnaire, administered in two parts, was used to:

- Elicit the specific difficulties that SVU students identify regarding online distance language learning.
- Elicit students' impressions of the course and the usefulness of the various course support components.

The first part of the questionnaire was administered in Arabic and online on the SVU's website on the Intelligent Student Information System (ISIS) during August of the term spring 2008. The questionnaire constituted multiple-choice Likert five scale type of questions (ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree). Some sections of the questionnaire were based on a study carried out by Hurd (2000). 317 SVU English language students enrolled on different programmes took part in this survey. The system automatically worked out the percentages of students' replies and presented them in bar charts.

The second part of the questionnaire was dispatched in October 2008, towards the end of spring 2008 term. It was administered at the class level through emails. Tutors of each English language class were given the questionnaire and were asked to explain its content to their students during online class sessions before requesting them to fill it in. Feedback was received through the electronic mail. The number of students who took part in this section of the questionnaire was 177, which is less than those who took part in the first section and that is because the latter elicited feedback from students who were attending the live sessions at the time the questionnaire was dispatched. This part of the questionnaire constituted multiple-choice Likert five scale type of questions (ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree) and open-ended questions too.

Another source of information used in this study was a survey carried out online in fall 2007 by the SVU administration on 390 students enrolled on all of its programs.

The last source of information was the researcher herself who has been acting as the QA supervisor for the English language department at the SVU since 2005.

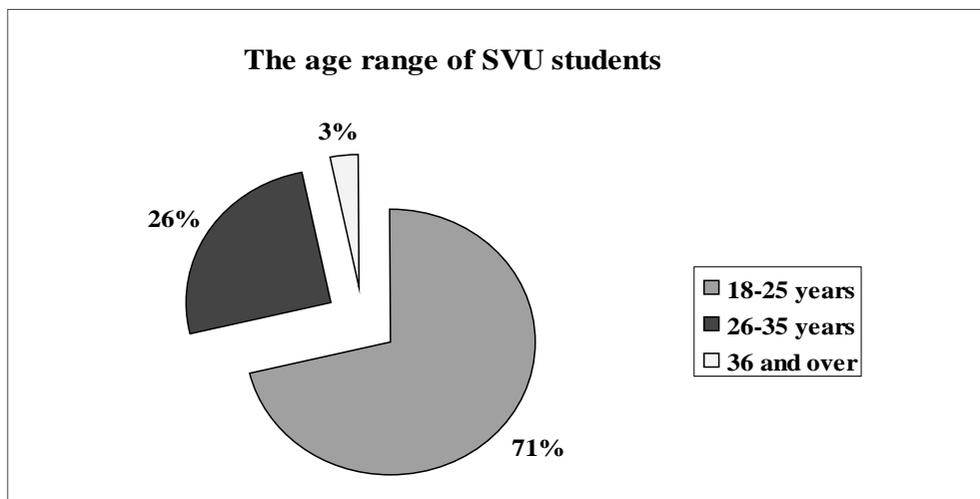
III. Research findings and discussion

1. SVU student profile

The survey carried out by the SVU administration in fall 2007 on 390 students revealed that the typical Syrian virtual learner is in his twenties. 71% of the overall number of registered students at the SVU are aged between 18 -25 years, 26% are between 26 - 35 and only 3% are 36 years and over (see Figure 1). The survey also revealed that around ninety percent (89%) of its students chose the program because they were seeking a bachelor's degree: 48% of whom came from high school, 41% came from intermediate institutes (vocational Institutes) and only 11% came with a Bachelor's degree seeking a Masters. It is worth mentioning here that in Syria, intermediate institutes offer a two-year vocational training in different specializations for students whose Bacallaureate exam marks are not high enough to secure them a place at one of the state universities. The average Bacallaureate exam marks obtained by a random sample of 177 SVU entrants was around 65%, which means that the majority of learners who opt to study at the SVU are average students. Another survey carried out on 317 students revealed that 72% of SVU students are working students with 54% in full-time jobs and 19% in part-time ones. Nonetheless, 91% of the 390 SVU students in the survey believe that a university degree will open for them better opportunities in life.

Another characteristic of SVU learners is that they come from an educational environment where they have been largely dependent on the teacher who is responsible for most of the planning, organizing, and delivery of learning materials. Students have not been trained on how to take charge of their own learning. Coming into a context where autonomy is essential to success, learners are likely to find this new environment rather challenging.

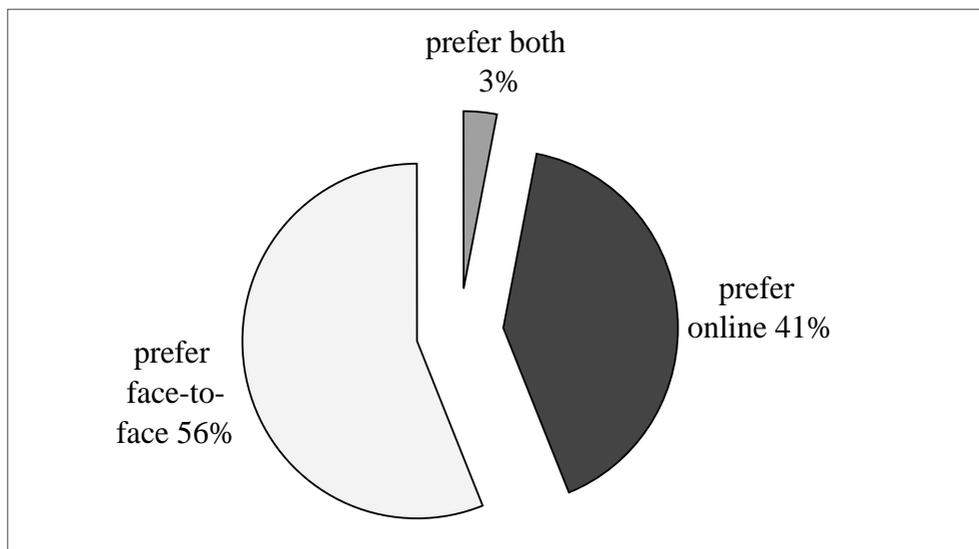
Figure 1. The age range of students enrolled on SVU programs



2. SVU students' perceptions

As part of a QA practice to obtain students' feedback regarding different aspects of teaching and learning, a survey carried out in fall 2007 by the SVU administration on 390 students, revealed that only 37% of SVU students felt satisfied with the English language courses, 37% were uncertain, and 26% were dissatisfied. This relatively high degree of uncertainty and dissatisfaction was a reason for concern. In the survey carried out on 177 students in spring 2008 exclusively on the SVU English language learners investigating which mode of learning students would prefer (see Figure 2), only 41% of the informants chose learning English online, some with reservations: only if students have good IT skills, enough time and are devoted to learning. 56% said that they would still prefer the face-to-face language classroom. The remaining 3% did not mind either. However, when asked whether they would recommend online study programmes to friends, 73% said they would recommend them and 27% said they would not. If students were keen on recommending online programmes, what were, therefore, the problems with the language courses? What were the reasons that were causing this high level of uncertainty and dissatisfaction amongst virtual English language learners?

Figure 2. SVU language students' preferences



The open-ended section of the survey revealed the main reasons why students would still prefer face-to-face language courses. Learners' main concern was the absence of 'real communication' as put by one of the students. Others commented by saying: "*learning a foreign language means communication*" and "*language is life and conversation*". Technical problems were also another reason for concern: "*in online meeting there is a lot of connections errors.*" The absence of the human factor was also a reason for anxiety: "*I think the e-learning will kill the human relationship soon.*", "*I like to make a real conversation with teacher and to learn from real book to have ability to return to it and study from real book not from screen.*" The lack of feeling of 'obligation' to study was also expressed by some of the informants: "*Face to face is more powerful from online course. I feel obliged to study*", and finally some students felt that online learning was rather more time consuming.

On the other hand, the reasons given by those students in the survey who preferred online language learning were mainly its flexibility in time and place for it allows students to study and work at the same time: *"I can study and work."*, some could even *"study from work."* It also provided recorded sessions that could be listened to for as many times as the student needs *"in this way of learning recorded sessions are available any time I want to study. I can hear it more than one time."* Informants also felt that it was an economical and convenient way to earn a degree. It was more resourceful with more tasks to practice: *"when you learn English online you can find many sources on the internet that can help you with your study."* Besides it was novel and more fun *"Because of the good way in teaching."*, *"Online learning follows new methods in English learning by entertainment, technology, smart quizzes and lastly online learning does not depend on place, time specified."*, *"Learning English online is very interesting, but face to face course would be more efficiency."* Learners online also suffered no embarrassments and were more relaxed and tutors spent less time on class management and focused on individual learners: *"I can ask about important things privately with the tutor if I have any question."* *"I prefer online because I can contact my teacher with out annoying my friends and I feel that I can communicate with my teacher by email."*, *"The tutor will take care of each one of us and will know exactly our level whereas in a face-to-face course, the tutor could be busy to calm down the students."* Some students also felt that online learning helped them develop study skills and engaged them in independent learning: *"It makes me learn by myself."*, *"Learning online is more effective because it is depending on listening, reading and writing without any supporting gestures."*, *"Because it develops my ability in listening and improves my skills in focusing (concentration)."* One student also commented by saying: *"Language is a self development procedure."*

A first hand evaluation of these comments points to the fact that learners seem to be aware that this medium of instruction has a great potential for supporting learning. The reasons given in favor of online learning far exceed those given against it. Besides, the drawbacks mentioned by students are mainly related to their lack of competence in the strategies of self-learning and to the inefficiency of the technology; the very same infrastructure that is supposed to support the whole learning process.

3. SVU language learner difficulties

317 SVU English language students attempted the questionnaire whereby they were presented with a list of statements adapted from Hurd (2000) and were asked to give feedback concerning the elements of distance learning that were a source of difficulty. Responses were in the form of a multiple choice Likert five scale answers (ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree). The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Difficulties with virtual language learning

Statement	Agree (%)
1. Takes more time than anticipated	83 (1)
2. Find it hard to remember new vocabulary	67 (2)
3. Few opportunities for practice with others	65 (3)
4. Find it hard to assess my own progress	59 (4)
5. Feel overwhelmed by all the material	59 (5)

6. Get easily de-motivated if I don't understand something or if I get a bad mark or if I face a technical problem	47 (6)
7. Requires too much self-discipline	41 (7)
8. Find it hard to concentrate on my own/get easily distracted	37 (8)
9. Access to a PC at the university's telecentres is difficult	36 (9)
10. Feel that I make progress less rapidly than others	32 (10)
11. Don't like to ask for help	20 (11)

(Data in parentheses represent the rank order of the responses)

The time factor seemed to be the SVU students' greatest worry. 83% of SVU English language students said that learning online takes more time than anticipated. This finding should not come as a surprise as 72% of SVU learners are working students. Thus, time seems to be the SVU learners' greatest enemy. This is also reflected in their eternal problem of not being able to meet their assignment deadlines. This calls for more induction to prospective students through training them on 'time management' before they embark on their distance courses.

The second difficulty pointed out by SVU students was 'find it hard to remember new vocabulary' chosen by 67% of the informants. As Arabic is a language that belongs to origins that are different from English, this might explain the learners' difficulty here. However, learners are probably not guided enough to use strategies like mind maps, mnemonics, etc ...that can help them retain the new vocabulary; hence the need to guide students on how to use some learning strategies. Finding 'few opportunities for practice' was the third difficulty pointed out by SVU students with 65% of informants choosing it. The reason may be that during online tutorials, and due to the pressure on the net, SVU students are for most of the time listeners rather than speakers. They mainly communicate with their tutor or peers online through written messages but they rarely speak. This worry was also expressed in the open-ended questions where students complained about their inability to converse with tutors and peers. This problem is related to the quality of internet and IT services provided and it varies a lot depending on the access point from which the end-user is logged on. In addition, over one third of the informants (36%) found it hard to find a PC to work on at telecenters. This shortage in resources is due to the fast growth of the university with resources not increasing at the same rate of increase in the number of students. The university needs to take that into consideration in its strategic plan.

The fourth difficulty faced by SVU English language learners was 'hard to assess my own progress' (59%). This indicates that almost 60% of learners have not yet developed the metacognitive skills of self-evaluation. Autonomy in learning is usually signaled by learners' ability to plan, evaluate and monitor their own progress. If learners are facing difficulties here then they are most likely metacognitively immature. One explanation may be the fact that SVU learners come from an educational culture where assessment lies totally in the hands of the instructor and where they have rarely been requested to perform any form of evaluation of themselves or their peers. Similarly, over one third of the SVU students (32%) felt that their 'progress was less rapid than that of their peers'. This again may be due to the same reason mentioned above and that learners have not been trained to self-reflect and assess themselves. This calls for the need to give distant learners more opportunities to self-reflect and learn how to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. This may help them become more independent learners.

The fifth source of difficulty to SVU learners was their being 'overwhelmed by the huge amount

of materials' with 59% of students choosing it. With online web materials and links given out as resources with almost every session, SVU students are probably finding it hard to cope. Coming from a culture where the core course book is the main source of reference may be one of the reasons behind this problem. Another reason may be the feeling of loss that the World Wide Web resources invite if learners are not properly guided. This calls for more individualistic learning where students are adequately guided and given the choice to pace themselves to do as much extra materials as needed depending on their own learning styles, needs and personal preferences.

Almost 50% of SVU students in the survey said that they 'get easily demotivated when they did not understand something or if they get a bad mark, or faced a technical problem'. Coming from an educational culture where students are passive recipients of knowledge and where the mark is an end in itself, this finding is not unexpected. This problem may also be related to students' lack of self-confidence or lack of know-how in the use of technology, and therefore is indirectly affecting their motivation. This points to the need for more tasks that stimulate learners' intrinsic motivation like learning through researching a topic rather than through memorizing and cramming.

In the seventh place came the difficulty 'requires too much self discipline' with 41% of students choosing it. This finding points again to a problem with the students' metacognitive skills of learning. Some SVU students are therefore finding it difficult to manage and control their own learning. Similarly, 37% of SVU students found it 'hard to concentrate on their own or got easily distracted'. Coming from an educational background where much of the learning takes place in the classroom where the teacher is in charge of managing and controlling the whole process may be the reason why students find it hard to concentrate whilst working on their own. Again, when learners are trained on how to use the strategies of self-learning and self-management, they will feel more in control of the learning process and will be able to discipline themselves better.

SVU students did not seem to have much of a problem 'seeking help', with only 20% declining to ask for help. This difficulty came last probably because in this mode of learning students are in contact with their tutors and peers either synchronously during live sessions or asynchronously through emails and thus can seek help whenever they run into any difficulty. Besides, the impersonal medium that is provided by the technology makes it easier on students to ask for help. This is evident in the flood of emails sent and received whereby students ask their tutors or their peers about issues concerning their studies and their assignments. This means of support is highly commendable as it provides learners with a lot of social and psychological support and helps them develop their socio-affective learning strategies. However, tutors can invest more in this tool to encourage networking and group learning.

Though in this technologically supported virtual learning medium the support system is supposedly offering students more help than in other forms of distance learning nonetheless, the percentage of SVU students facing problems is rather high on most of the difficulties listed by Hurd (2000). SVU students' problems are mostly related to the learning process and autonomy. These problems involve learners' self-discipline, self-assessment, concentration, time management, finding opportunities to practice the foreign language, and remembering vocabulary. A possible explanation to this is given in Hurd and Xiao (2006) where they posit that active participation and taking responsibility of ones own learning is fraught with difficulty and is a totally alien concept to learners who have not been brought up in systems or cultures that encourage active learning.

4. SVU Learner support systems

The quality of support offered to learners is a mark of the efficacy of the system in providing learners with the support needed to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

In this virtual environment, English language students get support from a number of sources which often intersect. In what follows, five categories of learner support systems will be investigated: IT support systems, lab centres (telecenters), tutorials, learning materials, and peer support.

a. IT support

With a learning medium dependent on technology, the IT support is vital. It offers both staff and learners the technology needed for teaching, learning and communication. One such form of support on offer at the SVU is the online information system known as the ISIS (Intelligent Student Information System). This system has been designed by local SVU IT experts to meet the needs of its students and staff: administrators and academics. Since its introduction in 2006, it has been considered an achievement and has actually helped to change the face of the SVU. It served as a window to the university from which tutors and students can access all they need like program and course information, announcements, term calendars, class schedules, recorded sessions, exam timetables, exam results and reports etc

Programs like the LMS (learning management system), the AMS (assessment management system), the Web Demo, etc ... are also provided to facilitate learning and assessment, but the problem is that some students come with very little experience in the use of technology even in as far as performing some of the basic IT operations. Short optional IT training sessions are offered by the SVU support team to all students before the onset of each term. However, the fact that those training sessions are optional leaves many students without sufficient knowledge of how to access these programmes. Thus, they end up struggling to come to terms with all the technological requirements on top of having to cope with the course content. If induction is to be made a prerequisite to joining language courses, this will help learners approach their studies with more confidence and less anxiety.

b. Computer lab centres

Since its establishment, the SVU's original intention was to provide its tutors and learners all over Syria and in some Arab countries too with telecenters (computer labs) that are fully equipped with PCs, fast internet connection and an IT support team that help in sorting out technical problems. Until recently, this has been the case and such labs were available for students' use nationwide 12 hours daily. This generous gesture was hoped to enhance learning especially for those students who for social, economic or geographic reasons could not access this technologically supported form of education. SVU learners use the university's telecenter facilities for various reasons: to attend live or recorded sessions, to download learning materials and assignments, to upload written projects and assignments, to send and receive emails from tutors and peers, to check announcements, to sit for exams, to get exam results and to make petitions etc These telecenters have an added advantage too. In many ways, they help break the walls of isolation that generally characterize distance learning. At those centres, students usually meet other learners and that will be the time to discuss their studies, assignments, exams, or any other worries or anxieties. It gives them the 'on campus' feel which helps them socially and psychologically, besides enhancing their socio-affective learning strategies.

With the growth in the number of students enrolled at the SVU, there has been an increased demand on telecenters. It is becoming increasingly difficult for tutors and students to find a PC to work on. That of course varies from one region to another; however, students nowadays are being advised to try to log on from outside the university. This is not what the university initially

planned, but its rapid growth coupled with an insufficient increase in resources is having its bite on this service which students, especially language learners, value so much.

Table 2. Students’ feedback on the quality of the IT support system

Statement	Agree (%)
The IT support team is helpful.	52%
Internet connection is good for most of the time.	35%
Quality of recorded sessions is good.	52%
The AMS is efficient.	65%
The ISIS (Intelligent student information system) contains all the information that the student needs.	47%
The Web Demo is efficient.	53%
The PCs available at telecenters are sufficient.	26%

In the survey carried out on 317 informants, students’ feedback on the degree of their satisfaction with the SVU technical support services revealed that students were facing technical problems (see Table 2). A common complaint made by tutors and learners concerns the repeated interruptions of the Internet connection and the disruption of live sessions. Only 35% of students thought that the Internet connection was good for most of the time. That, of course, depends on the area from which the student or tutor logs on. This problem often leads to frustration to both parties; tutors and learners. Shortage in the number of PC’s available for students at telecenters is also another cause of concern to students. Only 26% thought that the PCs available are sufficient. That again depends on the area where the student logs on. As concerns the efficiency of the other programs used by students to access live and recorded sessions, exams and learning systems; student rating was around 50%. The reason why one out of every two students felt that the programs on the universities website were not so useful might be because students have not been well-prepared technically on how to access these programs. Similarly, around 50% of learners felt that the support team were not helpful enough. This all calls for the need to train students on the proper use of the technology besides updating and enhancing the university’s IT infrastructure.

Thus, it is evident that the IT infrastructure at the SVU is becoming increasingly under pressure again due to the mass increase in the number of users. This of course is affecting the quality of teaching and learning. It is also a source of frustration to students and tutors on all courses especially on the English language courses because as students put it ‘language is communication’. Bray et al (2007) posit that technology itself can provide a significant barrier to distance education efforts. “In a traditional classroom setting, if the technology does not work, alternatives exist. In the case of distance education, however, if the technology fails, the course stops with students and faculty cut off from one another not only is delivery hampered, but students face isolation from the instructor and one another particularly in synchronous classes” (Bray et al:2007). Thus, reliable technology and IT support are crucial to this medium of instruction.

c. Tutorials

Another and perhaps one of the most important means of regular SVU learner support is the virtual language tutorial whereby tutors and learners meet three times every week in one and a

half hourly sessions (around 42 sessions per course, 60 hours per term). As to the quality of these tutorials, 317 students' feedback indicates that in such tutorials, tutors are highly supportive (see Table 3). This is evident in the tutors' efficient use of different means of communication (85%), their supplying learners with extra curricular activities to enforce learning (80%), their readiness to answer to any query (86%), their feedback on written assignments (72%), and their induction at the beginning of every term (70%). As concerns the tutors' degree of organization, 81% of informants thought that the tutors were well organized. This should come as no surprise since tutors are used to their traditional role as planners, organizers and deliverers of course materials and to achieve this in a tight calendar they need to be highly organized. However, around 40% of the student informants thought that the number of tutorials is insufficient. Though support on the part of tutors is a QA requirement, distance language tutors at the SVU do not seem to be involving their learners in the metacognitive strategies of planning their own learning; a strategy that can help learners on their way to more autonomous learning.

Table 3. Students' feedback on the quality of tutorials and peer support

Statement	Agree (%)
Tutors use the electronic mail and other modes of communication efficiently.	85%
After live sessions tutors send us extra files, documents and web links as supplementary material to help us reinforce the things we are learning.	80%
It is always possible to get back to the tutor to make an enquiry.	86%
I get enough support from the tutor to carry out my assignments and project.	72%
The tutor is well organized.	81%
The number of tutorials is sufficient.	62%
The course materials are highly organized.	59%
The induction at the beginning of the term was helpful.	70%
I communicate with my peers outside the live sessions through electronic mail, chat boards, etc ...	43%

As concerns the language learners' rate of attendance, the survey on 317 informants revealed that only 6% language learners never attended any of the synchronous sessions, 18% attended from 1 - 10 sessions, 22% attended 10 - 20 sessions, 22% attended 20 - 30, and 31% attended from 30 - 40 sessions (see Figure 3). These figures are rather high considering that only 30% attendance (around 10 sessions) is a university requirement and that over 70% of students have a job on top of all the other modules that they have to attend (synchronously or asynchronously). Thus, attending tutorials seem to be important to SVU language learners. This may explain why only 62% of informants felt that the number of tutorials (42 per term) was sufficient. On the other hand, figures were lower for asynchronous sessions. 25% never attended any of the recorded sessions and 30% attended from 1 - 10 recorded sessions, 18% of students attended 10 - 20 of the recorded sessions, 12% attended 20 - 30 sessions and 18% only attended from 30-40 sessions (see Figure 4). These findings indicate too that students seem to prefer live sessions to recorded ones. The reason behind this may be the fact that synchronous sessions emulate

traditional face-to-face classrooms more or it may be the fact that the quality of some of the recorded sessions is not always that good. This is evident in students' feedback whereby 50% of SVU language learners thought that the quality of recorded sessions was not always that good. Again, the unreliable technology seems to be standing in the way of flexible learning.

Figure 3: Percentage of synchronous attendance

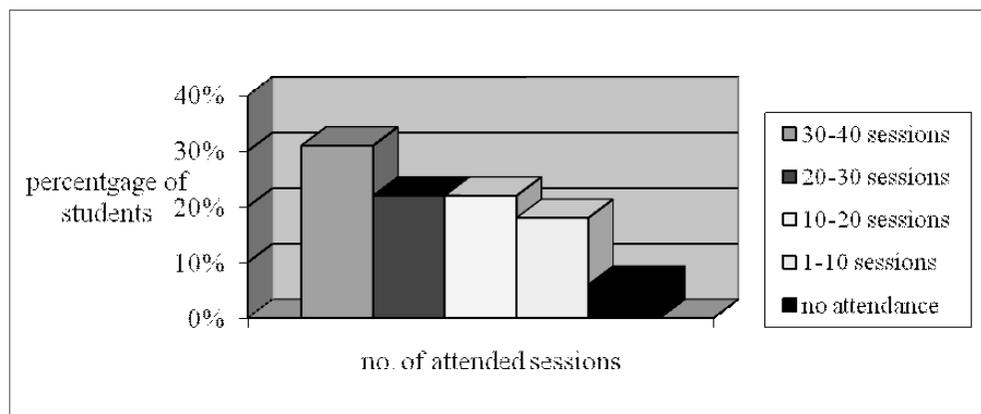
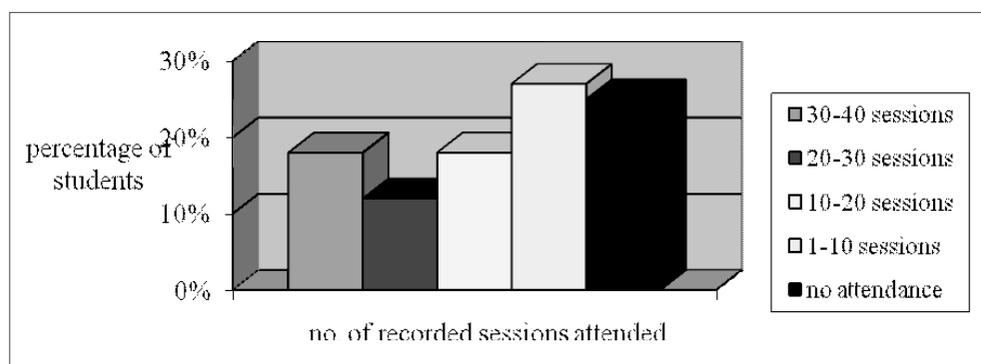


Figure 4: Percentage of asynchronous attendance



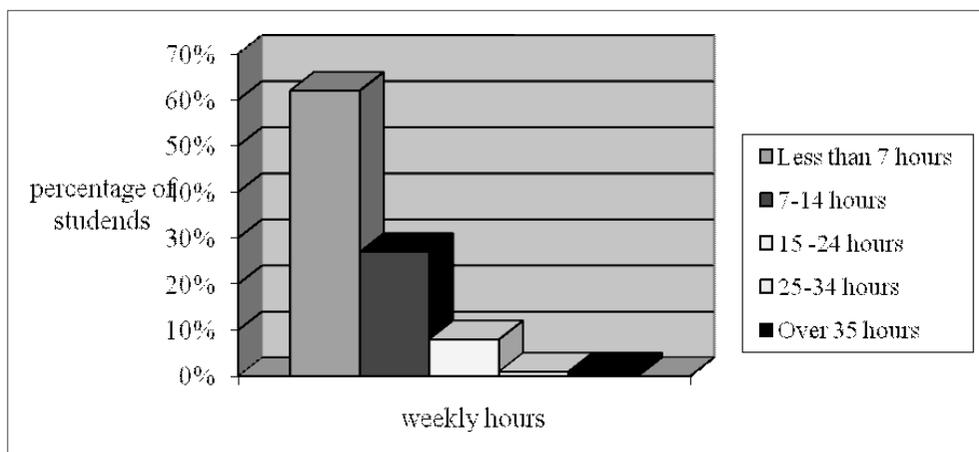
d. Course materials

According to Hauck and Hurd (2005), materials in distance language learning play a central role as the teaching voice. They are the link between teachers and learners and are characterized by distinctive features. They are structured with explicit aims, objectives and learning outcomes. They include activities that give practice and encourage reflection. Such activities are carefully sequenced to provide steady progression and ensure variety in type, skill, grammatical/style focus. And to help students develop awareness of themselves and encourage an autonomous approach, learning strategy sections are embedded into the course materials and thus reflect an indirect and contextualized approach to strategy training. "The aim is gradually to shift the locus of control from teacher to learner and build learners' confidence in taking an active part in their own learning" (Hauck and Hurd, 2005).

The SVU provides its general English language teaching materials through an online European program (Netlanguages) that has been designed specifically for distance language learning courses. The program is an interactive one that consists of five levels starting with the elementary and leading up to the advanced level. Each level consists of 10 units which have to be covered within a period of one term. For each of those levels, students get the chance to meet their tutors either synchronously or asynchronously for 60 hours per term (3 one and half-hour tutorials per week). The course content is all predetermined. The pace at which the course materials are delivered is also conditioned by the length of term, which is getting shorter with the growth of the university as exams are taking longer every term (exams take place in the same telecenters where students attend sessions, hence when there are exams running, no classes take place). The pacing of the course delivery, the mid and final exam times, the assignments and project submission deadlines are all fixed. Learners are left with little flexibility if any in a mode which claims to be flexible. Students have no say in planning their courses or choosing their learning materials let alone practicing some form of reflection, self or peer evaluation. Little (2002), defines autonomous learners as those learners who 'understand the purpose of their learning programme, explicitly accept responsibility for their learning, share in the setting of goals, take initiatives in planning and executing learning and regularly review their learning and evaluate its effectiveness'. However, this is all subject to the 'willingness of teachers to hand over their responsibilities' (Candy, 1991; Little, 1995). Barnett (1993) warns that 'Self-access in general, and computer applications in particular, can easily fall into the traps of either leaving learners too much alone, overwhelmed by information and resources, or directing them too much by transferring lockstep classroom methods to organization systems and programs.' The latter seems to be the case at the SVU where tutors are too directive besides transferring their classroom practices into the virtual environment. Barnett (1993) goes on to say that 'neither alternative is desirable, for learners cannot be autonomous unless they have the ability to make meaningful choices.' With the majority of SVU English language tutors coming from an educational background where they themselves have not experienced 'autonomization' in their own learning, one has to question their awareness of the value and impact of autonomous learning on their own students. Tutors may not be ready to support and develop their students' decision-making and independent learning. White (2003) proposes that to achieve autonomy, approaches to learning must assist learners to take control through the explicit development of metacognitive strategies based on critical reflection, and involving learners in choosing and accessing learning opportunities which are personally meaningful (White, 2003). Learner autonomy therefore does not seem to be high up on the tutor's agenda and that may very well be because 'all forms of 'autonomization' threaten the power structures of educational cultures' (Little, 2002). This in fact requires faculty to change their perspective and practice to activate and disseminate the new ideology '... neither technology nor other strategies are likely on their own to be sufficient to significantly re-shape the present transmission model. Without a radical and explicit change of perspective and practice, neither full-time nor associate lecturers have much chance of successfully mobilizing and disseminating an alternative educational ideology to the dominant one.' (Peters, 2004)

As regards the time spent by learners on the web self-learning, unfortunately, findings were not as expected (see Figure 5). Over 60% of the 317 informants spent less than 7 hours per week using the web for learning English. 27% spent between seven to fourteen weekly hours learning from the web and only 1% spent over 35 hours a week self-studying. This lack of incentive for self-study may indicate that students are overwhelmed by the amount of course work that is required from them on top of all of their other responsibilities. It may also indicate that learners are not well-guided on how to supplement their knowledge from useful web resources.

Figure 5. Percentage of weekly hours spent using the web for self-study



e. Peer support

The survey on 177 informants shows that only 7% of SVU English language students have no friends at all and on average, each SVU student has around 10 friends. 43% of the 317 students in the first part of the survey said that they communicated with their peers through electronic mail, chat boards and mobile phones (see Table 3). Thus, although students are geographically dispersed all over Syria and in many parts of the world, they still communicate with one another mainly electronically. The open-ended questions revealed that most of the contact between learners takes place when they are working on their assignments, projects or exams. This indicates that students offer each other moral and academic support. This is a positive feature that tutors can build on to improve the socio-affective learning strategies of their students. At present, group learning seems to be scarce, at least in the English language courses. According to the social constructivist approach, learning is considered an active, social process in which individuals actively construct knowledge within the social environment (Vygotsky, 1978).

IV. Conclusion

Analyzing support systems is one way of looking at the efficacy of educational systems. In this study, whilst linking theory with practice, the author has outlined students' perceptions and attitudes to the support systems available for English language learners at the Syrian Virtual University (SVU). Undeniably, the SVU offers its language learners varied forms of support to emulate face-to-face classes and give its learners the 'on campus' feel. These include the IT infrastructure and services, courses materials, tutorials, and peer support.

Whilst there is no doubt pertaining to the great potential for learning that the current support system is providing, care must be taken that in the strive to respond for more student intake, quality education does not suffer and neither does the flexibility which is the hallmark of distance education. Major findings indicate that learners are not being adequately guided to the learning of strategies that promote autonomy which has become a QAA mark of 'graduateness'. This calls for action at both the technological and the pedagogical level. Such recommendations can be extended to other Arab non-conventional and blended higher education institutes. At the technological level, learning can be enhanced by expanding the technological infrastructure and

services to match the rapid growth and needs of such growing universities. At the pedagogical level, there is a need for maximizing autonomy through teaching learning skills alongside language skills. This can be achieved by introducing a radical change to tutors' perspective and practice in teaching to incorporate social constructivists' approaches that utilize both active self-directed and group collaborative learning. Exploiting the multimedia in social networking and group learning would also enhance students' socio-affective learning strategies.

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*Quality of Education:
Faculty Staff*

Culture shock or shocking culture: An exploration of the main obstacles encountering Syrian newly returned academic staff from abroad

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Abstract

This study explores and empirically investigates and classifies the major reverse culture shock aspects, difficulties that Syrian returning academics encounter once they come back to their sending universities, and their previous cultural exposure when they studied abroad. The data is collected using a questionnaire developed for the purpose of this study and distributed to more than one hundred academics who returned within the past 49 months to Damascus University. Seventy eight academics responded. From the perspective of newly appointed academic staff, the questionnaires basically investigate the extent of study abroad exposure, aspects of reverse cultural shock, and major difficulties academics face from the date of returning until the date of being a full member of academic staff. A cross-sectional comparative analysis based on personal information is accomplished. To further investigate the three dimensions of the study, both factor and cluster analysis are employed. The results are presented in a three dimensional grid models. This study is the first analytical study in this field in the Syrian higher education sector. However, it is limited to data collected from only one public university in Syria. Implicitly, the study highlights the importance of maintaining academic staff at their institutions. It also provides suggestions and recommendations to university managers for better elimination of the high risk of brain drain in developing countries.

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I. Introduction

By the end of 2008, thousands of Syrian governmentally funded students were studying abroad, consuming hundreds of millions of Syrian pounds of the national income. In line with the national development map for the higher education sector, the main aim is to provide public institutions, particularly universities, with their staff capacity needs. A considerable number of those students return back home holding the capacity qualifications required for appointment at the institutions that delegated them. However, most of them encounter several kinds of obstacles and difficulties causing some to leave the country after returning as well as causing others still abroad to think of not returning to Syria.

In order to identify the factors that could lead to high risks of brain drain, the study explores and empirically investigates these difficulties and their relations with reverse culture shock aspects and previous exposure to foreign cultures during study abroad. Based on the results of analysis, the study also aims at providing useful recommendations to university managers highlighting the importance of maintaining academic staff at their institutions. The study tries to fill the gap of reverse culture shock literature in two ways: first, it addresses the issue of reverse culture shock in an Arab country where this phenomenon has not previously been studied; and second, by its dynamic nature of analysis that links the exposures to the country of study culture, the difficulties reverse culture shock brings to academic life, and the symptoms of reverse culture shock.

This paper is organized as follows; a review of the main features of the Syrian higher education and the Syrian government efforts towards capacity building of the academic staff is presented in section II. Section III reviews the related literature and provides the theoretical framework of the paper. The method, difficulties, and techniques of data collection and analysis are described in section IV. The findings of this study are illustrated in section V. Finally, section VI discusses the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

II. Features of the Syrian higher education, and the capacity building of Syrian academic staff

The Syrian Government has responsibility for the supervision and control of the Higher Education System in Syria. This is achieved through the Ministry of Higher Education and the Higher Education Council. There are six public universities (Damascus University, Al Baath University, Aleppo University, Tishreen University, Al-Furat University, Syrian Virtual University), with a plan to expand to ten universities by 2010. There are thirteen private universities, and eleven more which are under construction. There are also six higher institutes, and a huge number of intermediate vocational, professional and technical training institutions that are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Higher Education. The most influential legislation for higher education in Syria since 2000 was the Presidential Decree No. 36 of 2001, which governs the work of private universities in Syria. The other legal framework that governs and regulates higher education in Syria is Law No. 6 of 2006, called "The University Regulation Law", which governs the work of public universities in Syria. This Law is an amendment of the previous Law. The new law gives more autonomy to universities, particularly with regard to staff appointments and promotions.

The Ministry of Higher Education is aiming to set priorities, devise executive plans to implement them, and continue the process of modernization of the sector. To fulfil its goals, the Ministry of Higher Education is cooperating with national (public and private) and international partners. In

line with the modernization and upgrading projects planned and carried out nationally with the various programmes of the European Union and UNDP, the Ministry has set out the following as immediate reform priorities:

1. The establishment of new institutions, faculties and programmes within the existing institutions.
2. New admissions policy consistent with academic standards, potential students' needs, and national development needs.
3. Developing existing curriculum and implementing dynamic flexible rules for their continuous revision in response to social and market needs.
4. Continuing the process of establishing a Quality Assurance and Accreditation System.
5. Drafting executive plans for the purpose of upgrading the skills of academic staff.
6. Upgrading the enabling environment through providing up-to-date facilities such as: labs, modern libraries, network connectivity.
7. Revamping academic research and graduate studies programmes.
8. Upgrading vocational and educational training institutes.
9. Sector restructuring to enhance governance and introducing updated management information systems.
10. Establishing an effective statistical matrix which is important for planning at the strategic and policy level.

One of the major shortcomings of Higher Education in Syria, and the Arab region in general, is the lack of relevance of programmes and curricula to development needs and to the labour market. The Council of Higher Education in Syria is conscious that there is a need for major reform and diversification of the Higher Education programmes in Syria to meet development needs, and has asked the universities in the country to reform and modernize their programmes. It has also eased the regulation governing curricula development and made them more decentralized and flexible.

A government committee called the "University Admission Committee", which is headed by the Prime Minister, determines the number of students to be admitted to the Higher Education system each year and their distribution. The Syrian government is committed to the policy of equal access to higher education. In principle, each student passing the General Secondary Education Exams (The Baccalaureate) is eligible for a place in the Syrian Higher Education system. This "Open Door" Policy was adopted by the Syrian government in the early seventies, and still being practiced.

Following the open door policy and in order to respond to the huge number of students recruited each year, the Ministry of Higher Education in consultation with the universities, and applying the measures of quality assurance, is looking to enhance capacity building among academic staff, particularly teaching assistants, both qualitatively and quantitatively. This is mainly done through international capacity building programmes funded by the government, where hundreds of teaching assistants are sent every year mainly to western countries to study for their PhDs to enable them to fulfil the requirements of appointment at their sending institutions.

By the end of 2008, there were more than four thousands Syrian governmentally funded students studying abroad, consuming hundreds of millions of Syrian pounds of the national income. Most of these students were students reading for their PhD degrees. More than half of them were appointed as teaching assistants at the Syrian universities prior to leaving to the receiving country. The Syrian governmental policy towards studying abroad was majored by western receiving countries including Germany, France and Britain (see Table 1).

Table 1: Number of current governmentally funded Syrian teaching assistants studying abroad

Hosting country	Number of teaching assistants studying abroad on 29/Jan/2009	%
France	833	41.88
Germany	567	28.51
UK	404	20.31
Egypt	91	4.58
Other countries	94	4.73
Total	1,989	

Source: Department of Academic Staff Affairs, Ministry of Higher Education, Syria

Considerable numbers of these PhDs holders come back every year to Syria to start their new career as full academic members at their faculties. However, most of them, after spending a relatively long period of time in the country of study, and being exposed to the academic environment at their hosting institutions may encounter difficulties in coping with the new academic culture at their sending institutions. The aim of this study is to investigate the difficulties that are encountering Syrian newly returned academic staff from abroad in relation to their exposure to their study abroad culture and environment and to the major symptoms of reverse culture shock.

III. Relevant previous studies and theoretical framework of the study

1. The dilemma of brain drain

A review of the literature on reverse cultural integration in the home country of Syria and in the Arab world reveals a great lack of such studies. However, this is not only the case in the Arab Region, as Furnham (2004) argues, such studies are comparatively new. There is a lack of large scale, multi factorial, longitudinal studies that can help policy makers to identify the problems of increasing numbers of returning students the world over. For policy makers, this issue is of great importance as it may lead to the brain drain of an important class of the society, i.e. the academic staff. However, it will always be difficult to stop very skilled workers from emigrating. Miyagiwa (1991) emphasizes that conventional policies designed to stop a brain drain may succeed only in retaining those who are mediocre professionals while the brightest continue to emigrate.

The demand for better opportunities and better academic and professional environments lead highly skilled academics to emigrate. Li and Bray (2007) investigated the push-pull factors and motivations of mainland Chinese students in Hong Kong and Macau, and found that that flows of mainland Chinese students are driven by both excess and differentiated demand. Tremblay (2005) argues that in the context of increasing internationalization of education, academic mobility is a potential source of qualified workers from the host countries' perspective, either during their studies or through subsequent recruitment. Studying abroad can be part of a deliberate emigration strategy from the perspective of students. Major notable reasons for the emigration of highly skilled academic staff and students relate to the uncomfortable culture in the sending countries. In a study on the major challenges faced by Russian academics, Smolentseva (2004)

found that Russian higher education and its academic staff face the challenges of adapting to financial constraints, improving appointment and evaluation procedures, and the formation of a faculty with a younger generation. Halici and Kasimoglu (2006) in a study on the level of discrimination against academic staff in a Turkish and an Azerbaijani university, found that such discrimination leads to thoughts about emigration.

Academics have proposed different solutions to the dilemma of brain drain. Gonzalez (2004) proposes different solutions for brain drain and overseas employment in the Philippines. For oversubscribed professions, overseas employment is a viable option; it is a source of foreign exchange and a natural way of population control. For undersubscribed professions he proposes a system of incentives tied to a period of mandatory service, after which the beneficiary may exercise his/her options. Hendriks and Sousa (2008) investigated how universities in the Netherlands approach the need and means for motivating university researchers through their management practices. They found how individual and organizational understandings of work assessment, work processes and work context connect to the social mechanisms borrowed from the broader epistemic, discipline-specific communities outside the university are factors that should be investigated further by university management. In the same context, Meyer and Evans (2008) suggest that universities must proactively investigate policies and strategies to motivate and enhance their developing professoriate, and not doing so will lead inevitably to limits on the institution's capacity to attract, retain, and nurture those with the essential qualifications, academic ability, and commitment necessary for higher education to perform its unique role in society.

2. The exposure to the hosting culture

The theory suggests that most of those who are more exposed to the culture of the country of study, and specifically the organizational culture at the hosting academic institution, are more likely to suffer from reverse culture shock. In a study on a group of American students who participated in an honour program in the UK and a control group of students who stayed home, Bates (1997) suggest that those who participated in the study abroad programme showed personal development as well as an increase in their world-mindedness. In the same context, in a survey of participants in programs run by the New Jersey State Consortium for International Studies from the Fall of 1997 to the Summer of 2002, Hadis (2005) found that the experience of studying abroad has a very positive impact on university students who return more worldly than before, are more interested in international affairs, read newspapers more often than before going abroad, increase their fluency in other languages, acquire a more solid knowledge about their host countries' societies and culture. They also show definite signs of personal development: they are more independent, more outgoing, more friendly toward people from other countries, more self-assured and uninhibited about travelling to countries where English is not the first language. Cannon (2000) investigated the outcomes of an international education for Indonesian graduates, and found that the outcomes derived from an international overseas education are a complex mix of professional, affective, cultural and career advantages mediated by the nature of the environment in which they work and the nature of the work they do. The author found that most graduates believe the advantages of an overseas education are more important than the disadvantages. In a comparative study of intercultural adaptability and intercultural sensitivity to study abroad students with students who stay on campus, Williams (2005) found that students who study abroad exhibit a greater change in intercultural communication skills after their semester abroad than students who stay on campus. This indicated that exposure to various cultures was the greatest predictor of intercultural communication skills.

Sussman (2002) explores the relationship between culture identity and repatriation experience among 113 American teachers who studied in Japan. Results indicated that overseas adaptation and repatriation experiences are not directly associated. Rather, strong home culture identity inversely predicted repatriation distress with repatriates experiencing high distress reporting weak culture identity. Repatriation experience is related to shifts in culture identity. Increased estrangement from American culture (subtractive) or feeling “more” Japanese (additive) following a visit are correlated with high repatriation distress. Employing an interpretive case study of a group of masters’ degree students in Singapore taught by an Australian university in partnership with a local provider, Pyvis and Chapman (2005) found that international students studying in their home country with an overseas institution may also experience culture shock as an effect of this engagement. Cannon (2000) indicated that there are important disadvantages of exposure to a receiving culture such as difficulties with re-entry, work relationships, and the development of appropriate professional networks. However he found that the exposure will cause more important changes in intellectual abilities, attitudes and culture perspectives than on narrower career advantages such as salary and promotion, which may actually suffer as a consequence of an international education.

3. The aspects of reverse culture shock and disintegration

Research has shown that some of the symptoms of culture shock include challenges to sense of identity, frustration, anger, withdrawal, depression, exhaustion, and numbness. If left unresolved, culture shock can result in a premature return to the home culture, functional difficulties, and prolonged psychological distress (Swagler & Jome, 2005). Oberg (1960) has identified six distinct aspects of culture shock:

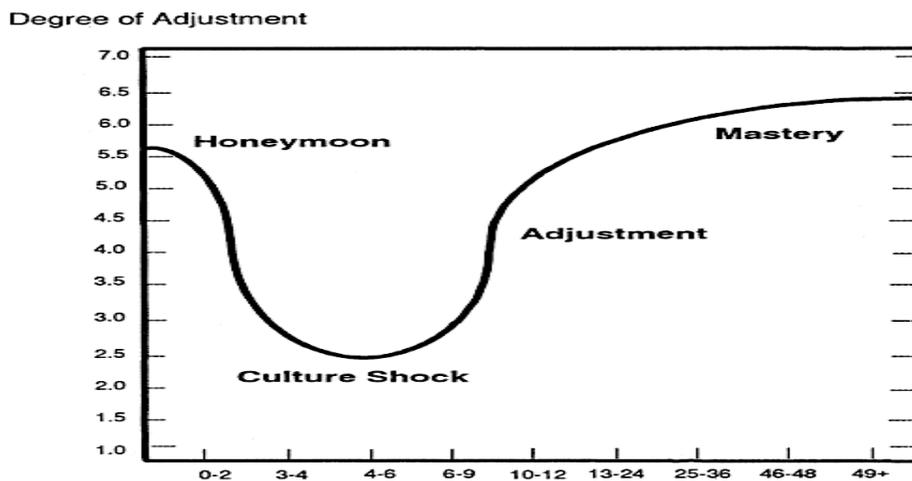
- a. Strain due to the effort required to make necessary psychological adaptations
- b. A sense of loss and feelings of deprivation in regard to friends, status, profession and possessions
- c. Being rejected by and/or rejecting members of the new culture
- d. Confusion in role, role expectations, values, feelings and self-identity
- e. Surprise, anxiety, even disgust and indignation after becoming aware of culture differences
- f. Feelings of impotence due to not being able to cope with the new environment.

In an investigation on the aspects of reverse culture shock in American students returning from overseas, Gaw (2000) found that returnees experiencing a high level of reverse culture shock were more likely to report personal adjustment and shyness concerns than were returnees experiencing a low level of reverse culture shock. The author also found a negative correlation with regard to reverse culture shock and student support service usage; as reverse culture shock increased, service usage decreased. In a study to notions of transitions of re-entry through the experiences of East Asian tertiary international students who had studied in New Zealand, Butcher (2004) found that these transitions centre on expectations, a longing to belong, identity crisis, and a sense of homelessness and loss, as well as various social responses and other general transitions. Butcher argues that the reintegration of identity and place is crucial in ameliorating some of the re-entry difficulties, which also provides a useful conceptual framework to understand re-entry. Miyamoto and Kuhlman (2001) identify the variables that may predict the level of culture shock and anxiety level over returning to Japan among 240 Japanese expatriate students living in southern California. They found that the students attended an American school on the weekdays and a Japanese supplementary school on Saturdays. The study showed that the most effective predictors for the mitigation of culture shock and anxiety over returning to Japan

were, respectively, the perceived favourableness of the relationship with American teachers and friends, perceived favourable relationship with their Japanese teacher, and a favourable perception of their father’s English language proficiency.

Pedersen (1995) proposes five stages of culture shock as follows, the honeymoon stage, the disintegration stage, the reintegration stage, the autonomy stage and the interdependence stage. In the same context, according to two major dimensions, degree of adjustment to the culture and the period of adjustment, Black and Mendenhall (1991) draw up a U-Curve of Cross-Cultural Adjustment based on four major steps of reintegration (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Black and Mendenhall’s (1991) U-Curve of Cross-Cultural Adjustment



4. The study questions

Based on the theory of culture and reverse culture shock, most studies describe the psychological symptoms of academic returners. However, there is a lack of dynamic analysis of the associations between exposure to the culture in the country of study, the academic life difficulties resulted from reverse culture shock, and the symptoms of reverse culture shock. This study aims to investigate the main academic difficulties and obstacles encountering Syrian newly returned academic staff from abroad by responding to the following research questions:

- a. To what extent were the Syrian newly returned academic staff exposed to the culture and environment in the country of study?
- b. What major aspects of reverse culture shock are the newly returned Syrian academic staff experiencing? And to what extent are the aspects of this shock reflected in their daily academic life?
- c. What are the major academic obstacles that they face, and to what extent are they facing such obstacles?
- d. To what extent is there compatibility between study abroad exposure, reverse culture shock symptoms, and the academic occupational difficulties of newly returned academic staff?

IV. Methods, difficulties and techniques of data collection and analysis

1. Methods of investigation

The investigation was based on a descriptive survey. The study examined the occupational problems of PhD-holders returnees to Damascus governorate governmental Higher Education University and institutes. Data were incorporated to explore the exposure to the other culture when studying abroad, aspects of reverse culture shock, and occupational difficulties faced upon returning to Syria. The subjects were 60 PhD-holders returnees who had been selected by the government to study for a PhD degree abroad. The number of qualified participants is in the range of participants in similar studies. For example 66 participated in the Gaw (2000) study; 113 participated in the Sussman study (2002); 95 in the Hadis (2005) study.

2. Criteria of participants

Academic staff at Damascus University, who met the following inclusion criteria at the time of the study were asked to participate in the investigation: (1) holding a PhD degree; (2) completing the PhD degree outside the Syrian Arab Republic; and (3) final returning to Syria within the past 49 months. These criteria were selected following a study of the culture shock literature and performing some initial pre-sampling tests. The maximum period of 49 months for final return to Syria as a condition for participation in the study was based on the U-Curve theory of culture shock and the stages suggested by Black and Mendenhall (1991) which suggests that it usually takes an individual around 49 months to complete the cycle of adjustment. To test the validity of this cut-off point, 36 questionnaires were distributed equally over two groups of PhD-holding staff from the above mentioned higher education bodies. The first group of staff arrived back in Syria more than 49 months ago (at the time of the study) while the other group included returnees who had been living in Syria for 49 months or less. A t-test was performed to investigate whether there is a difference between the means of the percentages of the neutral answers⁴ to all answers in the two samples. The test results which appear in Tables (2a and 2b) show Levene's test is significant ($P < 0.05$) suggesting unequal variance, and the t-test is also significant suggesting that the mean of the percentage of neutral answers in the first group (returned more than 49 months ago) is significantly higher than its counterpart in the second group (returned less than 49 months ago). Therefore, the t-test results support the choice of the cut-off point built on the U-Curve theory.

Table 2a: Group Statistics

	Arrival	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Percentage of neutral answers	more than 49 months ago	18	.4804	.32502	.07661
	49 months or less	18	.2386	.10430	.02458

⁴ Neutral answers are those that do not give a clear opinion either because they are not applicable to the respondent or because he/she is not able to form a decision about an answer for the question

Table 2b: Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Percentage of neutral answers	Equal variances assumed	15.646	.000	3.006	34	.005
	Equal variances not assumed			3.006	20.464	.007

3. Data collection and difficulties of data collection

To collect data, several visits were made to all faculties at Damascus University and the other higher institutes at Damascus University to collect contact information about all academic staff who returned during the past 49 months. The survey packet contained a cover letter explaining the study and the survey. 25 surveys were sent by email, although respondent rate was very low for this method of data collection (only three completed surveys were returned). The researchers were informed that the survey contains personal information and were advised to send and collect the surveys using mail boxes. 100 surveys were distributed using the mail boxes and respondents were asked to complete and return the mailed survey immediately. 78 questionnaires were collected in this way, although after filtering procedures only 60 of these were considered as qualified (usable). A variety of issues were encountered while collecting the data. The first was to identify the sample for the study based on accurate information on the exact dates of the participants' final return to Syria. Another was the geographical distribution of faculties at Damascus University. As mentioned above, for confidentiality and anonymity reasons, the majority of participants preferred not to fill in the questionnaire electronically and this meant that longer time had to be spent in distributing and collecting the questionnaires. In general, the participants showed a high degree of co-operation, as many said 'the questionnaire pinpoints their concerns and highlights their problems'. However, a considerable number of participants were irritated by certain items on the first part of the questionnaire and considered them too personal and irrelevant to the research. Hence, some refused to fill in the questionnaire, while others completed it only after time spent persuading and clarifying. In order to avoid the refusal of participants to fill-in in the first part of the questionnaire, the answers were elicited indirectly following prolonged conversations with participants. Furthermore, some participants commented that they felt uneasy filling in the second part of the questionnaire.

4. Questionnaire design and techniques of data analysis

This investigation employed a survey consisting of three areas; the exposure to foreign culture during study abroad, reverse culture shock, and the main occupational difficulties facing the returnees. Demographic components in the survey included age, sex, marital status, and number of months lived abroad. The first group of questions assessed the participants' degree of exposure to foreign culture during their study abroad. These eleven items investigated issues ranging from personal (such as having a partner) to work experience. The second group assessed the participants' degree of reverse culture shock based on the six culture shock aspects mentioned in the study by

Oberg (1960). This was a sixteen item, 5-point Likert-type scale developed from previous culture shock and reverse culture shock research (e.g., Mumford (1998). The third component of the survey investigated the main difficulties facing the new comers. This was an eighteen item, 5-point Likert-type scale representing 4 groups of difficulties; financial, personal, academic and research related, and organizational. In order to meet the three major dimensions of the study identified in the research questions, i.e. the cultural shock, the level of exposure to culture in the country of study, and the occupational difficulties, the authors used the factor analysis technique to obtain one factor for each of the previously mentioned dimensions. The method used to extract the factor is the Principal Components method (see Bryman and Cramer, 1999, p. 274). As this analysis aimed only at one factor for each dimension, no rotation techniques were needed. The aspects of cultural shock, level of exposure to the culture in the country of study, current occupational difficulties factors were estimated using the relevant items identified in the previous paragraph. The scores of the three factors were calculated using the Regression method to count factor scores. The previous steps of this analysis were conducted by using the SPSS statistical package.

V. Findings

1. Sample description

Participants were in the 31 to 45 age range; the average age was 36 (S.D. =2.6) and most of the participants were aged 37 (the mode). Thirty nine males and twenty one females participated. At the time of the study, this sample had been back in Syria for an average of 23 months, with a range of from less than a month to 49 months. Respondents studied in eight different countries. The majority were in France, UK and Egypt. The distribution of participants according to the country of study was: 25 in France, 20 in the UK, 8 in Egypt, 2 in USA, 2 in Russia, and one in each of Italy, Germany and Japan. The average stay was around 74 months with a range of 40 to 213 months. Twenty seven of the participants were single, one was a widow, one was divorced, and thirty one were married. Three of the married participants (two males and one female) were married to foreigners. Eight were married before leaving to study abroad, another eight married during the period of study abroad, seven got married after finishing study abroad, and the rest preferred not give information about the date of their marriages.

2. Descriptive analysis (responding to research questions 1, 2 and 3)

This study assessed the degree of exposure to foreign culture, reverse culture shock, and occupational difficulties experienced by a sample of 60 Syrian higher education governmental bodies' academic staff who received their PhD degrees from abroad. The study then examined the compatibility between these three researched areas for newly returned staff. This section provides a descriptive analysis of the participants' responses to the questions representing the three research areas.

a. Exposure to foreign culture

Tables 3a and 3b provide the response percentages of the sample across the exposure measurement variables. Table 3a shows the responses to the yes/no questions. The table shows that less than 7% of the participants had partners and/or been married to foreigners. However, most of them (over 90%) were exposed to other social activities or experience. Table 3b shows the responses to other nonparametric questions. This table illustrates that over 55% of the participants were highly exposed to the culture of their countries of studies via residency, tourism and working abroad. The participants' exposure through problems faced and academic research however was relatively low (less than 39% of the participants).

Table 3a: The exposure to foreign culture during study abroad responses (yes/no variables)

Exposure Item	Yes	No
Married to a foreigner	5.0	95.0
Having a partner	6.7	93.3
Visiting to foreign families	90.0	10.0
Having contacts abroad	98.3	1.7

Table 3b: The exposure to foreign culture during study abroad responses (other non-parametric variables*)

Exposure Item	Lower		Middle		Higher
Residency	8.3	26.7		33.3	31.7
Tourism	3.3	41.7		36.7	18.3
Work experience**		33.3	8.3	56.7	
Work motivations**	26.7	10.0		1.7	60.0
Problems faced	58.3	13.3	1.7	16.7	10.0
Research experience***		66.7	25.0	1.7	

* No category values represent no such category for the variable

** One missing value

*** Three missing values

Table 3c shows the participants' response statistics of the parametric question (the duration of stay abroad). The minimum stay was 40 months while the maximum was 213 months with a mean of 74 months (around 6 years) and a standard deviation of 25 months suggesting that the variable's entries are highly dispersed.

Table 3c: The exposure to foreign culture during study abroad responses (parametric variables)

Exposure Item	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	S.D.
Duration of stay abroad (by months)*	40	213	74	25

*Three missing values

b. Aspects of reverse culture shock

Table 4 provides the response percentages of the sample across the culture shock aspect subscale. Items were sorted by respondents as; neutral (not applicable/do not know), strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree. Some questions in the questionnaire were structured in a negative form (referring to the existence of the culture shock aspect examined), while others were structured in a positive form. For the purpose of factor analysis, answers for the positive questions were transformed to be presented in the same direction of the negative questions (indicating the existence of culture shock aspects (see Table 4).

Table 4 shows that more than 86% of the participants often make comparisons between the faculties where they worked/ studied abroad and the ones they are working at in Syria and notice the gaps between organizational cultures when comparing between the two. Interestingly, about 60% of the participants have the feelings of deprivation with regard to profession and over 75% prefer to write using the language they used to study their PhD degree. Approximately 12% of the participants think that faculty staff members reject them for who they are although 60% were cautious when dealing with the faculty staff members.

Table 4: Reverse culture shock aspects subscale responses

Culture Shock Item	Neutral answers	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Feelings of deprivation in regard to academic skills.	10.0	10.0	20.0	25.0	35.0
Feelings of deprivation in regard to research skills.	6.7	8.3	11.7	23.3	50.0
Preference to write using the language of PhD graduate study.	18.3	0	6.7	36.7	38.3
Feeling uncomfortable with the general atmosphere in the faculty.	30.0	3.3	18.3	28.3	20.0
Inability to understand plenty of things that take place in the faculty.	30.0	1.7	5.0	40.0	23.3
Feeling different compared to other academic staff members.	41.7	3.3	15.0	23.3	16.7
Feeling the gaps between organizational cultures when comparing organizations in the two countries.	6.7	0	5.0	30.0	58.3
Cautious when dealing with the faculty academic staff members and/or employees.	16.7	1.7	15.0	41.7	25.0
Often compare between the faculty I worked/ studied at abroad and the one I am at in Syria.	8.3	0	5.0	30.0	56.7
Feelings of deprivation in regard to development and success opportunities.	10.0	1.7	21.7	28.3	38.3
Feeling afraid of being misunderstood by academic staff or employees.	30.0	3.3	18.3	35.0	13.3
Think that academic staff members and employees reject me for who I am.	33.3	6.7	48.3	11.7	0
Feeling that academic staff members and employees might not accept the way I look and that I was accustomed to when I was abroad.	48.3	10.0	23.3	10.0	6.7*
Feeling being discriminated against because of being younger.	31.7	5.0	25.0	23.3	13.3*
Feeling shocked by certain things that happen at the faculty.	25.0	1.7	5.0	41.7	26.7
Strain to cope with the new work environment.	30.0	1.7	28.3	31.7	8.3

* One missing value

c. Current occupational difficulties

Table 5 provides the response percentages of the sample across the occupational difficulties subscale. Items were sorted by respondents similar to the culture shock items ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questions that were formed in a positive way were transformed similar to the explanation earlier (so that they refer to the existence of the occupational difficulties instead of referring to the nonexistence of the difficulties). Table 5 demonstrates that financial difficulties came on the top of the difficulty scale (over 85% of the participants agreed that university payments were insufficient). Organizational difficulties came next where over 80% of the participants stated that the appointment procedures at university were difficult and inflexible, 75% of them agreed that participating in conferences and workshops held abroad is

difficult, and over 68% stated their agreement that university has not provided them with a clear job description. However, it should be mentioned that on the faculty level, organizational difficulties were not of considerable importance (see items referring to management and staff support). Academic and research related difficulties were also given significant weight as more than 70% of the participants agreed that academic and library facilities available at the faculty were unsatisfactory and that keeping in touch by e-mail with colleagues or students at the faculty was inconvenient. Personal difficulties came last.

Table 5: Occupational difficulties subscale responses

Occupational Difficulties Item	Neutral answers	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Insufficient payment from university.	8.3	1.7	5.0	46.7	38.3
Obstacles with my main university duties due to working in other academic institutions.	38.3	10.0	21.7	20.0	10.0
Facing real academic affairs problems/difficulties with colleagues.	26.7	1.7	28.3	38.3	5.0
Facing real academic affairs problems/difficulties with superiors.	31.7	3.3	28.3	30.0	6.7
Facing real academic affairs problems/difficulties with students.	25.0	18.3	36.7	15.0	3.3*
Head of Department is not supportive.	15.0	13.3	65.0	3.3	3.3
Faculty administration is not supportive.	30.0	11.7	41.7	13.3	3.3
Faculty employees are not supportive.	33.3	13.3	50.0	1.7	1.7
Inability to conduct research of the same quality compared to research done when abroad.	10.0	18.3	15.0	21.7	35.0
Inability to manage time with the same efficiency when abroad.	15.0	8.3	13.3	33.3	30.0
Academic facilities available at the faculty are unsatisfactory.	13.3	1.7	13.3	21.7	50.0
Library facilities available at the faculty are unsatisfactory.	13.3	6.7	8.3	26.7	43.3*
Keeping in touch by e-mail with colleagues or students at the faculty is inconvenient.	16.7	10.0	23.3	26.7	21.7*
Difficulties to participate in conferences and workshops abroad.	10.0	5.0	10.0	20.0	55.0
Appointment procedures at university were difficult and inflexible.	10.0	0	8.3	23.3	56.7*
Teaching subjects that are unrelated to area of specialization.	8.3	20.0	56.7	10.0	5.0
University has not provided me with a clear job description.	18.3	0	13.3	30.0	38.3
Not expressing personal opinion freely during meetings and forums.	23.3	16.7	36.7	16.7	6.7

* One missing value

3. Advanced analysis (responding to research question 4)

In response to research question 4 on how compatible the three dimensions are, the participants were categorized according to the three dimensions; their exposure to the culture in the country where they studied, the degree of their culture shock, and the occupational difficulties faced by them. The 3D visual scatter plot appears on a 3 two-dimension basis (Figures 2, 3 and 4).

While Figures 2, 3, and 4 show 8 categories, Table 6 shows the frequency of cases in each of these categories and the percentage to the total sample. Table 6 also illustrates that groups 1, 4 and 8 contain the highest number of participants and make 56.6% of the total sample. The first group (group 1) representing participants who experienced high levels of exposure to foreign culture, showed clear aspects of culture shock and faced more difficulties compared to the other groups. This group alone forms 30% of the total sample. The last group (group 8) representing participants who experienced low levels of exposure to foreign culture, showed less clear aspects of culture shock and faced less difficulties compared to other groups. This group forms 13.3% of the total sample. Group 4 is of equal weight as group 8. It represents participants who experienced low levels of exposure to foreign culture, showed more clear aspects of culture shock and faced less difficulties compared to other groups.

Figure 2: (Culture Shock-Occupational Difficulties) Grid

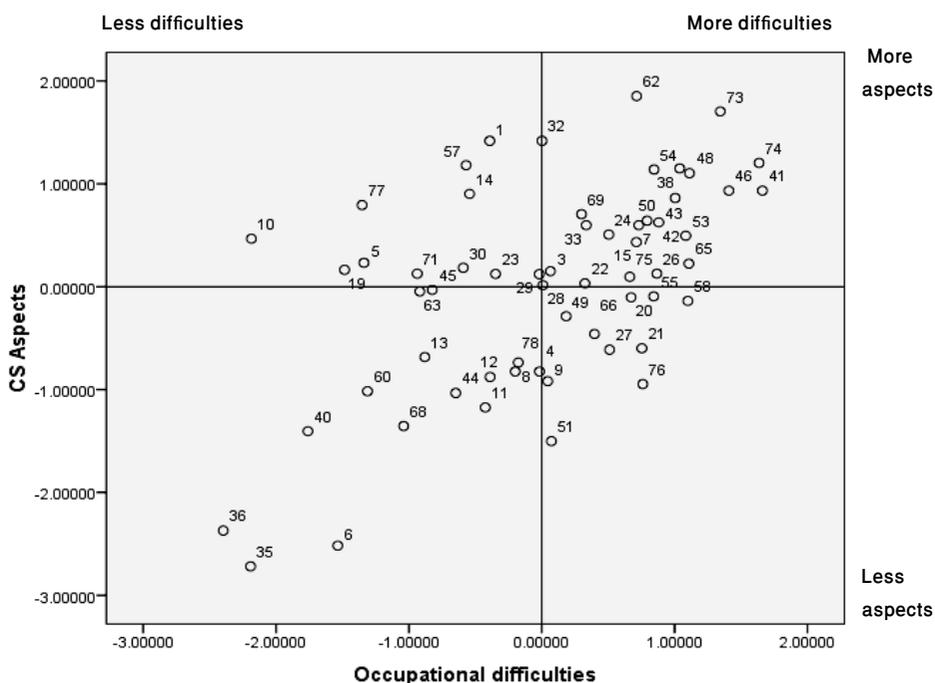


Figure 3: (Culture Shock-Exposure to Foreign Culture) Grid

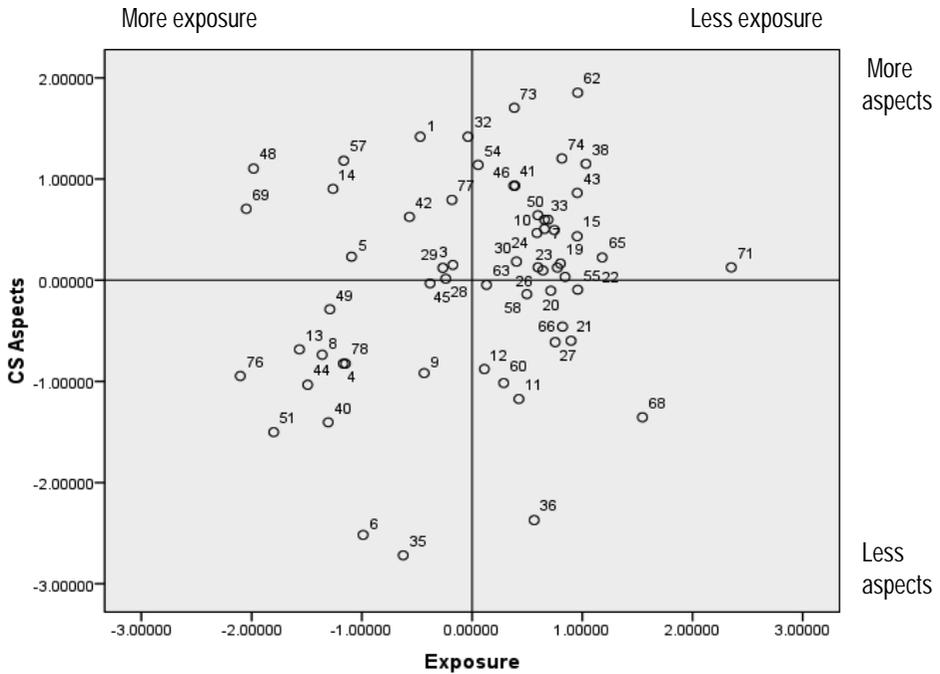


Figure 4: (Occupational Difficulties-Exposure to Foreign Culture) Grid

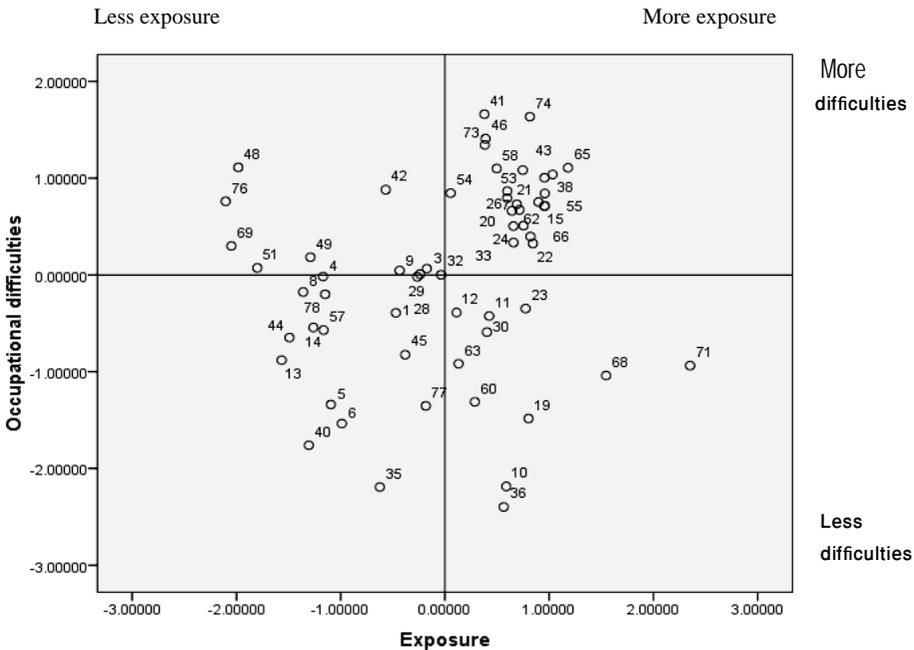


Table 6: Groups' Size

Group	Number	Percent
1	18	30.0
2	4	6.7
3	5	8.3
4	8	13.3
5	6	10.0
6	5	8.3
7	6	10.0
8	8	13.3
Total	60	100.0

Table 7 demonstrates a summary of the group analysis. It can be noticed that the first four groups of participants that showed clear aspects of culture shock were all graduates from the USA and West European countries. With the exception of the third group which is ending 'the honeymoon' with the least difficulties reported, it may be also be due to them experiencing the least average waiting time for appointment, while the rest were mostly in their third stage of culture shock, the adjustment phase.

Table 7: Groups Description

Group	Group Char.*	%	Av. Age	Av. Waiting	Time spent in Syria	Countries %							
						UK	USA	Ger	Fr	Egy	Ru	It	Jp
1	HHH	30	34.5	14	10- 24	44.4			44.4				
2	HHL	6.7	35.67	17	>24	50			5.				
3	HLH	8.3	35.40	7	3- 9	60			40				
4	HLL	13.3	36	8	10 -24				7.5				
5	LHH	10	36.67	13	10- 24	33.3	5.6		50				
6	LHL	8.3	35.4	10	10- 24	40			40	20			
7	LLH	10	36	17	10- 24	33.3			16.7	16.7			
8	LLL	13.3	37	9	10- 24	12.5	12.5	5.6	12.5	75	33.3	12.5	16.7

* H: High, L: Low

* The first letter refers to culture shock aspect, the second refers to occupational difficulties faced and the third refers to the degree of exposure

VI. Conclusion

This study investigated the extent to which newly arriving PhD academic staff members at one public higher education institution are facing reverse culture shock, the degree of their exposure to foreign cultures while studying abroad and the occupational difficulties they faced during their early years of arrival. Quantitative data were collected and analyzed by the use of some statistical methods.

Data analysis showed that a considerable number of them (over 58.3% of the participants) suffered reverse culture shock, particularly those who studied in the USA and Western Europe. More than half of the staff members sampled experienced middle to high exposure to foreign cultures while studying abroad. In aggregate, more than half of all participants leave their country of study after some years of study-related work experience. 55% of the respondents suffered different levels of occupational difficulties. These occupational difficulties come in various categories, with financial and organizational difficulties being the most significant.

The analysis showed eight main groups of participants according to the degree of reverse culture shock, the degree of exposure to foreign cultures while studying abroad and the occupational difficulties. However, the most critical group of them all is the one that makes the combination that could lead to higher risks of brain drain. This is the group that contains staff members who faced high levels of exposure to foreign culture, showed clear aspects of culture shock and faced more difficulties compared to other groups. The criticality of this group comes from two sources. First, this was the biggest group making up thirty percent of the sample. Second, the fact that staff in this group are able to quit if they are not able to manage the adjustment phase. This is due to their high level of exposure and the difficulties hindering them from making a professional and academic contribution.

The study results highlight the importance of maintaining academic staff members in the critical group at their institutions. These staff is valuable assets that could revive the institutions they work within. University managers should seek ways of helping them be attached to their universities by the improving organizational culture and regulations as well as helping them to improve their professional skills, both nationally and internationally. By doing so, the risks of brain drain might be reduced or even eliminated. Notwithstanding, university managers should take brain circulation into consideration when planning their academic staff, bearing in mind the temporary absence of their qualified academic staff members as a trade-off. In this regard, the study opens the door for further intensive research on this group of staff members and their requirements.

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Career Path of Higher Education Teaching Personnel in the Arab States and the Quality Challenges

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Abstract

This study presents a set of concepts related to the quality of teaching personnel in higher education, and a number of standards and best practices adopted at the world level to guarantee this quality. It also presents indications about the quality of higher education teaching personnel in the Arab States drawn from the practices of these States related to the initial training and qualifications of this personnel, as well as to their selection schemes and working conditions. It also deals with what could be regarded as fundamental issues to be addressed in order to raise the teaching personnel to the levels expected according to international standards. The study is primarily based on the analysis of official documents available from international organizations, some of the world countries, and Arab universities, as regards faculty members' selection, conditions of employment, promotion, and working conditions. It also relies on relevant available statistical data.

The study shows that the efforts made by the Arab States regarding the career path of higher education teaching personnel are deficient, at the quantitative and qualitative levels, and that there is an urgent need for a radical change in the current situation, if teaching personnel are to play an active role in meeting the challenges of higher education quality in the Arab States.

I. General introduction

1. The quality of higher education and the quality of the teaching personnel

The study of higher education quality in the Arab States faces a variety of problems, the most important of which is the lack of comprehensive data on higher education inputs, on the processes taking place within the framework of this level of education and on its educational, research and service outputs. In fact, there are only few documents published on these issues, and no national, regional or international body has data which are accurate and comprehensive enough to draw a clear picture of the quality of higher education in these States.

A recent study (Salamé, 2007) tried to tackle these issues from aspects on which some statistical and qualitative data were available, such as the characteristics of teaching personnel, teaching curricula and graduates' competencies. The study concluded that higher education in the Arab States generally suffers from deficiencies in the various mentioned aspects.

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Available data concur to the fact that no Arab university is capable of occupying a frontline position among the world universities, taking into account the standards² adopted at the international level, and apart from of all reservations on the methodologies adopted in the related classifications.

Achievement of the quality of higher education institutions and programs requires a combination of various elements. However, the higher education community agrees on the critical role played by teaching personnel in ensuring this quality since they constitute the main resources around which revolve most of higher education processes and outputs. Teaching personnel determines teaching curricula, as well as the students' performance standards and quality. They also significantly contribute to the establishment of programs offered by higher education institutions to keep pace with scientific progress, as well as with the development and labor market needs. Furthermore, teaching personnel conduct to a large extent research and development activities that contribute to the technical, economic, social and cultural progress of societies. Thus, they directly contribute to the development of their societies.

Agencies of Quality Assurance in Higher Education have adopted the quality of higher education teaching personnel as one of the main standards to assess the quality of higher education institutions and programs³.

One of these agencies formulated this standard as follows: "The institution develops a faculty that is suited to the fulfillment of the institution's mission. Faculty qualifications, numbers, and performance are sufficient to accomplish the institution's mission and purposes. Faculty competently offer the institution's academic programs and fulfill those tasks appropriately assigned them" (NEASC, 2005).

Moreover, the American Board for Engineering and Technology, one of the most prominent higher education specialized accreditation institutions in the United States of America and in the world, considers the teaching personnel, in terms of quality and number, as one of the seven criteria adopted in the accreditation of engineering and technology programs (ABET, 2008)⁴.

The British Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education attaches particular importance to the role of teaching personnel in achieving the quality of graduate studies in higher education

² Review for instance the online ranking of the first 100 Arab universities among world universities for 2009, based on their activities and quality of available production, knowing that 70% of the first 100 universities are from the United States of America and that only 10 Arab universities rank among the top 2000 world universities, i.e. 0.5%. Moreover, only 42 Arab universities rank among the top 5000 world universities, i.e. 0.08%. This shows that Arab universities are lagging behind in terms of scientific interaction and use of modern technology. Accessed April 9, 2009. http://www.webometrics.info/top100_continent.asp?cont=aw

However, no Arab university enters the Shanghai University ranking which only publishes a classification of the top 500 world universities based on elitist selectivity (according to Nobel prizes won, to recognitions certifying scientific production, or to publications in prestigious journals such as «Nature» or «Science», etc). Accessed April 9, 2009 [http://www.arwu.org/rank2008/Top500_EN\(by%20rank\).pdf](http://www.arwu.org/rank2008/Top500_EN(by%20rank).pdf)

³ Hereinafter are the eleven domains of standards adopted by the Association of schools and colleges in New England in the United States of America for the accreditation of higher education institutions: (1) Mission and Purposes, (2) Planning and Evaluation, (3) Organization and Governance, (4) The Academic Program, (5) Faculty, (6) Students, (7) Library and Other Information Resources, (8) Physical and Technological Resources, (9) Financial Resources, (10) Public Disclosure, (11) Integrity. Accessed April 9, 2009. http://cihe.neasc.org/standards_policies/standards/standards_html_version

⁴ Hereinafter are the seven general domains of criteria adopted by this board in the accreditation of Engineering and Technology programs: (1) Students, (2) Program Educational Objectives, (3) Program Outcomes, (4) Continuous Improvement, (5) Curriculum, (6) Faculty, (6) Facilities, (7) Support (including Financial Resources). ABET. Criteria for Accrediting Engineering Programs, Effective for Evaluations during 20092010- Accreditation Cycle. November 1, 2008.

through the supervision of the students' works, in addition to including elements closely related to teaching personnel in all other standards adopted to ensure the quality of these programs (QAA, 2004)⁵.

2. Specificities of teaching in higher education

During the last quarter of the twentieth century, a number of questions on the specificities of teaching in higher education and on the possibility of allowing all holders of university degrees to exercise this profession emerged within the higher education community. Moreover, the number of questions about the level of the required academic qualification and pedagogical training for teaching personnel in higher education increased. These questions cannot be answered without knowing whether teaching in higher education entails a series of highly specialized competencies which are accurately determined and different from those required for the exercise of other professions. One could ask if any jurist, psychologist, historian, medical expert, or any other person who is usually holder of a doctorate degree, is qualified to exercise teaching in higher education without any further qualification. These questions have driven many countries and higher education institutions to differentiate between the different academic paths designed for university students enrolled in graduate studies. Thus, special training programs were designed for those who wish to exercise teaching in higher education and were added to the general requirements for acquiring a Ph.D., based on the specificity of teaching in higher education and on the fact that the general competencies acquired by Ph.D. students are not sufficient to exercise teaching in higher education.

3. Approaches for the establishment of a reference framework to ensure the quality of higher education teaching personnel

The establishment of a reference framework to ensure the quality of human resources in any professional sector requires a series of measures, starting with the definition of the roles expected to be played by the professionals in the concerned field and the tasks relevant to these roles, taking into account the advancement of knowledge and the expectations of the concerned community, institutions and professional bodies. This should be followed by the identification of the competencies that should be mastered and of the ways to acquire them, as well as the definition of the conditions that would ensure proper selection of human resources, their efficiency and further development. Teaching in higher education requires competencies that meet the different work situations faced by members of teaching personnel. In fact, teaching tasks in higher education range from teaching large numbers of students in halls capable of accommodating hundreds of students, which requires special skills and attitudes, to supervising individual, theoretical or practical works undertaken by the students, which requires skills and attitudes different from the above. Between these two extremes, we find multi-shaped educational situations requiring different types of skills and attitudes, although, in all scenarios, higher education practitioners use the same academic knowledge.

⁵ Hereinafter are the domains of standards adopted by this agency to determine quality characteristics related to post-graduate research programs: (1) Institutional Arrangements, (2) The Research Environment (including many standards and indicators closely linked to faculty), (3) Selection, Admission, and Induction of Students, (4) Supervision (included directed standards linked to faculty), (5) Progress and Review Arrangements, (6) Feedback Mechanisms, (7) Assessment, (8) Student Representations, Complaints and Appeals. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education. Section 1: Postgraduate research programmes - September 2004.

II. Roles and functions of higher education teaching personnel

1. Roles

It is commonly agreed upon that higher education teaching personnel perform basically three functions that are: teaching, research, and service to the university and the community. However, apart from this stereotype and in order to shed some light on roles and functions which do not usually get enough attention, the roles expected from higher education teaching personnel were divided into five categories and the order of these roles was modified as follows to be in line with the French orientation which emphasizes scientific research as a prior condition for teaching and distinguishes between scientific research and research management. This new classification also follows the American orientation which distinguishes between service to the university and service to the community. Thus, the functions of higher education teaching personnel could be labeled as follows:

- Research;
- Teaching;
- Research management;
- Academic participation and collegiality;
- Contribution to community development.

In fact, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in France identifies two interrelated main roles for teaching personnel: “ensuring the development of basic and applied scientific research and the transfer of the resulting knowledge to students” (Ministère de l’enseignement supérieur et de la recherche, 2009). Thus, the Ministry gives priority to scientific research over teaching and links teaching to the results of scientific research.

The French system also differentiates between research carried out by teaching personnel on their own, or within the framework of teams, laboratories or research centers, and research management. The former is expected to be carried out, in one form or the other, by all members of higher education teaching personnel. As for the latter, it is only reserved for those who have proven their ability and have been recognized as such by the institution through a mechanism called “habilitation” This also applies to the German system. (Enders, 2001).

The distinction between academic participation and collegiality, and the contribution to the development of society, sheds light on two distinct types of activities undertaken by higher education teaching personnel which appear particularly in American documents. In fact, in the USA, collegiality in higher education goes back to more than a century, while the contribution to the development of society, as a role for the teaching personnel, appeared only during the last decades of the twentieth century as a result of the expansion in higher education institutions which sought to be closer to local communities and decided to leave their “ivory towers” where they had isolated themselves when they were few in number and when they were reserved for the children of political and economic elites.

2. Role-specific functions

a. Scientific research

The International Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (UNESCO, 1997) stipulates that teaching in higher education requires a high level of knowledge to be acquired and sustained by teaching personnel through lifelong studying and research. This is reflected in the Recommendation by the use of the term “Scholarship” which emanates from the American tradition. Scientific research include activities undertaken personally by the

member of the teaching personnel, which lead to the expansion, deepening, dissemination and innovative use of knowledge, through continuous scholarship, a synthesis of available knowledge, a systematic search for new knowledge, and the production and publication of new documentation. The tasks also include the production and publication of new creative literary, artistic or technical products. It also includes registration of patents, scientific, literary and artistic criticism and the development of knowledge applications in the various fields of human activities. If teaching personnel leave aside these activities, higher education becomes similar to other levels of education, where knowledge transfer occurs without any critical thinking, analysis and scrutiny, which are supposed to be present in higher education.

b. Teaching

The *raison d'être* of higher education institutions is to train high-level scientists and professionals that would meet the society's need for human resources possessing advanced qualifications in various fields so as to ensure its proper functioning and to contribute to comprehensive and integrated development. Teaching tasks include assuming the responsibility of courses which encompasses the following: planning courses, preparing lessons, choosing and applying learning and teaching methods, supervising students' work and supporting students in order to achieve learning and to acquire the prescribed competencies or the intended learning outcomes, assessing students' learning and performance, developing new educational methodologies in order to promote learning and to evaluate learning and progress, supervising practical exercises and field experiences of students and assessing their progress, evaluating the work accomplished by the students, participating in the examination committees, and supervising teaching assistants.

c. Research management

Research management tasks include activities aimed at the systematic organization of scientific research leading to the desired results. They include the supervision of students' research, reports, theses and dissertations, the implementation of activities aimed at initiating or supporting research activities, the management of research projects and research teams, the participation in committees concerned with the assessment of research projects and applications for research grants, the participation in the editorial committees of scientific periodicals and in peer review committees, etc.

d. Academic participation and collegiality

Academic participation and collegiality tasks include activities related to the organization of academic work and to the participation in decisions regarding academic and professional life. These activities include the management of study and training programs, the participation in the management of research centers and in the organization of seminars and conferences, etc. as well as in scientific research ethics committees, along with other relevant committees and councils, and responsibilities related to the management of academic and student affairs.

e. Contribution to community development

The contribution to community development includes activities that reflect the commitment of the teaching personnel to societal issues and that contribute to the promotion of their social status and that of the higher education institution to which they belong, provided that these activities are done within the framework of the specialization of the teaching personnel or within a multidisciplinary domain, in an atmosphere of academic freedom similar to that applied to teaching, scientific research, scientific management and collegiality. This includes consultations provided by the teaching personnel to the community's institutions, and services offered to civil society institutions and to governmental and non-governmental organizations. It also includes the participation in the activities of scientific, professional, governmental, cultural, and social bodies.

3. University ranks and their requirements

Teaching personnel in higher education are characterized worldwide by a hierarchy of university ranks often made up of four main ranks with possible ramified ranks horizontally, upwards or downwards. At the bottom of the pyramid, there are members without a Ph.D., then the holders of a Ph.D or of an equivalent qualification, followed by holders of a Ph.D. who have some years of experience in higher education. The members of this group would also have proved their competence in teaching and research, as well as their ability to carry out research management responsibilities along with individual responsibilities in terms of academic participation and collegiality. Finally, at the top of this pyramid, are those who are generally Ph.D. holders and who have provided outstanding contribution to their field of specialization, profession, or the society, through their work as members of teaching personnel. These contributions must usually be recognized by the professional or academic community outside the institution where these members work.

The U.S. appellations in this regard may be the most adequate ones. These are classified from bottom up as follows: Lecturer⁶, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Full Professor⁷. As for other ranks, such as, teaching assistant, research assistant, technician and others, they ought to be classified in a different category and should not be considered part of the faculty.

Usually, the promotion from one rank to another does not occur only on the basis of the accumulation of years of experience, but also requires that the member of the teaching personnel member demonstrates, according to due assessment, his eligibility to be promoted based on his performance. There is usually no automatic promotion other than between the ranks of lecturer and assistant professor, which occurs generally after obtaining a Ph.D., although many higher education systems require more than a PhD to grant this promotion, and impose other prerequisites related to productivity in research and the adequate performance of teaching tasks.

6 The term «Lecturer» has sometimes been translated into Arabic as «Muhader» which has the connotation of «Speaker». We think that the terms meaning «Instructor» or «Teacher» are more adequate appellations for at least two reasons. The first concerns the fact that lecturers and instructors are generally limited in higher education to the transfer of available knowledge without deep personal contribution. This is the type of role expected from a beginner having no PhD and no scholarship opportunities. Thus, the majority of systems adopted by higher education institutions considers the rank of lecturer as a temporary one and designed for a short period of time. The relevant member can either become eligible to reach the next rank or its employment be terminated. Language teachers in higher education (not teachers of literature and language specializations) may be the exception to this rule, because teaching basic language skills, even at universities, doesn't rise up to the level of higher education. As for the second reason, the appellation «Speaker» isn't particular to the occupier of this rank, and may apply to any university rank or even individuals who aren't faculty members. Thus, «Speaker» is a description not a rank. However, in some systems and institutions of higher education in the Arab countries, this appellation has been used as a university rank instead of «lecturer» or independently. Moreover, we disapprove the use of the term «instructor», which is common in some faculty regulations in Egypt and other countries that follow the same system, to refer to the rank of «Assistant Professor» according to the American hierarchy of university ranks. In fact, it is common worldwide and in the Arab countries to have a PhD as a prerequisite to access this rank. Hence, the use of «instructor» to refer to «Assistant Professor» downplays the importance of this rank. Discarding this appellation would allow to free this category of teaching personnel from any «complex of inferiority».

⁷ It is noteworthy that the Association of Arab Universities tried years ago to unify university ranks without much success because each system in the Arab countries is deeply rooted in its own history which is often inspired from a western country. Nevertheless, the global rapprochement to the American system of rank classification may be an incentive to review the current fragmentation of the classification systems in the Arab world. Furthermore, it seems necessary to examine, at the level of each Arab country separately and of the Arab world as a whole, the classifications adopted by the newly established institutions of higher education and to try to unify the standards necessary to access to each rank, or at least, harmonize them in order to preserve their credibility and promote the mobility of faculty members.

III. Academic and international standards ensuring the quality of teaching personnel

1. To qualify for teaching in higher education

The guiding principles contained in the UNESCO International Recommendation (1997) stipulate that the training of graduates of higher education who are qualified, educated and able to serve the society as responsible citizens, and who are capable of carrying out tasks related to scientific research, requires a highly qualified and talented teaching personnel, capable of preserving, disseminating and criticizing the knowledge and culture accumulated through the ages. Teaching personnel should also search for new knowledge, without any restrictions imposed by prescribed doctrines. Moreover, according to the guiding principles, the progress in higher education depends on the qualifications and advanced knowledge of the teaching personnel, as well as their humanistic, educational and technical attributes supported by academic freedom, professional responsibility, collegiality, and institutional autonomy.

These guiding principles conclude that teaching in higher education is a full-fledged profession which requires teaching personnel to have advanced knowledge and specialized skills, acquired and preserved through rigorous and lifelong studies and research. This profession also requires a commitment to high professional standards in scholarship and research. The benchmark documents issued by accreditation bodies of higher education institutions and programs as well as by the associations and unions of teaching personnel are concordant with those of the International Recommendation⁸.

a. Academic and research training

The UNESCO International Recommendation, as well as other standard documents, seem almost to recommend that all higher education teaching personnel should be at least Ph.D. holders and to have had an appropriate pedagogical training. In fact, one would ask what exactly are the necessary high qualifications for teaching personnel advocated by the International Recommendation if these are not at the level of Ph.D.? At what level of education, if not at the level of Ph.D., can one actually acquire the advanced knowledge and intellectual independence to be able to undertake scholarship and knowledge criticism and renewal based on strong scientific grounds, adopt reflective thinking approach to contribute to the continuous development of the discipline and the improvement of educational practices, and undertake responsibilities for research and educational programs management?

Furthermore, it is common sense to say that training in scientific research, with a high degree of professionalism and independence, could not be achieved but through the preparation of a doctoral dissertation under close supervision and through extensive discussions of the various stages of progress with the participation of at least the supervising professor and a few specialized professors. These various stages include choosing the topic, reviewing relevant literature, choosing methodological approaches and research methods, means and tools, undertaking the research with precision and care, analyzing results, and writing the dissertation according to the relevant standards, taking into account the necessary quality control during all the stages of planning and implementation⁹.

⁸ See for example the documents of the American Association of University Professors and those of the Canadian Association of University Teachers.

⁹ For instance, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in the UK has proposed in 2004, in cooperation with the councils of scientific research, seven domains of research qualifications that should be acquired by PhD. students, while these are not expected to be mastered at the first levels of higher education. These domains

The most advanced countries, in terms of higher education quality, have almost generalized the possession of Ph.D. as a prerequisite for teaching in higher education. For example, available statistics about the qualifications of teaching personnel in the United States of America (Cataldi et al., 2005) indicate that about 86% of those working in the public and not-for-profit private universities hold a Ph.D. degree or an equivalent qualification. The same applies for example to the universities in the Province of Quebec, Canada (CREPUQ, 2009)¹⁰.

b. Pedagogical qualification

It is common sense to wonder if obtaining a Ph.D. is sufficient for teaching in higher education with a high degree of professionalism, and whether this professionalism could be automatically acquired by merely studying at this level.

In fact, teaching in higher education is not different from teaching in other levels of education, in terms of the need for professionalism, which requires having a set of competencies unanimously agreed upon by teaching reference frameworks and that could only be acquired through learning and training (Salamé, 2009). As for teaching tasks in higher education, the basic competencies can be summarized in terms of: (1) competencies relevant to the learning mechanisms, (2) competencies relevant to the organization of the learning/teaching environment and the choice of means and methods of teaching and learning, (3) competencies relevant to the assessment of students' learning and performance.

c. Qualifying for other tasks

It is common sense as well to wonder if a member of the teaching personnel is able to perform all other tasks with an acceptable degree of professionalism without having a systematic training in each of them. For instance, supervising the practical training and research has its own rules and methods, and the relevant supervisory competencies are acquired at universities through learning and practice under supervision. The same applies to students' counseling, participation in committees and councils, and other tasks. Members of the teaching personnel may acquire some of these required competencies through practice. However, having access to specialized training in the relevant areas could improve their performance of these tasks and reduce the time necessary to master the relevant skills with minimum errors. Therefore, there is a need to allow Ph.D. students and new teaching personnel to participate in various actions and activities that permit them to get acquainted with the activities they are expected to perform in order to acquire an early training to perform the functions expected from them.

d. Training frameworks

Many countries and universities around the world became aware of the need to train higher education teaching personnel, beyond their academic qualifications. Therefore, they have adopted various regulations and mechanisms and a variety of methods to train them or train

are: (1) Research Skills and Techniques, (2) Research Environment, (3) Research Management (4) Personal Efficiency, (5) Communication Skills, (6) Networking and Team Work, (7) Management of the Career Path. These titles may fail to reveal all the content of each domain, but it is clear that acquiring these competencies can only be done through in-depth training which is ensured through the preparation of a doctoral dissertation or by long years of practice in scientific research under supervision.

¹⁰ According to the rule of thumb, the difference in education between the teacher and the learner must be made up of at least two educational levels. If we simplify the educational ladder into the levels of basic education, secondary education and the three university levels, it may be said that all teachers in basic education must hold a corresponding bachelor's degree. Similarly, all teachers in secondary education must hold a corresponding master's degree and all teachers in the first university level must hold a corresponding Ph.D. As for teachers in the two advanced university levels, they must be holders of a Ph.D. and have supplementary competencies acquired through studies, research, and practice undertaken after the Ph.D.

the candidates wishing to enter into the higher education teaching profession on carrying out the tasks entrusted to them in the best possible way. Some countries have considered that it is necessary for them to learn the basic principles for teaching and to undertake training under specialized supervision as a precondition to access to the higher education profession or to get tenured, and have made this training compulsory as is the case of Norway, Finland and the United Kingdom (Trowler and Bamber, 2005).

Some countries and institutions of higher education have designed special training programs for those who intend to join the higher education profession and for the new entrants in it, as well as for more experienced personnel, in order to encourage them to improve their educational practices. This is, for example, the case in the Netherlands, Australia and New Zealand (Trowler and Bamber, 2005), and in Sweden (Stigmar, 2008).

There is great diversity among countries and universities in terms of the scope, duration and comprehensiveness of the training on the various competencies expected of the teaching personnel. This diversity also appears in terms of compulsory training, especially for junior faculty members, and its focus on faculty members or on those aspiring to enter into the higher education profession as is the case in France and the United States of America¹¹, or on both, as is the case in the United Kingdom. Nowadays, the issue of compulsory training and its timing in view of the period of access to the teaching profession is raised in many countries of Europe (Trowler and Bamber, 2005). Perhaps, the oldest initiative in this field is the one adopted in the United States that allows graduate students the chance of undertaking a systematic practice of a set of consistent tasks that are usually performed by a faculty member, accompanied by meticulous educational supervision and performance assessment. This requires that students delve into the subject, participate in the preparation of the general plan of the course and in each of its lessons, contribute to lectures, discussions and laboratory work, practice the establishment of constructive relationships with students, guide them, encourage them to actively participate in the teaching and learning activities, and help them develop their higher mental abilities. Finally, they would practice different types of methods to assess student learning and performance¹². All of this happening with respect to the code of ethics of teaching in tertiary education.

The institutions of higher education in the USA encourage all higher education students to engage in programs of graduate teaching assistant. However, the programs usually remain limited to those who wish to join the teaching profession because of their future professional orientations. In fact, there are students who receive a Ph.D. without acquiring any educational experience during their studies, because they do not aim to become university teachers. As for institutions of higher education, they prefer to recruit graduates who have such experience.

In the UK, this issue led to the establishment of a special degree for teaching in higher education. Among its entry conditions, there is the obligation to hold first a graduate degree or to be a new member of the higher education teaching profession¹³. This degree can also be obtained as a master in higher education in some universities, including the approved Master of the French

¹¹ See, for example, the Graduate Teaching Assistant Handbook, prepared by the University of California at San Diego, (Streichler, 2005).

¹² A study conducted in Turkey demonstrated the need of graduate research and teaching assistants in faculties of Education for that kind of training to prepare for teaching in higher education. What then about graduate students in other majors? See in this regard (KABAKÇI and ODABAŞI, 2008).

¹³ See for example the Post Graduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education offered by the University College of London (UCL Center for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching, no date), or the training offered at the London School of Economics for graduate students (LSE, no date).

Speaking University Agency, provided by a university in Belgium, through distance learning¹⁴ among other means.

The United Kingdom is characterized by the dynamism and mobility of its organizations concerned with the professional development of teaching personnel and with the training of higher education students on teaching in higher education. Thus, since the end of the last century, official authorities have established institutes, networks and bodies for this purpose. Shortly afterwards, they all united under the name of The Higher Education Academy¹⁵. In collaboration with various stakeholders in higher education in the United Kingdom, this Academy has developed the UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education. These standards are used to adopt the programs offered by institutions of higher education in this area (The higher education academy, no date).

Worldwide, the most common system remains the establishment of training units for teaching personnel or equivalent bodies within the higher education institutions. These units are aimed at the teaching personnel during the performance of their teaching tasks. Participation in the activities and consultations of these units is usually voluntary. However, there is a growing tendency to make this participation compulsory, as is the case in the United Kingdom and some other countries¹⁶.

Some authors defend the need to diversify the ways and means through which teaching assistants and teaching personnel are trained on the tasks of higher education. They maintain this stand by noting the accumulated impact that is achieved by having multiple ways of bringing about change in educational practices (Knight et al., 2006). However, the international experience points out the need to institutionalize the pedagogical training of higher education teaching personnel¹⁷ (Salamé, 1994), to the benefits of establishing national standards to this effect, and to the benefits of networking at the national and the global levels, as is the case in French-speaking countries¹⁸.

2. Appointment

Proper selection of human resources plays a central role in ensuring the good performance of

¹⁴ See the program available at the Université de Liège entitled: Master complémentaire en pédagogie universitaire et de l'enseignement supérieur, <http://www.fomcom.auwe.be/portal/formationsearch.htm?id=128> (Accessed April 6, 2009), and a similar program is available at the Université Catholique de Louvain, <http://www.uclouvain.be/232266.html>; (Accessed April 6, 2009).

¹⁵ The three most important bodies are: the Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, the Learning and Teaching Support Network, and the Higher Education Staff Development Agency.

¹⁶ For more information: <http://www.cefes.umontreal.ca>, where one can access the center of studies and training for higher education (Centre d'études et de formation en enseignement supérieur) which was established by the University of Montreal in Canada as an advanced model of the existing model in French-speaking countries in addition to what has been referred to concerning English-speaking countries.

¹⁷ See in that regard the list prepared by the University of Dalhousie, Canada, including specialized university centers in Australia, Canada, USA...and some bodies interested in developing teaching in higher education in English-speaking countries. <http://learningandteaching.dal.ca/ids.html#US> (Accessed April 6, 2009).

¹⁸ The International Association of University Pedagogy (Association Internationale de Pédagogie universitaire) was established in 1980 and regroups members from Europe, North America and Arab countries (Lebanon, Morocco, and Algeria). It publishes a specialized journal called *Revue Internationale de Pédagogie de l'Enseignement Supérieur (RIPES)*, previously known as «Res Academica». For more information, visit the current website of the association: www.ulg.ac.be/aipu (accessed April 6, 2009). Another journal is published in French about university teaching techniques: *Revue Internationale des techniques en pédagogie universitaire*. For more information, <http://www.ritpu.org>

any institution and the good quality of its services and products. Proper selection helps choosing the right person for the right position. Thus, the selected individual performs his tasks with the expected efficiency, effectiveness and autonomy, without the need for lengthy training and continuous supervision.

According to article 43 of the UNESCO International Recommendation (1997), teaching personnel should enjoy «a just and open system of career development including fair procedures for appointment, ...».

The most important procedure for ensuring this fairness is the announcement of vacancies in the widest way possible and for a sufficient period. The announcement should consist of a clear description of the required tasks, qualifications and selection standards and procedures. Moreover, the selection process should be based on equity and transparency, without distinction of any kind other than what is relevant to the needed qualifications. Finally, peers at the faculty should take part in this process.

3. Probationary period

In order to become a regular staff member in any profession, it is necessary to pass a probationary period during which the newcomer has the opportunity to practice the basic tasks required by the profession, and demonstrates his/her ability to accomplish these tasks with the required level of quality. Teaching personnel in higher education are no exception to that. In fact, recruitment systems in higher education institutions include probationary periods, and the guidelines of teaching personnel organizations¹⁹ as well as the International Recommendation of UNESCO (1997) recognize the legitimacy of the existence of such probationary period.

The probationary period constitutes an opportunity to help newcomers in the higher education profession get acquainted with the various aspects of work and standards of professional practice. This is also an opportunity for the newcomers to apply these standards in practice and develop their educational and research capabilities and benefit from the supervision and advice of the experienced members.

According to the International Recommendation (UNESCO, 1997), some of the entrants may not be able to successfully conclude the probationary period within the designated time period. Therefore, they may not be provided tenure. However, it is their right to receive previous assessment of their performance and to be informed of the results in order to give them the opportunity to improve their performance. However, if they fail to prove their capabilities anyway, there is no objection to terminate their contracts for the sake of the quality of teaching and research.

4. Tenure

According to the International Recommendation of UNESCO (1997), job security is one of the basic regulatory safeguards of academic freedom and a shield against arbitrary decisions. Job security promotes personal responsibility and the retention of highly talented faculty members. Therefore, it serves the interest of higher education and of its professionals, and should be ensured for the teaching personnel who prove to be competent through the periodic evaluation of their performance. Thus, they are protected from termination for non academic reasons.

¹⁹ It has been since a long time that the guidelines adopted by the American Association of University Professors limit the probationary period to a maximum of seven years. However, according to regulations and practices currently applied in North America, this period is limited to five or six years in normal conditions and to four years in exceptional conditions. As for Germany, the probationary period could be much longer according to available vacancies of permanent posts (See: Enders, 2001).

5. Evaluation for contract renewal, tenure or promotion

In advanced industrial countries, higher education teaching personnel may be the most subjected to evaluation. Often, students are asked at each semester to evaluate their performance. In addition, scientific articles written by them are submitted for peer review before publication. Also, all research projects they present to donor parties pass through peer evaluation before getting the funding. Their writings are scrutinized by their colleagues who may quote them in their own writings, or criticize them positively or negatively. Their performance in the context of academic participation and collegiality is subjected to peer criticism at any time and taken into account for re-election or reappointment. Finally, they are asked to take part in consultations and societal development based on their reputation.

In fact, there are at least four main stages in the career path of the higher education teaching personnel where evaluation is crucial. In addition to the evaluation for selection and appointment, teaching personnel face evaluation when renewing their contracts, getting tenure, and getting promoted. Hence, given the importance of evaluation in the career path of teaching personnel, it should be based on the best principles, methodologies and level of transparency. Therefore, the International Recommendation of UNESCO (1997) laid the groundwork for this evaluation, so that its primary mission would be to guarantee the quality of higher education and the development of individual skills according to personal interests and capacities. Moreover, this evaluation should be exclusively built on the academic standards of efficiency in research, teaching, and other academic and professional tasks. In addition, it should be based on the highest degree of objectivity according to reliable standards and mechanisms, without bias, spite or equivocation. Evaluation mechanisms should take into account the difficulties of judging the qualifications of a person through a single experience or situation²⁰. The concerned faculty member must be informed of the various stages of evaluation, its criteria, mechanisms, results and relevant decisions. Finally, faculty members must be granted the right of appeal to a neutral party concerning the evaluation process and results, if they believe that the evaluation process wasn't duly respected or that its results and decisions aren't based on solid grounds.

6. Professional renewal

As science make progresses every day, teaching personnel in higher education have the duty to be up-to-date to promote their scholarship and thus, benefit their students. Higher education institutions throughout different countries became aware of the importance of the periodic renewal of the competencies of teaching personnel in higher education. Hence, they have adopted a unique well-established tradition at universities, the tradition of the "sabbatical leave", which is provided by these institutions to tenured higher education personnel. The International Recommendation has anchored this tradition in articles 65 and 66.

The objective of this "Scholarship period"²¹ is to renew the competencies of teaching personnel

²⁰ Specialists in human resources assessment distinguish between accomplishing the tasks competently, assuming the responsibilities with conscientiousness and abiding by the code of ethics. This is opposed to incompetence, negligence and moral turpitude. Specialists consider repeated negligence despite of warnings and flagrant moral misconduct as an accepted reason to deny contract renewal or to terminate services. However, the relevant institution is held responsible for proving incompetence with undeniable arguments.

²¹ We chose to use the term «scholarship period» instead of the term «sabbatical leave» to avoid any misunderstanding of its nature among faculty members, public officers or the public in general. In fact, these parties frequently accuse higher education institutions of granting teaching personnel «leaves» every seven years in addition to annual leaves, without understanding the true objectives of this period.

and enrich them with recent scientific and educational developments relevant to their discipline. This is done through scholarship, development of educational methods, scientific research, or scientific, literary or artistic productions in the context of the assigned tasks.

Furthermore, teaching in higher education requires continuous renewal of competencies. The need for this renewal was stipulated in the International Recommendation which recommended granting teaching personnel in higher education the opportunities to participate in professional activities, events of scientific and cultural exchange and technical support programs outside the country in which they work. Also, their institutions are required to participate in any possible additional expenses related to these activities.

IV. Some facts about the career path of the teaching personnel of higher education in arab countries

1. A gloomy picture

Observers of the career path of the teaching personnel in Arab universities find themselves confronted with many shades in a gloomy picture. As a matter of fact, Arab countries often send their elite high school graduates or university undergraduates abroad to acquire graduate degrees, especially Ph.D.s, and they then return and teach at local universities. Also, Arab universities have applied a ranking system for the teaching personnel according to the best practices in industrialized countries. Moreover, more than a third of a century ago, Egypt adopted, in a pioneering move, both in the Arab world and internationally, a legal text imposing training on “teaching methodologies” as a precondition for getting appointed at the first rank in a faculty²². Furthermore, many Arab universities have called for nearly twenty years now, for the establishment of “the Arab network for the professional development of teaching personnel in Arab universities”, laid the foundations for it and have been participating in its activities over the years²³. In addition, many college deans in Arab universities have been discussing the issues of faculty quality, performance evaluation and promotion in periodic meetings²⁴. They have also called for the establishment of a regional academic center to improve the performance of teaching personnel in the relevant colleges²⁵.

²² According to article 59 of Decree 809 of 1975 related to the executive rules and regulations of law 49 of 1972 relevant to the organization of Egyptian universities, «assistant lecturers and lecturers shall receive training on the general and specialized teaching methodologies through courses, seminars or practical lessons according to the conditions of each college and the rules adopted by the university council. Attending training in a satisfactory way is a prerequisite for getting appointed as assistant professor» (Abou Hatab, 1994).

²³ The first meeting of the network's founding committee was held in October 1991 at the faculty of Architecture, University of Alexandria. This faculty administrated the network's secretariat affairs (the Arab network for the professional development of teaching personnel in Arab universities and UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States, 1993).

²⁴ See for example, the minutes of the sixth meeting of the deans committee of the faculties of literature and human and social sciences in the GCC, held on Tuesday and Wednesday 6 - 7 January 2004. This meeting tackled the issues of teaching courses to a big number of students, the necessity to use modern techniques and the deficiencies of university programs. During this meeting other issues were brought up such as the importance of having skilled human resources and modern scientific material, as well as the evaluation of faculty and academic courses, and ways of promoting faculty performance. <http://www.kau.edu.sa/fah/amda/admin/M6.htm>, accessed April 6, 2009.

²⁵ See the minutes of the second meeting of the deans committee of the faculties of literature and human and social sciences in the GCC, held on the 17th and 18th of November 1998 at the King Abdul-Aziz University. <http://www.kau.edu.sa/fah/amda/admin/M2.htm>.

At the same time, many indicators show that higher education in Arab States is falling behind the international progress, be it in the quality of education and the quality of its outputs (Salamé, 2007) or in terms of its contribution to the advancement of knowledge (Salamé, 2007; Hamzé, 2009). Perhaps the most important indicator of faculty shortcoming in Arab States compared to all the other regions of the world is the ratio of students per faculty member. In 2005, this ratio amounted to 25 to 1, the highest rate in the world, while the rate in the industrialized countries was no more than 16 to 1. According to a study of current trends, the Arab States won't be seeing the end of this dark tunnel soon. Enrollment rates in graduate studies in these countries remain quite low compared to international rates, and would not ensure a number of highly qualified teaching personnel to meet the current needs of higher education. This also applies to ensuring appropriate educational services for the growing numbers of students flocking to higher education institutions²⁶. The current needs of the Arab States are estimated at more than a hundred and fifty thousand Ph.D. holders in order to meet the needs of students' training in higher education institutions. This is without considering the need for more Ph.D. holders to substitute for foreign teaching personnel²⁷ and to meet future needs (Salamé, 2007).

2. Scholarship

Many higher education institutions in the Arab States have adopted programs for internal and external scholarships aimed at facilitating the pursuit of bright students of graduate studies, with the intention of paving the way for their integration in the higher education teaching profession²⁸, even though some officials in these institutions complain about the obstacles that impede the proper implementation of such programs²⁹.

However, in contradiction with the principles of sound human resources management and with the principles of the International Recommendation that stipulate an open competition for the recruitment of teaching personnel, higher education institutions in Arab countries (with the support of the States themselves) resort to their local resources to increase the number of teaching personnel. To this end, they send out their graduates to specialize abroad then return to the faculty, or they assign graduates to lower positions (lecturer and such) and then gradually promote them³⁰. It is needless to emphasize the disadvantages of such a closed local system,

²⁶ See for example the 2004 declaration of the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Algeria concerning the need of this country for 24400 new teaching personnel members to cater for the deficit in the number of personnel expected for 2008 and to the need for 43300 new teaching personnel members to become near the international students/teacher ratio, in addition to the fact that only 15% of the teaching personnel members hold the upper two university ranks and the difficulty of the higher education system to ensure the necessary numbers to raise this rate. http://www.algeria-watch.org/fr/article/div/recrutement_enseignants.htm ((Accessed April 6, 2009).

²⁷ Available statistical data, for example, show that at least some of the Saudi Arabia universities essentially count on teaching personnel from foreign countries. This seems also to be the case of many recently established universities in other States of the Gulf.

²⁸ Take for example the case of Saudi Arabia: the rules and regulations of missions and training for registered students. The decision of the higher education council number (61997/4/); Yemen: law number (19) of 2003 related to missions and scholarships; Libya: decision number (43) of 2005 of the General People's Committee of Libya; Kuwait: the rules and regulations of missions: <http://www.mohe.edu.kw/moheweb/sch2.pdf>. (Accessed April 6, 2009).

²⁹ See the interview with the minister of higher education in Yemen. "Bassirra: Ending the problems related to scholarship missions and the Higher Education law is my main priority". <http://www.almotamar.net/news/28667.htm>. (Accessed April 6, 2009)

³⁰ A website mentioned that the Administrative Judiciary Court in Egypt has ruled in 2008 that it is contrary to the

compared to an open system which avoids isolationism and inbreeding, and encourages mobility among higher education institutions.

The decision (43) adopted by the General People's Committee of Libya in 2005 concerning the rules and regulations of scholarships for studying abroad or locally is undoubtedly the clearest manifestation of this philosophy. In fact, this decision stipulates that scholarship "candidates from universities, higher institutes and affiliated institutions must be members of the teaching personnel at the same institution". This means that each university selects its own lecturers, who are usually graduates that have completed the first academic cycle at the university. Then, after having taught as lecturers for a year or two, their university nominates them for scholarships so that they attain higher academic levels. Afterwards, they return to their universities as faculty members, and are most likely to remain in it and get promoted in it to the various academic ranks until their retirement.

If it could be considered normal for some small Arab countries, like Kuwait among others, where there is only one university, to select the graduates who have obtained study scholarships to specialize abroad and then return to work as teachers in the same university, it seems awkward that countries such as Libya, Saudi Arabia and Egypt continue to adopt this approach. The difference being in the latter group that these countries have an increasing number of universities, and an increasing number of graduates in the various disciplines who constitute a large reservoir to choose from for scholarships and recruitment in higher education at the entire national level.

3. Terms of employment

Arab countries have generally adopted the international standards of employment at the various university ranks, especially requiring a doctorate degree or its equivalent as a precondition for assigning a candidate to the position of an assistant professor (or any other equivalent title), and in the two following ranks as defined above³¹.

constitution for an Egyptian university to restrict the applications for faculty recruitment to the graduates from only one institution, because such a practice breaches the principle of equal opportunities. However, members whose appointment was cancelled resorted to the Supreme Administrative Court, claiming the revocation of the decision that cancels their appointment. <http://www.f-law.net/law/showthread.php?s=&threadid=22323>. (Accessed April 6, 2009). If the latter court upholds the ruling of the former, these rulings could entail the revision of faculty recruitment that is restricted to graduates from the same university. But it seems that the organizations of teaching personnel in Egypt do not approve of open competition because they do not trust the impartiality of governmental parties who supervise universities, and they fear that this process would be politicized. <http://www.cusclub.net/fileman/aaa/pdf/L2-Project.pdf>. (Accessed April 6, 2009).

³¹ For this purpose, the national and institutional bylaws related to teaching personnel as well as statistical data were reviewed in each of the following countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, U.A.E, and Yemen. It's worth noting that the rules and regulations concerning faculty recruitments in Arab countries no more contain, at least in the texts, any ethical conditions that may be considered breaches to human rights, as is still the case for example in China, where the law concerning faculty recruitment stipulates the necessity for the candidate to have the right ideological beliefs and that the assessment of teaching personnel for any purpose, including recruitment and promotion, should include the evaluation of their ideology and political performance, in addition to other professional and ethical elements (See the higher education law in the Popular Republic of China, particularly articles 46 and 51 on the following website http://www.moe.gov.cn/edoas/website18/en/laws_h.htm) (Accessed April 6, 2009). Whereas we find in Arab countries for example that the duties of higher education teaching personnel include integrity and good ethics as well as the need to respect regulations, instructions and applicable ethical rules, in addition to avoiding any breach to the professional honor. (Saudi Arabia). The stated conditions of recruitment and promotions at the U.A.E University are void of such considerations and are similar to those adopted in industrialized countries.

Public universities in some countries like Lebanon and Jordan restrict their selection to teaching personnel who are Ph.D. holders. In contrast, public universities in other countries massively recruit teaching personnel who do not hold a Ph.D. and sometimes not even a Masters degree, which constitutes an essential weak point in such universities. Hiring regulations of academic staff do not consider that as an exception to the rule or a transitional phase. Moreover, no maximum limits have been defined for recruitment in terms of the percentage of such teaching personnel from the total number of higher education staff. In addition, the situation becomes even more blurred, given that some rules and regulations fail to underline the difference between secondary language teachers who, once they obtain their Masters degree along with an pedagogical qualification, may be suitable to teach at post-secondary level, from those who are responsible for teaching core specialized courses.

Some of the available statistical data show that the percentages of Ph.D. holders among teaching personnel (at least in certain Arab universities, not to say most of them) do not reach the internationally sought after minimum percentage of 70%. This is with the exclusion of higher averages as in the case of the United States, Canada, or Germany. For instance, in 2003, the number of Ph.D. holders in Iraq reached 28.2% (UNESCO, 2004)³²; teaching personnel in Saudi universities occupying the ranks of professor, associate professor and assistant professor, who are supposedly Ph.D. holders, accounted for 59% of the total number of teaching personnel (Masi & Abu Ammo, 1225 H). In Algeria, teaching personnel occupying the three highest academic ranks and who are supposed to be Ph.D. holders, account for around 54%³³. Whereas in Syria, such teaching personnel account for 71%³⁴, and in one Egyptian university the number of Ph.D. holders does not exceed 60%³⁵.

Furthermore, according to the available data, many Arab universities consider, within their statistics, all holders of academic ranks as teaching personnel, including lecturers and teaching assistants, and student/teacher ratio is calculated on this basis. This applies at least to Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, and other Arab States. However, in general, the concerned countries and universities do not provide sufficient information regarding the qualifications of their overall teaching personnel, especially the qualifications of low rank lecturers who often hold only a first university degree³⁶.

Thus, in view of the absence of a sufficient number of teaching personnel who are Ph.D. holders, the educational quality is being jeopardized by resorting to lecturers and the like to assume the

³² Masters holders accounted for 38.7% and Bachelor's degree holders accounted for 33.1%. The actual circumstances undergone by Iraq in recent times may have influenced these rates, but it is doubtful that they have turned the tables that much.

³³ See the data published on webpage: http://www.algeria-watch.org/fr/article/div/recrutement_enseignants.htm (Accessed April 6, 2009).

³⁴ If we exclude the technical and laboratory personnel as well as the instructors and adjunct personnel that are being mistakenly included when calculating students/teacher ratios. See Syrian Arab Republic, Government Office, Central Statistical Office, 2003.

³⁵ Out of the total number of regular faculty members, whereas the university indicates in its statistics that it has around twice the number of teaching personnel covered by data. This information is taken from available data relevant to teaching personnel in Arab Universities on the website of the Association of Arab Universities (See webpage: http://www.aaru.edu.jo/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=81&Itemid=47 for statistics about teaching personnel and the following webpage : http://www.aaru.edu.jo/index.php?option=com_reports&task=teachersGuide that contains an index of teaching personnel in some member universities. (Accessed April 6, 2009)

³⁶ One of the universities announces that all its teaching personnel in all fields are « British Board » members with no further details!

full responsibility of teaching academic courses and giving lectures, etc. without any supervision. In addition, the Ph.D. holders are often entrusted with the responsibility of teaching courses that fall out of their specialization, whether within their teaching load or as additional courses in exchange for an additional fee, thus reducing the time allocated for scholarship and the advancement of knowledge.

The danger for the quality of higher education also lies in the lack of national regulations related to the required qualifications for faculty recruitment in private universities that have been licensed in several Arab States since the 1980's. Despite the lack of relevant statistical data, one can assume that in view of the lack of such legal constraints, newly established private universities do not require from teaching personnel to be Ph.D. holders in order to enroll in the teaching profession. This could also be because of the additional financial cost entailed by such a requirement. Similarly, the statistical data related to the number of Ph.D. holders in Arab countries reveal a huge deficit in this area and a lack of sufficient numbers that could respond to the need resulting from the increase in the social demand for higher education (Salamé, 2007).

4. Pedagogical qualification

The Ain Chams University is considered to be one of the first universities that began implementing the pioneering decision, adopted in Egypt in 1975, which stipulated compulsory pedagogical training as a pre-recruitment requirement in the first of the three highest regular academic ranks (Abu Hatab, 1994). It was preceded by the faculty of education in Alexandria University in organizing training courses for its teaching personnel starting in 1973 (Al Nemr, 1994). Other universities in Egypt have followed the example of these two universities, and the Teaching Personnel Development Center at the Cairo University gained reputation in this field given the huge efforts undertaken to cover various faculties.

This concern was not restricted to the above universities. It also encompassed other universities, such as the public universities in Jordan, the UAE University, as well as Damascus and Khartoum universities³⁷. It appears from the available data that the entry point to this field lied in the efforts made by these universities to upgrade health education and to create centers for educational technologies in order to help teaching personnel to enhance their educational practices.

However, this concern did not manifest itself in other higher education institutions in the Arab countries, or rose up to the expected qualitative level; it rather remained marginal in the professional life of teaching personnel, mainly reflected in the attendance to workshops and sessions instead of really benefitting from activities and focusing on the impact of such attendance in the educational practices of the teaching personnel (Abu Hatab, 1994). Moreover, the latter did not show, in most cases, any real interest in this matter and are not yet convinced about its efficiency. However, with the exception of Egypt, the concerns about the upgrading of teaching personnel's pedagogical know-how were limited to few official and higher education personnel in several Arab countries³⁸.

³⁷ See: The Arab Network for the Professional Development of Teaching Personnel in Arab Universities (1994). Workshop on the experience of Arab universities in the field of faculty professional development, the University of Jordan, Faculty of education.

³⁸ It should be noted that UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States-Beirut provided support for many years to the Arab Network for the Professional Development of Teaching Personnel in Arab Universities and tried to disseminate this model through the promotion of national networks or pedagogical clubs in several Arab countries. Bu these attempts have failed, sometimes because of the lack of awareness among university officials of the importance of this issue (like in Libya) or because of the refusal of teaching personnel of the notion that they could benefit from these programs and activities (like in Algeria), or from both (like in Lebanon).

5. Promotion

Public universities in Arab States in general have adopted the international standards related to the academic promotion of teaching personnel, in terms of the need for the candidate to produce research and to ensure quality education.

However, some countries and institutions have established a difference between scientific promotion based on performance standards and what can be called statutory promotion based on the accumulation of years of service along with a relatively low research production or even without such a production. This includes the promotion to Assistant Professor without holding a Ph.D., or on the basis of equivalence granted by the university itself according to research produced that may not match the usual level of a Ph.D. dissertation. These two elements abolish the efficiency of internationally based promotion systems and reduce the profession of higher education to a mere administrative job in which the employee is promoted on the basis of the accumulation of years of service and the direct recommendation of his/her supervisor.

In contrast, in some countries which have adopted the French approach in academic ranking, such as Morocco, there are quasi-separate tracks for tenured teaching personnel with a strict hierarchy between these tracks, with different categories and ranks in each of them. One can remain in the same position throughout one's entire career, and may be promoted based exclusively on seniority. As for moving from one track to another, it appears to be constrained by strict requirements and limited numbers through qualifying, applying for vacancies, competition, selection and elimination of candidates as well as granting few promotions. Such selection and elimination might lead to frustration among teaching personnel members, who tend to be submissive and desperate, and thus unable to generate scientific production. However, the financial, physical and moral privileges enjoyed by the teaching personnel of the highest tracks prompt teaching personnel to ask for the elimination of all hurdles and impediments to access such tracks. It seems that this occurred in the academic year 1997 - 1998 and the following years, following the adoption of new laws and rules that regulate the matters related to the promotion from one track to another. Transitional provisions for promotion were also included that combined seniority and scientific production. The effects of such provisions led to the transfer of a large number of teaching personnel between tracks in a very short time period (between 1997 - 1998 and 2003 - 2004), which cannot be explained by promotion on the basis of scientific production and performance assessment.

However, what lies beyond the text is the prevailing culture, as some available texts related to the promotion terms and conditions in academic ranks reveal the cultural shortcomings regarding the nature of such ranks. In general, laxness prevails in Arab countries when it comes to promotion terms and conditions. This unveils the perception of higher education as any other civil service rather than as an occupation that requires years of perseverance and scientific production as well as excellence in professional and educational performance.

In one of the reputable universities of science and technology, promotion from assistant professor to associate professor can take place by achieving excellence in scientific research (five research papers at least) during the first three years after obtaining a Ph.D. (and this could be considered a short period of time, according to international standards) or by teaching, undertaking research, and gaining professional experience at least five years after obtaining a Ph.D., or by achieving service excellence during ten years at least after obtaining a Ph.D. without any original scientific production. Promotion can also take place from associate professor to professor following four years of experience, including excellent scientific production. Thus, brilliant researchers can be awarded the title of professor at less than thirty three years of age! Then they remain in the same rank for another thirty three years until retirement!

On the other hand, an opinion poll undertaken in Saudi Arabia (Al Kari, 1425 H) showed that teaching personnel do not accept the current promotion terms and conditions, which are in general more similar to the minimum standards than to the German or other standards. One of the suggestions made by the surveyed sample in this regard, was “to have only three years of service before being promoted to a higher rank”, and “to reduce the number of research units required for promotion to associate professor and professor”, as well as “to take into consideration the research serving the university and society when grading scientific production”, and “to apply both scientific and statutory promotion systems”. This indicates that teaching personnel are not familiar with internationally agreed upon academic standards and customs. Furthermore, their perception of academic work is similar to other government jobs where promotion from one rank to another occurs in a very limited time and with a minimum scientific productivity.

This trend is reinforced through the direct linkage between higher education institutions and public authorities as well as through the definition of teaching personnel members’ obligations by the number of office and teaching hours that are largely similar to the working hours of civil servants rather than by teaching, research and service assignments³⁹. In addition, instead of holding teaching personnel accountable for fulfilling these tasks it rather makes them respect the working hours (a condition that is often useless and counterproductive). It is further reinforced through doubling teaching hours of teaching personnel in comparison with their peers in developed industrialized countries. This is in addition to reducing the time allocated by teaching personnel to scientific research, scholarship and writing (Hamz , 2009). In fact, scholarly activity does not necessarily require a presence at the higher education institution, but an independent invisible effort, especially in the humanities, social disciplines and education, to name just a few fields. The situation is further worsened by the widespread establishment of private higher education institutions and the lack of national standards for the promotion of teaching personnel in the absence of awareness of academic traditions among the founders and officials of these institutions. The divergence between the noble academic traditions and the practices of many academic leaders may be due to the pressure exerted by the owners of these institutions and by the teaching personnel as well.

V. Teaching personnel and qualitative challenges - the main issues

The quality of higher education is not only bound to the quality of teaching personnel. However, these constitute the cornerstone when building the quality of higher education processes and outputs, as well as the quality of its intellectual inputs, in terms of programs, methodologies and the like. The efficiency of higher education institutions is also based on the competencies of teaching personnel who are entrusted with the governance of these institutions as well as the management of their activities and affairs.

³⁹ It should be noted that the university traditions and practices in North America require the determination of annual assignments to each member of the teaching personnel in the form of courses as well as the supervision of a number of graduate students, in addition to the supervision of research financed or non-financed by internal or external parties, research production, participation in conferences, councils and committees, etc. without mentioning the number of working hours devoted to each of these components of duties and responsibilities. In addition, each faculty member should submit by the end of each academic year an annual report about his activities, works and achievements. Future assignments are determined in the light of previous achievements and future commitments. It is worth noting that research indicates that every faculty member spends at least 50 hours per week as a general average of hours dedicated to university assignments. It might reach 70 hours per week for novice teachers and more productive researchers. (See for example Cataldi and al., 2005).

Nonetheless, this quality is first and foremost the result of the efforts of the teaching personnel and the direct supervisors of the teaching and learning processes. These people create the suitable conditions for learning and they can develop and enhance learning incentives among students, because they were granted the authority to assess the competencies acquired by learners and to evaluate the attainment of educational objectives. Thus, there are many important issues that make a difference between a successful member of the teaching personnel and a less successful one. These are: their academic training prior to their appointment; their pedagogical competencies; their constant renewal; their openness to international knowledge and its various approaches; the academic freedom; the job security; the working conditions and the mechanisms adopted to evaluate their performance and their productivity.

1. Qualification to teach in higher education

The qualification to teach in higher education constitutes the first issue that needs to be thoroughly addressed in order to upgrade this profession in the Arab States, in addition to guaranteeing the minimum human resources required to efficiently undertake the necessary tasks at this level of education. This process rests upon three interdependent factors:

The first factor is the recruitment of non-Ph.D. holders and the insufficient human investment in graduate students. As a matter of fact, primary estimations point at the urgent need in universities in all Arab States of at least 150.000 Ph.D. holders to work as members of teaching personnel, in order to match up to international standards in higher education (Salamé, 2007). In addition, there is a need stemming from the increase in demand on higher education, and the necessity of replacing teaching personnel who are not Ph.D. holders with those who are.

The second factor is the pedagogical qualification of teaching personnel, whether for teaching, supervision or participation. Arab States and their higher education institutions must review pioneering experiences in this regard such as the experiences undertaken in the United Kingdom, the United States or other countries, in order to follow their example and make this qualification compulsory. Unfortunately, the pioneering decision adopted in Egypt more than 30 years ago did not lead to the desired results. Similarly, the project aimed at enhancing the capacities of teaching personnel and leaders adopted in Egypt within the framework of the Development of Higher Education projects⁴⁰ failed to rise up to the level required for an effective qualitative leap in this domain. Undoubtedly, Arab States are in need for a radical progressive vision to make such a leap, starting with the adoption of best practices at the international level as a first step towards progress in this domain and with the development of an Arab pioneering pattern that promotes the cooperation between countries. As for the third factor, it concerns the regular and continuous academic and professional renewal of teaching personnel. Sabbatical leave may be widespread in some Arab universities. Nonetheless, it is not a universal practice, and teaching personnel rarely dedicate their time during this leave to scientific scholarship, research and production. Instead, they undertake teaching tasks in other institutions, seeking additional financial gains rather than academic or professional renewal. There is also an urgent need for the promotion of continuous academic renewal opportunities, through the participation in local, regional and international conferences and seminars. It is equally necessary to enhance the opportunities of professional renewal through mechanisms such as the establishment of academic pedagogical clubs and specialized associations that study methods for developing educational practices in the field of specialization, as well as national and regional networks for the same purposes.

⁴⁰ The Arab Republic of Egypt - Ministry of Higher Education (2005)

2. Isolationism

Isolationism is the second issue that needs to be treated radically. This lies in the lack of a diversified scientific enrichment and in the exclusivity of scholarships to each institution aside from others.

The available data regarding the scientific production of teaching personnel in the United States reveal that during 5 years, members of academic institutions produce an average of 6.5 articles published in refereed periodicals; 1.25 published books, studies or reports; 2.25 published reviews of papers written by others; 3.25 non-refereed articles; and 14.75 presentations in conferences, seminars or exhibitions (Cataldi and al., 2005).

These numbers underline the vitality of knowledge production among teaching personnel as well as the vitality of knowledge dissemination. They also show that the scientific production of each faculty member is exposed to criticism almost permanently, away from the trap of isolationism. The faculty member might easily fall into isolation if ever he limits himself to teaching in classrooms in order to transfer his knowledge, to translating a book, writing and publishing a book without arbitration or even publishing articles in a journal issued by the college or the university where he works.

The Arab academic community has often limited itself to the publication of a number of periodicals specific to each institution of higher education or even to each separate college (Al Amine, 2005; UNESCO, 2004) and has rarely published national or Arabic periodicals, and these latter periodicals are rarely published by academics; they are rather sponsored by regional or international organizations. In all cases, they are not widely promoted, and are only accessible to a small number of direct stakeholders. Moreover, Masters' theses and Ph.D. dissertations are often kept within a narrow circle without being fully published or even sometimes, without publishing their results. This prevailing pattern leads to the isolationism of the scientific knowledge itself and limits it to narrow circles.

Thus, it appears imperative to reconsider this status of things at the Arab States' level as a whole and at the level of each State individually, in order to promote Arab scientific advancement and dissemination. Therefore, the establishment of the Arab Information Network on Education "Shamaa"⁴¹ is a good start for preventing this intellectual isolationism.

The second factor leading to isolationism lies in the mechanisms of graduate scholarships. The partial data available about the career development of a large number of teaching personnel in Arab universities highlight some grim experiences. For instance, we find that the member of the teaching personnel was born and raised in the same city where he graduated from primary and secondary education and works at the same university from which he obtained the three university degrees. The term "intellectual cloning" applies in this situation where the member of the teaching personnel has not been exposed to any enrichment outside this narrow context. This situation becomes more alarming when many teaching personnel actually defend these unsound situations and oppose the selection of lecturers and candidates for scholarships based on a non-restricted competition that is open to all those interested and qualified, regardless of the institution from which they graduated. Furthermore, the idea of the necessary intellectual enrichment outside the mother institution, at least at the graduate levels (Master and Ph.D.) doesn't appear to be widespread amongst higher education officials, whether at ministries, institutions or among teaching personnel, let alone the advantages of external enrichment through the practicing of higher education in more than one institution.

⁴¹ For more information about the network and services: <http://www.shamaanet.org>

3. Research professors and academic freedom

As mentioned above, the mission of higher education institutions, in general, and universities, in particular, could be defined as to “ensure the development of basic and applied scientific research, and the transfer of the pertaining knowledge to students” in order to ensure the training of highly qualified persons. It is therefore crucial to stress, first of all, the interdependence between the roles of teaching and scientific research that are played by the members of the teaching personnel. This is possible, for example, by describing the backbone of teaching personnel as “research professors” (enseignants-chercheurs in French) and by ensuring a balance between their teaching and research tasks. The need for this assertion becomes greater since teaching personnel in higher education institutions constitute the critical nucleus of scientific research in Arab States (Hamzé, 2009). This is explained by the scarcity of governmental and non-governmental research centers that are independent from higher educational institutions, and operate through full-time researchers⁴². This leads to the “recognition of knowledge and scientific research as a basic raw material and a permanent resource” (Ministry of Higher Education, Algeria, 2007, p. 26). Hence, teaching personnel should enjoy academic freedom in education and research, as well as in intellectual, literary, artistic and technical production. They should also be allowed to freely express their critical intellectual opinions without any institutional or societal pressure and without any discrimination. In this way, they would be able to freely delve into knowledge, expand it and promote it. In addition, if China and a few other countries around the world continue to impose on teaching personnel particular ideologies that can not be altered through free scientific research, Arab countries should put this issue on the table and find the appropriate solutions.

The analysis of official documents regulating the work of institutions of higher education reflects in general, respect to international standards in academic freedom. However, an in-depth study of practices shows that most Arab States lack the basic conditions for achieving these standards on the ground (Salamé, 2006). In fact, most higher education institutions are still directly subjected to governmental authorities and do not really enjoy academic autonomy. These institutions consider teaching personnel as employees, no different from other civil servants who are constrained by a number of limitations which restrict their ability to travel abroad, organize meetings, seminars and conferences, or participate in such events, publish the results of their research without prior censorship, participate in public policy debates and institutional discussions and so on. In addition, only governmental authorities have the right to appoint heads of higher education institutions and expect them to remain loyal to the prevailing ideology.

At the same time, groups of both teaching personnel and students use higher education institutions as forums for political action and ideological mobilization. In some cases, actions are undertaken to suppress any nonconformist views, disregarding one of the conditions of practicing academic freedom, which is the responsible use of this freedom, the respect of opposing opinions and the approach of all issues from a scientific angle, provided that the freedom of practicing political action and of defending ideologies be kept outside the boundaries of educational institutions. In both cases, the conflicting parties prove their ignorance of the true nature of higher education institutions and their lack of respect for academic freedom.

On the other hand, the other elements that influence the scientific productivity of teaching personnel and the quality of education are the loss of scholarship opportunities, the absence

⁴² This even applies for Egypt which is the most active Arab country in the domain of scientific research outside higher education. See (Radi, 2005).

of real support provided to research, the lack of production of new knowledge, the lack of opportunities to disseminate research results through various means, and drowning the teaching personnel in heavy workloads.

This situation is exacerbated by the absence of a supportive social environment for academic freedom, and the presence of issues that cannot be subject to research and to deepening of the knowledge related to them through rigorous scientific research and societal debate. These taboos are related to what is considered in most Arab States as sensitive issues that should not be subject to public discussion such as discussing religious beliefs, issues related to national security and armed forces, and issues affecting the political system, the head of state, the heads of other states and the judiciary system. Sensitive issues may even be related to history and geography, given the possible interstate or internal political sensitivities.

The violations of academic freedom are not limited to the practices of the authorities responsible for higher education which refuse the renewal of the contract of any individual considered as having violated his obligations or going off-course, but also engulf the practices of state authorities. These authorities exercise various forms of pressure on individuals who may be arrested or ordered to internal or external exile. To that we can add all forms of pressure, threats, and intimidation exercised by ideological groups that are independent from state and academic authorities against all those who dare to cross the red lines imposed on the freedom of belief and expression which are safeguarded by the Charter of Human Rights and are also necessary for proper exercise of the higher education profession. A teaching personnel association at an Arab university expressed its attachment to "the importance of academic freedom which is the basis for the advancement of education and development, (and its conviction) that the disregard of academic freedom is not only limited to the current administration at the university, but is a widespread phenomenon in some regional and Arab universities" (Al Ray Newspaper, 2009).

In conclusion, the institutional and societal atmosphere in the majority of Arab States doesn't seem to be conducive to academic freedom. As a result of various pressures faced by teaching personnel, it is noted that most of them adopt a policy of self-censorship and refrain from engaging in the discussion of any issue that may be considered sensitive or controversial by those who hold the power. This has led to the reduction of the role of teaching personnel in leading scientific research, in producing knowledge and debating issues that can contribute to the advancement of society and its institutions. Furthermore, it hinders the education of intellectual elites who would possess the critical thinking needed to lead societal progress.

4. Job security and accountability

If the enjoyment of academic freedom requires a high degree of job security so that the teaching personnel would exercise this freedom without being subjected to the risk of being sanctioned or fired for having expressed their opinion, absolute job security would reflect negatively on their productivity. This absolute job security is mainly represented by the fact that teaching personnel in governmental higher education institutions in the Arab States are considered as regular civil servants. Furthermore, they often insist on staying in this situation because of the job security they enjoy and other social benefits generally reserved for public sector employees.

However, job security must be coupled with clearly defined accountability mechanisms and with a regular assessment of performance and productivity as well as with measures designed to improve this performance. There should also be strict measures applied in the event of proven incompetence, repeated neglect or misconduct. It is to be noted that all of these measures, both preventive and disciplinary, are absent from the culture of public management in the Arab States

or are applied in a selective way that is far from respecting equity and non-discrimination. This situation that could lead to the absence of the sense of responsibility is coupled with short-term contracts which require the “good conduct” of the teaching personnel in order to be renewed. Thus, the member of the teaching personnel remains at the mercy of the administration of the institution of higher education which employs him, and keeps him/her on a short leash. Therefore, the member of the teaching personnel adapts all his/her activities to the expectations, letting him/herself go and neglecting his role in searching for the truth, criticizing knowledge and leading the thought paving the way for social development at various levels. It is perhaps in North America that the best practices in this area are found resulting in the autonomy of the universities, even governmental ones, and where the contractual relationship between the institution and the member of the teaching personnel is based on a clear and collective explicit contract. This model includes job security which is conditioned by the proper accomplishment of the tasks entrusted to the member of the teaching personnel, and the provision of various social benefits similar to those enjoyed by public sector employees. Thus, the institutions have working conditions specifically tailored for higher education and a financial status commensurate to the high-level functions performed by the members of the teaching personnel.

5. Working conditions

The performance of teaching personnel cannot be reduced to their scientific qualifications and educational skills. In fact, their morale, dynamism and motivation to ensure efficient performance are affected by the working conditions.

The objective conditions that have a significant effect on teaching personnel include the availability of appropriate facilities and equipment, the number of students per classroom, the presence of teaching and research assistants, the availability of funding for research, the opportunity to participate in decision-making, especially those of an academic nature, and the means for disseminating intellectual outputs and the opportunities for meeting peers from the professional and academic community.

Another important factor is that of the physical, financial and social benefits which are granted to teaching personnel. It seems that benefits provided by institutions of higher education in the Arab countries to teaching personnel could be described as good (as in the case of Kuwait), acceptable in some cases and less than acceptable in most of the cases. This is because many countries still lag behind in this area by depriving teaching personnel of a decent salary, even in some Arab countries that enjoy high incomes⁴³. This state of things would prevent teaching personnel from fully engaging in their profession and devoting themselves entirely to their tasks, as recommended by the International Recommendation of UNESCO (1997). In fact, they seem to pile up additional teaching hours, therefore drowning themselves in heavy teaching loads and consequently, leaving aside scholarships and scientific research⁴⁴. Thus, in a matter of a few years they lose their scientific vitality, quit and move to the private sector for other possibilities or emigrate. As for those who are not Ph.D. holders, they face the same threats in a much shorter period.

VI. Conclusion

This study shows that Arab States did not give enough attention to the issues of career path of higher education teaching personnel, in spite of many efforts aimed at sending nationals to

⁴³ Many interventions of teaching personnel or those on scholarships deploring low wages in some Arab countries including the KSA and the UAE can be found online.

⁴⁴ See for example, regarding Egypt (Radi, 2005).

specialize abroad and then return home to undertake teaching functions in higher education institutions.

For instance, in the majority of Arab States there is no integrated strategy designed to supply the institutions of higher education with highly qualified teaching personnel who have the necessary competencies to efficiently carry out the various roles and functions expected from them.

In addition, there is no strategy to promote scientific research aimed at developing and deepening existing knowledge, producing new knowledge and expanding its applications. This is badly needed in order to develop Arab societies in all areas, to benefit higher education students from these advances, and achieve a more educated society with graduates who master analytical skills and new technology better than past generations, are aware of and committed to human, societal and universal issues and better equipped to face the challenges of globalization.

These issues are related to the policies that should govern teaching personnel matters more than to career path rules and regulations. In fact, regulations applied to scholarships may be good from a management point of view, but the underlying philosophy ought to be entirely reversed. In addition, specific regulations for recruitment and promotion may be good in appearance. However, the highest standards in this context are not established in the minds of the teaching personnel and of the higher education officials. Thus, it becomes difficult to properly apply these standards and preserve the glitter and academic connotation of university ranks.

In respect to the issue of qualifying to teach in higher education, and despite some orientations that at first seemed innovative, it seems that the actual levels remain far from the expected. In fact, academic qualifications are below the expected in most Arab States, while pedagogical qualifications seem to be almost or totally absent in these countries, regardless of the standards that could be considered.

In conclusion, it seems that achieving the quality of higher education in the Arab States is only possible if a high priority is given to the issue of supplying its institutions (including private institutions) with teaching personnel capable of assuming their responsibilities with a high degree of professionalism. Thus, each country should develop an urgent and integrated strategy to significantly upgrade the qualifications and competencies of higher education teaching personnel in order to get close to international standards, if not to match them.

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Engaging academics in quality conversations: A bottom-up approach to improving teaching and learning in higher education institutions

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Abstract

Higher education in Tunisia has recently launched a quality enhancement program. Often scant attention is paid to the role of academics in impeding or facilitating change. This paper reports the experience of a group of lecturers who spontaneously engaged in quality conversations and designed collective measures to improve their teaching and learning. The conditions as well as the processes for engaging in such bottom-up experience are reviewed. The outcome of such experience on the academics' theories of teaching and specifically readiness and metaphors for change are discussed. This is compared to the results of previous studies on resistance to change to argue that both top-down and bottom-up approaches are necessary to the implementation and success of a quality culture in higher education.

I. Introduction

The Tunisian university has celebrated its fiftieth birthday in 2008. The “modern university” was officially inaugurated in 1958 two years after the independence thus cutting with the traditional teaching in the Zeytuna mosque founded in A.D. 698 and considered as the first university in the region and the oldest in Africa.

The “modern university” was pretty much modeled after the European one and specially the French. Tracks, degrees and length of study were much like the French system of higher education. After 1987, the Tunisian higher education system developed from an elite into a mass higher education with over 30% of young people aged 21 - 25 estimated to be studying for a university degree. According to the official statistics, 13 universities and 190 institutions serve a student population of over 350000 expected to increase to 500000 students in 2011 (Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research). All universities are public institutions and are provided for in the budget. Universities are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research. Until the 1970's, students had unrestricted admission to the universities. Later, student admission was restricted based on the average level of the student's baccalaureate exam. However, a political decision has been made to grant all those who succeed in the national baccalaureate exam a seat in the higher education institutions.

Recently, a number of reforms have been introduced to the Tunisian higher education scene. The

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generalisation of the LMD system to all higher education institutions and a number of quality initiatives are considered among the most important. Tunisia has recently undertaken a number of measures concerning quality such as receiving a loan from the World Bank in June 2006 or issuing an important law in February 2008 mainly aimed at providing the legal framework for a quality enhancement and assurance program. The enactment of this law raised a considerable amount of resistance and argument between academics and the ministry which caused a new model to emerge that divides the academics into “followers” and “dissidents”. The followers are those who support all top management decisions and thus “agree” with the new quality program and the dissidents are those who oppose the management and thus “refuse” the new quality program. Away from a political model that divides academics into two groups, we need to understand first what really motivates academics to engage in educational innovating activities and second how new quality enhancement measures are implemented in the realities of departments, lecture rooms and labs. The challenge in such situations is not just to change the legal framework and structures but also to alter the academics’ underlying belief systems and assumptions.

Tunisian academics seem to be ill-prepared for undertaking a major change in their daily teaching practices. There is currently no professional training requirement for lecturers; as a result, the majority of the lecturers do not have any teaching qualifications, and essentially are required to learn on the job, oftentimes relying on how they were taught themselves. However, there is a growing recognition within the sector for the need for training for lecturers. A new scheme for providing in-service training to newly appointed lecturers was launched two years ago whereby the newly recruited lecturers are required to attend a number of most probably mentoring sessions provided by senior lecturers of the same university. There is no explicit description of this program. Each university is entrusted to design a concomitant program for its newly appointed lecturers which in turn entrusts one of its senior lecturers to design and achieve it. In the lack of a clear learning theory adopted by the institution and the dearth of research on teaching and learning at the Tunisian higher education institution, it is surprising to see any benefit from this program. There is, however, no official program for in-service training for other experienced lecturers. The general tendency is to assume that once you get a PhD in any domain you should figure out how to teach it. The second general belief is that after gaining a number of teaching years at any department, there is little to be learnt. Pedagogy is thought to be at best redundant and at worst ridiculous. The only exception is e-learning as it is believed to require novel and technical knowledge. Educational research on higher education is altogether very thin on the ground and almost inexistent. This is probably due to the unacceptable and inexplicable absence of a faculty of education which would have centrifuged all kinds of research on learning and teaching.

During the period 2005 - 2008, I have conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with senior members of staff on their conceptions of “good” teaching (Ben Othman, 2009). The data talked loud of teacher-focused conceptions of teaching excellence, of lack of reflective practice and specially of lack of the right attitude to consider teaching “problems” not as individual instances of failure but as opportunities for department level and institutional learning on how to make teaching and learning better.

This study relates a spontaneous academic development experience where a group of lecturers led by an enthusiastic and energetic head of department engaged in a series of conversations “to get into grips” with the new quality requirements. Armed with a positive attitude to enhance their teaching practices, these lecturers openly discussed various teaching problems and collectively

designed an analysis and a solution for it. Developing, implementing, managing, and refining quality teaching processes is not effortless. This study sheds some light on some of the processes of undertaking change within the realities of a Tunisian higher education institution.

II. Theories of change in higher education

The classical tradition in innovation research regards the development of innovations as a diffusion process. According to this tradition, diffusion occurs between individuals, even though the innovations take place in a geographical and social field, the structure of which influences the diffusion. Diffusion is seen as dependent on geographical communications, on information through social contacts, and individual acceptance occurs through imitation or through some process of intellectual conviction. But, in parallel with diffusion research, there has grown up a research field oriented towards change not merely *within* a system but also *of* a social system. In this setting, there is a greater emphasis on the behaviour of groups and organisations and on interaction within and between groups.

1. Quality assurance and quality enhancement

Harvey and Green (1993) distinguish three definitions of quality that are relevant to the issue of quality assurance (QA): as value for money, as fit for the espoused purpose, and as transforming. *Quality as value for money.* A “quality” institution in this view is one that satisfies the demands of public accountability.

Quality as fit for the purpose. The “purpose” is that of the institution. Universities have several purposes, with teaching and research as the most important.

Quality as transforming. Quality teaching transforms students’ perceptions of their world, and the way they go about applying their knowledge to real world problems; it also transforms teachers’ conceptions of their role as teacher, and the culture of the institution itself.

Harvey and Knight (1996) strongly stress the need to transform higher education if it is to provide a transformative experience for students, so that they will become the change agents for the future society. Central to higher education transformation is to reconceptualise the learning process. There is a need to move the emphasis from teaching to learning; and to see students as participants in a process, who are to be enhanced and empowered. Prosser et al. (1994) have found that helping teachers change their conceptions of teaching would be likely to improve the quality of student learning. Biggs (2001 p. 227) states that quality enhancement ‘is about getting teachers to teach better, which is what staff development is all about’. Carpenter & Tait (2001) define good teaching as having ‘two central features: it is necessarily student centered, and it is ‘innovative’.

2. Academics’ reactions

In recent years, there has developed a substantial literature focused upon strategies for implementing change within universities and the impact of organisational cultures upon the choice and success of change strategies (Thomas, & Willcoxson, 1998). Surprisingly, the approach to strategic change promulgated by most OECD governments and many practitioners assumed that a hard managerialist approach to strategic change was more effective than traditional models of collegial debate and decision-making used in universities. The literature abounds with studies of lecturers’ reactions to quality assurance initiatives in most OECD countries. Different studies mainly conducted in the USA, Australia, the United Kingdom or other European countries have

reported instances of academic staff inertia, compliance or resistance to governments' quality assurance programs. Academics are described as "trapped" (Newton, 2002). Despite a huge expansion in change management education and training, it became increasingly obvious that beliefs held by stakeholders about the identity, purpose, and character of the process, the higher education institution, and its environment strongly affected organisational actions. Teacher beliefs have been seen as being produced and reproduced by social processes and as being significant at the collective or group level, and at the individual level as they form a 'conceptual lens' i.e. the possibilities that were open to the strategic planners (Norton et al., 2005).

III. Methodology

1. The context of the study

This institute which we are going to call the Tunis Institute of Finance (TIF)² is a relatively young institute providing undergraduate and graduate education in accountancy, finance and ICT related fields.

I have been approached by the head of department to give what she termed a "hands-on" workshop on quality as she thinks that she as well as her colleagues needed a good "technical" introduction on what quality is. The intended workshop developed into six 3 to 4 hours meetings which were attended by an average number of 24 lecturers and took place at the TIF over the period between May and June 2007. The meetings were discussions of "issues" described by lecturers as unacceptable or problematic.

When the head of department approached me in April 2007, I have just finished a study on academics' resistance to quality where academics' questionnaires and interviews revealed a great deal of inertia, lack of information and lack of understanding of what quality is and a general mistrust of the real motives behind the government's quality program (Ben Othman, 2007). Understandably, I found it interesting that a group of academics genuinely expressed the need to understand what quality is about. I haven't, then, envisaged any research plans for this particular event. I have kept a diary as I wanted to maximize my own learning opportunities from this quite unusual practice in the Tunisian higher education scene. At the same period, and just accidentally, I have been approached by four different institutions for the same reason. The other three institutions did not really achieve much. In one of them, the members of staff did not simply turn up either to the first or the second announced meetings probably to assert group inertia or "disobedience" to the director's "invitation". The second institution first meeting was good but the second one was interrupted by a real unfortunate struggle for power between the head of department and a senior lecturer which made any kind of "professional" discussion simply impossible. The third head of department was not really interested in understanding quality. All that he wanted was someone to fill in the quality tender on his behalf. Thus, I quickly called the TIF my "best quality group" but still with no planned intention to research this experience. I decided to look at this experience with a research lens only when I started receiving requests from this group to attend their classes and give them feedback. Peer observation is locally rated as one of the most "hated" and least "trusted" reflective practice routines by academics and very often equated with basic and secondary education culture where inspection is carried through classroom observations. To me, these requests which were largely unexpected and unmediated witness critical moments in the change of the lecturers' beliefs and conceptions of their work

² A pseudo-name is given to the institute at the request of the TIF quality group.

and of ways to enhance it. Further instances came during the round-up session which took place nearly a year after the first meetings and where different lecturers showed their own rated success of how they enhanced their instructional routines.

The quality conversations with the TIF group evolved as follows:

Table 1: Types of quality conversations

Quality conversations	Period
Six meetings The last one is a round-up session	May-June 2007
1 day seminar entitled “motivating students is the responsibility of the teachers”	October, 24 th 2007
One final round up session	May 2008

During the meetings, the group engaged in processes of reflection and dialogue. My aim was to challenge their otherwise taken-for-granted beliefs and assumptions regarding teaching and learning with a view to broadening their perceptions. The aim of such an exercise is to help lecturers attain the requisite variety in their mental models necessary to face the requirements of a student-centered culture.

The meetings evolved around a number of activities prepared in advance and a battery of questions that emerged spontaneously during the discussion. The aim of the sessions was to help this group of lecturers perceive, understand and act upon the teaching and learning events that occur in their daily lives and design a collective understanding and solutions for any events that they describe as problematic. It is often the case that the solution is given by a member of the team either as something he has already tried out or as a plan of action that he thinks can help. My role was often to confront the team with information scenarios and questions that challenge both individual and collective cognitions that have come to prevail within the Tunisian higher education culture.

2. Sources of data

Table 2: Sources of data

Type of data	Quantity	Major themes
Researcher diary	6000 words	Problems identified during the discussion Major misconceptions Theoretical input
lecturers’ emails	890 words	Individual issues Explicit and implicit feedback on the quality conversations Signs of reflective practice
Summary report of the first meetings	2000 words	Issues, different analyses, solutions and future plans as perceived and agreed on by the group

Course descriptions, handouts and exams	1190 words	Signs of shift from a teaching-focused beliefs to learning focused ones
Task written output	49 instances	New emergent metaphors
Lecturers' oral presentations of their achievements in the round-up sessions	1 power-point presentation and three oral presentations	Self-assessed evaluations of the changes carried by the lecturers in solo or in small groups
Other written sources	Varied articles	The lecturers brought to the meetings short articles and URLs for web pages they found related and important to the issues discussed during the conversation sessions

3. Data analysis

Different types of data have been analysed using the constant comparative method, with its primary aim to identify main categories and patterns in collected qualitative data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The method combines inductive category coding with a simultaneous comparison of all units of meaning obtained. Following Strauss & Corbin (1994, 1996) procedures of writing rules of inclusion when rethinking about data which fit into certain category, certain proposed statements have been derived from refined categories revealing the main draft of research outcomes.

Data was sieved to answer the following questions:

1. How did the TIF group engage in enhancing their teaching routines?
2. What were the favourable conditions that helped them do so?

IV. Findings

The TIF group has progressively undergone cycles of upgrading their teaching and learning beliefs and conceptions. The reflective conversations often evolved around the new changes in the work of academics specially those that directly affect teaching and learning. The biggest revelation for the team was to realize that their students are far from being what they used to or what they expect them to be. Massification has often entailed what they termed a "new breed" of students and it took the team cycles of discussions and positive attitude to stop accusing the others for the "low-quality" or "non-quality" aspects of their students' learning and start thinking of possible ways to overcome an unprecedented variability in their institutions' input. The team's positive attitude helped them to attempt to adapt their teaching to the new kind of students they deal with.

In contrast to other faculty education techniques, the "quality conversations" enabled participants to appropriate the process and the output of collective reflection. The enthusiasts would bring to the meeting instances of identified problems and seek collective reflection and advice. Some of the lecturers started individual and systematic reflections that they did not attempt before. Others reported a continuous effort to make sense of their teaching environment in "new ways". One of them reported:

I keep turning everything I see into a series of questions which are why is this happening the way it does? Is my answer/solution correct? And is there still a better way of doing things. I think that the number one lesson that we all learned, thanks to you and to X (name of the head of department) is that there are good and that there are even better ways of teaching and learning. If that's quality, then I am for it. (A/C2 email dated November, 21st 2007)

The quality conversations seemed to respect a number of unspoken rules. The number one rule is that the meetings are to find collective ways to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Second, the conversations do not take the government's quality program into account. Third, there should be no censoring to questions or to answers.

During the one day seminar, the TIF group seemed more open to theoretical input on motivation, learning, teaching, assessment and related themes as attested in their written statements of what they expect to learn from the seminar. They elaborated detailed expectancies and started collectively thinking of new issues the teaching of generic skills or optimum ways of "combating student forgetting" (A/C 12). The seminar contained several instances of "ahs" that testified to how this group of lecturers turned into active learners, collectively diagnosing, reflecting and making sense of their teaching worlds.

The final round-up session was requested by the group as they wanted to "assess how much they achieved so far" (A/C 1 email dated March 12th 2008). Table 3 below summarizes the types of innovations as reported by the group.

Table 3: Types of innovations as reported by the lecturers

Types of innovation	Frequency
Use of handouts	18
Written course materials	12
Pre-course prior knowledge testing	10
Clear unambiguous exams	8
E-learning resources	6
Other	13

One of the group self assessed the benefits of the new techniques by comparing the results of her present students to those of the previous year. She reported a net 43% increase in students' end of term exam compared to the previous year. She estimated that the assessment of students' prior knowledge and continuous in-class support were the major causes of improvement. Another lecturer described how their efforts as a team of mathematics lecturers in a department which traditionally receives students who are bad in mathematics turned their "boring and deserted" lectures into live and interesting ones where students do not hesitate to ask questions that show real signs of learning and specially motivation to learn. This teacher described the key to success as:

As soon as the students were relieved from the burden of taking notes of detailed mathematical equations, they started giving understanding more importance. We used to spend most of the lecture time writing on the board while the students were breathless trying to keep in paste of our writing and of the unfolding of the lecture. No wonder they used to understand little. No wonder that only the very best students used to sit for exams with a minimum comfort. It took us a lot

of work though to prepare the course handouts and basic readings. Fortunately, each of us committed himself or herself to his or her share of work. Still it is a lot of work and we hope that next term we will be relieved. We have had no exam results yet to compare with last year. We frankly think we do not really want to. These comparisons are dangerous. But we have all witnessed a better attitude and motivation from our students. We are very happy for that specially that we didn't expect as much (A/C 6 lecturer)

The rest of the lecturers who attended the round-up session but did not report any explicit change in their instructional routines did not show signs of doubt or disbelief. Some of them declared their intention to invest the necessary time and effort to do so the following term. Others regretted not being able to team up with other colleagues and wondered if they could go solo. None of the lecturers showed any signs of resistance to quality teaching. It simply stopped being part of the ministry's discourse and became part of the "quality group" discourse whether for those who went ahead and carried the necessary changes in their daily teaching or for those who just convinced themselves of doing so some time in the future. Perhaps this second group needs another round of group conversations.

V. Motivating conditions for academics' engagement

Worldwide, the higher education scene has witnessed a number of changes which have varied in nature, provenance and intensity, but which all impact on academic staff and their every day work lives. The literature has reported more instances of resistance or compliance than grass-roots engagement experiences where a group of lecturers genuinely engage in collectively building their own agenda of quality in higher education. Success stories seem to be more related to top-down programs and initiatives rather than bottom-up ones. This study argues that lecturers' engagement can happen and that by providing for a number of positive motivating conditions, it is possible to reduce group inertia. The following section will describe discerned conditions that seemed to favour the success of this "quality group" in enhancing their instructional routines.

1. Building sustainable power

Traditionally, the moral purposefulness of the academy has turned on the notion of academic freedom as 'freedom for academics': their freedom to speak their own minds, to teach in accordance with their own interests, and to develop those interests according to their own research agenda. Academics do not like to be rendered into execution agents, monitored or worse inspected. The changing nature of higher education has made the traditional power boundaries increasingly fuzzy (Barnett, 2000). Recent organizational forces (e.g. new quality programs, LMD systems, accountability) have eroded and redefined traditional academic power and privilege. The TIF lecturers trusted their own ability to diagnose the different issues and build collective and practical solutions to them. They did not expect or accept any tierce body to dictate to them what to do. If there is a growing necessity to attend differently to the needs of their students, academics would like to be given the time and the space to do so.

2. Constructing collective frames for quality teaching and learning

Quality enhancement and assurance programs draw values and paradigms from a number of social values that are neither universal nor objective. Academics' conceptions of the tasks of higher education, of their own roles and identities and of the optimum ways of enhancing

the ways they do normally things for a number of decades are also socially constructed and contextually shaped. The way the TIF academics negotiated and ordered their priorities within the limits of what they think is possible tells so much about their implicit theories of teaching, learning and their selves. Though the TIF lecturers showed a great aptitude to upgrade their teaching constructs and routines, and they did actually attempt to do so to a varying degree, yet there seems to be a limit at what is possible to achieve while upgrading these frames and constructs. However small the academics' success at upgrading their frames of reference is, there seems to be plenty of indications that such success is more sustainable than trying to comply with quality standards and norms without actually changing the way things are done at the core (Newton, 2000; Birtwistle, 2004; Birtwistle, 2006).

Apparently, the TIF lecturers needed the support of the group to attempt individually and collectively to step out of the comfort of teacher-focused paradigm; the status quo of doing things which has become legitimate with time; and step into the uncertain and uncomfortable zone of learner-focused paradigm which is at the basis of quality teaching. There seemed to be an urgent need for a common vision, nonetheless an unofficial one. The conversations helped a lot to construct this common vision. While discussing the relationship between conversations and collective identity and interorganisational collaboration, Hardy et al (2005) argue that interorganizational collaboration can be understood as the product of sets of conversations that draw on existing discourses and that effective collaboration emerges out of a two-stage process. In this process, conversations produce discursive resources that create a collective identity and translate it into effective collaboration. Though Hardy et al (2005) studied the effective collaboration between organizations, their conclusions seem to apply to the collaboration within the same organization as well.

3. Not being afraid of “mistakes”

Individual and collective mistakes were treated with great professionalism. Contrary to the senior lecturers who find it hard to signal any teaching problems even general ones, lecturers in this group did not hesitate to “admit” going wrong and publically analyzed their misconceptions. They were happy to work within a zone of comfort created through a zone of mutual trust and honesty.

One of the lecturers admitted that:

I was wrong to inform my students that only a third of the group could make it and the other two thirds could not. I explicitly told the two thirds to save themselves the hassle of attending. I guess I am wrong.(A/C 1)

4. Persuasive leadership

The head of department firmly believed that there must be better ways of doing things and could convince her colleagues of looking for these ways. She monitored most of the conversations with great ability. She was often described as firm but fair. Some of her colleagues came to the last meeting even without knowing what the meeting was about. They admitted that only “her could bring you to a meeting without even knowing what the meeting was about”. The head of department also insisted on getting a report read for everyone’s knowledge and circulated it among all members of staff including those who did not show any interest in attending the quality conversation meetings hoping that a written document “would steer up thoughts”. She was unanimously reelected as head of department and colleagues started thinking that nobody could actually measure up to the standard she put so high. Discussions often tackled the centralization

of the decision-taking and complained of the disinterest and demotivating measurements of the TIF administration. However, these comments were not put centre stage. The head of department was determined to push things forward and it is not a lazy or complaisant director who is going to stop her or her team.

VI. Discussion

This study aimed at describing the experience of a group of lecturers who found the argument of how to really increase the quality of their teaching more appealing and persuasive than the general discourse of the new ministry quality program. Their indirect resistance to the “official” program has engendered an intuitive and authentic desire to build their “own” definition and understanding of quality teaching and learning.

The experience of the TIF group who genuinely engaged in building their own definitions and metaphors of quality teaching and learning seems to point to the fact that the difficulty in changing from a behavioral pattern these lecturers have been comfortably using to a newer one requires empowerment, collaboration and flexibility. These academics did not resist making the necessary changes once they collectively answered the basic questions of why to change, how and who is going to carry the change. Once they acquired the right attitude, knowledge and metaphor they created new and collective ways of enhancing their instructional routines and were ready to invest the necessary time and effort in order to do so. It seems misleading to assume that those who resist the top management initiatives are resisting quality. They resist the new distribution of power which the quality initiatives seem to enforce. The new quality initiatives treat the institutions as empty entities and the academics as either loyal or disloyal executers. Apparently, quality in higher education is not a plan to be executed. It is a new culture to be constructed primarily by academics who are operating in the front line and who have the great power of “realizing” a quality program.

Ben Othman (2007) has identified a number of defensive avoidance strategies that lecturers have used in order to resist the quality project. The biggest observation, then, was that resistance might be fruitful and even better than inertia. Group inertia and subtle covert resistance ways are often reported in the literature as common and “dangerous”. I think that the biggest challenge for Arab universities is not to “copy” the best quality enhancement and assurance programs but to find ways of turning group inertia into engagement. In relating a successful experience where a group of lecturers turned their resistance to the government’s quality initiatives into a positive attitude through varying forms of individual and collective frames for enhancing the quality of teaching and learning, this study hopes to argue that academics are major actors in the quality enhancement culture and that a number of conditions seem to favour their genuine engagement into designing and realizing better teaching and learning worlds.

This paper wishes to argue that both top-down and bottom-up approaches are needed in the region. Top-down initiatives are crucial in setting the tone for the new changes to be undertaken but bottom-up approaches are indispensable to the lecturers’ efforts to construct sustainable change and a sense of ownership.

Strangely, loyalty has been the number one issue discussed by senior members of staff when describing their professional lives issues and problems (Ben Othman, 2009). They often describe instructional routines as getting worse as the younger generation of lecturers lack the right loyalty to follow the steps of their seniors and carry on the good tradition. It is also the same lack of loyalty that prevents the senior members from imposing their own ways and from interfering

in the process when they notice what they categorize as “misbehavior” on the part of the junior colleagues. The same metaphor which sees “good” teaching as guaranteed through the moral obligation of junior academics to unquestionably copy the model of their senior colleagues and very often teachers, seems to apply with top management expecting the academics to execute their lofty intentions without even asking legitimate questions of “how” or “why” or even “who” is supposed to carry the changes necessary for quality enhancement. Both senior academics and management see questions “from below” to borrow Newton (2004) terms as signs of disobedience. The Arab region policy making in higher education seems to be an area of urgent research and attention in the future.

VII. Ways forward

Research on academics’ reactions to the new changes in their working environments whether these reactions are spontaneous or planned, individual or collective, conscious or unconscious, explicit or implicit is urgently needed in the Arab countries. However good the change programs and policies might be at the onset, academics’ engagement and collaborative work is a key variable in the implementation and success of such policies. Arab countries are in an urgent need to turn their higher education institutions to places where knowledge is produced and not merely consumed. Such an aim cannot be reached without a thorough understanding of the academics’ roles and a better use of the higher education resources. Quality in higher education is basically a western concept rather than a universal one and an appreciation of the context of higher education in the Arab countries as it really is and not as it is thought to be should smoothen the transfer of the quality concepts and thus weave them into the university “fabric” (Adams, 1998).

The implications for policy and professional development are worth noting. The higher education in the Arab region needs to move past its current seesaw regime of endurance and impatience and start applying gentle, but constant, pressure on universities to foster the development of quality learning and teaching. Such an orientation would not be possible without recognition of the role of academics at the front line and a change in position whereby academics are not expected to be execution agents but owners and partners of the change and the success of higher education mission and output. Whether considered as agents or partners, academics need to take a rough and lengthy road to quality teaching and learning. Unless equipped with the right social and cognitive frame, these academics will simply hesitate to undertake such a road. It might be misleading to categorize academics as followers or dissidents and to consider explicit resistance as a challenge and threat to management authority. What this study seems to point to is that academics are either able or not to undertake the road to change and that such ability seems to be negotiated and constructed locally within departments and institutions and NOT outside of them.

VIII. Conclusion

Although this study reports the experience of a small group of lecturers acting within an undoubtedly unique context, it holds clear implications for those who would like to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in higher education departments and institutions. Unlike most predominantly views of top down-managerial conceptions of the changes necessary for quality enhancement, this paper argues in line with (Norton et al. 2005; Brown et al. 2002 and Newton,

2000 & 2002) that sustainable quality enhancement is only possible when a change in the beliefs of academics is achieved.

The Tunisian system of higher education firmly believes in the leading role of senior staff members. As quality enhancement measures of teaching and learning seem to be challenging predominant routines and beliefs, some senior staff might feel that their professional competence is being implicitly challenged, and their perceived capacity to meet the challenge head-on and respond appropriately to it is likely to be less if demands for change relate to relatively undeveloped areas of professional activity. This case study suggests that unless senior staff members are given the opportunity to develop the necessary skills and competence to enhance the quality of teaching and learning, they would go against the quality enhancement program and might attempt to stifle junior staff bottom-up initiatives through the usual channels of power and dissuasion. Apparently, empowering members of staff both “followers” and “dissidents” is a vital condition to the success of local and national quality enhancement programs and initiatives.

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Le Laboratoire de pédagogie universitaire de l'Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth

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Résumé

Cette intervention traite d'un dispositif institutionnel innovant dans le champ de la pédagogie universitaire, celui du Laboratoire de pédagogie universitaire, rattaché à la Faculté des sciences de l'éducation de l'Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth (USJ). L'intervention se divise en trois parties : 1. Survol rapide des défis qu'affronte l'enseignement supérieur et leurs implications sur la pédagogie universitaire qui justifient la fondation de ce Laboratoire. 2. Présentation de ce dispositif, visant à faire ressortir son originalité. Ce Laboratoire regroupe des délégués de chacune des institutions, facultés et instituts, de l'USJ. Des personnes de champs disciplinaires différents travaillent autour de projets communs dans le champ de la pédagogie universitaire. Ce Laboratoire fonctionne comme plateforme fédératrice selon une démarche participative. Ce fonctionnement a permis aux membres de la communauté universitaire de l'USJ de concevoir des innovations pédagogiques, de se les approprier et de les mettre en oeuvre. 3. Réflexions inspirées par ce dispositif: Celles-ci portent sur le fonctionnement de ce dispositif en tant qu'«Organisation apprenante». Le Laboratoire y est analysé selon les caractéristiques de ce concept, issu du management et de la psychosociologie des organisations, et qui s'avère utile à investir dans le champ de la pédagogie universitaire.

Dans cette intervention² je présenterai le Laboratoire de pédagogie universitaire de l'Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth, dispositif institutionnel particulier, afin de proposer des pistes de réflexion qui pourraient être investies dans d'autres cadres universitaires.

Elle se divise en trois parties

Je commencerai par un survol des défis qu'affronte l'enseignement supérieur, ainsi que leurs implications pour l'Université, afin de justifier la fondation de ce Laboratoire.

Je présenterai ensuite ce Laboratoire afin d'en faire ressortir l'originalité.

Je vous soumettrai enfin quelques réflexions que m'inspire le fonctionnement de ce Laboratoire, afin de rendre cette expérience transférable à d'autres contextes universitaires.

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² Le noyau de ce texte a été présenté au colloque Quelle pédagogie universitaire dans le contexte méditerranéen et américain actuel, organisé par l'Université Antonine du 15 au 18 décembre 2008.

I. Défis et implications

Les défis qu'affronte l'enseignement universitaire sont nombreux. Je n'en citerai que cinq:

- L'augmentation des effectifs de l'enseignement universitaire et la diversification du public.
- L'accès individualisé à l'information grâce aux nouvelles technologies de l'information.
- La multiplication rapide des connaissances.
- La complexification du monde du travail.
- L'émergence du concept de qualité dans l'enseignement universitaire.

Ces défis impliquent de revisiter les cursus, les contenus ainsi que les approches et les méthodes d'enseignement afin de développer des compétences supérieures, compétences essentiellement réflexives, qui permettent de vivre et de produire dans la société de la connaissance.

Ils impliquent donc de revisiter la pédagogie universitaire, qui devient un des paramètres de la qualité, et de se déplacer du paradigme de l'enseignement vers celui de l'apprentissage.

Dans son allocution, à la fête patronale de l'Université Saint-Joseph, en mars 2006, le Recteur, le Professeur René Chamussy, disait «L'université ne peut faire l'impasse aujourd'hui sur les modalités d'appropriation du savoir par la population étudiante de même que sur sa façon d'exister et de se lancer dans la société (...), il s'agit là d'un problème de qualité pour notre Université, il s'agit là de cette excellence que nous avons à construire ensemble».

II. Présentation du Laboratoire de pédagogie universitaire de l'Université Saint-Joseph

Cette vision exprimée par le Recteur a été traduite en actes, au cours de l'année universitaire 2004-2005, avec la création à l'Université Saint-Joseph d'un Laboratoire de pédagogie universitaire et d'une Unité des nouvelles technologies éducatives, rattachés à la Faculté des sciences de l'éducation. L'USJ n'a pas attendu la création de ce Laboratoire pour développer la pédagogie universitaire en son sein, sa Faculté de médecine, à titre d'exemple, a été pionnière dans ce champ, et ce depuis de nombreuses années. Mais maintenant ceci fait partie de son projet pour développer l'excellence qu'elle brigue pour ses formations, et toute la communauté universitaire y est impliquée. Ce Laboratoire est un dispositif qui institutionnalise et opérationnalise cette volonté.

1. Mission

La mission de ce Laboratoire est le développement des pratiques pédagogiques au sein de l'Université, dans le but de renforcer l'excellence de l'enseignement.

2. Conception et originalité

L'originalité de ce Laboratoire est qu'il regroupe des délégués de chacune des institutions de l'Université Saint-Joseph: facultés et instituts.

C'est une plateforme fédératrice qui fonctionne selon une démarche participative.

Là est pour moi un point central de l'originalité de cette structure, et ce qui la distingue d'autres structures de pédagogie universitaire de par le monde. Effectivement, dans la plupart des autres universités de par le monde, une entité de pédagogie universitaire est créée, relevant du rectorat de l'université ou de l'une des ses institutions, ou bien jouit d'une autonomie totale. Cette structure est généralement constituée de personnes qui ne représentent pas nécessairement les institutions de l'université en question.

Le choix de l'USJ a été de former une commission d'«experts» «ex-pairs», pour reprendre la belle

image de Philippe Meirieu, constituée justement d'enseignants qui représentent leur institution au Laboratoire et ont un rôle d'agent multiplicateur du Laboratoire dans leur institution. Les membres du LPU sont donc des enseignants de disciplines et d'institutions différentes.

Cette originalité n'est pas un gadget, mais a permis aux membres de notre communauté universitaire de se connaître d'abord, et de s'approprier des innovations pédagogiques, de participer à leur élaboration, de les mutualiser et de les mettre en œuvre.

Cette démarche participative, entre personnes et institutions de champs disciplinaires différents, a permis de développer une culture commune de l'apprentissage dans notre Université.

3. Objectifs

Parmi ses principaux objectifs, assurer un cadre:

- de réflexion autour de diverses problématiques pédagogiques,
- d'harmonisation des représentations et des pratiques,
- de mutualisation et de diffusion des pratiques innovantes,
- de soutien pédagogique pour les enseignants universitaires,
- de formation continue des enseignants.

4. Activités

Les activités de ce jeune Laboratoire sont nombreuses:

Je citerai quelques-unes, effectuées depuis sa fondation en 2004 - 2005, jusqu'à ce jour, afin de rendre concrets sa démarche et ses travaux:

a. Activités autour des Travaux personnels des étudiants

Les Travaux personnels des étudiants sont constitutifs de l'enseignement dans le Système européen de crédits, adopté par l'USJ, et par d'autres universités.

Un travail de fond a été effectué concernant les travaux personnels contrôlés des étudiants:

- Un sondage auprès des responsables des institutions de l'USJ, des enseignants et des étudiants, a permis d'établir un état des lieux de cette question, de faire émerger les représentations, les difficultés rencontrées, les solutions envisagées, ainsi que les pratiques innovantes dans ce champ.
- Deux journées de réflexion, sur deux années consécutives, autour des résultats de cette recherche, organisées en ateliers de travail ont regroupé l'ensemble des enseignants et des responsables d'institutions.
- Un document de référence sur ce sujet, ainsi qu'un document consignait les mesures à prendre ont été rédigés et distribués aux doyens et directeurs.
- Un projet de recherche est prévu sur la pertinence pédagogique et l'efficacité des «Travaux personnels contrôlés - TPC» (exigés par l'ECTS dans l'ensemble des cursus) dans l'autonomisation des étudiants universitaires et le développement des connaissances et compétences requises.

b. Activités autour de l'Accompagnement des étudiants et du tutorat

- Une réflexion théorique a été menée autour du concept de tutorat, visant à en explorer les dimensions, les modalités d'application et la pertinence.
- Un état des lieux a été effectué sur les pratiques d'accompagnement pédagogique mises en place dans les facultés et instituts de l'USJ.
- Trois journées pédagogiques ont été organisées en ateliers de travail, autour de la question de l'accompagnement pédagogique des étudiants et du tutorat dans l'enseignement universitaire, rassemblant responsables institutionnels et corps enseignant de l'USJ.

c. Activités autour de l'Évaluation des enseignements par les étudiants

- Le Laboratoire a mené une réflexion et a produit un document proposant une procédure et une grille pour l'évaluation des enseignements par les étudiants, ainsi qu'une grille pour le feed-back des enseignants concernant l'évaluation de leur cours.
- Un état des lieux de l'application de cette procédure a ensuite permis de l'évaluer et de l'améliorer.
- Un forum de discussion en ligne sur l'évaluation a permis de poursuivre la réflexion.

d. Activités de Formation des enseignants de l'Université

- Une sorte d'observatoire a été créé au sein du Laboratoire pour détecter les besoins en formation des enseignants de l'USJ et leur évolution, les ressources humaines en pédagogie universitaire, disponibles dans les institutions, les innovations dans ce champ, ainsi que les nouvelles structures visant le développement des démarches pédagogiques dans chacune des institutions de l'USJ.
- Une journée d'initiation aux approches actives d'enseignement a été organisée. Les enseignants se sont regroupés en ateliers, pour s'initier à diverses démarches d'enseignement actives.
- Des sessions de formation ont ensuite été offertes au corps enseignant de l'Université. Celles-ci ont regroupé plus de 400 participants sur trois années.
- Ce parcours a abouti à la mise en place d'un Diplôme universitaire en Pédagogie universitaire, ouvert à tous les enseignants du supérieur. Ce cursus est opérationnel depuis la rentrée 2008 - 2009. Il compte actuellement 17 participants. Il a été construit avec la même démarche participative, regroupant des enseignants de l'USJ de diverses institutions, qui ont mis leur expertise en commun pour construire ce projet commun. Ils se sont inspirés d'autres programmes de formation opérationnels de par le monde, qu'ils ont adapté à nos besoins.

Ce travail préparatoire a été formateur en soi. Il a induit une réflexion collective en profondeur sur l'acte d'enseigner et d'apprendre en ce XXI^e siècle. Il a fallu concevoir un référentiel de compétences pour un enseignant universitaire, cohérent avec notre réalité, puis définir des objectifs et les traduire en matières, en axes, en méthodes d'enseignement, en démarches d'évaluation et de validation. Il a fallu construire des outils réflexifs et fédérateurs. Les membres de la commission ont beaucoup appris dans ce travail préparatoire. Ils ont beaucoup lu, cherché, et inventé pour atteindre la finalité professionnalisante que vise ce cursus.

Les évaluations faites jusque là par les participants témoignent de l'impact de cette formation diplômante sur leurs pratiques d'enseignement. Certains de leurs cours qui ont été filmés l'attestent.

e. Activités autour des Documents pédagogiques numériques

Un effort particulier a été investi pour promouvoir l'application des nouvelles technologies dans l'enseignement universitaire. Effort de sensibilisation et de soutien des institutions de l'USJ quant à l'utilisation de supports audiovisuels et numériques dans le cadre pédagogique, effort de formation également :

- Une étude a été effectuée auprès des enseignants et étudiants sur l'usage des nouvelles technologies dans le cadre académique. Elle sera régulièrement mise à jour. Un espace «feedback» en ligne est fonctionnel, et permettra de mettre à jour régulièrement les données recueillies.
- L'Unité des nouvelles technologies éducatives, rattachée à la Faculté des sciences de

l'éducation, a organisé de nombreuses sessions de formation autour de l'usage du logiciel Moodle, utilisé pour l'environnement numérique d'apprentissage de l'Université.

- Un réservoir de ressources numériques est en cours d'élaboration. Il vise à proposer à la communauté scientifique universitaire un espace en ligne pour diffuser, partager et valoriser les contenus pédagogiques et de recherche produits à l'USJ.
- Un Festival Moodle a été organisé, en vue de présenter, à la communauté universitaire, les bénéfices de l'usage des nouvelles technologies pour l'enseignement et la gestion des questions académiques.
- Un logiciel anti-plagiat a été mis en place, ainsi que des ateliers de formation pour enseignants et étudiants, assurant à ces derniers une formation éthique et technique.
- Un livre blanc est en cours de préparation sur la mise en place de l'enseignement à distance (semi-présentiel ou non-présentiel) à l'USJ qui comportera un état des lieux ainsi qu'une procédure alliant les questions pédagogique, technique et administrative.
- Un site Web est en cours de préparation, sorte de «référentiel» des pratiques pédagogiques innovantes à l'USJ. Ces pratiques y seront formalisées sous la forme de «guides», en présentant les expériences passées, les exigences pédagogiques et techniques nécessaires et surtout en donnant les références de personnes aptes à les mutualiser.
- Une série de visioconférences intercampus, présentant la production scientifique des enseignants de l'USJ, est en cours depuis le mois de mars 2009.

f. Activités autour de l'Éthique dans l'enseignement supérieur

- Un état des lieux des questions relevant de l'éthique a été mené auprès des institutions de l'USJ.
- Une réflexion a eu lieu au sein du Laboratoire autour de ce sujet.

g. Activités de Recherche

- Une collecte de données a été effectuée autour de la pédagogie universitaire et de toutes les dimensions qui lui sont rattachées afin d'établir une «carte conceptuelle» servant à:
 - * Guider la constitution, au sein du LPU, d'une base de données bibliographique et numérique autour du sujet.
 - * Clarifier l'ensemble des thématiques gravitant autour de «la pédagogie universitaire» et orienter le choix des problématiques de recherche, d'action et/ou de formation à entreprendre au sein du LPU.
 - * Cerner les dimensions politiques et stratégiques à réfléchir et/ou à développer.
- Un projet de recherche dans le cadre des programmes Tempus a été développé portant sur deux volets :
 - * L'évaluation des résultats du LPU et son impact sur l'Université.
 - * L'étude de besoins d'institutions de l'USJ désireuses d'avoir une «cellule de pédagogie universitaire» et leur accompagnement pour la mettre en place.
- Une recherche auprès des étudiants de l'USJ est prévue pour avoir leurs avis sur l'effet des TICE sur la qualité de la formation universitaire et la relation pédagogique entre enseignants et étudiants.

III. Réflexions inspirées par le fonctionnement du Laboratoire de pédagogie universitaire

1. Apprentissages tirés de cette expérience

L'expérience du Laboratoire de pédagogie universitaire m'a beaucoup appris.

Elle m'a appris, entre autres, que les innovations pédagogiques dans le monde universitaire, et peut-être partout ailleurs, se font dans la durée, dans la participation et avec des partenaires diversifiés.

- * Cette expérience m'a appris que le rythme des institutions n'est pas celui d'un noyau de personnes motivées. Mais que ce noyau peut entraîner les autres s'il respecte leur rythme, et respecte les principes de «continuité» et de «rupture», chers à Itard. Respecter ce que les autres font déjà et savent faire, pour y introduire des modifications légères qui se situent dans leur «zone proximale de développement», comme le dit Vygotsky. C'est-à-dire procéder par étapes, progressivement sans bousculer ni inquiéter. Ne pas brûler les étapes pour éviter les incendies.
- * Cette expérience m'a appris que la démarche participative est seule garante de faire avancer les choses, de faire adhérer les personnes et les institutions. Qu'il est nécessaire que celles-ci sentent qu'elles sont partie prenante des décisions prises, pour qu'elles puissent y adhérer et les implémenter. Qu'elles ont été consultées et entendues. Effectivement, comme le dit La Fontaine: «Rien ne sert de courir...». Cela peut faire que l'on se retrouve seuls ou à quelques uns seulement, et aussi que l'on n'aille nulle part.
- * Cette expérience m'a appris combien il est fructueux de collaborer avec des collègues de disciplines et d'institutions différentes, car cela nous permet de nous mettre à distance de nos pratiques pour mieux les interroger. Cela nous permet de relativiser nos certitudes. Cette expérience m'a appris en fait, combien il est impératif, dans ce domaine, qui traite avec des enseignants du supérieur, de fonctionner comme organisation apprenante. Ce concept, issu du management et de la psychosociologie des organisations, est à investir dans ce champ de l'innovation dans le monde universitaire.

2. Caractéristiques de l'organisation apprenante

Les écrits sur ce concept sont nombreux. Ils nous disent, essentiellement, qu'une organisation apprenante est une organisation:

- a. Qui fonctionne dans une dynamique de projet et permet à tous ses acteurs de construire ensemble autour d'un projet collectif. Nous sommes témoins au LPU que cette dynamique de projet et de construction collective qui inclut responsables d'institution, enseignants et étudiants est formatrice en soi, et qu'elle induit l'implication de la communauté universitaire, car elle donne un signal fort que le chemin se construit en marchant, que les choses ne sont ni absolues ni fixées à l'avance, mais que les personnes ont une expertise, même implicite de leur travail, et qu'ils peuvent faire avancer la réflexion et la pratique.
- b. Qui encourage et permet à ses membres de se renouveler sans cesse (L. Paquay 2005). Les personnes et les institutions impliquées sont de par le fait même encouragées puisque ce sont elles qui conçoivent et opérationnalisent et qu'elles ne sont pas là pour exécuter ce qui a été décidé par d'autres.
- c. Qui est en perpétuel questionnement sur ses pratiques : analyse ses échecs, ses réussites, et procède à des changements. La nature même de cette démarche participative met le

Laboratoire, les personnes qui y participent et donc les institutions qui y sont représentées dans cette posture réflexive.

Cela suppose selon Leopold Paquay :

- a. «Le partage de normes et de valeurs, particulièrement la conviction que les apprenants peuvent acquérir des connaissances de haut niveau et que les professeurs peuvent les aider pour cela. La démarche participative en elle-même est un outil pour la construction d'un système de valeurs commun. L'étudiant y prend la place centrale puisque la préoccupation majeure de ce Laboratoire est d'améliorer la qualité de l'enseignement qui lui est délivré.
- b. Un focus sur l'apprentissage des apprenants: les discussions et les projets des enseignants sont focalisés sur les activités d'apprentissage des apprenants. La mission même du Laboratoire met ce point au cœur de ses préoccupations.
- c. Une déprivatisation de la pratique: les enseignants osent parler entre eux de leur pratique pédagogique, avec authenticité, ils commentent mutuellement leurs démarches et leurs dispositifs, ce qui constitue un moyen privilégié pour chacun d'améliorer ses propres pratiques. Les membres du Laboratoire sont entre pairs, et se perçoivent comme tels. Ils sont donc dans des conditions qui structurellement encouragent à déprivatiser les pratiques des diverses institutions, de partager soucis et solutions envisagées.
- d. La collaboration : les enseignants élaborent ensemble du matériel, des outils d'enseignement et d'évaluation, ils fournissent mutuellement des informations (...), ils développent en équipe des projets (...). A titre d'exemple le LPU a élaboré collectivement la grille de l'évaluation des enseignements mise en ligne pour l'ensemble de l'USJ. Ce travail qui a consisté à identifier des critères et des indicateurs pour l'évaluation des enseignements nous a poussés indirectement, implicitement à réfléchir sur l'acte d'apprendre et d'enseigner dans notre Université et donc à dessiner en filigrane des représentations communes.
- e. Un dialogue réflexif: à travers les collaborations (...) les membres de l'équipe éducative sont amenés à analyser et évaluer leur pratique mais aussi le fonctionnement de leur institution».

Comme nous l'avons dit, les membres du LPU travaillent en commissions pluridisciplinaires et se rencontrent également en assemblées générales, le dialogue réflexif est instauré structurellement de par cette organisation.

3. Dimensions à respecter

Plusieurs dimensions sont à respecter dans une culture d'organisation apprenante selon Anderson et Thiessen, (cités par Lessard et Tardif, 2005):

- a. Une dimension sociale: des interactions entre les membres et entre ceux-ci et l'environnement universitaire.
- b. Une dimension psychologique: qui implique le développement d'une identité professionnelle et le sentiment de pouvoir sur l'évolution des choses.
- c. Une dimension philosophique: qui implique un dialogue professionnel continu sur les valeurs et les objectifs du projet de l'université.
- d. Une dimension politique: une autorité collective qui procède par participation globale au-delà des cercles de direction administratifs.
- e. Une dimension historique: la constitution de souvenirs communs et d'une histoire explicite des changements.

- f. Une dimension stratégique : l'engagement délibéré dans le changement par collaboration, et intégration.

Si les écoles sont fortement encouragées à fonctionner en organisations apprenantes, ceci semble impératif pour les universités.

Parlant de la professionnalisation du travail enseignant, Philippe Perrenoud (2003) dit que ce processus est «constructiviste», «ne se décrète pas» et «se joue à plusieurs». Ce sont les enseignants eux-mêmes qui «produisent leur profession» dit-il.

Des structures comme celle que je viens de présenter offrent un cadre pour construire cette identité professionnelle qui se professionnalise de par le monde

Cette démarche participative qui induit des changements de professionnalités (Paquay, 2005), permet de se nourrir des expériences des autres pour inventer les solutions les plus pertinentes pour l'environnement où l'on est impliqué.

Elle a des répercussions sur la qualité de l'enseignement.

En transférant la phrase de Philippe Meirieu au cadre universitaire, on pourrait dire: «L'étudiant apprend, quand l'enseignant apprend et quand l'université apprend».

Cette démarche permet aux institutions de rester vivantes parce que en questionnement, et aux personnes de continuer à être motivées par leur activité enseignante et d'être plus intelligentes, car c'est sûr, nous sommes plus intelligents ensemble et différents que seuls.

4. Limites de l'expérience du Laboratoire de pédagogie universitaire

Cette expérience si riche soit-elle connaît des limites. J'en évoquerai quelques unes:

- Notre Université a une histoire facultaire, et a entrepris au fil du temps un processus d'institutionnalisation toujours en cours de réalisation. Ce n'est que récemment, depuis les années 1970, que le processus d'institutionnalisation a été explicitement entamé. Ainsi, les diverses institutions connaissent une grande autonomie et une diversité de pratiques, ce qui rend lent et difficile le processus d'harmonisation des pratiques pédagogiques.
- Les diverses institutions de notre Université n'ont pas évolué au même rythme, quant à leur sensibilisation aux questions pédagogiques et à leurs pratiques d'enseignement. La Faculté de médecine, à l'instar des autres facultés de médecine de par le monde, a été pionnière dans la prise de conscience de la nécessité de former ses enseignants et a déployé des moyens financiers à cet effet. Certaines institutions ont une cellule de pédagogie universitaire en leur sein, ce qui permet de « porter » les mesures préconisées par le LPU et de les opérationnaliser, d'autres pas, ce qui ralentit l'application de celles-ci ou même l'empêche. Cette réalité fait également que l'investissement des diverses institutions est inégal.
- Ce Laboratoire n'a pas de prérogatives décisionnelles. La traduction en actes des résultats dégagés des études dépend des responsables d'institutions. Le LPU n'a pas de force contraignante. L'opérationnalisation des mesures préconisées dépendent de la place du délégué dans son institution et de la sensibilisation du responsable.
- Reste également la question des mesures financières et statutaires, en termes de politique de ressources humaines, pour reconnaître à leur juste valeur, l'investissement des enseignants qui se forment pédagogiquement, qui innovent leurs pratiques, ou qui s'investissent au sein de ce Laboratoire.

Il n'en reste pas moins que ces limites ne font que stimuler la réflexion pour les dépasser. Pour les dépasser ensemble, puisque c'est pour cela que ce Laboratoire a été conçu.

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*Quality of Education:
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Total Quality Management in Public and Private Jordanian Universities: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of faculty members at Jordanian public and private universities regarding the application of Total Quality Management (TQM) to university operations and management. The target population consisted of a representative sample of one public and one private university in Jordan, including faculty members. The study used a questionnaire divided according to the following topics: (1) Preparing the quality requirement in universities, (2) Improvement of teaching and learning processes, (3) Human resource development, and (4) Decision making and community service. The researcher adapted the TQM survey developed by Tan.

Results of study revealed that (41.2%) of public faculty members described themselves as knowing TQM «Very Well». and (47.4%) of private faculty members described themselves as having a «moderate» Knowledge 39% of public faculty members (39.2%) indicated there was no effort to implement TQM at their universities VS 31.1% of private faculty members regarding their universities. T-test indicated no differences among public and private faculty members regarding adoption TQM., and no differences related to gender of public and private faculty members' perceptions of TQM implementation.

I. Introduction

Higher education in Jordan began in the second half of the twentieth century, namely the sixties, when numerous Teacher training Colleges were established throughout the country. Their establishment provided the necessary teaching manpower needed to meet the high demand on school education characterizing that era. The first public Jordanian university, the University of Jordan, was established in 1962. Yarmouk University followed in 1976, and nine more public universities have been established in different parts of the Kingdom since that date.

In 1989 the Higher Education council endorsed the first policy document authorizing the establishment of private universities. Amman University, the first Jordanian private university, was established in 1990. An impressive number of twelve more private universities have been founded since that date.

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Non-university education is offered at Community Colleges, which were created in 1981 by converting and expanding the existent Teacher Colleges. These institutions are meant to offer specialized, career-oriented training, and prepare their students for work in mid-level professions. All community colleges are supervised by, and affiliated to, Al-Balqa Applied University, which is a Jordanian public university.

The Jordanian Higher Education council established in 1982 in response to the need for regulation and planning of higher education policies and coordination among Jordanian public universities. The Council formed the core for the Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research, which was established in 1985. The Ministry and the Council undertook the mission of applying the government's educational policies at post-secondary level, and of legislating up-to-date laws on higher education. The Ministry of Higher Education was disbanded in 1998, but was re-established according law no. 41 for the year 2001, which cancelled the previous Law. By this law, a Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research was established, which took over supervising all higher education issues, and includes the following Councils: The Higher Education Council (which comprises the Higher Committee for Scientific Research), and The Accreditation Council. The new Higher Education Law assigned the Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research the following prominent functions: 1. Implementing the general higher education policy in Jordan. 2. Coordinating between higher education institutions and public and private centers for consultations and research. 3. Signing cultural and scientific agreements in the field of higher education and scientific research. 4. Representing Jordan in international conferences and symposia on higher education. 5. Recognizing foreign institutions of higher education and equating certificates issued by them. 6. Setting student eligibility rules for scholarships inside and outside Jordan. 7. Supervising Jordanian students abroad through Jordanian cultural counselors. The Law gave the Higher Education Council the following main functions: 1. Formulating the general higher education policy in Jordan. 2. Endorsing the establishment of new higher education institutions. 3. Issuing instructions concerning administration and finance of the higher education sector. 4. Coordinating among local higher education institutions. 5. Evaluating the quality of higher education in terms of sufficiency and efficiency. 6- Determining the basic admission requirements at higher education institutions.

The Accreditation Council is given by the same law the following major duties: 1. Defining, amending and developing the regulations for the accreditation of higher education institutions, in light of the general higher education policy. 2. Supervising the performance of higher education institutions and their commitment to applying the rules of accreditation. 3. Appointing the specialized committees needed to carry out the tasks of the Accreditation Council. 4. Ensuring that institutions of higher education reach their pre-defined goals through continuous evaluation of their programs. 5. Proposing schemes for regulations and rules of the Council's duties. 6- Publishing the decisions the Council takes concerning accreditation in the official media.

At present (2009), there are eleven public and sixteen private universities in Jordan. While Bachelor degrees are offered by both sectors, Master's and Doctorate degrees are confined to public universities, except for the "Amman Arab University for Graduate studies", which is a private university specialized in offering Master's and Doctorate degrees.

The concerned authorities began showing interest in taking the necessary measures in quality control at the level of education inputs. Accreditation became compulsory in 1990; following that, an Accreditation Council was established in 1998. Quality control concentrated on admission criteria, infrastructure, and the level of education and preparation of faculty members. Quality evaluation launched in 2001 by an initiative from the Hussein Fund in cooperation with the Quality

Assurance Agency (QAA) of the United Kingdom. Legislation relatd to accreditation was developed and the duties of the Accreditation Council established in the 2001 law on higher education.

II. Challenges facing Higher Education

Colleges and universities in the twenty first century are feeling increasing pressures to reform and improve. Changing population demographics and decreases in standardized test scores for students are forcing faculty and administrators to re-think academic curricula and structure. In addition, dwindling government funding and increased competition in higher education have enhanced the need for reform (Birnbaum, 2000; Bryan, 1996; Lewis & Smith, 1994).

Over the last 10 years in Jordan, many studies have been conducted to identify, analyze and address different challenges facing HE in Jordan (AL Adwan & Qtaishat, 2007; Abu-Sharar, Yaghi, & Al Yousef, 2007). These challenges can be categorized into: increasing demand on higher education, lack of vocational education orientation, incompatibility between higher education outputs and market needs, financial challenges, deteriorating quality of the education process. In the 1990's, in response to these threats, many colleges and universities attempted implementation of new management programs such as Total Quality Management (TQM) (Birnbaum, 2000; Cornesky & McCool, 1992; Lewis & Smith, 1994). TQM is a holistic management system that seeks to integrate functional areas across an organization to increase customer satisfaction and achieve continuous improvement (Crosby, 1979; Deming, 1986; Feigenbaum, 1991; Ishikawa, 1985; Juran, 1988; Juran & Gryna, 1993). Many institutions of higher education initiated quality efforts in an attempt to improve student satisfaction and reform administrative structures (Brigham, 1995).

III. Total Quality Management

Total Quality Management programs have a variety of names. For example, Eastman Chemical Company referred to its quality initiative as "QMP," or "Quality Management Program" (Nabours, 1994). TQM has also been called "Quality Education Development" by some higher education institutions (Demicheill & Ryba, 1997).

Although defining TQM in higher education is important, equally important is a definition as to what does not constitute TQM in higher education. TQM should not mean faculty are permitted to deisgn course content that meets with the satisfaction of every student or even that each student will graduate (Yudof & Busch-Vishniac, 1996). TQM should also not be regarded as a vehicle to allow students to determine the contents of the course material, the grading system, or the course structure. If this were the case, the need for instructors would cease.

A Total Quality Management program must meet four criteria in order to succeed. First, TQM must be based on a quality mindset and quality orientation in every activity, including every process and product. Every aspect of the organization must have quality at its core. Second, employees need to be given the same quality treatment as the final product. Third, TQM must be based on a decentralized approach that provides empowerment at all levels, especially at the front line. Finally, TQM must be applied holistically so that its principles, policies, and practices reach every aspect of the department (Creech, 1994).

Stated simply, for TQM to be successfully implemented in higher education institutions, the entire organization must believe in its principles and everyone must be involved in the transformation (Hughes, 1996). Consequently, the following conditions must be met: Educate

and obtain commitment from the administration, maintain an atmosphere of trust, create pride in workmanship, transform the culture of the institution (Cornesky, McCool, Byrnes, & Weber, 1992). According to Thor (1994), when implementing a TQM program, confronting employee fears about the TQM process is the most critical item. In other words, the “human side” of the process needs to be remembered. Van Allen (1994) believed a college or university should first determine whether or not adequate funds are available to support a TQM movement. Van Allen also believed leadership must estimate the pace of the change because a rapid pace is necessary to sustain momentum. Finally, Van Allen believed leadership must understand employee feelings about management. If employees have faith in management, the transition process is more likely to be successful than if employees do not have faith in management. A major impediment to successful implementation of TQM in higher education has to do with the nature of higher education, itself. The culture of higher education presupposes input from faculty and unfortunately, this is not always the case (Winter, as cited in Sherr & Teeter, 1991). Ironically, a survey of colleges and universities that began the TQM process showed one of the major concerns to be the fact that higher education institutions are highly decentralized and may not be able to work together once the TQM process is initiated (Seymour & Collett, 1991).

Harris (as cited in Kwan, 1996) stated Total Quality Management can be used effectively in higher education in one of three ways: serving students utilizing staff training and development, increasing the contributions of all staff to make the school more effective, or improving service by conforming to specifications stated at particular points of the educational process. The numerous benefits of utilizing TQM in higher education include: a justification of the search for constant improvement, a promotion of change and flexibility, a provision for decision making to take place by those involved in the process rather than by a few individuals at the top of the institution, a positive change in employee attitudes toward students and toward each other, and a change from external to internal indicators of performance (Yudof & Busch-Vishniac, 1996).

According to Bosner, Ruback, and Stratton (as cited in Bland, Maynard, & Herbert, 1998), higher education became interested in TQM due to the numerous challenges facing colleges and universities, including: increasing operational costs, tuition fees increasing at a rate faster than the Consumer Price Index, changing student demographics, increases in technology costs associated with the advances in technology, and employee demands for better-prepared graduates. Lewis and Smith (1994) also cited reasons for the need for TQM in higher education including higher education’s diminishing perceptions of quality by the general public, apprehension from legislatures and employees to commit funds to higher education without evaluating its performance, and increase in skepticism and loss of confidence in higher education’s ability to produce a quality product, concern about the increasing costs to obtain a higher education degree, and the return on investment in higher education. Other reasons for incorporating TQM principles into higher education include diminishing resources and increasing public pressure for accountability (Entner, 1993). However, the strongest argument as to the reason TQM should be used in higher education may not have been stated by anyone advocating the use of TQM to higher education.

In 1991, state funding for higher education decreased for the first time in more than 30 years (Michael, Sower, & Motwani, 1997). When the state funding decreased, many individuals considered TQM to be a possible solution to assist with the new funding challenges faced by higher education. As an indication of the higher education’s interest in TQM, in 1991 the American Association of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), the main accrediting organization for business schools, gave TQM their “stamp of approval” by changing their accreditation standards to align more closely with the principles of TQM (Presutti et al., 1995). Another indication of

higher education's interest in TQM was the second annual conference entitled, Academia and Total Quality Management, that attracted representatives from almost 100 higher educational institutions in 1991 (Keller, 1992).

Feminist leadership in nursing can be achieved through Total Quality Management. Total Quality Management (TQM) is a philosophy and technology that represents the foundation of a continuously improving organization. The feminist leadership ideas practiced by nurses, such as empowering staff and decision by consensus, are also central to TQM. Feminist leadership utilizing TQM enables employees to creatively contribute to the system without fear or intimidation. Employees at all levels in the organization are then empowered. The role of the feminist leader using TQM is one of facilitator rather than authority figure. Feminist leadership in nursing can spearhead the opportunity for improvement to provide high-quality, cost-effective health care in a troubled and complex economic environment (Lanza, 1997).

TQM in Jordan

It is fair to say that Jordan was one of the first countries in the region to have real experiences in Total Quality Management in organizations. The universities that participated in this study claimed to have initiated quality effort. If these universities have effectively established TQM, it may be due to their endeavors to include internal stakeholders in the process. This understanding of stakeholders' perceptions is needed in the implementation process of TQM in higher education. Al-Marsumi's (2007) study "Total quality management in a chosen section of the hospitals in Amman, Jordan", the application of total quality management (TQM) is investigated in five hospitals in Amman, Jordan. The study was conducted using a five-point Likert scale survey, and reliability of the data was established by computing Cronbach's alpha. Although the extent of TQM application showed some variation, the investigation showed that each hospital applied TQM at a relatively high level, and that the correlation between the extent of the overall application and the values of the chosen performance indicators were direct and positive.

Another study conducted by Elmuti, Kathawala, & Manippallil (1996) identified total quality management (TQM) familiarity and utilization, and the perceived effects of TQM programmes on overall organizational effectiveness among ten selected institutions of higher education. Results of study revealed that TQM technique improves participants' morale, responsiveness to customer needs as well as the quality of teaching and research. Also, results show that a positive impact of TQM programmes on employee perceptions of their own productivity and overall organizational effectiveness in most of the institutions surveyed. However, almost one-third of the respondents indicated that TQM programmes have failed to achieve their stated objectives of improving quality and productivity.

According to Rawabdeh (2002), the increasing impact of international competition and changing business environment has given a more prominent role standardization, which was reflected in national standards. His paper presents the effect of companies' characteristics on both the importance and satisfaction level with Jordanian Standards (JS), identifying reasons for using foreign standards and the need for new JS in manufacturing sectors. The findings revealed that there are no statistically significant differences in the way Jordanian companies perceive the importance of having JS and the level of satisfaction or interest. Regardless of the company characteristics, it is concluded that targeted companies consider JS important to their business and JS are satisfying the companies' interests. The surveyed Jordanian companies show a serious interest in foreign standards. However, the lack of familiarity with the existing JS in some small and medium enterprises and its benefit to their industry was observed.

Rawabdeh's study (2008), about the essence of the Jordan Quality Award (JoQA) that was

developed and implemented in Jordan, described the award characteristics, framework, examination criteria, objectives, benefits and comparative assessment. The JoQA is benchmarked with two international quality awards: Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award and European Quality Award. A sample of 49 companies which had applied for the award was selected to test a set of hypotheses regarding the award's objectives, benefits, problems, and criteria weights, and to determine areas of weaknesses and potential improvements.

Findings: The testing of the hypotheses shows that the objectives of the award, externally, and internally viewed, were achieved. However, various implementation problems exist. Based on the findings, a recommended change is proposed for the weights of the award criteria. Although the findings confirm the theoretical framework, more empirical work is needed to better understand the award's impact over a longer time span. Further research should also identify if and how the award influences the participating companies in managerial, technical and financial aspects. Chapman & Al-Khawaldeh (2002) study proposed and identified the degree of application of total quality management (TQM) philosophy and practices in industrial corporations in Jordan. Results of study through survey responses were classified into two groups: high-TQM implementation and low-TQM implementation; that mean labor productivity measurements for high-TQM companies were significantly higher than for low-TQM companies over the period 1993 - 1998. Mean growth rates of labor productivity measurements for companies with high-level TQM were higher than for those with low-level TQM during this period. Results of study reveal a statistically significant positive relationship between TQM and labor productivity.

TQM has been suggested as a vehicle to design the mission statement describing the services provided by higher education. Sophisticated colleges and universities today are utilizing current business strategies. An interesting dilemma faced by higher education institutions that teach TQM is whether or not to utilize the principles of TQM. Those institutions that both teach and research TQM but do not utilize it will, most likely, lose credibility (Ho & Wearn, 1996).

IV. Statement of the Problem of study

In a college or a university, as with any successful organization, management is the catalyst that keeps change moving in a positive direction. In general, higher education institutions are constantly altering themselves to survive and often adopt successful business practices, such as TQM.

Five conditions are necessary to implement a TQM program at a higher education institution. These five conditions are: (1) Commitment from the administration. (2) Commitment from faculty and staff. (3) The establishment of trust. (4) The establishment of pride in one's work. (5) Institutional cultural change (Cornesky, McCool, Byrnes, & Weber, 1992).

With any organizational change, a number of factors increase the success of that change. One of those factors is the organization's level of "readiness" (Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993). "Readiness," similar to Lwein's concept of "unfreezing," is an indication of level of acceptance of the changes needed by an organizations members and their belief in the organization's ability to make the necessary changes successfully (Armenakis et al., 1993). Therefore, a college or university must be ready to implement an initiative as large as TQM Lack of readiness is similar to resisting change and, clearly, resistance to change is a barrier to the implementation of TQM. The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of faculty members at public and private universities regarding the application of TQM to university operations and management. In addition, the study examines the extent to which these universities faculty members differ in

their perceptions and the extent to which differences in perceptions are influenced by gender. This information will provide a foundation for future studies regarding the implementation of Total Quality Management principles at public and private universities in Jordan.

This study will answer the following questions:

One: To what extent do important faculty members understand the philosophy and knowledge of TQM as perceived by themselves?

Two: To what extent has there been an effort to implement TQM at participating universities?

Three: What perceived impact has the implementation of TQM made at participating universities?

Four: To what extent are the principles of TQM adopted at participating universities?

Five: To what extent do public and private faculty members differ in their perceptions of TQM at participating universities?

Six: To what extent do men and women differ in their perceptions of TQM implementation at participating universities?

V. Research design

This study is based on the survey method, where a sample is selected and participants are given a questionnaire to collect data.

1. Instrumentation

The researcher adapted the TQM survey developed by Tan (1997). The instrument sections were as follows:

Section one: Demographic data.

Section Two: Questions regarding TQM at the participants' institution. This section used a Likert-type scale to measure public and private faculty members' perceptions of:

- faculty understand the philosophy and knowledge of TQM
- the effort to implement TQM at their institution
- the evaluation of TQM's implementation at their institution

Section three: Institutional questions. This section used a likert-type scale to measure public and private faculty members' perceptions of their institution's use of TQM principles grouped into five areas: assessment (6 questions), continuous improvement (9 questions), collaboration (8 questions), communication (7 questions) , and organizational goals (6 questions).

The specific questions relating to TQM assessment principles were:

Item	Content
5	The college favors objectives testing.
6	The college incorporates real life learning events in the assessment process.
7	The college relies heavily on tests as a major means to assess student performance.
18	The college administrators are considered to be progressive educational leaders.
22	Students are afraid of faculty.
29	The college relies on grades to reflect the efficiencies of learning and improvement.

The specific survey questions relating to TQM continuous improvement principles were:

Item	Content
1	The college as a whole has shown consistency of commitment for quality education.
2	The college has adopted the philosophy of continuous improvement.
3	The college administrators, teachers, and students understand the college education philosophy.
9	The college empowers teachers and students to continuously improve the quality of education.
10	Opportunities are provided for individualized educational experimentation by teachers and staff.
11	The college continues to improve the quality of education after temporary setbacks.
12	The college institutes a comprehensive orientation program for new teachers.
36	Educational improvement retraining opportunities are provided in the college.
37	The college administrators constantly participate in in-service training.

The specific survey questions relating to collaborative relationships were:

Item	Content
4	The college believes in empowering the teacher-student teams.
8	The college establishes good working relationships with their community.
13	The college training programs are constantly re-evaluated by all staff.
15	The college administrators empower teachers and students in decision making.
16	The college administrators constantly encourage faculty and students to be coaches in the effort of improving the quality of education.
27	Teachers, students, administrators, and support staff collectively arrive at slogans and exhortations for improvement rather than fixing the blame on individuals or groups.
32	The college dedicates itself to removing the systematic causes of failure through close collaborative efforts.
33	Teachers and students commit themselves to bringing pride, encouragement, and talents to the betterment of the college.

The specific survey questions relating to TQM communication principles were:

Item	Content
17	The college administrators appreciate new input from faculty and students.
18	The college personnel, students, and teachers feel comfortable while presenting their ideas.
20	The college administrators act as counselors to help create a respectable atmosphere.
23	There are communication barriers among departments, teachers, and students.

- 24 The college administrators constantly work to eliminate communication barriers between subject areas and programs.
- 25 The college has communication barriers at some levels.
- 26 Area and departmental information is communicated by all college personnel in a timely manner.

The specific survey questions relating to organizational goals were:

Item	Content
12	The college institutes a program for teachers in the area of their expertise and goals.
21	The college administrators are afraid to face failures during the process of change.
28	Administrators establish slogans and targets for improvement.
30	The college favors short-term goals.
34	The college minimizes award presentations.
35	The college encourages ideas beyond the boundaries of the work assignment.

The responses to questions dealing with assessment, continuous improvement, collaboration, communication, and organizational goals were tallied using the following scoring: Not Applicable= 0, Low= 1, Medium= 2, and High= 3.

The answers to six questions of the study were obtained by comparing the responses of public and private faculty members using frequencies, means, standard deviations and t-tests.

2. Sample of the study

The sample of study consisted of two universities (one public and one private) chosen purposively for specific reasons; the public one chosen because the researcher of this paper works at this university, and the private university chosen because its site is not far from the public university and it's easy to reach it and distribute the questionnaires to faculty members.

There were 602 faculty members in the sample of study. There were 393 (327 male and 66 female) in the public university, and 209 (174 male and 35 female). In the private university Survey packages were sent to all faculty members (602) and 531 responses were received. The respondents were 346 (287 male and 59 female) in the public university, and 185 (154 male and 31 female) in the private university, i.e. an 88% response rate.

Of the 531 individuals who responded to the survey, 346 were faculty members at public universities and 185 were faculty members at private universities. The majority of public faculty members (82.9%) and private faculty members (83.2%) were male.

VI. Results of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of public and private faculty members regarding the application of TQM to university operations and management. In addition, the study examined the extent to which these two universities (public and private) differ in their perceptions and the extent to which differences in perceptions are influenced by gender.

Also, the two universities that participated in this study claimed to have established quality effort. If these universities have effectively established TQM, it may be due to the endeavors to

include internal stakeholders in the process. This understanding of stakeholders’ perceptions is needed in the implementation process of TQM in higher education. It appears from the research anecdotal and empirical studies of TQM in higher education that an examination of stakeholder perceptions of the process is missing. This research study attempts to explore this problem.

1. Research question one: To what extent do important faculty members understand the philosophy and knowledge of TQM as perceived by themselves?

Table 1 indicates faculty members understanding of TQM as perceived by themselves. The majority (41.2%) of public faculty members described themselves as knowing TQM “Very Well.” The majority (47.4%) of private faculty members described themselves as having a “moderate” knowledge of TQM.

Table 1: Understanding the philosophy and knowledge of TQM as perceived by Public and Private Faculty Members

Knowledge of TQM	N	Very Well	Moderate	Slightly	Don’t Know
Public Faculty members	346	41.2%	52.3%	6.5%	0.0%
Private Faculty members	185	41.3%	47.4%	8.6%	2.7%

Scale: 0=Don’t Know; 1=Slightly; 2=Moderate; 3=Very Well.

2. Research question two: To what extent has there been an effort to implement TQM at participating universities?

Table 2 indicates the effort to implement TQM at participating universities as perceived by faculty members. The majority of public faculty members (39.2%) indicated there was no effort to implement TQM at their universities. The majority of private faculty members (31.1%) indicated there was no effort to implement TQM at their universities.

Table 2: TQM Implementation Efforts

Efforts to Implementation TQM	N	Major Effort	Mod. Effort	Slightly Effort	No Effort
Public Faculty members	346	15.3%	24.8%	19.7%	39.2%
Private Faculty members	185	15.7%	22.1%	31.1%	31.1%

Scale: 0=No Effort; 1=Slightly; 2=Moderate; 3=Major Effort.

3. Research question Three: What perceived impact has the implementation of TQM made at participating universities?

As indicated in Table 3, TQM has had some impact at participating universities as perceived by public and private faculty members. As indicated in Table 3, the majority of public faculty members (35.9%) indicated “not applicable” regarding the question, “What perceived impact has the implementation of TQM made to participating universities?” Also, as indicated in Table 3, the majority (42.0%) of private faculty members indicated TQM has had a positive impact on their universities.

Table 3: Impact of TQM implementation at participating universities as perceived by public and private faculty members

Impact of TQM	N	Positive Impact	No Impact	Negative Impact	N/A
Public Faculty members	346	27.3%	31.7%	5.1%	35.9%
Private Faculty members	185	42.0%	27.6%	4.3%	26.1%

Scale: 0=N/A; 1= Negative; 2=No Impact, 3=Positive.

4. Research question Four: To what extent are the principles of TQM adopted at participating universities?

As indicated in Table 4, continuous improvement principles (M=2.31) had the highest adoption rate followed by organizational goals principles (M=2.25) followed by assessment principles (M=2.01) followed by collaborative relationship principles (M=1.78) followed by communication principles (M=1.62) as perceived by public and private faculty members.

Table 4: Adoption of TQM Principles as perceived by public and private faculty members

	N	Mean	SD
Use of continuous improvement principles	531	2.31	.337
Use of assessment principles	531	2.01	.245
Use of collaborative relationship principles	531	1.78	.378
Use of communication principles	531	1.62	.431
Use of organizational goal principles	531	2.25	.312

5. Research question Five: To what extent do public and private faculty members differ in their perceptions of TQM at participating universities?

Table 5 shows differences between public and private faculty members of TQM principles. Examination of means and t-tests ($\alpha = 0.05$) for independent samples indicated no statistically significant difference between perceptions of public faculty members and private faculty members.

Table 5: Differences in perception of adoption of TQM principles

		N	Mean	SD	t value	p
Use of continuous improvement Principles	Public	346	2.29	.344	1.04	.283
	Private	185	2.21	.332		
Use of assessment principles	Public	346	1.98	.258	.132	.831
	Private	185	2.01	.337		

Use of collaborative relationship principles	Public	346	2.19	.389	.327	.771
	Private	185	2.01	.458		
Use of communication principles	Public	346	2.01	.315	1.063	.665
	Private	185	2.27	.289		
Use of organizational goal principles	Public	346	1.63	.328	.319	.507
	Private	185	1.75	.317		

6. Research question six: To what extent do men and women differ in their perceptions of TQM implementation at participating universities?

Table 6 shows the gender differences of public and private faculty members' perceptions of TQM implementation at participating universities. Examination of means and t-tests ($\alpha=.05$) for independent samples indicated no statistically significant difference between perceptions of public faculty members and private faculty members.

Table 6: Public and private faculty members perceptions by gender

		Gender	N	Mean	SD	t value	P
Use of assessment principles	Public	Male	287	2.01	.221	.099	.813
		Female	59	2.02	.256		
	Private	Male	154	2.07	.291	.974	.284
		Female	31	2.03	.405		
	Total	Male	441	2.04	.287	.843	.324
		Female	90	2.03	.331		
Use of continuous improvement principles	Public	Male	287	2.41	.441	.708	.323
		Female	59	2.45	.424		
	Private	Male	154	2.29	.415	.415	.652
		Female	31	2.31	.398		
	Total	Male	441	2.35	.428	.452	.317
		Female	90	2.38	.413		
Use of collaborative relationship principles	Public	Male	287	2.07	.453	.639	.425
		Female	59	2.10	.428		
	Private	Male	154	2.07	.451	.224	.647
		Female	31	2.01	.491		
	Total	Male	441	2.07	.425	.217	.573
		Female	90	2.05	.462		

Use of communication principles	Public	Male	287	1.99	.209	1.081	.108
		Female	59	2.06	.220		
	Private	Male	154	2.03	.284	.418	.567
		Female	31	1.91	.287		
	Total	Male	441	2.01	.243	1.047	.247
		Female	90	1.98	.223		
Use of organizational goal principles	Public	Male	287	1.87	.361	.087	.884
		Female	59	1.82	.287		
	Private	Male	154	1.80	.301	.652	.345
		Female	31	1.85	.342		
	Total	Male	441	1.84	.329	.229	.821
		Female	90	1.83	.311		

VII. Discussion

The application of TQM in universities is a controversial topic. One of the first questions with which the researcher has struggled deals with whether or not TQM belongs in universities, or, for that matter, higher education. TQM began in the manufacturing industry. Perhaps TQM should not be adapted to non-profit entities such as higher education institutions. Clearly, the extreme departmentalization of colleges and universities makes campus-wide collaboration of TQM difficult (Lewis & Smith, 1994). The fact remains, however, that colleges and universities, are organizations that contain the same basic elements as any for-profit entity. Although TQM was designed for private industry, the fundamental components of TQM are applicable to any organization (Yudof & Busch-Vishniac, 1996).

One of the findings of this study supported the literature acknowledging the difficulty of implementing a TQM program. The implementation of a TQM program involves a cultural change in the organization and this type of change has traditionally been difficult in the higher education environment.

Another finding of this study supported the literature that TQM has had little impact at institutions that have attempted to implement TQM. However, TQM has been successful when applied to some of today's critical higher education issues. The key to applying TQM is to incorporate TQM as part of the mission addressing those critical issues (Ho & Wearn, 1996).

The finding of this study showed that gender is not a factor in the implementation of TQM at public and private universities. The feminist leadership style incorporates many principles of TQM such as power sharing, a focus on consensus, and decisions based on facts. Feminist leadership can be accomplished through TQM. Feminist leadership and TQM share the same focus of employee empowerment (Lanza, 1997). The possibility also exists that only a small percentage of females exhibited a feminist leadership style but not a large enough percentage to make a significant difference in the response.

VIII. Recommendations

The study provided information that may be useful to public and private universities. Investigate the extent to which faculty members are more knowledgeable of TQM than others. A reason given for the slight effort that has been made to implement TQM at the university level has been the governance system in higher education that prohibits top leadership from making the changes necessary to fully implement TQM. An examination of the governance system should be conducted to determine if this system is a hindrance to the implementation of TQM. The slight effort that has been made to implement TQM at public and private universities does not suggest faculty members are ignorant of TQM. The slight effort may be an indication that faculty members are aware of TQM but choose not to implement it.

Practitioners should establish a climate of trust in which to empower faculty and staff. Making data available to faculty and staff on campus to view performance results and to encourage the use of such data in decision-making would help engender a climate of trust and empowerment. The establishment of cross-functional teams on campuses would be useful for problem-solving, practice improvement, and producing positive change.

Further research is needed into the differences in the perceptions of faculty members and other stakeholders regarding TQM principles. Further research into the connection between gender and TQM implementation are needed.

Institutions of higher education appear to be no different from other companies and businesses in their attempts to successfully implement TQM principles. Successful implementation of TQM principles takes a minimum of 5-10 years. Business and industry in some cases have been implementing TQM for over twenty years; they still have a long way to go. Full implementation of TQM is a complex, never ending series of improvements. Measurements are critical, and provide feedback necessary to determine, continue, and evaluate successful implementation.

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Quality Assurance and a Bologna-type Process in the Arab world

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Abstract

The economy in an age of globalized and knowledge-based economies has become heavily dependent on university-educated and highly skilled human resources, who are employable and mobile across national borders. Harmonization of educational systems of the Arab countries and the setting up of shared academic quality assurance standards are essential steps towards facilitating employability and mobility of human resources. These issues are explored in the context of the Arab world in this mainly expository paper in which it is argued that the Bologna process, as a further step towards European integration, can serve as a model which is relevant to the harmonization of educational systems of the Arab countries.

I. Introduction

We live in the age of globalized and knowledge-based economies where development has become heavily dependent on university educated and highly skilled human resources (Steger, 2009). This has been demonstrated in recent decades in India and South Korea and in the case of China after it embraced a capitalist economy. This is not a new phenomenon: Going back a couple of centuries, Japan started its own path to economic development during the Meiji period from about 1860 by introducing Western knowledge and technology into its feudal society. In the case of the USA, the immigration of educated and highly skilled Europeans and other nationalities made a fundamental contribution to its development, especially after the civil war (about the same time as Japan opened its doors to foreigners). This evidence is sufficiently compelling to make it reasonable to expect that facilitating the movement of highly skilled human resources might lead to further economic development of the Arab world. The main attractor is of course the availability of better pay and conditions of employment. But it is the harmonization of educational systems that facilitates the employability of the highly skilled human resources from one country to another. The term 'harmonization' is used to mean a process of setting standards for education at all levels, promoting good practice in curriculum development, teaching, assessment and research, setting up mechanisms for the conversion

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and recognition of qualifications obtained in various Arab countries, facilitating the movement of students and academics between institutions and setting standards for academic quality assurance whilst respecting diversity across the Arab world. As will be seen shortly, robust systems of quality assurance are central to any effort towards harmonization, and for this reason increased co-operation between the agencies responsible for academic quality assurance in the Arab world is a necessity.

In this paper some of the significant initiatives to harmonize educational systems in the Arab world since WW II are reviewed in Part II, The Bologna Process and its relevance are outlined in Part III. Quality Assurance in the Arab world and GCC as a suitable environment for introducing an adapted version of the Bologna process is discussed in Part IV, and a possible way forward is explored in Part V.

II. Harmonization of higher education in the Arab world

1. An overview

Initiatives to harmonize educational systems and facilitate the conversion of academic awards in the Arab world started around the middle of the 20th century for geopolitical, cultural and economic reasons. The resulting treaties and pacts can be classified into two types, those signed by all Arab countries, and those treaties signed between individual Arab countries. Historically, two treaties have significantly influenced subsequent developments. First, the Cultural Treaty concluded over half a century ago at the end of World War II in 1945 between the members states of the Arab League. This treaty provided for the exchange of teachers and students at various levels of studies and education. It was a great step towards promoting mobility in the Arab world. As a step towards its implementation, the signatory states expressed their intention to standardize their own stages of education, while maintaining the basic tenets of their national educational systems. A Commission on Equivalences whose membership included academic experts was given the task of implementing this treaty, mainly by promoting local agreements between individual States, as suggested by its 3rd Article, (Guiton, 1977; UNESCO, 1974).

About twenty years later in 1964, a second step towards harmonization was taken by the Arab Cultural Unity Pact, which was intended to extend the scope of the co-operative work carried out since 1945. This pact proposed exchanges of teachers and students, some of its articles (for example the 24th) confirmed the need for establishing a system for equivalence of diplomas through bilateral agreements. Other articles proposed the standardization of entrance requirements, the length of various educational levels, and also the harmonization of curricula, assessment systems, etc, (Guiton, 1977; UNESCO, 1974).

Efforts among Arab countries continued in subsequent years. For example, in 1970 the Association of Arab Universities, set up a special Commission to study such questions as the standardization of admission requirements by the Arab universities. This commission produced its first official report in 1974, which was endorsed by the Council of the Association of Arab Universities. Its recommendations included that Arab countries should recognize the secondary school diplomas if awarded by the respective Ministry of Education of each state. Moreover, it recommended that every university student in the Arab world beyond the first year was to be entitled to transfer to another Arab University and continue his/her studies there. The most far-reaching recommendation was that undergraduate university degrees awarded by any accredited university in any Arab country should be recognized by all other Arab countries.

Under the auspices of UNESCO, over the last thirty years efforts to bring about harmonization

among various educational systems in the Arab as well as in the other regions of the world such as Africa have continued, for example actions related to the recognition of higher education degrees following the Arusha Convention (UNESCO, 2001).

2. Cooperation Council of the Arab countries of the Gulf (GCC)

The countries involved in the GCC, namely Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, have undergone a far-reaching economic and social transformation accompanied by a rapid expansion in their higher education systems. Evidence (www.gcc.org, 2009; UNDP, 2006) shows that over the recent years much has been invested in infrastructures, to develop and encourage the growth of educational institutions and improvement of educational standards. These countries have been aware that higher education should be contributing more effectively to the development of skills and knowledge required in the regional job markets and economies in general.

3. Outcomes

Looking back at these efforts from our vantage point in 2009, one can only admire the idealism of all those who were involved in and sponsored, these efforts.

In terms of concrete outcomes of these treaties and pacts, there is no doubt that important achievements have been made in the Arab world, including GCC countries. For example, a new generation of Arab specialists educated in American and British universities have joined the academic staff of many universities in the Arab world; curricula have been modernized; research has flourished; programmes for graduate studies leading to doctoral degrees have been established. In addition, governments have created national accreditation and validation authorities to regulate private universities. On the issue of harmonization of educational systems, for example, Oman reported to UNESCO that they will “recognize all diplomas and degrees in higher and secondary education obtained in any Arab country, provided that they are recognized in the country granting them and are awarded by a university or institute that operates under the supervision of the official authorities” (UNESCO, 1984).

However, there are some thought-provoking observations by authoritative sources such as the World Bank that “While the countries here invest a higher proportion of their gross domestic product on education than other regions in the world, the region continues to face challenges in developing a high-quality education system at all levels and promoting life-long learning and training that responds to the needs of the labour market.” (World Bank, 2007; UNESCO, 1998).

Reaching objective and evidence-based conclusions about the outcome of these initiatives, treaties and pacts is impeded by a number of factors, including:

- a. Availability of comprehensive longitudinal studies leading to reliable evaluation data about the implementation of these treaties.
- b. Availability of comprehensive information about educational systems, for example detailed information about curricula, assessment results, comparative assessment of research, decision process etc. regarding recognition of academic awards, different stages of higher and secondary education in each country, comprehensive directories, etc.
- c. Detailed information about the role of the labour market and the prospects for future employment as a decision factor in the introduction of new programmes of study.
- d. Detailed information about life-long learning programmes.
- e. Detailed information about co-operation between agencies responsible for academic quality assurance in the Arab world.

In the case of the GCC countries, some of the possible reasons for these problems have been described with admirable candor "...the political decision required for providing enough financial support and moral cover to render those efforts successful, the existence of an organizational gap between political decision-making and implementation, and the need for translating the political will into a tangible procedural reality...", (GCC, 2002).

Over the last two decades, the IT revolution, the delivery of courses by internet and international agreements for free trade have led to 'trans-border' and 'borderless' higher education where providers from the US, UK and Australia offer university education in almost all Arab countries through conventional as well as open and distance learning systems. This has increased access to higher education and has speeded up the introduction of Western liberal ideas and the concept of liberal arts education. At the same time, they have complicated the task of accreditation, comparability and recognition of academic awards. Examples include the link with the parent institution (whether it is only a business venture), the nature of the curricula offered, the quality of teaching and assessment, etc. In particular, it would be extremely difficult at the present time for employers to compare applicants holding similar degrees, without having access to a publicly available, independent and reliable method of comparison. Regulating this "market" requires close co-operation between Arab countries to provide objective information to young Arab students who see their future in pursuing university education in a properly vetted, accredited and validated institution.

It should be emphasized that problems of this kind are not limited to the Arab world; The West has had to deal with similar problems for a long time. American, British, French and German systems of education are organized along different educational philosophies and institutional structures, for example different credit systems, course and programme assessment requirements and a variety of doctoral degrees with varying standards.

The European Union, since its inception in the 1950s, following two world wars within nearly twenty years, has recognized that modern economic development requires highly educated human resources and that these resources should be made mobile and employable across the EU. An important step in this direction has been to set up the Bologna process (initiated in 1999) to facilitate the comparability of university degrees and the recognition of university awards. A part of this process is to foster closer co-operation among the agencies responsible for quality assurance in member states with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies. Although there is no Arab version of the EU, Arab countries explored a similar process as outlined above in 1945, before Europe. Nevertheless, the Bologna process, outlined below, can serve as a model, motivating further cooperation and ultimately leading to more extensive economic advancement of the Arab world.

III. The Bologna Declaration

1. This Declaration (signed by 29 EU countries on 19 June 1999)³, is a further step towards European integration. It embodies the earlier Sorbonne declaration (May 25, 1998) which stressed the creation of the European Area of Higher Education as a key way to promote citizens' mobility, employability and the continent's overall development.' The term 'employability' in this context is defined as "the ability to gain employment, to maintain employment, and to be

³ www.bologna-berlin2003.de; www.aic.lv/bologna/Bologna/maindoc/bologna_declaration.pdf
Bolognadec/process.2009

able to move around within the labour market” (Bologna Follow-up Group, London, May 2007). The Bologna declaration proposes that in this area university graduates should be able to move freely between European countries, using qualifications obtained in one country as acceptable entry requirements for further study in another. More detailed principal aims of the Bologna declaration are as follows:

- Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees; also through the implementation of the Diploma Supplement, in order to promote European citizens' employability and the international competitiveness of the European higher education system.
- Adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate. Access to the second cycle shall require successful completion of first cycle studies, lasting a minimum of three years. The degree awarded after the first cycle shall also be relevant to the European labour market as an appropriate level of qualification. The second cycle should lead to master and doctorate degrees as in many European countries.
- Establishment of a system of credits - such as in the ECTS system - as a proper means of promoting the most widespread student mobility.
- Credits could also be acquired in non-higher education contexts, including lifelong learning, provided they are recognized by concerned receiving Universities.
- Promotion of mobility by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement for students and teachers:
 - For students, access to study and training opportunities and to related services
 - For teachers, researchers and administrative staff, recognition and valorization of periods spent in a European context researching, teaching and training, without prejudicing their statutory rights.
- Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies.
- Promotion of the necessary European dimensions in higher education, particularly with regards to curricular development, inter institutional co-operation, mobility schemes and integrated programmes of study, training and research.

The European Ministers of Education (EME) in a joint declaration have accepted the challenge of being one of the main contributors in the construction of the European area of higher education, reaffirming their commitment to the fundamental principles of the Bologna Magna Charta Universitatum of 1988. They specifically promised to the following: “...engage in co-ordinating our policies to reach in the short term, and in any case within the first decade of the third millennium, the objectives which we consider to be of primary relevance in order to establish the European area of higher education, (www.bologna-berlin 2003.de/). These aims are expected to be achieved by 2010⁴.

2. Quality assurance in the European higher education area

As stated above, comparability of quality assurance systems across the EU is an important factor in achieving the aims of the Bologna declaration. For this purpose the European Network for Quality Assurance (ENQA) in Higher Education was established in 2000 to disseminate information, experiences and good practices in quality assurance in higher education to European QA agencies, public authorities and higher education institutions. Its work is based

⁴ www.aic.lv/bologna/Bologna/maindoc/bologna_declaration.pdf Bolognadec/process.2009

on the following principles (1) respecting the diversity of higher education systems in Europe instead of trying to establish a unified, pan-European quality assurance regime, (2) accepting that the fundamental responsibility for quality rests with academic institutions, (3) promoting co-operation of quality assurance agencies at the European and international levels, for example by supporting joint international projects in the QA field, (<http://www.enqa.eu/pubs.lasso>).

Institutions within Europe are expected to set up quality assurance standards for (1) the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programmes and awards, (2) the assessment of students using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently, (3) the quality of teaching ensuring that staff involved in the teaching of students are qualified and competent to do so, (4) learning resources and student support, (5) information systems for the collection, analysis, and the use of relevant information for the effective management of their programmes of study and other activities, and (6) public information which should be up to date, impartial and objective about the programmes and awards they are offering⁵.

ENQA gives priority to facilitating the mobility of students and academics within Europe. It intends to provide detailed and reliable information on the quality of individual study programmes, faculties and higher education institutions.

IV. Quality assurance in the Arab countries

In this section some of the initiatives towards the formulation of national and inter-Arab QA systems will be briefly reviewed. These efforts were motivated by the desire to strengthen collaboration and cooperation in quality assurance among the Arab countries, a region, as mentioned above, where there has seen an expansion in the number of newly established higher education institutions as a response to increasing demand by increased number of students. At the UNESCO's Arab Regional Conference on Higher Education, Beirut 1998, the Arab ministers agreed on a «resolution calling for the establishment of a regional mechanism for quality assurance and accreditation under the auspices of the Association of Arab Universities...» (UNESCO, 2003) Similar efforts were made at Arab Summits (8th conference for the ministers of higher education in Egypt 2001, 9th conference, Syria 2003 and the 10th conference in Yemen 2005). As a result, some Arab countries have established national quality assurance and accreditation councils.

At the regional level, 'The Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education' (ANQAHE) was launched in 2007 as an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organization established in association with the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAHE). The ANQAHE works in connection with the Association of Arab Universities and serves «as a platform to exchange information; disseminate knowledge; and improve professional expertise of the national quality assurance agencies, to enhance the collaboration between similar quality assurance organizations in the Arab countries as well as to develop cooperation with other regional and international quality assurance networks.» (www.anqahe.org). In addition, a network called the Arab Quality Assurance and Accreditation Network "ARQAANE" was established in Belgium in July 2007, as an independent, non-profit organization aiming at raising the quality of higher education in the Arab world and cooperation between the Arab Quality Assurance and Accreditation Networks. These networks are intended to complement the national quality assurance frameworks for the recognition of qualifications (both domestic and international), institutions, courses and programmes and also assist the creation of a national

⁵ <http://www.enqa.eu/pubs.lasso>

registers for institutions, courses and quality assurance agencies, (www.arqaane.org).

Despite these efforts, El Amine (2008) and Anqahe (2009) reported that the “QA status of higher education in the Arab countries and the prevailing quality assurance practices showed that QA systems are still falling short and identified some major challenges and limitations to quality assurance, for example:

- Insufficient funds and resources.
- Absence of a national QA system and a developing QA culture in many countries of the region.
- Lack of professional quality assurance expertise.”

Returning to the special case of the GCC countries, the Supreme GCC Council has played an admirably constructive role in updating the educational system of the region and in promoting quality assurance. A survey of their efforts can be found in Cooperation in the Field of Education, (<http://www.gccsg.org>). All these states have established various forms of quality assurance and accreditation councils. Some are linked with international accreditation boards. Most of their private universities are affiliated or are in partnership with foreign universities.

The 14th meeting of the GCC higher education ministers in UAE, March 30 2009 addressed such topics as the promotion of educational cooperation in the Gulf region. The meeting also focused on the promotion of cooperation in educational development in the Gulf, the creation of academic exchange programs, and the expansion of lifetime education in the region to boost the economies of the region and create new job opportunities, (www.gcc.org/edu).

At the 17th meeting of the Presidents, Vice presidents and Directors of GCC institutions of Higher Education, promotion of cooperation and coordination between Arabian Gulf countries in higher education was a focus of attention.

There is currently a proposal to establish a GCC Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (www.gcc.org). This reflects the understanding that a regional approach to quality assurance in higher education offers the possibility of reducing national costs and improving both national and regional competitiveness in the global market. In the beginning, the focus of the Gulf network will be on building national systems to carry out accrediting functions. It is possible that, in the future, the introduction of this Network may facilitate the establishment of a regional accreditation agency, but the initial goals of the Network, as with INQAAHE, are centered on sharing expertise.

Another proposal is that the GCC Ministers establish a process to determine standards for professional programmes for medical doctors, engineers, accountants and teachers. The outcome would be one common set of regional standards established for all professional programmes in the GCC countries.

However, more needs to be done in order to transform and build a culture of quality assurance in the region's higher education institutions.

V. Establishing a Bologna-type process in the GCC

Among the Arab countries, GCC countries provide a most suitable environment for establishing a Bologna-type Higher Education area. The main reasons include:

- The GCC nations have a common linguistic, cultural and religious heritage, prosperous economies, and similar geopolitical and security concerns.
- There is a well-established general cooperation framework, i.e. the Gulf Cooperation Council.

- The GCC nations are considered a natural strategic block headed toward a common currency in the near future, (www.gcc.org/economic/).
- Similarities between their educational systems, supported by the Governments and the existence of the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States (ABEGS).
- There are already thousands of highly qualified foreign experts working in the GCC who have made a fundamental contribution to its economic advancement in recent years.

The experience of the GCC in establishing such an area can serve as a model for other Arab countries to establish their own regional higher education areas or indeed establish a more global area covering the entire Arab world.

It is not the intent of the authors of this paper to suggest a particular administrative structure, or a new layer of bureaucracy, for the establishment of a Bologna process in the GCC. Together, the existing governmental and private institutions probably have the capacity to adopt the idea of the Bologna process to their own region and develop the framework and the mechanisms for implementing their adopted version. Indeed there are many structures within the GCC governments whose responsibilities include promotion of harmonization among their educational systems. The responsibility to do so is with the GCC Ministries of Higher Education, policy makers and senior university administrators, to work together with all concerned parties including international and regional organizations. In that case, all they may need would be certain adjustments in policy and practices to meet the challenges of harmonization in the GCC. We will suggest some strategic aims which can be considered as a guide for the basic steps and adjustments.

1. Revisit the existing treaties, pacts, official statements, etc. and choose those aspects which are acceptable to all, and applicable to the 21st century world, whilst respecting differences of opinion among the GCC countries to produce a modest realistic action plan based on the advice of academic experts in each country.
2. Entrust an appropriate body within the GCC with the task of formulating a suitable GCC-analogue of the Bologna process to produce a proposal and action plan for harmonization of the educational systems of the GCC countries and to ratify the final proposal, including the necessary resources, by the legal authorities in each of the GCC countries such as the national parliaments.
3. Expand cooperation between the agencies responsible for academic quality assurance in the GCC, as the key dimension of harmonization discussed in this paper. This may involve systemic changes to be made to modernize existing practices and bring varied systems of quality assurance together within the existing national quality assurance and accreditation agencies. In particular, a core of performance indicators shared among all QA practitioners would facilitate comparability among educational institutions.
4. Commission a group of specialist academics in each of the GCC countries with the task of evaluating the results of the implementation of the proposal and the action plan on a longitudinal basis.
5. Produce comprehensive information about the educational system of each country, including information about curricula, assessment results, comparative assessment of teaching, research, etc., and use the internet to disseminate that information.
6. Facilitate the exchange of students and academics among universities across the GCC by providing scholarships and research fellowships.

UNESCO, as an impartial international organization, with world-class experts from all nationalities is able to continue its important contribution towards the harmonization of education in the

Arab world, as can be seen in its historical track record. Therefore it would serve some of the fundamental interests of the Arab countries if they continue to give their unqualified support to UNESCO's efforts.

VI. Summary

In this expository paper the main initiatives to harmonize higher education in the Arab world have been reviewed. The Bologna process was briefly introduced and its relevance to economic development of the Arab world mentioned. Finally, it was suggested that the GCC countries provide a most suitable environment for establishing a Bologna-type process, and certain steps towards its implementation were suggested. The GCC experience can serve as a model for the entire Arab world in the future.

All these suggestions are meant to serve as flexible general aims; the details are a matter of negotiation between the Arab countries. What connects these suggestions together is the belief that economic development in the globalized world can be achieved only through cooperation.

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Licensing and Supervision of Private Higher Education Institutions in the Arab States*

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Abstract

This study provides a brief overview of experiences in Arab countries experience in the development and organization of private higher education; it aims at reviewing the licensing regulations and procedures and identifying the means for monitoring, supervision, and performance control as well as outlining the advantages and disadvantages of these regulations and means. The study touches briefly on the development of private higher education in the Arab states, and discusses and analyses licensing systems and means of monitoring and supervision, focusing on the experiences of eight Arab countries: Jordan, Sudan, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Tunisia. It reviews these countries' experiences with licensing regulations, procedures and structures, as well as with their means for evaluating performance, with the aim of outlining similarities and differences.

The study concludes that despite the relative progress achieved in applying licensing systems, as well as in monitoring and control in a number of Arab countries, it is worth noting that such progress was not achieved in compliance with the recommendations of an expert report published in 2000. In addition, there are shortcomings and weaknesses in ensuring that institutions comply with the set standards. Moreover, the controls proposed in the expert report need to be developed and updated to keep abreast of regional and global developments. The reviewed experiences show that the controls proposed in the report and those that are applied on the ground were designed for the traditional higher education system and fail to take into account the standards of modern higher-education models that have begun to spread in the region. The study also puts forward a number of recommendations.

I. Introduction

Higher education is deemed an effective mechanism to induce a comprehensive change in any country in the world. The second half of the 20th century witnessed great quantitative developments with increasing individual as well as collective demand for all forms of educational services. Qualitatively, there has been a large scientific and technical diversification in higher

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education programs, specifically in the way its institutions are structured, managed, and supervised and also in the way their performance is assessed.

In a number of countries the terms “non-governmental higher education” or “*ahli*” education are used to refer to private higher education, a term usually associated with for-profit economic investments. However, using the term private higher education institutions is more appropriate and inclusive, as this type outnumbers not-for-profit institutions. While the meaning attached to the term “private higher education” may vary from one country to the other, this study is restricted to post-secondary private higher education provided for profit by private entrepreneurs or by not-for-profit charities. Private higher education mainly aims at bridging gaps by providing those who cannot access governmental education or certain disciplines unavailable in governmental education with opportunities to pursue higher education. It also provides skills required by the labor market in specific areas; thus achieving high flexibility and adaptability to change, in addition to achieving high returns on investment.

II. Private higher education in the Arab States

The fast pace of progress in the world in general, has led to a number of radical changes in higher education policies and a rapid growth in private higher education institutions, notably in the 1980s and 1990s.

Jordan is considered as one of the first Arab States to establish private higher education institutions in the 1980’s (mainly for-profit) followed by Sudan, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt. Nowadays, private higher education has spread to almost all Arab countries, yet with large differences in both the number and size of institutions and of enrolled students.

Private higher education in the Arab States is characterized by a wide diversity of levels and organizational constraints. For example, a number of countries such as Sudan and Libya have exclusively local non-governmental and private institutions, whereas GCC countries, except for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, have opened their doors to transborder higher education. Saudi private education regulations provide that only charities and licensed companies are authorized to establish educational institutions.

Private higher education institutions in Arab countries follow a wide variety of systems, structures, and sizes. This is due to several factors, including: legislation, regulations, standards, institutional capacities, market demand, etc. Most countries, such as Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia, authorize direct licensing for the establishment of universities. While others, such as Sudan, only grant licenses for the establishment of institutes and faculties, which can later be promoted to the status of universities, according to specific terms, regulations, and standards. Other countries, such as Kuwait and Oman, only authorize branches of, or programs licensed by, foreign universities with a certain standing in international classifications.

III. Licensing private higher education institutions and monitoring their performance

Belle (2002), Babiker (2007), and Abu Amma (2009) have noted that, for various reasons, private higher education institutions, though increasingly numerous, do not clearly contribute in alleviating the burden of national higher education systems. Moreover, the unprecedented openness of higher education in Arab countries to different patterns of education and private institutions has stirred some concerns, regarding equal educational opportunities or social justice,

compatibility and quality of education. Moreover, these institutions were founded in a number of Arab countries without any controls or specific regulations. Those responsible for the sector only realized the need for regulations and laws when the number of private HEIs exploded. Based on that, it became crucial to determine solid conditions and restrictions for licensing them and put in place conditions to oversee, follow and ensure the quality of academic and administrative performance. Jordan, Sudan and the United Arab Emirates were the first countries to impose licensing restrictions and regulations in the 1990s, followed after 2000 by Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman and Bahrain (in chronological order).

Further to a recommendation from the 6th Meeting for Arab Ministers in charge of Higher Education and Scientific Research in 2000, a meeting of experts with participation of a number of relevant regional organizations was held in Amman, Jordan, in September 2000 with the aim of improving the performance of private education institutions by laying the foundations of licensing and accreditation, taking into consideration some of the common elements emerging from the experiences conducted in the Arab States. One of the outcomes of this meeting was a report including draft guidelines and controls for licensing. It was recommended that licensing follow a two-phase process, i.e. preliminary licensing and final licensing. The report reviewed licensing authorities, systems and regulations and funding. The Ministry of Higher Education or any other similar authority in charge of higher education would be responsible for granting licenses, drafting regulations, and ensuring oversight and follow-up. This would be done with the proper technical and administrative bodies that have been established to provide the necessary help.

The report recommended eight conditions to be met for preliminary licensing: funds should be available to guarantee the sustainability of the institution; founders should commit to abide by academic and social values; a number of experts, determined by every state, should be part of the Board of Founders and Trustees; objectives of the institution should be compatible with higher education objectives, such as meeting development needs; admission opportunities for qualified students should be enhanced; professional and scientific gaps should be bridged; new concepts of higher education should be introduced; institutions should adapt to technological change, and serve all sectors of society including remote and the least developed regions; and present a plan to provide appropriate resources for scientific research. Every State was to determine the validity of preliminary licensing, provided that it does not exceed three years, while the licensing decision had to be made by the authorities within three months.

Conditions and standards for final licensing include the following:

the availability of human resources, with the required number of highly-skilled professionals filling leadership and teaching positions; appropriate technical cadres; an integrated organizational structure of academic councils and administrative bodies (board of trustees, university and faculty councils, departmental councils, administrative and financial units, etc.); and the availability of training and capacity-building programs for human resources. Regarding utilities and equipment, the report indicated the need to check that institutions have the required teaching/learning facilities (such as halls, laboratories and workshops ..etc.) as well as any appropriate learning materials needed to serve the institution's mission and curricula. Sanitary and service utilities also need to be checked. In the program and curriculum section, the report pinpointed the need to determine objectives, the name of the degree, the number of required years or hours to complete courses and the competencies to be acquired at the end of the course. Moreover, it is important to ensure harmonization of courses with the objectives, competencies and educational progress as well as to be compatible with the financial and human resources that are available in order to optimize the execution of the curriculum.

Regarding performance monitoring, the report recommended developing assessment and accreditation mechanisms on three levels i.e. institutional, national and regional. These mechanisms would ensure all final licensing commitments are met to guarantee optimal performance, quality, and improvement of performance. It was also recommended to encourage institutions to use international assistance in assessment.

IV. Licensing higher education institutions in a number of Arab countries

1. Jordan

Jordan first started licensing higher education institutions in 1989, when the Provisional Private Universities Act was adopted. Article (7.b) of the Act provides that the Higher Education Council in Jordan should ensure that private universities fulfill their goals. The Council is also entitled to issue licensing and accreditation instructions which have to be respected by institutions before they begin providing services to students. Licensing is a two-phase process: general accreditation and specific accreditation. General accreditation is completed once the committees, formed by the supervisory authority (previously called the Accreditation Council, and currently the Higher Education Accreditation Commission), ensure that higher education institutions meet five sets of criteria. These are: faculty, land area, classrooms, library, and admission and registration procedures. Based on the scores obtained with regard to accreditation conditions the overall enrolment capacity is then defined (Higher Education Accreditation Commission, 2008). Specific accreditation covers: program objectives, intended learning outcomes, study plans, faculty, supporting staff, library, students, laboratories and workshops, equipment and instructional material, and administration (Higher Education Accreditation Commission, 2008).

A comparison, between Jordan's higher education and the guidelines and conditions published in the Expert report, would reveal several similarities. However, the Jordanian guidelines do not comply with a number of criteria mentioned in the report and related to the objectives of higher education institutions. For example, these include ensuring that profit does not outweigh educational objectives, providing new higher education patterns, geographic distribution, abundance by academic and social values etc. The Jordanian Higher Education Ministry also lacks a special administrative authority in charge of technical and administrative procedures necessary for licensing, oversight, and monitoring. Though licensing and accreditation regulations fail to mention scientific research, the 2005 Higher Education Act provides for the establishment of a Higher Committee for Scientific Research within the Ministry to promote and develop scientific research. This entails two scientific research professors from private universities to be included among the other members. This step highlights the attention given to developing scientific research in private higher education institutions.

2. Sudan

Prior to 1990, the Sudanese Ministry of Higher Education was in charge of licensing, by virtue of a direct decision made by the minister. However, as demands to establish new institutions soared at the beginning of the 1990's, the National Higher Education Council established an affiliate committee for licensing and follow-up, called the Committee for Non-Governmental and Foreign Higher Education. An Executive Secretariat for the Committee was established, and later developed in 1996 into a General Administration accountable to the Minister and the Committee for Non-Governmental and Foreign Higher Education. The National Higher Education and Scientific

Research Council also drafted, through the Committee, a set of licensing regulations.

The Sudanese example is unique, as licenses are only granted to faculties to be promoted later to the status of universities after meeting certain conditions. Licensing is a four-step process; (1) the application is examined by the New Projects Committee to ensure compliance with regulations and criteria; (2) this is then recommended to the Committee for Non-Governmental and Foreign Higher Education, which examines the recommendation and grants primary approval; (3), final approval is given after collecting key data on financial, physical and human resources and examining the recommendation of a special technical committee established to review such conditions; (4) lastly, the green light is given to start enrolling students and start courses, once the staff contracts are submitted and the qualifications of the faculty members and administrative staff are verified. Regarding quality control mechanisms and performance monitoring, the Sudanese experience follows certain procedures: licenses of new institutions as well as new programs in established institutions are audited; comprehensive and partial institutional and program evaluation is carried out; equipment within institutions is regularly checked by specialized technical committees formed by the Committee for Non-Governmental and Foreign Higher Education; regulations and legislations are regularly amended; assessment and follow-up mechanisms are updated to bridge any gaps arising during their performance; the numbers and qualifications of faculty members are regularly reviewed; and the external examiners system is regularly implemented to assess the performance of graduating students.

The Sudanese experience is compatible with most recommendations issued in the Expert report, and even includes additional regulations and procedures. However, practice has revealed a number of pitfalls, such as the focus of most institutions on programs of a theoretical nature with very limited numbers of students in programs of technical and vocational training, and leniency in the application of regulations and criteria". (Abdel Bagi Babiker, 2003)

3. The United Arab Emirates

The UAE has a large number of private higher education institutions of various sizes and capacities, owned by various parties. The Ministry for Higher Education and Scientific Research is responsible for licensing such institutions. (Higher Education Ministry - the UAE, 2008).

The Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) was entrusted with licensing and quality control through program accreditation and license renewal. This is a two-phase process: preliminary licensing and license renewal. The higher education institution should submit, with its application for the preliminary license ten required documents including a feasibility study, a list of human and physical resources, a building permit for the premises, regulations of the institution, etc.

As license renewal is not automatic, institution must submit an application for general accreditation at least one year before its license expires, and must meet the licensing criteria and regulations. The CAA carries out the accreditation evaluation procedures through special committees of local experts with participation of external experts or special committees fully comprised of foreign expertise. Special accreditation is then carried out once every four years according to specific criteria (Khaled Al-Sultan, et al., 2007).

The UAE licensing and accreditation regulations are largely compatible with the recommendations of the Experts report. Yet, the UAE regulations fail to include that profit shall not outweigh educational objectives, the necessity of providing new patterns, assurance of availability of resources for research, and that owners are expected to respect academic and social values.

4. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Private higher education institutions were first established in Saudi Arabia since the year 2000. The Ministry of Higher Education is the authority entitled to grant licenses to private higher education. A General Licensing and Approval Committee has been established for this purpose. This is a four-step process: preliminary licensing, general accreditation, special accreditation, and final licensing. Specialized committees ensure regular follow-up, interviewing faculty members, students, and administration staff, review programs, and examine the performance of graduates in the labor market (Waleed Abd-Al-Razzak Al-Wali, 2008).

Saudi Arabia has perhaps the most compatible regulations with those of the Experts report, including aspects ignored in other countries, such as the encouragement of not-for-profit educational institutions, abidance by academic criteria and social values, and the promotion of scientific research. However, as the Saudi experience is relatively new, it is necessary to wait for actual implementation of regulations in order o determine whether they are actually fully respected.

5. Tunisia

Private higher education institutions in Tunisia are established according to the provisions of Private Higher Education Act No. 73 of 2000. The Act stipulates that institutions should be established as corporations. It also determines certain requirements and general procedures to be met, and organizes the licensing process. The act also details licensing conditions and criteria, the required documents, and the special procedures and conditions in the organization of institutions, premises, faculty members, programs, assessment, examinations, etc. The Act also includes provisions linked to medical and health-related programs.

Regarding follow-up and supervision procedures, articles 22 and 23 of the act provide that the institution is subject to administrative monitoring. The General Directorate for Higher Education is in charge of technical and administrative issues for licensing. Several Decrees on licensing and follow-up were issued with the 2000 Act, such as the Decree on the Establishment of a Consultative Committee to Grant or Withdraw Licenses. Though new in this field, Tunisia has reduced licensing procedures to just one step, i.e. submitting the application for licensing with the required documents. Tunisia has not established a specialized private higher education administrative authority, since the Licensing Consultative Committee is a technical committee and administrative procedures still fall under the authority of the General Directorate for Higher Education.

6. Kuwait

The Private Universities Council (PUC) is the authority granting licenses for higher education institutions in Kuwait. The Council of Ministers issued Act No. 34 of 2000 regarding the follow up and licensing of private universities, and established the Private Universities Council. The terms of reference and authorities of the Council were determined regarding licensing regulations and including procedures for academic accreditation of private higher education institutions, program accreditation, review of their performance, as well as criteria for recognition and accreditation of the degrees, certificates and diplomas. The Council was also given the authority to grant or withdraw licenses, order the cessation of an activity or merge private educational institutions together (Private Universities Council, 2005).

The Kuwaiti experience is rather similar to some other Arab countries; however, it does adopt a general approach without detailed accurate criteria for measurement. Kuwaiti procedures cover

both preliminary and final approvals and regulations determine the steps to be followed. It is worth noting that in Kuwait, an institution submitting an application for licensing is required to have established an academic affiliation with a prestigious foreign university, which in turn minimizes the efforts for follow-up, supervision, and assessment of academic activity performance by the Council..

7. Oman

In 2000, the Ministry of Higher Education of Oman established a General Directorate for Private Universities as an authority to supervise and follow up the performance of private higher education institutions. In 2001, the Oman Accreditation Council (OAC) was established to be the governmental authority in charge of academic and program evaluation and accreditation of higher education institutions. Oman also requires all private higher educational institutions that apply for licensing to establish academic links or affiliation with prestigious foreign universities to ensure quality of academic performance (Abdullah Ben Mohammad Al-Sarmi, 2009). In addition to drafting and developing licensing procedures and criteria, the General Directorate conducts regular field visits to private higher education institutions to check compliance with rules and regulations and monitor academic performance. Under the institutional and program accreditation regulations and procedures a general evaluation should be carried out once the first batch of students graduate.

Oman's experience is rather special in the sense that OAC developed a number of criteria that could be regarded as a real addition to the Region, to be used in the follow-up, evaluation and accreditation of higher education institutions in other Arab States.

8. Egypt

Licensing higher education institutions in Egypt is unlike licensing in any other Arab country. There are no determined licensing regulations and criteria for private universities. Universities are established by virtue of a government decision, and every university has its own act, regulations and authorities. The only act in Egypt regarding the organization of higher education institutions was issued in 1970. A list of regulations was also issued by decision No. 1988 - 1978, in addition to regulations concerning medical and technical health institutes (offering programs leading to a Bachelor degree) in the year 1988, based on which the Ministry has authorized the establishment of technical institutes and colleges, or advanced polytechnics and community colleges offering vocational and training programs (Rules for Submitting an Application for the Establishment of a Private Higher Education Institution, 2009).

Requirements and needed documentation for the establishment of a higher education institution (other than a university) are found on the website of the Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education. Khaled Al-Sultan and his two colleagues (2006) summarized the Egyptian experience in licensing. In their study, they concluded that there were no general criteria and rules, but rather regulations issued on a case-by-case basis by governmental decision. Currently, there is no sign of any efforts to improve the situation, and it appears that there is general satisfaction that it meets the requirements for the time being. Regulations are also highly flexible, allowing for the prompt establishment of institutions and ease in the provision of educational services.

Follow-up, monitoring and supervision of higher education institutions is supposed to be carried out by the national quality assurance framework (the National Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Education "NAQAAE"), but it has not yet started evaluating and/or accrediting private or public institutions or programs. There is also no evidence in the reports of the Ministry

of Higher Education of any assessment or visits being carried out in any of the universities on. Seemingly, there is a general satisfaction based on the presence of a consultant from the ministry within every university, filing reports to the ministry, and accrediting its diplomas and carrying out the necessary equivalencies of such degrees..

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

Private higher education has gained ground in Arab countries, as its institutions and enrolled students are constantly increasing. However, there are different levels and organizational structures, as well as different regulations and criteria for licensing, accreditation, supervision, and monitoring. As unconventional higher education patterns rapidly expanded and grew, concerns were voiced by stakeholders and members of society over the quality of private higher education. A set of guidelines and indicators were then suggested for developing licensing and performance monitoring regulations. Arab Education Ministers and regional organizations (such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO; The Arab Association of Universities, AARU; and the Arab League for Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, ALECSO) launched this initiative in 2000, based on the experience of some Arab countries. In a number of Arab countries, these recommended licensing and monitoring procedures and regulations were taken into account to some extent. Despite remarkable progress in licensing regulations and procedures in several Arab countries, some regulations still do not comply with all the recommended requirements and guidelines by the Experts Committee in 2000. These include ensuring that lucrative and for-profit tendencies do not overshadow national objectives, bridging professional and scientific gaps, offering new patterns of higher education, ensuring respect of academic and social values and guaranteeing proper resources for scientific research. Most importantly, monitoring the performance of institutions and the assurance that they abide by the set criteria still seems to be weak; a matter which highlights the importance of regular follow-up and assessment. It is also necessary to develop quality control mechanisms and criteria within a strategy to include both public and private higher education in every country, and at the same time preserving diversity in line with international developments.

Based on the experiences reviewed, Arab countries clearly adopt different approaches in determining licensing and follow-up regulations for private higher education institutions and their programs. So far, Egypt still has not developed licensing and monitoring regulations and criteria. Instead, a case-by-case approach is adopted, which could lead to different regulations and measures negatively affecting higher education. Other Arab countries such as Jordan, the UAE and Sudan have come a long way in drafting and implementing regulation mechanisms. However, some of their regulations still diverge from the guidelines and recommendations of the 2000 Experts Report, and it is therefore necessary to bridge these gaps in implementation and develop new legislations. On the other hand, legislations in Saudi Arabia respect most of the report's recommendations, though so far, no information is available on actual implementation. Tunisia has developed limited regulations, which lack any follow-up, evaluations or visits to ensure respect of regulations and quality control.

It should be mentioned that the 2000 Experts Report, though important, has several discrepancies. It also needs to be updated in line with the international trends and developments, and general guidelines and criteria suitable for the Arab region should be adopted. In fact, the recommended regulations were designed for conventional higher education, failing to take into consideration the new higher education modes and patterns, which are expected to expand in line with

globalization and the developments in ICT.

Expert meetings are undoubtedly vital to develop licensing and quality control and assurance regulations and procedures, along with developing flexible criteria to be adapted to country-specific conditions (either by amendment or addition). It is also necessary in this regard, to draw on the positive experience of some countries and draft European-type conventions on quality assurance of higher education and mutual recognition of diplomas and degrees. Private higher education institutions can then play a more important role in developing education; degrees and certificates could be mutually recognized, and student mobility could easily be facilitated between higher education institutions in the Arab region.

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L'évaluation dans le système d'enseignement supérieur au Maroc: Bilan des réalisations, limites et principaux défis

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Résumé

Ce papier discute la question de l'évaluation dans le système d'enseignement supérieur marocain. D'abord, il présente brièvement certaines statistiques de ce système ainsi que sa réforme installée depuis l'année 2003. Puis, il définit le concept d'évaluation dans un système de l'enseignement supérieur en général. Ensuite, il décrit le bilan des réalisations des activités d'évaluation dans le système d'enseignement supérieur au Maroc, avec une identification des forces et des faiblesses des pratiques mises en œuvre. Enfin, il propose un cadre de recommandations relatives aux bonnes pratiques des activités d'évaluation dans le système de l'enseignement supérieur marocain.

I. Introduction

De par le monde, les systèmes d'enseignement supérieur connaissent des mutations et changements profonds, à cause de plusieurs constats: l'augmentation des effectifs étudiants, la croissance du nombre d'établissements et la diversification de leurs programmes de formation, la diminution des ressources financières, un besoin fort du secteur économique en cadres qualifiés de haut niveau et en une recherche scientifique performante, l'émergence du principe de la responsabilisation (accountability) et celui de l'internationalisation de l'enseignement supérieur (Van Damme, 2001), les conséquences de la mondialisation de l'économie et celles du développement des technologies de l'information et de la communication...

L'amélioration de la qualité de l'enseignement et de la recherche devient de plus en plus une préoccupation grandissante chez tous les acteurs, surtout après les efforts consentis sur le plan quantitatif: développement de l'offre et diversification des plans de formation. Ainsi, depuis plusieurs années, la tendance des réformes appliquées dans de nombreux pays converge vers la mise en place de mécanismes d'évaluation pour apprécier la performance des systèmes de l'enseignement supérieur en vue d'élaborer des régulations et des améliorations.

Depuis l'année 2003, le système d'enseignement supérieur au Maroc est engagé dans une nouvelle réforme suite aux orientations de la Charte Nationale d'Education et de Formation et la promulgation de la Loi 01 - 00 portant organisation de l'enseignement supérieur. Il s'agit d'une réforme qui concerne l'application de l'architecture pédagogique LMD et appelle à l'installation des modèles d'assurance de la qualité par l'instauration de systèmes d'accréditation

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des programmes de formation et des établissements, l'adoption de systèmes d'évaluation et la création d'instances d'évaluation et de régulation.

L'évaluation est placée au cœur de la modernisation du système de l'enseignement supérieur marocain; c'est là le principe dicté par les textes des lois et volontairement exprimé par les décideurs du secteur. Toutefois, les mesures à entreprendre pour adopter des opérations d'évaluation pertinentes et rigoureuses doivent commencer par l'installation d'une culture d'évaluation auprès de tous les acteurs éducatifs, par la formation à l'évaluation, et par la réflexion sur des principes et mécanismes opérationnels d'évaluation qui tiennent compte des particularités et spécificités du contexte local.

Ce papier discute la question de l'évaluation dans le système d'enseignement supérieur marocain à travers les éléments suivants:

- Présentation du système de l'enseignement supérieur du Maroc;
- Définition du concept d'évaluation dans un système d'enseignement supérieur;
- Bilan des réalisations des activités d'évaluation dans le système d'enseignement supérieur du Maroc, en identifiant les forces et les faiblesses concernant les pratiques d'évaluation;
- Proposition d'un cadre de recommandations relatives aux bonnes pratiques des activités d'évaluation dans le système de l'enseignement supérieur marocain.

II. L'enseignement supérieur au Maroc

Le système d'enseignement supérieur au Maroc est organisé selon trois pôles: les universités publiques, les établissements ne relevant pas des universités publiques et les établissements privés. Les universités sont composées d'établissements à accès régulé et d'établissements à accès ouvert.

1. Données statistiques et indicateurs

D'après les statistiques de l'année 2007 - 2008, il existe:

- 15 universités publiques et 97 établissements universitaires;
- 63 institutions ne sont pas liées aux universités mais régies par d'autres ministères, dont 25 établissements d'enseignement scientifique et technique, 15 établissements de formation économique, juridique, administrative et sociale, 23 établissements de formation pédagogique;
- 35 Centres de Formation des Instituteurs (CFI);
- 127 institutions liées à la formation professionnelle post-baccalauréat;
- 460 établissements d'enseignement supérieur privé et une université privée (Al Akhawayn);

Le système de l'enseignement supérieur marocain présente les indicateurs suivants:

- Le nombre d'étudiants de l'enseignement supérieur, dans toutes ses composantes, a atteint 392 324 étudiants, répartis comme suit: 72% dans l'enseignement supérieur universitaire, 6,4% dans les établissements publics ne relevant pas des universités, 15,2% dans les établissements de la formation professionnelle, 6,4% dans l'enseignement supérieur privé;
- Le nombre d'enseignants permanents de l'enseignement supérieur universitaire est de 9 995, avec un taux de féminité de 24%;
- Le taux net de scolarisation dans l'enseignement supérieur pour la tranche d'âge 19 à 23 est de 12,8 %;
- Le budget du Département de l'Enseignement Supérieur de la Formation des Cadres et de la Recherche Scientifique est de 777 millions de dollars (M\$), réparti en budget de fonctionnement (673 M\$) et en budget d'investissement (104 M\$);

- La part du PIB consacrée à la recherche scientifique est de 0,8%;
- 26 % de l'effectif global des étudiants sont inscrits dans le champ des sciences et techniques, des sciences de l'ingénieur et des sciences médicales, le reste des étudiants étant inscrit dans les domaines relevant des lettres et des sciences humaines, des sciences juridiques, économiques et sociales, et de l'enseignement originel.

2. Description de la réforme du système de l'enseignement supérieur marocain

Depuis l'année 2003, le système de l'enseignement supérieur marocain a été engagé dans une nouvelle réforme, à la suite des orientations de la Charte Nationale d'Education et de Formation et de la promulgation de la Loi 01 - 00 portant organisation du secteur de l'enseignement supérieur. Cette réforme porte sur les éléments suivants:

- L'engagement d'un nouveau modèle pédagogique LMD (Licence, Master, Doctorat) caractérisé par une nouvelle organisation: la filière, le système modulaire, les semestres, la flexibilité, la pluridisciplinarité, les passerelles entre les filières, l'évaluation continue, l'interactivité avec l'environnement économique et social, le recoupement des compétences avec les spécialités académiques, etc.;
- L'installation de modèles d'assurance de la qualité par l'introduction d'un système d'accréditation des filières et programmes de formation;
- L'adoption d'un système d'évaluation et la création d'instances d'évaluation et de régulation: Commission nationale de coordination de l'enseignement supérieur, Conseil de coordination des institutions qui ne sont pas liées aux universités, Commission de coordination de l'enseignement supérieur privé, Instance nationale d'évaluation...

La nouvelle réforme de l'enseignement supérieur a ciblé plusieurs objectifs:

- Satisfaire des besoins précis et prioritaires en matière de développement économique et social;
- Restructurer les enseignements sur la base de filières et de modules de formation;
- Instaurer des tronc communs et des passerelles entre les différentes filières;
- Asseoir le cursus des étudiants sur l'orientation, l'évaluation et la réorientation;
- Baser l'acquisition des modules sur le contrôle continu et des examens réguliers, et capitaliser les modules acquis.

3. Position des universités marocaines dans les palmarès internationaux

Dans le classement de Shanghai² et celui de THES³, aucune université marocaine n'est classée dans les tableaux statistiques de toutes les éditions passées, du fait que les critères adoptés ne sont pas remplis par les universités marocaines. Alors que pour le projet Webometrics⁴, les différentes éditions du classement ont donné des positions très médiocres des établissements marocains (Kaaouachi, 2008).

² L'institut d'enseignement supérieur de l'Université Jiao Tong de Shanghai a lancé en 2003 une première opération de classement des universités dans le monde selon leurs performances académiques et de recherche.

³ Le journal britannique Times Higher Education Supplement (THES) a publié un classement international des universités en novembre 2004.

⁴ Le projet Webometrics du Laboratorio de Internet du Centre de Documentation et de Recherche du Conseil Espagnol de Recherche (CINDOC-CSIC) à Madrid en Espagne, réalise un classement mondial des universités deux fois par an, en janvier et en Juillet.

III. Le concept d'évaluation dans un système de l'enseignement supérieur

D'après Stufflebeam et al. (1980), «*l'évaluation est le processus par lequel on délimite, obtient et fournit des informations utiles permettant de juger des décisions possibles*».

Le modèle de Stufflebeam et al. repose sur sept idées principales :

- Processus: C'est une activité continue;
- Définir: Il s'agit d'identifier les informations pertinentes;
- Obtenir: Il s'agit de mesurer, de collecter et d'analyser des données;
- Fournir: Il s'agit de communiquer des données;
- Informations: Ce sont des faits à interpréter;
- Informations utiles: Qui satisfont aux critères de pertinence;
- Décisions possibles: Ce sont des actions d'enseignement, d'orientation....

Cette définition a été complétée par celle proposée par De Ketele (1989); Évaluer signifie: «*Recueillir un ensemble d'informations suffisamment pertinentes, valides et fiables, et examiner le degré d'adéquation entre cet ensemble d'informations et un ensemble de critères adéquats aux objectifs fixés au départ ou ajustés en cours de route, en vue de prendre une décision*».

Les buts de l'évaluation sont de deux ordres:

- Le premier vise à rendre compte du fonctionnement et de la manière d'utilisation des ressources affectées. Le compte doit être rendu à plusieurs parties : les apprenants, les familles, les employeurs, la société et les pouvoirs publics. Il s'agit de la fonction sommative de l'évaluation qui dresse un bilan au terme d'une période de l'activité à évaluer ;
- Le deuxième vise l'aide à la progression et l'amélioration des tâches et activités. Il s'agit de la fonction formative de l'évaluation qui intervient au cours de l'activité à évaluer.

L'évaluation concerne plusieurs niveaux: Les apprenants, les personnels (corps enseignants et administratifs), les programmes et les cursus de formation, les pratiques et les méthodes, les unités (université, établissement, département, entité de recherche...), la recherche scientifique, le système global sur divers aspects du fonctionnement (politique éducative, réforme, différentes pratiques d'enseignement et d'évaluation...), et aussi sur son efficacité, son efficience, son équité et son rendement interne et externe.

Pour mener une opération d'évaluation selon une démarche scientifiquement fondée, il est nécessaire d'identifier et de clarifier certaines composantes:

- *Objet de l'évaluation*: L'objet de l'évaluation ou le référé qui doit être appréhendé par des informations et des données qui sont résumées sous forme d'indicateurs. Le référé est évalué relativement à des référents qui sont des objectifs avec des normes ou des critères;
- *Type de résultat de l'évaluation*: Le résultat de l'évaluation comporte un jugement de valeur. A la différence du contrôle qui a comme résultat des informations sur l'état ou le fonctionnement concret, comme par exemple les palmarès;
- *Évaluateurs*: Ce sont des personnes internes ou externes et des unités ou instance interne ou externe qui sont chargées de l'évaluation;
- *Démarche de l'évaluation*: Identification du référé et référent et explicitation des modalités du processus d'évaluation (outils d'évaluation, collecte et traitement des informations, échelonnement dans le temps, etc.);
- *Destinataires de l'évaluation*: Ceux qui manifestent l'intérêt aux résultats de l'évaluation, comme les étudiants, les personnels, les familles, les employeurs, la société, les pouvoirs publics.

Il existe des problèmes généraux pouvant affecter l'évaluation (Kaaouachi, 2007), comme par exemple :

- L'absence d'une stratégie spécifique à l'évaluation qui peut orienter ses opérations;
- Le manque d'outils et techniques spécifiques d'évaluation de certains niveaux;
- La diversité des critères et des indicateurs et difficulté de leur identification dans certains contextes;
- De multiples méthodes de collecte, de contrôle et d'analyse des données;
- L'attention accordée aux données quantitatives et la négligence de l'aspect qualitatif;
- Le manque de validité des données due à la falsification causée par les préférences et les intérêts personnels de certaines parties;
- L'utilisation de l'évaluation comme un moyen de diagnostic et de détection, plutôt qu'un outil d'amélioration et de développement;
- Le fait de prendre l'évaluation pour un moyen de contrôle;
- La diminution du nombre de spécialistes qui sont en mesure d'effectuer des études d'évaluation;
- Le manque de ressources financières et matérielles nécessaires aux opérations d'évaluation;
- La non-implication et/ou la non-participation des acteurs concernés par l'évaluation;
- La corruption et le népotisme des parties impliquées dans l'évaluation.

IV. Bilan des activités d'évaluation dans le système d'enseignement supérieur du Maroc

L'évaluation occupe une place importante dans les orientations et les choix en matière de politique éducative au Maroc. De nombreux articles de la Charte Nationale d'Éducation et de Formation ainsi que de la Loi 01 - 00 appellent à l'application du concept de l'évaluation à tous les volets de la question éducative: l'organisation pédagogique, les ressources humaines, l'amélioration de la qualité de l'éducation et de la formation, la gouvernance, etc.

Ainsi, la Charte nationale d'éducation recommande:

- *Article 80 : ... Asseoir le cursus des étudiants sur l'évaluation...;*
- *Article 103: Création de l'agence nationale d'évaluation et d'orientation;*
- *Articles 127 et 129: Deux types d'évaluation pour la recherche scientifique: interne et externe;*
- *Article 137(a): Critères d'évaluation pour la promotion et la gratification des enseignants;*
- *Article 155: Évaluation des administrations centrales;*
- *Article 157: Évaluation de l'ensemble du système éducatif.*

Par ailleurs, la Loi 01 - 00 stipule:

- *Article 8: ... Baser l'acquisition des modules sur des évaluations régulières ...;*
- *Article 77: Évaluation régulière du système de l'enseignement supérieur, portant sur sa rentabilité interne et externe, et touchant tous les aspects pédagogiques, administratifs et de recherche...;*
- *Article 78 : Auto-évaluation des établissements;*
- *Article 79: Création d'une instance nationale d'évaluation et un observatoire pour l'adéquation des enseignements supérieurs à l'environnement économique et professionnel.*

L'adoption des procédures d'évaluation dans le système d'enseignement supérieur au Maroc est justifiée par l'autonomie accordée aux universités publiques dans les dimensions pédagogique, administrative et de gestion.

Ainsi, la culture de l'évaluation a été progressivement introduite dans l'université marocaine et sa pratique a concerné l'ensemble des composantes du système d'enseignement supérieur: étudiants, personnels, programmes et filières, entités de recherche, établissements, universités, le système global...

Le bilan des activités d'évaluation génère des forces et des faiblesses relativement aux pratiques. Dans la suite de cette section, un bilan propre sera établi pour chaque niveau d'évaluation.

1. Évaluation des acquis

L'évaluation des acquis des étudiants occupe une place importante dans l'ensemble des processus d'évaluation des activités menées dans un système d'enseignement supérieur.

Au Maroc, un nouveau système d'évaluation des acquis a été appliqué suite à l'instauration de la nouvelle architecture pédagogique LMD. C'est un système qui se base sur le contrôle continu, comme le stipule l'article suivant du Cahier des Normes Pédagogiques Nationales:

«L'évaluation des connaissances, des aptitudes et des compétences pour chaque module s'effectue sous forme de contrôle continu qui peut prendre la forme d'examens, de tests, de devoirs, d'exposés, de rapports de stage ou de tout autre moyen de contrôle fixé dans le descriptif. Toutefois, si besoin est, outre le contrôle continu un examen final peut être organisé».

Les avantages de ce système d'évaluation des apprentissages sont grands (Edwards & Knight, 1995 et Montgomery, 1995):

- Accompagner la démarche d'apprentissage des étudiants. Dans ce sens, il convient de noter que le terme anglais «assessment», qui correspond à évaluation, tire son origine du verbe français «asseoir» et qu'il contient l'idée de «s'asseoir à côté de l'étudiant pour l'aider dans son apprentissage»;
- Indiquer la progression et orienter les apprentissages futurs;
- Avoir des feedbacks formateurs qui permettent aux étudiants de se corriger;
- Lutter contre l'échec scolaire des étudiants;
- Diversifier les formes de l'évaluation (examen écrit, examen oral, TP, projet personnel, stage...);
- Avoir des bases de données pour faire des comparaisons espace-temps, et pour identifier les facteurs de réussite;
- Suivre les pratiques innovantes d'évaluation;
- Recueillir de l'information sur l'efficacité du système éducatif.

L'application du nouveau système d'évaluation des acquis est en deçà des aspirations. Les faiblesses et les limites de la pratique de ce système d'évaluation sont les suivantes (Kaaouachi, 2004):

- Manque d'information et de sensibilisation des étudiants, des acteurs éducatifs et du public en général sur l'avantage du nouveau système d'évaluation;
- Lourdeur de l'organisation de l'évaluation (espace-temps) à cause du problème de la massification, surtout dans les établissements à accès ouvert;
- Gaspillage du temps pour les contrôles en faveur de l'apprentissage;
- Charge financière additionnelle provoquée par le déroulement des contrôles;
- Lourdeur de la tâche d'évaluation sur les activités de l'enseignant-chercheur. Cela implique des effets négatifs sur ses principales missions: l'enseignement, l'encadrement et la recherche;

- Absence de l'évaluation diagnostique qui se fait au début de l'apprentissage et qui a comme fonction le diagnostic des pré-requis et qui permet de définir les besoins précis de l'étudiant en matière de connaissance, de compétences et d'attitudes;
- Absence de l'évaluation formative qui se fait au cours de l'apprentissage et qui a comme fonction l'aide à la progression et qui permet d'indiquer le chemin parcouru et les voies à suivre pour améliorer les résultats ou ajuster les programmes;
- Diversité des pratiques d'évaluation: les dispositifs, les procédures et les critères. Cela est dû au fait que les contenus et les objectifs des enseignements sont différents en raison de l'autonomie dont jouissent les établissements et les enseignants du supérieur;
- Manque de crédibilité (fidélité, validité et fiabilité), de transparence et d'équité de l'évaluation;
- Aucun programme national n'a fixé comme objectif l'évaluation des acquis des étudiants pour comparer le rendement scolaire dans l'espace (entre établissements et universités) et dans le temps pour des études longitudinales.

2. Évaluation des enseignants

Au Maroc, il n'existe pas une vraie politique d'évaluation des enseignants de l'enseignement supérieur. Même s'il y a une sorte d'évaluation qui a des conséquences sur la titularisation et l'avancement dans la carrière (promotion et gratification).

Ainsi, pour avoir le grade de Professeur habilité⁵, une commission délibère sur la base d'un examen des travaux de recherche effectués par le candidat (Professeur assistant ayant une expérience professionnelle de quatre années au minimum) et d'un entretien conduit sous forme d'un exposé et d'une discussion.

Aussi, un système d'avancement d'une catégorie⁶ à la catégorie immédiatement supérieure, a été introduit. Il s'appuie sur des grilles d'évaluation qui portent sur les activités de recherche, les activités d'enseignement, les activités d'ouverture et de communication, la responsabilité dans les activités locales ou nationales à caractère universitaire.

Le ministère a proposé un système de contractualisation se basant sur les droits et les devoirs, mais une résistance s'installe refusant qu'on touche aux libertés traditionnelles des enseignants du supérieur.

Le développement de mécanismes d'évaluation pour la reconnaissance et la récompense du mérite des enseignants est une orientation importante. Il s'agit d'un levier essentiel pour l'amélioration de la qualité des enseignements et de la production scientifique. Cependant, certaines limites sont présentes dans la pratique courante:

- Les critères d'évaluation constituant la grille d'évaluation varient d'un établissement à l'autre;
- Les critères d'évaluation convergent plus sur l'aspect quantitatif que sur celui de la qualité des résultats (la qualité pédagogique, la qualité de la production scientifique);
- Les grilles d'évaluation n'associent pas certains critères importants comme les méthodes d'enseignement, les procédures de contrôle et d'évaluation des étudiants, l'impact de la recherche scientifique sur son environnement socio-économique, etc.;
- Une faible formation à l'évaluation pour les membres des commissions.

⁵ Au Maroc, il y a trois grades pour les enseignants universitaires: Professeur assistant, Professeur habilité, Professeur de l'enseignement supérieur.

⁶ Chaque grade est constitué de plusieurs catégories (trois ou quatre catégories selon le grade).

3. Évaluation des filières de formation

Au Maroc, l'évaluation des filières de formation a commencé en 1997 lors de l'installation de la réforme du 3ème cycle et du Doctorat. Cette réforme a concerné l'introduction des concepts d'accréditation et d'évaluation des filières de formation et des études doctorales.

La Commission Nationale d'Accréditation et d'Évaluation (CNAE اللجنة الوطنية للاعتماد والتقييم) a été créée pour piloter les activités d'évaluation des filières de formation. Sa mission principale est d'assurer les conditions et modalités d'accréditation des établissements universitaires habilités à préparer et à délivrer les diplômes de Doctorat, du DESA et du DESS⁷.

La Loi 01.00 portant organisation de l'enseignement supérieur a traité, dans un certain nombre d'articles, les modalités d'évaluation et d'accréditation des filières de formation dans l'enseignement supérieur public et privé.

L'architecture pédagogique fondée sur le LMD repose sur la définition de filières nationales types (niveau licence, niveau Master) ainsi que sur un Cahier de Normes Pédagogiques Nationales (CNPN). Elle repose également sur un document de référence présentant les descriptifs des modules et des filières et sur une méthodologie d'élaboration, d'évaluation et d'accréditation des filières de formation.

Ainsi, les modalités d'évaluation sont élaborées par les conseils d'établissement, soumis à l'avis des conseils d'université et fixés par arrêté de l'Autorité Gouvernementale de tutelle, après avis de la Commission Nationale de Coordination de l'Enseignement Supérieur (CNCES).

Les demandes d'accréditation sont présentées par les établissements universitaires et soumises à l'avis des conseils d'université. L'Autorité Gouvernementale de tutelle accrédite les établissements universitaires pour des filières de formation, après avis de la CNCES.

L'accréditation porte sur les conditions d'accès aux cycles et filières, le régime des études, les modalités d'évaluation, les conditions d'obtention des diplômes nationaux et les programmes d'études.

L'accréditation est accordée pour une durée de trois années renouvelable après évaluation de la filière. Pour la première fois, les universités ont conduit en 2006 - 2007 une évaluation et une accréditation des licences lancées en 2003.

Parmi les forces de ce système d'évaluation-accréditation, réside le passage d'un ancien système de création et de renouvellement de filières peu organisé à un autre se basant sur l'évaluation et l'accréditation.

Les faiblesses de ce système sont (Kaaouachi, 2007-a):

- Problème d'absence de programmes de formation à l'évaluation et à l'accréditation pour les projets de création ou de renouvellement des filières de formation, que ce soit à l'échelle locale (établissement ou université) ou à l'échelle nationale;
- Problème de création des filières de formation: L'accréditation est une sorte de reconnaissance officielle des filières et non pas un système de contrôle de la qualité de ces filières;
- Problème d'évaluation de la filière en état de fonctionnement: l'absence de suivi des filières pour apporter des corrections et de régulations en cours de route;
- Problème de renouvellement des accréditations: L'accréditation est un instrument de contrôle obligeant les filières à se conformer à certaines dispositions, mais non un outil pour le développement et l'amélioration continue de la qualité des filières, dans tous les aspects.

⁷ DESA: Diplôme d'Études Supérieures Approfondies. DESS: Diplôme d'Études Supérieures Spécialisées.

4. Évaluation des programmes de formation

L'évaluation des programmes de formation s'inscrit dans la phase d'évaluation des filières de formation uniquement sur la base du plan de formation ou des chapitres à enseigner. Cependant, aucun programme n'a tracé comme objectif d'évaluer le contenu de formation en profondeur selon certains critères, par exemple la pertinence et la cohérence interne du programme, la cohérence externe avec les autres programmes, la qualité du contenu en termes de connaissances et de compétences à faire acquérir aux étudiants, ses pré-requis, le degré de sa réponse aux besoins de l'environnement socio-économique et culturel, etc.

5. Évaluation des établissements

L'évaluation des établissements universitaires dans leur ensemble n'est pas une activité régulière dans le système d'enseignement supérieur marocain (Kaaouachi, 2007-b). L'évaluation des établissements est pratiquée uniquement au moment des grandes réformes. A l'état actuel, elle a concerné uniquement certaines institutions, par exemple les EST, les FST et les ENCG⁸.

Récemment, l'Université Mohammed V Agdal de Rabat s'est engagée dans un projet pilote de l'évaluation de ses établissements qui vise à mener une politique de management de la qualité au sein de l'université. Le projet s'est inscrit dans le cadre d'un programme Tempus sur une durée de deux ans (2005- 2007), et s'est fixé comme objectif de disséminer les résultats de l'expérience à l'ensemble des universités marocaines.

Le projet est réparti en plusieurs étapes:

- La mise en place d'un cadre méthodologique de l'évaluation institutionnelle;
- L'évaluation interne sur la base d'un référentiel de l'autoévaluation s'inspirant des références du processus de Bologne «Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education»;
- L'évaluation externe qui a généré un rapport d'évaluation externe après des visites du site d'une équipe d'évaluateurs externes;
- Le développement de mécanismes internes de qualité à partir des conclusions et recommandations du rapport d'évaluation externe;
- La valorisation et la dissémination des résultats de ce projet.

L'évaluation interne a permis à l'université de faire le bilan le plus complet sur sa situation, en impliquant l'ensemble de la communauté universitaire (enseignants, personnel administratif et étudiants). D'un autre côté, l'évaluation externe a proposé des recommandations s'articulant autour de quatre axes essentiels: développer une université forte et autonome, ouvrir l'université sur son environnement, renforcer et mutualiser le fonctionnement administratif, et enfin pérenniser la démarche d'assurance qualité.

En plus des mesures prises pour traiter les domaines nécessitant des améliorations, l'action a généré la création d'une cellule d'évaluation à l'Université Mohammed V Agdal qui a pour missions: la contribution à la mise en place d'indicateurs de pilotage, le développement d'une culture de complémentarité, de coordination et de solidarité entre les établissements de l'université, et la recherche et la diffusion de bonnes pratiques relatives à l'activité universitaire. Le projet pilote d'évaluation était une expérience réussie car il visait la réflexion et la mise en place d'un système marocain d'évaluation institutionnelle dans l'enseignement supérieur. Cependant, les modalités et les résultats de ce projet doivent être clarifiés, en identifiant les contraintes

⁸ EST : École Supérieure de Technologie, FST: Faculté des Sciences et Techniques, ENCG: Ecole Nationale de Commerce et de Gestion.

d'opérationnalisation du projet dans la réalité du terrain ainsi que le degré de cohérence des standards adoptés et de leur adéquation avec les spécificités du contexte marocain.

6. Évaluation de la recherche scientifique

A l'échelle nationale, on a réalisé en 2003 une étude d'évaluation du système national de la recherche scientifique dans le domaine des sciences exactes, des sciences de la vie et des sciences de l'ingénieur, avec le soutien de l'Union européenne. L'étude a été étendue en 2006 aux domaines des sciences humaines et sociales. Elle est basée sur:

- Une approche qualitative fondée sur des entretiens avec des chercheurs et enseignants-chercheurs;
- Une étude bibliométrique pour mesurer la production scientifique nationale;
- Une recherche quantitative par questionnaires administrés aux chercheurs et enseignants-chercheurs.

En outre, des commissions nationales ad hoc ont été mises en place pour l'évaluation des programmes nationaux d'appui à la recherche scientifique (PARS⁹, PROTARS¹⁰, pôles de compétences).

Les résultats des évaluations menées, ont fait ressortir des éléments de force de la recherche scientifique ainsi que des faiblesses et des dysfonctionnements. A la lumière de ces résultats, le ministère a élaboré une vision stratégique de la recherche à l'horizon 2025.

A l'échelle locale (des universités), la principale réalisation concerne l'accréditation des entités de recherche (équipe de recherche, laboratoire, centre, unité de formation et de recherche) par un processus d'évaluation. L'accréditation et la labellisation permettent à l'entité correspondante de bénéficier de financements adéquats.

Le processus d'évaluation des entités de recherche en vue d'une accréditation repose sur les critères suivants : les objectifs et les axes de recherche, les moyens humains, les retombées des axes, les moyens matériels et leur adéquation. Par ailleurs, le renouvellement de l'accréditation des entités de recherche est décidé par le conseil de l'université sur la base des rapports d'activité annuels.

L'évaluation a été utilisée comme outil essentiel pour la restructuration de la recherche scientifique. Cependant, des faiblesses caractérisent la pratique de l'évaluation:

- Limite des systèmes et dispositifs d'évaluation de la recherche scientifique;
- Absence des comités d'évaluation compétents de la recherche scientifique à l'échelle des établissements et des universités, et absence d'une instance nationale d'évaluation de la recherche scientifique;
- Les critères de renouvellement de l'accréditation portent le plus souvent sur les composantes de l'entité de recherche (moyens humains, axes de recherche...), avec une négligence des critères de la qualité tels que la production scientifique et son impact réel sur le développement socioéconomique et culturel de la région universitaire ou du pays en entier;
- Restriction de l'évaluation aux entités de recherche avec une limite de traitement d'autres composantes telles que les personnels de la recherche, ses programmes, sa valorisation, etc. ;
- Absence de l'évaluation des établissements publics de Recherche et Développement (R&D).

⁹ PARS: Programme d'Appui à la Recherche Scientifique.

¹⁰ PROTARS: Programme Thématique d'Appui à la Recherche Scientifique.

7. Évaluation globale du système d'éducation et de formation

Les travaux de la Commission Spéciale Éducation-Formation - COSEF¹¹ ont abouti à la rédaction d'une Charte Nationale d'Éducation et de Formation qui propose une série d'orientations d'une nouvelle réforme du secteur de l'éducation pour la Décennie 2000 -2010.

La fin des travaux de la COSEF a coïncidé avec la publication du rapport d'évaluation de mi-chemin en 2005, qui représente une sorte d'appréciation globale de l'état des lieux du système d'éducation et de formation par le biais d'une comparaison des réalisations avec les recommandations et les dispositions de la charte.

L'année 2007 a connu la création de l'Instance Nationale d'Évaluation-INE (الهيئة الوطنية للتقييم) relevant du Conseil Supérieur de l'Enseignement-CSE (المجلس الأعلى للتعليم). La mission de cette instance est de procéder à des évaluations globales, sectorielles ou thématiques du système d'éducation et de formation, en appréciant ses performances pédagogiques et financières par rapport aux objectifs qui lui sont assignés et en se référant aux normes internationales reconnues en la matière.

Le rapport du CSE¹², rendu public en 2008, a dressé l'état et les perspectives du système d'éducation et de formation. Ce rapport est constitué de quatre volumes : Réussir l'école pour tous, Rapport analytique, Atlas d'indicateurs du système d'éducation et de formation, Zoom sur le métier de l'Enseignant.

La méthodologie du travail retenue pour dresser le bilan des réalisations s'est basée sur les étapes suivantes:

- Évaluation de l'extension de l'enseignement (effectifs des apprenants et des personnels enseignants, capacité d'accueil, appui social) et son ancrage dans son environnement économique (rendement externe en relation avec le milieu: éducation et emploi, éducation et chômage);
- Évaluation de l'organisation pédagogique (architecture pédagogique, évaluation et examens, orientation et passerelles);
- Évaluation de la qualité de l'éducation (matériel didactique, pratiques d'enseignement, langue d'enseignement, technologie de l'information et de la communication);
- Évaluation de la gouvernance (décentralisation et déconcentration, autonomie);
- Évaluation du financement et du partenariat (relativement au rendement interne, modèle d'allocation des ressources);
- Évaluation de la recherche scientifique et technique (organisation, production).

Le rapport a identifié les forces et les faiblesses du système d'éducation et de formation. Il a constitué le point de départ pour lancer un programme d'urgence sur quatre années (Najah 2009- 2012) qui représente un nouveau souffle de la réforme du système éducatif.

Les opérations d'évaluation du système éducatif en entier étaient importantes pour identifier ses forces et ses faiblesses. Elles ont servi à l'élaboration des choix et orientations de la politique éducative selon des démarches scientifiques bien fondées. Cependant, les destinataires de l'évaluation, notamment les acteurs du terrain, n'ont pas eu le suivi ni la compréhension des choix et orientations choisis à cause d'une faiblesse de leur implication et de leur adhésion.

¹¹ COSEF: Commission Spéciale Éducation-Formation. Elle a élaboré la Charte Nationale d'Éducation et de Formation approuvée en Octobre 1999, par Sa Majesté Le Roi Mohammed VI. La COSEF a été alors chargée du suivi, de l'évaluation et de l'enrichissement de la réforme, dans le cadre de la Décennie Nationale de l'Éducation-Formation (2000 - 2010).

¹² CSE-INE (2008). État et Perspectives du Système d'Éducation et de Formation.

V. Cadre de recommandations relatives aux bonnes pratiques des activités d'évaluation dans le système d'enseignement supérieur marocain

L'étude développée dans la section précédente montre que des faiblesses et des limites caractérisent la réglementation et la pratique de l'évaluation dans le système d'enseignement supérieur marocain. D'où la nécessité d'adopter une nouvelle réforme du système de l'évaluation destinée à créer des procédures plus robustes de l'évaluation basées sur des standards de qualité. Nous proposons par la suite une série de recommandations permettant d'améliorer la qualité de l'évaluation qui représente un levier essentiel pour la réussite de la nouvelle réforme de l'enseignement supérieur:

- Réaffirmer la place et le rôle de l'évaluation dans les réformes du système de l'enseignement supérieur. Il s'agit de mettre l'évaluation au centre de toute activité, qu'elle soit de formation, de recherche, de management, etc.;
- Informer et sensibiliser les acteurs éducatifs et le public sur les avantages de l'évaluation par le biais de la presse, les conférences, les circulaires, etc. Leur participation active et efficace peut être la garantie du succès de toute opération d'évaluation;
- Former des experts locaux et nationaux sur la question de l'évaluation;
- Établir des textes légaux encadrant les pratiques d'évaluation et assurant un minimum de standardisation tout en laissant des marges de manœuvre de nature locale permettant de réagir aux spécificités du milieu;
- Élaborer des standards et des référentiels d'évaluation à tous les niveaux d'évaluation qui soient en accord avec les standards internationaux;
- Développer un système d'information qui soit fiable et valide pour construire des batteries d'indicateurs de pilotage pouvant nourrir les pratiques d'évaluation;
- Rendre obligatoire la rédaction et la diffusion du rapport d'évaluation qui découle de chaque opération d'évaluation;
- A l'échelle nationale, création d'une instance nationale d'évaluation, d'assurance qualité et d'accréditation et d'une instance nationale d'évaluation de la recherche scientifique;
- A l'échelle de chaque université (respectivement établissement), création de centres (respectivement unités) d'évaluation;
- Encourager les établissements à mettre au point des auto-évaluations sur leurs propres activités. Des mesures incitatives et motivationnelles sont à entreprendre, par exemple considérer l'auto-évaluation comme critère d'octroi des subventions;
- Disséminer les bonnes pratiques relatives aux méthodologies et instruments d'accréditation et d'évaluation dans l'enseignement supérieur;
- Appuyer l'évaluation des enseignants sur l'appréciation des étudiants et les pairs;
- Concentrer l'évaluation sur les produits (output, outcome) et sur les opérations (processus) avec une référence aux ressources déployées (input). Plus clairement, évaluer par la recherche de la valeur ajoutée;
- Transformer les actes d'évaluation du simple contrôle à une visée de l'amélioration continue;
- Mettre en place des structures et dispositifs d'évaluation interne et externe des activités de recherche.

VI. Conclusion

L'analyse de la réglementation et des pratiques relatives à l'évaluation dans le système d'enseignement supérieur marocain montre que des avancées importantes sont enregistrées. Cependant, des faiblesses et des limites persistent encore et appellent à repenser l'évaluation. Il est donc indispensable d'installer une nouvelle réforme du système de l'évaluation dans l'enseignement supérieur au Maroc permettant de placer l'évaluation au centre de toutes les activités de ce système: les activités de la formation, celles de la recherche scientifique, et celles de l'offre de services à divers destinataires. C'est une orientation incontournable et majeure qui doit être adoptée du fait que l'évaluation permet l'amélioration continue de la qualité et favorise le développement de l'efficacité, de l'efficience et de l'équité du système de l'enseignement supérieur.

L'évaluation est l'affaire de tous les acteurs: les pouvoirs politiques, les décideurs et les responsables, les enseignants, les étudiants, les familles, le monde socioéconomique, la société civile, etc. Il faut se donner et partager un sens commun relativement au système d'évaluation pour qu'il accompagne la réforme actuelle de l'enseignement supérieur. Et cela ne peut se faire sans l'évaluation de la réglementation et la pratique du système d'évaluation, c'est-à-dire évaluer l'évaluation, en vue de l'améliorer et d'accroître sa capacité de diagnostic et d'élaboration des pistes de changement et de développement.

La refonte du système d'évaluation dans l'enseignement supérieur doit s'appuyer sur les piliers suivants : l'implantation de la culture d'évaluation, la création des structures d'évaluation, la mise en place d'une réglementation relative à l'évaluation, la conduite des programmes de formation à l'évaluation, l'élaboration des référentiels et standards d'évaluation, l'amélioration du système d'information, le développement d'une expertise en collecte-traitement-analyse des données ainsi qu'une expertise en exploitation des bases de données...

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The Role and Function of Institutional Research in Institutions of Higher Education: Theory and Practice

Karma El Hassan¹

Abstract

The last decades have witnessed an increased concern in higher education over accountability, quality, and productivity and a struggle to meet increasingly complex challenges. Institutional research (IR) evolved with the changing needs of higher education, and its nature and the role it plays continues to evolve as a consequence of policy decisions, changing student clientele, advances in computing and telecommunications, the growing internationalization of higher education, the increasing complexity and sophistication of decision-making, and the growing interest in institutional effectiveness. Examining the role and function of IR has been a major pre-occupation of the field since the 1960s and a focus of continual debate; accordingly this paper will attempt to answer the following questions. What is IR? What is its institutional role? How has it evolved? What are its primary functions and activities? How is it organized? What skills and expertise does it require? And what are challenges facing IR? The paper will attempt to answer these questions through first a descriptive analytical review of recent literature on theory, models, and practice of institutional research, and secondly, through presenting a case study of an IR office operating in the Arab Region, that of the Office of Institutional Research & Assessment (OIRA) at the American University of Beirut (AUB). The paper will focus on evolving nature of IR, on how effectively it meets higher education challenges of quality and accountability, and will conclude with future challenges for the field.

I. Introduction

Institutional research (IR) as a profession is a rather new phenomenon in higher education. During the past 40 years, the profession has developed and matured into a vital function in higher education (McLaughlin & Howard, 2001). This development has occurred in an environment of rapidly changing societal demands of higher education in which calls for accountability, planning, and demonstrating effectiveness to internal and external stakeholders intensified. Colleges and universities struggled to meet increased demands for their services, increasingly complex reporting requirements, shrinking resources and the need to plan more effectively in a highly competitive educational market. As higher education reacted to the changing demands of society, institutional research became a key player and stature and importance of institutional research offices has grown substantially.

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As the field of institutional research is a relatively young profession and little has been written about it in the Middle East, the purpose of this paper is provide a general description of the nature and practice of institutional research. The first part of the paper regarding conceptual nature aims at answering the following questions: What is institutional research? How did it evolve? What is the role it plays in institutional governance? How is it organized? What are its contributions to the functioning of postsecondary institutions? And finally, what are the challenges and future developments? The second part aims at providing an exemplar of the practice of institutional research in the Middle East through presenting the case of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) at the American University of Beirut.

Understanding institutional research can best be done through an understanding of the changes in organizational, management, and performance patterns in postsecondary institutions. Therefore, this paper will start with providing a brief description of several changes that higher education has passed through and which had direct influence on the role and practice of institutional research.

II. Higher Education Transitions and Institutional Research

Changes in higher education over the decades have been remarkable and they can be placed within the context of the larger changes occurring within society. Volkwein (2008) best summarizes these changes as follows: The economy has grown from being dominated by agriculture and then by industry, to now being much more knowledge-based. Social values transitioned from being very elitist, where education was offered for the few, to being very meritocratic, where education was conceived as something for the most deserving and the most talented to being egalitarian, emphasizing education for all. Organizational structures have gone from being administration-centered, bureaucratic, and formal to becoming much more open and faculty-centered. Many institutions of higher education are much more client-centered and learner-centered. There is a move towards performance-based budgets, and the changed accountability atmosphere has gone from one emphasizing resources and reputation—the old accountability model—to a period when concentration was on goal attainment and program evaluation and processes, such as student ratings of instruction, and now much more emphasis is placed on results, outputs, and outcomes. Peterson (1999) views the changes in higher education more broadly and attributes them to two major transitions: move from an industry of traditional higher education to one of mass higher education and from an industry of mass higher education to one of postsecondary education. These transitions occurred primarily as a result of two forces: the addition of new organizations to the competitive mix and the new bargaining power of consumers as their numbers increased and the control of financial aid shifted to them.

Societal conditions and industry reshaping forces referred to above interacted to promote change through higher education. These changes have increased the value of information to institutions of higher education. It became no longer sufficient for institutions to know only their own inner processes, resources, and goals; they must understand the social, political, and economic currents shaping the society at large and the external constituencies they serve in particular to be successful (Olsen, 2000). Competing concerns like cost, productivity, access, effectiveness and accountability all collided on campuses resulting in heightened tensions for planners, administrators and institutional researchers. Campuses experienced a variety of dualities, tensions, and policy collisions - internal versus external demands, academic versus administrative cultures, professional versus institutional needs, access versus

excellence, efficiency versus effectiveness, and assessing for improvement versus assessing for accountability. These contradictory pressures produced a variety of challenges for institutional researchers and forced them to play a medley of roles and to pursue a number of different purposes (Volkwein, 1999).

Twenty first century poses various challenges for the field of higher education. Some believe that universities as we now know them will cease to exist in twenty years, while others holding the traditional view contend that colleges and universities, only slightly modified, will always exist. A third group views that a more fundamental change than postsecondary institutions have ever faced in the past lies ahead—a redefinition of the industry that could lead to institutional redesign (Peterson, 1999). In response to this new industry, new organizational models are emerging. They include entrepreneurial, network, and virtual organizations and also new forms of strategic alliances and joint ventures with non-educational partners for the design, dissemination, and discovery of knowledge (Peterson, 1999). As postsecondary institutions address redesign, they will also need to change their long-term performance criteria. A key component of that criterion is extent each institution has redefined the nature and role of knowledge it requires in an industry with rapidly changing participants and dynamics. Responding to such a need has implications for institutional research in terms of functions and activities.

Before discussing role and function of institutional research in institutions of higher educations of the twenty-first century, it is important to present a definition of institutional research and to briefly describe its development and evolution.

III. The Theory of Institutional Research

1. Definition

Although there is no commonly agreed-upon definition of IR, Peterson and Corcoran (1985) conceive of IR as research designed to generate information that serves planning, policy development, resource allocation, and management or evaluation decisions in all functional areas. Similarly, Saupe (1990) emphasizes institutional research as a set of activities that support institutional planning, policy formation, and decision making. The Association of Institutional Research (AIR) officially defines institutional research as “research leading to improved understanding, planning and operating of institutions of postsecondary education” (Peterson, 1999). Terenzini (1999) views institutional research as “organizational intelligence” and it extends from gathering data about an institution, analyzing and transforming them into information, to the insight and informed sense of the organization that a competent institutional researcher brings to the interpretation of that information.

An investigation of mission statements of institutional research offices through content analysis revealed that the majority of mission statements included the IR functions of support for institutional planning and decision making, assessment, conducting research, data management, and providing information to internal and external constituencies (Thorpe, 1999). To a lesser degree, the mission statements also referred to the responsibilities for data analysis and support for policy formation decisions.

So it appears that the practice of IR may have much to do with the production of data, but art is needed to contextualize that data, convert it to information, and make it meaningful (Olsen, 2000). The subject of institutional research is the individual college, university, or system, and thus can be distinguished from research on postsecondary education which has as its purpose the advancement of knowledge about and practice in postsecondary education generally.

Institutional research, then, is an essential ingredient of sound college or university governance. In this respect, it has been described as an attitude of commitment to the institution's purpose in society and to the value of critical appraisal and careful investigation. Institutional governance is informed and rational to the degree that such an attitude pervades the institution (Saupe, 1990).

2. The Evolution of Institutional Research

Institutional research as a profession is a rather new phenomenon in higher education. Development of institutional research as an administrative process or function is primarily a post-1950s development (Peterson, 1999). As external conditions affecting higher education have changed, as described above, institutional research developed concurrently, played a critical role in helping institutions respond to the challenges, and has at same time been shaped by the same forces expanding its role and array of activities in the process.

Generally, the broad phases of the development of institutional research operations fall into three major timeframes (McLaughlin & Howard, 2001). The first phase was the decentralized operations of information creation and inquiry occurring in the late 50s and 60s. In these years, institutional research tasks were often completed using tally sheets, stand-alone databases which were not computerized, and calculators to complete calculations. With advent of mainframe computers, the centralized institutional research office came into being with many institutions consolidating the institutional research tasks in a specific organizational unit. This second phase also reflects the creation of the identity of institutional research, allowing it to begin developing as a profession. Again, in mid-to-late 80s, the second phase of centralized institutional research began to move into a third phase. In this phase the function began to be distributed across the campus. It has become a complex organizational function driven by technology and the resulting impact technology has had on the infrastructure of colleges and universities.

IR has evolved as a key component of an institution's explicit knowledge base and continues to evolve as a consequence of policy decisions, the changing student clientele, advances in computing and telecommunications, the shifting budgetary climate, the growing internationalization of higher education, the increasing complexity and sophistication of decision making, and the growing number and volume of calls for internal and external reporting and for increased institutional effectiveness (Peterson, 1985; Terkla, 2008; Terenzini, 1999). In this development, IR primary role and the tools used in the field have changed, in addition to the topics that are of high importance to IR professionals. Volkwein (2008) provides a comparison of topics of interest to institutional researchers between 1992 and 1999 derived from AIR survey of its members (Table 1). As evident from the table, new areas of interest emerged like accountability and performance indicators, technology and efficiency issues, and information systems and data management. Other areas have gained importance as compared with 1992 like outcomes assessment and student retention and persistence. Another survey of AIR membership was done in 2008 but results have not yet been published and it will be interesting to identify changes in areas of interest, if any.

Similarly and to meet changing needs, IR has evolved to become associated with the advanced technical and statistical competencies that are the cornerstone of the information culture (Peterson, 1985). Primary role of IR has changed over time from emphasizing and requiring primarily descriptive statistics, fact books, and reporting to more analysis and evaluation, both quantitative and qualitative. Today there is a demand for IR skills requiring multivariate analysis and modeling: forecasts of revenues, enrollment projections, analysis of policy issues, and modeling alternative scenarios of tuition and financial aid and their impact on admissions attractiveness and therefore on enrollments (Volkwein, 2008).

Table 1: Topics of High Importance to IR Members

Topic	1992	1998
Outcomes Assessment	53%	61%
Research Design and analysis	50%	52%
Persistence and retention	48%	63%
Management issues	42%	32%
Enrollment management	35%	39%
Financial issues	25%	21%
Minority and diversity issues	25%	19%
Faculty issues	24%	22%
Student affairs issues	13%	15%
Accountability and performance indicators		71%
Technology issues		63%
Information systems and data management		63%
Efficiency issues		36%

Source: Sarah Lindquist (1999).

3. Institutional Research: Role and Functions

Examining the role and function of institutional research (IR) has been a major preoccupation of the field ever since the first AIR forum in 1961 and the literature reflects endless debate over the nature and role of institutional research (Terenzini, 1999; Volkwein, 2008; 1999; Trainer, 2008; Bers, 2008; Middaugh, Kelly & Walters, 2008; Delaney, 2008; Brittingham, O'Brien, & Alig, 2008; Voorhee, 2008; Brown, 2008; Peterson, 1999; Olsen, 2000; Saupe, 1990; Borden, Massa, & Milam, 2001).

Performance of institutional research involves a full range of activities from collecting data, the analysis and restructuring of these data into information, and the dissemination of the results of the activities to key constituents to be used for decision making and strategy support. In this respect, the information is converted into increased organizational intelligence which supports organizational learning.

Terenzini (1999) was a proponent of viewing the role of institutional research as institutional intelligence in three mutually dependent but distinct forms or levels. The first, most basic level is the technical and analytical. This type of intelligence is foundational and includes familiarity with terms and definitions and knowledge of methodologies like research design, sampling, surveying, statistics, qualitative methods etc. It is needed to produce the facts and figures about an institution: Admissions, enrollment, degrees awarded, faculty workload, faculty student ratio—all the elements that add up to describing the basic profile of the institution. Terenzini's second level is issues intelligence. It includes knowledge about the particular issues and problems facing

the institution. Issues such as resource allocation, program evaluation, enrollment goal setting, and planning that are of immediate importance to the institution. It also requires knowing about and working with the key actors and people at the institution who are addressing these issues. Level 3, or contextual intelligence, requires an understanding not only of the culture and customs of higher education in general but also of the particular institution in which the institutional researcher serves. The context involves knowing the institution not just internally but externally its history, culture, evolution, external environment within which the institution functions, and trends in that environment such as trends in population of high school graduates and economic health. The sum of contextual intelligence understands all the relevant trends in the external environment: financial, social, political, and demographic. These three forms of organizational intelligence are mutually dependent and supportive: only in the presence of the other two is the value of any specific form of organizational intelligence fully realized.

The practice of IR in an institution of higher education involves dealing with several roles and different purposes and audiences. The IR professional has to deal with the IR administrative role, in which he is a member of the administration and the management team, and the professional role, which is more academic and scholarly and emphasizes the need for impartial and objective research (Volkwein, 2008). He also needs to report to both internal and external audiences and for formative (improvement) and summative (accountability) purposes. To meet these various opposing pressures, IR professionals are forced to play a number of roles. Table 2 presents a typology of four overlapping yet distinguishable types of IR purposes and roles as conceptualized by Volkwein, 1999 and 2008. They include that of IR as information authority, policy analyst, spin doctor, and scholar/researcher. A fifth role was added by Serban (2002) that of IR as a knowledge manager with main functions of gathering and transforming data into information and knowledge; creating and maintaining information repositories; and facilitating the process of knowledge creation and sharing.

Table 2: Four Faces of Institutional Research

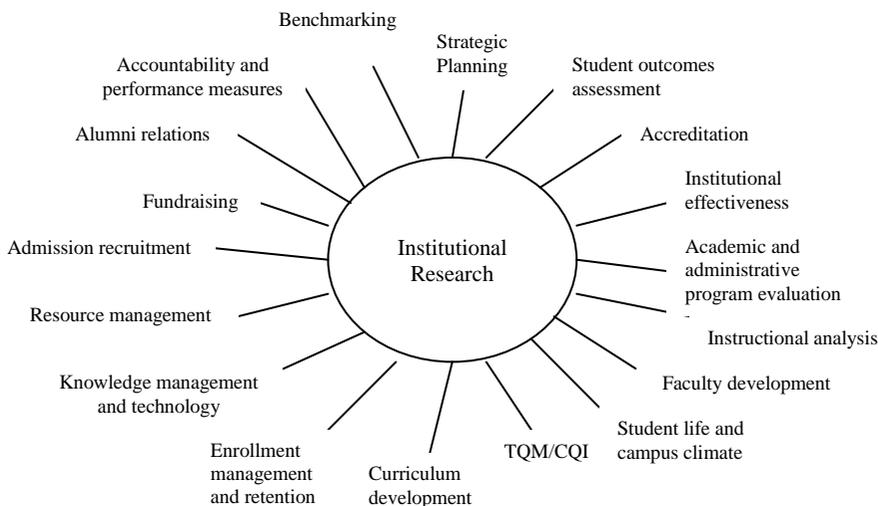
	Purposes and Audiences	
Organizational Role and Culture	Formative and Internal- for Improvement	Summative and External- for Accountability
Administrative and Institutional	To describe the institution- IR as information authority	To present the best case- IR as spin doctor
Academic and Professional	To analyze alternatives- IR as policy analyst	To supply impartial evidence of effectiveness- IR as scholar and researcher

Source: Volkwein, J. F. (2008), p. 5 -20.

Volkwein viewed IR as the center of gravity for all of the university’s analytical activities and he portrayed that pictorially as in Figure 1. As evident from the figure, areas in which institutional researchers may offer useful insights include assessment, accreditation, strategic planning, faculty workload analysis, peer group identification, benchmarking, comparative institutional analyses,

and understanding student populations from prospective applicants to alumni. In addition to these topics, there are myriad other areas where institutional researchers have or could lend assistance like program evaluation (both academic and administrative), campus climate intelligence, fundraising analysis, and curriculum development, formulation of performance and institutional effectiveness measures, and creation of management information tools (Terkla, 2008).

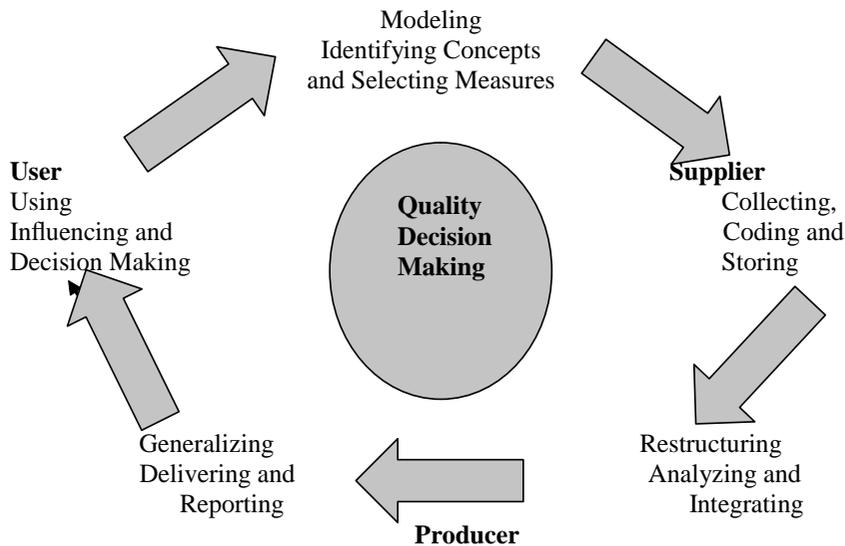
Figure 1: Volkwein’s IR: The Guiding Light



Source: Volkwein, J. F. (2008).

Central to all of these activities and to IR role is that of conversion of data into management information. The purpose is to develop a set of data which provides a meaningful and comprehensive picture of the institution and its operation and accordingly lead to increased organizational intelligence. In this respect the role of IR in the Information Support Cycle (ISC) is central and it involves several roles and a sequential set of tasks to create information that effectively supports decision-making (Mclaughlin & Howard, 2001). Figure 2 presents the steps involved in the ISC and different roles played by IR. Roles played by IR are those of supplier (custodian) of the data, the producer (broker) who converts data into information, and the customer or manager who uses information as increased intelligence. Data are identified, collected, stored (supplier), then they are restructured, analyzed or integrated to create information, data interpretation, and data reduction to be communicated and reported for use in decision-making (broker).

Figure 2. Information support Cycle



Source: McLaughlin, G. & Howard, R. (2001).

Borden, Massa, & Milam (2001) had quite a similar view to the information roles of IR professionals. The life cycle of IR included collection, preparation, analysis, and dissemination of data (Figure 3). For collection of data, data may come from one of three sources: institutional information systems (student, HR, fiscal systems), surveys and other local data collection efforts and external resources. Data then needs to be prepared before use, checked for errors and validated, reconciled, and scrubbed and files merged. Analysis then makes use of both descriptive and inferential statistics before dissemination of information through written reports and oral presentations. The role of IR professionals is that of information executive, architect and engineer in this cycle. The executive role occurs at beginning and end of the cycle and it involves coordinating design of the tasks, including specification of research design, resources, timelines, and division of labor among staff (modeling). At end it includes coordinating interpretation, packaging, and presentation of results to decision-makers (producer role). As architect, IR professional uses data extracted from various sources, builds secondary databases for use in analysis, conducts analysis and prepares summaries for information executive (broker role). As data engineer, IR professional creates and maintains data warehouses, has direct access to administrative system, develops queries to extract data and port it to self-designed structures for archiving, analysis and reporting (supplier role).

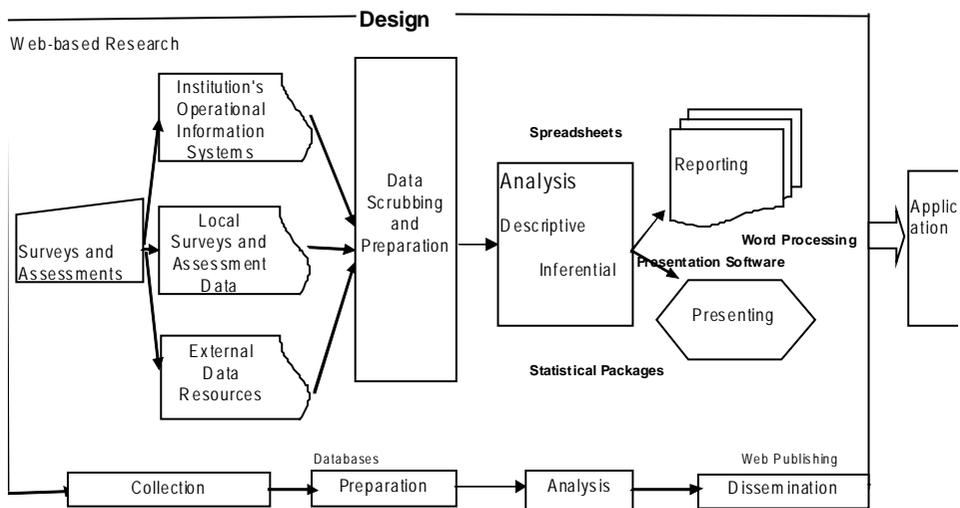
Based on wide range of activities performed by IR professionals and different roles they may be called to play, Volkwein (1999) proposes the following ideal job description for institutional researchers: Their job should cover:

- measuring and improving inputs, because of the strong empirical connection between input measures and important outcomes like academic achievement, graduation rates, and loan default.

- measuring critical processes, both because of the role of these processes in student integration and growth and because such measurement facilitates corrective intervention.
- measuring a variety of outputs and outcomes, because results matter most.

The previous paragraphs have provided an overview of the different models or conceptions of what is IR and what are its roles and functions. Although the role is viewed differently either as organizational intelligence with three levels (Terenzini) or as changing roles depending on purpose and audience (Volkwein), or as main provider of institutional information using Information Support Cycle (McLaughlin & Howard) or IR Life Cycle (Borden, Massa, & Milan), yet all views share a common perspective. They all agree on importance of the role played by IR in providing reliable information and evidence that supports decision making, institutional governance, and quality management.

Figure 3: Life cycle of institutional research



Source : Borden, V., Massa, T. & Milam, J. (2001).

4. Institutional Research: Organization

The above section presented the various roles and activities conducted by IR, however the actual practice of institutional research in any one institution tends to be shaped by the part of the organization the IR office is located in and the title of the office. There are various possibilities for where IR offices are located in an organization; similarly IR offices use various titles, may follow different organizational charts and can be centralized or dispersed across campus. They may differ in their reporting lines, range of responsibilities, level in the campus hierarchy, and work emphasis. The following paragraphs will briefly outline these organizational issues as they are highly variable from campus to another and may affect role exercised by IR.

Institutional research is conducted in offices with varying titles. Table 3 presents a listing of these titles as reported by Volkwein 2008. The table reveals the diversity in titles, in addition to focus of each office. A strategic planning office is definitely going to have a different emphasis from one of research or assessment or budget analysis.

Table 3: IR Offices Used Titles

• Research	• Assessment
• Institutional research	• Evaluation
• Research and information	• Enrollment research and planning
• Research and planning	• Budget analysis
• Strategic planning	• Effectiveness
• Academic planning	• Institutional effectiveness
• Institutional planning	• Enrollment management

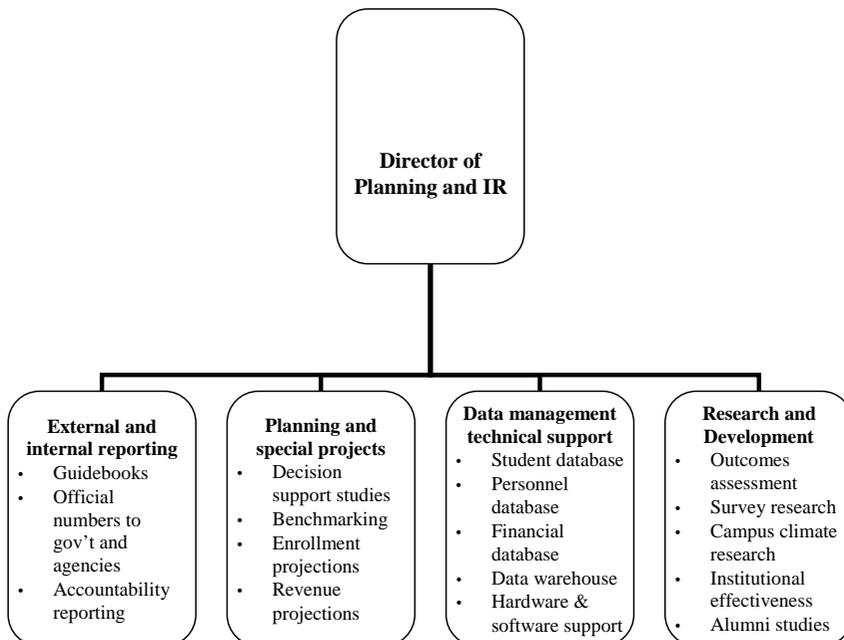
Source: Volkwein, J. F. (2008).

Similarly, the location of the IR office in the institution’s organizational structure varies among institutions. The 1999 AIR membership survey reports that 38% of the IR offices participating in the sample were located under academic affairs/ provost, while 26% were located under president/chancellor and 8% under business services. Others were located under student affairs or development offices (Volkwein, 1999). When IR office reports to the chief academic officer, office then becomes heavily shaped towards academic and instructional side of institution like faculty workload, salary, equity, student ratings of instruction, etc (Volkwein, 2008). If office reports to the President or chancellor then planning and resource allocation functions become central to IR office work. This organizational arrangement recognizes the function as one of central importance and so broad that to be effective it must be placed near the top. (Saupe, 1990). An office of student research may exist within the institution’s student affairs organization and be responsible for research on campus climates and subcultures, on the characteristics of various services provided students, on residence hall life, and on factors involved in retention and attrition (Saupe, 1990). IR function could also exist within the organization of chief financial officer where studies of business operations and budget and cost analysis will be principal responsibilities of such a unit.

IR offices can be centralized in one office within an institution or various administrative units may be charged with some responsibility for institutional research. According to Saupe, 1990, the dispersal of institutional research activities which has been multiplied by the widespread use of personal computers and personal computer networks and access to central computer data bases has introduced problems of data comparability. The data analysis of the deans may conflict with that of the vice president for academic affairs simply because of differences in definitions and sources of basic data. Additional problems of dispersed institutional research are duplication, a lack of research expertise in some or many institutional domains, an inability to deal with issues which cross organizational boundaries, and an absence of an institution-wide view in the research activities. The benefit of an office of institutional research, based upon its in-depth comprehension of institutional data systems, should be its capacity to combine, analyze and interpret data resulting from the several operational activities of the college or university. The office can thus serve as a reliable source for comprehensive and authoritative information about the institution (Saupe, 1990).

Even within central IR offices, there are differences in organization chart between those where the organizational chart follows a functional arrangement or ones where it is organized by customer. According to Volkwein, 2008, the most common arrangement is to have office organized by function. Figure 4 presents such an arrangement where core IR functions are divided into areas that are each responsibility of a well-trained analyst: external and internal reporting, planning and special projects, data management and technical support, and research and development. In such an arrangement, someone would be the lead person for compiling official statistics about the institution for both internal and external uses. Another person would be responsible for decision-support studies and a third for data management and technical support. A fourth person will be in charge of research and survey design and statistical analysis. An alternative centralized version of an IR office would be having it organized by its major customers (Volkwein, 2008). The benefit of such arrangement is that each major part of the organization has a contact person he can go to for information needed. The IR director is supported by an assistant for data warehousing and technical support and supervises work of four others, responsible for support of each of academic affairs, business/finance, enrollment management, and student affairs. This alternative arrangement emphasizes customer service and makes sure all key decision makers on the campus are getting the information they need. As evident from above discussion, organizational arrangements of IR offices are varied and the functions or activities are dependent on the part of the organization the office is lodged in. What is of importance is that IR offices should be sufficiently separated from the operational responsibilities of administrative processes to maintain the needed objectivity, credibility, and focus (McLaughlin & Howard, 2001).

Figure 4: IR organized by function



Source: Volkwein, J. F. (2008), 141, 5- 20.

5. Institutional Research: Contributions and Challenges

From the above discussion one can infer the significant contributions of IR and the role of IR offices in maintaining the quality of institutional governance. Institutional researchers do a lot more than collect statistics; they are more than ‘bean counters’ or ‘number-crunchers’ as they were sometimes ignorantly labeled. As Terkla (2008) summarized, they have contributed to creating a culture in higher education of decision-making based on evidence. They are often called upon to provide information to senior administrators that enable them to make decisions based on factual evidence as opposed to relying entirely on anecdotes. Such information will lead to increased institutional intelligence and accordingly a better understanding of the institutional environment, i.e. enhanced institutional learning.

Institutional researchers make many contributions that foster institutional change and improvement and that assist management. In strategic planning, skillful institutional research personnel play a pivotal role in accessing an institution’s data and converting those data into “actionable” information needed for planning. Actionable information makes obvious the next steps an institution should consider as it helps in posing realistic goals and strategies (Voorhee, 2008). Of importance here is IR professionals’ ability to provide operational definitions of data to facilitate common understanding. Similarly, according to McLaughlin and Howard (2005), institutional researchers can develop a list of peers, conduct comparative peer analyses, and make use of results in evaluating competition, providing benchmarks, identifying areas of weakness, guiding policy development, and justifying such things as budget requests, salary adjustments, teaching loads, and tuition increases.

Among the most important strengths IR brings are researchers’ knowledge of institutional student data and the ability to link institutional and assessment data from sources such as external datasets, portfolio evaluations, and surveys (Bers, 2008). Similarly, IR plays an important role in understanding and describing faculty work, and in an institution’s preparation for accreditation. In this respect the IR office supplies the Self-Study team with additional, current, and useful institutional data and reports. What additional data is required, the IR office sets out to get (Brittingham, O’Brien, & Alig, 2008).

Other contributions institutional researchers make are methodological expertise in conducting research, skill in selecting measures to ensure appropriate balance of quantitative and qualitative and direct and indirect approaches, and the knowledge of how to present results meaningfully bringing at the same time neutral perspective to the assessment conversation. An IR office can be a critical asset in helping an institution reports its assessment results, especially to external audiences as IR data have a high level of credibility (Bers, 2008). In addition, because IR office stores data from year to year, trends can be analyzed and reported over time to both internal and external stakeholders.

Despite these significant contributions, major challenges lie ahead for the field of institutional research. At least five of them will be outlined below:

- Institutional research will need to evolve in the future and play a new role or function in response to the challenges of postsecondary knowledge industry that is emerging with rapidly changing participants and dynamics. IR has the opportunity of assisting in and shaping institutional responses to a major challenge by providing its management service and institutional improvement function and going beyond by becoming a proactive management guide.
- The issue of data is a major challenge for IR professionals. Advances in access to raw data and relatively unprocessed information have outpaced advances in the ability to screen

and process this information into usable and timely information (Borden, Massa & Milam, 2001). In fact and as expressed by Trainer (2008) we are awash in data, some useful and some less so. There is a need to allocate attention efficiently among the overabundance of information resources and to extract needed data and draw meaningful interpretations that will expand user's knowledge base. The reduction of uncertainty, however, depends on the timeliness, sufficiency, and relevance of information provided. Information must be available before decision is made to have value and should focus on key issues without including a large number of surplus facts that have little bearing on the situation (McLaughlin & Howard, 2001). So, it is important to decide on data needed, and to report it in timely and understandable manner to various stakeholders.

- Another challenge for IR is to be effective in influencing planning and policy. This can be done by focusing on policy relevant questions and by being action-oriented in reporting through inclusion of recommendations formulated based on results. Research has shown that assuming a proactive role by formulating recommendations and conducting follow-up studies enhances the potential for influencing policy (Delaney, 2001). To enhance IR role in planning and policy and as administrators play a critical role, it might also be important to educate administrators about the usefulness of IR, particularly if they are not data driven (Delaney, 2008).
- The rapidly evolving and changing postsecondary environment will entail the need for continuous professional development of institutional researchers to keep pace with changes in technology, data collection, and data collaboration. Muffo (1999) proposed that future profiles of IR offices will be influenced by emerging trends in four areas: technology, demographics, pedagogy and policies. Sanford (1995) outlined four main challenges that institutional researchers need to address to ensure success in tomorrow's academic environment: adaptability to change, access to data with modern technology, better comparative data, and the policy analysis/technology resource dilemma. For this purpose, IR has begun to develop its own training and quality assurance mechanisms through summer institutes and the IR certificate program, and there are several mature AIR publications that form the knowledge base for the field as a field of practice and study. Central to efforts to sustain the practice of institutional research has been the development of a Code of Ethics which includes a set of standards for conducting institutional research (Schiltz, 1992).
- Another important challenge for IR professionals is for them to be fully engaged partners on campus as well as across campuses and other higher education organizations. They need to be included in institutional dialogue and to be brought in the discussion early as this will enable institution to be proactive with potential of greater benefit to the institution (Terkla, 2008). An IR culture of sharing best practices internally and across should be enhanced.

The above paragraphs have presented the evolvement of institutional research as a profession and the role it plays in an institution of higher education. As evident, the field of IR is gradually evolving toward a state of greater maturity as a profession and it is playing a critical role in developing a culture of inquiry on campuses that says, 'we use data to make decisions'. There are many challenges that need to be addressed to attain and maintain such a culture, but IR has overcome many of the challenges since its infancy around forty years ago and will continue to do so. A primary force behind such a commitment is the fact that no quality academic management can be accomplished without quality institutional research.

The following paragraphs will describe an example of IR practice that of the role played by the Office of Institutional Research & Assessment (OIRA) at the American University of Beirut.

IV. The Practice of IR: The Case of OIRA

The Office of Institutional Research & Assessment (OIRA) started its IR activities in 2001-2. Initially, it functioned as Office of Tests & Measurement (OTM) charged with conducting admission tests to AUB and other assessment research. The growing importance of assessment and accountability in higher education and AUB's growing interest in institutional and teaching effectiveness have necessitated the change of focus in OIRA's activities to institutional research. Since then, OIRA's activities and functions have expanded and the Office plays an important role in AUB's institutional renewal and improvement processes.

The following paragraphs will describe OIRA's organizational structure, activities and functions, and the challenges that need to be overcome.

1. OIRA mission, vision and functions.

OIRA reports to the chief academic officer at AUB, the Provost's Office. Its staff consists of five professional members and administrative support. Staff qualifications range from a doctorate in educational psychology to two masters degrees in education and one in statistics to a bachelors in computer and communication engineering. In addition to their academic qualifications, all members have attended and/or participated in professional development IR workshops and conferences to enhance their IR skills and to keep up to date with evolving IR field.

OIRA engaged in strategic planning in order to devise a strategic plan for the office. For this purpose a mission was elaborated, SWOT analysis was conducted, goals and objectives were formulated, and initiatives were identified with a certain vision for the office in mind. OIRA's mission reads as follows:

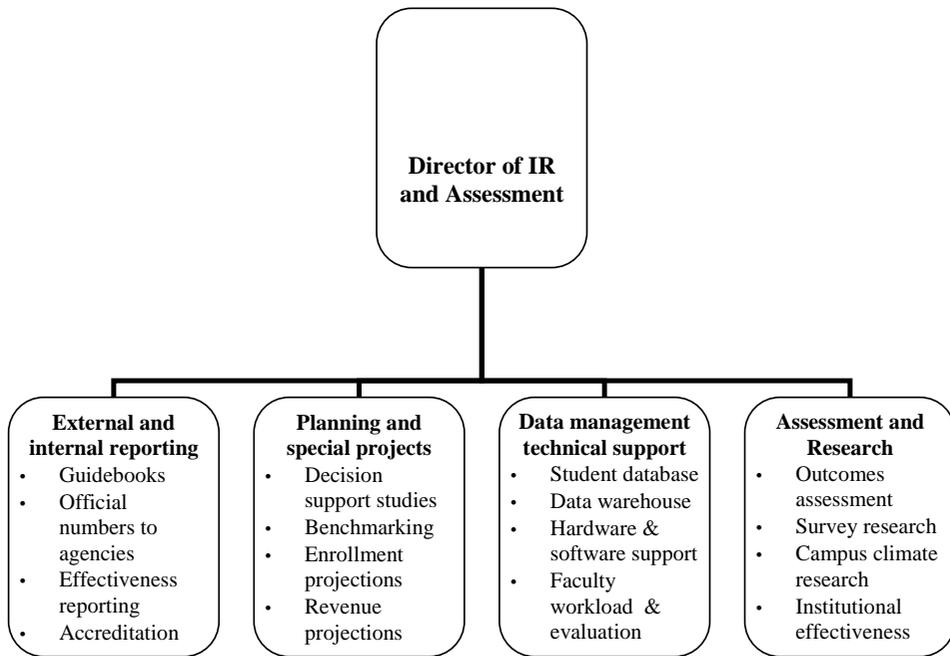
'The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment at the American University of Beirut undertakes to coordinate institutional assessment and research activities, and in this respect is responsible for the collection, analysis and dissemination of accurate and timely information about the University's environment and performance. This information supports institutional management, operations, decision-making, planning functions, and assists to achieve excellence in student learning and community service. Furthermore, the Office develops and conducts assessments for various purposes at institutional, regional and international levels'.

The above mission statement defines the role of IR as collection, analysis and dissemination of accurate and timely information about the university to support planning and decision making to achieve excellence. OIRA's vision is in line with the mission and sees OIRA as

A regional leader in institutional research and assessment that serves AUB community information needs with the most up-to-date technology and IR advances in order to support AUB's strive for excellence in learning and service to the community.

AUB Information needs, advances in IR and technology, and excellence in learning are key words and guide posts for OIRA's functions and activities. Figure 5 presents main OIRA activities and as evident from the figure, OIRA follows functional approach.

Figure 5: OIRA main functions



Source: OIRA, AUB.

OIRA prepares an annual assessment plan and each staff member is responsible for a set of functions within this plan. More specifically, the following activities are performed under each function:

- a. Data co-ordination, disclosure and reporting. OIRA acts as a resource and repository for official institutional statistics and information. It discloses information to AUB community and to the public through its published reports and on its website. Main reports include
 - 1) Internal
 - Fact Book
 - Facts & Figures
 - Faculty Workload Figures
 - 2) External
 - College Board Survey
 - Common Data Set
 - Thomson Peterson's Survey
 - Middle States Commission on Higher Education Institutional Profile
 - Universities. AC website
 - ASHA
 - Times Higher Education Rankings
- b. Planning and assessment support services. OIRA provides support to
 - 1) Enrollment management and other university units through
 - Conducting special research projects;

- Providing enrollment trends, projections, yields, and standardized records.
 - Providing projections for budgeting and planning purposes.
- 2) Strategic planning through tracking key performance indicators (KPIs)
 - 3) Accreditation self-studies by providing institutional data and conducting institutional self-study.
 - 4) Units in preparation of their unit assessment plans.
- c. Assessment and research.
- 1) Coordinate assessment and evaluation of university programs and processes through formulating and implementing data-gathering activities such as surveys, interviews, and focus groups for a wide variety of purposes. They include
 - Student Registration Survey
 - Exit Survey
 - Alumni Survey
 - Employee Satisfaction Survey
 - Faculty Survey
 - Accreditation Surveys, etc...
 - 2) Collecting information on student learning outcomes assessment, and they include annually administering
 - College outcomes survey
 - CAAP
 - Instructor course evaluations (every term).
- d. Data management and technical support. Maintain databases for student, faculty and institutional effectiveness information ensuring secure, reliable, timely, and user-friendly data extraction and use.

As revealed from above analysis, roles played by OIRA are very similar to ones described in the literature. While preparing annual assessment plan, OIRA is playing role of information executive, then with collection of data from various sources for various purposes OIRA acts as architect of information. The data management and technical support is very much aligned with data engineer and supplier role where OIRA creates and maintains warehouses, develops queries to extract data and ports it for archiving, analysis and reporting. OIRA acts as producer in the data reporting function influencing use and decision making. During these processes, data is collected then transformed into actionable information that increases organizational intelligence and learning leading to evidence-based decision-making.

2. Achievements and future challenges.

In the past five years, OIRA has considerably progressed towards realizing its vision. It has met AUB information needs, tried to keep with latest advances in IR and technology, and worked towards attaining excellence at AUB. A culture of inquiry and assessment is being formed but the progress made was not easy because of prevalent assessment illiteracy. Terms like assessment, effectiveness, excellence, and accountability were found to be threatening and were initially met with rejection and refusal. One had to go slowly, educate stakeholders, and gain their trust and confidence before anything could be achieved. Assessment for improvement was emphasized and activities were accomplished with complete transparency and objectivity. Communication and collaboration were the keys to the success of many activities and dissemination of findings was essential for ensuring that results were made use of in planning and effecting change. In addition to publishing reports on OIRA webpage, copies were sent to respective units and

meetings were held to further explain the findings and trends. Information derived from OIRA reporting assisted in strategic planning, accreditation, process improvement, and assessment of teaching and institutional effectiveness. The above accomplishments place OIRA as a leader in institutional research in the region, yet despite attaining them, several challenges remain and they can be summarized as follows: OIRA needs to

- Maintain leadership position in region. Higher education has witnessed considerable expansion and many internationally known institutions are now operating in the region, and AUB faces the challenge of maintaining its lead in the domain of quality education and institutional research.
- Keep working on building a culture of assessment at AUB and outside in the community. Although progress has been achieved in this area, but it is a challenge to further develop this culture by making assessment an integral part of all operations and on a continuous basis.
- Keep up-to-date with technological advances. Technologies, software, statistical packages and applications, internet uses are constantly being updated and they are providing quicker and more efficient solutions to IR problems and one need to keep abreast of these developments.
- Keep up-to-date with advances and developments in the field of institutional research. The field of IR is developing into a mature profession and one needs to keep updating methods and practices adhering to research-based best practices.
- Better serve AUB needs for information through automation and producing needed reports efficiently and in simple format. Timely reporting and in language understood by users is necessary for use of results for improvement.
- Ensure data and system security and comparability. Data security and integrity are serious challenges as they affect the reliability of information provided and accordingly its use.
- Build uniform and standardized lexica (definitions) for measures/criteria used at AUB. As assessment is still a relatively new field at AUB, some of its terms are not well understood, and may be defined and interpreted differently. This is especially so as different professional and/or accrediting bodies do not always use same language. Therefore, it is important in any one campus and for comparability purposes to adopt same definitions of common indicators like persistence, yield, graduation rates, full-time and part time faculty loads, etc. Developing standard definitions would enhance common understandings and would facilitate the building of an assessment culture.

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Quality Assurance Review in Arab Countries

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Abstract

The ultimate goal of the paper is to assess the progress of quality assurance (QA) in higher education (HE) in Arab countries. This includes the establishment, structure and affiliation, accomplishment, future strategic plans, finance and role of the national QA agencies or commissions, or relevant ministerial departments. Thus, the national as well as regional trends and status of higher education quality assurance will be obtained and updated. The paper scans and reports the international trends in QA, most of the regional QA initiatives in the last decade, as well as the Arab countries' national profiles. This assessment is an analytical and comparative literature and desk review-based study of the currently available national QA institutions and initiatives in all Arab countries that are members of the Arab League. Thus, this study depends heavily on the information available on websites, the published documentation provided by the individual national QA bodies, and any other published QA initiatives.

There has been some promising progress in the field of QA in higher education in a very limited number of Arab countries with different levels, and the rest are obviously lagging behind. However, all of these efforts are not sufficient in the world of knowledge, competitiveness, rapid transformation and rising demand for enrolment. It is worth mentioning that few QA institutions have presentable, clear, interactive websites such as CAA in the UAE and AQAC in Palestine where information, lists of documents, procedures/guidelines, reports, accredited institutions of higher education and programs in two languages (Arabic and any other foreign language). It has been observed that all QA bodies use QA terminologies, such as accreditation and auditing, loosely and sometimes interchangeably. In conclusion, the paper points out that Arab countries have, to some extent, achieved a reasonable but insufficient level of QA promotion, and must urgently do much to promote a QA culture and enhancement within higher education institutions themselves, self and external institutional and program evaluation for both state as well as private universities.

I. Introduction

The twenty-first century has begun with an extraordinary demand for HE, (the Arab World is expected to increase from 15% in 1996 to 20% in 2010), and an increased awareness of its vital importance for socio-cultural and economic development, and for building a future where

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younger generations need to attain new skills, knowledge and principles. HE is faced with great challenges and difficulties related to improved staff development, skills-based training, QA and enhanced teaching, research and services, program relevancy, graduates' employability, financing, establishment of efficient co-operative agreements, equitable access and regional/international co-operation. QA refers to review procedures designed to safeguard academic standards, and promote learning opportunities of acceptable quality for students. The 1998 HE World Conference² (WCHE) defined HE quality as a multidimensional concept that should embrace all its functions (teaching and programs, research, staffing, students, buildings, facilities, equipment, community services and the academic environment). It drew attention to internal self-evaluation and external review, and recommended the establishment of independent national bodies. It underlined respect for institutional, national and regional contexts to allow for diversity and avoid uniformity without losing international dimensionality, and the integral part of stakeholders in the institutional evaluation process. Moreover, it integrated the HE stakeholders in the institutional evaluation process that may identify internal and external QA types. Internal QA ensures that a HE Institution (HEI) / program has policies and mechanisms in place to meet its own objectives and standards. External QA is performed by an external organization, which assesses operation of the HEI / its programs to determine whether it meets the predefined standards.

The Arab Countries have realized the importance of reviewing their HE systems. Arab Ministers of HE and SR (AMHESR) called for establishing national QA institutions to address HE QA in their regular meeting in Cairo in 2001³. UNESCO had organized a meeting of HE partners in 2003 , to evaluate progress in implementing the World Declaration, to measure the impact that the Conference has had on the development of HE at the world level. The report stated that Jordan established a national board for accreditation in 1996 to license new HEIs and approve their programs. Other countries (Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen and Palestine) have established QA bodies. Furthermore, some universities have started a self-assessment process, while others have sought accreditation by international accreditation agencies. AMHESR recommended a study on establishing an independent Arab-reliance in 2003⁴, emphasized in 2005, and its findings were presented in 2007⁵. The study "Feasibility study on the forms of cooperation for QA in HE in the Arab States", published in 2008⁶, recommended the creation of an Arabic Establishment for Program QA (AEPQA). The proposed AEPQA will have a supervisory and funding board of trustees, a managerial executive office and facilitating commissions including capacity building and will start with Education, Business Administration, Agriculture and Architecture. ALECSO published its plan for developing education in the Arab countries in 2008 (ALECSO, 2008) in which it called for setting Arab standards for quality and academic excellence.

The methodology of this review is based on a desk and Internet review of published QA related initiatives and information. QA regional initiatives in Arab Countries will be briefly covered, followed by brief national profiles' presentations. Discussion and the main findings will be presented in the fourth section while section five will conclude the paper.

² http://www.unesco.org/education/educprog/wche/declaration_eng.htm

³ http://www.alecso.org.tn/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=684&Itemid=601&lang=ar

⁴ Meeting of HE Partners, Paris, June 2003, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013130341/001303/e.pdf>

⁵ http://www.alecso.org.tn/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=928&Itemid=325&lang=ar

⁶ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org>

II. Regional Initiatives

An important international body that includes regional QA networks and national agencies is the International Network for QA Agencies in HE (INQAHE)⁷. INQAHE's main functions include the sharing of information, developing theory and practice in assessing, improving and maintaining HE quality; and developing a Good Practice database, a QA Clearinghouse and a QA professional qualification.

An obvious trend is formulating regional QA networks. America has the *Ibero-American Network for QA in HE* (Red Iberoamericana para la Acreditación de la Calidad de la Educación Superior (RIACES)⁸, the Caribbean Area Network for QA in Tertiary Education (CANQATE)⁹, the Association of Specialized & Professional Accreditors (ASPA)¹⁰, and the Canadian Association of Accrediting Agencies (AAA)¹¹. Europe has the European Association for QA in HE (ENQA)¹², Central and Eastern European Network of QA Agencies in HE (CEEN)¹³, the Nordic QA (NOQA)¹⁴, the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA)¹⁵ and the Eurasian QA Network (EAQAN)¹⁶. Africa has set up the African Network for QA (AfriQAn)¹⁷ and Asia has established the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN)¹⁸.

The Arab region has witnessed several similar and overlapped QA initiatives. These include the UNDP HE (subject assessment) project exploiting the British QA Agency's guidelines for the Enhancement of QA and Institutional Planning targeting universities¹⁹ in 14 Arab Countries. 73 reviewed programs in Computer Science (15 universities), Business Administration (16 universities), Education (23 universities), and Engineering (19 universities). Furthermore, the project has generated regional agendas of academic reform, and has built QA regional capacities of experienced peer reviewers. In Palestine for example, several UNDP Project-trained evaluators have been involved in institutional and national committees to review programs, establish institutional QA units, and lobby to promote QA issues at their institutions and in their communities at large.

An independent, Arab, non-profit NGO "Arab Society for QA in Education (ASQAE)" was established²⁰. ASQAE supports studies to prepare regional academic reference standards for teaching Arabic language and Islamic curricula²¹. The Association of Arab Universities (AARU) had produced institutional framework guidelines for self and external assessment, measurements and general conditions for assessment and accreditation and established the Arab Council for QA

⁷ <http://www.inqahe.org/index.php>

⁸ <http://www.riaces.net/home.aspx>

⁹ <http://www.canqate.org/>

¹⁰ <http://www.aspa-usa.org/>

¹¹ <http://www.aaac.ca/>

¹² <http://www.enqa.eu/>

¹³ <http://www.ceenetwork.hu/>

¹⁴ <http://www.noqa.net/>

¹⁵ <http://www.eaconsortium.net/>

¹⁶ <http://www.eaqan.org/>

¹⁷ <http://www.aau.org/qa/>

¹⁸ <http://www.apqn.org/>

¹⁹ www.undp-equaip.org

²⁰ www.asqae.net.eg/

²¹ Minutes of the meeting of Policy Dialogues between various QA initiatives in the Arab Region on the 27th of June 2008, Cairo, Egypt published at http://english.anqahe.org/cms.php?id=publication_details&pub_id=8

and Accreditation²². The Arab QA and Accreditation Network for Education (ARQAANE)²³, which is an international non-profit independent association established in Belgium, aims at raising the Arab world education's quality. ARQAANE provides accreditation services in association with the Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA)²⁴. The Arab Network for QA in HE (ANQAHE)²⁵ is a non-profit nongovernmental organization which aims to create a mechanism for the Arab Countries to exchange and disseminate good QA practices and information, develop standards to establish / support QA institutions, and strengthen cooperation with QA counterparts in different countries. ANQAHE's full membership is restricted to national / regional QA bodies and HE institutions. Currently, it includes eight QA bodies (Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and United Arab Emirates).

International donors have contributed in promoting HE QA. These include the World Bank-funded HE projects in Egypt, Tunisia, Palestine and Morocco. In partnership with UNESCO, the World Bank has launched a Global Initiative for QA Capacity (GIQAC)²⁶ to support HE in developing countries. The GIQAC project supported policy dialogues between all QA regional initiatives and a scoping study to define the needs of the national QA organizations. The British Council²⁷ funded a regional QA activity in the Near East and North Africa (NENA) aiming at producing common guidelines to facilitate developing regional standards and subject benchmarks to redesign the curriculum, develop approaches to learning/teaching and assess student performance against desired learning outcomes. Participating countries are Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Morocco, Tunisia and Libya. It is expected to have 10 Academic Reference Standards for medicine, dentistry, physics, literature, law, engineering, technical engineering, IT, pharmacy, and languages. The German DAAD's activities focus on international dialogues via conferences, visits and professional training in self and external evaluation and capacity building²⁸.

III. National Profile

Among the few previous studies on QA bodies in the Arab Countries include the *QA in the Arab Universities* (El Amine, ed. 2005) that addressed practices of QA in HE in countries including Jordan and Egypt and universities in Lebanon, Sudan, Morocco, and the Arab Open University. Upon request of AMHESR, UNESCO conducted a feasibility study on the best ways and means of cooperation and coordination between Arab countries to ensure the quality of HE (El Amine et al, 2009)²⁹. The study described and analyzed the QA status in 13 Arab States. The study proposed to establish a regional program QA establishment. The latest regional study³⁰ was the scoping study to map and define the state and needs of national QA organizations in the Arab region against international good practices accomplished by ANQAHE. The main findings include a lack of, and a need to establish, national QA bodies in most of the Arab Countries.

The presented study, in the following sections, reviews the QA status at all Arab Countries³¹;

²² www.aaru.edu.jo

²³ www.arqaane.org

²⁴ <http://www.fibaa.de/en>

²⁵ <http://english.anqahe.org/>

²⁶ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015159197/001591/E.pdf>

²⁷ www.britishcouncil.org/egypt

²⁸ <http://www.daad.de/en/index.html>

²⁹ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018182395/001823/a.pdf>

³⁰ <http://english.anqahe.org/>

³¹ <http://www.arableagueonline.org/>

namely, the Democratic and Popular Republic of **Algeria**; Kingdom of **Bahrain**, Union of **Comoros**, Republic of **Djibouti**, Arab Republic of **Egypt**, Republic of **Iraq**, Hashemite Kingdom of **Jordan**, State of **Kuwait**, Republic of **Lebanon** Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, **Libya**, Islamic Republic of **Mauritania**, Kingdom of **Morocco**; Sultanate of **Oman**, State of **Palestine**, State of **Qatar**, Kingdom of **Saudi Arabia**, Republic of **Somalia**, Republic of **Sudan**, Arab Republic of **Syria**, Republic of **Tunisia**, United Arab Emirates, and Republic of **Yemen**. National profiles are briefly presented below.

1. ALGERIA

HE is provided by universities, university centres, national schools and institutes, and higher teacher training institutes (Ecoles Normales Supérieures), which fall under the responsibility of MHESR and institutes run by other Ministries. The Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique (MHESR)³² approves a standardized curriculum for each field of study. A National Conference of Universities was created in 2000 which is headed by the Minister of HE. A council for the evaluation and/or accreditation of HE was considered in Algeria, in 2003. Two of the Algerian universities are members of a consortium (EvQua-Meda Project)³³ that aims at self evaluation, external evaluation and strategic reflection on QA starting with Engineering education. A related initiative is the UNESCO Chair in Evaluation of HE in Algeria, established at the University of Mentouri-Constantine³⁴. It aims to promote an integrated system of research, training, information and documentation in the field of sciences of education, and to serve as a means of facilitating collaboration between high-level, internationally recognized researchers and teaching staff of the University and other national institutions and in Arab States. Some of the QA functions are accomplished by a governmental committee that reports to the Minister of MHESR³⁵ to approve a centralized curriculum rather than accredit them. Recently, some QA processes were encountered to cope with the educational system changes to the European LMD scheme as reported at the MHESR Arabic and French languages website³⁴. Any solid document to reflect QA structure, reviews, guidelines framework, or tools could not be cited.

2. Bahrain

Bahrain's Ministry of Education has a HE Council that has SR and accreditation and evaluation³⁶ directorates. Bahrain has a National Education Reform³⁷ classified into four initiatives including the establishment of an Independent QA Authority (QAA) to promote quality throughout all educational levels that reports to the Council of HE. In 2008, an independent QA Authority for Education and Training (QAAET)³⁸ was established and affiliated to the Council of Ministers. QAAET operates under the direction of a Board of Directors which has the overall responsibility for the conduct and strategic direction of the organization. QAAET's main partners include Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)³⁹, Nord Anglia and Cambridge International Exams in UK.

³² <http://www.mesrs.dz>

³³ http://www.ciep.fr/evquameda/www.evquameda.org/ANG_Presentation.htm

³⁴ <http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/>

³⁵ <http://www.AAU.org> accessed on 24 Mar., 2009

³⁶ <http://www.education.gov.bh/english/organization/index.asp> accessed on 24 Mar., 2009

³⁷ http://195.216.196.131/~educatio/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4&Itemid=5 accessed on 24 Mar., 2009

³⁸ http://english.anqahe.org/files/ArabLeague08/ArabLeague08_Bahrain_QAAET.pdf accessed on 24 Mar., 2009

³⁹ <http://www.auqa.edu.au/> accessed on 24 Mar., 2009

QAAET has reported conducting reviewing visits to HEIs. However, no guidelines, procedures, nor related QA documents have been published at the QAAET website⁴⁰. The author could not find any relative documents, reports to support its claims of site visits. Furthermore, QAAET is an independent QA body responsible for all levels of education.

3. Comoros

Comoros is a small poor country, discontinued territory with no university⁴¹. Its socio-economic, institutional and political instability seriously obstructs development. Comoros faces more urgent challenges to tackle than QA in HE.

4. Djibouti

Djibouti is a small country where Ministère de l'Education Nationale et de l'Enseignement Supérieur (Ministry of National and HE, MNHE)⁴² is the responsible body for accreditation. MNHE established a Comité Supérieur de l'Education (Higher Committee for Education (CSE)) to supervise the governmental Djibouti University⁴³ following the European LMD scheme.

5. Egypt

QA initiatives in Egypt began with a World Bank-funded HE project in 2002⁴⁴. One component was the QA and Accreditation Project (QAAP). In its first phase, A National Committee for QA and Accreditation was established to address the QA and accreditation of HEIs and programs. During the voluntarily evaluation of faculties at several universities capacity building was accomplished through self and external evaluation. In 2007, the National Authority for QA and Accreditation of Education (NAQAAE)⁴⁵ was established by a Presidential decree as an independent governmental body that reports directly to the Prime Minister. NAQAAE is the accrediting body for all Egyptian educational institutions. NAQHHE has a clear published mission, objectives, organizational structure with an internal QA unit to serve all national educational institutes. NAQAAE has the authorization to take the necessary measures to set a strategic plan for educational QA towards institutional evaluation and accreditation, develop instruments to promote educational quality awareness among academic institutions, and set up evaluation measures for the institutional fulfilment of accreditation standards. NAQAAE has accomplished several capacity building trainings, developed and published QA and accreditation related standards and guidelines⁴⁷ in Arabic and some in English. NAQAAE aims at undertaking QA Review, Program, Institution, Evaluation, Audit, Assessment, and Accreditation every 5 years. Its financial resources include membership fees, grants, and accreditation fees. There is no published evidence of being accredited by an external QA body.

6. Iraq

Iraq is still suffering from daunting social, economic, and political problems after the 2003 invasion. Documentations that address the Iraqi QA status are few including QA Strategies of HE in Iraq and Kurdistan (Kaghed et al., 2009). The Iraqi MHESR's implemented two strategies to

⁴⁰ <http://www.qaa.edu.bh/> accessed on 4 May, 2009

⁴¹ www.alecso.or.tn accessed on 23 Mar., 2009.

⁴² www.education.gov.dj accessed on 24 Mar., 2009.

⁴³ <http://www.univ.edu.dj/> accessed on 24 Mar., 2009.

⁴⁴ www.qaap.net accessed on 25 Mar., 2009.

⁴⁵ www.naqaae.org accessed on 4 May, 2009.

improve QA in HE. The first was a pilot study at the University of Babylon that initiated a quality development process focusing on capacity building of senior academics and quality reviewers. The second strategy was implemented in the Kurdistan Region Governorate that conducted an initial evaluation of quality practices in Kurdistan Region Governorate universities by UK reviewers. In 2005 UNESCO organized a round table on revitalizing the Iraqi HE. This offered Iraqi academics and MHESR representatives an opportunity to enter into open dialogue with the international community⁴⁶. Recently, a monitoring and scientific evaluation section within MHESR directorates has been established⁴⁷. It is clear that a QA body and function is missing.

7. Jordan

Jordan was the first Arab country to establish accreditation laws and guidelines to license and approve private universities and programs. Since mid 1990s, this has been headed by the Accreditation Council (AC) that reports to the HE Council (HEC) and works closely with MHESR⁴⁸. HEC has the authority to formulate HE policy, endorse the establishment of new HEIs, issue instructions concerning administration and finance of the HE sector, and evaluate the quality of HE (sufficiency & efficiency). Al-Hussein Fund for Excellence (HFE)⁴⁹ is an NGO non-profit QA body honorary chaired by the King, established in cooperation with the British QA Agency (QAA) and funded by the Jordanian Central Bank. HFE aims to assure the quality of the Jordanian HE and enhance the performance of HE programs. HFE has utilized international reviews for both institutional QA and the evaluations of specialized programs in all public and private institutions. In addition to the quality review of all HEIs, international bodies have carried out program evaluations in every private and public HEIs in such areas of nursing, law, banking, accounting, and English language and literature. In 2007, Jordan established an independent HE Accreditation Commission (HEAC) to cater for the accreditation issues of HEIs and programs⁵⁰. HEAC superseded AC along with its guidelines, criteria, and accreditation and addresses all public and private HEIs.

8. Kuwait

The Kuwaiti Ministry of HE (MHE)⁵¹ has the responsibility for HE (including the governmental Kuwait University) and research⁵². The MHE established a semi governmental Private University Council (PUC)⁵³ chaired by MHE Minister, and 8 experts. PUC has the power to set rules, guidelines and requirements to license and accredit private HEIs. The guidelines, licensing and accreditation rules, requirements, licensed and accredited private universities are published on the PUC website. PUC requires that a private university to be approved must have an affiliation or association with an international university that commits itself to carry out quality assessments of the scientific programs of the institution pending license⁵⁴. PUC's main funding resource is the government.

⁴⁶ http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=39383&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html accessed on 29 Mar., 2009.

⁴⁷ http://english.anqahe.org/files/ArabLeague08/ArabLeague08_Iraq_.pdf accessed on 28 Mar. 2009.

⁴⁸ <http://www.mohe.gov.jo/> accessed on 28 Mar. 2009.

⁴⁹ <http://www.husseinfund.jo/> accessed on 28 Mar. 2009.

⁵⁰ http://english.anqahe.org/cms.php?id=member_details&member_id=8 accessed on 4 May 2009.

⁵¹ <http://www.mohe.edu.kw/> accessed on 29 Mar. 2009.

⁵² <http://www.kuniv.edu.kw/> accessed on 29 Mar. 2009.

⁵³ <http://www.puc.edu.kw/en/> accessed on 4 May 2009.

⁵⁴ http://english.anqahe.org/files/ArabLeague08/ArabLeague08_Lebanon_Quality.pdf accessed on 4 May, 2009.

Measuring Kuwait University's quality performance was not stated within the related cited literature. Thus, PUC is a governmental QA body that addresses only the private universities.

9. Lebanon

The Lebanese Ministry of Education and HE (MoEHE), specifically the HE General Directorate (DGHE), is the national authority licensing HEIs. The Council of HE (CHE) overlooks HE issues and advises the Council of Ministers on new HEI licenses. The CHE contains technical committees responsible for the implementation of license standards and for the continuous review of HEI status⁵⁹. However, periodical institutional/program auditing is not yet available. A European Tempus-funded project (Lebanese Engineering Programs Accreditation Commission (LEPAC)) was initiated aiming to build a QA capacity and create an independent Accreditation Board in Lebanon to guarantee the quality of European partners and produce an appropriate legislating accreditation system to be adopted by the Lebanese MoEHE⁵⁵. No official document related to QA was published; therefore, a national QA body is still missing in Lebanon.

10. Libya

The General People's Committee for HE Libya (GPCHE)⁵⁶ supervises HE issues including governmental universities licensing and accreditation. In 2006, a financially-independent QA and Accreditation Centre (QAAC)⁵⁷ reporting to GPCHE, was established. QAAC has a mission and objectives to promote QA culture, license, evaluate, and accredit HEIs. QAAC encompasses institutional QA, Accreditation and equivalency units. Several QA relative documents and procedures are available at the QAAC Arabic-language website including licensing procedures, forms, institutional and programs accreditation guidelines. QA related activities were accomplished including QA awareness, capacity building in program and institutional self-evaluations. Thus, QAAC is a governmental QA and accreditation body (main funding body is governmental) that exercises its power of licensing and accrediting HEIs and programs for both public and private HEIs, a list of all accredited public and private HEIs is available on the website. However, it is not clear how QAAC accredited the listed HEIs. Committees were established to accomplish a HEI licensing process without published reports that reflects their decisions!

11. Mauritania

A small country with one governmental University of Nouakchott⁵⁸ and 4 HEIs supervised by Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale (Ministry of National Education (MNE))⁵⁹ that has responsibility for HE issues. A 15M\$ World Bank-funded HE Project (HEP) was granted to support the Government's strategy to improve education service delivery. HEP aims to improve the quality of the learning environment, the relevance of education and establish educational, administrative and financial management systems in the HEIs⁶⁰. MNE's website is inactive.

12. Morocco

MINISTÈRE de l'Éducation Nationale de l'Enseignement Supérieur, de la Formation des Cadres

⁵⁵ www.ec.europa.eu accessed on 31 Mar., 2009

⁵⁶ <http://www.higheredu.gov.ly/> accessed on 31 Mar., 2009

⁵⁷ <http://www.qaa.ly/> accessed on 4 May, 2009.

⁵⁸ <http://www.wes.org/eWENR/researchAfrica.asp?country=103#Mauritania> accessed on 31 Mar., 2009

⁵⁹ www.mr.refer.org/ipn accessed on 31 Mar., 2009

⁶⁰ <http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/> accessed on 31 Mar., 2009

et de la Recherche Scientifique (Ministry of National Education and HE, Managerial Training and SR (MNEHEMSTR)⁶¹, is the official body authorized to enforce QA regulations, evaluation and accreditation. MNEHEMSTR has a reforming initiative aimed at adopting measures to improve the quality at HE levels including mechanisms of licensing and controlling private HEIs. HEIs are responsible for internal QA, whereas external QA is supervised by the National Commission for the Coordination of HE (CNCEs)⁶². The National Agency of Evaluation (NAE) promotes and handles institutional QA issues and accordingly sets national procedures for evaluation, and accomplishes the external evaluation for periodic accreditation purposes⁶³. Private HEIs come under the regulations of a governmental Private HE Coordination Committee. Accreditation of 350 curricula programs has been achieved. NAE participated in the NENA project⁶⁴. Regional workshops have been carried out that shared experiences, built capacity, and addressed QA in HE. It appears that Morocco has a governmental QA commission that accredits curriculum targets private HEIs aiming to promote QA, develops and publishes related guidelines and records best practices on its website in Arabic & French Languages.

13. Oman

The HE Council (HEC)⁶⁵, chaired by the Minister of Omani Diwan of Royal Court, is responsible for drawing up HE, scientific and academic research policies in HEIs tailoring them to meet Oman's needs and cultural, social, economic and scientific goals. The Ministry of HE (MoHE)⁶⁶, the Omani Accreditation Council (OAC)⁶⁷ in particular, supervises the HE sector and reports to HEC. OAC has developed national frameworks to facilitate the development of the HE⁶⁸ combined by Oman's Education Framework. These include Standard Classification of Education Framework (OSCED)⁶⁹ that describes all possible fields of study, Oman Institutional Classification Framework (OICF)⁷⁰ that sets out criteria for defining types of HEI, and Oman Qualifications Framework (OQF)⁷¹ that sets out types of qualifications. OAC accredits programs and HEIs. Private HEIs are monitored by MoHE's Directorate General of Private Universities and colleges according to the same procedures used for government institutions. Furthermore, QOC has provided a capacity building National Quality Training Program⁷² to members of the informal Oman Quality Network (OQN)⁷³. The establishment of OQN is a good practice forum where members share some of their successful and innovative QA and quality enhancement activities. Thus, OAC is a governmentally-funded and organized QA body responsible for the external QA and quality enhancement of HEIs and programs that exist with all its developed documents, forms and guidelines for self-study, institutional and program accreditation and auditing, published on its website in English. Lists of licensed institutions are published on the OAC website.

⁶¹ <http://www.dfc.gov.ma/>

⁶² www.enssup.gov.ma

⁶³ http://english.anqahe.org/CMS/files//1214476820_ROYAUME_DU_MAROC.pdf

⁶⁴ <http://www.britishcouncil.org/morocco-society-quality-assurance-09.htm> Accessed in 31 Mar., 2009.

⁶⁵ <http://www.omanet.om/english/oman2000/sec31/.asp> 31 Mar., 2009

⁶⁶ <http://www.mohe.gov.om/> 31 Mar., 2009.

⁶⁷ <http://www.oac.gov.om> 31 Mar., 2009.

⁶⁸ <http://www.oac.gov.om/frameworks/>

⁶⁹ <http://www.oac.gov.om/frameworks/osced/>

⁷⁰ <http://www.oac.gov.om/frameworks/oicf/>

⁷¹ <http://www.oac.gov.om/frameworks/oqf/>

⁷² <http://www.oac.gov.om/qe/training/>

⁷³ <http://www.oac.gov.om/oqn/>

14. Palestine

In Palestine, HE was started by public, non-governmental initiatives, and later organized through the Council for HE in the 1980s. The Ministry of HE (MoHE)⁷⁴ has the authority to license, accredit, and enforce QA measures to all governmental, public and private HEIs. In 2002, the Accreditation and QA Commission (AQAC)⁷⁵ was established aiming at improving the quality of HEIs and programs and reports to the MoHE's Minister. AQAC is responsible of accrediting programs, licensing and accrediting new HEIs and its decisions are ratified by the Minister. AQAC reviews and updates accreditation criteria and this is published on AQAC's web site in Arabic and English languages. AQAC's mission, objectives, guidelines and procedures and an on-line system are accessible by stakeholders on its website. An ongoing comprehensive self and external assessment of all sectoral programs of study that grant academic degrees was started in 2003. General external reports are published. Financially, AQAC is supported through fees received for its services and governmental via administrative staff and space provided. In 2005, a World Bank and European Commission-funded 15M\$ Tertiary Education Project (TEP)⁷⁶ was launched aiming at improving the quality of HE. TEP's components include supporting AQAC, increasing HEIs internal and external efficiency by institutional QA units capacity building and strategic planning, and improving the HEIs quality through Quality Improvement Fund (QIF). QIF aims to improve the relevancy of HEI's programs and develop income-generating programs. AQAC is also involved in the NENA and Tempus projects including QA and Improvement in Tertiary Education⁷⁷. An internal review and SWOT analysis was accomplished in 2006. However, AQAC needs to introduce internal and external reviews to optimize its achievements and minimize its failures.

15. Qatar

The Supreme Education Council (SEC)⁷⁸ has established a diversified educational system that directs nation's education policy. SEC plays an integral role in the development and implementation of the education reform effort. The HE Institute (HEI)⁷⁹, one of the SEC institutes, advises individuals about career options and opportunities for HE in Qatar and abroad, and administers scholarships and grants. HEI encompasses several offices including the Institutional Standards Office (ISO)⁸⁰, responsible for ensuring quality of HEIs inside and outside Qatar and granting licenses for the educational institutions based on the policies and procedures set by the HEI. ISO licenses and accredits programs of HEIs, ensures all private HEIs abide by criteria, and provide assessment-based licenses and accreditation to private institutions. Qatar has the governmental University of Qatar and private HEIs. Licensing and accreditation criteria are followed; there is no evidence listing licensed / accredited HEIs, nor any guidelines. There is no document that supports Qatar claims of the ISO office or HEI guide containing the policies and procedures of establishing HEIs in Qatar and obtaining accreditation and licensing. The author could not cite any solid documentation that reflects a QA body in Qatar.

⁷⁴ <http://www.moehe.gov.ps/> accessed on 30 Mar., 2009.

⁷⁵ <http://www.aqac.mohe.gov.ps/> accessed on 30 Mar., 2009.

⁷⁶ <http://www.tep.ps/> accessed on 1 Apr., 2009.

⁷⁷ www.eu.etf/Tempus accessed on 1 Apr., 2009.

⁷⁸ <http://www.english.education.gov.qa/> accessed on 7 Apr., 2009.

⁷⁹ <http://www.english.education.gov.qa/section/sec/hei> accessed on 7 Apr., 2009.

⁸⁰ <http://www.english.education.gov.qa/section/sec/hei/iso> accessed on 7 Apr., 2009.

16. Saudi Arabia

The Ministry of HE (MoHE)⁸¹ supervises the execution of the country's HE and universities policies proposed by the Higher Council of Education (HCE)⁸² that supervises implementing these policies in SR, and reports to the Prime Minister. Also, HCE supervises the financially independent National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA)⁸³. NCAAA has a 17-director board chaired by MoHE's Minister and has authority for all post-secondary education accreditation except military education. NCAAA establishes rules, criteria, regulations and procedures for academic evaluation and accreditation, accredits new HEIs, periodically reviews and evaluates public and private HEIs and programs, and publicizes accreditation-related information. NCAAA organised a pilot of external HEIs evaluation. However, NCAAA has not published its claimed documents, forms and procedures, external review reports, good practices, accredited HEIs and programs on its English-language website. NCAAA's main funding resources include the government, accreditation fees and grants. NCAAA does not have an internal nor external QA mechanism, thus it urgently requires to review its functioning and needs to update its website.

17. SOMALIA

HE includes the governmental National University of Somalia (NUS) and private HEIs in Somaliland, Puntland and Mogadishu⁸⁴. However, the bloody conflict that tore Somalia apart has destroyed some of these HEIs. Somalia needs an urgent and rapid holistic approach in the reconstruction efforts. Needless to say, there is no QA system in Somalia!

18. Sudan

The Sudanese MHESR⁸⁵ is the official body that sets up policies, plans and programs for HE SR. The National Council for HE and SR (NCHESR)⁸⁶ is responsible for planning and coordinating policies and for educational and research plans. NCHESR is represented in all aspects of evaluation and QA of HE by the High Commission for Evaluation and Accreditation (EVAC)⁸⁷. EVAC, established in 2003 (originally, Evaluation and Accreditation Corporation, EVAC⁸⁸) (Palgrave, 2007), is chaired by the Minister and aims to assure that institutions of HE are implementing their activities (teaching, SR and community services) efficiently, capably and with high quality. EVAC has accomplished capacity building activities, developing institutional self evaluation units and evaluating sectoral programs. EVAC's publications⁸⁹ are on its Arabic and English website. EVAC is a governmental commission within the MHESR body with an annual budget. EVAC's main activities include promoting institutional QA and accreditation culture, but there is neither a published list nor reports of evaluation or accreditation of HEIs on the website. Although, EVAC is concerned with both evaluation and accreditation, all published documents mainly focus on QA and evaluation. Procedures of old and new HEIs accreditation are missing. Furthermore, most capacity building activities are accomplished using national funds.

⁸¹ <http://www.mohe.gov.sa/Arabic/> accessed on 3 May, 2009.

⁸² <http://www.mohe.gov.sa/Arabic/HigherEducationCouncil/> accessed on 3 May, 2009.

⁸³ <http://www.ncaaa.org.sa> accessed on 4 May, 2009.

⁸⁴ http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/cihe/inhea/profiles/Somalia.htm

⁸⁵ <http://www.mohe.gov.sd/eng/> accessed on 10 Apr., 2009.

⁸⁶ <http://www.mohe.gov.sd/eng/content/council.htm> accessed on 10 Apr., 2009.

⁸⁷ <http://www.mohe.gov.sd/eng/Directorates/Evaluation.htm> accessed on 10 Apr., 2009.

⁸⁸ <http://evac.edu.sd/> accessed on 3 May, 2009.

⁸⁹ <http://www.mohe.gov.sd/eng/content/publications.htm> accessed on 8 Apr., 2009.

19. Syria

The Ministry of HE (MHE)⁹⁰ is responsible for HE and SR. MHE encompasses four councils including the Council of HE (CHE). In 2006, CHE⁹¹ modified its regulations to accommodate licensing and accrediting of new HEIs. Among the various CHE committees are the Private HEIs Committee that carries out the needs analysis of HEIs, studies and recommends approval of new HEIs; and the QA Committee (QAC) proposes accreditations regulations, evaluation plans and methods of implementation to the CHE. All related decisions are published on the MHE website in Arabic. Recent QA initiatives⁹² include initiating a pilot self evaluation activity aiming to SWOT analyze and promote QA awareness at governmental universities. Other initiatives include EU Tempus, UNDP sectoral assessment, NENA projects, and the EU-funded Upgrading HE Sector⁹³ project that aims at establishing a National Commission for QA and Accreditation (NCQAA) that will be affiliated to the CHE. Thus, Syria has active and promising QA initiatives and programs aiming to promote the QA and accreditation.

20. Tunisia

The MHESRT⁹⁴ sets policy, strategic plans and supervises HE. The culture of evaluation within Tunisian universities started with the implementation of the World Bank-funded HE Reform I project⁹⁵. A governmental Comité National d'Evaluation (National Committee of Evaluation (CNE) is appointed by the MHESRT Minister. CNE aims to provide incentives to encourage universities to review their curricula in order to strengthen the quality of education and academic attainment. CNE conducted internal institutional evaluation, at first voluntarily and then on a compulsory basis. The HE reform II World Bank-funded project⁹⁶ started in 2006 aimed to expand access, improve the quality of education and institutional performance and provide quality grants. In 2006, a HE QA Program (PAQ) was set up that aimed to improve the quality of HE teaching and grant more autonomy to Tunisian HEIs. Moreover, a Fonds National d'Appui à la Qualité (FNAQ) was established to address evaluation and accountability issues and enhance the quality and relevance of undergraduate study programs. Furthermore, Tunisia has participated in NENA and Tempus projects. A new law has been adopted to establish independent QA and Accreditation in 2008⁹⁷. However, a QA body has not been established. Also, no evidence of self-evaluation external reviews accomplishments is available.

21. United Arab Emirates (UAE)

The MOHESR⁹⁸ is responsible for policy making, planning and coordinating HE. The Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA)⁹⁹ aims to ensure that UAE HEIs and programs meet international QA HE standards and reports directly to the MOHESR Minister. CAA's mandate includes licensing private HEIs, accrediting programs and supporting HEIs to develop institutional QA system. CAA

⁹⁰ <http://www.mhe.gov.sy/> accessed on 8 Apr., 2009.

⁹¹ <http://www.mhe.gov.sy/servers/gallery/20070401125254-.doc> accessed on 8 Apr., 2009.

⁹² www.english.anqahe.org/CMS/files/1214476768_syria-bc608.pdf accessed on 8 Apr., 2009.

⁹³ <http://uhes-sy.org/>

⁹⁴ <http://www.mes.tn/anglais/>

⁹⁵ <http://www.universities.tn>

⁹⁶ <http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?pagePK=64312881&piPK=64302848&theSitePK=40941&Projectid=P075809>

⁹⁷ http://english.anqahe.org/files/ArabLeague08/ArabLeague08_Tunisia_PAQ.pdf

⁹⁸ <http://www.mohesr.ae/>

⁹⁹ <http://www.caa.ae/>

has published its documents on its English-language website including criteria, licensing and accreditation standards, procedures, service provider, list of approved service providers and a list of licensed HEIs, but not the governmental HEIs¹⁰⁰. CAA provides full accreditation and re accreditation every five years. Decisions on final licensing and accreditation are taken by the MOHESR Minister¹⁰¹. It is clear that CAA is a well organized and governmentally funded body that has established internal feed-back demonstrated by versions of its standards. However, there is no evidence of external evaluation in compliance with international QA bodies.

22. Yemen

The Yemeni MoHESR¹⁰² is responsible for governing the HE sector and providing HE in response to national needs. The Supreme Council of Universities (SCU)¹⁰³ aims at setting HE policies, licensing and accrediting private universities. In 2005, a new law governing the authorisation of institutional establishments was approved that involves evaluation of accredited institutions and programs. Furthermore, an Accreditation Council (AC) was formed from HE stakeholders along with Ministry representatives¹⁰⁴. A World Bank-funded project (Yemen HE Development Project¹⁰⁵) in conjunction with the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada was launched to encourage professional development academics to revise their teaching methods and program content. In addition, MoHERS has another project through the Netherland Program for the Institutional Strengthening of Post Secondary Education and Training Capacity (NPT)¹⁰⁶ to introduce a new governance model for the HE and SR sector. There is no evidence of the AC, the MHESR-affiliated QA body, accomplishing or setting standards for assessment. Thus, there is no QA body in Yemen.

IV. Discussion

According to the 1998 WCHE, HE should display evidence of being able to sustain quality at national, regional or international levels. The new ICT is a vital tool in this process, owing to its impact on the acquisition and transfer of knowledge and know-how. The author will adopt the WCHE context of quality in HE as a reference that includes the multidimensional concept embracing its functions including teaching and programs, research, staffing, students, buildings, facilities, equipment, services to the community and the academic environment, in addition to the internal self-evaluation and external review conducted towards governmental and private HEIs, and the establishment of independent national bodies. Although all QA bodies are publicly-financed, an independent QA body reports to the Prime Minister / head of state (President/King/Prince). QA bodies reporting to a Minister will be considered as governmental. Accreditation that is based on assessment that meets minimum requirements (INQAHHE's description) will be adopted loosely in the following discussion.

Arab Countries are working relatively hard to address these characteristics. Overlapped regional initiatives have been conducted including establishing networks, societies and councils and

¹⁰⁰ http://www.mohesr.ae/heinstitutions_hct.html

¹⁰¹ <http://www.caa.ae/caa/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabindex=5&tabid=12>

¹⁰² <http://www.moheyemen.org/>

¹⁰³ <http://www.moheyemen.org/ar/contents.php?topics=supremeconcil&id=18>

¹⁰⁴ Schade, A, "An Introduction to QA and Accreditation for Yemen", 10_dies_schade_Yemen.ppt

¹⁰⁵ http://www.aucc.ca/programs/intprograms/multi_banks/yemen_e.html

¹⁰⁶ <http://www.utwente.nl/cheps/research/projects/yemen.doc/>

implementing internationally-funded projects. Arab Countries' responses to WCHE has been to call, international QA initiatives and AMHESR conferences in 2001, 2003, 2005 and 2007 to establish national QA bodies.

1. Five independent QA bodies from an affiliation viewpoint are well-organized (NQAAC, Egypt; NCAAA, Saudi Arabia; OAC, Oman; QAAET, Bahrain; and HEAC, Jordan). None of these have road map/plan to re-accredit HEIs. NQAAC is developing standards and has not moved from a pilot reviewing (accomplished 3 years ago) into a comprehensive review. OAC has well-documented standards targeting private HEIs. HEAC inherited well-established accreditation's procedures targeting private HEIs. It is not clear how HEAC will target (review/address) public HEIs and its overlapping functions and mission with HFE, the other body that has accomplished sectoral reviews at all HEIs, assuming complementary rather than competitive roles.

From the type of HEIs they are addressing, QA bodies can be classified as:

- a. Two independent QA bodies claim to target all types of HEIs, including NQAAC, Egypt and HEAC, Jordan.
- b. Two independent QA bodies claim to target only private HEIs, including OAC, Oman and QAAET, Bahrain.
- c. The independent NCAAA, Saudi Arabia has not clarified its targeted HEIs.
2. Five governmental QA bodies from an affiliation viewpoint. Namely, CAA, UAE; EVAC, Sudan; AQAC, Palestine, QAAC, Libya; and PUC, Kuwait.
 - a. CAA has well-established QA criteria for licensing private HEIs, accrediting programs and accomplishing reviewing and site visits. CAA aims to ensure that UAE HEIs/ programs meet international standards QA in HE.
 - b. EVAC, a well-organized governmental QA body, evaluated programs at all HEIs a few years ago, but evaluation reports have not been published. Accreditation of programs and HEIs that involves reviewing has neither been seriously addressed nor planned.
 - c. AQAC is a governmental well-established QA and accreditation body. Self and external evaluations of all offered programs by all types of HEIs started in 2003, and are still under going. Published general reports are available at AQAC's website. Institutional self and external evaluation was accomplished at one university. Licensing criteria and procedures are published on the website and implemented to new programs and HEIs. However, self and external HEIs review has yet to be planned.
 - d. QAAC, Libya is a new established governmental QA body that has used licensing and accreditation procedures but there are no published reports to demonstrate its transparent procedures. Furthermore, it is not clear how QAAC accredited all listed HEIs.
 - e. PUC, Kuwait is a governmental QA body targeting private universities. Lists of licensed/ accredited HEIs are available on the PUC website. It is worth mentioning that one major requirement to license any new private HEIs is its affiliation with an international HEI.
3. The remaining twelve countries have not established QA bodies. These are sub-classified into two main categories:
 - a. The first category includes countries that have exercised some QA and reviewing tasks through committees affiliated with HE Ministries or directly by Ministries' directorates. These category includes:
 - Yemeni Accreditation Council focused on Ministry's capacity building, and does

have licensing / accreditation procedures;

- Tunisian CNE looks after the evaluation. The author argues that an adoption of some QA processes have been accomplished while converting the educational system into the European LMD scheme. However, there is a lack of evidence of self-evaluation or external systematic reviews accomplishments nation-wide;
 - Algeria does not have a QA body or accreditation procedures. The author argues that an adoption of some QA processes have been accomplished while converting educational system into the European LMD scheme. However, there are no published documents or reports that support this argument.
 - Morocco does not have a QA body, but has addressed QA and reviewing tasks. MNEHEMSTR supervises external QA through CNCES. The National Agency NAE handles institutional QA issues and accomplishes external evaluation for periodic accreditation purposes. An accreditation process of curricula programs is undergoing.
 - Lebanon has not yet established a QA body. However, the DGHE performs licensing of new HEI by a technical committee that recommends to the Ministers' Council. Self and external evaluations of HEIs have not been addressed.
 - Syria has not yet established a QA body. However, the CHE that regulates licensing and accrediting of new HEIs has the Private HEIs Committee that accomplishes HEIs needs, studies and recommends approval of new HEIs. The author could not cite any documentation or regulations to support these claims.
 - Qatar has not established a QA body. However, the ISO Office that operates within the HEI institute develops policies and criteria related to the quality of HE including licensing and accreditation requirements, licenses and accredits programs of HEIs, and provide licenses and accreditation to private institutions based on assessments. The author could not cite any reports that support these claims.
- b. The second category includes countries that do not have QA processes including Iraq, Mauritania, Comoros, Djibouti and Somalia. All suffer from wars.
4. Limited countries (Palestine compulsory and Egypt voluntary) have comprehensively accomplished self and external evaluation of offered programs. However, Palestine alone has also conducted one self and external institutional review.
5. No country has a plan of reviewing to re-accredit HEIs. NQAAC has developed standards according to its five-year strategic plan.

Considering the funding issue, International donors have played a major role in promoting a QA culture including licensing, accreditation, self and external evaluation. These funding bodies include:

- The World Bank has funded HE reforms and QA promotions in Egypt, Mauritania, Palestine, Tunisia, and Yemen, and ANQAHE.
- The UNDP funded along with the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and Finland, sectoral program assessment in Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, UAE and Yemen.
- The British Council funded QA initiatives and capacity building through the NENA project that involved Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia;
- The EU Tempus Program has funded QA related joint projects in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia.

Most of the established QA bodies are financially dependent on governmental or /

and international funds which raises the vital issue of sustainability. It is also worth noting that there is no Arab funding body.

Considering the QA bodies' structuring models and aims, they fall into the following categories:

- An ambiguous relationship between the two Jordanian QA bodies (HENC and HFE) was noted;
- Some QA bodies are targeting private HEIs as in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and UAE;
- QA establishments and HE directorates have not presented their QA system, procedures guidelines, or disseminated professionally their achievements, reports, initiatives on reliable websites in Arabic and other foreign languages.

The author believes that most of the developed QA standards and criteria are of an international origin which reflects the international dimension. Also, he could not cite QA body self/external evaluation reports that reflect accountability, efficiency, measuring positive and negative impacts and assessing performance. However, Egypt has an internal QA unit, and UAE has conducted a self evaluation activity. All QA bodies must be assessed and externally accredited. QA bodies are urged to adopt the ISO 10015 standard. No evidence could be cited to report conducted staff/students national/regional mobility. Although QA capacity building projects have produced highly skilled and trained QA experts, most of the QA bodies are highly dependent on foreign experts. ANQHAHE is the most active QA network which is trying to combine QA efforts and share experiences. ANQHAHE is a promising forum to combine and disseminate QA information and reports.

V. Conclusion

The paper has reviewed Arab QA status a decade after the WCHE's recommendations. Based on desk and Internet review of QA published information, it has sighted most of the QA initiatives at regional and national levels. It can be clearly stated that there has been promising progress in a very limited number of countries at different levels, but many are lagging behind. Generally, the efforts are insufficient in today's world of knowledge, competitiveness, rapid transformation and students' increased demand for enrolment.

Regional QA cooperation has been in evidence. These embrace UNDP HE, EU Tempus, NENA and DAAD's projects; HEIs association (AARU), a society (ASQAE); and network of QA bodies (ANQHAHE). An attempt to share and exchange information on most of these initiatives in a QA policy forum was conducted. Serious attempts must be initiated to restate complementarily objectives and identify roles. In addition, the proposed AEPQA, which will offer a different QA regional body, is required to assess these bodies on different dimensions including objectives, quality of management, performance, positive/negative impacts, achievements, strategic plans and their expected outcomes.

Finance and willingness to act are essential factors. The AMHESR forum has called on countries to establish national QA authorities in the last four successive 2-year meetings 2001 – 2007. 23% of Arab countries have succeeded in establishing independent QA bodies, only 9% target all HEIs that comply with WHEC recommendation, and 14% target only the private HEIs. Thus, after a decade of QA promotions, two countries have succeeded in establishing independent QA bodies that target private and public HEIs. This reflects the seriousness of countries' decision-makers in addressing QA in HE and the QA priority levels. Also, it demonstrates the dominant role of public HEIs in national decision-making. 23% countries have governmental-style QA bodies that function within the HE Ministry. This indicates that 23% of the established QA bodies are limited in the scope, mandate

and budget of a Ministry. Optimistically, 45% countries have established either independent or governmental QA institution. In addition, 32% countries have exercised limited QA and reviewing tasks. This form of QA organization pushes QA functionalities and importance further away from the Ministries' priorities. Unfortunately, the other 23% countries have made almost no effort towards addressing HE QA. These figures demonstrate the lagging status of HE and QA in Arab Countries.

Most of the structures of established QA bodies have a governmental affiliation. However, to avoid politics and interference, QA bodies are urged to promote affiliation to the presidential, royal, or prime Minister, with an annual budget, rather than functioning under a Minister's umbrella and within the budget of the Ministry.

It is worth mentioning that few of the QA institutions have well-presented interactive websites such as CAA, UAE and AQAC, and Palestine, where full information with lists of documents, procedures, guidelines, reports, accredited HEIs and programs in bilingual form (Arabic and any other foreign language). Showing all procedures, guidelines and decisions reflect issues of accountability and transparency nationally, regionally and internationally.

The author believes that offered programs and HEIs dominate, and most of these are government/public (although this needs further investigation). Thus, accreditation of all these programs and HEIs should be started. A transition period could be given after which all have to be re-accredited. 4/ 5 programs and 1 HEI in Palestine have been assessed.

It is obvious that most of the QA institutions depend on international projects and funds and these have a vital positive impact on capacity building, expertise and knowledge transfer. Side effects include the sustainability and financial burden of expenses. All QA authorities and HEIs use QA terminologies loosely/interchangeably and the adoption/harmonization of unified QA terminologies is required. Monitoring of QA establishments is essential to ensure accountability and this requires internal and external assessment of QA institutions.

Arab countries have, to some extent, achieved a reasonable level of QA promotions, and are urged to do a lot more in establish/enhance a QA culture within the HEIs themselves, self and external program and institutional evaluation for private and governmental HEIs. The issue of self evaluation and accreditation of the established QA institutions must be addressed later.

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The Impact of Reform Projects in Higher Education: The Case of Egypt

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Abstract

Egypt has been engaged in a major system-wide reform of its higher education system over the past decade based on a dynamic long-term strategic reform plan that caters for, and is adaptable to, any changes as needs arise. The outcomes of the implementation efforts made by all concerned stakeholders involved in the reform process is starting to pay back and flourish, influencing the overall performance of Egyptian higher education institutions.

The objective of this paper is to give an overview of the Egyptian higher education reform initiative the first phase of which has been ongoing for the past six years, focusing on the efforts made to measure the impact of the reform projects, individually and collectively, at different levels. A review of the three phases of piloting, developing and implementing the impact assessment framework is presented. A review of one of the pilot projects developed and implemented in one of the Egyptian Public Universities to measure its impact, is presented and discussed. The assignment for this pilot project was further extended to develop an impact assessment framework for universities and higher education institutions to use as a guide to implement it in their own institutions. Results of the impact assessment studies conducted by the seventeen public universities based on this framework are also reviewed and discussed.

In addition, the World Bank has selected the Higher Education Enhancement Project (HEEP), as one of its most successful projects implemented worldwide, as stipulated in their biannual project performance assessment reports (Aide Mémoire), to develop for the first time what they call a learning ICR (Implementation Completion Report) in which impact assessment is a mandatory portion. Preliminary results of the ICR impact assessment studies conducted by the Projects management Unit (PMU) at the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) in collaboration with the World Bank on a pilot scale applied to three public universities selected to establish baseline data for the second phase of reform, is also reviewed and discussed. Lessons drawn from implementing the overall Higher Education Reform Strategy (HERS), together with those drawn from the impact assessment studies are followed by concluding remarks.

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It is hoped that, the outcome of this paper will help other countries in the region, and globally, to benefit from the lessons drawn from the Egyptian experience and to avoid mishaps that confronted the Egyptian higher education reform initiative.

I. Introduction

The Egyptian higher education system has been for long-suffering from many problems inherent in overcrowding, overly centralized governance and widespread inefficiencies, low quality of university education and poor quality and relevance of mid-level technical education. The Government being cognizant of the challenges facing the higher education sector initiated serious steps to deal with these issues. A high-level consultative committee was appointed by the Minister of higher education to identify the needs for higher education sector-wide reform. Issues considered by the committee included the change and/or modification of regulations applied to governance structures, institutional autonomy, the degree of control institutions exercise over budgetary resources, and their capacity to mobilize extra budgetary resources. Efforts of this committee culminated in the development of a comprehensive Higher Education Reform Strategy (HERS) that addressed all deficiencies.

The objective of this paper is to give an overview of the Egyptian higher education reform initiative the first phase of which has been ongoing for the past six years focusing on reviewing and discussing the initiatives made to measure the impact of the reform projects, individually and collectively, at the institutional level.

II. Overview of the Egyptian Higher Education Reform Strategy

1. The Egyptian higher education system

The author (Said, 2003) presented a detailed historical review of the Egyptian higher education system, including comprehensive statistical data reflecting on the size and structure of the system and summarizing the efforts to develop the overall strategic reform plan before its inception. The author (Said et al, 2008) further updated the statistical data, and reported on the progress in the implementation of the first phase of the strategic reform plan.

The most recent statistics of the Egyptian higher education system reported for the academic year 2007 - 2008) by the Supreme Council of Universities (SCU, 2009) and the Strategic Planning Unit (SPU, 2009) at the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE, 2009) entail an aggregate of around 2.5 million students enrolled and supported by over 80 thousand faculty members and their assistants. The breakdown of the higher education system includes seventeen public universities, six branches of which will become independent within the coming two years, encompass over 1.5 million students enrolled in regular undergraduate programs as well as programs entailing new modes of delivery. Over 65 thousand faculty members and their assistants affiliate to these public universities.

Seventeen private universities are already offering their educational services and several others are in the pipeline to start offering their programs meeting the government directives to expand on enabling community contribution to the higher education system as government alone cannot cater for all levels of education that meet quality requirements. Slightly over 50 thousand students enroll in all the newly established private universities representing just over 3% of the total university enrollment. Al-Azhar University, the oldest in the world, alone caters for more than 420 thousand students enrolled in diverse specializations other than Islamic ones.

Community college education has been totally restructured by clustering the existing 45 public Middle Technical Institutes (MTIs) into 8 Technological Colleges (TCs) catering for about 125 thousand students, in addition to eight private MTIs catering for around 30 thousand students. Graduate students enrolled in postgraduate studies exceeded 180 thousand in the academic year 2007- 2008 with over 45 thousand graduating from the year before. It is worth mentioning that one of the major challenges facing the Egyptian higher education system is the enrollment of over three quarters of the student in humanities and social sciences specializations leading to an increase in unemployment because of the surplus of graduates exceeding the needs of the labor market. The Egyptian government represented by the Ministry of Higher education is giving utmost priority to resolve this problem by encouraging enrollment of students in science and technology related specializations to meet the labor market needs, with the hope to reverse the percentage of enrollment.

The enrollment rate of students of the age cohort 18 - 23 years into higher education is currently around 28% with government plans to enable access to higher education to accommodate 35 - 40% of the same age cohort by the year 2022 according to the MOHE strategic plan (SPU, 2009) as forecasted by the increase in population. The budget spent by the government during the academic year 2007 - 2008 on higher education was around 8.35 billion Egyptian pounds at an increase of about 10% than the budget spent in the previous academic year. Recently, the government announced a major increase in the coming academic year's budget by over 20% for education at large realizing the need to support its national recognized priority.

The above overview of the Egyptian higher education system, classified among the largest higher education systems worldwide, presents an insight about the challenges that face the system and the reform efforts needed to meet these challenges. A brief review and reference of the reform efforts, implementation priorities, achievements and lessons learned follow.

2. Higher Education Reform Strategy (HERS)

The Higher Education Reform Strategy (HERS) developed by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), and endorsed by the National Conference in February 2000 (MOHE, 2000), consisted of 25 projects addressing the diverse areas of reform. The HERS aimed to support efficiency and quality enhancement initiatives and improve the quality and relevance of higher education so graduates have the knowledge and skills demanded by Egypt's developing and globalizing economy. Twelve of the 25 projects were identified and bundled into six integrated sub-projects and given priority in the first phase of the HERS (2002 – 2007), namely:

- FOEP Faculties of Education Project
- ETCP Egyptian Technical Colleges Project
- FLDP Faculty-Leadership Development Project
- ICTP Information & Communication Technology Project
- QAAP Quality Assurance and Accreditation Project
- HEEPF Higher Education Enhancement Project Fund

(A competitive mechanism to support universities, faculties and/or individual/group faculty members' developmental needs)

Following is a brief account on each of the six priority projects.

1) Higher Education Enhancement Project Fund (HEEPF)

Website: <http://www.heepf.edu.eg>

HEEPF aims to enhance quality, relevance and efficiency in Higher Education through establishing

a sustainable competitive mechanism among Egyptian universities and Technical Colleges (TCs), creating mechanisms characterized by effective administration and transparency to finance, support, follow-up the implementation, appraise the performance, and ensure the sustainability of higher education enhancement competitive projects. Starting with the basic foundation of educational institutions to achieve the high quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of higher education in the national universities and institutes through enhancing administration systems, restructuring, academic enhancement, and community engagement to qualify graduates that satisfy the needs of the labour market and compete locally, regionally and globally.

2) Information & Communication Technology Project (ICTP)

Website: <http://www.ictp.org.eg>

ICTP is a fundamental project supporting the University's mission-critical activities: research, teaching and learning. It focuses on implementing efficient technology infrastructures and effective information systems; providing excellent information services, and access to information and quality technology resources; and delivering responsive support service to students, faculty, and staff. ICTP also aims at preparing the academic community to deal with these technological revolutions. Activities entail improving the overall efficiency of the IT network infrastructure, creating Management Information Systems to automate the administration within all public universities, linking public universities to the National Network for Scientific Research and making available a digital library that contains all the needed journals and periodicals, and creating a platform for e-learning courses. In addition, extensive certified training for IT capacity building of faculty members, administrators and students were conducted at different levels.

3) Egyptian Technical Colleges Project (ETCP)

Website: <http://www.etc.edu.eg>

ETCP addresses one of the most problematic areas of our higher education system. During the past five decades, 45 Middle Technical Institutes (MTIs) having two years of study, distributed over 18 governorates were established in Egypt. These institutes established to provide technical cadres to meet the needs of the labour market in the industrial, business, tourism, hotels, and other fields, were clustered geographically into 8 technological colleges (TCs). ETCP aims at improving the performance and upgrading the capabilities of the TCs to improve the quality of their graduates to satisfy the ever-increasing demand of the labor market for efficient employees in the intermediate job level, to establish effective links with the society and the business sectors, and to reduce the unemployment rate among the TCs graduates. Improving governance and performance of TCs and enhancing their capabilities to graduate administrators and technicians with skills to meet the relevant international level of skills standards. Certified training centers established in the TCs to offer services for the community and surrounding industries to help improve quality.

4) Faculty of Education Project (FOEP)

Website: <http://www.foep.edu.eg>

The project aims at achieving a comprehensive modernization of faculties of education, to go in tandem with world scientific and professional development, taking into consideration the Egyptian cultural dimension in general, and each faculty's environment in particular; on a systematic basis, that guarantees effectiveness of teaching and learning, and total quality as an approach to reform. Achievements were made by creating an appropriate environment for

development that supports the mission and conceptual framework of these faculties of education, preparing new by-laws for FOEs to use as a model to develop their own based on newly revised curricula, reforming teacher preparation system at all levels with a view to technology and training, enhancing professional development of teaching staff and their assistants, improving infrastructure quality of the faculties of education labs and equipment, ensuring quality performance of the faculties of education, adopting faculties' self-reform approach, associating project activities with public schools and other enhancement projects, and establishing a follow-up and evaluation system.

5) Faculty and Leadership Development Project (FLDP)

Website: <http://www.ncfld.org>

FLDP aims at enhancing institutional and professional potentials of higher education institutions (HEIs), along with developing the skills and competencies of faculty members, administrators and leaderships to enable them to cope with developments of the era, to face competitiveness, and to increase the efficiency of higher education outcomes. The achievements of FLDP fulfilled through: identifying the training needs of HEIs, developing training strategies by universities/HEIs, conducting Training of Trainers (TOT) workshops to create core teams of certified trainers within each university/HEI, establishing sustainable training and development mechanisms, supporting the establishment of training centers in each public university to ensure sustainability of the continuous training process, setting training priorities, prioritizing training groups and developing annual training planners, executing all training activities within the training centers established in each university/HEI, and performing periodic evaluation and impact assessment of the training programs in accordance with quality assurance and accreditation requirements.

6) Quality Assurance and Accreditation Project (QAAP)

Website: <http://www.qaap.net>

The strategic objective of QAAP is to prepare universities/HEI to qualify for accreditation by developing a national QAA system/body to ensure that the quality of graduates from universities and HEIs makes them compete nationally, regionally and internationally. The project activities entail: developing an Internal Quality Assurance System in universities/HEIs, establishing National Academic Reference Standards (NARS) and Benchmarks, establishing QA centers/units in each university/faculty to overlook QAA related issues, assisting universities/HEIs to develop their own strategic plans as a mandatory requirement for accreditation, introducing the culture of quality by raising the awareness of universities/HEIs and the community at large building their capacity through focused training and organizing workshops, developing a national database for peer reviewers and experts in the area of QAA, and conducting peer review visits as a rehearsal for the accreditation visit(s).

These six priority projects were collectively implemented under the Higher Education Enhancement Project (HEEP) funded from World Bank diverse sources (IDA and IBRD); 13 million US\$ IDA (International Development Agency) soft loan agreement to support FOEP, and 50 million US\$ IBRD (International Bank of Reconstruction and Development) loan agreement to support the remaining five projects. In addition to other sources of funding such as the European Union (EU), The Ford Foundation (FF), The British Council (BC), and USAID, the GOE complemented the World Bank funds with a 10 million US\$ for ineligible expenditures under World Bank regulations and guidelines, such as taxes, custom duties, etc.

The design of the Higher Education Enhancement Project (HEEP) focused primarily during the first

phase of its implementation (2002 - 2007 extended to 2008) on following a top-down approach for many reasons. Universities were not ready to accept change due to lack of confidence, the need to create a critical mass of involved stakeholders to affect change, the need to create the necessary environment and culture for accepting the change and avoiding resistance, and the absence of a competitive transparent mechanism to encourage participation, were among the main reasons. To meet these challenges, HEEP aimed at laying the foundation for improving the quality of the higher education system in Egypt, through legislative reform, institutional restructuring, establishment of independent quality assurance mechanisms and monitoring and evaluation systems.

HEEP had three main components; the first component supports the Government's efforts to restructure system governance and management, so that conditions are in place to support improved sector efficiency, and quality. More specifically, this component included reforming legislation governing higher education; rationalizing funding allocation practices - financing international technical assistance for resource allocation across higher institutions; establishing a national quality assurance authority, guided by technical assistance in establishing the performance standards for an accredited system of higher education. Management training, capacity building, as well as the establishment of an integrated management information system, are among the activities supported by providing funds for higher education institutions to improve teaching/learning abilities. The second component focused on improving the quality, and relevance of university education, through the establishment of an information technology (IT) integrated computer, and network infrastructure, and finance in-service training to develop competencies in the application of computer technology, particularly in teaching methodologies. Finally, the third component targeted the improvement of the quality, and relevance of mid-level technical education, by consolidating 45 MTIs into 8 TCs, designing relevant curriculum, and training instruction, and strengthening academic administration and management.

Achievements, pitfalls and lessons learned under the above-mentioned three components of the HEEP six sub-projects are reported in detail elsewhere (Said et al, 2008), (World Bank, 2009), (EUN, GOE, HEEP, MOHE, PMU, SCU and SPU, 2009). Furthermore, the author reported on the progress and outcome of the HEEP reform activities focusing on governance and finance (Said 2008), on Egyptian quality assurance and accreditation related initiatives (Said, 2005), (Said et al, 2005-a, 2005-b) and (Said et al, 2006 1st Ed and 2nd Ed 2008). In addition, the author also reported on government efforts towards the internationalization of higher education (Said, 2007) and (Said et al, 2008). These references give the reader a comprehensive and detailed idea about the accumulated experience to reform the higher education system over the last decade, as it is beyond the scope of this paper to review further the outcome of the Egyptian reform model. However, to give an idea about the overall sustainable achievements of HEEP on the institutional level, the National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Education (NAQAAE, 2009) now established for over a year and started offering its accreditation services to qualified schools. NAQAAE has been since its inception concerned with developing National Academic Reference Standards (NARS) for different specializations, and will be engaged in the peer review visits to universities/faculties for their institutional accreditation at the beginning of the next academic year 2009 - 2010. Quality assurance centers/units at universities/faculties to administer QAA related issues, Faculty-Leadership development Centers (FLDCs) to develop and implement training programs based on competencies and skills acquisition, and University Projects Management Units (UPMUs) to administer all reform activities, all are already established as a sustainable part of the organization structures of all public universities. The three entities

provide support for reform activities within each university, thus institutionalizing the reform process. In addition, a National Center for Faculty-Leadership Development (NCFLD, 2009) established as the third branch for the International Board of Certified Trainers (IBCT) in the US, with its second branch in the Netherlands to cover EU countries, offers its training services to certify master trainers, training materials, and training labs, covering 22 countries in the MENA region, Africa and Asia. NCFLD also operates as a hub networking the FLDCs established in all public universities to coordinate training activities and ensure that they conducted in accordance with international good practice and certification requirements.

Readers concerned to learn more in-depth about the Egyptian experience and the outcome and achievements of its reform efforts are highly advised to visit the resourceful project website (HEEP, 2009), to navigate through the Egyptian higher education system at large learning everything about it, and to have direct access to other related information, and/or concerned entities/stakeholders.

It is worth mentioning that after the successful implementation of the first phase of HEEP, the Government of Egypt (GOE) allocated an aggregate budget of 2.7 billion Egyptian pounds (L.E.), equivalent to about 480 million US\$ at the current prevailing exchange rate (1 US\$ = 5.7 L.E.) for the second phase of reform (2007 – 2012). The focus of the second phase is on preparing our universities/faculties to qualify for accreditation, and to continue reforming technical education. This GOE commitment reflects a political will to improve the quality, relevance and efficiency of the Egyptian higher education system.

The Egyptian higher education reform model culminates by developing and implementing several impact assessment initiatives, details of which follow.

III. Impact Assessment Initiatives

The concept of a comprehensive, well-structured Impact Assessment (IA) study was nearly absent from any of the reform projects implemented under the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). However, dispersed monitoring and evaluation efforts to evaluate the projects outputs/outcomes were ad hoc with no structured methodology and baseline data to compare with. Among these evaluation efforts were those conducted by external reviewers such as the World Bank biannual supervision missions, the Association of Egyptian American Scholars (AEAS) in the US, the British Council, as well as universities and beneficiaries of the Egyptian higher education system, details of which are reported elsewhere (HEEPF, 2009).

The Ministry of Higher Education in collaboration with the World Bank realized the importance of measuring the impact of their efforts to reform the Egyptian higher education system to assess the performance of reform projects, collectively and individually, to take the necessary corrective actions as needed during the consecutive phases of the reform activities. This unforeseen mandatory requisite, realized halfway during the implementation of the first phase of the higher education strategic reform plan, led to the absence of baseline data to compare performance and reform outcomes. As a result, several initiatives took place to assess performance starting on a pilot basis and ending with a university system-wide implementation of an impact assessment structured methodology developed based on the pilot results. To start with, the World Bank organized a workshop in coordination with the MOHE inviting one of the world-renowned authorities in the realm of impact assessment to talk about international good practices and to train some of the concerned Egyptians on the methodology to develop and implement a comprehensive impact assessment framework.

It is worth mentioning that all the impact assessment efforts were based on criterion referenced-evaluation that depends primarily on meeting the predetermined objectives for the reform projects. Interviews were conducted internally within the institutions, classified as intermediate and short-term IA and thus cannot be considered conclusive evidence of impact, as is the case when implementing norm referenced-evaluation based on external dialogues with concerned stakeholders, classified as long-term IA. However, these IA efforts are preliminary steps towards the establishment of an evidence-based system-wide impact assessment mechanism that takes into consideration criterion and norm referenced evaluation to help institutions evaluate their performance and output. Following is a brief account of these impact evaluation/assessment initiatives.

IV. Development Phases of the Impact Assessment Strategy

Impact assessment initiatives developed over a period of nearly four years in three distinctive phases, namely; piloting phase, development phase, and structured and system-wide implementation phase. The piloting phase started in 2005 under one of the HEEPF funded projects at Zagazig University, one of the 17 Egyptian public universities, to measure the impact of the project on the concerned beneficiaries from the project outcomes (El-Badawy et al, 2006). The scope of the pilot study was further expanded to assess the overall impact of HEEPF funded projects within Zagazig University on the main beneficiaries within the university.

The development phase started after the successful implementation of this pilot IA study, with the same team contracted by the Projects Management Unit (PMU) at the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) to develop a comprehensive framework for an impact assessment strategy for the overall reform activities conducted in Egyptian public universities. The outcome of the methodology followed during this development phase is three fold; the first is a final report containing the framework for the IA of the Higher Education Enhancement Projects (HEEP), together with the results of implementing this framework at Zagazig University using sample representative colleges (El-Badawy et al, 2007-a). The second fold was an Operational Manual developed to guide universities and higher education institutions on how to implement structurally the IA methodology (El-Badawy et al, 2007-b). The operational Manual was further developed (El-Badawy et al, 2007-c) into an Impact Assessment Handbook based on well-established methodologies and criteria (Kusek et al, 2004) and (Mosse et al, 1996).

Finally, the structured and system-wide implementation phase entailed applying the IA framework developed on a selected sample of universities and then on a university system-wide basis. This was the first attempt to establish a system-wide IA on the public universities level with the hope to establish baseline data for the second phase of reform that extends to year 2012.

Following is a brief account of each of the three phases of development of the impact assessment strategy, including review of the methodology followed and the outcomes, bearing in mind that IA is intended to provide answers to the four main questions; reach who, change what, change how much and reach how many.

1. Piloting Phase

The first impact assessment efforts initiated within Egyptian universities started with an assessment of outcomes of one of the projects funded under HEEPF at Zagazig University (El-Badawy et al, 2006). The impact assessment study had three specific objectives, namely; to develop a sustainable impact assessment system as a model to replicate in other universities, to

assess the individual and collective impacts of HEEPF, and to pinpoint problems and drawbacks associated with its application.

The framework of the IA study covered the activities/inputs that HEEPF was able to develop or update, and the output/outcome as seen by beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. The framework methodology focused on selecting a sample of faculties at Zagazig University stratified into three strata according to the number of HEEP projects in each faculty, and from each stratum, one faculty selected. The selected faculties were medicine with five projects, faculty of engineering with two projects and faculty of commerce with no projects. The target groups included 43 high-level administrators, Deans, Vice-Deans, Heads of Departments and Professors; all questioned through in-depth interviews. A group of beneficiaries of 15 faculty members and 7 students, and non-beneficiaries of 16 faculty and 13 students, were all interviewed through focus group discussion. Another group of beneficiaries including 146 faculty members and 533 students, and non-beneficiaries of 154 faculty and 606 students, all were subjected to structured-interview. Selected beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries were identified according to a specific criterion.

All data collection was conducted in Arabic since it is easier and does not need any interpretation, and thus ensures standardization. Both qualitative (focus group discussion and in-depth interview) and quantitative measurement (checklist and structured interview) methodologies were used. Tools developed were formed of; questions for the implementation of the focus group discussions and the in-depth interviews, checklists to collect data about infrastructure and documentation, structured interviews, one for beneficiaries and one for non-beneficiaries. Questions used in qualitative and quantitative interviews were complementary and covered the different aspects of the HEEPF projects' impact. A scale of six ratings used by the World Bank to avoid the tendency of interviewees' to choose the happy medium in the usual scale of five ratings, was adopted in all the questionnaires, whenever applicable, to ensure that the interviewee would have an opinion stand

Recruitment and training of team members was essential from the onset of the impact study to ensure that all participating team members were oriented about the meaning of impact assessment and trained on different approaches for data collection. Developed tools were first tested among team members and among a small sample of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries (about 30 questionnaires); revision of the forms and its finalization was then carried out. The time needed to fill the questionnaires was estimated to be from ten to fifteen minutes.

a. Data Collection, Management and Analysis

The data collection was carried out concurrently from the three faculties in order to save time, and it took about three weeks to revise the forms, data entry and analysis.

The most important findings of the individual and collective impacts of the IA study at Zagazig University are reported in terms of activities/inputs and outputs/outcomes (El-Badawy et al, 2006). The activities/inputs group entails awareness, infrastructure/ documentations, capacity building of faculty members and dissemination of information about the project and its activities. It was evident that the level of awareness about HEEPF is defective especially among non-beneficiaries. Among them, only 9.8% of staff and 3.0% of students have heard about HEEPF. This lack of awareness is an important issue as it can hinder any effort for improvement and can limit the impact of any project to those only involved.

b. Outputs/Outcomes

Academic environment, students' achievement and faculty performance were among the elements used to measure impact. It was found from the responses to questionnaires posed on HEEPF projects related to transparency, performance, efficiency, funding, monitoring and

evaluation, that the overall effect of HEEPF on the faculty was found by more than 60% of beneficiaries to be good to very good. Moreover, almost all non-beneficiaries (97.9%) believe that competitive projects are needed. The Impact Assessment study (El-Badawy et al, 2006) concluded that HEEPF projects were able to introduce and change to a large extent attitude, behavior, skills acquisition, and overall performance of beneficiaries, faculty and students. Nevertheless, awareness, sustainability and limitation of the projects to only beneficiaries were among the areas identified in the study that need to be further addressed and dealt with.

2. Development Phase

One of the main outcomes of this study was to develop a generic IA framework model that can be used on a wider basis by universities and higher education institutions as a routine assessment procedure. The system developed (El-Badawy et al, 2007-a) covered the necessary methodology including the sampling, the data collection methods and tools, the needed team, training and statistical analysis, report writing, time and frequency of application and finally problems encountered and drawbacks. A manual for the IA system was also developed (El-Badawy et al, 2007-b) explaining all details for developing IA tools and for conducting an IA study in other universities. For in-depth details about the IA framework and methodology to develop the tools and implement them on a system-wide basis, the reader is encouraged to refer to and access the references (El-Badawy et al, 2007-a, 2007-b and 2007-c).

3. Implementation Phase

a. Impact Assessment for the HEEP ICR

As part of the requirements for the HEEP Implementation Completion Report (ICR), a workshop was organized with the objective to provide the MOHE and the World Bank with feedback from the main concerned stakeholders; namely, universities, Technical Colleges (TCs), students, employers, MOE, Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Labor, etc. on project outcomes/impact, implementation issues, lessons learnt, and future support from the Bank to higher education. The workshop addressed three major themes articulated around the project components:

- 1) Reform of higher education governance and management for better efficiency
- 2) Improving the quality and relevance of university education
- 3) Improving the quality and relevance of mid-level technical education

The workshop gathered a limited group from the abovementioned stakeholders (around 60) to work in groups for two days and allow participants to provide feedback on the several aspects of the HEEP reform projects. Details of the Workshop sessions, how it was conducted, the speakers and the views of the of the main stakeholders participating are reviewed and analyzed in the HEEP ICR Stakeholder's Report (El-Sawah et al, 2008).

b. Survey Study for the HEEP Implementation Completion Report (ICR) on the Perceptions of the Projects Beneficiaries

This study took over three months to be completed (El-Mahdi et al, 2009) and constitutes one of the main components of the ICR. The main objective was to assess the results included in the output reports presented by the directors of the different HEEP project components, namely FLDP, QAAP, ICTP, HEEPF and ECTP. The evaluation process was conducted on four main groups of beneficiaries, namely, faculty members, assistant faculty members, undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Because of the distinctive nature of some projects, the survey study was conducted in three phases, the first phase included the first three projects FLDP, QAAP, and ICTP that share common

features, the second phase included the ETCP dedicated for technical education and the third phase covered a selected sample of the HEEPF projects.

Extensive and detailed statistical data collected and analyzed in the survey study (El-Mahdi et al, 2009) reflect the following conclusions:

- In general, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that there have been positive results achieved due to the implementation of HEEP as indicated by all groups of beneficiaries. However, satisfaction of the interviewed beneficiaries engaged in the implementation of HEEPF-funded projects was higher compared to the level of satisfaction from the other development projects included in the study ICTP, QAAP, FLDP and ETCP. This could be related to the competitive nature of the HEEPF projects, which target a specific category of beneficiaries and have specific goals; unlike the other four projects, which are more general in nature and need a relatively longer time to achieve their desired objectives.
- With regard to ICTP, FLDP and QAAP projects, the beneficiaries declared that there is a moderate degree of positive results achieved; this degree is higher among staff members and their assistants, while they were lower among students.
- Moreover, there are evident higher positive results derived from the implementation of ICTP, compared to FLDP and QAAP implementation. This phenomenon could be explained by the fact that FLDP went through many stages of development, namely, the training matrix, and the training of faculty members to qualify them as certified trainers responsible to conduct training programs within their respective universities. Moreover, the nature of QAAP needs more time to achieve a significant impact.
- With regard to ETCP, there is generally a noticeable degree of development achieved, due to the positive impact from integrating the 45 MTIs into eight technological colleges. This decision helped in improving the management and administration structures and efficiency. Despite establishing and upgrading the computer and language labs, there are still difficulties of internet access, which are felt by staff members and students. Moreover, there was a relative decline in the degree of positive results achieved within the commercial education compared to the industrial education and the tourism and hotels education.
- In view of the absence of a "situation analysis study" to establish baseline data for an impact assessment study at the inception of HEEP implementation, the results of this survey study can be considered as benchmarks for the implementation of similar studies aiming to follow-up on the achieved development within higher education over time.
- Regarding the methodology of selecting the sample of universities and faculties included in this study, there was a bias towards choosing the universities and faculties with largest number of implemented projects, while taking into account the representation of the three main regions in Egypt, namely, the Metropolitan areas, Lower-Egypt and Upper Egypt. This decision agreed upon prior to the beginning of the implementation of fieldwork, reduces the degree of random choice and decreases the possibility of generalizing the results. Hence, in future similar studies, it is essential to select randomly amongst universities and faculties to have better representation of both humanities & social sciences and science specializations.
- The most important obstacles encountered in this survey study were; the limited time available to conduct the study, beneficiaries' commitment to overlook mid-year exams, and the lack of cooperation from some faculty coordinators (employed to help in applying the IA study) in a way that would ensure sufficient number of beneficiaries to select for interview.

- In addition, the shortage in time hindered the team from using qualitative methods in the analysis, such as the focus groups and in-depth meetings.

c. Universities Impact Assessment Study: Preliminary Results

Using the impact assessment (IA) methodology developed and tested on a pilot basis to prove its validity and reliability (El-Badawy et al, 2007), all the 17 public universities available in Egypt were invited to implement the IA system to assess the impact of HEEP projects on the main beneficiaries in their respective universities. Only 16 out of the 17 universities presented the results of their IA studies with an aggregate sample of 104 faculties, 4172 staff members, 5626 postgraduates and 24233 undergraduate students. The universities used almost the same methodology as that in the previously referenced pilot study. The methods of data collection focused on five main sources, namely:

- Reviewing documentation at the level of the universities, faculties and departments included in the study, to get the full data concerning faculty members, graduates and number of students enrolled. Number of foreign students joining the university, documents about all aspects of the teaching, examination methods, the learning facilities such as computer labs, digital libraries etc., were among the data collected.
- Conducting in-depth interviews among high-level authorities to get their opinions on the achievements fulfilled through the implementation of HEEP.
- Organizing focus group discussions with staff members, graduates and students to get as their impressions well on the needs fulfilled through the HEEP.
- Carrying out structured interviews with a representative sample from staff, graduates and students to get their perception about the changes that can be attributed to HEEP.
- Using an observation checklist to identify the quality of performance of the faculty members as a result of implementing HEEP.

The data collection within each university was closely coordinated between HEEP management team at the central PMU and the management of the respective university PMU (UPMU) because of the time limitation to complete the study. Different sets of questionnaires were developed to suit the different stakeholders considered (students, graduates, faculty) focusing on aspects such as the quality and diversity of postgraduate studies, the use of faculty internet, use of new modes of delivery such as e-learning, distant learning and self-learning, using new technology in teaching, teaching methods, assessment and examinations, as well as student satisfaction about faculty performance and faculty-student relationship.

The collective review and analysis of the IA reports received from the 16 universities revealed the following conclusions:

- Participation in HEEP was high among university faculty members (above 67% in all universities with the exception of one university "South Valley" reporting only 45% and the highest participation rate reported was 98.8% at Zagazig). Figure 1.
- For postgraduate studies, about 50% of faculty members believed that the topics of thesis were not repeated and of good quality, the references were up-to-date and the methodology was correct and these aspects showed a significant improvement after the implementation of HEEP. Figure 2.
- Percentage of faculty members who obtained foreign degrees varied considerably with southern universities having the highest percentage because of limited postgraduate studies. Percentage of faculty members having International publications varies from 5% to 65%. However, the number of faculty members having international publications may be much higher in universities having lower percentage such as Cairo University. Figure 3.

Figure 1

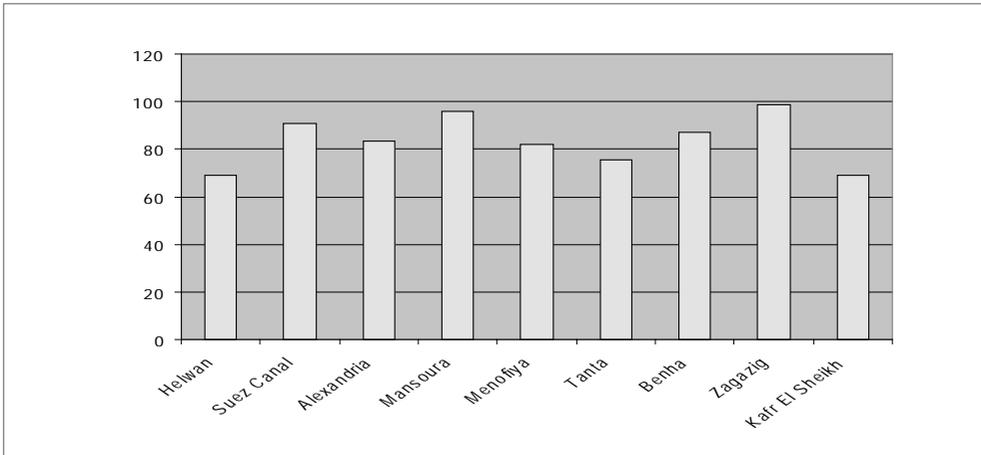


Figure 2

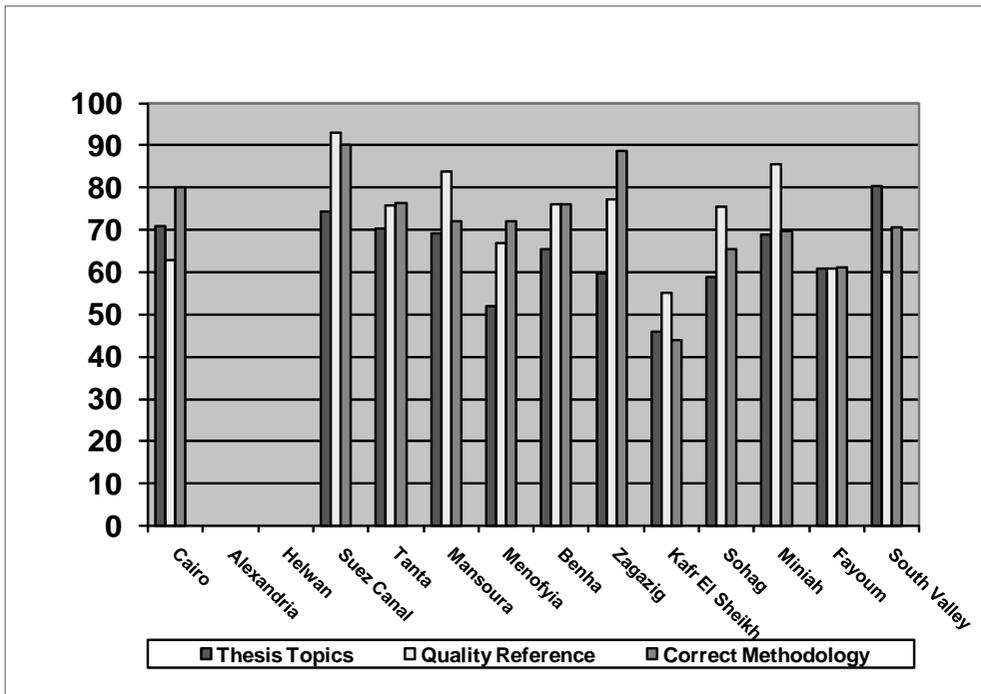
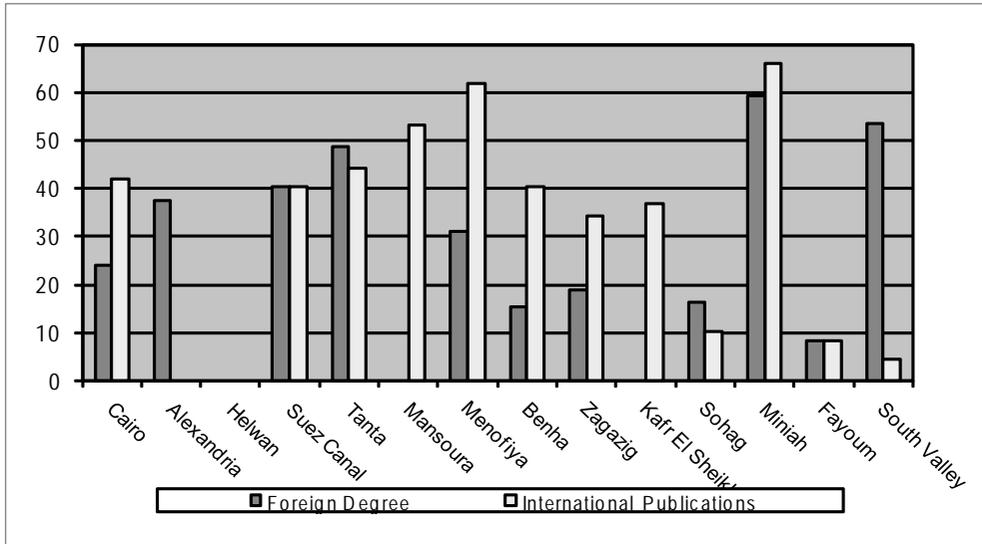


Figure 3



- Distant learning and self-learning were not used much and were present clearly in only 8 universities out of the 16. Figure 4
- The HEEP implementation has created in the universities a competitive environment that has led to increase in participation of faculty members in other projects. In 10 universities out of the 16, the faculty members stated that they are engaged in other projects (variation levels 20% to 85%). Figure 5.

Figure 4

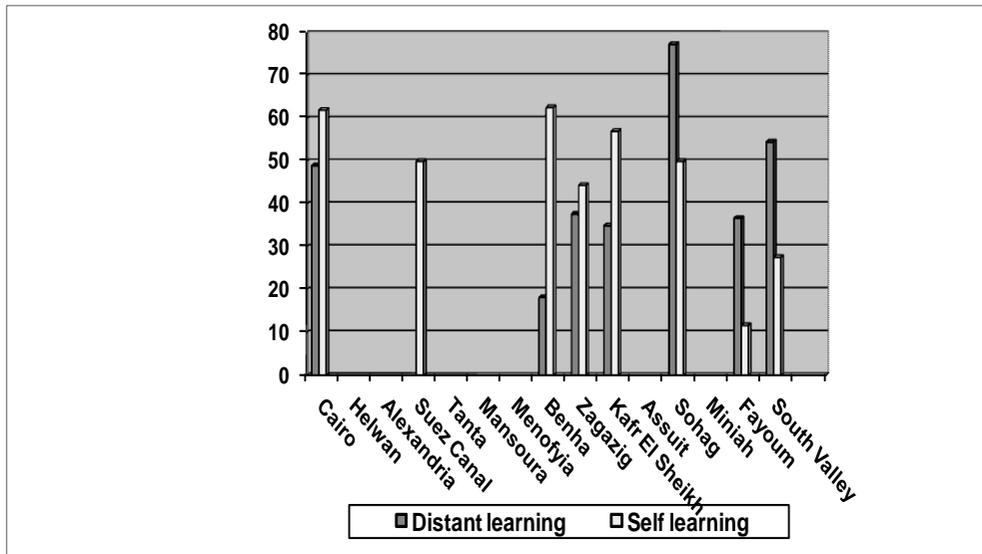
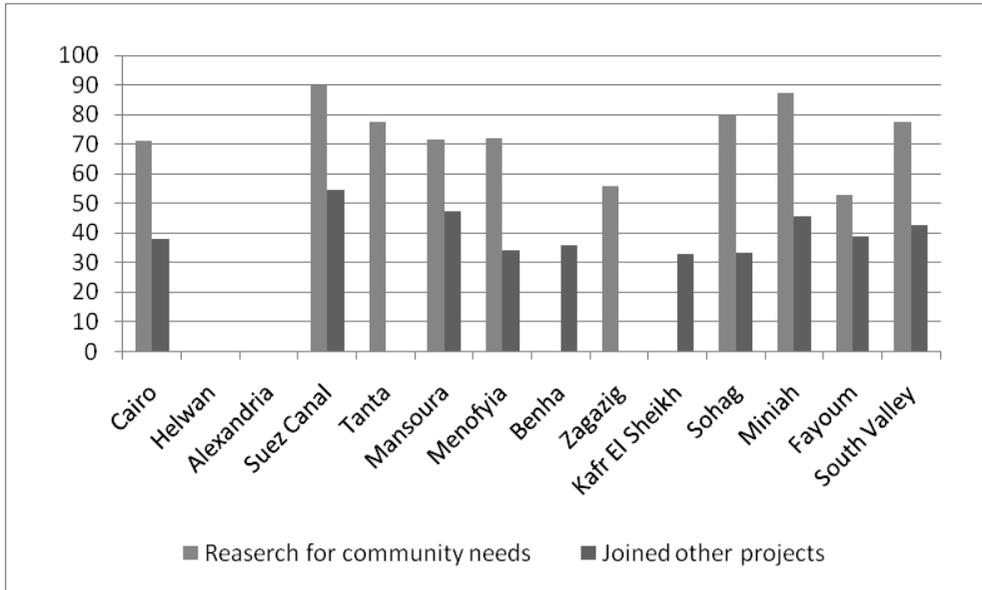


Figure 5



- The use of the electronic network from universities has showed improvement. Faculty members are using it now during and outside working hours with variable degree (20% to 85%) and its use for e-mail ranged from 15% to 80%. Figure 6
- Graduates and students use of their university network was less, in some universities it was only 10%. Figure 7.

Figure 6

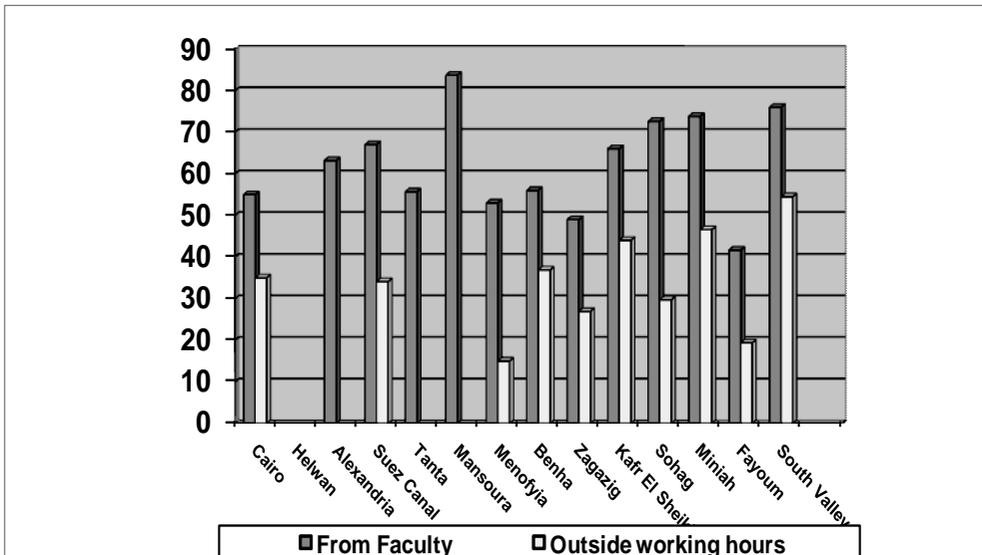
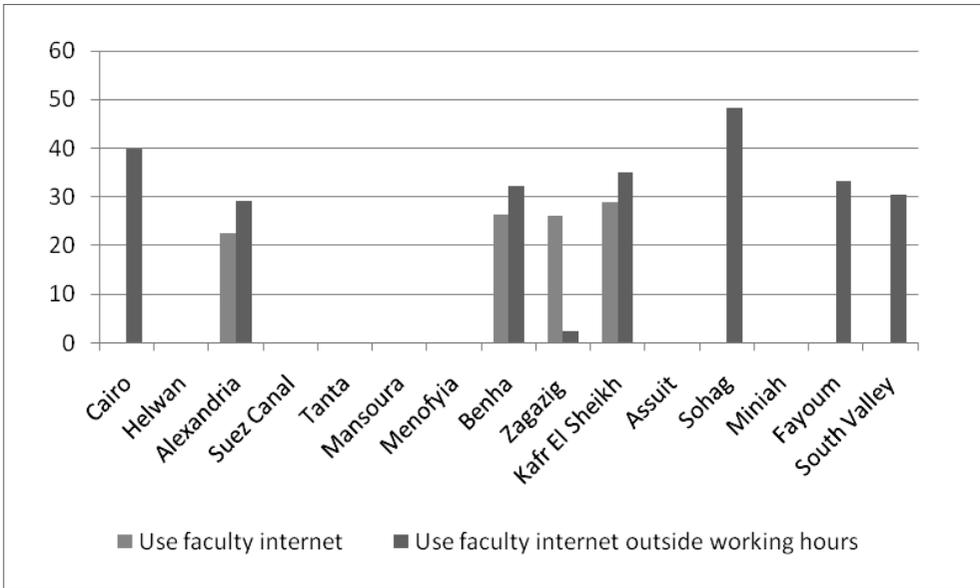


Figure 7



- E-learning is still at its beginning (10% of students had e-learning courses) while the use of digital libraries is still not high. Figure 8.
- The change in the curriculum writing, using of new methods of teaching and new methods of exams was more obvious. As an example of this change, about 50% to 95% of faculty members have written course specification, applied teaching in small groups and used data show. For using multi-choice questions (MCQs) in exams, the level ranged from 35% to about 80%, and the problem solving approach ranged from 50% to about 70%. Figure 9.

Figure 8

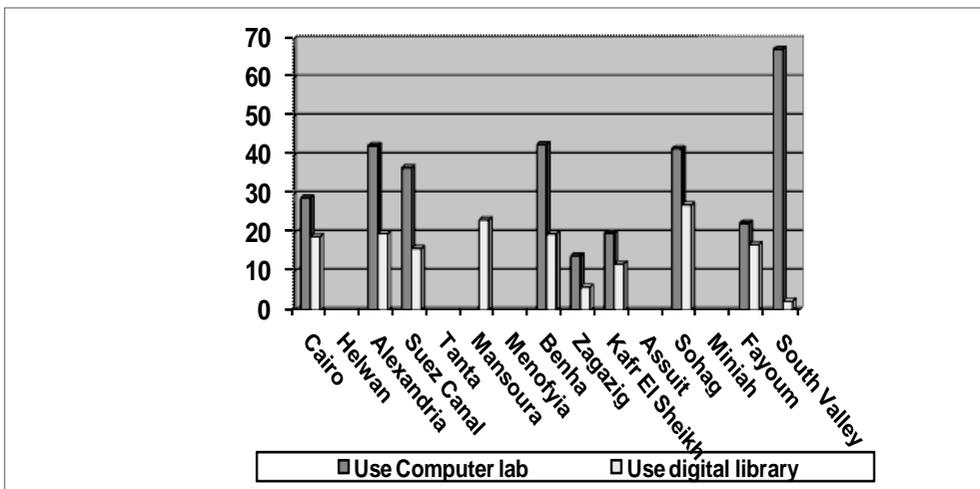
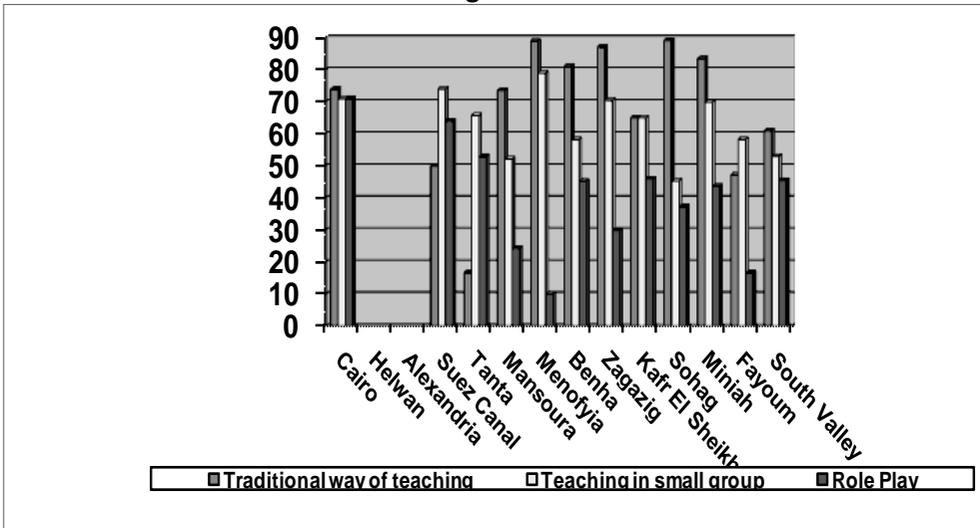


Figure 9



- Students' satisfaction of their relationships with staff members ranged from 30% to about 65%.
- As for faculty members' awareness of the presence of vision, mission and objectives in their faculty/department, it was obvious that there was a significant improvement and the lowest level was about 70%. Figure 10.
- Faculty members' administrative capabilities showed significant improvement, and their performance as reported by only two universities showed a satisfactory level among more than 50%.

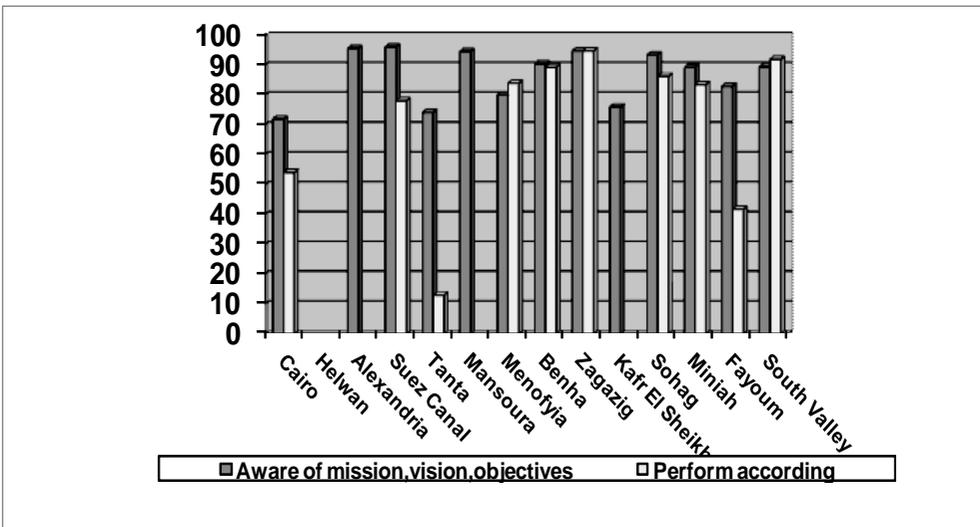


Figure 10

In spite of some of the drawbacks such as the absence of baseline data and target results, we still can state that preliminary results of the impact assessment has shown some significant changes that were recognized by faculty members more than the graduates or the students. The results presented in this paper are by no means exhaustive as the IA studies are extensive and for further details, the reader is advised to refer to the relevant report as referenced.

V. Concluding Remarks

The impact assessment strategy followed under the MOHE strategic reform plan was an extensive learning process systematically developed for concerned stakeholders to apply. Many lessons drawn from the IA development process include the feasibility of its implementation on a higher education system-wide basis, with ownership by all Egyptian universities and higher education institutions. Impact assessment of reform projects or any project in general, has become a mandatory requirement endorsed by the SCU to implement by universities periodically.

Results of the IA in universities indicated that faculty members are satisfied with the level of quality of theses as regards topics selected, quality of references and research methodology. However, there some variability between universities regarding the study abroad, international publications, postgraduate curricula, vocational training and participation in other projects. E-learning and self-learning are thought to be weak and need further support. The use of faculty internet facilities by faculty members, graduates and students varied between universities, however, it was highest among graduates and lowest among faculty members who prefer working at home, for many faculty members the IT personal infrastructure made available by institutions is not adequate and they prefer working at home or elsewhere. There is clear evidence that there is use of new approaches in curriculum writing, teaching methods, use of teaching aids and assessment/exams. Impact assessment also revealed that the HEEP reform efforts have clearly reached the majority of faculty members and to a lesser extent the students and graduates.

The outcome of the impact assessment efforts reflect the need for further IA periodic studies to expand the loop of beneficiaries to include concerned stakeholders from the community at large and to continue refining the impact assessment tools to ensure reliable results reflecting the reality of the higher education system in Egypt, or elsewhere. The lessons learned from the preliminary efforts to implement IA studies during the first phase of the Egyptian strategic reform plan, directly benefit the second phase of reform to establish the baseline data, and to continue refining the IA framework to comply with the overall objectives of the second phase, and the plans for higher education development.

Finally, the impact assessment initiative presented in this paper is a worthwhile model to adapt and replicate elsewhere, locally, regionally or globally, and the extensive resources referenced in this paper makes it easy for concerned stakeholders to draw lessons learned from the Egyptian experience and to avoid mishaps that confronted the higher education reform endeavors.

Acknowledgement

The author wishes to express his thanks and appreciation to all those who contributed not only to the development of the IA initiatives but also to those who were instrumental in the successful implementation of the first phase of the Egyptian higher education reform strategy. Special credit goes to all current and former Directors of the HEEP projects and the administrative assistants

for their dedication and commitment throughout the years of implementation that led to the recognition of concerned stakeholders of the impact of HEEP on the overall higher education system. The collective efforts of all those engaged in the reform activities made this work a reality.

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Education Faculty of Qatar University: Implementing the Quality Assurance System (Case Study)*

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Abstract

The paper discusses the development of the University of Qatar, including the process of educational reform and associated developments. The case of the Faculty of Education is addressed as a model, starting with the experience of the Faculty (Diploma in Special Education Program) with the "Enhancement of Quality Assurance and Institutional Planning in Arab Universities" project, organized by the Regional Bureau for Arab States of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in its first phase, which was devoted to "education programs". The project sought to apply global standards of education, with the aim of promoting a culture of quality assurance in Arab universities. As a result of the project, a quality assurance group was formed at the University of Qatar, with a view to assuring internal quality and upgrading all teaching and learning processes. To this end, the group set up a quality assurance system that assesses student learning outcomes of programs of study. Another result of the project was the establishment of a quality assurance committee at the Faculty of Education. This committee reviewed all Faculty and departmental programs, and developed a system of evaluation, including peer observation. The paper also discusses the results of the student learning outcomes system at University level, as well as at Faculty level. Finally, it discusses the results of a pilot study of the peer observation system.

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I. Introduction

Arab societies are going through a vital transitional phase and they are aiming, thanks to new visionary development approaches imposed by challenges of the modern era, at fostering progress. In this regard, as education efficiently contributes to the comprehensive development process, it is important to assess the relevant skills and the efficiency of the theories and practices which are adopted worldwide, (Shahata 2003). Improving administration is a key element to improving education, its philosophy and management. In line with any new form of progress, the quality of education means delivering the best educational services in the most cost-effective ways (i.e. the best quality at the lowest costs). Here are some goals of a good quality education:

1. Monitor and improve the educational institutions management systems by distributing roles and defining responsibilities.
2. Improve the physical, mental, social, moral and spiritual development of the student.
3. Increase the efficiency of education and ameliorate the performance of administrative and teaching staff within educational institutions.
4. Enable educational institutions' capacity to scientifically analyze problems.
5. Implement a quality assurance system within relevant institutions to grant them national respect and global recognition (Helal, 2002).

There are also many ways to improve academic programs, such as:

- Each institution or one of its relevant programs is voluntarily subject to an evaluation process, which does stem from a governmental decision. One of the accreditation commissions usually undertakes the evaluation based on defined standards and decides accordingly whether the institution or the program complies or not with the minimum standards, in order to get an accreditation for a specific period of time. Accreditation is thus a necessary certificate the institution uses in its relations with students, parents, teaching staff, donors, labor market and local society.
- Academic accreditation of programs provides markets with professional and competitive graduates. In this regard, accreditation councils are sorted in two categories: specialized councils which grant accreditations to specific academic programs and councils granting accreditations to a whole institution (Abu Daqqa, 2004, p. 6).
- Assessing academic programs (external academic review) falls under specific evaluation standards established by the relevant party, usually a group of experts in the field (Abu Daqqa and Arafa, 2007 p. 4).
- It is necessary to undertake an evaluation of the various programs' academic outputs on a regular basis. This process defines the knowledge, skills and values the student needs to acquire when graduating. It also evaluates the level of academic achievements and uses the available data to improve the student's aptitudes and the performance of academic programs (Abu Daqqa and Arafa, 2007 p. 4).

This study tries to set forth some experiences related to the improvement of Qatar University's Education Faculty through reviewing the following:

1. Creation of Qatar University as a national institution and its efforts to establish various systems related to quality and academic accreditation.
2. British Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) external review standards.
3. Education Faculty and UNDP's assessment programs for education in the Arab world: outcomes of improving quality and educational output systems in Qatar University.

4. Improving the quality assurance system in Education Faculty and establishing a peer observation system.
5. Recommendations to improve academic programs in Qatar University and other Arab Universities.

II. Growth of Qatar University

Qatar University was created in 1973 with two core education faculties for teachers (men and women) pursuant to a decision taken by the Prince in his speech delivered on 22 February 1973 to celebrate his first anniversary at the head of the country. Since its beginning, the University has gone through different phases, marked by the establishment and development (quantitative and qualitative) of higher education which encompasses the quality of education and the related educational and teaching processes, scientific research and serving society. The organizational and administrative hierarchy of the University was established in compliance with the Qatar University creation Law of 8 June 1977. It is represented by the President, the Regent, Secretary General, deans of faculties, student affairs representatives, head of departments, research center directors and other scientific facilities. Everything is organized so that the Prince of Qatar is the Supreme president of the University.

In 1977, three faculties were established, namely those of humanities, social sciences and sciences faculties. On 4 October 1980, the Engineering Faculty was officially launched.

At the beginning of the academic year 1985/1986, the University took an important initiative and established a College of Business and Economics.

In 1990, the Faculty of Technology was established according to arrangements made by the University to follow the trends of technological progress and meet the needs of the industrial and economic sectors. Academic centers such as libraries, computer labs and a teaching technology center, were also created to support the educational process and the three-dimensional mission of the University (teaching, scientific research and serving society). (El-Kabissi, 1993)

Furthermore, with the beginning of the 21st century and perhaps more precisely from the years 2003 /2004, the University entered a new era of development and reform. It endeavored to obtain an accreditation for quality assurance, which is vital to improve the output of academic quality and achieve the developmental goals. That is why, the university has been trying to obtain academic accreditations for all its programs and put in place development plans "University development project" for years 2003/ 2004. An agreement with RAND Corporation made this possible and provided the University with global academic skills which contributed in establishing an integrated development project. A high commission was thus created including worldwide experts, RAND Corporation and some members of the university teaching . The University development plan resulted in the following:

1. Adopting the idea of creating a Board of Regents.
2. Adopting the idea of creating an Academic Senate, presided over by the University vice-president for academic affairs. This Senate studies the general academic issues related to the educational programs' design and presentation standards, nomination and teaching faculty promotion policies, academic performance assessment systems and teaching faculty professional development.
3. Supporting faculties and academic departments willing to obtain international academic accreditation from international universities and specialized institutions.
4. Adopt a system to assess the teaching faculty's performance,

Moreover, this initiative was first announced within the Institutional Strategic Plan Project as part of the University's efforts to meet its goals, namely serving its members and meeting their aspirations.

The departments in the faculties have made great efforts to develop managerial agencies and human resources, defining their objectives, designing academic plans, establishing academic programs and improving their academic outputs in line with academic recognition conditions. Besides the new academic concepts that have been adapted, there have also been some additions to the university culture and with it new terms have started to appear. For example, Academic Core Team, Portfolio, E-Portfolio, philosophy, mission, vision, thinking platform etc. In this regard, symposiums, training workshops and other activities were organized to spread this culture amongst students in universities and raise awareness as to the importance of such orientation and its culture.

In addition, it is noteworthy to say that many programs and faculties in Qatar University obtained or are trying to obtain an academic accreditation from global and prestigious education institutions. Here are some examples to name but a few: The Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) accredited in the beginning of October 2005 the programs of chemical, civil, electronic and mechanical engineering. Therefore, Qatar and the UAE University are the first two universities in the GCC countries to be granted accreditation for their engineering programs in line with standards in the year 2000. And in spring 2008, the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Science NAACLS granted accreditation to the Biomedical Sciences program in the faculties of Humanities and Sciences in Qatar University. In 2009, the Canadian Society for Chemistry accredited the Chemistry program in the faculty of Arts and Science. The Canadian Council for Accreditation of Pharmacy Programs CCAP also granted the faculty of Pharmacy in the Qatar University an accreditation. This became the first faculty in the world, outside the Canadian borders, to be accredited by the above-mentioned council. Moreover, the College of Business and Economics is likely to receive an academic accreditation in the year 2010, as well as the education and law faculties.

III. Development of a quality assurance system in Qatar University

The higher education system in Qatar comprises nine universities, including one national university and eight private universities. In this regard, Qatar University guarantees a good quality of education in all its programs. It is also an active member of various global and regional organizations such as: Association of Arab Universities, Federation of Islamic Universities and International Association of Universities. Besides, the University attracts a large number of researchers and faculty from other Arab countries who work under the supervision of the Board of Regents. All faculties in the University deliver a Bachelor's degree in addition to postgraduate studies in a number of chosen programs.

Moreover, Qatar University aims at to be a model national university providing high quality education which focuses on the student. As for academics, administrative staff and students in the university, they all show social values and culture which reflect the level of the University.

In an attempt to improve the University's administrative and quality assurance system, many activities have been conducted, including research, to define the local requirements for higher education quality assurance. These studies highlighted a need to establish various structures within the University. Furthermore, it has also stipulated that the University's administration must be independent and the institution must provide high quality education to its students.

The University has improved financial and administrative mechanisms to guarantee a good performance from the teaching faculty and the leaders in charge, so that its education complies with international standards.

IV. Educational reform and restructuring

1. Education resources

Qatar University undertook various alterations and changes in order to deliver modern, constructive and useful education resources, such as: providing students with equipment, devices and software most suitable for their majors, improving the use of the different education resources, providing adequate and updated books and training courses, giving Internet access to both teaching faculty and students, and registering for online databases relative to the university's members and students specialization fields.

2. Quality management and improvement

The University has established efficient and adequate mechanisms to continue developing and improving the teaching process. It also created a Quality Control Unit, a mechanism aimed at achieving self-evaluation at both university and majors levels. In addition to that, the University developed a Quality Guide along with internal and external evaluation systems available, continuous academic improvement mechanisms for teaching and executive staff, nomination and promotion mechanisms and clear admission mechanisms according to the required major. Furthermore, Qatar University has developed its facilities and support services as well. This was achieved through the integrated improvement of the library based on establishing an electronic research system, providing classrooms with adequate instruments and equipment. This is in addition to giving access to the teaching faculty to well equipped offices, laboratories and facilities.

It has been noted that quality assurance has started to give positive results especially when it comes to the benefits of preparing self evaluation documents, program standards, academic plans and degree courses reviews, along with syllabus content review (i.e. terms, syllabus objectives, knowledge and skills the student is expected to acquire and establish a link between the syllabus objectives and the program's objectives on the one hand and the syllabus objectives and the University mission on the other).

V. Quality Assurance project in Arab Universities

1. United Nations Development Program (UNDP) – Enhancement of quality assurance and institutional planning in Arab Universities

The United Nations (UN) Arab Human development report highlighted a dangerous situation in the region which had stemmed from one of the worst global economic situations and a slow growth. Thus, the UNDP Arab Regional Office launched a project entitled “Enhancement of quality assurance and institutional planning in Arab Universities”, based in the Jordanian capital of Amman.

The project aims at maximizing the efficiency of institutional planning in universities and higher education administrations in order to better use the available resources. It also aims at evaluating programs within the faculties in many Arab universities and their enhancement as a key element of growth and economic development.

There was a substantial number which participated in this project:

- 24 universities from 13 Arab countries: Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Qatar, Bahrain, Sudan, Oman, Morocco, Algeria, Palestine.
- 50 experts in education representing Education Faculties in Arab Universities (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk>)

The project's objectives were the following:

- Global internal and external quality assessment of the quality of educational programs in Arab universities in light of the British Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) standards.
- Assessment of the performance of students about to graduate in all programs, which are evaluated through international tests able to be compared at the regional and international levels.
- Creation of a statistical database providing indicators on students, teaching staff, workers and programs in every participating Arab university.
- Provision of indicative outcomes relative to the enhancement of quality assurance in tertiary education.

Hereunder are some results of Arab universities education faculties programs' assessment (UNDP- RBAS, Dec., 2006):

- Universities participating in the assessment have clearly contributed to the preparation of teachers on the level of Bachelor's degree and postgraduate study in the Arab region.
- Many universities continue not to adopt the Intended Learning Outcomes when planning their academic curricula.
- Academic standards were "good" in 5 universities, "satisfying" in 16 and "non-satisfying" in 2. Moreover, the academic standards weak points were obvious when it came to students' evaluation, as this process still focuses on measuring memorization and information recall, ignoring the student's thinking skills, while there is no evidence on the transparency and fairness of the correction process.
- The quality of education opportunities varies from one university to another in the region.
- Enhancing quality assurance in higher education institutions still represents a weak point in many universities.

2. Faculty of Education: assessment phases of the Education diploma program

The Faculty of Education has provided, since 2002, a special education diploma program. It opened two separate classes for men and women and in the first year about 42 students graduated. However, in the later part of 2004, the Higher Council for Family Affairs and the Ministry of Civil Services, the program's sponsors, highlighted the necessity to review some courses of the above-mentioned program. This was so it would comply with the needs and requirements of services delivered to families in Qatar. Accordingly, a governmental committee of experts in special education, academics from Qatar University and others (who prepared a report recommending the amendment of some academic decisions concerning the program) reviewed the program in 2004. In this regard, Qatar University accepted the suggested amendment and adopted the new program for the academic year 2004 - 2005. (Lazarus, et al., 2004).

Later on, the University suggested that the Special Education diploma program join the UNDP project (Enhancement of quality assurance and institutional planning in Arab Universities). It would then be part of the academic plans enhancement projects related to quality assurance systems in the Arab countries. Therefore, experts in quality assurance and enhancement started

to prepare to review this diploma program for the year 2005 / 2006.

Once the review process was achieved, the project team submitted a report to Qatar University comprising of a list of important conclusions made by the external auditors:

- Concrete efforts have been made to enhance academic standards and educational outputs so they comply with the diploma's program conceptual framework, international standards, requirements of the Special Education program and procedures adopted in Qatar.
- The program's objectives along with relevant educational outputs and courses are linked. This increases the efficiency of the curricula used in the teaching process in addition to the evaluation of educational outputs acquired by the students. Moreover, the on-the-job training curriculum appeared to be structured and well organized. It also provides students with the practical and vocational skills they need in the special education field.
- The external program's stakeholders and program's team cooperate within a partnership framework.
- In addition, there are clear links between scientific, practical, educational and teaching research within the program. This is reflected by the participation of students and teaching faculty in many conferences and by the use of modern updates, modern communication technology and educational means (especially technological equipment). The latter shows the efficiency of the program and contributes to enhancing both the educational and teaching processes (UNDP/RBAS, 2006).
- The program delivers excellent vocational development opportunities to students. It is recommended that this is continued, so it provides such opportunities in the future.
- In the conclusion, the report confirmed that quality assurance and enhancement systems in Qatar University were satisfying and that some quality assurance components were also available in the university. Accordingly, it recommended establishing a more efficient quality assurance and enhancement system (UNDP/RBAS, 2006).

VI. Establishment of a learning outputs assessment system in Qatar University

According to the conclusions of the above mentioned report in the autumn of 2007, recommendations began to be implemented. These included establishing a learning output evaluation system. It is defined as a structured and organized process to gather proofs and analyze data, in order to use conclusions in enhancing the educational process (Academic Evaluation Handbook, 2007). Soon afterwards, Qatar University announced the launching of a learning outputs assessment system and submitted it to the Academic Assessment Office and the Quality Unit (this unit was established directly after the UNDP report was released) of the University. Furthermore, Quality Unit members, teaching faculty members and an American expert reviewed the system to guarantee its validity and reliability.

The Academic Assessment Office and the Quality Council in Qatar University announced, at the beginning of the semester for spring 2007, the implementation of the new system by organizing two scientific conferences aimed at presenting the system. Later, the Office organized three workshops to present the best ways to use the system, its most important elements and the period of time required to submit a progress report concerning learning output assessment.

In autumn 2007, all the faculties were asked to form a Quality Assurance Council. This Council monitors the learning outputs assessment system, reviews the accredited program outcomes,

reviews the program's mission along with relevant objectives and educational outputs and coordinates its work with the Academic Assessment Office.

In addition, the Academic Assessment Office and the Quality Unit prepared an annual report on the educational outputs assessment system related to the different university programs. The reports' review conclusions showed that 63.4% of the programs present their mission in an easy to remember, precise and concise way. The programs' objectives are also clearly stated, along with targeted categories, work mechanisms and beneficiaries. They also comply with the mission of the concerned faculty, university and programs' partners. Furthermore, 63.6% of the programs clearly showed to their partners the objectives of their mission.

The conclusions show that 54.5% of the programs describe clearly and precisely the intended learning outcomes and these are observable and measurable. Furthermore, around 50% of the programs use certain means and procedures to measure and assess the learning outputs in a systematic and organized way. Academic outputs can then be acquired efficiently and successfully. The results from 50% of the programs showed that assessment methods and the procedures which are used did not link to what is expected of students' learning. Besides, those procedures are not suitable to assess learning outcomes. Results also showed that the assessment procedures which are used tend to focus on learning outputs and not on the learning processes. Moreover, it was found that one learning output was actually a mix of several outputs. It was also obvious that learning output reports included much information and many details (Academic Assessment Office, 2007a).

VII. Education Faculty: Implementation of peer observation

The Education Faculty (based on the above-mentioned initiatives) started to reform and enhance the educational and teaching process. Many changes occurred in the educational process. Members of the teaching faculty started using various teaching methods and modern strategies. In addition, members cooperated together through the exchange of information concerning the academic performance of each other. The academic assessment system's results were also reflected in students learning outcomes measurement and assessment. Various means were applied, such as teaching faculty and program's external partners working as one group and the teaching faculty and students in another, with both groups exchanging information concerning the learning outputs assessment's progress report (Academic Assessment Office Report, 2007, b, p.2).

In the year 2006 - 2007, the Education Faculty adopted a decision to create a Quality Assurance Committee. Its most important objectives include reviewing the learning outputs in the different faculty programs and reviewing course descriptions in line with student needs and the expectations and requirements of faculty and external partners. (Faculty of Education Report, 2007-b, p. 2).

The Quality Assurance Committee in the Faculty of Education consequently undertook a global review and close examination of all courses offered by the Faculty of Education as a university requirement. Then, these courses were reviewed and examined by two external reviewers from the American University of Beirut and Texas A&M University to assure their quality and their compliance with student needs (Faculty of Education Report, 2007-b, p. 2).

Once the educational outputs enhancement system was implemented in the programs of the different education faculty departments (i.e. Educational Sciences, Psychological Sciences, Physical Education & Sport Science and Art Education), the administration of the Education Faculty

in Qatar University had to come up with a mechanism that would follow the implementation of enhancement steps in classrooms, to make sure that outputs are enhanced and, hence, the educational process quality. In this regard, it was the Quality Assurance Committee in the faculty which had to consider this issue and find the adequate mechanism.

Many researchers and experts in education and quality assurance (Deming 1986, Faught 2001, and Michael, 2005) agree that continuous gathering and analyzing of data concerning the educational process is one of the core elements in achieving quality assurance. Moreover, Huda & Freed (2000) consider that assessing educational outputs with practical means helps in diagnosing the situation and taking the adequate decisions for institutional development (Abu Shaar, 2008).

In the autumn of 2007, the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) established a Peer Observation system. It is a developmental system, since it gives the faculty a constructive feedback that serves in enhancing and assuring the quality of student learning and promotes good educational and teaching practices in accordance with quality systems and academic accreditation strategies in the faculty of education (Quality Assurance Committee, 2008, p.2).

1. The Peer Observation Guide: preparation stages

The QAC conducted surveys in some foreign and Arab universities to identify the follow-up measures which are taken to guarantee learning outputs and program quality. It noticed that many universities use the Classroom Observation System as a means to assess the teaching faculty or the educational process in general. It is noteworthy to say that conditions and implementation mechanisms vary in universities using such system. In light of the literature and universities review the QAC decided to choose the Classroom Observation System as a means to follow the implementation of academic programs outputs in the faculty.

2. Designing the Classroom observation system

The QAC started searching for a name to give to the Classroom Observation system and in light of reviews and discussions the following name was adopted: "Peer Observation System.» The system's objectives were defined as follows:

- To support a dynamic educational process in order to improve the learning and teaching quality in the Qatar University Education Faculty.
- To raise awareness concerning problems that teaching faculty may face in the instructional process.
- To encourage the faculty teaching staff to discuss and participate in the mutual exchange of experiences and ideas in the fields relevant to education quality.
- To achieve important changes based on proof and data related to the educational process in the education faculty in general, in order to guarantee the education quality.
- To provide the faculty Academic Accreditation commission with proofs and data related to the learning process quality in the faculty before the self-evaluation stage.
- To assess and enhance the faculty programs' learning outputs.
- To train new academic personnel or cadres capable of improving the educational process in the university through exchanging academic experiences.

The QAC also decided to make a guide for Peer Observation System that contains all procedures and details related to Classroom Observation implementation and provides to faculty full information and answers concerning the Classroom Observation process. It took the QAC a semester (autumn 2007) to choose the content of the guide, as many discussions were held and many opinions reviewed before the final content of the Peer Observation Guide was adopted.

Once the QAC adopted the Guide, four experts (experienced professors in the faculty) were consulted on the Guide's content. Based on their comments the Committee revisited the Guide and introduced the relevant amendments.

3. Applying the Peer Observation system to the teaching staff of Education Faculty

Once the Peer Observation Guide was ready, the QAC defined the steps that guarantee a successful implementation of the system and evade impediments. These are the steps taken:

- a. The idea of implementing the Peer Observation system was spread among the teaching staff and the importance of education quality in the faculty was highlighted. The steps taken to begin this system were:
 - 1) The Peer Observation Guide was distributed to all members of the teaching staff, so they could give their opinion on the subject.
 - 2) The QAC met with heads of departments to give needed explanations concerning the system and hear their opinion on the subject.
 - 3) The Observation system was launched through an official meeting held in the faculty.
 - 4) Meetings were held between the Commission and the teaching faculty in each faculty department to discuss the system and its efficiency regarding education quality.
 - 5) Individual meetings were held with some members of the teaching staff who required explanations or needed to express their opinion concerning the implementation of the system.
- b. The Committee's meeting highlighted some obstacles that constrain the implementation of the system. Some faculty staff expressed the following concerns related to system implementation:
 - 1) The impact of the Classroom Observation on academic freedom. Furthermore, it was considered by some to be a lack of respect to the professor in front of his students.
 - 2) The impact of the observation results on the faculty staff's annual academic assessment.
 - 3) The impact of the observation results on the contract renewal of new teaching staff and on whether they would retain their job or not.
 - 4) The impact of observation results on teaching faculty staff's annual premium.
 - 5) The lack of objectivity in gathering data during class observation.
- c. The QAC in the faculty took some steps and procedures to overcome the above-mentioned concerns:
 - 1) The guide will clearly state that the two observers do not have the right either to make any remarks during the observation or to participate in the lecture (express their opinion or talk). They must sit in a neutral place in the classroom where students would not openly notice them and so the teaching staff does not appear to be evaluated.
 - 2) The guide will clearly state that the observation results (based on the Peer Observation system) do not have anything to do with the teaching faculty staffs' assessment, performance evaluation or their job offer.
 - 3) It is important to be careful in choosing terms when preparing the guide, so they are not seen as performance assessment or a judgment of the teaching staff.
 - 4) The guide will clearly state that the observation results are kept confidential undisclosed. They are exclusively used to assess the quality of the education process in the faculty through the QAC.

- 5) The teaching staff member should have the chance to choose the course to be observed, in addition to the day and time of the observation visit.
- 6) The QAC will announce the observation visit results in general and without giving names.
- 7) The evaluated teaching staff shall check the final report of the observation visit, ask for explanations, discuss and review the results in addition to giving his opinion before signing the final report.

4. Survey study on Peer Observation

The Quality Assurance Commission (after designing the final version of the Peer Observation Guide, distributing it to the teaching staff in the Education Faculty and overcoming all implementation obstacles) undertook an exploratory study to ensure that the system's implementation procedures are sound and accurate. The study also aimed at training the Commission's observers on using all the data and information, in addition to gathering the reactions of the «observed» peers. The Commission adopted the following steps to achieve the study:

- a. The study was exclusively conducted on volunteer who accepted being observed (i.e. 25% of the teaching faculty in each department).
- b. An observation schedule was established in line with the time and place of the members' lectures.
- c. Two observers from the Committee members were designated.
- d. The Committee sent a letter to the "observed" teaching faculty participating in the study, at least a week prior to the observation visit date, notifying them of:
 - 1) Place and date of the observation visit
 - 2) Required documents (course description, relevant educational outputs, course activities, evaluation methods and exam samples)
 - 3) Names of the two observers.

The two observers usually agree, after each observation visit, with the "observed" member about the place and time of the discussion meeting. Such meetings take place before the member and the two observers adopt the final Report and submit it to the QAC. It allows the faculty staff to know the observation visit outcomes, discuss the Report content, write his comments and express his opinion.

In light of the observers' final reports and the observation data, the QAC undertook a statistical treatment of data in order to obtain the final results. Hereunder are the study results:

- 83% of the staff sample who were visited made an introduction to the lecture and explained its objectives
- 83% of them started the lecture on time.
- 75% of them checked the students' motivation through various debates, dialogues and activities.
- 75% of them explained the content and the key elements of the lecture.
- 83% of them clearly explained the main ideas of the lecture.
- 92% of them linked the given information to practical applications through applicative examples.
- 83% of them caught the students' attention during the lecture by asking questions and launching debates and discussions.
- 92% of them used adequate means to promote the student's responsiveness during the lecture.

- 92% of them used various educational activities (critical writing, article analysis, and topic presentations).
- 92% of them ended the lecture with a summary.
- 83% of them ended the lecture on time.
- 100% of them treated students with attention and respect.
- 92% of them used various and adequate teaching means (self- directed learning and working in small groups).
- 75% of them asked evaluative questions during the lecture to make sure students understood the topic being presented.
- 100% of participants to the study had a positive feedback in the Peer observation system in general and the observation visits in particular.
- 67% of them encounter various problems in the classroom, such as:
 - Classroom is inadequate to work in small groups as seats are fixed and cannot be moved.
 - Some classrooms do not accommodate the number of students.
 - The central air conditioning system does not work properly (lack of fresh air, loud sounds).
 - Some classrooms lack computers and overhead projectors.
 - Some majors (physical education and art education) lack basic equipment necessary for the courses.

In light of the study result (which was achieved by the end of academic year 2007/2008/) the QAC prepared a comprehensive report comprising the results of the study which was duly submitted to the Faculty's dean. The faculty administration took adequate steps to address the negative points stated in the report.

The QAC started applying the Peer Observation system to all teaching staff of faculty departments at the beginning of the academic year 2008/2009/. In this regard, the Committee adopted the following implementation steps:

- Notifying the chair of departments that the QAC had started implementing the observation system in order to define the schedules and places of the lectures.
- Designating the two observers, the faculty staff who will be visited and the course to be observed, in addition to putting an overall schedule of the observation visits covering all teaching staff.
- Notifying the evaluated member of the observation visit time, and the names of the two designated observers, in addition to sending him a copy of the Peer Observation Guide.

IX. Conclusion

1. The Faculty of Education in Qatar University aims at improving its programs in accordance with international standards, in order to provide high quality instruction, to guarantee an excellent education level for graduates and to obtain academic accreditation.
2. It is important to design a clear a long-term strategy in the Faculty of Education in Qatar University, in order to achieve quality assurance through the continuous enhancement of a changing educational process.
3. It is necessary to disseminate the quality assurance culture amongst teaching faculty, employees and students in the faculty and consider it as a building block.
4. A data gathering system is required, to spot both weak and strong points in the educational process, as it aids assessment of this process in the faculty on a permanent basis,
5. Following the changes and development of the labor market in Qatar, helps the Education

faculty enhance its programs to provide graduates with an excellent education level, and to be able to take up the challenges in the labor market.

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The Participatory Approach in the Reform of Academic Curricula – Case Study of the Faculty of Dentistry at Damascus University – Syria

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Abstract

In 2005, the Higher Education Council at the Syrian Ministry of Higher Education passed a resolution requiring Public Universities to undertake a self-evaluation of their academic processes with the aim of improving the quality of higher education in Syria. Damascus University translated the concept of “quality in higher education” to signify “meeting the needs of stakeholders interested and affected by the educational processes”. Accordingly, the University embarked on a process to reform the academic, administrative and society outreach aspects of higher education in 2006. The process is carried out on two levels with the participation of students, academic members, administrative staff, and external stakeholders. At the University level, extensive surveys were conducted and a strategic plan was developed based on a redefined mission statement. At the faculties’ level, four pilot faculties were selected and detailed assessments of the current situation were conducted. In the mean time, trends in the academic fields and best teaching and learning practices with reference to leading countries from around the world were evaluated. Findings are being used to determine future orientations for the reform of academic curricula in accordance with the measures highlighted in the University strategic plan. In this paper, the participatory approach and good governance practices developed for the reform processes implemented in redefining the mission statement and in elaborating a strategic plan at the University level, along with outcomes achieved in the faculty of dentistry are presented. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the importance of involving various stakeholders for achieving a comprehensive curriculum reform that can be carried forward into the implementation phase in complex institutional and legal environments.

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I. Background

In 2005, the Higher Education Council at the Syrian Ministry of Higher Education launched an initiative inviting all public universities to self-evaluate their academic programmes. The purpose of this exercise was threefold: (1) assess the performance of their academic and administrative processes; (2) highlight weaknesses in order to draft future strategies for improvement; and (3) establish criteria for performance assessment (Higher Education Council, 2005). By 2007, a wave of developments and an increased pace of change had occurred as part of the Government's reforms in higher education. These included the implementation of a reformed law for higher education; a strategic implementation plan at the Ministry based on the 10th five-year plan (SPC, 2006); new initiatives from the Ministry and other organizations; and outcomes of the Universities' self-evaluations coming on stream with implications for national policy. These have led to an intensive debate at the national level as to the definition and meaning of quality in higher education.

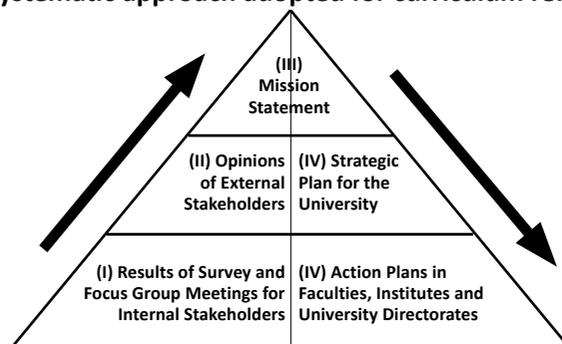
II. Defining Quality in Higher Education

In order to define quality, Damascus University was faced with the need to answer two basic questions: Who is interested in University quality? And who can make judgments on University quality? In 2008, and after having consulted various stakeholders including students, alumni, University staff, employees, and other institutions and organizations (Centre for Quality Assurance, 2007), the University came to the conclusion that there are no objective criteria to define quality. In fact, evidence had shown that the diverse stakeholder groups tended to emphasize the different aspects of the University quality according to their own particular interests. As a result, each group used its own concept to define quality. Concepts such as excellence, fitness of purpose, fitness for purpose, compliance, customer satisfaction, transformation, value for money, were all mentioned in one way or another.

III. Participatory Approach for Developing the University Mission Statement

Stakeholders' consultations and surveys allowed for the generation of an unprecedented amount of information, and yielded an in-depth analysis of Damascus University academic and administrative functions and relevant social influences of a critical nature on the quality of higher education. These findings served in the process for formulating the mission statement following a systematic approach as depicted in Figure 1.

Fig 1: a systematic approach adopted for curriculum reform



The surveys were conducted following participatory approach based on highlighting specific policies and practices to demonstrate their impact on quality in higher education. The surveys addressed crucial academic and administrative functions and social influences. Surveys were completed for undergraduate students, teaching staff, and key external stakeholder groups represented by alumni, parents of students and employers of graduates. Focus group meetings were also convened for administrative staff in faculties and University directorates. In total, about 8300 students, 700 teaching staff, 160 administrative staff, and 150 employers' representatives participated in this process between 2006 and 2007.

Survey findings provided clear evidence to the existence of challenging issues that require immediate attention, particularly in the fields of teaching and learning, and in resource management. On the other hand, survey results demonstrated positive aspects on social responsibility, such as the willingness of stakeholders to share the burden of improving quality of higher education in Syria, and their satisfaction and pride with Damascus University.

The evidence base provided by the surveys gave sufficient information for the University to redefine its mission statement and to elaborate a set of objectives leading to a strategic plan and a timetable for implementation. It also offered a baseline upon which the University can measure progress and impacts of the intended improvements. This evidence base was also supported by a consultative process of 80 internal and external stakeholders constituting a rainbow of people representing various socio-economic and geo-political groups in Syria.

The outcome of this process was a mission statement which focuses on academic programmes to support the economic and social development of Syria, and stresses the need to invest in people, organizational development, and strategic partnerships. The mission statement is worded so as to set direction, invite agreement and consensus, and unify members of the University. This was a crucial point as the redefined mission is the starting point for setting objectives for improvement, and constitutes a reference point for assessing success and performance. The mission statement of Damascus University is: *The mission of the University is to promote excellence in scientific research and academic programmes relevant to the economic and social development of Syria. It aims to produce graduates that are competitive in national and regional job markets, and capable of continuing their education and professional development. It does this through investment in people, organizational development, and also by strategic partnerships that support scientific research and campus-based teaching enhanced by community-based learning opportunities.*

The mission statement was subsequently presented to the University Council for review and approval. In March 2007, the University Council adopted the mission statement, and work proceeded to develop the strategic plan needed to achieve its strategic objectives.

IV. Development of the University Strategic Plan

The strategic plan of Damascus University was the product of the self-evaluation begun in 2006 and the extensive consultation with key representatives of faculties and administrative departments and directorates in the University. At least four workshops were convened in 2007 for key academic and administrative staff at the faculty level to discuss the contents of the plan. The primary purpose of the plan is to improve the quality of the full range of University activities. A secondary purpose is to provide clarity and focus for all staff members and employees of the University to share the mission, vision and priorities for improvement. Consequently, a strategic plan which incorporates the mission statement into a set of 12 strategic objectives dealing with University autonomy, improvement of academic and administrative processes, social outreach,

and development of a University-wide quality assurance system, was developed. Each objective is detailed into a number of measures, a time-table for implementation spanning from the 4th quarter of 2007 till the 4th quarter of 2010, and assigned responsibilities. The strategic plan also identifies key areas for early consideration in the University; adopts a phased approach moving in stages to more advanced and challenging objectives; and identifies potential financial resources and technical support required to achieve its objectives (Centre for Quality Assurance, 2007). Today, the strategic plan is viewed to provide a flexible framework that enables all University faculties and departments to formulate their own operational plans, and to estimate necessary human and financial resources required for implementation. The strategic plan was adopted by the University Council in October 2007.

V. Developing the Framework for the University's Quality Assurance System

In order to develop its quality assurance system, the University adopted an approach based on the national policy reforms that is best summarized as follows (Brown, 2008):

- Establishing sustainable systems within the University in order to:
 - place responsibility and the necessary authority within the faculties and other equivalent units;
 - raise the level of confidence among all stakeholders in the quality of the University's education and its supporting administrative services; and
 - ensure continuing improvement.
- Mission-related, meaning that mission statements in each faculty determine the detailed preparation of specifications that in turn inform self-evaluation of the degree of success.
- Outcome-related, meaning that these specifications focus of the quality of the learning and the outcomes.
- Securing relevance to society and economy in the curricula and related academic research activities.
- Using the national framework for ensuring that the University's internal quality assurance system secures the relevance and confidence of the range of stakeholders.
- Providing briefing, training and other support within an overall policy for professional and organizational development.

VI. Implementation Steps in the Pilot Faculties

Following the approval of the strategic plan by the University Council in October 2007, a Centre for Quality Assurance, directly tied to the University President, was established in January 2008. Briefings on the development and objectives of the Strategic Plan were conducted for the individual faculties whereby teaching staff and employees were informed of the contents of the plan. Faculties were requested to nominate quality coordinators to act as liaison officers between the Centre and their faculties. The coordinators attended a number of capacity building courses and seminars in order to increase their level of awareness and knowledge of quality aspects in higher education. At the same time, seven faculties volunteered as pilot institutions for implementing the second strategic objective concerned with the development of existing educational programmes. In order to validate these nominations, the Centre for Quality Assurance conducted individual visits; first to the dean, then the faculty/departmental

councils, and finally teaching staff to explain yet again the goal of the plan, and to ensure process ownership. As a result, the number of pilot faculties dropped to four. These were the faculties of Sciences (chemistry department), Dentistry, Pharmacy, and Medicine. The experiences of the four pilots are intended to inform the process when other faculties participate starting in academic year 2009 - 2010.

Pilot status was granted by the University Council to the four faculties, and four working groups were formed. The aim was to test pilot processes that would turn academic programmes from input-based teaching and learning to output-based curricula. Initial attempts in the first quarter of 2008 in the Chemistry department and Pharmacy faculty demonstrated the need for fundamental curriculum reforms. As a result, a process for reform of academic curricula was formulated and operationalized in two principal phases:

1. Desk study conducted by an external academic expert in the field to identify and analyze selected appropriate academic programmes from a scan of best international practices, with reference to leading countries from around the world including Europe, USA, Australia, Far East and Middle East.
2. Initial assessment conducted by the working group to review current programme structure and key features including SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities). The review includes assessment of the mission statement developed in consultation with teaching staff; assessment of current curriculum; assessment of research activities; assessment of market needs; and assessment of activities currently undertaken by the faculty in relation to outreach with society.

Assessment findings in the pilot faculties were published and subsequently presented in a general faculty meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to identify teaching staff to attend the faculty stakeholders' workshop. In the mean time, undergraduate and graduate students were recruited, and external stakeholders were invited to participate in the stakeholder workshop. Stakeholder workshops were organized as a single-day event whereby working groups were formed and asked to assess the faculty's mission statement and to express their opinions on four key issues:

1. The characteristics of the Damascus University faculty graduate
2. Faculty-community outreach
3. Key trends in practice and education that should be included in the undergraduate faculty curriculum
4. Opportunities for continuous professional development and knowledge transfer between the faculty and its stakeholders

Findings from the stakeholder workshops provided an evidence base to validate the faculty mission, and to create a road map for developing new programme aims and learning outcomes. A detailed action plan has been developed by the working group in each faculty which provides a road map for developing programme and courses specifications. The plan stresses the importance of validating the information collected from the stakeholders, particularly in the domains of transferrable and personal skills. The plan also provides for researching new curriculum models and curriculum mapping that focus on horizontal and vertical integration of course modules. It further requires that faculties assess potential accreditation criteria and develop curriculum models that fulfill these requirements. In order to assist the working groups in their work, three supporting groups were formed in each faculty with the aim of institutionalizing work in the faculty: A communication group to raise awareness; an organizational group to introduce institutional measures; and a capacity building group to provide the skills and knowhow to

accomplish the required tasks. The following are the outcomes of this participatory process in the faculty of Dentistry.

VII. Outcomes of the Participatory Process in the Faculty of Dentistry

1. Developing the Mission Statement

Following the presentation of the strategic plan at the faculty of Dentistry, a quality coordinator was nominated and a working group consisting of ten teaching staff members was formed. The first task mandated to the working group was to moderate the process for formulating the faculty mission statement. Workshops were held and the process for developing the mission statement was explained to faculty members. Specifically, faculty members were asked to answer six basic questions that constituted the building blocks of the mission statement:

- 1) *What* does the faculty do (e.g. educational programmes, research, etc.)
- 2) *Why* does the faculty undertake this work (e.g. meeting social and economic needs, providing better graduates for market, etc.)
- 3) *With* whom does the faculty work (e.g. strategic partners, etc.)
- 4) *Where* does the faculty work (e.g. campus-based, at the work place, community-led, etc.)
- 5) *How* does the faculty achieve its aims (e.g. more responsibility to learning with students, collaborative strategic partnerships, collaborative, decentralization, etc.)
- 6) *How well* (e.g. excellence model, average, etc.)

Based on answers collected from over 30 out of 70 faculty staff, a mission statement was developed and later approved by the faculty council. It reads as follows:

The mission of the Faculty of Dentistry is to promote excellence in producing a graduate who is highly qualified in the ethics, art and science of Dentistry, and to strengthen the faculty-community relationship by providing the best oral care to society. The Faculty of Dentistry also aims at excellence in scientific research, closely tied with the latest international developments, and relevant to society's needs and the economic and social development of Syria and the Arab World. The faculty accomplishes its mission through investment in people and by enhancing collaboration with healthcare sectors, in addition to strategic partnerships that support educational development, learning opportunities, and professional development.

The mission was later validated in the Stakeholder meeting, and received overwhelming approval from all stakeholders.

2. Assessment of the Current Situation

The current situation in the faculty was defined by collecting general information and data related to the faculty, its staff and students. A review of the current dental curriculum was also undertaken. The subjects and tasks required from students and data on the undergraduate and graduate programme such as number of graduates, admissions requirements and requirements for passing levels and grades were evaluated. A questionnaire indicating a list of personal and professional skills (implying effectiveness and continuing skills development to higher education standards) for dental graduates was designed to provide information specific to market needs of graduates. An assessment of the findings of market need analysis is underway. Scientific research undertaken by faculty staff was assessed. All activities in relation to outreach with society were addressed. A detailed report explaining the current situation and infrastructure of

the faculty was prepared and documented. The report was reviewed and approved by the dean of the Faculty.

In parallel, the faculty invited an expert³ in dental education and quality assurance in dentistry from King's College (University of London) to provide an assessment about international trends in dental education, in addition to offering guidance and advice to the working group during curriculum reform. The main findings from both assessments provided the following conclusions:

- The education of dental students in Damascus University consists of five years of professional (pre-doctoral) training. The building blocks are based on 74 subjects.
- The curriculum generally includes basic science and preclinical instructions in the first three years while clinical subjects are taught in the fourth and fifth years.
- Clinical experience can be obtained through attending and practicing dentistry in different clinics in the dental school. Practice in community clinics or outreach clinics is only available through two weeks camping in communities which suffer from insufficient healthcare services.
- Student exchange programmes with various countries are available for the top ten dental students each year. These are regulated by agreements between Damascus University and other Universities.
- There are no studies evaluating the competence and satisfaction of dental undergraduates or graduates. A questionnaire was designed to investigate this quality aspect. Data collection is underway.
- The curriculum of the faculty of Dentistry is traditional in that it is teacher-centered, discipline- and hospital-based.
- New teaching and learning methods such as “enquiry-based” learning, “case-based” activities, “course-assisted” learning, and use of “web-based” resources do not have a major role in learning and are not part of the programme.
- Problem-based learning (PBL) and clinical problem solving approaches are still in their fetal stage since inter-departmental collaboration is not strongly emphasized.
- Critically Appraised Topics (CAT) are not part of the programme.
- There are some projects and research activities undertaken by undergraduate dental students. These are optional as the faculty council has established the annual scientific research competition in order to encourage students to carry out research.
- Research undertaken is significant. The research portfolio is capable of promoting excellence, but a strategic approach would be advisable.
- Research funding is limited and directed to postgraduate students rather than research groups working to a strategic plan.
- There is no sound understanding between the Syrian Dental Association, Syrian specialist dental societies, and the Faculty to ensure a continuing dialogue related to their expectations of the graduate's skills and competence to practice dentistry safely in Syria.
- A number of faculty staff aspire to improving the learning environment for the student to attain better knowledge and clinical skills by engaging with modern educational methodologies.
- It is essential to reinforce the role of dental students and dental employers in curriculum reform, and to organize another stakeholder meeting before moving to the next phase.

³ Expert financed by the British Council

3. Stakeholder Workshop

The stakeholder workshop took place on 27 January 2009 to discuss the process of educational reform in the faculty of Dentistry. In addition to students and faculty members, participants representing the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Higher Education, military services, the Syrian Dental Association were in attendance. The meeting discussed and approved the mission statement adopted by the faculty, then proceeded to address the four broad questions related to curriculum reform.

The outcome of the stakeholder workshop at the faculty of Dentistry confirmed society's need for a dental graduate fit for the 21st century, who can fulfill the admission requirements of leading dental colleges from around the world. Stakeholders stressed the need to undertake the necessary measures by the faculty to improve the delivered programme in response to continued changes in dental knowledge; materials and equipments; methods of delivering oral health care; demands of dental students and graduates; and the ever-changing expectations of society for oral healthcare. Moreover, the stakeholders' message informed staff in the faculty of Dentistry about the need to address the issue of continuous professional development, and improving teaching and learning methods in order to create a new dental curriculum which emphasizes evidence-based dentistry.

These issues constituted a roadmap for the working group in the faculty in their subsequent task to define programme aims and intended learning outcomes necessary to produce a relevant, fit-for-purpose dental academic programme in the faculty of Dentistry in Damascus University.

4. Curriculum Models and Mapping

The report prepared by the external academic expert provided fertile grounds for intra-faculty discussions on the way forward. The main issue currently under discussion is how to select the appropriate curriculum model that best fulfills the faculty mission; stakeholders' requirements; and achieves excellence in teaching as noted in the University mission statement within the existing context environment and external limitations.

Research papers collected by faculty under the leadership of the quality coordinator were posted on the web site of the Center for Quality Assurance (www.qa-du.com) in order to provide faculty members with up-to-date information on this topic. To date, the web site has been accessed by most teaching staff in the faculty of Dentistry, and some articles registered over 250 hits. Published information opened the door for new topics which were never discussed previously in the faculty and amongst members of the working groups. Examples include:

- The Bologna Declaration and its merits in converging and harmonizing the higher educational system inline with the European countries.
- The role of the "Thematic Network (TNP) DentEd" funded by the EU in converging and harmonizing the various dental curricula, and for transferring expertise and activities, including site-visitation and quality assurance systems, to the "Association for Dental Education in Europe" (ADEE), (Plasschaert et al, 2005).
- The new model of curricular structure in dentistry developed by ADEE and DentEd (Plasschaert et al, 2006) which is organized in modules according to the European Credit Transfer System "ECTS" (Plasschaert et al, 2007).
- The ADEE and DentEd 14 requirements for quality assurance in dental education and their 'toolkit' which was developed for supporting dentistry faculties for meeting these requirements (Jones et al, 2007).
- The Profile Competence Document (PCD) which was revised in 2008 and published in the

ADEE website after consulting National and European Dental Associations (Cowpe et al, 2008).

- The profile of the new European dentist and its implications on the contents of the curriculum of the faculty of Dentistry in terms of graduating a dentist who:
 - has a broad academic and dental education and able to function in all areas of clinical dentistry
 - trained in biomedical science
 - able to work together with other dental and health care professionals in the health care system
 - has good communicative skills
 - prepared to undertake continuing professional development supporting the concept of life-long learning
 - able to practice evidence-based comprehensive dentistry through a problem solving approach, using basic theoretical and practical skills
- The possibility of:
 - changing the traditional curriculum structure and integrating basic, medical and dental sciences both vertically and horizontally (Snyman and Kroon, 2005);
 - offering student-centered learning (Oliver et al, 2008) that would inspire students to become life-long learners; and
 - adopting curricular requirements recommended by ADEE and DentEd from which some suggestions were formulated.

5. Future Tasks

The development of a suitable curriculum model will be accompanied by capacity building programmes for all faculty members in order to introduce the concept of developing intended learning outcomes on the course level. This will be followed by detailed instructions for completing course specifications including teaching and assessment methods for the elaborated learning outcomes needed to fulfill programme aims. It is hoped that these tasks will be completed by end of summer 2009.

VIII. Conclusions

The participatory approach which was adopted in early 2006 in Damascus University has offered a unique opportunity for involving all relevant stakeholders in the reform process; a sign of good governance. This approach created ownership amongst University staff and students and encouraged involvement and volunteer work. Response from external stakeholders has been overwhelmingly supportive. The University carries out general stakeholder meetings in the beginning of every year to explain its reform process, its achievements and challenges. Over 270 participants of about 400 invitees attended its third meeting held in January 2009. This number was 100 percent higher than that of the previous year.

At the faculty level, the participatory process is offering teaching staff the opportunity to actively participate in improving their academic working environment. A unique approach was adopted to encourage the participation of everyone, while skeptics were asked to judge the process in the future and to get on board when they believe that success will be achieved. Not a single directive was issued from the University President or Faculty Dean to force anyone to participate in this process. However, extensive efforts have been exercised by the Center for Quality Assurance

and the Faculty Quality Coordinator to convince people to join the working groups and to participate actively in the reform process. Ultimately, it is quite clear that future tasks cannot be accomplished without the full participation of all faculty members.

Finally, the participatory approach opened doors for frank discussions on issues which no one would raise in the past. The Bologna process, curriculum integration, non-traditional teaching and learning methods, alternative assessment methods, student-centered teaching and learning, self-evaluations and peer reviews, are some of the new concepts introduced which are changing the academic culture of Damascus University. The road to quality is long, but a thousand mile trip starts with the first mile.

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Research

The Status of Social Scientific Research in Lebanon in a “Globalized” Context: Attempt to Understand its Components, Conditions and Limitations*

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Abstract

This paper attempts to draw a dynamic picture of the components of social science research in Lebanon, in the context of “globalization” of both higher education and research. It is predicated on the premise that social science research and higher education in social sciences are encumbered in Lebanon with what may be termed the “international division of scientific labor”, i.e., none of the components of social science research: institutional structure; cooperation frameworks; conceptual tools and methodology; funding; research priorities; dissemination and use of research results; and language and medium of publication, is controlled by local researchers, except in limited individual cases.

The paper addresses two specific determinants of the relationship between social science research and globalization. The first is the position taken in relation to the globalization of social sciences, and, consequently, research within their framework. In some countries “of the South”, there is opposition, even resistance, to globalization, as in India for example. In contrast, in Lebanon, there is submission to the dictates of globalization and the international division of research labor, which militates against formulating elaborated policies of institutional research, and feeds on a prevailing culture that directs education and research towards responding to the needs of the market first and foremost. The second determinant is the way in which the structure of social science research in Lebanon receives “globalization”. Universities and public research institutions, which constitute the research environment, either have been deeply rooted in some form of “globalization” since the outset of higher education in Lebanon in the second half of the nineteenth century, or have entered into foreign partnerships or “cooperation” arrangements that force research to adapt to conditions they generally do not participate in setting.

The paper is based on field research carried out within the framework of the Evaluation of Scientific and Technological Capacity in the Countries of the Mediterranean (ESTIME) project. It concludes by highlighting the importance of distinguishing between market-oriented research and science-based research which is maintained by a scientific community, and nurtured by academic

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institutions and private and public research centers that are governed neither by the logic of the market as the determinant of scientific activity, nor to priorities beyond the control of the researchers themselves.

I. Introduction

Scientific researchers and other researchers both face numerous difficulties in Lebanon in their attempt to study a subject, due to the scarcity of the research conducted in their domain. Indeed, this domain only draws people's attention in a few cases², such as in the context of unpublished research conducted for academic purposes only. This is the result of a differential situation because the number of researchers, particularly in social sciences, is actually continually rising, just like the number of graduates from the second and third university or college cycles of the same disciplines. In addition, the number of published and unpublished pieces of research that are conducted in numerous fields is also expanding, both vertically and horizontally. This phenomenon was exacerbated in the end of the past century, when the Lebanese secondary education system was amended and reorganized on the basis of four branches, which included sociology and economics sections. If we add to this new education system the increasing demand for specialists in the fields of social sciences, applied research related to development, women's rights, the rights of other social groups, poverty and other topics, we can notice the disparity between the expanding presence of social sciences, in both education and research in Lebanese life on the one hand and the low level of attention granted to the understanding the structures performance and results of these sciences as well as the social use of these results on the other hand. In addition, if we take into consideration the historical dimension of the presence of social sciences in Lebanon, both in education and in research, we notice that this disparity grows to become a clashing paradox. Indeed, these sciences have an institutional history of at least fifty years in this country. However, despite the different troubled episodes of history, for example the destructive wars between 1975 and 1990, the outcomes of social research didn't stop, even though it was altered from time to time.

In this study, we will try to recompose the social research scenario in Lebanon, taking into account its particular institutional history, in the academic field, the changes it had to face and its present structure. After that we will address the different patterns of response adopted by researchers in order to cope with these changes. In conclusion, we will try to explain this situation in the context of the current "globalization" process.

The issue of research in Lebanon doesn't constitute a special case. It can be looked at and understood from a broader angle, namely when we look at its relation with the current "globalization" process. This dimension of globalization is supposed to have a crucial importance concerning the future of science and research. However, it limits the local and national dimensions. Therefore, we can study the case of Lebanon in taking into account the updates and evolutions occurring in the process of globalization or internationalization of research in "southern" countries. This process raises a number of questions³. The first question would be

² Among the rare works addressing research and researchers in social sciences in Lebanon, we mention: Bahithat, (1996 - 1997), El Amine , editor (2005).

³ From a historical point of view, it is difficult to say that «globalization» is a new process. The system of modern education, along with research and protocols, owes its existence to the system of complex relationships, institutions and standards which found its way to the South through direct colonization or through expansion of educational institutions or, finally, through the formation of scientific experts

to know how the institutions of modern science were established in these countries, how they function and what were the results of their establishment. The second question would concern the relations of the state to these institutions. In the southern countries, the trend was for the state to interfere in the scientific development process and to direct its outcomes. This was the case in some countries such as India and Egypt, ever since the nineteenth century. This was also the pattern primarily adopted in Japan, followed by South Korea and China, as well as a number of countries in Asia and South America. The third question concerns the formation of the scientific community in “southern” countries. This community was built in compliance with the example of the same communities in industrialized countries. However, unlike these communities, its scientific, educational and research work was not independent, due to the direct interference of the state. The community remains, according to most of the cases studied, dependant on the strategies and political power of the state in these countries. This was particularly clear when, after their independence from colonial domination, these “southern” countries started searching for a model of a “nation- state” that would be compliant with their history. During this phase, the scientific community became an instrument in the hands of the national authority and it was used to build scientific institutions in order to establish an independent economy (such as producing instead of importing). When this model started tumbling, the community itself tumbled. (Gaillard, Krishna & Vaast, 1997)

Another question can be raised, concerning the current phase that started in the 1970’s when the criteria for the establishment and functioning of scientific institutions on the international level, namely the public ones, became subject to the demand of national and international institutions, as well as globalized companies, in the context of the predominance of neo-liberalism. The scientific community became largely dependent on the dynamics of this demand. After that, the community started to gain financing by responding to the demand of the public sector⁴ or through its “cooperation” with national and international organizations.

In this exceptional evolution of the scientific situation in southern countries, many concepts were put at a difficult test. The first concept concerns the institutional dimension of science. The question that has to be asked is whether it suffices to adopt the model of institutional science present in industrialized countries to be efficient in all southern countries⁵.

On the other hand, what is the exact meaning of scientific openness and cooperation? Can we talk about a “national” science that is prone to communicate with “national” sciences proper to other countries? Or can we consider that there are situations in the context of which science falls and which constitute an unequal process on the historical level (ex-colonized countries and ex-colonial countries) as well as on the cultural and operational level (the relatively easy reversal

in the South and through the transfer of the concept and methodology of science directly to them. Therefore, it is more accurate, historically and conceptually, to talk about the internationalization (global standardization) of science and research rather than «globalization». As the «globalization» seems to be a “neutral” process, with no status. This slide can be ambiguous and even misleading.

⁴ Although the context here is global by excellence, the Lebanese example can clarify the limits of responding to the demand of the private sector in the case of research. The Lebanese government approved, at the beginning of the third millennium, that the Institute of Industrial Research meets the demands of the private sector to be able to compensate for the shortfall in its funding from the budget of the Ministry of Industry.

⁵ This model has proven, so far at least, to promote stability, growth and effectiveness in the specific experiences subsequent to the industrial revolution, and even later, during the collapse of the colonial system, like the cases of Korea, China and Brazil, for example. For the experience of South Korea, see (Amsden, 1989).

against social sciences during times of wars and conflicts due to the weakness of the social sciences traditions in a large number of southern countries and the revival of the anti secular culture)? Finally, what does “scientific research” mean, namely in the field of social sciences, in southern countries: Does it simply consist of adopting predetermined research areas and themes according to a fixed social model or to the market imperatives?

These questions can’t be ignored if we intend to study the future of research in the field of social sciences⁶ in Lebanon, in a “globalized” context. These questions, as one can imagine, are at the core of the research process in this country. In order to answer these questions we should look at the experience of research and higher education far from the backtracking approach. This experience cannot be analyzed unless it is linked to the Lebanese project of state. Undeniably, Lebanon constitutes a completely different model compared to the previously mentioned states. Indeed, it has always had a precarious state project, which made it difficult to build the modern science institutions, especially the scientific research institutions. On the other hand, the history of science and scientific research in Lebanon teaches us that these weaknesses undermined the capacity of scientific and social culture to gain legitimacy in the face of the predominant culture. As a result, scientific culture had little chance of becoming a direct and efficient factor in the predominant culture. In this context, scientific research seemed, to a large extent, an external condition when it came to culture or to the state project. We arrive here to a very important dimension of the conflictual historical relation between the state on the one hand and science and scientific research (specifically in social sciences) on the other.

II. Landscape of higher education and scientific research in Lebanon and its evolution

Lebanon has always been a hub for higher education institutions, as well as for the institutions responsible for the preparation of graduates in many specializations. This task was undertaken by centenarian universities⁷ and by others that were established more than half a century ago⁸. However, the last batch of universities, which constitute the largest number and are the least compliant with the idea of university, only goes back to a little more than a decade ago⁹. The current total number of higher education institutions in Lebanon (by the end of 2009) is thirty two accredited universities or have at least gathered all the conditions of acceptance required by the Higher Education Council. These universities do not fall under the same category due to the disparities in the specializations they offer, the registration fees and the opportunities their degrees offer on the local, regional and international job markets. We also find these disparities in the levels of specialization, in the availability of scholarships and in the regional and international exchange programs. And most notably they differ in their relation to scientific research. Indeed the institutions that sponsor this type of research or at least offer the conditions

⁶ In this paper, we mean by social sciences, the science that study specific levels and dimensions of the social structure in its material and institutional - the relational aspects on one hand, and the mental aspect in its various products such as symbolism on the other hand. Thus, the sciences that we will present and analyze are: sociology, anthropology, economy and law. However, a particular importance will be given to research in the fields of sociology and anthropology, for they reflect, to a large extent, the modifications that have occurred in the structure of the research system in Lebanon in the last two decades in particular.

⁷ We will call them “first generation universities”

⁸ We will call them “second generation universities”

⁹ We will call this last batch “third generation universities”

to conduct it are very few. They belong to the first or second generation of universities, where there are clear criteria they have to respect. These academic institutions¹⁰ were established in a climate of cultural, scientific and linguistic competition. Each one tried to be a pioneer in their own domains¹¹.

It is true that the universities of the first two generations were dedicated to education and training, however their relation to research, mainly through the personal initiative of some professors, was maintained. They indeed provided the framework for attracting the scientific know-how and for sending the students benefiting from a scholarship on mission abroad (the Lebanese university started applying this policy in the 1960's). They also provided the necessary resources such as academic libraries and laboratories and they organized and participated in many international conferences, etc. This is particularly true in the case of natural and medical sciences (Gaillard et al., 2008). As for the social sciences, they didn't start to develop in the institutional level until the 1960's when the developmental policy adopted during the mandate of President Fouad Chehab (1958 - 1964) was oriented towards censuses, research and field studies. It is noteworthy that the mandate of President Chehab saw the first serious attempt at building a modern state. The Social Sciences Institute of the Lebanese University was founded in 1959 as an institute for both education and research. In 1962, Lebanon saw for the first time, the formation of a ministry that had the task of conducting studies and elaborating the necessary plans in order to improve the performance of both the state and the economy. This event was accompanied by the foundation of the National Council of Scientific Research that had to play a consulting role and that had the mission of opening up academic life in general, namely in the Lebanese University. And even though the mission of this institute only includes natural and exact sciences, its mere foundation carries the foundation of the process that consists of integrating research into higher education which includes the field of social sciences.

This orientation led to monthly or quarterly¹² periodicals that reflected the tone of the cultural, ideological, scientific and social debate concerning social conflict and economic planning as

¹⁰ In fact, Lebanon experienced, very early compared to neighboring countries, the spread of modern education. That is reflected in the foundation of two educational institutions in the second half of the nineteenth century. Their first vocation was to prepare Christian theologian and a central body of paramedics before becoming two universities, in the strict sense of the word. From the outset, the development and evolution of these institutions that will be known as of the twenties of the last century as the American University of Beirut (Protestant religious groups) and the Jesuit University (Jesuit community), involved competition, although the status of the Jesuit University was more anchored in the beginning due to existence of a supporting environment despite some reserves (the Maronite Church of Lebanon that has a long history began to play a political role since the system of Alqaimqametin in Lebanon, which falls under the Ottoman Empire) in comparison with the protestant Anglo-Saxon presence that aims to evangelize a hostile milieu, according to some allegations.

At the beginning of the fifties of the last century, the establishment of the Faculty of Pedagogy constituted the first step of the public universities, i.e. the Lebanese University, which would later become the largest academic institution in Lebanon.

¹¹ This is what Samir Khalaf noticed, for example, in the cases of American Universities (in Beirut) and the Jesuit University. (Khalaf, 2001).

¹² The most important are: The Road Monthly Review which was founded in the early fifties of the last century and which essentially addresses Lebanese affairs. It ceased publication at the end of 2003. Also, the Journal of Arab Studies established in the mid-sixties and tended to extent its interests to the Arab affairs without losing sight of Lebanese ones. It has completely ceased publishing in 1998. In addition the American University of Beirut (AUB) and more specifically the St. Joseph University (USJ) had published some periodicals in this particular period of time.

well as the socio-political transformations, etc. In addition, many publishing houses worked at tightening the links between researchers and their readers (Mermier, 2007).

This orientation was even clearer in the 1970's when Beirut became host to private research centers, with Arab financing, which attracted researchers in both human and social sciences. In the midst of the 1970's, the Arab Development Institute was founded. The institute extended its activities until the early nineties. The Center for Arab Unity Studies, which still works with permanent and powerful energy, was founded in 1978 and constituted a distinction in the context of destructive wars and the beginning of the relapse in higher education and research in Lebanon. Even though these two institutions adopted a regional ideology (Arab nationalism), their common accomplishment was to attract some highly experienced researchers and dozens of new graduates. The institutions therefore provided what we can call a "living" laboratory where the researchers could experience their capacities and develop them at the same time¹³. In addition to what was previously mentioned, the role of these two centers also included publishing. Indeed, this allowed them to establish intellectual communication, to exchange ideas and to broadcast them. In this context, the two centers published a number of periodicals in the field of social sciences¹⁴ and various reports as well as collective or individual publications. They also provided a framework for research teams, conferences as well as exchange and coordination with researchers from other Arab countries.

However, the activities undertaken in the field of research in social sciences weren't limited to publications in Arabic only. In the same period, the Center for Studies and Research on the Contemporary Middle East (CERMOC)¹⁵ was founded in 1977. Despite a series of crises, namely the ones provoked by the regional-local wars in Lebanon, this center contributed in promoting research in social sciences in a local and international context. It published a large number of monographs, particularly in French, concerning Lebanese issues, not forgetting those from other regional countries such as Jordan, Palestine, Syria and Iraq. This comeback of institutional research brought back the importance of social science after the governments following the Chehab mandate refused to acknowledge the importance of this science in both the building of state institutions and the development in its broader sense.

III. Higher education and research in the post-Taif phase

This was the landscape of higher education and research in social sciences in Lebanon before and during the series of local and regional wars, i.e. until the late 1980's. At the end of this phase it seemed as if stability was relatively established, especially after the Taif accord that established the "second republic". Despite the fact that Lebanon only witnessed stability on a superficial level, without really enjoying it, its academic institutions witnessed a rapid growth in an unprecedented way.

¹³ We are aware of the presence of two other research institutions in Beirut at the same period. The first one is the 'Institute for Palestine Studies', which was founded at the mid sixties and the second one is the 'Palestinian Research Center' which had been completely looted by the Israeli army during its invasion of Beirut in 1982. The influence of both institutions on the world of social research in Lebanon was very limited since they were completely devoted to Palestinian cause and the Arab-Israeli conflict and therefore had attracted a few numbers of Lebanese researchers.

¹⁴ We particularly mention the Arab Thought magazine issued by the Arab Development Institute, which focused on issues of community and methodology, as well as the Arab Future Journal, published by the Center for Arab Unity Studies, one of the few Journals dedicated to social sciences in the Arab world.

¹⁵ Centre d'Études et de Recherche sur le Moyen-Arabe (CERMOC).

Until the late 1980's, Lebanon only had eleven universities, ten of which were active, and three of which were founded during the eighties. This number kept rising, especially in the middle of the 1990's. It has now reached the fixed number of thirty two. However, this quantitative expansion didn't have any developmental dimension concerning research; the goal remained, as we will see, to rapidly train students only looking for a job opportunity.

In parallel, the world of social science witnessed a recession after the Development Institute stopped its research activities in the early 1990's. In the meantime, the French Research Center (CERMOC) reduced its research activities¹⁶ to almost nothing. The only survivor was the Center for Arab Unity Studies. However the center chose to stick to its "nationalist dimension" and lost, to a large extent, its Lebanese cachet, except when it came to administration and logistics.

In the early 1990's, the Lebanese University, that traditionally accommodates more than half the professors and academics in Lebanon, went through a very troubled and destructive phase after which it was only left with weak structures, flawed education programs and a quasi-total absence of scientific research¹⁷. The university had to restore all that was fragmented, reestablish cooperation between its different branches and departments and mitigate the deterioration of the educational process as well as provide the necessary resources, before giving its attention to research.

Also in the early 1990's, the prestigious private universities were trying to awaken from a long lethargy that only some progress in medical research could breach (Gaillard et al., 2008). However, is it possible to start running when your knees are injured? This was in particular the case of the American university. (Indeed, foreign professors, i.e. professors who had neither the Lebanese citizenship nor an Arab one, who were working at the American University of Beirut, were forced to leave Lebanon after the president of AUB, Mr. Daniel Dodge, was kidnapped and his successor, Mr. Malcolm Kerr assassinated. This vicious circle of threats and aggression persisted during this period)¹⁸.

As to researchers, especially those working at the Lebanese university, they were clearly affected by the deterioration of their revenue, which was a result of the devaluation of the Lebanese pound. Consequently, they had to look for other sources to increase their purchasing power, knowing that their salaries were no longer enough. And the question that should be raised in this context is: How were these researchers able to go back to research in these circumstances? All of this happened when state institutions were struggling to catch their breath and when the consensus over a unifying vision of the country seemed impossible to reach, despite the Taif accord of 1989¹⁹. The institutional structure of the state was then revised and the roles redistributed in order to be in compliance with the model of hegemony imposed by the prominent local and regional forces, which had the monopoly of public affairs (resistance against the occupying Israeli forces, the "brotherhood treaty" with the Syrian regime, the control of the social and political life so it fits in the mold of poor standards, namely concerning the freedom of speech and the undertaken activities) while the civil society and the academic world were struggling to

¹⁶ Here we mention the assassination of Michel Seurat, director of the Center in 1987, which was preceded and followed by a numerous field difficulties that hindered the center's activity.

¹⁷ C.f Adnan Al Amin (editor), 2002

¹⁸ In an interview with the Daily Star, on 4 May 2009, Peter Dorman, the newly appointed Chairman of the American University in Beirut, notes that the university is still in the process of reemergence from the years of "civil" conflicts in Lebanon.

¹⁹ An agreement approved by the Lebanese deputies meeting in the city of Taif in Saudi Arabia in 1989 under the auspices of U.S. and Saudi Arabia and with a Syrian acceptance. The drafters of the agreement and its supporters thought it will bring peace to Lebanon and allow its reconstruction.

do their jobs, trying their best not to anger the hegemonic forces²⁰. This equation was magnified by the intensified presence of UN, international and nongovernmental organizations²¹, on both financial and logistical levels as well as in the priorities of the research field. We can understand this phenomenon through the urgent and increasing needs that resulted from the destructive wars that affected the human, financial and institutional situation. We can also look at the emergency call from the Lebanese governments, starting in 1992, to these organizations, asking for help in the mitigation and control of the complex situation of finance and livelihood. These same governments insisted on keeping the traditional role of the National Council for Scientific Research not allowing it to play an incentive and pioneer role in the field of social research.

As we can see, neither the private universities nor the public ones were prepared to cope with these changes. First of all, they had to reorganize their structures and mitigate the educational and logistic deterioration that they endured, with different magnitudes. Here are some of the measures the university took: Attempts by the Lebanese university's central administration to put some order in its newly created branches in different regions; the decision of the American University of Beirut to close its Eastern Beirut campus, unlike the Jesuit University which reinforced its campuses in the same region as well as in other regions. In addition, these two universities took measures to restore libraries and all complementary educational tools and to popularize computer usage in research and in administrative work, etc. Universities also had to give increased importance to their faculty (the governmental decree issued in 1993 stipulating the lay-off of all professors not yet returning to their university jobs in the Lebanese University, as well as the tendency at the American University of Beirut to start recruiting foreign professors, etc.)

In parallel, the centers of attention; in the domain of social sciences research; were changing drastically. The questions and issues related to the social structure in general and to social changes, development, state building, migration, displacement and other major phenomena, were replaced by sectarian and administrative matters. These were dealt with in a narrow social framework for they were considered as social issues requiring a local and precise response, such as local development, poverty belts, women's empowerment, deportation and the consequences of wars in Lebanon in general. Furthermore, ever since the early 1990's the agenda of research has changed once again and became inextricably linked to the concerns of international organizations and forums. For example, these topics included such areas as "globalization" (namely its cultural dimension), women's empowerment, the instauration of democracy and sustainable development, as well as the promotion of the role of "civil society" and "knowledge society", etc²².

²⁰ Once again, the dichotomy between policies and priorities of the state on one hand and the growth and needs of scientific research on the other hand, is confirmed. This pattern will remain until the beginning of the third millennium, when the mission of the National Council for Scientific Research was expanded to include social sciences and humanities with the reintroduction of university research grants in the Lebanese University.

²¹ UN organizations are those deriving from the structure of the United Nations, while the international ones are those defined by the prevailing international system such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, etc.

²² We have already dealt with how sociological thought addressed the issues in the Arab context, in general, and in the context of deep pragmatic societal transformations. See: Kabanji, 2005. On the other hand, it is interesting to note that these themes have only had limited echo in the doctoral dissertations prepared at the Institute of Social Sciences at the Lebanese University, which is the main grantor of PhD in sociology in Lebanon. In the period between 2001 and the end of April 2009, around 60 PhDs were

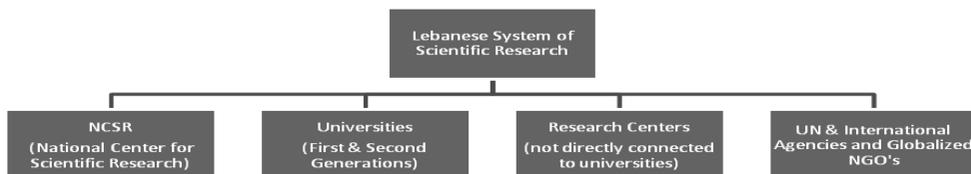
Research in social sciences in Lebanon had to be integrated, during the 1990's, in this dynamic process despite the fact that individual researchers and research institutions had limited influence on its extent, incentives, priorities or resources. Therefore, the majority of social researchers, especially in the academic circles, had become mere instruments asked to play the role that they were assigned. This situation, as well as the historical openness of universities in Lebanon, was crucial in the transition to the internationalization (globalization) of social research in Lebanon at all levels: The demand for research, its priorities, its financing, controlling the application of its outcomes, its publication and dissemination, etc.

IV. The landscape of institutional research in Lebanon

1. Components of the Lebanese Scientific Research System

The reorganization of the landscape of research at both structural and institutional levels, as well as at the level of human and financial resources and priorities, can best be illustrated in Graph 1. This graph defines the main components the Lebanese research system in its current form. This system has four main pillars: the National Council for Scientific Research, the active universities in Lebanon, especially the ones belonging to the first and second generations, research centers that are not institutionally linked with the academic structure, and finally the UN and international agencies along with the globalized NGOs all specializing in the funding of applied research projects. These four pillars often work in different, and contradictory ways. They do, however, regroup the majority of researchers, namely those who work individually and who don't belong to a collective research framework. In this structure of the research system, the National Council for Scientific Research does not play an important role in the field of social sciences. This is despite the fact that the Council is the organization responsible for policy making and for the activation of scientific research in Lebanon, in cooperation with universities as well as economic and professional institutions. The reason behind this is very clear. Indeed, the Council did not involve social sciences in its activities until 2003. However, social sciences didn't become an actual research concern until the end of 2008. In parallel, the universities sponsoring research (from the two first generations) remained hostages of their traditional research strategies in dealing with the totally different and urgent tasks that resulted from the consecutive wars between 1975 and 1990. The same goes for dealing with the emergence of universities with low academic standards and with no commitment to the imperatives of research.

GRAPH 1 : Components of the Lebanese Scientific Research System



awarded at the Institute. The most prominent topics were the following: development, elderly, health, women, the problems of industry and agriculture, emigration, migration, reversed migration, politics and religion. We can see in this variety of themes, the differences in the concerns of scientific research and standardized research.

These universities kept counting on the individual researchers who finance their research activity either through research tenders, essentially individual, or through incentive programs that motivate them to conduct their research²³. This is the case particularly of the Lebanese University, but also the case of the two most prestigious private universities in Lebanon: the American University of Beirut and the Saint Joseph University²⁴. The main accomplishment of these two universities in the research field is the deepening of their “openness” to the institutions of the countries and cultures that they belong to. They established partnership and cooperation arrangements with foreign universities with the same linguistic and academic sensitivity, which gave them new perspectives in the field of international research cooperation. In that sense, both of them have increased their dependency on “globalized” research partners, namely European and American ones²⁵, after having achieved the “globalization” of their educational process. However, the best example of the “globalization” of social research in the academic context was provided by the Lebanese University through a common governmental initiative launched by Lebanon and France. It is true that this example may not be the only one, or the most important in the context of research “globalization”. Nevertheless, this accord, concluded between France and Lebanon on the 5th of April 1996, has led to the creation of the CEDAR (CEDRE) program²⁶. This program allowed dozens of Lebanese researchers, mainly in the Lebanese University²⁷, to conduct research in cooperation with partners working in French universities and French research institutions.

All in all the universities that sponsor research in different ways, although not with the same efficiency, - have integrated their traditional research policies in the context of a “renewed scientific globalization”. However, this orientation is not reflected in the universities that emerged in Lebanon in the middle of the past decade.

Ever since the beginning of this decade, a process has started developing, carrying the heritage of academics and research as well as the components of an academic present that is evolving far from the old criteria, if not in a total opposite direction. The higher education system in Lebanon has carried, since its beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century, the milestones of an early “globalization” that would consecrate the concept of academic “modernization”, namely

²³ At the beginning of the third millennium, the Lebanese University established a system of incentives for the individual researcher (budget field, petty cash and funding for some equipment related to informatics, etc.). It has also established a central committee for research. Its task was to keep pace with the stages of research and to impose a minimum of scientific regulations.

²⁴ The vice president of research stimulates research in these two universities. The American University offers research grants to the junior instructors. Overall, these universities, in addition to the Lebanese University, produce the majority of academic research in Lebanon. See: Gaillard 2008.

²⁵ Evidence is provided with the AUB support to ‘faculty by providing short- and long-term development grants primarily for short-term travel to conferences and workshops to present research and long-term visits to research facilities. (Gaillard & al. 2008, p. 19)

²⁶ The objectives of the agreement, as defined in the signed text of the two governments, are «to promote cooperation and exchange of scientific experts and academics through participation on order to launch research and develop it in Lebanon» as well as to “create a procedural mechanism that provides scientific quality of research and that benefits from the effective support of the governments.» The research topics are, according to the text of the agreement: science society and the contemporary world, the environment and Earth sciences, health, medicine, and finally Engineering Sciences.

²⁷ It can be assumed that the importance of this program is to attract dozens of Lebanese researchers affiliated to the Lebanese University, especially if we take into consideration that the total accredited research projects submitted by professors at the Lebanese University - which have a total number of professors of three thousand – between 2002 and 2005 amounted, according to the university’s data, to 211 projects, including a rate of 51.2% in French compared to 13.3% in English and the rest in Arabic.

in the first and second generation universities. However, the new generation of universities that have emerged since the last decade of the twentieth century reversed this trend and exclusively oriented themselves towards the commercial aspect of this globalization. With this generation, the concept of university changed, to become “an already made” educational program, offering a restricted list of specializations, only to meet the punctual needs of local and foreign markets. Thus, the concept of university itself became ambiguous. Indeed, universities with different and uneven academic and logistical capacities (including capacities of scientific research), were put on the same level. If one looks closely into the list of accredited universities²⁸, the difference between new universities and their predecessors becomes very clear. Indeed, the number of faculties in the new universities rarely exceeds three. These faculties only provide a technical training that any specialized institute can offer (with the exception of specializations related to religion). In addition, its educational staff has, in the best case scenario, a master degree, and it isn’t entirely dedicated to higher education. Nevertheless, we cannot underestimate these universities as they represent fifteen out of thirty two legally accredited universities. Furthermore, their capacity to increase their symbolic capital is promoted by a number of agreements they concluded with international educational institutions, such as prestigious ones (like Al Azhar University in the case of the Global University) and high-quality universities (such as the University of Quebec, Canada, in the case of the Lebanese Canadian University). These agreements provided an “added value” and an increase in the symbolic capital, which promotes the image of the concerned university.

However, the current research structure includes, as we previously mentioned, other pillars besides the National Council for Scientific Research and universities. In this context we mention the research centers that have kept undertaking their activities according to what we will call “guided research programs” and didn’t divert from their original programs to marginal preoccupations except in a few cases²⁹. Therefore, it is easy to notice the working pattern of the Center for Arab Unity Studies that maintained its centers of attention³⁰, taking into account the developments occurring on the Arab scene, namely in the political and strategic levels. Even though the Research and Studies Center for the Middle East (CERMOC) tried to be flexible when it comes to research programs, it kept a certain form of stability in its orientations and preoccupations. Indeed, the center has always worked according to the intersection of interests of both the institutional entity to which it is related³¹ and the incoming researchers. We can therefore safely assume that in general, just like universities promoting research activities, the main research centers did not interact with the various challenges facing research and higher education in Lebanon.

In parallel, the UN and international institutions and organizations, including nongovernmental ones, played a crucial role that surpassed the role played by the academic institutional components when it comes to the changes occurring in the “globalization” of research in Lebanon, during the past two decades. Their role also consisted of defining the framework, priorities and financing of research. Briefly put, these organizations interfered in the field of research according to their

²⁸ See the list of accredited universities and the ones that have received the approval of the license on the website of the Directorate General of Higher Education in Lebanon: http://www.higher-edu.gov.lb/personal_univ.html

²⁹ This is particularly noticeable in the case of the Center for Studies and Research on the Middle East, that is prone to cooperate with the active Anglophone parties in the field of research in Lebanon, namely through funding. We must note in this context the establishment of the Center for Lebanese Studies in 1989, which set to itself a guiding framework that maintained its attention concentrated on issues related to general policies.

³⁰ This can easily be checked by taking a close look at the center’s outcomes of the last three decades.

³¹ This center is affiliation to the French Foreign affairs ministry; it therefore has a particular diplomatic status.

own logic, keeping in mind their one-dimensional vision on important topics such as poverty, development, civil society, women's empowerment, fighting corruption and the like. The organizations then work to popularize this vision among different groups and on different levels. As a result, their role expanded and their influence on the Lebanese research field increased. The best example may be their intensified presence, in both financial and methodological levels, in the on-the-field research programs aimed at providing the Lebanese administration with a primary data base concerning the conditions of health, economy and demography in Lebanon, starting in the mid-nineties³². Needless to say that the team of social researchers participating in these censuses and studies attracted academics from prominent Lebanese universities. On the other hand, the participation of these international organizations and agencies in the work of research centers reached a decisive point. Indeed, it became possible to assume that some of these centers only remained active thanks to their support and financing³³. In addition, entrepreneurial research activities owe its survival to the same sources. Entrepreneurial research activities in the Lebanese context are conducted by local agencies that consist in a number of institutions and offices responsible for the field research assigned to them. The mechanism usually consists in participating in 'calls for tender' organized by UN agencies or international organizations³⁴ or through subcontracting in the context of on-the-field missions, assigned to them by prominent institutions undertaking social, economic and legal projects³⁵.

³² Here we can mention the contribution of these agencies and organizations in the following surveys and field research: the UNICEF in the survey for the health of children and mothers, the League of Arab States in a research on the health of Lebanese families, the United Nations Development Program and the World Bank on poverty, in addition to the contribution of these two organizations and the ESCWA in the local development, and the contribution of the European Community's agencies in the development researches and the modernization of administration etc..

³³ It is possible, for example, to rely on a list of funders for one of the main research centers, the Lebanese Center for Lebanese Studies, founded in 1989, listed on the center's website:

- Canadian Fund for Dialogue and Development, CIDA, the Canadian Embassy
- Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE)
- Economic Development Institute (EDI) , World bank
- Fares Foundation
- Ford Foundation
- Freidrich Ebert Foundation
- Frem Foundation
- Harvard Institute for International Development (HIID)
- International Center for Economic Growth (ICEG)
- Konrad Adenauer Foundation
- Near East Foundation
- Netherlands Organization for International Development Cooperation (NOVIB)
- Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (OXFAM)
- Rockefeller Foundation
- UNICEF
- UNCHS-HABITAT

³⁴ This is adopted by global institutions such as some organizations of the European Community or the World Bank or research centers affiliated to a country such as the Canadian Agency for International Development.

³⁵ For clarification, we can refer to the work conducted by prominent research and consulting institutions in the field of construction and contracting, such as the Khatib & Alami institution and the Teame institution and which assign a local research agency with a specific field work with a socio-economic dimension or content.

These local agencies³⁶ generally play a double role and are becoming increasingly important. On the one hand, they accomplish a large part of social and economic field research without decisively influencing the orientation of the research objectives or limitations. Therefore, the agencies do not directly participate in enriching the scientific research experience because their experience in the domain does not belong to the institutional and academic research process; in the absence of clear and adequate mechanisms. On the other hand, these agencies recruit trained researchers among social sciences students, namely in the second and third academic cycle. The experience of these students is limited to an intensified use of technique and predetermined means that they can hardly integrate to their academic curriculum.

However, the importance of these local agencies is on the rise due to the huge demand on their executive work on one hand, and to their capacity to adapt to the imperatives of this demand on the other hand.

The UN and international agencies: a structural and institutional component

The UN and international agencies have been exceptionally present in the realm of applied and field research during the past two decades. Their presence contributed in the restructuring the landscape of social research in Lebanon. When it comes to researchers, the agencies played an even greater role according to the result of our field study³⁷. The agencies also played an almost decisive role in financing research. Their financial contributions to the work of researchers varies between one third, in the case of researchers in law (and this constitutes the lowest percentage) and 54% in the case of researchers in economy. Researchers in sociology declared that these agencies financed 43% of their work and 41% of the anthropologists' work.

It can therefore be assumed that the very important role played by these agencies made them a main institutional and structural component of social research: "the main support of research in social sciences, in the case of Lebanon, comes from regional and international agencies. The parties playing an even greater role are the World Bank, European Union's agencies and UN organizations, working in different social and economic fields such as cultural and economic development, health and childhood. Therefore, the most important activities conducted in the social field have been financed by these international agencies, ever since the early 1990's." This situation allowed us to talk about what we will call "custom research" and "remotely-directed research" (Kabbanji, 2010).

However, the reason these agencies controlled the applied and field research in the social field doesn't only reside in financing. Indeed, the agencies were capable of networking data in the social field, which gave them greater control.

These agencies have accomplished the following:

³⁶ The "research and consulting institution" and the "research and training group for development action" constitute the two main examples of these agencies.

³⁷ This research, conducted in 2006 and 2007, includes a group of 44 researchers working in the four scientific fields constituting social sciences: sociology, anthropology, law and economics. These researchers come from various universities, research centers and research entrepreneurial agencies. This work is part of a research including the Arab Mediterranean countries and aims at studying the «assessment of scientific and technical capabilities» in the Arab world, namely in the field of research in social sciences. The European Community funded this research, and coordination has been under the supervision of the French Research Institute for Development (IRD). The results of this research concerning Lebanon have already been published by the Institute of Social Sciences at the Lebanese University. (Kabbanji, 2010).

- Interconnection with the academic world, namely by recruiting, through fixed-term contracts, scholars and researchers working in the fields of sociology, anthropology, economics and law, as well as other fields, particularly in the Lebanese University and the American University of Beirut.
- Availability of considerable and easily transferable financial resources at their disposal, compared to the slowness witnessed in the academic and administrative mechanisms.
- Control of the outcomes of field research, and restriction of their distribution.
- Making first-hand decision of the priorities and dimensions of research, even when the partner party is a public institution.
- Determination of the scope and domain of research. They also determine the methods that researchers have to use.

2. Researchers and “research globalization”

We have already talked about the structural and institutional dimensions of research evolution in Lebanon and its pathway towards specific forms of cooperation and openness in the constantly renewed “globalized” context of academics and research activities. This brings us to a very important question: How did researchers cope with this evolution and what limited their ways of dealing with it?

In order to answer this question, we will talk about two specific dimensions of research activity. The first dimension concerns the method adopted by researchers to spread the outcomes of their research as well as the openness of these methods to the “globalization” of research that we previously mentioned. The second dimension concerns the presence of researchers in the international institutions responsible for the international exchanges in the field of scientific cooperation, such as in social sciences.

3. Researchers and publishing

The research strategies of researchers working in the social sciences field and associated to universities that sponsor research are mainly based on the policies adopted by these universities. Indeed, in universities where the academic and professional future of faculty members is directly linked to what they produce and publish, there are very specific criteria, namely the publishing in accredited and standardized journals. From this perspective, these universities are just like any other institution in the academic world, on the international level. However, in the case of Lebanon, these criteria play a double role: on one hand, the criteria are only valid in a small number of universities, but on the other hand, these criteria determine the future of researchers. Furthermore, the universities adopting these criteria do not implement it in the same way. Indeed, the universities adopting the American system, using English as the medium of instruction and belonging to the first generation, ask their researchers to publish their articles in English and in specific journals. Thereby, these universities get their researchers in touch with the academic world that constitutes the mirror of the work they publish. This strategy promotes ties with the research field in an international level. However it limits the interaction between researchers and the local and regional academic world that publishes its outcomes in Arabic or in any other language. Breaking these rules would be a personal decision of the researcher and comes at a cost³⁸. Here, we can safely assume that “globalized” communication is channeled through

³⁸ The researcher who trespasses on her/his institution’s publishing conditions incurs the risk of the annulment of his contribution during the academic evaluation.

language, as a carrier, more than in any other way. We can also assume that the communication tool of “globalized” research, i.e. the English language in this case, can rapidly become a cultural tie, carrying all the connotations of this language.

Other universities, belonging to the French-speaking world, give their researchers, in order to be evaluated, the freedom of publishing in a variety of languages, with a preference for the French language. Indeed, the research openness of these universities is mainly oriented towards the Francophone academic world that is quite limited in comparison with the Anglophone academic world. Therefore, in this case, we can understand the source of language diversity in terms of publications, means and countries.

When it comes to academic criteria, the Lebanese University constitutes an exception. It is true that it shares several common points with Francophone universities when it comes to language diversity adopted by its professors too. Nonetheless, it differs when it comes to the restrictions imposed by the separation between education and research. Indeed, despite allocating a large budget to research, the Lebanese University does not link the professor’s job security to research activity. Thereby, the “Publish or Perish” rule is not implemented as a sine qua non condition. In consequence, the teacher has to prove his research capacities on his own, and therefore merit a promotion in the academic hierarchy not necessarily subject to a scientific evaluation.

On the other hand, there is no language or publishing restriction imposed on publications in the Lebanese University. Therefore, a professor can present, in order to evaluate her/his work, material that was published in non academic periodicals.

However, the separation between education and research in the Lebanese University hinders the chances of international scientific exchange. While some of its teachers, namely those who do not aspire to an academic promotion, prefer to boycott intellectual production and publishing, others prefer to produce individually, probably to avoid obeying to the evaluation mechanisms adopted in institutional research. This can provide an explanation for the low demand of research grants in the field of social sciences in the Lebanese University. While the demand for research grants in the field of natural and exact sciences rose to 60% of the agreed upon research projects from 2002 to 2005, the percentage of agreed upon the same kind of projects in the field of social sciences (sociology, anthropology, economy, law and political science) for the same period only accounts for 12%³⁹.

These disparities in the relations of academic researcher with the conditions of publishing show a great deal of differences in her/his relations with the “globalization” of the research process in the social sciences field⁴⁰.

4. Researchers and international institutional research interaction

The relationship between researchers in general, especially academic ones, with international institutional research interaction does not deviate from the evolution of their publishing activity. Once again, we notice disparities between researchers. Indeed, they interact with international research institutions through their respective affiliations in an academic, linguistic and cultural world. This means that the interaction opportunities of a researcher affiliated to an academic institution working in Lebanon depend on the ties her/his university has with a specific cultural and linguistic climate. This was proven by the researchers’ evolutions that we have previously mentioned in this study. The cooperation agreements between local universities and international institutions (such as the International Organization of Francophone Countries)

³⁹ This data is taken from the records of the central research committee of the Lebanese University

⁴⁰ We have detailed this other aspect of “globalization” in different study (Kabbanji, 2010)

define the different aspects of interaction and their limitations⁴¹. This is particularly the case in work teams, international conferences, symposiums and workshops or even in groups of experts, missions and research grants.

However, this framed process does not include all the openness and exchange measures of researchers. We also have to mention the international institutions to which academics pay allegiance on the international level. These institutions are mainly international associations. Some of these cross linguistic and cultural barriers and some are affiliated to a specific linguistic, cultural and geographic sensitivity. And it seems obvious that Lebanese academics working in social sciences and belonging to the Anglophone world tend to be affiliated to international associations that are open to all languages, but that mainly work thanks to the hegemony of the English language. The Francophone researchers, on the other hand, are prone to be affiliated with international associations with a French affinity.

The exceptional case remains that of researchers in social sciences working at the Lebanese University. Many of them have little or no links to the prominent international institutions that promote interaction between experts in social sciences. This can be explained by the lack of incentives motivating them to communicate internationally. This is attributed to the linguistic barrier. Indeed, Arabic is not considered as a communication language on the international level. It can also be explained by the limited subjects of research, knowing that these topics may not have an echo on the international scene. In addition, social experts tend to only publish their works in Arabic. Furthermore, the translations available are either poor or absent. This hinders the possibility of communication with the international scientific community and its prominent institutions.

The absence of incentives can also have an institutional explanation. Indeed, the Lebanese University has no exclusive international and cultural reference in the field of social sciences, unlike the American University of Beirut and Saint Joseph University. It does, however, have a preference for the francophone world, but this orientation is a great deal clearer in the case of exact and applied sciences than in social sciences.

We can therefore assume that the efficiency of “scientific globalization” in its current phase is increased when the receiving structure is adequate, namely in the fields of scientific culture and language. This receiving structure is present in academic institutions and among researchers when they are oriented towards international scientific culture, with its criteria and regulations, regardless of the used language (English and French in the case of Lebanon).

V. Research and researchers in the midst of international distribution of scientific work - an attempt to explain

According to what was previously mentioned, we can assume that the “globalization”⁴² of the research process in Lebanon is a complex and unequal one. At the core of this process, reside the Lebanese modern educational system and the changes that have occurred in the research field; as well as the deviance of a major part of it to establish relations defined by the demand on the private sector, with the increasing importance of “remotely-directed research”. This process is part of the larger framework of the current “globalization” context that we also call “international division of scientific work and education”. This division is the mirror of the division of international work in

⁴¹ Our interviews in the context of our previously mentioned research work showed that the professors and researchers at the American University in Beirut, for example, look at the scientific exchange and research as a process of affiliation to the a culture and a system of values.

⁴² See footnote 3, concerning the definition of what we mean by “globalization”

general. In other words, the entity controlling resources and wealth, in the levels of production, distribution and consumption, also controls science because science constitutes a process of training, research, physical and logistical equipments, experiments - actual ones or by simulation, resources and priorities. The same entity also controls innovation even if not exclusively. It also imposes educational systems and research regulations and defines the standards of scientific productivity, efficiency and accomplishments. This evolution did not arise suddenly and did not happen in the blink of an eye. On the contrary it did arise from deep metamorphoses rooted in the modernization process and the hegemony of capitalism which dominated both science and research and controlled people's destinies and fortunes. It also emerged from the popularization of secular culture and a system of values that separates the worldly from the religious, as well as from a political system that promotes accountability, despite all the flaws and loopholes.

Despite all that, this situation is not predestined. This international division of international scientific work has been changing over the last decades. This is what we proved in the beginning of this study when we referred to the cases where countries or societies rebelled against the restrictions of such division. Furthermore, a large number of social experts tried, over the last three decades, to show the biases of this division and its unfairness.

This means that there is an international scientific research field, in the sense suggested by Pierre Bourdieu⁴³, which is constantly restructured, even with difficulties. On one hand, there is a field that works according to rules and norms which do not differ from the traditional and institutional division of labor, despite some major breach. On the other hand, there is the awareness of some social scientists, who criticize this kind of division and work hard to overcome its restrictions. This is the truly bright side of "scientific globalization", when thousands of social scientists work in a context of international openness and communication that enriches scientific production. The other face of this "globalization" is represented by those who work to hamper equity between social researchers when it comes to international scientific production. Indeed, social scientists in "southern" countries do not possess sufficient financial resources in order to conduct research. They also have neither the adequate training nor the appropriate research equipment, such as laboratories and research centers that they would determine their priorities.

They also lack specialized publishing means, in quality and in quantity, which forbids them from communicating their outcomes, through translations, to their colleagues in different countries and institutions. In addition, their contact with them is often hampered by institutional and financial obstacles, such as the restricted openness of public universities to international scientific interaction. This openness isn't backed by a series of incentives that would encourage contact and openness in both the education and research levels.

This face of globalization tips the scientific balance to the advantage of the rules imposed by the international scientific division. From this perspective, the independence margin of the scientific field, i.e. the independence of its internal components such as researchers, institutional frameworks and resources, remains really limited and hinders the efficiency of the scientific field. It is from this loophole that organizations and agencies working according to the market's supply and demand rules interfere in the scientific research field.

This is what research experiences in Lebanon have shown in the field of social sciences. It is the same for a large number of countries that do not have an advantageous position in this international division of scientific work.

⁴³ Bourdieu suggested in various works, different definitions of the concept of "field". We got his definition of the scientific field from a text he wrote about the social use of science. See (Bourdieu, 1997)

VI. Conclusion

Looking back to the questions we asked in the beginning of this study, the Lebanese research experience in the field of social sciences seems to have a number of specific aspects. Indeed, in this case the state does not seem to play an effective role in promoting science (not education) and scientific research. Not enough strategies are adopted in this context and not enough effort is oriented towards it. The state entered the field of higher education in 1951, after the private higher education institutions, linked to international religious institutions, had already been established. Furthermore, the state's interest in the research field only goes back to the 1960's. Indeed, it spent a lot of time trying to expand the public university horizontally, without accompanying this expansion with research development policies (with the exception of the founding of the National Council for Scientific Research), especially in the field of social sciences. The state was far from the model of "national state for national science" adopted in a number of countries such as Egypt, India, Turkey, Tunisia, etc. When the country had recovered its strength after the troubled phase of 1975-1990, the issue of scientific research, namely in social sciences, had been subject to dynamics that the state encouraged to some extent. Thereby, the state thought it was sufficient in the early 1990's to increase the budget allocated to promoting research in the Lebanese University that had adopted the "professor-researcher" formula. It also increased the resources of the National Council for Scientific Research in many fields of basic and applied research. However, the most important initiatives in the field of research were still launched by the academic institutions of the first and second generation. While in the field of social sciences, the main contributions were made by the regional and international research centers.

After the UN and other international agencies have attracted the field of applied scientific research, starting in the early 1990's, and after the emergence of the role of "research entrepreneurship", it became obvious that there were two processes of the research experience in the field of social sciences. The first process is the institutional and academic one which includes minimal standards of autonomy for the field and for researchers at once. The other process imposes the market conditions on the research "product" in the field and on researchers. Furthermore, with the poor implication of the state in the development of scientific research, there is a tendency of social research to lose some components of its autonomy (the control of agencies over resources, objectives and use of the outcomes of research).

It is clear that these two factors, i.e. the poor state involvement and the division of research into two different, maybe contradictory, processes, show the necessity of rethinking the whole nature of research in social sciences in Lebanon. Whenever the presence of universities and research centers in both scientific and institutional fields increases, the enabling factors of research increase too. This is one of the main conditions of the formation of a local scientific community. It also becomes possible to adopt a framework research policy where "scientific globalization" would constitute an important factor. However, accomplishing all this will require a number of conditions. Indeed, the availability of research strategies (framework research programs), training programs for researchers, the appropriate logistical structure such as laboratories and publishing means and the necessary financing, all of them requires a state contribution through allocations from the budget. This will reflect the country's awareness of the importance of drawing its attention to a field it has been neglecting ever since the dismissal of the Chehabist vision in the middle of the 1960's. Furthermore, the state sponsoring of research is a confirmation that scientific research cannot be subject to the supply and demand rule. We cannot imagine this structure without the assumption that the National Council for Scientific

Research will play a coordinating and central role, having integrated social sciences in its research orientations. This will allow the Lebanese research system, namely the institutions, to interact and to work on the improvement of the links between academic circles and the research field. Moreover, this alternative formula has in its core the openness of research in social sciences to regional and international cooperation, namely at the institutional level. This is, in our opinion, the way to reach “framework research programs in social sciences” that would promote the autonomy of both the researchers and the field.

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Globalization of Applied Scientific Research and Development Requirements*

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Abstract

This paper addresses issues related to competition and scientific research set in a structure comprising the state, scientific research institutions and the private sector. The study looks at the impact of globalization on the role of the state in political decision-making, development of the constitutional and legislative framework for scientific research and technology transfer, the training of technical cadres, and in the setting of research and development priorities. The paper also deals with the impact of globalization on the managerial role of scientific institutions in launching scientific research and technology transfer on the basis of the political decisions and within the constitutional and legislative framework, relying on and developing the technical cadres, and proposing support structures and appropriate legislation to help speed up the process and overcome any obstacles. Finally, the paper explains the role of the local and international private sector in providing material and moral support to the research institutions, and proposing areas of research that are of interest.

I. Introduction

Scientific developments have shaped the world over the last hundred years. However, for scientific research and technology to thrive, there needs to be an availability of skills, an adequate infrastructure, an appropriate legal framework, an effective institutional system, a wise and experienced scientific administration, supporting political decisions, and a society that believes in science and technology. In industrialized countries, 2 to 2.5% of the GNP (Gross National Product) is allocated to research and development, although the percentage of the educational budget allocated to research and basic sciences in northern countries varies from between 4 to 10%, with a similar amount allocated to applied scientific research. In addition, twice this amount is allocated to development and advanced technology.

Scientific research requires both an appropriate environment and a critical number of trained scientists to enable the process of interaction to start. The scientific community then becomes self-interactive, and if it is not well preserved institutionally, it may wither and fade. It is necessary, therefore, to raise awareness within society on the importance of allocating adequate levels of expenditure to different scientific fields, especially in sciences leading to economic growth.

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Indeed, skills and capital are two inextricably linked factors in attaining sustainable growth in a country. The British experience has shown that it is possible to achieve such growth, the Japanese experience has shown that technology is easy to acquire, the Russian experience has shown that giving priority to heavy industry accelerates growth and the Chinese experience has shown that cheap labour is equivalent to capital itself.

II. The Objectives of Scientific Research

Scientific research plays an important role in the creation, development and transfer of technology. Countries need to manage and direct scientific research and technical development to ensure that the human, financial and organizational components are dealt with in order to pave the way for increased rates of social and economic growth. Based on the above, the objectives of scientific research can be defined as follows (Al Safadi & others, 2006):

“Research is the full and direct reflection on the accumulation of human thought and scientific knowledge. It uses methodological means in order to provide qualitative and innovative cognitive products that will have a positive impact, either direct or indirect, which generates an added value in one aspect or more of human activity (economy, social life, administration, politics, etc.)”.

However, challenges present in the third millennium often influence scientific research to an extent that exceeds this definition. It has become impossible to work in the field of research or development without taking into consideration the international scientific community. This has transformed scientific research into an organized industry, with the aim to guarantee rapid achievements and to keep the research process on a safe and competitive track, both in the short and long term.

If we take into account the current weak economic, scientific and technical capacities in developing countries, we notice that these countries have to abide by internationally fixed standards on aspects such as product quality and exchangeable services, without having participated in the definition of these standards. Furthermore, the regulations for trade, imports and exports have opened the door to fierce competition. Moreover, international teams impose certain topics on the research and development system. These include areas such as the environmental risks of industrial activities. Working individually in the field of research and development, remote from the international scientific teams, will hold back the local research system and will lead to it being isolated from the rest of the world. Therefore, it is possible to change the research objectives as follows:

“Research is the full and direct reflection on the accumulation of human thought and scientific knowledge. It uses methodological means in order to achieve three objectives:

- To satisfy the human thirst for knowledge.
- To gain new knowledge that has a positive impact and an added value in one aspect or more of human activity.
- To secure the capacity to be present in the international scientific climate and to compete in it.”

III. The Influence of Globalization on Higher Education

It seems logical to start with a brief overview of globalization’s influence on higher education, before tackling the issue of scientific research. Globalization is defined as the intensified, accelerated and expanded increase in international interactions and links. It leads to one single

world, governed by a single system and a single culture. Frontiers are then also abolished. Globalization's effect on higher education can be defined as follows (Friwan, 2008): international academic cooperation, international academic mobility, the development of international programs and activities, use of modern techniques in higher education programs, openness to other countries and its influence on the Arab identity.

This influence can be even clearer through the following aspects (Abdel Razik, 2008): the creation of technical universities, the use of techniques in the educational process, development of educational programs in compliance with modern imperatives, modernization of educational tools and methods, quality of educational outcomes and compliance with the needs of the labour market, multi-disciplinary specializations, development of students and faculty culture, modernization of the educational administration, the use of internet among circles of students, staff and faculty, communication with local and foreign universities, orientation towards functional teaching, linking scientific research to the needs of society in order for the university to play a productive role in helping to resolve local social problems, and orienting the universities' work towards creation and invention so as to assist society in producing appropriate techniques.

IV. The Role of the State in the Development of Scientific Research

1. The role of the state in improving the economic environment of the science and technology system

a. Providing stable economic conditions and encouraging investment through adoption of a clear economic vision

Encouraging investments in science, technology and innovation is mainly the state's role, through the establishment of a clear strategic economic vision. This can happen by orienting of economic activity to local and international markets with high purchasing power. Increasing the competitiveness of its products requires it to improve its scientific research and development capabilities and to increase the use of technology.

Such policies will build trust and improve the investment climate of the country, thereby allowing it to compete with other countries. This, in turn, will lead to increased investments in various sectors, which will ultimately increase demand for science, technology and innovation, and lead to higher investments in this field.

b. The adoption of innovative policies to encourage exports and allow the participation of the private sector:

Adopting the concept of cooperative research, which is applied in a number of industrialized countries, will lead to an effective combination between productive institutions, universities and research centres. Scientific experts in these institutions will have to unify their efforts and put their differences aside. It involves:

- Technological research that is attractive to producers and to experts
- Short and medium term research
- Research and information
- Education based on training and education based on technical skills
- Improving basic knowledge and commercialization of new technology

c. The activation of supporting services aimed at improving test level and quality assurance

The specifications, standards and calibration in centres of technology, play a role in promoting technical progress and contribute to improving productivity and quality. The main functions of

specifications, standards and calibration are identification and measurement. With globalization and free trade, these functions have to be expanded to include the following:

The increased demand for standardization following the technological boom

The delivery of quality certificates that goes beyond the physical and chemistry conditions of the products to include other conditions such as the products', production, transfer and storage are taking place.

The development of technological instruments for measuring and testing.

The examination and analysis procedures related to quality control of the product and its compliance with international quality standards

The creation of new ways of testing, in order to verify and implement new standards and referential checklists.

d. The stimulation of production in research and development and of the demand on its outputs:

The impact of research and development on economic competition can be measured by the capacity to produce more with less labour. Employment is directly linked to activity and competition levels: any activity that excludes competition doesn't grow, and the main instruments of this growth are research and development.

The promotion of economic skills depends directly on investments in innovations that help to improve technology and increase capacity. Innovations also increase yields in all kinds of other investments, including education. Knowledge gains an economic importance through investments in new technology that allows the promotion of economic competition and an increase in growth and employment rates and, indeed, labour productivity growth rates is the best way to measure the repercussions of innovations. This all points to the need for universities, research centres and productive enterprises to cooperate.

2. The role of the state in providing the primary components of the science and technology system

a. The building of infrastructure

Laboratories for basic sciences: Scientific research falls under the two main categories of basic research and applied research. Basic research aims at understanding the reason for things, their interconnections and their essence, while applied research aims at achieving products and producing outcomes. Assuming that research and development centres can be affiliated to companies and production centres and institutions, basic research can be only a state-sponsored public responsibility.

Specialized research centres: Development often requires the establishment of specialized research centres. For example, the study of arid lands and their vegetation can only be conducted by the state, perhaps in cooperation with other states suffering from the same problem. The same goes for environmental issues, such as the pollution of groundwater, that are, by nature, regional resources. These centres mainly conduct applied research related to vital issues that cannot be ignored. This is not always the case in basic research centres.

Databases: The first prerequisite of scientific research is information. This information is available in databases that provide the necessary information for scientific research. Statistical data can be useful in various types of research, such as in the fields of health, society and products. What we call "cognitive information" facilitates familiarization with a certain subject and with its latest updates. The latter information is similar to a structured, indexed, encyclopaedic work that can be composed of different indexed topic, in different languages.

Communication: The communication revolution at the end of the twentieth century, launched a new era of communication and information. The Internet has many objectives, namely:

- Communicating with members of the work team, other laboratories or potential partners
- Having fast access to information: concerned with activities, conferences, research, brochures of other research centres and scientific journals
- Publishing research activities of groups
- Connecting with a university or research centres' networks

Libraries: The content of libraries, whether books or journals, in hard or soft copy, constitutes one of the main pillars of scientific research. Not so long ago, libraries only offered books and magazines, but the technological progress of the last three decades has made many electronic books to be made available on-line. This allows small countries to access the content of a large number of international libraries by only paying a subscription fee.

b. Qualification and training

Staff training: The lack of specializations is compensated by various academic visits to other countries where the different specializations are available. This enables people to become a critical research mass that can promote a certain specialization and contribute to its development.

The quality of education and its importance in addressing technology and innovation: Between the nineteenth and the middle of the twentieth centuries, the entire economy depended on energy (labour) and capital. This dependency started changing during the second half of the twentieth century. Knowledge and information substituted energy and labour as vital resources for generating wealth. Therefore, if we were to divide real capital into two main categories, the material/concrete capital and the soft capital (cognitive) we would find that the share of cognitive capital is rapidly increasing in most developed countries at the expenses of material capital.

What is needed is to provide learning opportunities, while working on promoting the quality of education. This is in order to enhance the capacity of students to access knowledge and put it to good use, adopt a global approach rather than a fragmented one, focus on abstract concepts, promote academic, cooperative work, break the boundaries of time and space, and meet the increasing demand for various scientific and technological fields.

Training: Training may not directly fall under the theme of scientific research, but it does contribute to assimilating the new technology, which in turn, contributes to scientific research. The best example is training in information and communication technology. Moreover, building the capacities of workers in the industrial sector will increase the demand in industry for scientific research. Developed countries take the initiative in training their working force and the state can either have a direct role in the training, or a supporting indirect role. These roles include lowering taxes for companies that provide training programs for their workers.

Consciousness and promotion: Scientific research requires the involvement of people ready to dedicate their lives to this career. Thus there is need to raise consciousness among students and direct them towards a specialization relevant to development. However, in many developed countries such as Britain, students are not eager to orient themselves towards specializations like physics or chemistry and this can lead to problems.

3. Diversifying the sources of expenditure on research and development through collaborative research and tax incentives

a. The allocation of a percentage of the GDP

According to the UN statistics, between 1996 and 2002 scientific research was not a priority for universities. The statistics are summarized in table 1 which shows that Arab countries devote

very low percentage of GDP allocated to research expenditure. Quite apart from the negative effects that weak scientific research has on the economy, the main affect is on higher education which is one of the key factors for generating development. What is needed is for countries to allocate at least 1% of GDP for scientific research expenditure.

Table 1: Percentage of GDP allocated to research expenditure in some industrial and Arab countries (United Nations, 2000)

USA, Japan, Sweden	Industrialized countries, except the previously mentioned	Least developed European countries	Global average	Israel	Arab countries
3.1	2.4	0.9	0.7	2.6	0.2

b. Lowering taxes for the facilitators contributing to financing research

The state can exempt companies from taxes, fully or partially, if these companies invest in research and direct these investments towards local research institutions such as universities and research centres. This measure helps to activate applied research in universities while contributing to the development of the work and outcomes of the companies. This measure is very common in developed countries, but it requires appropriate legislation.

4. The role of the state in enacting the necessary legislation to activate a science and technology system

One cannot underestimate the influence of legislation and financial initiatives on the promotion of education, technology, science and innovation.

a. Protection of intellectual property

Weaknesses in national legislation regarding intellectual property rights, drives companies away from financing knowledge production and this has local and international consequences. Therefore, there is an urgent need to create regulatory frameworks to protect intellectual property and to help expand knowledge based on science, technology and innovation. This framework will also help to promote economic growth, which will inevitably lead to more expenditure in these fields.

b. Regulation of e-trade

E-trade has recently been flourishing as a result of the digital revolution that has transformed the world into a “global village”. This expansion has prompted countries to pass legislation to regulate this kind of trade.

5. The role of the state in designing national policies for science and technology and in preparing implementation strategies

The creation of a national innovation system can only be achieved through a national policy for science, technology and innovation. This policy has to be adopted in the light of a thorough analysis of the current situation in these areas and of predictions for the future. Following this, the preparation of implementation plans and strategies is required.

A national policy for science, technology and innovation includes the following main tasks:

- Coordinating and linking the different sectors related to science, technology and

innovation.

- Defining the priorities of science and technology and allocating the necessary resources (mainly from the public budget).
- Impose regulations on scientific and technological activity.

The analysis of the current situation of science, technology and innovation is the first step to take. The analytical approach allows determining the strengths and weaknesses of the science and technology system, its relation to its environment, the main challenges it has to face and the opportunities it can seize.

Future predictions are based on qualitative and quantitative indicators. They consist of predicting consequences of complementary policies and choices in the long term perspective. In this context, it is possible to adopt the “scenario” method that consists in a series of hypotheses linking between the current situation and the future.

Preparing the strategies (i.e. mobilizing capacities and energy in order to achieve the objectives of a policy) is the stage that links the planning and implementation, but also between the science and technology system and the development planning. Reaching the objectives of the national policy depends on preparing of strategies that include strategic goals, alternatives, standards, regulations, choices and tactics related to the achievement of the objectives.

The implementation plan is based on programs, projects and initiatives and is linked to the five-year development plan of the state. Developing countries often work on designing policies without creating implementing mechanisms. The right thing to do would be to devote particular importance to the implementation stage that is based on the current situation and on international experiences and a sound theoretical background.

V. The Institutions and Components of Scientific Research

We can consider the system of research, development and innovation as a subsystem of the state's systems, in the knowledge that the state itself is, in turn, a subsystem of the international system. We can also note that the information revolution has allowed the existence of direct relations between countries in a way that overcomes national frontiers. Therefore, this system has two environments: the close environment, in the country, and the remote environment, being the international environment (cross-national).

The close environment is comprised of national organizations that do not directly work on scientific and cognitive accumulation, but have a spoken or unspoken need for cognitive or physical goods that result from work in this scientific accumulation. This domain includes almost all the activities of a society, such as industry, agriculture, tourism, trade and services. In all these sectors, there are questions to be answered and needs to be met. This can only be done through the direct investment in scientific and cognitive accumulation. Furthermore, the close environment does not end with physical infrastructure, but also includes logical infrastructures from the cultural, juridical, administrative and financial systems, as well as the means to access information, check its reliability and accuracy and the possibility of investing it.

The remote environment exists in research, development and innovation organizations in other countries, and also in multinational regional or international organizations. This environment does not raise questions for our national organizations to answer. The interactive relation with this environment lies in the capacity to benefit from its accumulation of knowledge, information, skills and experiences. This is on two main levels: the first level involves cognitive accumulation, and it is the duty of national systems to absorb this scientific progress and to nationalize its

products; the second level is the level of the system itself. Developed countries started creating these systems very early and have therefore gained a lot of experience when it comes to the system's role, the best ways to improve its efficiency and facilitate its integration in the global national mission as well as the capacity to invest its outcomes in social promotion and development.

We can define the following components of the research system:

1. Higher studies and doctoral schools

It is recognized that postgraduate research (especially doctoral research) is the cornerstone of scientific research, especially in universities (higher education students are the unknown soldiers of scientific research) and in scientific research centres. The nationalization of these types of research requires a quality leap in the external scholarship policies, summarized in the following areas:

- Developing non-research master's scholarship at the national level so that MA students will not be sent abroad except in necessary cases.
- The adoption of a joint supervision system, in order to prevent dropouts, the nationalization of research, the establishment of laboratories, the building of academic skills, the transfer of knowledge and methods through short term stays in foreign laboratories. It is possible to do so through the signing of bilateral memorandums of understanding that define the role of both parties and the names of the supervisors. These memorandums also have to include the research requirements and the duration of the student's stay in the laboratories.
- The promotion of postgraduate research: with some exceptions, the number of students enrolled in higher education programs in Arab universities is still very low in comparison with other countries.

2. Foreign relations of cooperation

When we talk about foreign scientific cooperation, we mean more than the traditional cooperation methods. It should involve the sending of staff to conduct postgraduate studies such as masters or PhDs, enabling professors to visit research institutions (for a few months or a year), allowing technicians to train on new equipment and technology, and the purchase and installation of new equipment.

Despite the importance of these methods in training staff, building human capacities and preparing an adequate infrastructure for research and development, experience has clearly shown that they are insufficient to conduct serious research activities and to constitute a basis for scientific research. The objective of scientific cooperation is the adaptation of scientific research methods to the national framework and introducing new technologies and working methods that can interact with and develop the local environment. Therefore, it is very important to focus on undertaking local research and technical activities through foreign cooperation, by using the locally available equipment and by benefiting from local capacities, in order to link these activities to local requirements. The familiarization visits that researchers undertake are very important, but it is even more important to recruit foreign specialized experts to help develop the local activities. This requires a clear definition of local needs and the mobilization of sufficient financial resources to encourage foreign researchers to work in local research institutions.

Bilateral relations, such as the twinning of two institutions (or more) that have the same working methods, help to meet specific needs. They also enable activities to be undertaken in both institutions and they facilitate coordination. However, the main problem remains the financing

and implementation of these relations.

The existence of regional blocs, like the European Union, encourages another kind of scientific cooperation, i.e. multi-lateral projects. The European Union realized that such projects were important to enable member states to develop a scientific and technological capacity that could compete at the international level, especially with the United States and the Asian bloc. Member states of the European Union aim to establish a European research zone. The framework of research and development in European countries involves frame programs that define and finance joint research projects involving institutions from various countries. Very often, a minimum of three states has to be involved in the project. The participation of non-European countries in this project is possible and some states even work on expanding this participation, with the exception of certain domains. The participation of local institutions in these projects increases contact with foreign institutions. However it is important that the work of these institutions' is not restricted to statistics, field studies and technology promotion. It is vital for local institutions to participate in the scientific research activities.

VI. The Administration of Scientific Research

1. The mechanisms for marketing the outcomes of research

Market research can be accomplished in many ways such as publishing in local, Arab and international scientific journals, publishing information through local media, scientific reports and advisory and technical publications, organizing forums and conferences at local, Arab and international levels, and providing policymakers and key facilitators (private and government) with appropriate information on research outcomes.

During the past twenty years (Arab Human Development Report, 2002), the number of research papers published in the international press in the field of technology increased by 34,594 between 1990 and 1995. The biggest increase in absolute numbers was registered in Egypt and Saudi Arabia where 84% of research papers of the Arab region were published. Lebanon is the only country in the region where publications diminished (by 500 publications between 1990 and 1995). The number of citations from these published papers was also very small. According to the last Arab Human Development Report in 2002, only four research papers were published in the Arab region which were cited more that forty times. These figures are very low in comparison with papers published in the United States.

2. Links between research and teaching

We can answer some of the questions concerning the link between research and teaching as follows (Zubrick & Rossiter, 2001):

- a. A strong link between research and teaching will help universities to be more relevant to an information-based economy. Universities are in competition at the international level, which requires them to prepare students for a competitive labour market. In the long term, governments will support and promote research that can be beneficial for their economies.
- b. A strong link between research and teaching reinforces both fields. Indeed, researchers and policymakers in higher education give great importance to academic teaching for two main reasons: first, the importance that the public gives to the quality and credibility of higher education; second, the importance of educating students and building their capacities.

- c. The emphasis on academic research will allow universities to get closer to their important clients in industry and society which will help them to get the financial and moral help they need. Moreover, universities that give great importance to research are more attractive to scientific experts, more competitive with regard to student enrolments and more attractive for non-governmental capital.
- d. Strong links between research and teaching will promote the quality of research and will enrich dialogue and exchange between academics, students, industry, scientific communities and other beneficiaries. Indeed, applied research that is tied to industry, plays a very important role in the fields of research and teaching.
- e. Such strong link is beneficial to the students and to the members of the educational body in matters of teaching performance. The student has to acquire certain ways of thinking and the capacity to assess and build knowledge. All this requires serious efforts regarding the reorganization of teaching and education to ensure that the outcomes are consistent with the desired model.

3. Management of knowledge technology and the current mechanisms

Globalization and economic mergers are bringing many changes in the field of knowledge and technology transfer. In addition, the world trade organization is reorganizing trade.

The transfer of knowledge is useless unless it is accompanied by adoption processes at the national level. This process can be summarized in one term: acquisition of technology. Technology transfer has always been considered in the Arab world as the industrial transfer (means of production) of one product or more and organizing training on its use. In addition, package involves the commercializing of its products according to a legal license that contains a list of practices concerning the changes in the production process, and the available markets and the resources used.

The assimilation of technology can only be achieved when local experts understand the processes of production and the specifications of the material used, and have the capacity to develop it. It is also vital for the producer to use generated technology to develop innovative products that can be competitive on the international stage.

Thus, we can say that the management of knowledge and technology is based on the following patterns:

- The transfer of technology involves acquiring, experimenting and using technology.
- The management of technology assimilation involves the unbundling of technology, the adaptation of technology to the local environment and to the sustainable development process.
- The management of generating technology involves technological research and development, the management of a national innovation system, patents and intellectual property rights, generating pilot companies and financing technology.

The models of technological transfer are numerous. Some of the main ones are industrial licenses, strategic alliances, technical assistance contracts, conventions for patents and the use of trademarks, foreign direct investments, training and administrative and supervisory services, and the right to knowledge agreement.

In the context of technology transfer, two new patterns have recently emerged:

- An exponential increase of direct foreign investments and an increase in the services' share of these investments. When the technology is highly complex or confidential, big companies prefer this technological pattern since it allows the transfer to remain in the

company even when it is located in foreign countries.

- The decrease of the “Client Freedom” in technology transfer. For example in the selling of knowledge, licenses or trademarks and the attempt to integrate new determinants to the concession contracts, such as the delimitation of the selling zone, the determination of the sources of supply, the limitation of the market size or number of clients, contracts included in contracts, i.e. the selling of technology rights.

VII. The Development of Human Resources

The main mechanisms related to the management of human resources (Al Masry & others, 2006) in any scientific research institution are attracting human resources, planning human resources, vocational guidance and applying the predictive administrative method to human resources.

1. Ways to develop human resources

- 1) Increase the number of researchers according to development requirements.
- 2) Improving scientific skills, organizing and developing the working methods of researchers and their assistants.
- 3) Preparing and training the necessary staff with adequate quality standards.
- 4) Regularly revising the manpower distribution among administrative and scientific posts.
- 5) Addressing the problem of “the brain drain” and encouraging the return of “migrating” brains.
- 6) Providing researchers with the necessary working tools through modernization, establishment of laboratories and modern technological equipment.
- 7) Providing sufficient financial resources for human resources and research imperatives.
- 8) Developing the organizational and administrative infrastructure in all scientific institutions and guaranteeing the use of modern technology in their activities.
- 9) Promoting human resources management, motivating employees and efficiently evaluating their performance.
- 10) Improving the legislative and legal environment in order to develop scientific institutions and guarantee their independence.
- 11) Increasing the number of workers in scientific research and development and enhancing their capacities.
- 12) Creating and consolidating coordination ties between researchers and their foreign colleagues.
- 13) Creating and consolidating ties between research institutions and economic institutions.
- 14) Guaranteeing access to sources of information through modern technology, namely through the Internet, which is considered as a vital source of information and communication tool between researchers and scientific and economic institutions.
- 15) Improving the publishing of research according to economic and development needs.
- 16) Improving the economic, political, social and cultural state of affairs.

2. The imperatives of human resources (HR) development

- 1) In order to conduct any scientific research, it is necessary to take the following measures: define the financing party, define an expenditure mechanism, avoid reliance on a centralized authority in decisions concerning daily and urgent financing needs, define the financial share of researchers and other participants in the project (e.g. researchers,

- engineers, technicians), and facilitate the direct purchase of the required equipment without having to consult the university administration or research centre.
- 2) Creating a fund for supporting scientific research, technological development and innovation. This fund could be financed by the state, the private sector, or Arab, Islamic or international organizations.
 - 3) Encouraging the public sector institutions to finance projects in scientific research and technological development in their sphere of interest. These institutions can help to define these projects so that they can gain direct benefit from their outcomes.
 - 4) Encourage applied research with material benefits.
 - 5) Establishing a human resources incentives system which includes four aspects: material positive incentives for the distinguished, material negative incentives for non achievers, moral positive incentives for the distinguished, moral negative incentives for non achievers
 - 6) Adopting a predictive HR management system in scientific and research institutions.
 - 7) Benefiting from researchers according to specialization, qualification and experience.
 - 8) Defining the national development program and publicising it to open-op discussions with all stakeholders in order to determine the available resources, including financial, and the necessary cadre and their preparation.
 - 9) Developing higher education with a precise implementation plan defined by the facilitators in the fields of education, research, development and innovation, as well as those in economic and social development (from both the private and public sectors).
 - 10) Developing research and development institutions, providing them with specialized experts, granting them a large margin of independence and all the necessary resources.
 - 11) Assigning every university, faculty and educational institution the task of forming a committee to monitor their human and financial resources. This committee would present relevant reports in order to build a database to help in coordinating and planning efforts.
 - 12) Assigning every university, faculty and educational institution with the task of submitting a precise developmental plan. The plan should clarify needs in terms of training, projects, equipment and organizational structure. The plan should be developed in cooperation with private and public economic institutions and international and Arab organizations.
 - 13) Reducing time-consuming, complex bureaucratic and administrative procedures which constitute obstacles to the researchers' work. It is also necessary to adopt flexible administrative procedures in scientific institutions.
 - 14) Developing a new administrative policy for researchers, in compliance with the nature of their work. Indeed, researchers tend to be very independent in their work; they do not react well to restrictions, procedural organization and strict audit.
 - 15) Selecting researchers among the most engaged and distinguished.
 - 16) Recognising the importance of engagement and self-motivation for researchers in order to reach exceptional and innovative outcomes. Thus, it is necessary to encourage researchers and avoid framing their work in a rigid, predetermined way.
 - 17) Guaranteeing appropriate working conditions for researchers, such as good office space and information and communication tools.
 - 18) Building local, Arab and international networks between researchers who have similar or complementary specializations, in order to encourage collaboration.
 - 19) The institution should not rely solely on its internal staff but, when appropriate, seek

- external expertise and consult other institutions in helping to solve particular issues.
- 20) Choosing the most promising students and directing them towards research centres and higher institutes. Sending some students to developed countries in order for them to pursue their education.
 - 21) Focusing on the importance of science and knowledge. Giving students a thirst for knowledge and education, stimulating their curiosity and encouraging them to consult books and references.
 - 22) Determining policies for internal and external educational scholarship programmes, in compliance with cooperation agreements.
 - 23) Introducing disciplines in methodologies of thinking and innovation and communication skills in schools and universities.
 - 24) Focusing on preparing and training experts in scientific research through creating a permanent training department in all faculties and research institutions. Recruiting foreign experts for short training seminars.
 - 25) Providing scientific publications and periodicals as well as travelling to participate in conferences and conferences. Following participation in these seminars, experiences need to be shared with the research community to ensure that local research reflect international research practices and activities.
 - 26) Determining masters and PhDs themes and topics in universities and research centres, according to the needs of social and economic institutions.
 - 27) Facilitating financial procedures for recruiting foreign professors to deliver lectures and supervise doctoral research.
 - 28) Creating an office for sponsoring inventors and innovators.
 - 29) Supporting and developing an exhibit of inventions and innovations. Reviewing the selection of exhibits to check their quality and scientific reliability. Ensuring a high level of media coverage and increasing the value of awards.
 - 30) Creating a website in every scientific institution with a brief overview of the institution's identity, its goals, staff, and its current and future activities.
 - 31) Benefiting from cooperative programs with the European Union. Cooperating with developed countries in common research and in technology transfer.
 - 32) Inaugurating a scientific museum, organizing scientific exhibitions with the aim of attracting students and citizens and emphasizing the importance of science. Calling upon private and public institutions to provide financial support.
 - 33) Encouraging teamwork and cooperating in order to achieve the assigned goals.

VIII. Performance Indicators and Standards to Evaluate the Scientific Research System and its Accomplishments

The system of research, development and innovation needs standards and measuring indexes to evaluate its performance. These standards can be categorized as follows:

- Performance standards of scientific institutions
- Performance standards of scientific experts working in these institutions
- Standards linking the outcomes of the institutions' activities to aspect of development.

All these measurable standards can evaluate the performance of the system. Indeed they all reflect the actual efficiency of the system's work mechanisms and outcomes and these two factors are essential for an accurate evaluation. The standards that can be adopted to evaluate

the system's performance can be outlined as follows:

1. Evaluation Standards of the system's outcomes

This is a list of standards that reflect the direct scientific or practical results of the system's work:

- a. Scientific referred publications acknowledged in scientific records and international conferences
- b. The number of patents delivered and the numbers of patents that were actually invested in
- c. Higher scientific degrees granted in the context of the scientific research activities undertaken in the system's institutions
- d. The number of job opportunities created by the system's affiliated institutions as a result of research-oriented activities
- e. Contracts concluded between research institutes and the productive sector as well as the size of the funding provided by these contracts
- f. The system's goods and products that promote self-sufficiency, even if they are currently available
- g. The improvement of human health and environment
- h. The number of generated technological poles or incubators related to the system's activities

2. Standards evaluating the system's work mechanisms

This is a list of standards evaluating some important aspects of inputs and work mechanisms and that affect global performance:

- a. Scientific cooperation agreements that link the different institutions of the system
- b. Scientific cooperation agreements that link the system's institutions to external facilitators
- c. The size and source of the system's funding
- d. The size of expenditure allocated to research and development in the system's productive institutions.

3. Other standards that indirectly reflect the system's success and development

This is a list of standards reflecting the system's scientific reliability, its capacity to host highly qualified scientific experts and its capacity to interact with similar regional and international systems:

- a. The number of award-winning experts working in the system's institutions
- b. The increase in the number of people working in the scientific research institutions during a specific period of time, and improvements in their qualifications
- c. A series of standards evaluating the possibility of linking the national research and development system to regional and international systems. These standards include joint research projects aimed at producing an investable product, the number of local researchers participating in joint research conducted in foreign laboratories, the number of hosted researchers involved in joint research and the number of national hosting laboratories.

IX - The Role of Mediating and Supporting Institutions

The contribution of institutions in offering mediation services and the support that the private

sector provides to scientific research and technological development helps to bolster economic growth and to improve and diversify productivity.

One of the biggest challenges that face applied scientific research in Arab countries is the lack of private sector contribution in enhancing, modernizing and financing scientific research. According to the World Economic Development Report, in 2006 private institutions spent approximately 12.6 million dollars to finance scientific research in all Arab countries i.e. only 2.9% of total research and development expenses, whereas state budgets allocated 48.9 million dollars (61.5%) and universities paid 217.3 million dollars (27.8%).

Table 2: Scientific Research Sources of Financing in Arab Countries (United Nations, 2005)

Expenses in Percentage Terms	Expenses in Numbers (million dollars)	Source of Financing
61.5%	840.9	State Budgets
27.8%	217.3	Universities Budgets
2.9%	12.6	Private Sector
7.8%	61.5	External Financing
100%	782.3	Total

1. Importance and role of mediation and supporting institutions in socioeconomic development

The private sector and the institutions that provide mediation services and support contribute to development plans, given that they play an important role in using local resources to enlarge and diversify national revenue sources, expand productivity and increase the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Consequently, new objectives, plans and strategies must be defined so that governments devote a bigger role to the institutions that provide mediation services and support, whether through financing or through establishing research centres and incubators that support scientific research and technological development. As a result, the following measures are needed:

- a. Increase the contribution of private sector institutions in mediating and supporting socio-economic development
- b. Define ways to reach this policy
- c. Implement the policy

The private sector (along with the mediating institutions) plays a major role in achieving these objectives through providing permanent support to scientific research. This support can be provided by chambers of commerce and industry and relevant councils that represent the private sector. These chambers have to support scientific research activities in all domains, such as (Shaaban, 2008):

- 1) Developing strong partnerships with local and international institutions with the aim of improving private sector activities
- 2) Monitoring the performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) to draw conclusions that help enhance their efficiency
- 3) Setting integrated networks of information and statistics about market needs in terms of scientific research

- 4) Outlining the private sector market's detailed needs and requirements
- 5) Specifying investment opportunities suitable for research
- 6) Presenting the viewpoints of businessmen in all sectors that support scientific research
- 7) Enabling scientific research centres to give advice on financial, economic and organizational problems
- 8) Raising all important local and international issues related to research during forums and conferences related to the research process
- 9) Preparing annual reports, statements and analytical indicators for companies financing scientific research centres
- 10) Building a favourable investment environment to attract local and foreign investments
- 11) Making scientific research results public so that the private sector can benefit from them
- 12) Encouraging the private sector to establish independent university-affiliated centres and institutes for research and development
- 13) Building cooperation bridges with scientific research institutions all over the world
- 14) Signing scientific cooperation agreements with universities and integrate research

2. Obstacles preventing the mediating and supporting institutions from effectively playing their role in developing scientific research

Institutions that provide mediation services and support face many obstacles such as (Turkmani, 2006):

- The absence of chambers of commerce, industry and agriculture in terms of developing cooperation between universities and research centres
- Weak communication channels between mediating and supporting institutions and scientific research institutions
- Low interest in the problems and requirements of productive sectors
- Poor spending on scientific studies aimed at developing enterprises
- The gap between industrial sectors and scientific research institutions
- The absence of coordination and cooperation within similar industrial projects in a single industrial sector

3. The big issues at stake in science and technology

The lack of water resources is the biggest issue facing Arab countries in the 21st century. According to a study undertaken by the World Water Organization (Journal of Water Resources Development, 1999) one third of the global population i.e. 2.7 billion people will face an acute lack of drinking water by 2025.

The major challenge facing developed countries is improving water resources management to assure its sustainability and quality, whilst meeting all the needs without harming the ecosystem. With this end in view, scientific and technological capacities are being mobilized and improved methods are being developed for the global management and the sustainable exploitation of water resources. Studies are being undertaken concerning the climatic characteristics of humid zones and freshwater ecosystems. New techniques are being put in place for water filtering and treatment, as well as new water protection methods and early warning systems for on natural disasters. Desalination techniques are being developed from two integrated aspects - technical and economic - and efforts are being deployed to build plants that can be easily used and

maintained, and are economical and environmentally friendly.

In terms of the environment (SIBIS, 2001), Earth's situation is not much better than that described for water due to the increase in toxic greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, nuclear waste storage, risks of nuclear proliferation (due to civil nuclear uses) and desertification in the south. Industrial countries are mainly to blame for this situation, but by 2020, the south will imitate northern models, as rising consumption will lead to higher oil production and thus to more greenhouse emissions.

Taking up these environmental challenges requires more scientific discoveries to develop wind and solar energy that can be used in the future. Scientific research is increasingly focusing on improving the efficiency of bioreactors that provide many solutions. For example, in water recycling, researchers are working on genetically modified components that can absorb polluting materials. This initiative could lead to significant developments in combating water pollution and oil spills. This breakthrough could also be used to enable polluted soils to recover their arability. In terms of agriculture and nutrition (World Summit on the Information Society, 2003), scientific and technological progress will lead to a revolution, as more plants and animals genomes will be unveiled, especially the genomes of insects, making them easier to control. This progress will also help create additional and new micro-organisms for plants and animals, as well as new management systems, to guarantee soil renewal. As a result, farmers can adopt developed techniques that take into consideration the climate, soil treatment and plant selection. They can also use a manufactured tailor-made soil that guarantees soil renewal and protects greenhouse plants and those growing naturally.

Genetic modification of plants (Bizri, 2002) will pave the way for the diversification of food and less animal protein on the plates of the developed world's population. New healthy, ecological and ethical procedures will shed light on the importance of the vegetarian diet. New types of genetically modified food will be available according to the consumers' tastes, nutritional needs and health. Nutritional concerns (preserving food, developing new types and improving existing ones) fall within the scope of many fields, such as physics, chemistry, biology, engineering and industrial management.

In terms of health (European Trend Chart on Innovation, 2005), a deeper understanding of human genetics will pave the way for new methods that will not only be based on prevention, but also on the reinforcement of physical and intellectual capacities. Potential relationships between diseases and disorders will be highlighted as biochemical reactions become better understood, particularly the ones that lead to diseases, disorders and interactions with the environment or due to individual personal history.

Moreover, the physiological, chemical and genetic causes of human behaviour would be unveiled and thus combating diseases and strengthening individuals would become common practice. In addition, new techniques that help control the brain and the way of thinking will be developed and used to control emotions, capacity to learn, senses, memory and other psychological states. In terms of medicines (ESCWA-UNESCO, 1998), much research is currently being carried out to reuse known drugs for new purposes. For example, the use of vitamin D to combat cancer cell expansion or relieve sound cells that come into contact with exogenous bodies such as contact lenses and inhalers. Moreover several research activities are being undertaken to produce medicines from micro-organisms coming from metabolic reactions, mutations and genetic engineering. Some researchers are also working on developing vaccinations, lotions and serums to strengthen immunity against HIV.

In terms of nanotechnology (World Development Indicators, 2002), developed countries attach

great importance to this science of particles and atoms whose name derives from nanometre i.e. one billionth of a meter. Nanotechnology is based on the study of particles and is not only a revolution in the design and use of equipment, but it also entails many social and economic aspects. Scientists and technicians are eager to develop these techniques which help to measure and evaluate things at the atomic level. In addition, according to the results of some laboratories, these techniques can be used in different areas such as microelectronics, energy preservation, medicine and engineering. Moreover, nanotechnology is expected to start a revolution in the near future for producing materials and enhancing the capacities of computers and informatics in order to resolve the most difficult issues. These new methods of production would be smarter and in-line with sustainable development and environment protection, given that they produce more with less. Nowadays, nanotechnology generates among scientists, industrialists and bold investors a momentum similar to the interest aroused by biotechnology two decades ago.

X. Conclusions and Recommendations

This essay highlighted first the importance of an integrated triad composed of governments, scientific research institutions and their environment and the researcher. This is the best formula for a successful process. If any of these components is absent, research is a mere personal initiative that does not bring any added value to development and fails to make scientific research one of the state's most important assets and the force behind its productivity. It is, therefore, important to take the following measures:

- Create scientific and technological groupings and clubs for scientists and researchers.
- Promote consciousness of the economic and developmental benefits of science, technology and innovation.
- Establish an Arab scientific news agency responsible for disseminating information about science in Arab countries and international scientific innovations in a variety of languages.
- Launch initiatives that promote national productivity through competitions under the slogan "Made in ..."
- Establish within Arab research and development institutions effective offices that disseminate scientific knowledge.
- Develop and improve the Arab environment at the financial, social, academic and legislative levels, especially in terms of intellectual property rights.
- Establish institutions that offer mediation services and innovation centres which match scientific research institutions along with secondary and tertiary sectors to provide research with production possibilities and investment.

Furthermore, this paper considered that it was essential to adopt a medium and long term strategic approach to build a research society, while keeping in mind the importance of international cooperation to raise local research to the level of international research. This process is vital as it lays the foundations of a strong, competitive, productive and innovative scientific community that provides for the needs of its society. In this regard, it is important to take the following measures:

- Enhance inter-Arab scientific cooperation including the cooperation with Arab scientists in the West. .
- Set up networks among universities and research centres in Arab countries through new information technology, in order to follow up the latest developments in science, technology and innovation throughout the world.

- Improve planning and organization of research, development and innovation activities while implementing quality standards.
- Establish centres for scientific and technological restructuring in each Arab country and in the Arab region as a whole, to face the scientific and technological challenges of the 21st century.

This paper considered the main scientific and technological issues relevant for strong partnerships with the private sector and with scientific research institutions all over the world. For this to happen, it is important to take the following measures:

- Launch a joint Arab initiative for biotechnology and relevant ethics.
- Encourage Arab universities and research institutions to use nanotechnology and smart materials.
- Establish desalination plants in Arab countries using new technology and create an advisory council in charge of water affairs.
- Set up an initiative for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.
- Launch joint Arab projects in renewable energy, especially photovoltaic and solar energy, bio-fuels and biogas.
- Set up an initiative to build ecological centres with Arab and international financing for industrial waste treatment in Arab countries.
- Set up an initiative to create joint Arab specialized centres and research units for issues such as diabetes, heart disease, therapeutic plants, environmental health, metabolic science, health awareness and polio.
- Establish an Arab network in the agricultural sector to enhance the scientific and technical capability of people working in this sector and to combat desertification.
- In general, this paper has shed some light on the different related issues that should be taken into consideration when designing new approaches to scientific research. However, the integration between the local, Arab and international approaches is one of the most important requirements in the development of scientific research in the new era of globalization.

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The Social Sciences Research in the Arab East Dilemmas of the Research Centres outside of the University¹

Sari Hanafi²

Abstract

The donor community encourages the creation and the development of such centres. According to the new policy agenda and post-Washington consensus, there should be simultaneously empowerment of the civil society institutions and disempowerment of the state. The university was seen and treated as a public institution as if it were part of the State. Though they have recognized the institutional pitfalls in moving research outside the domain of universities, they highlight the benefits of doing research within small scale units that are not hampered by university bureaucracy and are flexible and efficient. In this process the university becomes a very marginal actor in term of research.

The growth of research groups outside the university has led to three contradictory consequences for the production of research. First, it has discouraged faculty members in universities from conducting research, although some have engaged in collaboration with off-campus centres. Second, the centres have well endowed libraries and are better stocked with recent titles than those within the universities. They are off-limit to University students and scholars. The third relates to the quality and form of the production of research. Research promoted by these centres is policy oriented, such as the research on population studies. A majority of these studies remain unpublished or, if published, they do not undergo a proper peer review process. Additionally, this form of funding has encouraged consultancies. Such research is based on low-level generalizations and extrapolates from tables derived from small samples. This research draws upon the fieldwork conducted in the framework of the project "Evaluation of Scientific and Technological capabilities in Mediterranean countries (ESTIME)"

La tâche essentielle de la sociologie du monde arabe consiste à mener un double travail critique a) une déconstruction des concepts issus du savoir et des discours sociologiques qui ont parlé à la place du monde arabe, et qui sont marqués par une prédominance occidentale et une idéologie ethnocentriste, b) et en même temps une critique du savoir et des discours élaborés par les différentes sociétés du monde arabe pour elles-mêmes (Khatibi, 1975 p. 1).

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Ce qui est en jeu dans la pratique des experts, ce n'est pas tant l'accumulation d'un savoir sur la société 'indigène' dans sa "spécificité" que la mise au point de technologies pour sa transformation (Roussillon, 2002).

I. Introduction: the History of Social sciences as a Nexus between the Global and the Local

These two quotes with which I start my study suggest a problematic relationship between the heritage of the Western social sciences and the local society in the Arab region. I join Alain Roussillon (2002) who argues that sociology in the Arab World was part of the colonial project. Orientalist texts such as the five volume *Description de l'Egypte* (Description of Egypt) map out this intent. During the latter part of the colonial period, and especially after independence of the Arab states, an indigenous sociology or *sociologie musulmane* (Muslim Sociology) emerged. It attempted to decipher the specific nature of the segmented Arab society and yet retained an Orientalist position by investigating its 'exotic' culture. It was only in the 1970s and 1980s that a social sciences community emerged in the Arab region to examine its own society. This social sciences community occupied a complex and contradictory relationship with Western social sciences and scientists. It is structured by an unequal partnership as its analysis remained dependent on the academic perspectives developed in the West and yet it shared a relationship of collegiality with the West. As a result social sciences are often taken as a Western discipline raising the question of their legitimacy.

This relationship to the West is not only historical but also recent. Since the Washington Conesus in 1995 (Hanafi and Tabar, 2005) and its recommendation to direct aid not only to government but also to civil society, the international community has contributed to the creation and subsidizing of research activities in research centres located outside of national universities. Understanding the research production of sociology cannot be fully comprehended without referring both to the genesis of the social sciences in this region since the colonial era, and to the political economy of the aid system. This paper will focus on the impact of the latter factor on both the structure and production of research in the Arab East (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestinian territory and Syria). The growth in the number of research centres in the Arab East is related to the proliferation of the phenomenon of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). There are almost 122 centres involved in research activities within this area, which emerged in the context of the political transition in the Palestinian territory and Lebanon as well as the economic transition in Egypt and Jordan. This abundance is not only specific to this particular region but, more generally, it refers to the context of any developing country to which the international community conceived aid as a way to promote the recipient country's civil society.

In this paper, I analyze how the intersection between structures of power within the society and state, the international community and the market of research production, influence the themes of research and the relationship between the donors and the NGOs. Thus, this study will question the research centres which hold the status of NGOs unaffiliated with academic institutions and the consequences these centres have on research production. This study will be based on two research programs. In the first program, ESTIME, which concerned donors' funding towards research activities³, 52 interviews were undertaken with several donors, international

³ The fieldwork was conducted under the framework of the research project ESTIME. The ESTIME project (Evaluation of Scientific and Technological capabilities in Mediterranean countries) aims at describing the scientific and technological capabilities of eight research partners' countries of the Mediterranean. The project

organizations involved in research funding in the Arab East, as well as their recipients from the research centres and universities. The second research program that I coordinated focuses on the relationship between donors, international organizations and Palestinian NGOs, and specifically on agenda-setting and networking between the global and the local⁴.

This study will also shed light on the role of local NGO leaders, including researchers, as a new elite – hereby qualified as the ‘globalized elite’ – who have access to the international arena (such as sector-related UN conferences and international networks), but participate very weakly in their research agenda setting. While raising the dominant paradigms (research topics and objects, research methodology, research questions), this study will place more emphasis on actors and the structure of the research field.

After mapping the research structures, I will also delve into the ways through which external actors influence research production in the region. These actors are donor agencies (such as the French Cooperation, German Stiftungs, the Population Council, and UN agencies) and international organizations (such as the Ford Foundation of the Canadian agency IDRC). I will make reference to paradigms revealed from general trends, without any pretension of doing an inventory of funding and research centres activities, since many exceptions can be found within these trends.

II. Research Structure in the Arab East

Many scholars from Maghreb involved in the ESTIME project clearly indicated that the phenomenon of research centres taking the form of NGOs is not very widespread. However, the case of the Arab East is quite different. Research centres, either private or as NGOs, are flourishing, launching several surveys in applied social research for two particular reasons: the first being the peace processes of both Lebanon (after the Taef Agreement of 1989) and the Palestinian territory (after Oslo 1993), and the second concerning economic liberalization in Jordan and Egypt. The keyword for the donors was “the reinforcement” of civil society. These centres produce either research or pure consultancy (in other words, very short research where the output is often an unpublished report)⁵.

The survey I have carried out concerning research centres in the region shows that research activities have mainly been conducted by two different types of organizations: first, by specialized research organizations such as research centres that have emerged either within or without university settings, and second, by NGOs specialized in development, advocacy and cooperative efforts (like The Lebanese Centre for Policy Studies). For instance, in the Palestinian territory, table 1 demonstrates that research production is very much marginalized when it comes to university affiliated institutions (only four centres constituting 10%)⁶, while the predominant

portrays the close links between both the European and Mediterranean research spaces by providing precise indications on research, technological development, and innovation in the Mediterranean region, supported by empirical investigations and a thorough revision of sources of information. ESTIME is a project of the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement – IRD.

⁴ The research on this program was conducted with Linda Taber and led to the publication of a book. (Hanafi & Tabar, 2005).

⁵ IFPO and ESTIME established in 2005 a database for research centres and researchers. Among the 54 research centres, there are 27 centres which published publication labelled as grey literature: “En général les ONG éditent soit des guides, pour celles qui sont très proches du terrain et font de la formation, des rapports et enquêtes, les universités des actes de colloque». (IFPO, 2007)

⁶ Three are connected to the University of Birzeit (Public Health institution, Law Center and Birzeit Centre for Development Studies) and one is connected to Al-Qds University (Jerusalem Studies Centre).

number of organizations are NGOs. Some 41% of the organizations producing research are specialized bodies while the rest are NGOs specializing in advocacy and development.

Table 1: Organisms producing research in the Palestinian Territory

Type of Centre	Number	%
NGOs: Research Centres	13	31
NGOs: Development and Advocacy Centres	16	38
NGOs: Development, Advocacy & Research Ceter	9	21
University Research Centre	4	10
Total	42	100

In Jordan we find diversity in the status of the research organization, but what is important is that the vast majority of the organizations are outside the premises of universities. See table 2.

Table 2: Organisms producing research in Jordan

Type of Centre	Number	%
Private research centres and offices of consultancy	23	31
NGOs	20	27
Governmental Institutions	16	21
International institutions	13	17
Library or Documentation centres	3	4
Total	75	100

Source: (IFPO, 2007) based on the (CERMOC, 1995). This number is reduced now to only 61 active organizations.

However we have two specific cases in the region: from one side, Syria and Lebanon, and from the other side, Egypt. In Lebanon the university is still the bastion of research: according to the ESTIME survey, 85% (60 out of 71) of the researchers studied are affiliated with the Lebanese universities (IFPO, 2007). Syria has the same situation but for different reasons: the government still controls what is produced in the social sciences and humanities. These are strongly apologetic, restricted in their research approaches, controlled by single-party authorities, and used for ideological propaganda and political manipulation. In contrast to other countries, Egypt constitutes a specific case where the importance of public research centres in social sciences is a phenomenon that dates back to the 1950s. Egypt holds the National Centre for Sociological and Criminological Research (NCSCR) based in Cairo, as well as the semi-public institution Al-Ahram Centre for Strategic Studies. Other centres are university affiliated like The American Research Centre in Egypt (ARCE), which is also based in Cairo.

The source of funding for these institutions does not only come from Western donors, but also from the Gulf monarchies. These absolute monarchies often finance non-critical social sciences and the Islamization of these sciences, as well as technical research centres. However, the picture has recently become more complex, especially with regards to Qatar's contribution to the promotion of research topics, like democracy. Other than Western, Gulf and national

funding, there is also funding from some pan Arab centres like the Arab Unity Studies Centre and the Institute of Palestine Studies. Both institutions survive thanks to endowments from Arab business people.

The growth of research groups outside the university has led to three contradictory consequences for the production of research. First, it has discouraged faculty members in universities from conducting research, although some have engaged in collaboration with off-campus centres. These centres are well-endowed and their libraries are better stocked with recent titles compared to those within the universities. However, these libraries remain private, usually not open to the public and when they are, they have regulated opening hours. Second, since they are off-campus and scattered, these research centres have not encouraged graduate and undergraduate students to be involved in research⁷. The ESTIME project reported that such centres do not often advertise their library in their website or brochures (IFPO, 2007). More generally, these research centres make little effort to cooperate with universities by opening their resources to university students and faculty. The third consequence relates to the quality and form of the production of research. Research promoted by these centres is policy oriented, such as the research on population studies (2004). A majority of these studies remain unpublished or if published, they do not undergo a proper peer review process. Additionally, this form of funding has encouraged consultancies and fast research (like fast food) where research is designed, implemented and analyzed within half a year. Such research is based on low-level generalizations and extrapolations from tables derived from small samples. Some funding organizations do not promote research, but rather fund only workshops and networking activities within research projects.

III. The Research “Field” and the Research Community

While one may find large research communities in Lebanon and Egypt (and to a lesser extent, in Jordan) scattered between universities and research centres, this is not the case in the Palestinian territory, where there are very few senior researchers who succeed in attaining a professional trajectory based mainly on teaching and conducting research. Very few scholars labelled by Vincent Romani (2001) as *intellectual entrepreneurs* have shared in the research contracts in the Palestinian territory. One prominent researcher cynically disclosed to me that he is currently involved in eight research projects. The research field is thus threatened by a model of market-based centres - the production and consumption of this research is for specific clients and not for the public. Contrary to both Lebanon and Egypt, Jordan suffers from a lack of proper research centres. IFPO/Amman (Ex-CERMOC) was a pioneer in producing the bulk of research concerning social history, migration and refugee camps in Jordan. For example, the Centre of Strategic Studies established at Jordan University produces political literature, while the Centre of Urdon al-Jadid (the New Jordan), founded in the 1990s, produced good research about social history, but ended up often producing rather journalistic studies on the Jordanian economy, political system, and the process of democratization.

This has implications in terms of investment. There is an overwhelming bias towards physical infrastructure rather than human resources within these research centres. For example, most centres have excellent communication systems, such as the Internet, websites, brochures,

⁷ One Masters student in Ramallah reported sadly that “they are forced to run around the West Bank from one city to another city to find one book here and another there. While there is no centralized public library (of course the municipality library usually is very poor), the acquisition in university libraries depends entirely on book donation.”

publications and newsletters. The discourse of institution and capacity building of both donors and local NGOs often concerns equipment more than human resources. It is very rare to find training programs for researchers working in these centres. However their research staff is recruited on contract for the term of the projects (generally eighteen months) while administrative staff is permanent. As a result, researchers shift from one centre to another depending on project availability. This mobility is salient and prevents researchers from accumulating experience. This situation compels many competent graduates to seek employment in international NGOs, developmental fields, or even as employees in government administration. Reflexive research thereby loses out. Individual researchers do not play a role in setting-up research programs inside these research centres. The majority of these research centres do not hold weekly or monthly meetings, and thus they do not share decisions with the contracted researchers. It is no wonder that these centres remain associated with single individuals and, at best, the decision making is shared between the director of the centre and the board. This explains why so many of these research centres have a diverse range of research projects with no program federating them.

The absence of the participation of young and junior researchers in the decision-making process has reinforced their marginalization and has kept them in the shadows. The majority of seminars are closed to the public and the invitation process is often personal, composed almost entirely of clientele who are close to the NGO spheres and research centres. This concerns not only the attendants but also the participants who belong to the older generation of researchers.

In describing the closed nature of the research field, one researcher from Ramallah stated, "Tell me the title of a conference and I will guess the chosen speaker." It is striking that until now it is very rare to find a call for papers for the workshops or conferences that have been held. In the process of organizing the Middle East Research Awards (MEAwards) research group on return migration - a type of brainstorming group - some of those who received the call for papers found it quite insulting to be required to provide abstracts and CVs; they thought that their names should have been sufficient for their selection. I will later discuss the case of the MEAwards.

Pierre Bourdieu's concept of the field (*champ*) helps illuminate the nature of intellectual production⁸. The field is a result of interaction between the specific rules of the field, the agent's habitus and the agent's capital (social, economic, cultural and symbolic) (Bourdieu, 1990). In the case of Palestine, the rules of the research-field are complex and established not only by local actors but also by the donor agencies. The latter not only allocate the research contracts to the research centres but also influence staff recruitment.

The field is a social arena of struggle over the appropriation of certain types of capital. While scholars often focus on diverging ideas and ideologies to explain conflict within a field, they tend to overlook the power structure shaping it. There are many fault lines inside this structure: between the well established senior scholars versus junior newcomers and between English speakers versus Arabic and French speakers. The senior researchers and English speakers impede the latter in establishing themselves⁹. Ironically, after contributing to the marginalization of the new researchers and the graduate students, this research elite has complained about the lack of competent researchers. Most senior researchers are located in the capitals (Amman¹⁰, Cairo,

⁸ A field is a system of social positions (for instance, a research field) structured internally in terms of power relationships (the power differential between universities, research centres, senior and junior researchers).

⁹ Roussillon (2002) was not convinced by the notion of a field, because he considered the research community in Egypt to be extremely fragmented, thus rendering the concept of field inappropriate.

¹⁰ 58 out of 61 centres are located in Amman (IFPO 2007).

Beirut¹¹, Jerusalem and “Ramallah”), where they are in proximity of the donor community. Teaching may occur in any city but the research structure tends to be in the capital near the donor community¹². These conflicts allow for groups to develop within the sociological community. Following Jacques Kabanji’s (2005 pp. 75 - 77) ideal-types, one can distinguish between three types of sociologist. The first is the committed (or activist) sociologist who is engaged ideologically, politically and nationally in societal problems. The second group does not believe in the leading role of state in the modernization project of Arab society and is in search of new actors in civil society to fulfil this project. The final group consists of experts interested in sociological research as a tool for development in order to manage the social crisis but who do not engage in reflexive and critical theoretical research. For Roussillon (2002), in the specific context of Egypt, the tradition is rather of an apolitical sociology and what he called “structural a-politicism.” There is unequal competition in the society, because with the intervention of the donor agencies, there is a tendency to favour expert-sociologists at the expense of other figures. Competition between these three groups for resources allows for research to be dictated by an obsessive commitment to the paradigm of identity at the expense of social criticism. Contemporary sociological analysis has overstated externalities as well as the negative role of colonialism upon the local society and understated the internal factors and the contradictions inside this society. Additionally, the themes of study - such as democratization or public satisfaction - borrowed from the West and promoted by the donors, do not reflect the internal processes as organic to contemporary society. Simultaneously, the study of new local themes is not encouraged. Because of this contradiction, researchers are caught in a trap: a criticism of the lack of democracy implies a criticism of existing power structures and, by implication, means an acceptance of the positions represented by international donor communities. This is why many debates in the region often end up being parochial and reflect old debates. These debates were often marked by a discourse of exceptionalism, specificity and particularism of the society in question as compared to perceived ‘others,’ therefore necessitating special social science agendas and methods governed by national considerations (Hanafi, 1999), to the point of mythologizing their uniqueness as in the case of the research on Palestinian and Lebanese issues¹³. In the case of Lebanon, many research projects and publications start with the statement that the Lebanese political system cannot be analyzed in the light of the political science categories of secularism versus sectarianism and that the Lebanese society is unique in the Arab region. The outcome then is often practical knowledge (Romani, 2007), lacking deep conceptualization, a comparative perspective and criticism. Having said that, I am in favour of the public intellectual who takes interest in the hot issues of society, especially when they are not part of one’s specialty. (Burawoy, 2007) In the last four years, after suicide bombing became the main mode of military action among Palestinians, we see a new trend among some Palestinian sociologists to criticize such nationalism and to be committed to the transformation of the Palestinian community. Many Palestinian scholars have condemned such acts through petitions and articles in the Palestinian newspapers labelling it as a war crime.

IV. Aid System and the Emerging NGO Status’s Research centers

These processes have become starkly clear due to the changes in funding after the 1990s as a

¹¹ Out of 54 centres, 46, or approximately 85%, are located in Beirut (IFPO 2007).

¹² See the Romani study about sociologists in the West Bank (2007).

¹³ See, for instance, the critical review of the research trends on the Palestinian refugee problem in Hanafi (2006) and Zureik (2003).

result of an increase in the number of research centres promoted by donors in collaboration with the local elite. Before 1990, sociological research was produced mainly in universities.

The Palestinian case is very revealing. For instance, the book *The Sociology of the Palestinians* was written to create an “attached, committed and action-oriented” (Nakhleh and Zureik, 1980 pp. 11-12) sociology of Palestine that is sensitive to dependency, social classes and colonial exploitation (Tamari, 1980). This perceived orientation of sociology changed in the nineties. One of the major reasons for this shift is due to the institutional setting of the research. The increase in the number of foreign donor-driven research centres is part of the neoliberal agenda. The latter believes in the need to promote local civil society organizations to facilitate the shift from a conflict-ridden society to a post-conflict one, with the aim of reconfiguring the ways by which subordinate classes are incorporated into emerging state-society relations. This is particularly true today in the case of Palestine, which has a long history of internal and external conflicts. This agenda has direct implications on the structure of social science knowledge. Krishna et al. (1998: 269) argues that instead of creating national institutions that organize its knowledge in coherent structures, this type of agenda creates hierarchies in the research field. In the context of Palestine, this agenda has serious implications, given its weak institutional educational structure, the occupation of its territory and the enormous influence of international communities in its internal politics.

If we project this process onto the research agenda in the Arab East, we see that the transformations in the donor agenda are intrinsically linked to three complex processes:

Firstly, from the early 1990s there was a fundamental shift in the political economy of aid in NGOs. Internationally, this moment coincided with a change in the sources of aid: solidarity-based support between Northern and Southern NGOs withered away and was replaced by bilateral and multilateral relations between Southern NGOs and governmental and development agencies. Regionally and locally, this period coincided with the 1991 Gulf War and the onset of the Madrid peace talks, through which Palestine’s geopolitical status was reconfigured and the West Bank and Gaza Strip were recast as sites of ‘peace-making’.

Secondly, the shift in the political economy of aid in NGOs in the region created new internal forms of social and political capital. As a result, the establishment of research centres was encouraged at the expense of giving aid to universities; this was part of the new policy agenda for the empowerment of civil society institutions.

Thirdly, the entry of local NGOs into aid channels has led to new subject formation and changes in the conceptual and institutional foundation of NGOs. NGOs represent *fragmentary sites*. That is, they are positioned locally, within development channels and network globally. A new globalized elite has emerged. This elite refers to a type of transnational subject formation, in which the actions of local actors are fore-grounded by debates, development paradigms and international standards, that are not bound to their local context.

In this context, and in the framework of a three-dimensional crisis of national science (financially, institutionally and in terms of self-confidence) (Waast, 1996), one needs to study the emergence of research centres in the form of NGOs. I will develop three points: the *institutional aspect*, the *emergence of knowledge society*, and finally the *impact in terms of elite formation*.

1. Institutional Aspects: Empowering NGOs and Disempowering the State

During the 1980s and 1990s, there was a process of professionalization and institutionalization of NGOs in their capacity for advocacy and research actions, and especially in their increased entry into development cooperation. NGOs have taken on new practices in the form of research, civic education training programs and awareness raising activities (Hammami, 1996).

International donors have encouraged the creation and the development of such centres. According to the new policy agenda, empowerment of civil society institutions is accompanied by a disempowerment of the state. In the Palestinian territory, the ties between the Ministry of Higher Education and the High Commission of Higher Education, on which Palestinian universities depend, have made the donors perceive universities less as civil society and more as public institutions. As a result, the university becomes a locus for producing graduate students who are disconnected from the research field. Moreover, the centre's leaders have preferred to decline university affiliations in the fear that the university will take a percentage of the allocated funds. In fact, the University of Birzeit, like other universities in the world, receives a percentage that varies from thirty to eighty percent of the project budget for running costs, administrative management and the facilities offered to the project. Occasionally these leaders have been direct in their replies, claiming individualistic reasons such as keeping research centres outside the control of some university faculty members and administrators. Consequently, Palestinian universities are unable to generate adequate resources for instruction and research.

While there are serious pitfalls in moving research outside the domain of universities, one should also acknowledge the benefits: these small scale units are not hampered by university bureaucracy and are flexible and efficient when closures and curfews become the general behaviour of the Israeli occupation forces in the Palestinian territory. Some donors and external agencies are well aware of this situation.

So the dilemma of empowering NGOs and disempowering the state does not take into account the fact that the number of the private universities is mushrooming: six universities in Lebanon, five in Egypt, four in Syria, four in Jordan and one in the Palestinian territory. These universities (with the relative exception of those in Lebanon) have few resources for research. In the Gulf monarchies, a different phenomenon is taking place. Instead of developing the national state universities, international branches of leading universities (including, for example, Carnegie Mellon, Texas A&M, Weill Cornell, Sorbonne and others) have grown. The parachuting (Bashour, 2006) of these structures does not encourage research production and the social sciences in these institutions are very marginal.

2. The Impact on Elite Formation

As a result of this logic of competition between different NGOs introduced by new sources of funding, new cleavages have emerged. These new actors represent an emerging elite, intertwining research, advocacy and development, and have overturned the old elite of the voluntary charitable societies which mainly work on relief. Moreover, internal divisions such as urban/rural, Islamist/secular, English/Arabic speakers and professional technocrat/militant activist have become more pronounced. These divisions represent markers, fissures, which reflect the process out of which this new elite is emerging.

The fact that the majority of research is done under the framework of NGO structures and not in specialized university research centres - or at least university affiliated research centres - has important consequences. They impact on the quality of the research and the type of approach and methodology used, as well as fostering the emergence of a new 'globalized' elite in local societies (Hanafi and Tabar, 2005). A central premise of this study, therefore, is that there is a re-structuring of knowledge and practices and a new process of elite formation underway in the Arab East research and NGO sector today. They are called the "globalized elite" because they have access to the global (e.g. UN events, international workshops, scientific congress) but do not participate in the decision-making of these global events.

The configuration of this field cannot be understood without looking at the general environment of the region and the impact of donor policies on the empowerment of an elite category of researchers. However, responsibility cannot be placed on the donors alone but is shared by the globalized elite, whose actions/research are disconnected from social demand. In fact, local actors have their own responsibility and role in promoting certain groups at the expense of others. The donors sometimes propose an idea without taking into consideration the conflicts, the internal divisions within the society, or the actors' own predilection. For example, the Network of Policy Research Centres (Rabita), a network proposed by the Ford Foundation in 1995 for five Palestinian research centres, ignored the fact that some of these organizations do not want to engage in networking. As a result, the networking initiative ended up as a small club. Although ideas and knowledge circulate within aid channels and are embraced by donors and NGOs alike, concepts are interpreted and re-articulated by local actors. Therefore, although the Ford Foundation conceived the idea for the network as an open space, this idea was de-coded and re-encoded by local actors as a clique.

The fact that many of the practitioners and leaders of NGOs are producing reports and/or publications in the field of research makes it hard to understand the relationship between knowledge and society without referring to the internal transformation of the NGO sector. Much has been written on the way salaried positions in the NGO sector attract skilled and educated individuals, often to the detriment of the public sector. The notion of elite used here is much broader and includes the way in which the rise of a new social formation disrupts the embeddedness of local organizations within local social networks, concomitant with the rise of the neoliberal paradigm which transforms the relationship between the individual and social institutions.

V. New Forms of Knowledge

Since the nineties, we can discern new forms of knowledge emerging that assess contemporary societies in the region¹⁴. As in the rest of the world, gender has become an important lens through which changes in contemporary society are assessed. Themes such as gender and democratization in the Arab world, gender and school curriculum and the oral history of women's experiences examine patriarchal and semi-patriarchal domination. However this research has not developed through the 'mainstream gender analysis' approach and it remains somewhat superficial unlike such research in the North and some parts of the South.

As we mentioned before, the donor community has, with only a few exceptions, channelled its funds to research centres holding NGO status. NGOs, as a fragmented site, were seen as an easy target that would accept the transfer of new research activity and methodology.

As a new research activity, the NGOs linked their research to a new notion of the 'public' that emphasises that citizens need to be satisfied of the actions exercised in social and political spheres. These NGOs' research centres claim that these models are being accepted by the new citizens thereby indicating the superiority of their analysis over the traditional in-depth comparative analysis advocated by the universities. To this end, developmental NGOs have created a new repertoire of concepts, which anthropologist Riccardo Bocco (2006) calls *knowledge society*. This term, he argues, together with other concepts such as *knowledge management* and *knowledge*

¹⁴ As Rosen noted, some international organizations have been leading agents for the development of certain fields. For him, the "Ford Foundation... played a constitutive role in the post-World War 2 establishment of area studies as well as development discourses and theories" (Rosen 1985).

sharing is actively promoted by the World Bank (1998) and has created a preconceived theory with its own specific methodology. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has come up with its own repertoire of concepts such as *knowledge-based aid* to add to those of the World Bank, creating a new perspective to assess and examine social processes in the Palestine territory. These concepts legitimize the interventions of donor driven aid through scientific tools, measurement and monitoring systems on the basis of preconceived past experiences (Bocco, 2006). Knowledge about the political system and social actors in the recipient societies become all important for orienting Western government and international organizations policy.

However, my analysis of the paradigmatical intervention of the donor community should not, in any way, suggest that there is homogeneity in the donors' agendas or in the reception of this agenda by the region's research centres. While donors exercise influence over local research centres in order to advance their own political agenda, this does not mean that it isn't met by resistance from their partners. In the research domain, when funding agencies support a specific research topic, they do so at the *expense of others*. Thus, research topics are indirectly "manipulated," but donors rarely wield any control over the actual research process. Moreover, although there may be a tendency for research projects to reflect the official political position of either the donor or its government, one should not exaggerate the occurrence of such episodes. For example, a German foundation supported a conference organized by the Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA) entitled, "The Impact of the Peace Process on Industrial Sectors in the Middle East." Although the foundation sought to emphasize the positive impact of the peace process on the industrial economies of the concerned countries, most of the studies presented at the conference concluded the opposite, at least in the transitional period, due to the intermittent progress of the peace process.

Not only are there new research activities and topics, but also a new methodology. Much research on the Palestinian territory and on Jordan is based on polls as they are the only available empirical data. Lebanon, Syria and Egypt seem to be different from the two former areas. In the Palestinian territory there are eight research centres whose activities are mainly concerned with producing public opinion polls on political issues. Presently, NGO research centres promoting advocacy and policy oriented research do so mainly through the organization of surveys, the majority of which are based on polls. These inevitably use quantitative techniques to study living conditions. One reason for this is the orientation of funding organizations which prefer research projects with unambiguous quantitative indicators. This "fetishism of the quantitative" (Tamari, 1997, pp. 33) is devoid of critical interpretation. Currently, eight research centres conduct public opinion polls on political issues. It is a donor-driven methodology which fits the model of a "standardized" project. In the proposal, poll centres determine the sample size, the questionnaire and the budget. For instance, one German foundation's major program was to support opinion polls on Palestinian society. Unfortunately, the methodology used was obtrusive. Instead of assessing opinion, it *generated* and manufactured opinion, legitimizing political discourses and actions of certain political actors, who are the contemporary elite. Social scientists became a part of the political game (Champagne, 1990). Research conducted on poverty will illustrate the forms of knowledge generated in this form of research.

1. Research on Poverty: Who and Where Are the Rich?

Poverty studies conducted in the Palestinian territory make a diagnostic survey of 'poverty mapping' and 'poverty alleviation,' by presuming that certain neighbourhoods are occupied by the poor, without examining why they live in these neighbourhoods and assessing the root

causes of the poverty, such as the distribution of resources and the role of the state and its structural adjustment policies. The study of poverty is part of catastrophe-centred research that has been carried out, sponsored and sometimes published by UN agencies and later outsourced to NGOs. Indeed, the abundance of data on poverty - declining standards of living, unemployment, labour market contraction, and other crises in the public and private sectors - found in the periodicals and annual reports by the aforementioned organizations is probably sufficient to sustain hundreds of research projects in the social sciences. These organizations have often used quantitative indicators and have emphasized demographic characteristics. These surveys are thus descriptive in nature, based on an evaluation of consumption and income, together with life expectancy, child mortality and literacy. The incorporation of this raw data and its partially processed findings into broader sociological, anthropological, and historical studies lags far behind. It is also interesting to note that these studies identify the poor but not the rich and have postulated policy interventions to reduce the size of the poor population, while neglecting to assess the wealthy community. A qualitative approach based on in-depth interviews and an assessment of poverty in specific groups such as youth, are seldom taken into consideration. In these circumstances, it is impossible to understand the nature of inequality and the stratification system. This trend is confirmed in a global study of Else Oyen et al. (1996) which reveals different analyses of the datasets available in their country/region, but does not take into account ethnographic research.

One case of subcontracting is the work of the Jordan Centre for Social Research (JCSR). This centre's project is to promote the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). This research is very descriptive and its objective is to identify the geographical location of poverty and to propose solutions. This is very obvious even from the declared objectives of the research:

[they] were to carry out the first phase of the overall development of a strategy for the MDG implementation and monitoring in Zarqa/ Jordan. The overall development strategy had the following components or phases: (Phase One) Conducting a preliminary field study to assess the socio-economic situation in the Governorate of Zarqa and identifying potential local partners. (Phase two) Drafting of an in-depth local MDG Report to be used as a future blueprint for policy and to monitor progress towards achieving the MDG and development goals in the Governorate. This phase involves extensive research into the status of MDG implementation to be conducted with the participation of local organizations, NGOs, CBOs, the municipal authority, etc... (Phase Three) Implementing short-term projects to address the most urgent issues and set the foundations of a strong partnership for development with local authorities and civil society organizations.

Through cooperation with international organizations, the local research centres also produce knowledge on poverty but the researchers are often experts who have built their careers in international organizations. Another example of this tendency to geographically localize poverty is a project entitled "The Figures: Measurement Methodologies and Development Research Needs for Data in Jordan. (The Problem of Poverty)"¹⁵

However, there are some exceptions. The urban approach adopted by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in 2006, in response to the Millennium Development Goals of UNDP, has dealt with fundamental issues related to the causes of poverty, such as the lack of redistribution of wealth.

¹⁵ This project was implemented in 1999 in Jordan by the Centre for Strategic Studies.

VI. Conclusion

This paper has attempted to qualify our claim about the problematic development of research in the social sciences in the region. It has accounted for the emergence of the intellectual entrepreneurs (Romani, 2001), expert-sociologists (Kabanji, 2005), and consultants (al-Kinz, 2005) who have become part of the networks of the donor agencies and thus use the cognitive code of the donor agencies in the research field. All of them have in turn become part of the network of the donor agencies, each using their respective discourse in the research field. Although sociological research has flourished in the Arab East recently (compared to its earlier dearth), due to academics' attempts to present plural and diverse approaches, their studies have lacked a critical emphasis because of the donor-driven orientation discussed earlier. Thus, this research field is not structured by interests of social classes or ideologies but rather is an arena wherein researchers compete to manoeuvre for material resources and/or contracts. The donor agencies play an important role in setting the rules of the field. This partially explains why current research is policy oriented, commissioned and packaged to assess the "pulse of the Arab street," rather than being driven by academic research programs and social demands. The end result is an empiricist-oriented research, often lacking theorization. Although some authors have tried to transcend these constraints by conducting qualitative, in-depth research based on theoretical frameworks, publishers have not encouraged the publication of these texts, indicating the close relationship between donors, knowledge and academic culture.

The most salient issue is the form of funding. Funding disparate projects, instead of coherent research programs, raises a major problem concerning the accumulation of knowledge, methodology, topics, and specialization which are necessary to ensure good research. The scarcity of public funding for research, the lack of fundraising from the wealthy local community, and the exclusive appeal to and for foreign funding hinders the ability of the research centres to make long-term plans and hire suitable personnel.

For instance, endowments that generate minimal revenue for research centres, often found in North America and some European countries, are very rare. As Mustapha Barghouthi explains, endowments have been proposed by NGOs, but the donors often refuse them since there is no guarantee that the character of the organization will not change over time (1995). In June 2000, at an International Development and Research Centre meeting for Palestinian partner organizations, many Palestinian NGOs suggested that international NGOs should help local NGOs set up endowment funds. Yet, as the present discussion revealed, this form of support is very difficult for donors to justify financially. It is apparent that donor support for Palestinian research centres remains confined to a short-term emphasis on obtaining 'results' in donor-relevant thematic areas of concern. This comes at the expense of long-term institution building. While research centre sustainability is ultimately the responsibility of the local organization, donors have hindered them in this matter by prioritizing short-term gains over long-term mechanisms to support these institutions.

With research done outside the university, sociological practices have become prone to many pressures. Even the *Universitat* in Italy in the Middle Ages was autonomous vis-à-vis the city. This was a necessary condition for creating a community critical of its society. The fragmentation of research sites makes research centres vulnerable to attacks from political and security authorities and also from religious, leftist or conservative groups. Thus the researchers fail to be critical of their own society. In this globalized order, in which donors are not interested in empowering state institutions to conduct research so as to play a role in social change, the

marginalization of the university need not be inevitable. Ali Al-Kinz noted that the university tradition in Brazil, Argentina, India and South Africa is so strong, that universities take a leading role in the production of research (2005, p. 35).

Finally, if the current situation continues and research centres remain disconnected from universities in the Arab East, one can eventually expect a research field without professional researchers, mirroring Ghassan Salameh's (1994) characterization of a democracy without democrats. This would be a dark future for the research field itself.

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Impact of Crises on Scientific and Research Activities of Faculty Members: a Comparative Study (Iraq and Jordan)*

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Abstract

The occupation of Iraq since 2003, terrorist attacks, dismissal of a number of faculty members in various universities, and the so-called "brain drain" have all had a major impact on scientific research. This study seeks to identify the negative repercussions of crises on scientific research in Iraq, through comparing the level of scientific and research activity of faculty members working in Iraqi universities with that of Iraqi faculty members working in Jordanian universities during the period 2006 - 2008.

Descriptive analysis of the results of a questionnaire administered to 500 faculty members is employed. Indicators of performance of Iraqi universities for the academic year 2006 / 2007 are used. The most prominent finding is that the level of scientific and research activity of faculty members working in Iraqi and Jordanian universities is low, particularly in authoring, translation, dissemination of scientific research, publishing articles, supervision of graduate students, patents, participation in scientific conferences and symposia abroad, participation in research under contract for state organizations, dedication to scientific endeavor, amounting to no more than one activity per year on average. During the three-year period, 65 - 68% of the faculty members in and outside Iraq have not undertaken any scientific activity. Moreover, the proportion of hours devoted to scientific research by faculty members does not exceed 1.5% of total weekly hours spent on discharging university duties.

I. The Methodology of the Study

1. Problem and Importance

The country witnessed a scientific rebound in education in the 1960s and 1970s which led to many international scientific prizes being received, such as in primary education and literacy. Iraq was then plagued for three decades by wars, armed conflicts and embargoes, which affected education in general. The resources of this country were mostly used to serve military purposes and not to improve the socioeconomic and educational life of Iraqis. The Gulf War of 1991 also had a major impact on all economic, social, educational and health sectors. The Security Council

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imposed with resolution 661 an economic embargo that prevented the country from calling upon the necessary support to meet the population's needs and also in rebuilding the infrastructure, such as education and health facilities which had been mostly damaged.

Teaching and learning were rapidly deteriorating, their resources were lacking and competent faculty members were leaving (the brain drain) because of low salaries. Iraqi educational accomplishments therefore lost their sparkle.

The invasion of Iraq and subsequent occupation, as well as the ensuing violence, assassination and terrorism since 2003 have had a major impact on all educational aspects, including scientific and research production. Iraqi educational and cultural centers were pillaged, burnt and destroyed. According to UNESCO reports of 2004, 84% of the faculties and universities were destroyed; 20 faculties were totally destroyed during acts of war, 25 faculties were burnt and 101 were pillaged. In this context, it is worth noting that the total number of faculties amounted to 201, not to mention the libraries, museums, artistic and cultural centers that were also destroyed, burnt and pillaged. (UNESCO, 2004, pp. 173 – 174)

No doubt, the crises have greatly and directly affected scientific and research activities of Iraqi faculty members working in Iraqi universities or those abroad. The present study seeks to assess and compare scientific and research activities of faculty members in Iraqi universities and expatriates working in Jordanian universities between 2006 and 2008.

2. Objectives

The study aims at:

- a. Assessing the repercussions of the crisis on scientific research in Iraq.
- b. Evaluating and comparing the level of scientific and research activities between faculty members in Iraqi universities and expatriate Iraqi faculty members who have worked in Jordanian universities between 2006 and 2008.

3. Limitations

The study is confined to:

- a. Studying the evaluation of Iraqi universities performance between 2006 and 2007 to assess the scientific and research activities undertaken by the faculty members of Iraqi universities.
- b. Comparing the level of scientific and research activities between faculty members in Iraqi universities and expatriate Iraqi faculty members who have worked in Jordanian universities between 2006 and 2008, through a questionnaire prepared for this purpose.

4. Methodology

Descriptive research was used in collecting data and information that was to be analyzed and explained in order to realize the objectives of this study.

a. The study population

Iraqi faculty members still working in Iraqi universities i.e. 19,339 people for the 2006 / 2007 academic year are the targeted community². As for the expatriate Iraqi faculty members still working in Jordanian private and governmental universities, they amounted to 797 in 2006 and 863 in 2008³.

² Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Evaluation Report of Iraqi Universities Performance for 2006 / 2007

³ Statistics of the Jordanian Ministry of Higher Education for the academic year 2006, 2008.

b. The Sample

The study was applied to a random sample chosen according to the characteristics of Iraqi faculty members still working in Iraqi and Jordanian universities. The factors that were considered were the rank, the degree, the specialization and country where the degree was obtained.

The sample included 250 faculty members from the following Iraqi universities: University of Baghdad, Al-Mustansiriya University, University of Technology, Al-Nahrain University, Diyala University and the University of Anbar. The sample accounts for 5% of the total faculty members of the chosen universities. As for the expatriate Iraqi faculty members working in Jordanian public and private universities, they amount to 250 and were chosen from the following universities: University of Jordan, Philadelphia University, American Middle East University, Balqa Applied University, Jadara University, Al-Ahliyya Amman University, Zarka Private University and the Hashemite University. The sample accounts for 31% of the total faculty members of the chosen universities.

Despite a total of 500 faculty members in the sample, the researcher considered that the sample somehow realized the objectives of the study, given that all the characteristics are available. Statistically speaking, the bigger the sample, the better the study. However, in practice speaking, it is very difficult to apply the questionnaire to more than 10% of the community members due to security, long distances between universities along with human and financial resources.

74.3% of the sample members are doctorate holders and 25.7% are master's degree holders. Furthermore, 33.2% are specialized in the scientific fields and 66.8% in humanities. 62.4% had obtained their degrees from Iraqi universities and 37.6% from foreign ones.

c. The Tools

1. The researcher prepared a questionnaire with a number of questions concerning scientific and research activities of faculty members between 2006 and 2008. The questionnaire was distributed as follows:

- a. It was presented directly to 250 faculty members from diverse scientific majors and levels in Iraqi universities and interviews were conducted with them.
 - b. During a visit to Jordan, the researcher met 250 Iraqi expatriates working in Jordanian public and governmental universities in different scientific and literary majors.
2. The researcher analyzed the performance evaluation report in Iraqi universities for the 2006/ 2007 academic year and gathered the information related to the objectives of the study.

II. Results of the Study- Impact of the crises in Iraq on scientific research

Scientific research in Iraq mainly faced the following crises:

1. Expulsion of Faculty Members from Iraqi Universities

One of the factors that affected scientific and research activities of faculty members in Iraqi universities under the occupation was the expulsion of some faculty members because of their partisanship. In fact, 3,000 university professors were expelled because of their political leanings. Therefore, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research had to reduce the number of fields in higher education due to the scarcity of micro specializations (Shaaban, 2006). According to the Arab Human Development report for 2003, the persecution by Americans of Iraqi scientists raises fears over the continuation of the research process and the technological progress, not only in Iraq, but in the entire region (UNDP, 2003).

2. Security threats on Iraqi academics

Amidst the occupation, security threats to Iraqi academics increased, and ranged from threats with beating, insults inside the university campuses, kidnapping (group or individual kidnapping) from academic institutions and assassination of faculty members while they were leaving the universities. Some academics even received threatening letters instructing them to leave the campus. In fact, the militias who controlled the security of the universities used the setting as a scene for settling old scores. This therefore, had a major impact on the Iraqi brain drain (Dawoud, 2006).

Furthermore, according to a study prepared by the Association of University Professors in Iraq in 2006, Iraqi university professors were living in fear for their lives; 91% were scared of a painful death and 66% live in dread of being killed at any time.

Another study on the assassination of Iraqi academics conducted by Ismael Al-Jalele, a medical consultant, showed that 80% of the assassinations targeted people working in universities. More than half of the people killed were professors or associate professors. Of these 62% were doctorate holders, one-third of them had specialized in sciences and medicine and 17% of them were practicing doctors (Naba Information Network, 2007, Bouneeman, 2006).

In addition, the site www.brusselstribunal.org published a long list of scientists assassinated after the occupation, subdivided by scientific major and academic level. Up to 19 /1/ 2009, there were 413 faculty members killed, 74 kidnapped, 3,000 expelled and 5,500 doctors migrated.

Table 1 presents figures of assassinated faculty members according to the Iraqi universities and ministries where they used to work until 19 /1/ 2009.

Table 1: Assassinated faculty members

Institution	Number of Assassinated Faculty Members
University of Baghdad	118
University of Basra	39
University of Mosul	46
Al-Mustansiriya University	34
Diyala University	13
University of Anbar	21
Al-Nahrain University	15
Babel University	1
University of Technology	17
Al-Kadissiya University	1
Al-Muthanna University	1
University of Kerbala	4
Kufa University	4
Kirkuk University	5
Center of the Ministry of Higher Education	5
Other State Ministries	76
Total number of Killed academics	413

Source: www.brusselstribunal.org

3. Pillaging and setting fire to universities and libraries

The war acts before 9/ 4 /2003 led to an interruption of studies from 1 /3 /2003 till 1/ 11/ 2003 because universities, libraries, laboratories and scientific research centers were destroyed, burnt and pillaged.

The National Library built in 1920 which contained a wide assortment of more than a million documents, including rare books dating back to the Ottoman period and the royal regime, was completely burnt. The National Archive built in 1973 which contained more than 17 millions documents was burnt and totally destroyed. Moreover, most large libraries in Iraqi universities were burnt and destroyed, such as the central library of the University of Baghdad which was looted and then burnt. It contained many rare sources such as the writings of scholars Ahmad Susa, Muhammad Bahjat Al-Athari and Carmelite Father, Anstas Mary. The libraries of the universities of Basra and Mosul suffered the same fate. To name but a few, Bayt Al-Hikma, Al-Idrissi Research Center, the National Standardization Center and the Arab Gulf Center for Studies were looted, burnt and completely destroyed (Donny, 2003) (Asharq Al-Awsat newspaper, 2007). It is also noteworthy to say that Iraqi libraries had also suffered under the economic embargo imposed from 1990 to 2003. This was in the form of dilapidation of facilities as they could not be modernized, difficulties to subscribe to foreign and international periodicals, the absence of many master's and PhD theses related to scientific research , the unavailability of an internet connection, as well as a lack of general financial resources.

4. Iraqi brain drain

The occupation imposed on Iraq, as well as the marginalization and oppression endured by Iraqi scientists, has stifled the desire to realize any type of achievement. A feeling of indifference and sadness has prevailed and citizens moved away from the process of making any needed change in the country.

The repugnant socioeconomic and political environment led to an increase in brain drain in Iraq. After the Iran-Iraq war (1980 - 1988), the number of asylum seekers from Iraq to industrialized countries reached 24,750. The invasion of Kuwait accelerated this phenomenon and the repercussions of this war, such as the economic embargo imposed on Iraq, led to the migration of 7,350 scientists because of insecurity as well as the political situation. These people were from different specialties such as: surgical sub-specialties, nuclear medicine, electronic engineering, nuclear engineering, laserology, astronomy and many other high-tech specialties. After the occupation of Iraq, the number of emigrating competent people doubled. The total number of emigrating doctors exceeded 5,500 (Nima, p. 3 - 5). As for the total number of emigrating academics, the least we could say is that it doubled, but no real updated figures are actually available.

The reasons of this phenomenon could be summarized as follows:

- a. Decrease in revenues and living standards as the monthly salary of an Iraqi university professor ranged between 10 and 50 dollars under the embargo.
- b. Low morale amidst employees in general and scientists in particular given that the possibilities of scientific research (e.g. books, scientific magazines, apparatus, time needed for research, international scientific contact and institutional infrastructure) were not available and the results of such research were not used to benefit society.
- c. Absence of freedom to think and express opinions, in addition to a strict control on scientific and research material presented by the professors in their specializations. Authorities could even forbid the publishing of the results of some studies and research (Ferjany, 2000).

- d. Attractive external factors, given that technology development and the communication revolution which was to be found in developed countries would attract competent Iraqi people (Ghazal, 2006).

5. Lower expenditure on scientific research

The expenditure on research and development as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is one of the most important indicators used worldwide to show the priority given by countries to research and development. According to UN statistics, this ratio has reached 3.6% in the USA, 3.8% in Sweden and 2.7 in Japan (UNDP, 2006). In the Arab World, this ratio has not exceeded 0.3% of the GDP, according to UNESCO statistics for 2004 (Abu Taha, 2008). The report showed that the ratio in Egypt has reached 0.34%, 0.28% in Jordan, 0.11% in Saudi Arabia, Syria, Lebanon and Tunisia and 0.04% in Iraq (UNESCO, 2004) where the military expenditure to the GDP ratio for 1990, reached 20% (Hattouch, 2004).

6. Administrative corruption

The Corruption Perception Indicator report for 2006, published by Transparency International, ranks Arab states according to the degree of corruption showed. The less corrupt Arab countries are ranked 31 out of 163, whereas, the Iraqi ranking is 160.

Corruption is very complex in Iraq; it affects individuals as well as communities and institutions. It became closely intertwined with political and economic degradation. Moreover, it had also penetrated the organizations of scientific research in Iraq, thus the country has regressed in qualitative scientific attainment (Nouri, 2007).

7. Regression of performance in Iraqi universities

The Performance Evaluation Report of Iraqi Universities ⁴ for the academic year 2006 – 2007 indicated the following:

a. Lack of autonomy of Iraqi universities:

When one takes a close look at the rules and regulations adopted in higher education, scientific research institutions and Iraqi universities, one finds that the majority of these regulations limit the independence of these facilities, putting them under the direct control of the ruling political party. Thus, academic freedom is restricted; faculty members are discouraged from innovation because it might give rise to controversial issues or political problems. Consequently, the desire to create is stifled. However, the excellence of scientists of distinction found in some Iraqi universities is the fruit of personal efforts and conditions and not of an institutional support.

b. Decrease in the higher academic ranks:

Despite the 10 to 13% increase in faculty members of Iraqi universities after the occupation, due to the reappointment of politically expelled members and the unemployed, some universities have witnessed a significant decrease of faculty with high ranks. This is the case in the University of Baghdad (15%), the University of Technology (17%) and Babel University (25%). This is due to the following reasons:

- 1) The expulsion of more than 3,000 faculty members who were mainly holders of high

⁴ The Evaluation Report of Iraqi Universities Performance is a database containing more than 250 evaluation indicators of the quality and level of Iraqi universities performance in the following domains: (objectives and mission of the university, faculty members, students, scientific research, social service ...)

academic ranks. This was in an attempt to dismantle the Baath Party.

- 2) Assassinations and brain drain. The number of assassinated faculty members reached 413 people. This was 2.2% of the total number of Iraqi faculty members. The number of faculty members who emigrated or resigned reached 15.8% of the total amount (Majid, 2007).

c. Increase of teaching load:

Due to the embargoes inflicted on Iraq, the average weekly working hours for faculty members in Iraqi universities was very high before 2003. It ranged from 21 to 24 hours per week for all academic levels. Between 2006 and 2008, this average decreased to 14 - 24 hours per week. Yet this goes beyond the university instructions which stipulate 68- hours per week for a professor, 10 -12 hours per week for an associate professor and 14 - 16 hours per week for an assistant professor.

Indicators showed that Iraqi universities have given priority to teaching hours at the expense of research, social service and other intellectual aspects. The average weekly hours that faculty members dedicate to research reached 34 minutes in Iraq, which is 1.5% of the whole academic working hours (Majid, 2007) compared to 33% for each faculty member in developed countries (Zaytoun, 1995).

d. Decrease in scientific journals:

According to the evaluation indicators, 7.7% of Iraqi universities published scientific results while the other universities stopped publishing them due to a lack of relevant resources, the continuous electric power cut-offs and the interference of political parties (Majid, 2007).

e. Lack of equipment such as libraries and computers:

The Evaluation Report of Iraqi Universities Performance for the academic year 2006 - 2007 noted a decrease in the number of books in libraries and their dilapidation as well as the deterioration of libraries that had endured pillage, embargoes and wars. Some of them were even burnt down. The UNESCO report of 2004 showed that libraries in Iraqi universities are limited. It was noted that even in the best universities the number of books per student is low (around 7 only). Namely it is 7.3 for the University of Technology, 7.6 for Al-Mustansiriya University and 5.1 for Kufa University. As for the total number of books in libraries, it ranged from 700,000 in the University of Basra to 30,000 in smaller universities, compared to 3 million books in the University of Strasbourg for instance, 2 million books in Konstanz University in Germany and 3.3 million books in Cluj University in Romania (UNESCO, 2004).

The evaluation indicators also highlighted a decrease in the number of computers compared to the number of students and faculty members, as only one computer is available per 20 faculty members in a single university (Majid, 2007).

Therefore, one could say that Iraqi universities suffer from a lack of material, technical and human resources and are even more vulnerable because of security and instability.

III. Results of the study- the scientific and research activities, a comparison between Iraqi Faculty at Iraqi Universities and Iraqi faculty expatriates at Jordanian universities, between 2006 and 2008

Results showed that the average research and scientific activities for faculty members working in Iraqi universities reached 2.97 compared to 3.16 for expatriate Iraqi faculty members working in Jordanian universities. It is noted that 64.8% of the faculty members in Iraq and 68.4% in Jordan did not present any scientific or research work during the abovementioned period, which is of course a very worrying situation. (Table 2)

Table 2: percentages of scientific and research activities undertaken between 2006 and 2008 by faculty members in Iraqi universities and Jordanian universities

Number of Undertaken Research & Scientific Activities	Number of Faculty Members in Iraq		Number of Iraqi Faculty Members Working in Jordan	
	N	%	N	%
None	162	64.8	171	68.4
1 - 3	17	6.8	15	6
4 - 6	20	8	18	7.2
7 - 9	14	5.6	13	5.2
10 - 12	12	6	13	5.2
13 - 15	18	7.2	20	8
16 & more	7	2.8	9	3.6
TOTAL	250	100	250	100

As for the quality and nature of scientific and research activities undertaken by faculty members, the following can be noted (see table 3):

1. Published research

This kind of research came first amongst the research and scientific activities of faculty members in both Iraqi and Jordanian universities. The average number per faculty during a single year reached 1.345 in Iraqi universities and 0.702 in Jordanian ones. Consequently, a faculty member, either in Iraq or Jordan is presenting a maximum of one piece of research during a single year.

As for the field of research there is focus more on humanities and social sciences rather than on natural sciences such as computer engineering and medicine.

Many studies show that the productivity of a researcher in developed countries can reach up to 1.5 pieces of research per year (Ghanem, 2000) and during the past five years, 305 million scientific research papers were published all around the world. These included 34% of American origin and less than 1% from the Arab countries (Al Barghouty et al., 2007).

2. Participation in scientific conferences and symposia

The participation of faculty members in scientific conferences and symposia is ranked second. The average annual amount of participation reached 0.816 in Iraq and 0.431 in Jordan. This lack of participation is due to insufficient financial resources for sending delegations to participate in scientific conferences and symposia outside Iraq. This is due to university regulations which have defined an amount of \$200 that will be allocated per year to any faculty member who participated in a conference outside Iraq during a single year.

3. Published articles

Published articles are ranked third. The average annual number of published articles is 0.519 in Iraq and 0.652 in Jordan.

4. Supervising theses

Supervising theses is ranked fourth, with an annual average of 0.259 for each faculty member in Iraq and 0.602 in Jordan. This shows that a faculty member in Iraq can supervise one thesis every 4 years, while in Jordan he/she can supervise one every 2 years.

5. Writing books

Writing books is ranked fifth, with an annual average of 0.242 for a single faculty member in Iraq and 0.345 in Jordan. This means that a faculty member in Jordan or Iraq can only write one book every 45- years.

This low rate of writing and publishing is mainly caused by:

- a. Local censorship. A strict censorship targeting writers and writings is imposed on books in Iraq. Many have been forbidden because they expressed the views of some political parties, criticized the state or any friendly country and were contrary to morals.
- b. The absence of companies and printing houses that print, publish and distribute such texts.

6. Dedication to science:

Dedication to science is ranked sixth, with an annual average of 0.041 in Iraq and 0 in Jordan.

7. Translating books

Translating books is ranked seventh, with an annual average of 0.018 for each faculty member in Iraq and 0.032 in Jordan.

Iraq does not translate many texts because faculty members tend not to master foreign languages. Therefore, they can neither translate nor benefit from the book in its original language. Moreover, translation sources and references, if available, are very old.

8. Participating in research contracts of State institutions

Participating in research contracts of state institutions is ranked eighth, with an annual average 0.029 in Iraq and 0 in Jordan. This weak participation is due to the low number (8.8%) of contracts between state institutions and Iraqi universities. Moreover, state institutions are not able to pay salaries or allocate the appropriate financial resources to faculty members for their participation in research contracts.

9. Patents

Obtaining patents is ranked ninth, with an average of 0.009 in Iraq and 0 in Jordan.

When comparing the scientific and research production of faculty members inside and outside Iraq, it appeared that the results were in favor of faculty members in Iraq in research, published studies and participation in conferences, while they were in favor of members outside Iraq in academic supervision of higher education students. As for the 6 other domains, the differences were not significant.

Table 3: Average annual scientific and research production of faculty members in Iraqi and Jordanian universities between 2006 and 2008

Statistical Significance	Annual Average for Faculty Members Working in Jordan		Annual Average for Faculty Members inside Iraq		Type of Scientific and Research Production
	Comment	Average	Comment	Average	
Not significant	1 book each 3 years	0.345	1 book each 4 years	0.242	Writing Books
Significant at 0.01	One faculty /one conference each 2.5 years	0.566	One faculty /one conference each 1.5 year	0.816	Participating in Scientific Conferences and Seminars
Not significant	1 book translated each 25 years	0.032	1 book translated each 50 years	0.018	Translating Books
Significant for 0.01	Less than one research per year	0.702	1.25 research each year	1.345	Publishing Researches
Not significant	No participation	0	3 faculty for each 100 members participate in research contracts	0.029	Participating in Research Contracts of State Institutions
Not significant	No dedication	0	Annually, 4 faculty members out of 100 dedicate are research full timers	0.041	Dedication to Science
Not significant	1 article each 1.5 year	0.652	1 article each 2 years	0.519	Articles
Not significant	-	-	1 patent each 100 years	0.009	Patents
Significant for 0.01	1 supervision of a Master's or PhD Thesis each 1.5 year	0.602	1 supervision of a Master's or PhD Thesis each 4 years	0.259	Supervising Master's and PhD Theses

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

1. Conclusions

Consequently, one can make the following inferences:

- a. Scientific and research production is weak, as shown in the evaluation indicators of Iraqi Universities' performance. This is due to the expulsion of more than 3,000 faculty members, security threats to academics, the brain drain, the assassination of more than 413 faculty members, low expenditure on scientific research, war acts such as

- pillaging and setting fire to universities, insufficient libraries and laboratories, as well as administrative corruption.
- b. The performance of Iraqi universities is poor because universities are not independent, salaries even for high academic levels are low and opportunities to publish in relevant scientific journals are slender. In addition, there is a heavy academic load, weak scientific and research production and insufficient technical and financial resources (libraries and computers).
 - c. When it comes to scientific and research production, faculty members inside and outside Iraq endure similar conditions stemming from psychological, social and economic instability.
 - d. More than 64% of faculty members inside and 68% outside Iraq have not undertaken any scientific activity for 3 years.
 - e. The number of hours dedicated by each faculty member to scientific research represents a maximum of 1.2% of the weekly working hours.
 - f. Scientific and research production of faculty members working in Iraqi and Jordanian universities is low. This includes: writing, translating, publishing scientific research and articles, academically supervising higher education students, obtaining patents, participating in scientific conferences and symposia abroad and participating in research contracts of state institutions, as well as dedication to science. The average number of scientific and research activities between 2006 and 2008 reached 2.97 in Iraq and 3.16 in Jordan.
 - g. Scientific and research activities of faculty members in Iraqi universities focused on publishing research, obtaining patents, participating in scientific conferences and symposia and in research contracts of state institutions as well as dedication to science. The differences were significant in their favor for the publication of articles and the participation in scientific conferences and seminars.
 - h. Scientific and research activities of Iraqi faculty members in Jordanian universities focused on publishing scientific articles, supervising higher education students, writing and translating books. The differences were significant in their favor for the supervision of higher education students.

2. Recommendations

- a. It is necessary that international and regional organizations such as UNESCO, ESCWA, the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, the Federation of Islamic Universities, the Association of Arab Universities and other organizations in charge of higher education affairs use this study in order to take adequate measures to alleviate the harsh conditions endured by faculty members in Iraq and Jordan.
- b. It is necessary to present the results of this study to organizations in charge of human rights and associations in charge of academic affairs in order to organize conferences and forums that defend Iraqi faculty members and alleviate their hardships.
- c. It is important that faculty members inside and outside Iraq get research grants in order to encourage them to maintain a scientific contact between Arab and international universities, as well as research centers.
- d. Scientific research of faculty members inside and outside Iraq should be published in prestigious Arab and international scientific journals.

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Societal Responsibility

Academic Partnerships: The Driving Force behind Social and Pedagogical Development (Case of Mohammed V University at Souissi)*

Ahmed Ouzi¹

Abstract

Many universities are looking into new ways of increasing their income in order to cover part of their expenditures. As a result, some universities have entered into academic partnership and cooperation agreements with various bodies involved in education and training.

This paper considers the case of the University Mohammed V Souissi in Morocco, a newly established University that has entered into partnerships and cooperation arrangements with numerous universities, organizations and sectors, both at home and abroad. Such partnerships and arrangements have helped the University to achieve many goals related to the development of pedagogic modalities and methods. They have also helped to open the university to the community, through links with various sectors of society, ensuring that its graduates have an appropriate profile, in return for financial aid to finance their education. This has enabled, the University to run new professional, industrial, social, educational and cultural specialization programs in its various faculties and institutes. Additionally, the paper provides some insights into what partnership and cooperation agreements could contribute to opening new advanced horizons for higher education in Arab countries.

I. Introduction

Higher education undoubtedly faces radical changes in knowledge, economy and technology. It also faces many challenges that traditional methods are unable to meet. These challenges are even bigger in Arab countries where higher education is under a lot of pressure, both qualitatively and quantitatively. It is necessary for higher education, therefore, to look for new ways to generate well structured programs, new curricula techniques and experiences in order to help higher education attain comprehensive quality and become actively involved in the knowledge economy.

Higher education is the cornerstone of societal development; it is one of the main indicators of the progress and prosperity of people. The traditional role of higher education institutions was to generate intellectual wealth and transfer it to the labour market. However, its role has changed

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and it is now expected to support growth and development in its socioeconomic context, as well as industrial progress, living up to people expectations and helping them to realize their aspirations (ISESCO, 2008).

Consequently, higher education institutions have become inextricably linked up with research centres, laboratories and training workshops that form the educational process. In addition, they are now closely interconnected with the economy as a whole. "Each nation's upswing is the fruit of knowledge. University is the breeding ground of brains which produce knowledge, excel in it and reshape life with scientific know-how, vocational experience and practical experiments drawn from academic attainment" (AlTouajeri, 2008).

It is the concepts of sustainable development, technological and scientific progress as well as the enhancement of living standards that now go hand in hand with higher education. This in turn gives rise to ideas, theories and theses that are applied on the ground through innovations and inventions which promote progress and growth. Higher education institutions are, therefore, like laboratories and factories which produce the best products and innovations of the human mind in diverse scientific and technological fields. As such, they put an end to backwardness.

In order to upgrade higher education so that it becomes the lever of socioeconomic development and progress, it has to broaden its horizons, become receptive to international experiences to improve its quality and services and look for new financial sources to cover its increasing expenses. Thus, officials and decision-makers in charge of higher education must, on the one hand, devise new approaches to relieve the high expense burden on governments and, on the other hand, devise new ways of developing cooperative partnerships between active stakeholders in the economic, academic, national and international sectors.

II. The Importance of Academic Partnerships and Cooperation in Higher Education

Nowadays, the concept of a partnership is widely found in the plans and programs of many international organizations concerned with education and development affairs. It requires high degrees of cooperation, coexistence, fraternity and tolerance from the various stakeholders, but it can achieve tangible results with regard to progress and development. Partnerships change the roles between academic institutions and the other institutions in society, and it has become one of education's main modern characteristics (Ouzi, 2007, p. 23).

Partnership itself is not the end, but one of the means used to achieve common goals. It represents a challenge for authorities that are used to intervening and applying bureaucratic rules in administration. Societies today are looking for new mechanisms and strategies of governance in all sectors, including the education and training field that is recognized as the driving force behind socioeconomic development and progress (Ouzi, 2007). Officials in charge of education have acknowledged the importance of partnerships and the role they play in boosting development at all levels. Furthermore, organizations started to call for international conferences and meetings that encourage partnerships and cooperation amongst a range of stakeholders.

The Dakar (Senegal) conference held in 2000, called for achieving education for all and highlighted in its resolutions the importance of partnerships, laying its foundations, setting its regulations and establishing diverse mechanisms to be adopted at national and international levels. Moreover, the declaration of the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien (Thailand) in 1990 pointed out, in article VII, the importance of encouraging partnerships at all levels, adopting a new expanded vision and making a renewed commitment in education through the participation

of all governmental and civil institutions. Partnerships play a crucial role; they are an expedient of development, invention and innovation and a means to encourage learning and improvement. The World Bank report on education and training in the Kingdom of Morocco in the 21st century stated that “all reforms in the education and training sector will not succeed unless they are accepted by all the categories of the society and the relevant stakeholders. It is therefore necessary to establish strategies in order to fulfil this comprehensive commitment.” (Jahidi, 2006, p. 69) In other words, education should be of great importance to everyone in society, from individuals to groups (including political parties, syndicates, organizations and civil society). In an attempt to implement the principles of the National Charter of Education and Training (which points out the necessity of partnerships and the importance of decentralization), the Ministry of Higher Education and Training in the Kingdom of Morocco issued special decrees (MOE, Morocco, 1995). They urged stakeholders to conclude agreements with academic institutions and establish communication links through networks and infrastructure that enable the institutions to realize their education and training goals and be in harmony with their environment.

III. Concept of Academic Partnerships and its Features

It is difficult to define partnership since it belongs to many knowledge fields. However, one can say that academic partnership is “a relation of excellence based on a common project between two people, groups or institutions and even more. It takes concrete form in the exchange of expertise, experiences, information, human and financial resources. This is in order to serve and realize specific academic projects that bring added value to both contracting parties based on mutual agreement and sharing of responsibilities” (Ouzi, 2007).

A partnership has many positive features, as it offers great possibilities to overcome the many problems facing the different facilitators. Solutions are found when these people unite, support each other and share their experiences. This is because they are convinced about the importance of the project and they are committed to deploying efforts to make it succeed (Marjolaine, 2001, p. 11).

In addition, a partnership is a collective effort that benefits all aspects of development in general and education in particular. This is because it is a fundamental pillar that supports and improves academic services, develops academic institutions and increases their efficiency through effective and fruitful agreements with the sectors of civil society. Such agreements help to design and implement new structures for the education field so that it meets the new needs of today's students. In addition, academic institutions become the lever of development at all levels, societal, economic and cultural. These institutions can, therefore, lay the foundations of cooperation and solidarity between academic institutions, students, professors and all sectors of civil society, so that all contribute to academic development in the era of modernity and knowledge.

The task of developing education in the information society is incumbent on responsible people in society. It requires the participation of all sectors in order to achieve the aspirations of the people, to get them actively and effectively involved in the information society and to ensure that they are not mere passive spectators.

The universities in Morocco, as with many other universities in Arab countries, are making great efforts to meet the challenges facing them. They are trying to enhance education so it meets the needs of the national labour market. They are trying to ensure that their future graduates will be able to move in a globalized world and be competitive in the international arena. In fact, «the regional characteristics of higher education have been regressing amidst the hegemony of the

features, products and tools of globalization. As a result, people in charge of higher education affairs must strengthen structures, develop curricula, programs and incorporate them into the whole society to benefit from its experience and become beneficial" (AbdelSamih, 2005, p. 1). Consequently, universities have been taking active steps to improve curricula, modernize pedagogical methods and develop research projects. This process requires additional costs that the universities cannot afford. They have had to look for new sources of financing and cooperation. "An increase is expected in the coming years in the registration applications submitted to universities in developing countries, which will have an impact on all aspects, namely financing, globalization and quality. In fact, registrations in the universities of the MENA region increased by 250% between 1999 and 2004 compared to an average of 114% in developing countries. Based on the expected augmentation, the number of registrations in developing countries universities is estimated at 120 million during the next ten years" (Allnaqui, 2008).

As a result, many universities in Morocco and other Arab countries took several measures to guarantee new sustainable sources to finance educational requirements and support the academic infrastructures and equipment. These include:

- a. Academic and pedagogical partnership and cooperation agreements with many national and international parties.
- b. Openness to the national labour market through the creation of new scientific and vocational majors that meet market requirements. New vocational degrees and new scientific majors were added to fulfil the needs of different sectors.

These measures enabled higher education institutions to cover part of their expenses and improve their programs and regulations in-line with the aspirations of society. Moreover, they created new dynamics and helped develop a new pedagogical approach in academic institutions. It is important, therefore, to look closely at this situation in order to analyze it and draw conclusions on the new approaches regarding academic partnerships and the positive openness of higher education institutions to their social environment. This is the subject of this study which is based on the actual experience of Mohammed V University at Souissi, located in Rabat (Morocco), which was established ten years ago.

IV. Academic Partnership and Cooperation in Moroccan Universities and their Effects on Societal Development and Pedagogical Methods Enhancement in Higher Education (Case of Mohammed V University)

1. Overview of Mohammed V University

It is located in Rabat and consists of 26 higher education, training and research institutions, in addition to medical establishments affiliated to Ibn Sina Hospital. The university was founded in 1992 and has more than 15,923 students and 707 administrators, educators and technicians. In addition, there are 1,012 professors and researchers and it encompasses 14 main fields of studies that comprise of 24 majors. It offers 10 vocational bachelor's degrees and 23 master's degrees in law, economics, sociology, medicine, pharmacy, engineering and computer science. In addition, there are 13 doctorates offered and recently a doctoral school was created within the university. The research section consists of 118 units, 103 research groups, 9 laboratories, 5 research centres and one observatory.

2. Partnership and Cooperation Agreements between Mohammed V University and National and International Partners

There are academic partnerships within sectors both inside and outside the country and with local industrial and administrative organizations. Those responsible for these partnerships often realize many objectives, namely:

- a. Promote societal development
- b. Modernize and develop pedagogical curricula and methods
- c. Enhance academic administrative systems
- d. Improve the quality and standards of graduation from the university
- e. Develop and modernize programs and degree courses

As a result, academic partnerships and cooperation play an essential role in today's world. This is especially true in higher education as they can help the institutions to become more open to their socioeconomic environment, broaden their horizons and provide students with skills and knowledge to enhance their capacities in-line with the needs of the local labour market. Furthermore, partnership and cooperation agreements can help develop strategic frameworks that reduce the gap between acquired and required skills. This in turn globalizes education in the sense that it defines a profile for a "Global Graduate" whose skills, competences and innovative spirit go beyond national borders. These academic agreements make higher education one of the fundamental levers of socioeconomic development through the creation of new scientific, industrial, technical and vocational majors within academic institutions in accordance to the needs of the environment and partner institutions. This encourages students to enrol in these majors. As a result, private and public sectors become effective partners in implementing national academic policies, enriching them with their experiences, enhancing their structures and building their capacities.

In this regard, Mohammed V University strengthened cooperation with several national and international parties by signing academic partnership agreements. This has had a positive impact on its pedagogical methods and mission as well as on its status in the international scene.

3. Cooperation and Partnership Fields between Mohammed V University and its Partners

Mohammed V University participated in many international programs and concluded many partnership and cooperation agreements with other foreign universities and facilitators in the fields of research and education. These agreements included the following measures:

- a. Exchanging information about higher education, educational methods and research (Kingdom of Morocco, Mohammed V University, 2008).
- b. Inviting teachers, researchers and executive tutors of partner institutions to participate in diverse academic and research activities.
- c. Inviting research professors of partner institutions to participate in meetings, seminars and training sessions that deal with research subjects.
- d. Elaborating programs of scientific research in common fields of interest between contracting universities.
- e. Receiving students who are preparing their theses and providing co-direction.
- f. Looking for sources of finance for common activities.

Law 10/ 2000, which related to university reform in Morocco, encouraged universities to upgrade their capacities and participate in socioeconomic development. Mohammed V University is aware of the challenges it faces, and has, therefore, included in its strategy effective and permanent

partnerships at the national and international levels. This is in order to exchange knowledge and expertise and provide services in terms of continuous training, research, development, assistance and orientation for the benefit of social and economic organizations and institutions. The partnership agreements concluded by the university following its foundation can be categorized as follows:

- 64 partnership and cooperation agreements with national partners
- 55 partnership and cooperation agreements with European countries
- 18 partnership and cooperation agreements with American countries
- 8 partnership and cooperation agreements with African countries
- 4 partnership and cooperation agreements with Asian countries
- 15 partnership and cooperation agreements with Arab countries
- 10 partnership and cooperation agreements with foreign organizations

The figures 1 - 4 illustrate these agreements.

Figure 1: Partnership and Cooperation Agreements between Mohammed V University and National and International Partners

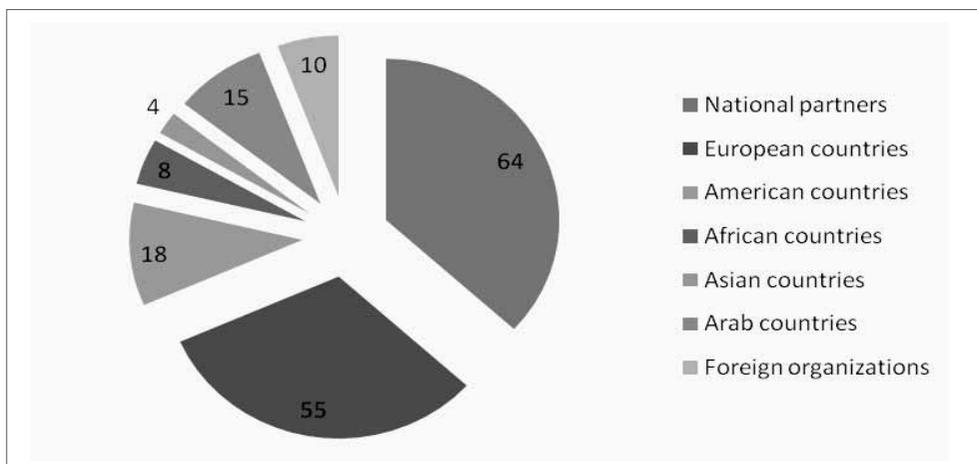


Figure 2: Partnership and Cooperation Agreements between Mohammed V University and European Countries

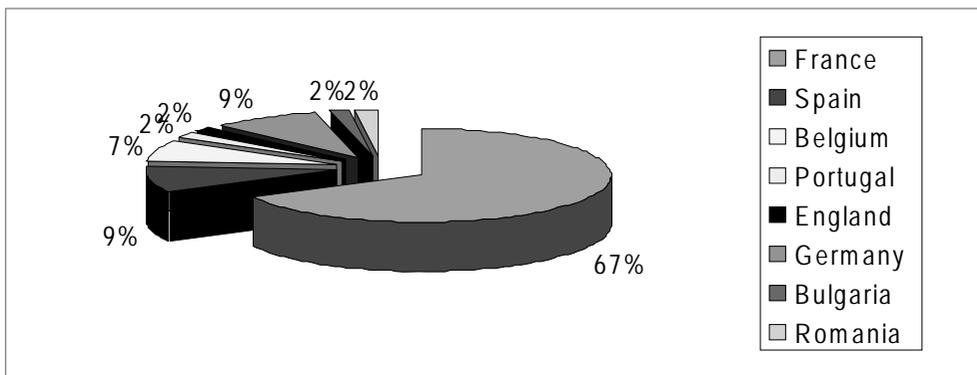


Figure 3: Partnership and Cooperation Agreements between Mohammed V University and American Countries

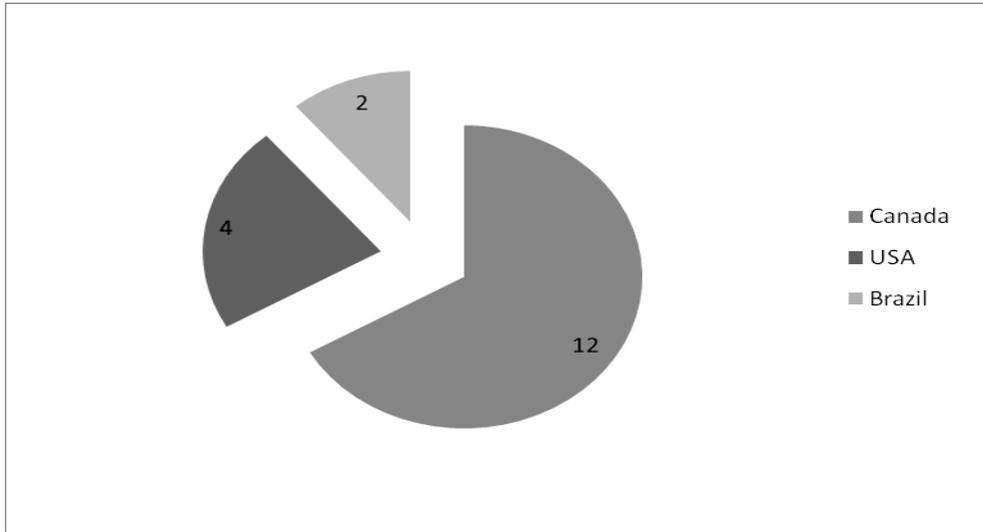
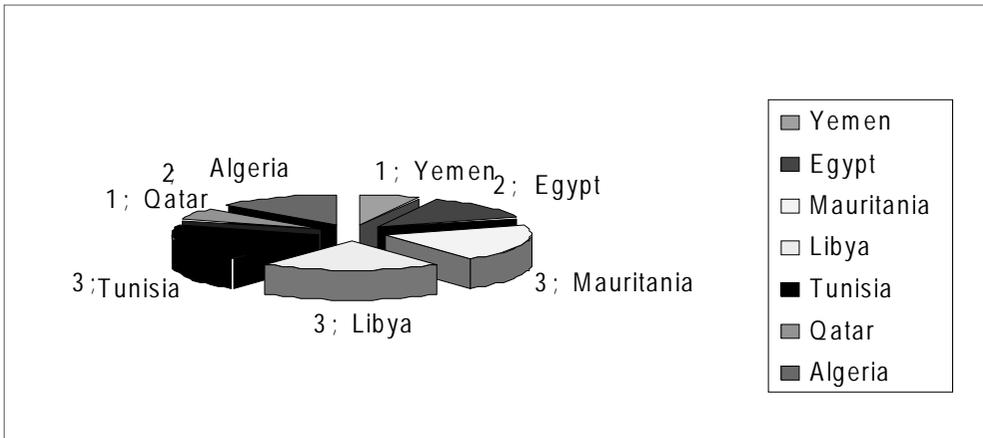


Figure 4: Partnership and Cooperation Agreements between Mohammed V University and Arab Countries



4. Examples of Partnership and Cooperation Agreements concluded by Mohammed V University

a. Moroccan – French Cooperation for Training in Tourism

This cooperation has helped open new higher education majors in tourism and hotel management since July 2004 in the faculty of law, economic and social sciences in Sala. This agreement will be put into force in 2010 in the tourism sector that is expected to receive 10 million tourists.

b. Organizing Regional Sessions in Commercial Tourism with the Cooperation of the World Trade Organization (WTO)

The Mohammed V University and WTO signed a technical training and cooperation agreement to organize regional sessions in commercial tourism in 2004, 2005 and 2006 for the benefit of 27 African countries. These sessions aimed at raising knowledge about the concepts of this organization and about the issues related to commercial tourism. They were conducted by experts from the WTO and specialized African experts from academic and scientific research institutions.

c. Cooperation with the American University of Texas

Within the framework of partnership and cooperation between Mohammed V University and the American University of Texas, a training session was organized for the students of the latter university in June 2008. Arabic classes and courses about Moroccan history, art, culture and the political institutions in Morocco were conducted during this session.

d. Cooperation between Mohammed V University and Tunisia

Within the framework of cooperation between Morocco and the Republic of Tunisia, a joint research program was adopted between Moroccan researchers and their Tunisian peers, through a joint bid for common research projects (Mohammed V University, 2008, p. 5).

5. Cooperation and Partnership Agreements between Mohammed V University and Important Moroccan Economic Facilitators

The reform of universities in Morocco offered new opportunities for them to provide their services to the different economic sectors. As a result, Mohammed V University offers basic training, continuous training and research sessions with a view to develop these sectors. Indeed, the university is trying to become more open to its socioeconomic environment and has created a special office responsible for mobilizing capacities within the university for the private sector. Other sub-offices within university-affiliated institutions were established in order to increase the efficiency of this special office. They follow up on the field partnership agreements with enterprises in terms of basic training, continuous training and scientific research. For example, the university created a “Business Incubator” to orient, guide and help students to integrate into the socioeconomic fabric.

6. The Business Incubator (Pépinière d’entreprises)

In order to increase the openness of the university to its socioeconomic environment, Mohammed V University opened new majors that meet the needs of society and bolster, social, economic and cultural growth and development. For example, new vocational, industrial and cultural majors were opened in the Faculty of Education Sciences, such as a bachelor degree course in social intervention or socio-cultural activation and a master’s degree course in juvenile delinquents re-education.

The university has also helped integrate graduates in the socioeconomic fabric through the creation of a “Business Incubator”. The “Business Incubator” receives, follows-up and supports future entrepreneurs. It is an instrument for local economic development that provides support for future entrepreneurs from the planning of the project to the establishment of the enterprise and its integration in the economic fabric. A “Business Incubator” offers orientation and guidance services for graduates as well as logistic support in order to maximize their chances of success. The company spends a maximum of two years in an incubation program, enabling entrepreneurs to benefit from the following services:

- a. Legal and legislative coverage
- b. Assistance to fully understand the project
- c. Follow-up
- d. Expenses coverage for 2 years
 - 1) Acceptance Criteria: In order to encourage entrepreneurship and innovation, Mohammed V University chooses innovative entrepreneurial projects each year that are submitted by graduates desiring to benefit from assistance and the follow-up services provided by the “Business Incubator” or partner organizations during the implementation of the project. Applicants must:
 - a. Hold a diploma of higher training
 - b. Be exclusively occupied with the implementation of the project
 - 2) Continuous Training: The National Charter for Education and Training and the various legislative texts related to higher education regulation, namely law 102000/, offered many opportunities for universities to develop continuous training. In this regard, Mohammed V University follows up graduates with university degrees who are working in different organizations and offers continuous training sessions within the various faculties and in different majors. This training is carried out in accordance with a regulation issued by the University Board on the 16th December 2005, which defines the beneficiaries of continuous training. These are people working in private institutions, or public administrations individually or collectively within the framework of a partnership; people working in the faculties of the university, such as medicine and dentistry; and students enrolled in basic training courses in other majors in the university.
 - 3) Coordination Office between the University and Enterprises: The Chief Education Office of the university established a specialized office for mediation between the university and enterprises with a view to connect it with the economy and society and to encourage cooperation between the university and its partners. These include public authorities, enterprises, social and cultural facilitators, and involve research, training, development, orientation and guidance, as well as the bolstering of local, national and international development. It also promotes orientation activities and the support provided to universities, educators, researchers and their external partners. The office includes an Orientation Council composed of many partners that study entrepreneurial contracts related to research and continuous training, and look for suitable training for students in their institutions, and for financial support to help establish entrepreneurship.
 - 4) Encouraging Contractual Research Activities: Mohammed V University does this for science and technology through several ways (disseminating information, organizing events and forums, academic days dedicated to research, lab visits, and intervention amongst main partners). The coordination office informs research groups in the university about available research opportunities and sources of finance, organizes training sessions for research professors on different aspect of contractual research and provides logistic support to develop their activities.
 - 5) Promoting Continuous Training:

Developing permanent training is a socioeconomic challenge for both universities and organizations as it:

 - Strengthens the university’s openness to its socioeconomic environment

- Has a positive impact on the basic training of students as it satisfies the needs of the institutions, undertakes case studies and provides assistance in the modernization of labour regulations.
 - Enhances the university's resources
 - Represents a valuable asset for the university and its professors
- 6) Starting training of projects holders: On October 21st 2008, the "Business Incubator" of Mohammed V University organized in its main campus a meeting for graduates with entrepreneurial projects. Several representatives from prestigious financial and economic institutions, such as the National Bank for Enterprises and the National Agency for the Promotion of Employment and Labour Skills, and many research professors in charge of supervision and training attended this meeting. Discussions took place between the graduates and the coordinators in charge of supervising them and several projects were adopted, as shown in table 1.

Table1: Graduates whose projects were adopted by Mohammed V University

Applicant Name	Academic Level	Services or production (project)
Youssef Acamy	Holder of law degree from Mohammed V University	-Advertisement posters design - Cars and motorbikes design - Advertisement posters design equipment - Advertisement posters printing
Ahmad Issam	Holder of a diploma in the reform of special technical textile materials	- Lighting and electricity - Power line and computer networking - Satellite - Video surveillance - Automatic doors
Ibrahim Al-Souissi	Holder of a PhD in pharmacy from Mohammed V University	- Training of pharmacists and people working in the pharmacy field - Pharmacy counselling
Amin Rahim Said Alebo Imad Mahu	Holders of a vocational degree in cultural mediation from Mohammed V University	- Cultural project management - Counselling with a view to improve the institution profile
Sanaa Bulbul	Holder of bachelor degree in economics (business management)	- Centre that provides advisory, counselling, check-up, and follow-up services before childbirth

- 7) Examples of Partnership and Cooperation Agreements with Local Partners: The openness of the university to its social environment has allowed it to conclude many partnership and cooperation agreements with a variety of social, cultural and economic partners. The university created many new vocational majors to provide graduates with training in-line with the needs of a society that has been developing dramatically at all levels during the last decades. These agreements include:

- A cooperation agreement with the urban community of Rabat.
- A cooperation agreement between the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Directorate of jail management and re-education.
- A cooperation agreement between Mohammed V University and the Regional Council of Rabat.
- A cooperation agreement between the Faculty of Education Sciences and the centre for combating illiteracy and informal education.
- A cooperation agreement between the Faculty of Education Sciences and the Secretary of State's Office for Social Protection, Family and Child Affairs.

V. Conclusion

Partnership agreements are very fruitful and can have an effect on a wide range of sectors, as they can be concluded with educational, social, economic, artistic and sports partners. Partnership can be seen as a means to help develop society in a globalized economy. This concept was integrated in the education and training sector in order to enhance it and to meet the new societal and international needs. However, one must keep in mind that academic partnership is not a ready-made method that can be easily applied. Rather, it is a framework that is tailored to the needs of both parties. Consequently, partnerships can vary in substance and in form with regard to their nature, their environment and the expected objectives in terms of education, training and research.

Entering into a partnership, whether national or international, does not mean losing the identity or autonomy of the contracting parties, as all the parties share responsibilities and have equal rights and obligations. Consequently, partnerships can represent a major change for academic institutions with strict administrative hierarchies. This is because in order to promote power sharing and cooperation amongst the various facilitators and organizations in society, they have to create new dynamics based on cooperation. Partnerships can also bring to reality the desire of education and training institutions to be relevant to the economic sector, which has been a source of concern for a long time, in order to develop and modernize structures and systems.

Academic partnership management, as with any other human resources management dealing with human skills, capacities and ambitions, will not bear fruit if it only focuses on the already developed logistics. It has to be driven by a strong will, determination and a readiness to understand the real meaning of partnership and accept changes in tasks and responsibilities. It also has to stem from a common interest in the field of work and a sense of cooperation (Ouzi, 2007, p. 65).

The main features of partnership are collective efforts and human cooperation and for institutions they represent an arduous task. However, academic partnership and cooperation are one of the best ways to improve academic programs, modernize pedagogical approaches, enhance administrative systems and upgrade degree courses. "The higher education institutions can no longer ignore the importance of academic partnerships and cooperation, in order to improve their curricula and upgrade degree courses." (AlAwit, 2008)

"Financing higher education in the Arab region is incumbent in the first place upon the state. However, this financing is not enough to meet the growing needs of the society in terms of higher education and an assured good quality given the various pressures on public sources of finance. It is therefore necessary to diversify these sources through partnerships with economic, social and international facilitators and launch a restructuration process for universities. This is in order that they become self-sufficient productive institutions, capable of promoting their academic

production and providing tailored services in terms of expertise, counselling and research with sufficient resources to be invested in quality improvement. In this regard, the globalization of educational services represents an opportunity for Arab universities to export their programs and diversify their sources of financing.” (AlDougui, 2008)

In order to help higher education institutions to achieve these goals, it is necessary to promote cooperation and enhance partnerships through symposia and workshops. Such measures will raise awareness about the importance and necessity of partnership and cooperation along with helping to accelerate new initiatives.

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L'engagement social des étudiants universitaires: expérience de l'Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth

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Résumé

Les jeunes sont les plus vulnérables face aux turbulences et la perte du sens menace leur avenir, les institutions d'enseignement sont concernées par cette situation et doivent pallier à cette menace à travers la formation, l'encadrement, la transmission de valeurs et l'encouragement des jeunes à développer des projets personnels et se fixer des repères.

L'implication des étudiants auprès des collectivités locales, le volontariat et les activités de groupe permettent aux jeunes de se construire des repères, de découvrir des situations inédites et participer à des activités gratifiantes tout en contribuant au service d'autrui. Les organisations participent de plus en plus aux activités sociales avec l'adoption du concept de responsabilité sociale des organisations (Corporate social responsibility), ce concept trouve sa place dans l'énoncé de mission de nombreuses organisations, notamment les institutions d'enseignement supérieur, pour démontrer leur dimension humaine et leur intérêt pour les problèmes de la collectivité.

Des activités de volontariat très variées ont été mises en place en 2006 à l'Université Saint-Joseph à travers l'opération 7e jour qui a permis de fédérer les acteurs de l'Université (étudiants, enseignants et personnel administratif) autour de projets de bénévolat dans différentes régions libanaises. Cette expérience est décrite dans ce document ainsi que les avantages obtenus au niveau de tous les intervenants et les résultats d'une enquête auprès des étudiants de l'Université concernant leur attitude à l'égard des activités sociales en faveur des personnes défavorisées. Nous avons constaté que, désireux de «changer le monde», les étudiants sont ouverts aux activités de bénévolat durant leur parcours dans l'enseignement supérieur et prouvent que l'engagement social et les études font bon ménage.

I. Bénévolat étudiant: la nécessité d'éduquer à la solidarité et la citoyenneté

La reconnaissance et la valorisation de l'engagement étudiant sont au cœur des préoccupations de nombreuses associations, universités et instituts d'enseignement supérieur. Le bénévolat étudiant apparaît tout à la fois comme un formidable laboratoire de la solidarité participative et comme l'occasion d'un rendez-vous citoyen.

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L'engagement social structure incontestablement la personne humaine, il façonne le citoyen en même temps qu'il offre l'occasion de faire valoir des compétences, des qualités, une motivation (Ashman, 1999). Par delà de leur engagement, les étudiants acquièrent de l'expérience, qu'ils peuvent faire valoir sur le marché du travail.

A travers le monde, des millions de jeunes sont mobilisés chaque année dans l'action et dans la bataille pour la justice sociale et l'égalité des chances. Leurs actions se manifestent sous différentes formes: accompagnement scolaire pour les enfants défavorisés, alphabétisation ou cours de langue aux travailleurs immigrés, présence dans les hôpitaux auprès des enfants malades ou aide aux handicapés, visite aux prisonniers, aide à l'insertion sociale ou préparation de repas aux plus démunis.

Les actions de volontariat, rendez-vous civique et solidaire, sont un vecteur puissant de renforcement du lien social, de vivification de la démocratie et de citoyenneté solidaire.

1. Les étudiants source de dynamisme et vecteur de changement

En près d'un millénaire d'histoire, se cristallise la figure extraordinairement polysémique et paradoxale de l'étudiant universitaire.

Dans l'imaginaire social, les révolutions, les arts plastiques, la musique, la contestation et les changements de toutes natures, ont pour origine les jeunes étudiants. L'étudiant est associé à la fois à l'étude et à la fête, au conformisme et à la contestation, à l'élitisme et à la marginalité, mais aussi à la solidarité et à la citoyenneté.

Les événements qui bouleversent les campus de la côte ouest des États-Unis durant les années soixante et l'explosion de mai 68 en Europe mettent encore un peu plus les engagements extra-académiques des étudiants sous les feux de la rampe. D'autant qu'en un sens, ils ne font que prendre le relais à la fois chronologique et géographique du Mouvement de 1919 en Chine ou de la part prise par les étudiants aux vagues révolutionnaires européennes du 19^e siècle et des mouvements de contestation en Amérique Latine durant la seconde moitié du 20^e siècle.

Quant aux variations de l'engagement ou des activités extra-académiques des étudiants, elles complexifient encore un paysage que les évolutions sociétales des trente dernières années ont profondément modifié.

2. Formation de la personne de l'étudiant

L'Université place l'étudiant au centre de ses préoccupations de formation, et ce, tout au long de son passage dans l'institution. La qualité de la formation comprend une dimension de développement intégral de la personne ainsi que le développement de compétences associées au programme d'études. Cette vision humaniste impose un style de relation où la réussite humaine est la toile de fond et comporte les dimensions suivantes:

- a. L'autonomie qui consiste à développer chez l'étudiant l'habileté de se prendre en charge de façon responsable et d'apprendre à apprendre décrit la première valeur recherchée en considérant le développement intégral de la personne. L'apprentissage est un changement profond dans la personnalité de l'étudiant. Les connaissances et les habiletés s'acquièrent par des méthodes et des moyens qu'il est utile de maîtriser durant les années d'études, mais aussi en vue de poursuivre, de façon autonome, l'acquisition des savoirs, une fois terminées les années d'études.
- b. L'appartenance, à travers le sentiment d'appartenance à des groupes de travail au sein de l'organisation et dans la société pour faciliter l'interaction de l'étudiant avec son environnement

- c. Le respect de soi, des autres, des institutions et de l'environnement pour traduire le rôle de l'enseignement supérieur dans le développement de la personne dans son milieu de vie. Le respect ne doit pas se confondre avec la conformité, mais faire place à la tolérance et inclure le respect de la différence.

3. Doter l'étudiant de compétences

De nombreux établissements d'enseignement supérieur valorisent de hauts standards d'excellence associés aux compétences que l'étudiant veut acquérir en poursuivant ses études. Les valeurs qui suivent placent toujours l'étudiant au centre de sa formation:

- a. Doter les étudiants de compétences durables et transférables pour faciliter leur insertion professionnelle
- b. Favoriser l'acquisition d'une culture riche, diversifiée et intégrée pour permettre aux étudiants de s'adapter aux différentes mutations que connaît la société.
- c. Centrer sur la coopération par opposition à la compétition pour habiliter les étudiants à mutualiser leurs moyens et ressources pour atteindre leurs objectifs.
- d. Habilitier l'étudiant à opérer dans un environnement nouveau et collaborer avec des personnes de différents profils et cultures, ce qui prépare l'étudiant à intégrer des équipes multiculturelles et faciliter sa mobilité entre des régions géographiques ayant des spécificités culturelles.

4. Transmettre aux étudiants des valeurs et des repères

La dynamique croissante de l'environnement et les changements imprévisibles que nous vivons désorientent les étudiants et il est souhaitable de leur transmettre des valeurs et les aider à construire des repères leur permettant de surmonter les nombreux obstacles et difficultés auxquels ils seront confrontés sur les plans professionnels et personnel.

La justice, l'équité, la loyauté, l'entraide, le respect des lois, des réglementations et de l'éthique sont indispensables à transmettre aux étudiants. L'engagement social permet l'épanouissement des individus qui le vivent et l'enrichissement du milieu qui en bénéficie. Afin de favoriser l'engagement, l'institution doit valoriser les initiatives de ses étudiants et de son personnel et leur participation aux activités communautaires.

5. Impératifs de l'engagement social dans l'évaluation qualité des institutions d'enseignement supérieur

Les évaluations qualité des institutions d'enseignement supérieur et de leurs programmes par les organismes d'accréditation allouent une importance particulière à l'engagement social des acteurs de l'institution auprès des collectivités et vérifient la disponibilité, au sein des institutions d'enseignement, de processus facilitant cet engagement et des structures d'accompagnement (Giacalone & Thompson, 2006). Les institutions d'enseignement se préparant à postuler à des accréditations internationales de qualité sont supposées développer des processus favorisant l'engagement social de leur personnel et leurs étudiants à travers des aménagements horaires des activités académiques, un support institutionnel et un encadrement des activités extra-académiques à dimension sociale et la localisation des terrains adéquats à l'action sociale ainsi que la valorisation et la reconnaissance de ces activités au sein de l'institution. Dans le domaine de l'accréditation des programmes de gestion, les organismes accréditeurs AACSB et EFMD incluent dans leurs standards les processus favorisant l'implication sociale des acteurs de l'institution, sachant que l'absence de ces processus pénalise l'institution candidate et la prive de l'accréditation.

6. Responsabilité sociale des organisations

L'adoption par les organisations du concept de la responsabilité sociale a permis le développement de nombreuses activités sociales instituées, parrainées ou financées par des organisations. Cette tendance a débuté suite au mouvement de privatisation de la majorité des services de base traditionnellement assurés par les pouvoirs publics et le désengagement progressif de l'Etat de nombreux secteurs. Les organisations sont confrontées dans leur environnement à des besoins sociaux et sont appelées à atténuer ces besoins par des programmes qu'elles lancent elles-mêmes ou qu'elles financent pour améliorer leur image auprès de leurs «stakeholders» et leur inspirer confiance pour le maintien de relations harmonieuses. De nombreuses organisations deviennent un modèle de citoyenneté et se veulent morales à travers les valeurs adoptées et les actions sociales entreprises.

Les institutions d'enseignement supérieur qui constituent un type particulier d'organisations sont prioritairement concernées par la responsabilité sociale car elles sont altruistes, recherchent l'excellence dans leur enseignement, se veulent innovantes et pionnières tout en essayant de développer la créativité de leurs étudiants (Matten & Moon, 2004).

Ces institutions s'intéressent à la responsabilité sociale à deux niveaux:

- a. Formation de jeunes diplômés qui sont supposés devenir de bons citoyens
- b. Interaction avec leur environnement pour assister les personnes les plus défavorisées et participer au bien commun de la collectivité.

II. Opération 7^e jour, modèle de mobilisation des acteurs de l'université autour d'un projet social

La mise en place de cette opération répond à un souci de l'Université Saint-Joseph au Liban de sensibiliser ses étudiants aux problèmes de la société libanaise pour les confronter avec des réalités et des situations qu'ils découvriront durant leur parcours professionnel, favorisant par cette sensibilisation leur insertion professionnelle et contribuant au développement personnel des étudiants. Les objectifs pédagogiques présentés dans la première partie seront-ils atteints à travers l'opération 7^e jour ?

1. Contexte d'apparition de cette opération

Antérieurement à 2006, l'engagement social des étudiants de l'Université Saint-Joseph se limitait à des initiatives ponctuelles mises en place par des services administratifs, des amicales ou des étudiants à titre individuel. En 2006, un événement externe soudain et d'une ampleur extrême, a été l'occasion pour l'Université d'expérimenter l'engagement social collectif et l'a incitée à pérenniser et structurer cet engagement.

Le conflit isolé qui a éclaté en juillet 2006 entre le Hezbollah et Israël a rapidement dégénéré en une guerre qui a duré 33 jours (Picard, 2007). Durant cette période, des frappes aériennes ont été effectuées sur différentes régions libanaises accompagnées d'un exode de la population vers le centre du pays et vers les pays environnants. Plus d'un million de personnes ont quitté leur domicile pour échapper à la violence et se sont réfugiées dans des locaux précaires (écoles, universités, bureaux et locaux commerciaux) en attendant la cessation des opérations militaires (USJ information, 2007).

L'Etat libanais, totalement surpris par ce cycle de violence, s'est retrouvé paralysé et incapable de mettre en place des actions d'assistance face à l'ampleur de cette situation dramatique.

De nombreuses organisations non gouvernementales (ONG) se sont activées quelques jours

après le début du conflit, mais leurs moyens étaient rudimentaires et leurs ressources humaines peu mobilisées. L'Université Saint-Joseph a réagi conformément à sa mission de participer au service public et d'interagir avec la société libanaise. Malgré les vacances universitaires les dirigeants de l'université ont appelé à une réunion de concertation avec les représentants de certaines composantes de l'université ayant à leur actif des actions sociales et communautaires, susceptibles de participer à des activités d'urgence pour atténuer les souffrances de la population civile prise en otage dans cette guerre.

De nombreuses personnes ont répondu à l'appel du Recteur et la première réunion a débouché sur des recommandations d'intervention dans les domaines de la restauration rapide (meals on wheels), la santé communautaire et les activités de divertissement pour enfants. Ne disposant que de ressources limitées, les acteurs de l'université ont préféré s'associer, dans une première étape, avec des ONG déjà présentes sur le terrain, disposant de moyens et de contacts locaux avec la population. Durant les trois semaines suivantes, les acteurs de l'université ont acquis suffisamment d'expérience, grâce à leurs activités en collaboration avec les ONG, et ont augmenté la mobilisation des étudiants et des enseignants, ce qui leur a permis de se détacher graduellement des ONG et de développer leur propre schéma d'assistance.

Des groupes se sont progressivement constitués autour de porteurs de projets d'intervention ayant démontré une expertise, un engagement social ou une capacité d'accès à des ressources. A la fin de la cinquième semaine de conflit et avec l'annonce de l'entrée en vigueur d'un cessez-le-feu précaire, une réunion de mise au point incluant des représentants des groupes engagés dans des activités d'assistance s'est tenue en présence du Recteur de l'université. Durant cette réunion, un échange de bonnes pratiques entre les groupes fut réalisé, de nouveaux besoins furent identifiés, des chevauchements entre les activités des groupes furent constatés et les relations avec les autres ONG évoquées ainsi que les relations à établir avec les bénéficiaires.

2. Evolution du concept

Le cessez-le-feu a permis de structurer davantage l'action de l'Université à travers le changement de l'appellation de groupe à cellule, la nomination d'un responsable et la rédaction d'un énoncé sommaire de mission pour chaque cellule, l'élaboration d'une liste d'actions prévues et l'augmentation du nombre de cellules pour répondre aux nouveaux besoins apparus après la cessation des combats notamment génie civil, dialogue, environnement et tourisme.

Quelques jours après le cessez-le-feu, une remise en question était nécessaire car l'environnement a changé (passage d'une situation de bombardements intenses à un calme parfait), les bénéficiaires dispersés géographiquement, l'évolution des besoins d'urgence vers des besoins de développement social, l'arrivée de nouveaux acteurs sociaux régionaux et internationaux. Le Recteur proposa le maintien de ces organisations éphémères (Lanzara, 1983) tout en modifiant leur modèle d'intervention et en les structurant davantage, cette proposition fut adoptée à l'unanimité par les acteurs qui souhaitaient voir leurs efforts déboucher sur des réalisations concrètes et durables. De même cette proposition offrait les avantages de maintenir la dynamique créée autour du bénévolat au sein de l'université, l'expérience accumulée et les contacts établis qui risquaient de disparaître en cas de dissolution de ces structures. Le développement régional et l'appui aux personnes défavorisées furent des arguments supplémentaires pour formaliser cette opération et éviter de démanteler les groupes avec l'amélioration de la situation (Roux-Dufort, 2000). Le choix d'un nom pour cette opération était nécessaire, le nom devait refléter le bénévolat et l'engagement social, car cette opération se voulait durable et fédératrice de tous les acteurs de l'Université.

Le nom Opération 7^e jour a été retenu car le repos du septième jour est institué dans le premier livre de la Bible dans un des deux récits de l'origine du monde. Au commencement était le souffle et après avoir travaillé à la création pendant six jours, la Bible (Genèse II 2 à 4) nous dit: «Dieu acheva au septième jour son œuvre, qu'il avait faite: et il se reposa au septième jour de toute son œuvre, qu'il avait faite. Dieu bénit le septième jour, et il le sanctifia, parce qu'en ce jour il se reposa de toute son œuvre qu'il avait créée en la faisant». La symbolique du nom est conforme avec les ambitions de cette opération d'impliquer dans des activités sociales les étudiants, les enseignants et les membres du personnel durant leur temps libre et aux dépens de leur activité personnelle.

3. Pérennisation du concept

Une rencontre en avril 2007 des responsables des cellules, réunis autour du Recteur, a permis de dresser un inventaire des réalisations des derniers mois. Les constatations suivantes ont été relevées: l'atmosphère dans les entités de l'université qui ont participé à cette opération est devenue plus sereine et la coopération entre les ressources humaines plus étroites ; de même, les étudiants participant à cette opération ont ressenti la valeur des compétences acquises et leur attrait pour les directeurs de ressources humaines lors des entretiens de recrutement car les étudiants acquièrent la capacité à écouter, interagir avec le public, développer leur créativité, s'intégrer à une équipe et offrir un service à des personnes avec des profils et des attentes qui diffèrent dans la plupart des cas.

Une opportunité d'extension de l'opération 7^e jour, à d'autres acteurs, a émergé en février 2008, durant la rencontre d'information entre les représentants de l'Université Saint-Joseph et les directeurs d'écoles secondaires ; le concept de volontariat et de service à la collectivité ont suscité l'intérêt des directeurs d'écoles qui ont exprimé leur intention de participer à l'opération 7^e jour ou de développer des projets similaires au niveau de leur école avec, si possible, l'appui de l'Université.

Du point de vue positionnement stratégique, l'opération 7^e jour offre à l'Université Saint-Joseph l'avantage de se différencier des autres universités en impliquant ses acteurs dans ce projet. Cette différenciation devient nécessaire avec la standardisation des programmes d'enseignement et l'accès des universités concurrentes à des ressources équivalentes. La formation de la personne et le développement des compétences personnelles des étudiants, à l'aide d'activités de terrain, réalisables à travers l'opération 7^e jour, offrent des avantages concurrentiels pour les diplômés.

4. Attitude des étudiants

En octobre 2008, une enquête a été réalisée au niveau de tous les étudiants inscrits à l'Université Saint-Joseph. Sur un total de 10 860 étudiants inscrits, 8168 personnes ont répondu au questionnaire et 2918 ont manifesté un intérêt pour le volontariat et l'engagement social, sachant que 2207 déclarent disposer de temps pour le volontariat, ce qui constitue environ 27% des étudiants de l'Université ayant participé à l'enquête. Dans tous les cursus d'étude, parmi les personnes intéressées par la dimension sociale, la proportion des étudiants disponibles pour participer aux activités sociales dépasse les 70% excepté dans les cursus de médecine, d'ingénieur à cause de la nature de ces études caractérisées par une charge de travail assez lourde pour les étudiants, ainsi que les étudiants suivant des cursus en sciences humaines qui semblent moins disposés que les étudiants inscrits dans d'autres formations à s'impliquer dans les activités sociales.

Tableau 1 : Intérêt des étudiants de l'USJ pour le volontariat et l'engagement social

Cursus d'études	Intérêt pour le Social	Disponibilité	Proportion	1 à 2 h	2 à 3 h	3 à 4 h	4h à 5h
Formation sociale	24	19	79%	12	5	1	1
Sage-Femmes	10	8	80%	4	2	1	1
Agriculture	9	7	77%	4	1	2	0
Ingénieurs	413	266	64%	161	76	25	4
Traducteurs	70	63	90%	38	17	7	1
Laboratoires	33	32	97%	22	8	1	1
Droit	104	80	77%	45	26	9	0
Gestion	786	605	77%	307	194	65	39
Lettres et Sciences Humaines	141	83	59%	52	21	6	4
Médecine	271	144	53%	91	41	11	1
Médecine Dentaire	149	133	89%	76	35	11	11
Pharmacie	192	148	77%	120	25	3	0
Sciences	191	169	88%	92	55	18	4
Sciences Economiques	204	174	85%	130	35	5	4
Education	59	46	78%	32	9	5	0
Sciences Infirmières	66	55	83%	27	24	4	0
Audio Visuel	16	15	94%	6	7	1	1
Télécom	44	37	84%	23	10	2	2
Physiothérapie	48	43	89%	34	7	2	0
Psycho Motricité	37	32	86%	16	11	5	0
Orthophonie	28	28	100%	15	8	5	0
Assurance	23	20	87%	12	6	1	1
Total	2918	2207	75%	1319	623	190	75

En plus des résultats de l'enquête (tableau 1), l'observation sur le terrain de l'activité des cellules (ne figurant pas dans cet article) démontre que le taux de participation le plus élevé à l'opération 7^e jour a été enregistré parmi les étudiants poursuivant des études dans des cursus de santé,

excepté le cursus de médecine. Cette observation peut être expliquée par la nature des activités réalisées dans le cadre de l'opération 7^e jour, pouvant constituer un complément de stage à ces étudiants ainsi que le sentiment d'utilité probablement ressenti par ces étudiants et la gratitude des bénéficiaires engendrant une satisfaction personnelle aux étudiants.

Par contre, les étudiants des autres cursus ne constatent pas un lien direct entre leur formation académique et les activités réalisées sur le terrain dans le cadre de cette opération, ni une satisfaction personnelle associée à leurs prestations.

5. Déroulement de l'opération et développement de partenariats

Après quelques mois d'activités, l'opération 7^e jour a constitué des cellules de travail et un comité de coordination. Les cellules sont subdivisées par secteur et interviennent dans les domaines suivants: Reforestation, génie civil, développement social, santé et développement humain, dialogue, environnement, tourisme, éducation à la citoyenneté et sciences politiques

Des projets centrés sur le dépistage de maladies épidémiologiques et chroniques (cancers du sein et du col de l'utérus, diabète, hypertension,...), la prévention de certaines maladies (ophtalmologie, dermatologie, dentition,...) et la vaccination, la formation d'acteurs locaux et la participation à la mise en place d'infrastructures ont été réalisés dans de nombreuses régions du Liban, notamment dans des régions rurales défavorisées.

(Cana, Yarine, Kaa, Akkar,...).

Le déplacement fréquent des intervenants (étudiants, enseignants et personnel administratif) vers ces régions et les contacts établis sur place, ont permis à ces intervenants et notamment les étudiants de découvrir les problèmes de cette population, de tisser avec les habitants une relation de confiance et d'acquérir des compétences relationnelles avec des personnes de profils différents.

Ces interventions ont contribué au développement de partenariats avec différents types d'organismes: les municipalités de certaines localités (Cana, Yarine, Jal-El-Dib), des O.N.G. (Ahlouna, Jouzour, Télélumière), des organismes publics (Ministère des réfugiés, Ministère des affaires sociales), les services de coopération d'ambassades étrangères (Ambassades de France et d'Italie) et des entreprises privées (laboratoires pharmaceutiques). Les partenariats permettent d'une part de transmettre ce modèle à des acteurs locaux et d'inciter les partenaires à appuyer les initiatives de la société civile face à des besoins importants détectés dans de nombreuses régions.

III. Conclusion

L'évolution rapide de l'environnement et la disparition de certitudes désorientent les individus et les organisations notamment les institutions d'enseignement supérieur qui assument la lourde responsabilité de former la prochaine génération de dirigeants et de professionnels qui influenceront la société. L'engagement social peut constituer un complément de formation pour les étudiants qui recherchent des repères dans un monde incertain, de même l'adoption du concept de responsabilité sociale par les institutions d'enseignement supérieur facilitera la réalisation de leur mission et leur ancrage dans les collectivités qu'elles desservent.

Quel que soit l'avenir de l'opération 7^e jour et au-delà de ses dimensions humanitaire et sociale, l'exemple de l'opération 7^e jour présenté dans ce document a permis de donner un sens aux ressources humaines de l'Université Saint-Joseph impliquées dans cette opération et de les extraire d'une torpeur dans laquelle tous les Libanais furent plongés après le déclenchement du conflit.

Certains participants à cette opération ont déclaré avoir découvert les habitudes et les comportements d'une frange de la population qui vivait repliée sur elle-même et en marge de la société libanaise depuis deux décennies. Au niveau national, tout repli communautaire peut engendrer un danger pour la société libanaise caractérisée par la tolérance, l'acceptation de la diversité et le respect de la différence.

Les bénéfices pour l'Université et ses partenaires se résument dans une meilleure motivation de leur personnel administratif et enseignant, un sentiment d'utilité, des travaux d'équipe et une ouverture sur une frange de la population. Au niveau des étudiants, les activités de volontariat et de bénévolat sont recommandées en management des ressources humaines pour souder les équipes et en marketing pour améliorer le service aux clients.

Les étudiants en seront les principaux bénéficiaires car les activités déclenchées dans le cadre de cette opération les doteront de nouvelles compétences appréciées dans les organisations et des qualités relationnelles indéniables ainsi qu'une préparation à accomplir un rôle citoyen dans la société; De même elle favorisera l'acquisition d'une culture riche, diversifiée et intégrée susceptible de les aider face aux fluctuations de l'environnement.

L'Université Saint-Joseph peut continuer à développer les activités sociales de cette opération en se basant sur son personnel et le noyau d'étudiants ayant déclaré leur disposition à y participer tout en intensifiant les efforts au niveau des autres étudiants pour les attirer vers ces activités sociales qui compléteront leur formation et les doteront de nouvelles qualités personnelles.

Les principaux défis pour l'Université résident dans l'augmentation du taux de participation des étudiants à l'opération 7^e jour, notamment les étudiants faiblement impliqués de par la nature de leur cursus académique et la pérennisation de cette opération. Il est souhaitable que l'Université examine chacune des activités développées sous l'angle de son incidence sur les bénéficiaires, mais également au niveau des compétences acquises par les étudiants surtout les compétences durables et transférables, mettre au point un descriptif de l'activité et ses avantages pour les bénéficiaires mais surtout pour les étudiants à travers leur développement personnel et les nouvelles connaissances qu'ils sont susceptibles de puiser. La communication de ces éléments aux étudiants les encouragerait à adhérer à cette opération, acquérir une autonomie et respecter la diversité. Cette opération offre un double avantage: assister humainement des personnes en difficulté en améliorant leurs conditions de vie et compléter la formation académique des étudiants qui seront confrontés prochainement à la vie active.

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Beyond the Walls: The American University of Beirut Engages its Communities

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Abstract

The American University of Beirut (AUB), a private institution of higher learning founded in Beirut in 1866, has long espoused a mission of social responsibility. From peace time to periods of conflict, AUB students and faculty have reached out through established organizations and clubs, summer work camps, and other voluntary efforts.

This paper presents the AUB experience in three sections. The first section offers an historical overview of community engagement at AUB using a mix of archival material, published articles and books, and first hand accounts. The second section analyses the difficulties of community engagement within a university context. Although faculties are evaluated on their community service, this assessment rarely influences promotion and contract renewal. The third section presents case studies of three new initiatives at AUB which reaffirm the university's commitment to service: CCECS: The Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service; AREC: Advancing Research, Enabling Communities; and The Neighborhood Initiative. The paper concludes with a reflection on the institutional changes needed within AUB for these young programs to thrive.

...“Graduates will be individuals committed to creative and critical thinking, life-long learning, personal integrity and civic responsibility, and leadership.”

from the AUB Mission Statement

“All academic units, and some administrative units, must build into their missions a commitment to seek ways to benefit the broad communities in which we live.

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It is not enough to provide good education to our students. We must in addition constantly ask ourselves how we can serve our community. The answer to that question will be easier for some units than for others, but all must ask it.”
President John Waterbury, State of the University address 2004, citing community service as one of AUB’s ten strategic goals.

I. Introduction

Institutions of higher education exist to prepare young men and women for useful and productive lives. Some aim even higher: to produce a new generation of thinkers and leaders who will in their professional lives contribute significantly to the development of their countries, and to produce research that expands the realm of the known. Through these actions, institutions of higher education fulfill their social responsibility. This paper employs a wider definition of social responsibility, one that incorporates the notion of service, of working explicitly for the public good, and connecting to the people and the place in which we live and work.

This wider notion of social responsibility is at the heart of three new initiatives at the American University of Beirut (AUB).

- The Center for Civil Engagement and Community Service, located in the office of the Provost of AUB, was founded in spring 2008. The Center aims to develop a culture of service and civic leadership at AUB.
- The Agricultural Research and Education Center (AREC) established in 1953 as the university’s farm. In 2008, the AUB Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences decided to strengthen and deepen its commitment to sustainable rural livelihoods, and, at the same time, to reach out to the entire university to literally create an AUB campus in the Bekaa. AREC’s current mission is embodied in the new reading of its acronym: Advancing Research, Enabling Communities.
- The Neighborhood Initiative, located in the Office of the President, was launched formally in autumn 2007. The Initiative aims to link AUB faculty, students and staff to the district of Beirut immediately surrounding the university through invigorated outreach, research focused on priority problems facing the neighborhood, and partnerships to protect the legendary diversity of the place.

The paper highlights the challenges that must be addressed to enable these three young initiatives to develop to their maximum potential.

II. The history of engagement at AUB

The imperative of community service has been an enduring theme in the history of the American University of Beirut⁴ since its establishment in Beirut in 1866. Approaches to community service, however, are not fixed; they change over time, and in the case of AUB, reflect historical contexts which combine prevailing economic, political and intellectual currents and, often, the exigencies of war and conflict.

The founders of AUB had grand ambitions for their graduates. A printed manifesto that appeared in 1863 outlined the ideological basis of the new university and listed among its objectives:

⁴ Founded as the Syrian Protestant College. The name changed to the American University of Beirut in 1920. See: (Penrose, 1941, p. 171).

to supply the educational needs of the country, encourage its industrial interests, develop its resources, and for its graduates, to occupy positions of authority (Munro, 1977, p. 14 - 15). Indeed, in 1864, the Ottoman Turks gave Lebanon more autonomy and Lebanon needed competent leaders. The founders of AUB endeavored to train those leaders, and provide an education that combined Christian ideals with principles of modern Western education. Their objective was to produce “honest, intelligent and courageous men, liberal in point of view, and devoted to the true interests of their country” (Penrose, 1941, p. 4).

The founders of AUB also inculcated in their students a special *attitude*: the obligation to serve their fellow men. The notion of service was in fact deeply rooted in the religious faith of the founders of AUB, Protestant missionaries from New England. The AUB founder and first President Daniel Bliss, in his baccalaureate address of July 8, 1894 entitled “The Thrones of Service”, cites the principle of service as the law of life, the principle running through the moral and spiritual universe (Rugh, 1956, p. 16).

In tones typical of the time, Reverend Bliss later warned his students (Rugh, 1956, 24):

“You came to College that your view of the world might be extended, that your view of life and the duties of life might be enlarged, that you might become stronger and better able to help and bless mankind. If you are more and more willing to serve your fellow–mankind, your college course will be a blessing to the world; and the founders and teachers of the College will rejoice that you came to us. But if you are less willing and continue to be less willing to serve your fellow men, would to God that you had never entered these doors!”

Service in the early years of AUB had distinctly Christian overtones. Although the college was institutionally separate from the mission, AUB was still charged, in its earliest days, with bringing converts into the faith and training a ‘vigorous Native ministry.’ Successful ultimately in neither, the founders recast their mission more broadly to encompass a more secular and scientific approach to education (Makdisi, 1997, p. 707- 711; Khalaf, 2001, p. 44). Institutional values included: freedom of conscience and religion, tolerance, and service to fellow men (Crawford, 1927, 192 - 195; Munro, 1977, p. 15). Service should not then be viewed as a crudely utilitarian tactic of proselytization, but rather as a humanitarian perspective stemming from the founders’ faith.

The humanitarian aims of the early AUB community are most obvious in the early medical education and outreach. The Medical School was founded in 1867, just a year after the university enrolled its first students, and the first class of physicians graduated in 1871. Students and faculty eventually played large roles in the provision of maternal care in the poor neighborhoods of Beirut, including one populated by Armenian refugees; the Lebanon Hospital for Mental Diseases in Asfurieh, the tuberculosis sanatorium in Shebanieh, among others (Khairallah, 1939, p. 461 - 463).

Other welfare organizations and activities developed, all within the framework of the Christian faith. As President Bayard Dodge was to declare in his inaugural address (Penrose, 1941, p. 292):

“...religion is not the ulterior aim of education ... is it something more fundamental; it is the consciousness of a spiritual power, controlling life and seeking good. Religion is not for the chapel alone, but can be found in the spirit of honest study, good sportsmanship, and consecration of the welfare of mankind.”

One such welfare organization, the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), was to become the largest and most influential student organization on campus prior to World War I (Penrose, 1941, p. 50 - 51). The Association collected charitable contributions from the student body, and

combined social and religious services. They were particularly active in Ras Beirut⁵. World War I brought many hardships to the people of Lebanon, Syria and Palestine, and AUB responded. By the summer of 1916, the stress of war was acute; the rural economy of Lebanon was in shambles and starvation and disease were widespread. The university ran soup kitchens in the villages of 'Abeih and SuK al-Gharb, and medical students became active in providing medical care there⁶. Throughout the war, AUB leaders stressed the independence of the university from the American government which had broken diplomatic relations with Turkey, and demonstrated its neutrality by setting up tent hospitals for wounded soldiers. The Turkish governor at the time, Jemal Pasha, was impressed that graduates of the American medical school were the only ones prepared to serve in the typhus wards and on front-line dressing stations (Penrose 1941, p. 161; Munro 1977, p. 66). Wartime relief work brought other cordial relations: an often repeated story from the period describes the attitudinal transformation of the Mufti of Beirut. Prior to the War he had been distrustful of what he saw as a predominantly Christian proselytizing enterprise, but observing the hard physical labor of the doctors, nurses and medical students in organizing the war relief, he later called on President Howard Bliss, son of Daniel, to announce "From now on I shall be your best friend" (Dodge, 1958, p. 40).

Community service work continued after the war. Bayard Dodge, AUB president from 1923-1948, in an article entitled "University Work and Community Life", offers numerous examples: AUB took over and reconstructed an old building in Ras Beirut to serve as an experimental elementary school and community service center offering night classes, evening meetings, and activities for boys of the neighborhood; faculty and students in Dentistry started a 'clean teeth' campaign; with malaria endemic, medical professors worked with local government to eradicate mosquitoes from Ras Beirut. Summing up the prevailing attitude, the university president states (Dodge, 1927, p. 262 - 264):

"The University will do more harm than good, if it weans men and women away from service to their communities, by giving them a veneering of culture and puzzling their minds with too many theories."

Adding that

"...the greatest intellects in the world are not ashamed to interest themselves in commonplace things... instruction is not limited to the classroom or laboratory, for the country village, the city slum, the market and the factory are used to demonstrate problems of intellectual value."

In the 1920s, the YMCA was transformed into a distinctly inter-religious faculty-student organization called the West Hall Brotherhood, where

"men of different religions can work together for their common good and uplift their fellow men, with a spirit of cooperation that is sympathetic and hearty and based on mutual respect and mutual confidence."

The West Hall Brotherhood motto emphasized common ground: "The realm in which we share is vastly larger than that in which we differ." Among its activities, the Brotherhood organized a night school for lower-level staff at AUB, language teachers for Ras Beirut School, volley ball games at the Muslim Boys' School, visits to hospital wards, school assistance 'deputations' to

⁵ AUB Archives (Jafet Library) Student Life and Activities 1896. AA4.3. 1896 Minutes of the YMCA of the Syrian Protestant College. AA4.3 1903 - 1915. Circular.

⁶ AUB Archives (Jafet Library) Howard Bliss Collection 1902 - 1920. AA2.3.2 Report of the 'Abeih and Suk el-Gharb soup kitchens.

Tripoli, Choueifat, Aley, Shoueir, Nabatiyeh, as well as Homs, Hama, Aleppo and Damascus. Names such as Harry Dorman and Constantine Zurayk appear in leadership positions of the West Hall Brotherhood in the 1920s and 1930s⁷.

During AUB's first sixty years then, from the 1860s until the 1920s, community service was carried out by faculty and students under the banner of religion. By the 1930s, service had a different emphasis: AUB students and faculty were bringing modernity, through their predominantly extra-curricular voluntary work, to underdeveloped regions and people. Attention turned to rural development and agricultural modernization.

In 1930, the Near East Foundation, a New-York based philanthropy created by the Dodge family who had been benefactors and leaders of the university from its inception, funded the establishment of the Institute of Rural Life. The Institute functioned as an agricultural extension program, working with farm families to improve crop production and animal husbandry; it also organized agricultural education for schools, child welfare programs, and farmer's cooperatives⁸. AUB students began participating in Institute programs as volunteers during weekends and vacations, and eventually this work evolved into the Village Welfare Service.

The Village Welfare Service, in fact, reflected growing nationalist sentiments and the obligation of students to contribute to national development⁹. As a report published in 1935 reminds the AUB student (Munro, 1977, p. 87):

... "in accepting the privilege of an education he thereby incurs increased responsibilities. He has contracted a debt which he can discharge only by bringing the knowledge and experience he has gained to bear upon the problems of the community which sent him to be educated, whether from city or from country."

The AUB administration, anxious about the political agitation accompanying the rise in nationalism, viewed service as a convenient channeling of nationalistic aspirations into productive activity, compelling students into altruistic work in all aspects of rural life: farming, water and sanitation, public health and hygiene, home economics, refugee assistance and literacy (Dodge, 1958, 65,68; Munro, 1977, p. 86 - 87; Penrose, 1941, p. 271).

The Village Welfare Service, in turn, evolved into Civic Welfare League (*Rabitat al-In'ash al-Qawmi*)¹⁰, with a broader mandate to work year round and in Beirut as well.

World War II thrust AUB again into the domain of relief work. By 1941, the AUB campus had become a refuge for Free French and British troops. The AUB medical staff provided anti-malarial training to the foreign forces, and supported the work of the Red Cross and the Spears Mobile Clinics (Dodge, 1958, p. 73 - 4, 82). The latter were set up by Lady Spears, and eventually became a permanent clinic in Chtaura headed by a pediatrician from AUB, with childhood immunization

⁷ A West Hall Brotherhood pamphlet from the 1930s contains clarifications about its modus operandus: The Brotherhood does not compete with other AUB student societies (such as the Urwat al-Wuthqa) but serves them; teacher and student are on the same level in the Brotherhood; the Brotherhood is inter-religious not irreligious; the Brotherhood does not promote internationalism but encourages 'true' nationalism; alumni may also be Brotherhood members. AUB Archives (Jafet Library) Student Life and Activities. AA:4.3 1921 - 1935. The Brotherhood. AA:4.3 Brotherhood Meetings 1930s. See also: (Avery, 1927, p. 265 - 266; Tannous, 2004, p. 118 - 119).

⁸ AUB Archives (Jafet Library). Institute of Rural Life, 1944. AA:3.5.2 The Institute of Rural Life at Beirut. Bayard Dodge. Also: Personal Communication, Dr. Nuhad Dagher.

⁹ AUB Archives (Jafet Library). Students Life 1882- 1980s. AA: 4.3 1954 - Constitution: The Village Welfare Service.

¹⁰ It is interesting to note the prominence of the Arabic name *Rabitat al-In'ash al-Qawmi* in the archival materials.

programs run by AUB graduate doctors. The AUB pharmacy and laboratories provided technical back-up to this outreach work¹¹.

AUB became a genuinely secular institution after World War II. By the time Constantine Zurayk became acting President in 1954, the institution was in the forefront of the secular renaissance of the Arab World. And as the historian John Munro observes: University leaders “found it increasingly embarrassing to speak earnestly about morality and disinterested service to one’s fellow men; the AUB had passed into the modern, secular, pragmatic world.” (Munro, 1977, p. 76, 125).

Indeed, by the mid-twentieth century, AUB was no longer led by missionary-spirited individuals who had come to Lebanon with a life-long commitment to doing good works. Following World War II, AUB devoted considerable attention to improving its academic standards, programs in agricultural, social and public health sciences were established with funds from international foundations such as Ford and Rockefeller, and there was a regular turnover among the more globally-oriented faculty (Dodge, 1958, p. 94, 101 - 2).

This was a time when what had been extra-curricular service activities became incorporated into academic programs. Funding from the US Government’s Point Four Program and international foundations allowed the university to diversify and expand. In 1953, a School of Agriculture with an experimental farm in the Bekaa was established with Ford Foundation funding (Munro, 1977, p. 101 - 104). Community development projects offered research opportunities to faculty. The Social Sciences received support from the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Foundation to develop this work (Penrose, 1941, p. 243).

It is in this context, then, that the evolution of AUB’s community service programs must be seen. But there were competing and sometimes contradictory pressures on faculty and students alike. The professorial ranks were now expected to perform to international standards, not just as good teachers and researchers working on locally relevant problems, but publishing in international journals topics of interest to international audiences. This eventually forced new priority-setting, and imposed dilemmas that the AUB faculty struggle with even until today.

As an institution with firm footing in the Arab world, faculty and students influenced and were influenced by the rising tide of Arab nationalism, and the despair and fury that followed the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. In fact, a Palestinian diaspora of intellectuals contributed significantly to the shaping of AUB and its academic excellence in the 20th century. As noted above, nationalism encouraged a growing civic consciousness and a commitment to uplift and develop the Arab world. Parts of this consciousness AUB found threatening, as is well-documented in the histories of student activism on campus (Anderson, 2008a; Anderson, 2008b; Rabah, 2008).

The post war period also ushered in a period of affluence and with it, a new global consumerism. A review of AUB student publications from the 1950s and 1960s suggests that for many at AUB in the 1950s and 1960s, campus life was meant to be fun, and ‘sock hop’ dances, beauty pageants and fashion-shows were interspersed with the occasional charitable activity for the underprivileged¹².

AUB was also influenced by another global trend, seen most memorably in France in 1968: a general revolt by the young against the old and established. Anti-authoritarianism at AUB also responded to regional events: September 1970 in Jordan, and the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli wars. Student unrest reached its climax at AUB in 1974, with the student strike and occupation of university buildings, leading to the expulsion of 103 students (Munro, 1977, p. 152 - 177; Anderson, 2008a).

¹¹ AUB Archives (Jafet Library) Missionaries. AA:7.5.2.6. The Work of the Spears Mobile Clinics in Syria and Lebanon, 1941 - 45. pp2, 17, 23 - 24.

¹² Personal Communication, Dr. Betty Anderson.

And yet, even in the tumultuous years prior to the Lebanese Civil War, the spirit of Arab nationalism animated community service, not just campus politics, at AUB. For example, in 1972 AUB students organized a National Development Committee to promote integrated rural development in villages surrounding Nabatiyeh in southern Lebanon. Students from all AUB faculties were involved in work that included childhood vaccination campaigns; workshops for farmers on bee-keeping and the care of olive and fruit trees; the distribution of large numbers of olive, almond, citrus and fig trees at discounted prices; assistance to farmers during the tobacco harvest; vacation camps for children; painting, repair and maintenance of school buildings and more. Transportation was provided by the Lebanese Army, UNICEF, and Red Cross¹³.

The events of the Civil War (1975 - 1990) understandably constrained community service at AUB but also offered many opportunities for courageous altruism. AUB records, such as reports by presidents to university trustees, reveal the sheer determination it took to keep the university open and the civil war outside the walls, while coping with war damage to campus; abductions and murders of students, staff and faculty; budgetary short falls; and the crippling attrition of teaching staff. But those same reports also describe heroic voluntary efforts to keep the hospital emergency room functioning when it was too dangerous for essential staff to get to Ras Beirut, as in the spring of 1976, or when displaced persons were cared for in West Hall during the Israeli invasion of 1982¹⁴. And when feasible, some faculties continued community-based research. The Faculty of Health Sciences, for instance, conducted substantial community based research during the War: epidemiological surveillance; disease control activities, and in particular the monitoring of drinking water quality; evaluation of services; and research on the effects of war on the Lebanese population (Armenian and Acra, 1988, p. 267).

In the last two decades, since the end of the Civil War, AUB has again reached out. Many examples may be cited. For example, Faculty and students in Agriculture created Healthy Basket, a program to support small organic farmers in Lebanon. Students in Civil Engineering participate in summer work camps designed to offer technical service to communities in rural Lebanon. Faculty and students in public health are involved in intensive and multifaceted collaboration with the people of Zawtar el-Charkieh in southern Lebanon. Activities range from solid waste recycling, to developing alternatives to tobacco, to preventive health workshops, to improvements to the local day care center (Germani, 2009). In 2001, AUB medical and non-medical students established the Volunteer Outreach Clinic in the Shatila Refugee Camp to provide medical care to the underserved. The clinic functions with donations and a totally volunteer staff, and offers free medical assessment; medications and counseling; free laboratory services and free referrals to the Outpatient Department of the AUB Medical Center¹⁵.

In summary, then, social responsibility, seen through the lenses of community service and engagement at AUB, has, since the very founding of the university, evolved as a reflection of changing times: humanitarian projects reflecting Christian ethics; noblesse oblige charity to the underprivileged; earnest contributions to national development and modernity; individual student and faculty projects tied directly to academic programs, and throughout, intense relief efforts in times of crisis. Over the years and especially since World War II, competing and sometimes contradictory pressures have affected faculty and student responses to the service imperative. These will be discussed in the next section.

¹³ Dr. Hafez el-Zein. Personal Communication. See also: (Srouji, 1974, p. 12 - 13).

¹⁴ AUB Archives (Jafet Library) President's Reports to the Board of Trustees 1975-1990-.

¹⁵ Dr. Mona Nasrallah, Personal Communication. See also: www.voclebanon.org, accessed 26.2.09.

III. The challenges of engagement within a university context

AUB's Mission Statement underscores the university's three functions: teaching, research and service. As has been shown, service has long been a part of the AUB student and faculty experience, and was recently recognized explicitly as a strategic priority of the university.

"The American University of Beirut (AUB) is an institution of higher learning founded to provide excellence in education, to participate in the advancement of knowledge through research, and to serve the peoples of the Middle East and beyond..."

Despite this long and noble history, and the recent explicit prioritization of service among the university's priorities, AUB struggles with several huge challenges to bridge the gap between stated ideals and the reality 'on the ground.' Three main interrelated challenges may be identified: the extent to which service and engagement are conceptualized as part of a *political* project, as put forward by theorists of 'critical pedagogy'; the question of accountability - that is, social responsibility to *whom?*; and, how to recognize and reward service by faculty and students where such rewards matter most.

First, the extent to which service and engagement are conceptualized as part of a *political* project. There are many different ways to conceptualize service and engagement, and AUB's history touches on most of them. Service as a philanthropic act may go some way to alleviating suffering but rarely seeks to change the status quo. To what extent should university faculty and students seek to change the status quo? There are many who would argue that the academy should remain outside – or above - politics, that the ivory tower of learning and reflection must be preserved. One need not look too deeply into Lebanese history to appreciate the potentially incendiary effects of political factionalism and sectarianism, should they be let loose on campus. The political we are referring to here is something different; it is about the role of the university, and especially its faculty and students, in imagining and working toward a different and better future for everyone. This political project is, ironically, closer to the ideas of AUB's founding fathers than to more recent conceptions of the role of a university: of Daniel Bliss, who was amply aware that education at his college would undermine Turkish hegemony, or that of Bayard Dodge, who believed that the village, the city slum, the market and the factory offered problems worthy of academic study (Bliss, 1993, p. 33). Here, the political means that faculty members, as citizen-scholars take critical positions, relate their work to larger social issues, encourage their students to engage in community projects and research that are socially responsible, and, ultimately, give them the hope that they can make a difference in their society, and in the world (Giroux and Giroux, 2006, p. 29). In the field of agriculture, for example, engaged academics are joining with social movements around issues such as community supported agriculture, organic food and the environmentally sustainable practices to push for an agenda that has 'emancipatory change to end injustice' as its fundamental goal (Constance, 2008).

Although the political project is not new to AUB, it is safe to say that consensus does not currently exist at AUB about the value or even the wisdom of such political engagement.

Second, when university faculty and students become engaged in projects to make the world a better place, to whom are they accountable? Students, when participating in curricular and extra-curricular service activities, must still produce the required academic work to pass their courses. In this sense, they are accountable to their teachers. Faculty members must account for their teaching, research and service activities to their academic peers and their superiors responsible for judging their performance. (More will be said about this below). As with students, the usual

channels of faculty accountability remain within the university walls.

The AUB archives contain ample documentation of good works done, life-changing experiences to students, indeed technological developments brought to the fields of medicine and agriculture. Little is known, however, about how the intended beneficiaries participated in and benefited from AUB service-related activities, or even whether the activities were seen as priorities by them in the first place¹⁶. Where activities are funded by external agencies, AUB faculty and students become accountable to them for the agreed-upon use of funds, adding another potent direction for accountability and one that may well trump all other claims, especially from less powerful local constituencies.

Times have changed since the soup kitchens of Suk al-Gharb. The issues of accountability and participation have been problematized in endeavors ranging from humanitarian relief, community and economic development to the academy itself (Strathern, 2000)¹⁷. AUB, however, has yet to have an open discussion about the question: social responsibility *to, or for, whom?* Moreover many faculty find themselves ill-prepared for the social and political intricacies of community-based work, especially that defined within a participatory framework.

The third and final challenge relates to the institutional recognition and reward given to service by faculty and students. Although service, along with teaching and research, is one of three pillars of academic life, and has been named a university strategic priority, its value is strenuously contested at AUB.

For more than 50 years, AUB has aimed at increasing its academic standards as measured by prevailing international norms. As a result, certain academic production has become more valued than other work: research over teaching and service; individual research output over institution building efforts; research published in international peer-reviewed journals over local or regional outlets; research on theoretical or methodological questions over development research aimed at solving local problems or improving the conditions of the poor. At their crudest, these norms translate into a specified quantity of publications in high-impact journals. As critics of this approach have noted (Dupeyrix, 2009), this globally pervasive system of academic evaluation has led to a 'publish or perish' rat-race, and AUB now stands shoulder to shoulder with the rest. These standards are important because they determine how an individual scholar fares: how his or her performance is evaluated, whether he or she is promoted; and whether his or her contract is renewed. AUB froze its tenure contract in the mid 1970s, so it is understandable that ambitious faculty emphasize those aspects of their academic production that matter most for contract renewal. In other words, while many faculty members may be persuaded of the importance of community-based approaches in teaching, research and service, few are willing to take the plunge, especially in the absence of job security.

Even those sympathetic to the ideas that service is important in the life of AUB and that it should count in performance evaluation are unclear about how precisely to measure and evaluate it when individual faculty members are being assessed. Internal discussions are taking place about how to proceed, but, generally speaking, what is interesting is how narrowly service is defined. The argument rests not on the inherent value of service – as an act of citizenship – but how it will build the financial, political and social capital of the implementer through service on expert committees, editorial boards and media contributions.

Under current conditions, service activities conducted by faculty may have little overall effect

¹⁶ We are indebted to Dr. Betty Anderson for underscoring this point.

¹⁷ Although much has been written recently on participatory approaches, this classic reference outlines the challenges succinctly: (Arnstein, 1969, p. 216 - 224).

on how their intellectual output is judged. Ironically, for students, it is the opposite. Service activities are now highly desirable additions to resumes and graduate school applications, where standardized test scores and grade point averages are not enough to separate out the premier candidates from the rest. Obviously not all AUB students take such a utilitarian attitude toward volunteerism and community service, but an increasing number do.

IV. Three new initiatives at AUB

Three new initiatives at AUB reaffirm the university's commitment to service, but they also provide concrete examples of how the challenges facing the university play out in practice.

1. The Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service

Israel's war on Lebanon in 2006, which caused extensive damage to people and property across the country and forced many in the south and in Beirut's southern suburbs out of their homes, thrust AUB again into a relief mode, playing the unplanned-for role that it has played since its earliest days. Faculty, staff and students worked spontaneously with others to provide emergency care for those most affected by the violence. Following the month-long war, the university president formed a Task Force for Reconstruction and Community Service composed of AUB faculty and administrators most active in the relief effort. The Task Force offered support to other faculty and students involved in the mammoth task of immediate relief and reconstruction. The Task Force further encouraged and raised funds for community-based projects to strengthen sustainable livelihoods in underserved regions. Out of this experience, the group recommended that the university create a focal point for community service and engagement, a place that could at once advocate for and support community engagement by faculty and students (Task Force for Reconstruction and Community Service, 2007).

As has been shown in this paper, community service and engagement are not new at AUB. And yet recent events in Lebanon and the region, and developments in various academic disciplines, have underscored the necessity for AUB to be more reflexive, more mindful, about its service and engagement. Put simply, it was time to examine both the quantity and quality of service at AUB, and in particular, how service and engagement both respond to, and challenge, institutional priorities.

The Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service (CCECS), located in the office of the Provost of AUB, was launched in March 2008 with the designation of a half-time faculty director to lead and develop the initiative. The CCECS aims to develop a culture of service and civic leadership at AUB. A primary goal of the Center is to provide opportunities for faculty and students of every discipline to study and respond to critical social and civic issues affecting the people of Lebanon and the Middle East.

The CCECS will serve as a hub for community service and civic engagement at AUB. The Center's functions include: Support for community-based research initiatives; development of, and support for, service-learning; and the organization of a strong student volunteer outreach program.

Since its inception in spring 2008, CCECS has linked students with many volunteering opportunities. Both short-term outreach activities and long-term community-based projects have been organized with AUB partners and others from outside the university. As examples of the diversity: surveying traditional old houses proposed for rehabilitation and helping in the reconstruction of damaged houses in southern Lebanon; teaching computer literacy in villages;

creating a day-care nursery; developing public spaces in rural communities; assisting in a youth wellness project in Bourj al-Barajneh Palestinian camp; tree planting, collecting used clothing for needy families, painting Arabic poetry on urban walls, and more.

Students have generally been receptive to outreach activities. Their motivations vary. Some volunteer out of concern as socially-responsible citizens, others to enhance their credentials for career advancement, but generally both apply. Many student clubs at AUB have community service as one of their objectives. And yet, the volunteering spirit is not widely prevalent at AUB. There are a number of reasons why: students are pre-occupied with academic success; outreach opportunities are not yet sufficient to accommodate large numbers of volunteers; in some cases, they are not well advertised; and links to organizations outside AUB that might engage student volunteers could be stronger.

The Center is beginning to tackle these challenges by structuring the outreach program and providing students with greater opportunities; matching volunteer opportunities with students' academic and personal interests; and developing a system to recognize student outreach activities. For instance, the Center is developing a 'community transcript' which will list all voluntary activities and complement the standard academic transcript.

The issue of whether community service should remain voluntary or become a requirement for students at AUB is not on the Center's agenda at present. More time is needed to experiment with and assess the impact of the current outreach initiatives, both on students and communities served. The latter is rarely done and of prime concern. Moreover, making community service a requirement presents considerable logistical challenges that are beyond the capacity of AUB and its partner organizations at the present time.

In addition to extra-curricular outreach activities being developed, the CCECS has also begun to consider how outreach activities could become part of student coursework at AUB. During the summer 2008 a workshop attended by AUB faculty and colleagues from the American University in Cairo, Egypt and EARTH University in Costa Rica discussed the benefits and requirements of implementing service- or community-based learning (CBL) at AUB. Discussions with department chairs and deans are proceeding with the objective of formulating a model of CBL at AUB that would take into consideration AUB's institutional and cultural context.

Faculty engagement is another matter, and is an issue that reverberates throughout this paper. The CCECS has a vested interest in promoting community involvement by faculty university-wide, but integrating service into academic study and research is easier said than done. The main problem, as discussed in Part III, is the current faculty evaluation system. As the focal point for community service and engagement at AUB, the Center will play a main role in challenging current institutional priorities by advocating the valorization of service in faculty assessment (Mabsout 2008; Mabsout 2009).

2. Advancing Research, Enabling Communities: AUB Outreach from the Bekaa Valley

The Agricultural Research and Education Center (AREC) is AUB's campus in the Bekaa. Established in 1953 on 100 hectares of land near Baalbek, in the Northern Bekaa, AREC was initially created for students, faculty and local communities to collaborate in the development of innovative solutions to agricultural problems. Over the years, concern for the broader well-being of rural people led AREC to shift the emphasis of its work to rural community development and especially to the issue of improving rural livelihoods. The region is one of the poorest in Lebanon, and, although chronically deficient in water, is considered to be the breadbasket of the country

(Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences, 2009; Zurayk, 2009).

Since its creation in 1953, AREC has facilitated many important achievements in farming and rural development. They include the introduction of modern poultry production to the Middle East, new wheat and barley varieties, organic farming, and a commitment to biodiversity conservation. In recent years, AREC has served as the center for voluntary extension services in Lebanon through a variety of externally funded projects: Dairy; Forage; 'Arsal: Sustainable Improvement on Marginal Lands; Yammouneh: technology transfer to farmers benefiting from the Yammouneh irrigation scheme; and Sustainable Agriculture in the Qaraoun region.

Following Israel's war on Lebanon in 2006, AUB joined the reconstruction effort to rebuild shattered livelihoods of people in southern Lebanon. The Land and People relief program adapted a model from public health, the mobile rural development 'clinic', providing agricultural and business development advice to rural communities. The management of the Land and People program was recently moved to AREC. While retaining two mobile clinics in the South, the program expanded its services to the Bekaa, where a mobile clinic now covers the farm extension and capacity building needs of farmers' and women's cooperatives in the 12 villages surrounding AREC. The program achieved international recognition. It has been featured in the Lebanese, Arab, US, Dutch and German media and has won a certificate of appreciation from the United Nations Development Program for its innovative approach.

In 2008, the AUB Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences took the decision to strengthen and deepen its commitment to sustainable rural livelihoods, and, at the same time, to reach out to the entire university to literally become the AUB campus in the Bekaa. AREC's current mission is embodied in the new reading of its acronym: Advancing Research, Enabling Communities. Beginning with a commitment to service and aspiring to work within a social justice framework, AREC accomplishes its goals through experiential learning, adaptive research and community outreach. In the coming years, AREC plans to establish an agribusiness development center to stimulate rural entrepreneurship through incubation services, technical support, and agribusiness workshops.

Looking to the near future, AREC must address two major challenges: how to create the right mechanisms and incentives to attract more AUB faculty and students to AREC, and how to operationalize a social justice agenda.

Agricultural students and faculty have always had strong connections to AREC. Whether working as part of their academic curriculum or as volunteers or paid staff on projects, at AREC students turn theory into practice through hands-on learning. Unlike courses taught at AUB's Beirut campus, most AREC's courses now include a service component that puts students in direct contact with the surrounding communities. Agriculture and Landscape Design and Eco-management students currently spend half of an academic year in residence at AREC. In the Spring 2009 term, for instance, the Landscape Design and Eco-management students worked with the students' environment club of the municipal school of Bednayel, a neighboring village, to rehabilitate the school grounds and re-design and manage its landscape.

The new challenge, however, is for AUB as an institution to exploit fully what AREC offers: the opportunity for sustained partnerships with communities in one of Lebanon's most disadvantaged regions. AREC offers AUB faculty unparalleled facilities for research, teaching and service in rural Lebanon. However, given the existing disincentives for community-based service and development research focused on the problems of disadvantaged communities, AREC will have to create new incentives to attract AUB faculty from across the university to their facility in the Bekaa. These might include new sources of research funding for interdisciplinary or interfaculty projects based at AREC, genuine partnerships with local people to be mobilized for research or

service-learning, and retreat and writing space for short research breaks or sabbaticals. To begin this process, the Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences now publishes a newsletter to inform all AUB faculty about the service, learning and research possibilities at AREC. A university-wide committee, the AREC Integration Committee, consisting of representatives from all faculties and interfaculty centers, was also recently created to promote AREC among the AUB faculty. For example, one such interfaculty center, IBSAR, the AUB Nature Conservation Center for Sustainable Futures, has already established a strong presence at AREC which it uses as a base for many of its activities. IBSAR's "Seeds of Hope, Trees for Tomorrow" program, provides support and advice to municipalities for the introduction of native trees in their urban greening program. The program organizes regular tree planting activities which bring tens of students to participate in nature conservation programs.

The second immediate challenge confronting AREC is how best to operationalize its social justice agenda. By virtue of its location in one of the poorest areas of Lebanon, AREC offers an exceptional opportunity for AUB to realize its commitment to improving the lives of the people of Lebanon and the region. The current outreach programs implemented from AREC are driven by the desire of some faculty members to contribute to the social and economic development of the poor surrounding communities. In recent years, AUB has taken firm steps to work on topics that matter to disadvantaged rural communities by initiating programs in organic and community-supported agriculture, emphasizing rural livelihoods, and underscoring the importance of sustainability and equity in rural development.

AREC has multi-stranded contacts with local communities: through the mobile 'clinics', extension programs, continuing education classes offered to local residents, outreach to farmers' and women's cooperatives, student projects in neighboring villages, and development or 'translational' research by faculty. As AREC seeks to strengthen its social justice agenda, the next set of challenges have to do with the ways of working with local communities, a certain reflexivity about questions of participation and accountability, and the nature of partnerships developed with people and communities in the Bekaa.

A new strategy for the valorization of AREC is currently being developed. Its central tenet is the reintegration of AREC into the University as a whole, and the recognition of the potential of the facility to contribute to the building of AUB's social capital. This, however, cannot be achieved without clear institutional recognition of the importance of this capital.

3. The Neighborhood Initiative: Going Beyond the Walls in Ras Beirut

The academic year 2007 - 2008 opened with a formal convocation and speech by the then AUB president, John Waterbury, who challenged the university to go outside its walls and engage with its neighborhood of Ras Beirut. There were many reasons for this challenge: Although the presence of AUB had been instrumental in the growth and development of Ras Beirut over its 140 year existence, the Lebanese Civil War had forced the university into an increasingly inward-looking attitude toward its place. By 2007 the juxtaposition between the peaceful flowering campus behind walls (significantly, in Arabic, haram) and the increasingly dense and chaotic neighborhood outside forced the university to examine its relationship with its place: what kind of an urban neighbor was AUB? Out of this challenge the AUB Neighborhood Initiative was born. AUB has two main reasons for working for the well-being of its neighborhood, a project of engagement that has a specific geographic focus. One is enlightened self-interest: to keep AUB attractive to excellent faculty and students, AUB has a vested interest in keeping the district of Beirut that surrounds it a stimulating, pleasant and affordable place, for everyone. The other

main reason acknowledges that as one of Beirut's most significant private employers, AUB has the moral obligation to be a better, even exemplary, urban institution. The Initiative is founded on the principle of mutual benefit: sharing and reciprocity, not a one-way transfer of knowledge or good works.

Through the Neighborhood Initiative, AUB is playing three roles in its neighborhood:

- a. AUB as exemplary neighbor: fostering an atmosphere that change is possible through invigorated but targeted outreach, and straightforward activities that demonstrate AUB's commitment to the neighborhood;
- b. AUB as producer of knowledge for the public good: providing incentives to faculty and students for research on problems confronting the neighborhood;
- c. AUB as partner in revitalizing and protecting the diversity of the neighborhood: creating positive and sustainable change through a strategic focus on projects that would have many positive secondary effects;

Intensive interviews with neighbors have defined immediate priorities for action. For example, neighbors complained about the lack of greenery, so the Initiative has supported faculty and students in horticulture and landscape design to develop a 'Greening the Neighborhood' project. Neighbors, visitors and members of the AUB community have also expressed frustration with traffic, noise and lack of parking near the university. So the Initiative will support a series of studies led by the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department dubbed the "neighborhood congestion studies." At this young age, the Initiative is vulnerable and many challenges exist.

The first challenge, and one shared with both the CCECS and AREC, is finding the most effective way to involve the AUB faculty, who have much to contribute to understanding and solving local problems. Any outreach activity that does not involve the faculty misses their unique contribution and risks being seen as 'not serious,' and in the case of the Neighborhood Initiative, a mere public relations exercise. The most effective way to involve faculty lies, in part, with finding the right incentives to encourage faculty to work on neighborhood questions, and defining the research and action agendas broadly enough to incorporate their theoretical and pedagogical priorities.

The second is solidifying the Neighborhood Initiative funding-base. The university's neighborhood of Ras Beirut is threatened by multiple problems, but it is not Beirut's most disadvantaged district. It is reasonable that funders wish to support service and engagement activities in disadvantaged communities. But should work in Ras Beirut be disqualified from funding because the area is not disadvantaged enough? In many places urban universities have become critical actors in the development of their neighborhoods and cities. AUB as an engine of innovation can contribute uniquely to positioning post-conflict Beirut in the globally connected 21st century.

Another major challenge is participation, again shared with both the CCECS and AREC. Participatory approaches are and will be critical to the success of the Neighborhood Initiative in its relations both inside the university and beyond the university walls. Still small in terms of paid staff, the Neighborhood Initiative is guided by a group of senior faculty and administrative staff who reside in Ras Beirut, and every activity is defined and carried out collaboratively with academic and administrative units of the University. For example, a survey to analyze how much AUB students spend in the neighborhood was organized with the Office of Student Affairs, or another to calculate how many student cars were adding to neighborhood congestion done with the AUB Registrar. The Neighborhood Initiative and Center for Civic Engagement Community Service recently collaborated on a student workday in the neighborhood.

Beyond the walls of the university, participation raises other challenges. The literature on university-community partnerships suggests that participation is vitally important but that it is

exquisitely complicated when powerful institutions attempt to engage with disorganized and often disempowered citizens (Kromer and Kerman 2005; Rodin 2007). The Neighborhood Initiative has adopted an approach that involves two distinct but mutually reinforcing ‘conversations’ with neighbors. One is the continuous consultation with a wide variety of individual stakeholders, to keep our ‘finger on the pulse.’ The second is that each activity proposed - Greening the Neighborhood, and so on - creates its own mechanisms of participation through steering groups, committees or whatever form is most appropriate. (Myntti, 2009)

V. Conclusion

Social responsibility, seen through the lenses of community service and engagement at AUB, has, since the very founding of the university, evolved as a reflection of changing times. In 2009, AUB and the communities with which it works - from its urban neighborhood to its rural hinterland and beyond - are profoundly affected by global trends and the penetration of the market. In response, the language of AUB’s missionary founders has returned with renewed calls for engagement as an ethical and moral response to the changing world outside the university walls. The scope and ambitions for ‘emancipatory’ change are as great as ever. Questions are posed about how service fits a social justice agenda. And there is also explicit reference to mutual benefit and reciprocity, no longer assuming a one-way flow of good works from ‘us to them’, and new concerns about accountability and participation are being raised.

At this point, let us return to the theme, the social responsibility of universities, and ask the fundamental question: Why should universities in the Arab World take community engagement and service seriously? Now more than ever, the Arab World needs ‘citizens’: generous, ethical individuals committed to the wider social good. By providing students with service opportunities, universities may counteract the individualistic, careerist tendencies increasing in prevalence everywhere.

In addition, in this era of global competition and rankings, universities could do well to analyze all the possible elements of their comparative advantage. Research excellence is one such element. Rootedness in a particular place and connections to local communities offer other unique advantages. These elements, however, must be constructed through an outward approach that links global science and local priorities through service and community-based research.

This is thus the main argument of our paper: Social responsibility, as we have enlarged it to include community service and engagement, is not an optional ‘add on’ to the central educational mission of universities. It is central to excellence, relevance and the groundedness that confers comparative advantage. Moreover, in the Arab region it is central to the development of citizens. And yet, as has been described in this paper, the challenges and contradictions are many, and profound. The status quo pushes individuals into competitive isolation, and must be counteracted forcefully with community-building within the university as much as with outside organizations and groups.

The three initiatives outlined here, while young, offer a potent countervailing force to isolation and competitiveness. By virtue of their missions, they can serve as models of engagement by embarking on a reflexive and mutual learning process, and developing collaborative activities. Community-based learning and research initiatives are logical venues for such mutual integration. Ironically, the challenging endeavor of co-authoring the present paper provided an opportunity to reflect on where and how AUB ought to go next.

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Applying an Interdisciplinary Model for Promoting the Study of Humanities & Social Sciences: the Case of Zayed University (UAE)

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Abstract

The increasing popularity of interdisciplinary programs, courses, and pedagogies in the humanities and social sciences (especially in the realm of general education) has been well documented and examined in the West, particularly in the United States. This research has yielded important findings that can and should be examined in a broader international context. The literature, however, provides little substantial analysis of interdisciplinary programs in universities across the world, particularly in the Middle East/ Gulf region.

Using Zayed University as a case study, I will discuss how interdisciplinary courses and curriculums are being used to structure and promote the study of the humanities and social sciences at the general education level and at the majors level within the program of International Studies. I will then go on to address the successes and challenges that have confronted both the implementation of the Global Awareness sequence within the general education program and the International Studies major. Overall, the interdisciplinary model has been an effective approach in promoting the study of the humanities and social sciences within a region that has tended to place greater value or emphasis on those majors and courses that are tailored to the immediate demands of the marketplace.

I. Introduction

The increasing popularity of interdisciplinary programs, courses, and pedagogies in the humanities and/ or social sciences (especially in the realm of general education) has been well documented and examined in the West, particularly in the United States (Klein 1990, 1996, 2005; Burton, 2001). This research has yielded important findings that can and should be examined in a broader international context. The literature, however, provides little substantial analysis of interdisciplinary programs in universities across the world, particularly in the Middle East/ Gulf region. Given the significant growth in tertiary education, particularly in the Gulf, during the past ten years, a study of university curriculums is essential.

Using Zayed University (ZU) as a case study, I will discuss how interdisciplinary courses and curriculums are being used to structure and promote the study of the humanities and social sciences at the general education and majors levels. ZU is an English-medium, U.S. style

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institution recently accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. While predominantly made up of UAE national women, the university has recently opened its doors to national men as well as international students in general. My paper will cover how both the general education (referred to at ZU as ‘colloquy’) and International Studies curriculums at Zayed University approach the issue of ‘interdisciplinarity’ in the study of the humanities and social sciences. I will then go on to address the successes and challenges that have confronted the implementation of the Global Awareness sequence (made up of three required courses) within the general education program, and the advantages and disadvantages associated with both an interdisciplinary department (Dept. of Humanities & Social Sciences) and an interdisciplinary major (International Studies). Ultimately, the interdisciplinary model has been an effective approach to promoting the study of the humanities and social sciences in a context where educational offerings are heavily geared towards those fields deemed as best capable of preparing students for the job market—i.e. Business and IT.

II. The Scholarship on Interdisciplinary Studies

Interdisciplinary curriculums and the scholarship on the latter are not a recent phenomenon, but rather date back at least three decades. The literature on the subject has provided insight into interdisciplinary learning experiences as opposed to ‘multidisciplinary,’ ‘cross-disciplinary,’ or ‘transdisciplinary’ experiences (Klein, 2005; Nowacek, 2005). Both the Council of Arts Accrediting Association (CAAA) and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) put forth formal definitions of these terms in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Jacobs, 1989; CAAA, 1994), emphasizing the spread of interdisciplinary programs and integrated curriculums across the US (Burton 2001, 17). While numerous scholars have expressed a preference for approaches that move beyond disciplinary boundaries (Miller, 1982; Kelly, 1996; Klein, 2005), others have also expressed a cautious reserve about interdisciplinary programs and/ or curriculums that in practice often do not do justice to the disciplines (Burton, 2001). Unlike multidisciplinary models, for example, which do not integrate or explicitly analyze disciplinary perspectives but simply present them side by side, interdisciplinary approaches “restructure the curriculum with explicitly integrative seminars and experiences that are typically theme-, problem-, or question-based” (Klein, 2005, p. 9). While there is a broad consensus that some degree of synthesis of disciplinary perspectives is at the heart of interdisciplinary approaches, the scholarship is also in agreement that there is no consensus on how this is defined, that there are various pedagogies for interdisciplinary learning, and that there are certain challenges in implementing interdisciplinary curriculums. Nowacek’s (2005) research, for example, highlights the importance of understanding how interdisciplinary connections are perceived and constructed by students and instructors in the classroom setting. This has important implications for those assessing interdisciplinary programs and in determining how ‘synthesis’ is defined, constructed, and measured in the context of such programs. Garder, Wissick, Schweder, and Canter’s (2003) research examines how thematic units and the use of technology can enhance interdisciplinary instruction for special education instructors. While such a thematic strategy is certainly employed in the context of university general education and majors courses, there has also been criticism that courses structured around a particular theme are not always integrative enough of various disciplines (Burton, 2001). Overall, the literature has documented numerous strategies that have been employed in structuring and delivering interdisciplinary courses including: team teaching, organizing courses around a particular theme, interdisciplinary seminars at the introductory and capstone levels, collaborative learning, and paired courses (Abrahamson, et al, 2002; Klein, 2005).

The successful implementation of such strategies, however, has often been challenging due to certain problems confronting interdisciplinary curriculums. Such challenges center on structure, content, and delivery of material. Perhaps one of the more fundamental problems confronting interdisciplinary programs is the lack of agreement regarding what exactly constitutes 'synthesis' and 'integration' (Nowacek, 2005, p. 191). Does this mean, for example, that all content and methodology associated with a particular discipline can and should be integrated with that of another discipline? Should discipline-specific experiences be incorporated into interdisciplinary programs and if so how? There is some support for the latter as necessary for the long term viability of interdisciplinary programs (Burton, 2001, p. 18). According to Burton, "the structures of the disciplines must be known and understood before authentic connections and linkages can be made" (Burton, 2001, p. 17). This requires that instructors possess or gain a certain mastery of materials in disciplines outside of their own. Professional development opportunities that provide faculty with some training in the theories and methods associated with interdisciplinary curriculums are invaluable but often not provided. This is particularly true in the case of general education programs which often times have limited funding, no chair or head of their own, and must rely on faculty from various departments (Abrahamson, et al, 2002, p. 591). Finally, a somewhat related problem concerns territorial issues among faculty from diverse disciplines teaching interdisciplinary courses. More comparative research is needed here to assess how team-taught or paired courses impact faculty collaboration across disciplines, and how the academy values faculty leadership and contributions in their pursuit of enhancing interdisciplinarity within the institution.

III. Interdisciplinary Studies in the broader International Context and Within the Middle East/ Gulf Region

While interdisciplinary programs in the social sciences and/ or humanities have increased in the past decade across the developing world, there has been limited research done to examine the nature of these programs, particularly in the context of the Middle East/ Gulf region. The existing research on higher education in various parts of Asia and Africa, for example, has focused largely on the relationship between development, globalization and education². This scholarship has highlighted, however, that higher education in developing countries has tended to place greater emphasis on programs that focus on science and technology rather than the humanities and social sciences (Downes, 2003; Green, et al, 2007; Webb, 2008). This is partly due to the support offered to such programs by developing states and popular perceptions regarding what constitutes a lucrative and/ or 'prestigious' career.

In the context of the Arabian Gulf, higher education has expanded rapidly during the past ten years. The region has witnessed the proliferation of both state-funded institutions of higher education as well as private universities, several of which are satellite campuses of US universities. In spite of this dramatic transformation, research on university curriculums in the region remains limited. The literature remains primarily concerned with the intersection between modernity and education as well as politics and education in the broader Arab world (Shaw, 2006; Mazawi, 2006; Nir, 2006; Macpherson, et al, 2007; Findlow, 2008; Davidson, 2008; Schulz, 2008), the onslaught of Western universities and/or Western (particularly US) university models in the region (Krieger, 2008; Mills, 2008), and, to a lesser extent, women's access to higher education (Kirdar, 2006).

² An exception to this is an early article on interdisciplinary orientations in the teaching of the social sciences in India by Yogendra Singh (1979)

IV. The Role of Humanities and Social Sciences within General Education at ZU

Beginning in 2003, ZU initiated the Colloquy on Integrated Learning, a general education curriculum. The goal of the program as spelled out on the university's website is to ..build students' abilities to think critically about the relationship between local contexts and global forces through a comparative engagement with the world, its histories, its problems, and its successes. At the same time, students are prepared to work in their major field of study and in their professions through systematic development of their abilities in critical thinking, computer applications, information literacy, and in Arabic and English language (<http://www.zu.ac.ae/colloquy/>, accessed March 2, 2009).

The learning goals of the colloquy curriculum include global awareness, critical thinking and quantitative reasoning, information technology, leadership, information literacy, and written and oral proficiency in both English and Arabic. During the first three semesters of the BA program, students enroll in standardized core courses that incorporate the following elements: a sequence of math, computing applications and science courses that integrate quantitative reasoning and computing applications with the sciences; an English composition writing sequence as well as a sequence in Arabic composition and writing; and finally, an interdisciplinary global awareness sequence that integrates the humanities and the social sciences. As students transition into their majors, they enroll in courses in the Colleges that systematically continue the development of the University-wide learning goals.

Of the six learning goals according to which students are assessed, the global awareness sequence is charged with ensuring that students achieve two goals in particular—global awareness and information literacy. The university website defines these two learning outcomes as:

Global Awareness. Students will be able to conceptualize the historical and contemporary impact of global forces on their local contexts while at the same time being able to acknowledge, appreciate, and understand the artistic, cultural, and political values and beliefs of others.

Information Literacy. Students will be able to analyze the nature and extent of their information needs, evaluate sources critically, and effectively communicate their findings (<http://www.zu.ac.ae/colloquy/>, accessed March 2, 2009).

The three courses that make up the sequence are organized both historically and thematically with the first course in the sequence focusing on the 'Emerging Civilizations', the second course on 'Imperial Encounters' and the third on the 'Twentieth Century'. Each of the three individual courses is further structured around specific themes that relate to: politics and the state; trade and economy; social, cultural, scientific developments; and art and architecture. In the context of each of these courses, students are exposed to both secondary and primary readings (including literature, journals, autobiographies, treaties, treatises, philosophy, etc.). Both the curriculum and the assignments in the courses are designed to encourage students to think comparatively while also providing them with the tools to think about the impact of cross-cultural encounters on local, regional and global processes. The courses also complement the two required colloquy courses students take in Arabic and Islamic Studies (Islamic Civilization I and II) which are delivered in Arabic and provide background on the historical, cultural, and political developments in the Arab and broader Muslim worlds.

The commitment of the sequence (and the Colloquy in general) to providing an interdisciplinary education is supported by both the structure of the sequence itself as well as by the administrative framework that oversees the delivery of the general education curriculum. The underlying

historical framework of the courses overall as well as the combined comparative and thematic approach guiding the curriculum in this sequence serve to strengthen the 'interdisciplinarity' of the courses. This is further aided by the fact that each of the courses is assigned a coordinator who is responsible for providing guidance and support to faculty on curricular, administrative and pedagogical matters. This is crucial in providing faculty from various disciplinary backgrounds the tools for teaching interdisciplinary courses. Finally, unlike many general education programs in the US (Abrahamson, et al, 2002, p. 591), the ZU colloquy program has its own Dean and is housed within a separate College (University College) which employs its own core of full-time faculty. Thus, while courses within the global awareness sequence are taught primarily by faculty within the College of Arts & Sciences (CAS), specifically the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, there are some University College faculty who also teach these courses. General education's representation at the administrative level helps promote a cohesive curriculum as well as ensure that the program has its own advocate. This undoubtedly contributed to the favorable comments made regarding ZU's general education program by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education in their Evaluation report on the University in April 2008. Significant accomplishments highlighted by the report in regards to general education which emanate from some of the strengths of the program alluded to above include:

Existence of a very strong, distinctive, outcomes-inspired and mission-driven general education program that has aligned its goals with the six institution-wide ZULOs (Zayed University Learning Outcomes), facilitating student proficiency in oral and written communication (in both English and Modern Standard Arabic), critical thinking, scientific and quantitative analysis, and technological competency (Kneedler, et al, 2008, p. 16 -17).

ZU's commitment to ongoing assessment and utilization of assessment data in continuous improvement of general education offerings and pedagogy is outstanding and could be models of best practices in the field....

The commitment of the Faculty, particularly in the Arts and Sciences College, to the General Education program is extraordinary (Kneedler, et al, 2008, p. 18).

Given the recent nature of the general education curriculum at the university, there are, however, certain challenges that confront the program in its humanities and social science courses. For one, faculty in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences are often confused about administrative boundaries between Colloquy and the College of Arts & Sciences of which they are a part. Secondly, providing faculty members from specific disciplinary backgrounds with the appropriate training in interdisciplinary education continues to be a challenge. One possible solution might be to provide more formalized professional development training for course coordinators throughout their tenure. While coordinators are usually intimately familiar with the course content and material, they are less well versed in the methods and paradigms that define various disciplines. A final challenge, closely related to the latter, revolves around achieving consensus on what exactly constitutes 'interdisciplinary synthesis.' The ongoing debates regarding this provide as much of a challenge as they do an opportunity to reinvigorate the program and ensure that it remains dynamic rather than static.

V. Program in International Studies

The degree of International Studies is offered through the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, an interdisciplinary department made up of faculty with backgrounds in history, political science, anthropology, sociology, literature, and area studies. In addition to a major in

International Studies, the department (as of Fall 2008) also offers a minor in English Literature. While degree programs in International Studies exist at other institutions in the UAE³, the creation of two proposed specializations within the International Studies program at ZU offers a unique interdisciplinary perspective not available anywhere else in the Gulf region. The two concentrations offered in the major are 'Culture and Society' and 'International Affairs.' The first concentration offers students an interdisciplinary approach grounded in the humanities and social sciences for understanding social institutions and cultural production over time. The specialization in 'International Affairs' focuses on state power, international and global institutions, and contemporary political issues. There are a certain number of core courses which are common to both concentrations including: World History, Comparative Intellectual Traditions, Social and Economic Trends in the Gulf or History of the UAE, Introduction to International Relations, Introduction to Culture and Society, Comparative Sociology, Politics of Identity, and two area studies courses. In addition to these courses, there are certain required courses within each concentration. Within 'International Affairs,' students are required to take at least one course from within a menu of courses in law and diplomacy and one from a menu in political economy. Those students pursuing a 'Cultural and Society' concentration must take Popular Cultures or World Cinemas. Both these courses have a menu of six world regions to choose from (Middle East, East Asia, Africa, Europe, Americas, South and Southeast Asia). Students from both concentrations are required to take at least one Special Topics course. This course draws on the multi-disciplinary strengths of faculty within the program and allows students the opportunity to explore different areas of scholarship.

Other common requirements for students in the International studies program in general include completion of a ten week internship and a research-intensive capstone project in the last two semesters. As part of the latter, students are required to take Research Methods, Capstone Seminar I, and Capstone Seminar II. The first two courses (taken simultaneously for ten weeks prior to the internship) essentially provide students with insight into different methodological and theoretical approaches and are largely organized around student projects. During the Capstone Seminar II, students are engaged in data collecting, analysis and writing of the project, working closely with both their Capstone instructor and Capstone advisor in the process.

Students are encouraged by the department to design their Capstone projects in light of the coursework they have pursued in their chosen concentration. Because students' proposed capstone projects are matched with the expertise of particular faculty within the department, the latter expects that Capstone projects will involve student-faculty collaboration.

Some of the strengths of the interdisciplinary model of the International Studies program at ZU include: its effective incorporation of discipline-specific courses within an interdisciplinary curriculum, thus ensuring the integrity of those methodologies and paradigms associated with particular disciplines; its successful implementation of various strategies that have been documented as effective in promoting interdisciplinary learning, including thematically organized courses, interdisciplinary seminars at the Capstone levels, and collaborative learning; its ability to link interdisciplinary education to the needs of the job market; and the strong connections between the colloquy global awareness sequence and the majors courses, particularly the foundational courses common to both concentrations in the major. The global awareness sequence courses act as an effective 'recruiting ground' for students interested in International Studies. The courses provide them with a good introduction to interdisciplinary learning in

³ The American University of Sharjah for example.

the humanities and social sciences, addressing several important themes, methodologies, and paradigms that are taken up in more depth within the International Studies program.

In an environment that values educational skills tailored to the needs of the job market, it has been essential that the program in International Studies provide students with the tools needed to succeed in the real world. The required ten week internship program contributes to accomplishing this as does the two-track concentration offered in the Department. The 'Culture and Society' concentration promotes itself as preparing students for careers in cultural institutions, research centers, and social services in the private and public sectors. This is particularly important given recent efforts in Dubai and particularly Abu Dhabi to promote cultural and social initiatives that highlight national identity. The specialization in 'International Affairs' prepares students to work in government agencies and international institutions operating in the U.A.E. The two concentrations in the major also support the wider role CAS is playing in the community with its new graduate certificate in Diplomacy and International Affairs.

As an interdisciplinary program housed in an interdisciplinary department, the International Studies curriculum does face certain challenges common to interdisciplinary programs in other universities. To begin with, similar to the global awareness sequence within the colloquy program, there are ongoing debates surrounding what constitutes an 'interdisciplinary synthesis'. A core question at the heart of this debate is: Are faculty from specific disciplines better equipped than others to teach particular courses in the curriculum (along the same lines, should particular courses be taught primarily from the perspective of a particular discipline(s))? This debate is particularly pertinent to the more interdisciplinary courses in the majors curriculum. The recent incorporation of the English Literature faculty (and minor) within the Department has also generated debate regarding the role of the latter within the two concentrations majors program. Similar to the problem confronting the colloquy program, faculty within the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences need to participate in more professional development programs, seminars, etc. that specifically address recent trends and debates in interdisciplinary education. Interdisciplinary courses within the program are not consistently taught in a manner that gives justice to the methodologies and paradigms of various disciplines. Finally, while an interdisciplinary approach certainly exists and thrives within the humanities and social sciences at the university, there are not many instances of collaboration or interaction between the latter and courses offered in the natural sciences (or for that matter in other colleges, such as the College of Education). Faculty therefore lose sight at times of their broader role in providing students with a well-rounded liberal arts education. The development of a comprehensive liberal arts education is still very much a work in progress at ZU.

VI. Conclusion

Interdisciplinary education has been a core element in Zayed's mission to promote a liberal arts education in the region. While more research is needed, particularly in regards to the role of the natural sciences within a liberal arts education, the interdisciplinary approach has allowed for the promotion of the liberal arts in a context often dominated by skills-related fields. While there are certain common elements between ZU's approach to interdisciplinary education and that in various institutions in the US, there are also important differences. Similar to various western institutions, an interdisciplinary curriculum has been a core feature of the general education program at the university. Unlike many of these same institutions, however, ZU has helped promote the importance of general education by giving it its own administrative leadership

within the university. This has helped ensure and promote faculty commitment to the program, program innovation, and advocacy for general education at the institutional level. Through its 'International Studies' program and major, the university has also proven to be "ahead of the times" by moving beyond the more traditional discipline-based majors and departments that continue to prevail in many western universities. Although this has been motivated in part by practical factors related to education being tailored to the needs of the job market, it has nonetheless resulted in an innovative program of study at the majors level that promotes diversity and global learning in an integrative fashion-both through interdisciplinary courses and through internships that allow students to apply their learning beyond the classroom. Such initiatives and programs are only recently being implemented in various western universities. As educators in various parts of the world increasingly recognize the merits of interdisciplinary education in promoting critical thinking, diversity and global awareness, the ZU curriculum in the humanities and social sciences-at both the general education and majors level-- provides a possible model to universities in the region and beyond.

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Les universitaires touareg, vers la normalisation des institutions traditionnelles ou leur réforme?

Meriem Bouzid-Sababou¹

Résumé

Cet article s'interroge sur l'influence des universitaires touareg au cours des années 90, par des populations nordistes dans leurs conditions de vie et leur culture. Ces cultures étant à l'opposé de cultures touareg jugées spécifiques et singulières, en mettant l'accent sur l'ampleur des changements qui ont été introduit dans la société locale, et la nature de ces changements qui pourraient retracer la vie des étudiants et étudiantes, tels que: le choix d'un mode de vie autre, les différentes ruptures avec le système traditionnel, le choix du conjoint ainsi que d'autres variables qui peuvent nous permettre d'analyser ces changements voir ces affrontements.

I. Introduction

Dans le cadre de nombreux entretiens menés avec des femmes de différents âges, sur les changements ayant affecté la société féminine, le dialogue a débouché, enfin, sur la question de la violence (contre les femmes); celles-ci ont constaté que ce phénomène a pris de l'ampleur dans la société, et que le premier homme qui a battu sa femme est un jeune universitaire, disait l'une d'elles avec une pointe d'ironie et d'étonnement. Mais est-ce un motif suffisant pour déterminer un phénomène aussi complexe que la violence contre les femmes?

Si notre sujet est l'impact de l'université, à différents niveaux, sur la société «traditionnelle», c'est parce que les relations entre les sexes y sont les plus importantes car elles constituent les fondements biologiques et culturels de la société dans son ensemble. Et c'est la raison pour laquelle nous avons voulu pénétrer le monde des universitaires² touareg pour comprendre cet impact de l'université, en tant qu'institution de pouvoir, sur la société.

Ce changement est-t-il lié au niveau d'instruction ou y aurait-t-il d'autres critères qui auraient affecté le système de relations et des valeurs liant les deux sexes? La société est-elle affectée par les diverses idées et les nouveaux modes de consommation nés du contact avec les institutions modernes: les sociétés, les voisins nordistes de traditions et coutumes différentes, ainsi que l'influence des plus jeunes ayant accédé à de hauts niveaux d'instruction universitaires et professionnels acquis auprès des instituts et des universités? Serait-il possible que l'université

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² Dans cette étude, le terme «universitaires» est utilisé pour désigner des étudiants et des diplômés de l'enseignement supérieur. Il ne s'étend pas nécessairement aux enseignants universitaires.

ou les instituts d'enseignement supérieur puissent influencer la société et suivre le changement qu'ont engendré d'autres institutions liées au colonialisme, tout en perpétuant la politique de modernisation menée par l'Etat-nation en Algérie? Ou alors, la société exerce-t-elle toujours son pouvoir issu de différents systèmes, coutumes et institutions dites traditionnelles?

Ce que l'on entend, dans ce propos, par institutions traditionnelles, c'est l'ensemble des espaces géré par les coutumes et le système de valeurs hérité. Ces institutions qui ont résisté aux tentatives des institutions modernes naissantes de l'après indépendance; Il s'agit bien ici, de ces divisions tribales et des groupes sociaux, au pays touareg, qui sont soumis et gérés par un pouvoir symbolique, telle que l'origine des aïeules et tout ce qui en résulte de différents pouvoirs, espaces festifs, espaces de rencontres entre les deux sexes, institution du mariage; Ces derniers restent patents sur l'ensemble des oasis. C'est-à-dire tout ce qui touche à la société féminine, qui jouit d'une centralité constituée tout au long de l'histoire.

On a voulu vérifier la variable de l'enseignement supérieur et son impact à la fois «positif» et «négatif» sur quelques institutions sociales: l'adaptation de l'institution et le développement de certains de ses aspects, ainsi que certains aspects de cette réforme que l'on peut qualifier de violente et qui engendre des comportements inhabituels et rejetés par la société. On entend par réforme, un état de changement violent au niveau symbolique, pratiqué par des acteurs sociaux sur les valeurs et pratiques sociales régnautes et qui ne correspond plus à leurs nouvelles conceptions de ces institutions.

De cette problématique, il résulte deux hypothèses:

1. L'enseignement supérieur peut jouer un rôle dans le changement de certains comportements et la réaction envers la culture locale: la relation avec le patrimoine et différentes coutumes et modes de consommation cités, c'est-à-dire l'établissement d'un changement qualitatif sur les institutions traditionnelles et qu'on peut qualifier de «positif».
2. Les universitaires peuvent être considérés en tant que nouveaux censeurs sur les femmes et leurs comportements, ce qui donne lieu à de nouveaux types de violences qui atteignent la société tout entière.

II. Les Touareg dans la carte géographique et culturelle

Les Touareg se répartissent sur cinq pays Africains: Algérie, Lybie, Mali, Niger et Burkina Faso. Ils sont aussi divisés en Touareg du nord, ceux qui se trouvent dans des pays du nord de l'Afrique, en Algérie et en Lybie, et Touareg du sud, ceux des pays du Sahel: Niger, Mali et Burkina Faso.

Les Touareg du nord, une expression qui a été utilisée pour la première fois par le voyageur-explorateur Henri Duveyrier, dans un ouvrage au titre éponyme (Duveyrier 1864). Par contre, on entend par l'expression «contact avec le nord» en parlant des universitaires, le nord du Sahara algérien, vers la méditerranée. Ici, le Nord change selon ses expressions culturelles et géographiques.

Les statistiques concernant les Touareg ne sont pas fiable, mais elles sont approximatives vu la présence de groupes nomades même s'ils constituent un faible pourcentage par rapport aux Touareg qui se sont sédentarisés pour de multiples raisons, entre autre les raisons historiques, c'est le cas de cette société échantillon de notre enquête.

Donc, les Touareg de l'oasis de Djanet se sont sédentarisés depuis le paléolithique moyen, et cette sédentarisation n'est pas due aux conditions climatiques (naturelles), sécheresse, qui a incité le gouvernement à intervenir pour les reloger dans des centres d'habitat comme les

villages agricoles, au temps du président Houari Boumediène, ou dans des habitats précaires, comme ceux de bni oua sken³.

En l'absence de statistiques fiables qui montrent le nombre réel des Touareg dans les cinq pays, leur nombre approximatif est de trois millions cinq cent milles, dont les Touareg du Niger et du Mali constituent la majorité car ils ont atteint 85% (Attayoub, A.: en ligne).

D'après les statistiques de l'année 2008, la densité des Touareg de la région de l'Azjer a atteint le nombre de 54494 habitant, la population masculine étant de 28 844 alors que le nombre de femmes est de 25 650 (Bouzid-Sababou, M., 2009).

III. L'organisation sociale des Touareg

Les tribus et groupes du monde touareg, se rassemblent autour d'un pouvoir politique connu sous le nom d' «Etebl», ce dernier étant né de la hiérarchisation visible des sociétés touareg à partir de leur constitution en tribus qu'on nomme «tiwsatin» ou «tiwchatin» et qui veut dire poignet de la main et aussi tribu (Alawjeli, Gh., ag., 1985 p. 202) ou une paume dont partent les doigts. (Nicolaisen, J., 1982\7 p. 34).

Ces tribus ne sont pas égales entre elles, car elles sont soumises à des rapports de vassalité et d'allégeance qui ont leur spécificité dans le monde touareg.

Au stade actuel des connaissances sur les Touareg, on ne peut parler en aucune manière de stabilité interne de la structure sociale, même si l'on exclut l'influence externe jugée de «choc»: choc du colonialisme, de l'arabisation, etc. Mais parler de la pluralité des structures sociales des Touareg est un fait qui s'impose aux chercheurs.

Sur le plan formel, on trouve les nobles suzerains au sommet de la pyramide, les vassaux à un niveau médian et à la base on retrouve les esclaves et les artisans.

Un tel automatisme défigure la réalité des sociétés touareg, sachant que chaque société de l'ensemble nous donne une organisation (système) sociale hiérarchique fondamentalement différente: dans la société touareg des Azjer⁴ les suzerains (nobles) sont liés aux chorfas, eux mêmes originaires de la Tafilalet du Maroc, installés dans la région au XVIème siècle. Il s'agit des Imanen qui tenaient le pouvoir politique, connu sous l'appellation d'«ettebl»⁵, à leur côté des tribus suzeraines, mais sans pouvoir politique et qui ont soutenu les Imanen dans le meilleur comme dans le pire, c'est la tribu des «Idjadhanaren» venus de «l'Air» (Niger). Suivis des tribus vassales qu'on nomme Ceux des chèvres (kel Ouli) qui s'opposent à Ceux des chameaux (kel Imnas) ces derniers étant les suzerains. Après, c'est le tour des groupes ksouriens (les habitants des ksours, qu'on ne peut pas traduire de palais, car il s'agit d'un type d'habitat saharien sans

³ Expression répandue dans tout le Sahara algérien, là où se trouvent des constructions faites sans autorisation de construire. Elles rassemblent différentes nationalités, au sens moderne du terme et au sens d'identité dans le monde touareg: il se trouve en Algérie les Touareg du Mali, des Maures et d'autres groupes du Niger. En outre, il existe, l'expression: Abni oua skout (tu construis et tu te tais) qui accompagne la première expression et qui rend le même sens.

⁴ On appelle toute la région, objet de notre étude, le Tassili n Azjer, le Tassili se situe, entre l'Ahaggar à l'ouest, le hamada de Tinghert au Nord, le Ténéré du Tafassasset et le plateau du Djado au sud, le massif de Tadrart et l'erg de Mourzouk à l'est. (Encyclopédie berbère, 1986 p. 388). On entend par Azjer soit le fait de traverser un courant d'eau, soit le taureau, le sens exact n'est pas encore déterminé. «issou» est le terme qui désigne le taureau dans le «tamahaq», langue des Touareg.

⁵ Il s'agit d'un grand tambour qu'on tapait pour le rassemblement de toutes les tribus pour trancher les affaires de guerre et de paix. Il en existe chez les femmes de cette tribu; celles-ci sont les seules qui portent le titre de sultanes, dans tout le monde touareg.

aucune connotation de pouvoir). Ils sont les habitants de l'oasis la plus importante de la région (Djanet) et enfin, viennent les esclaves et les artisans.

Les tribus et groupes se fondent sur la base des origines des femmes (aïeules) depuis la première naissance historique (origines mythiques du groupe ou tribu) à la naissance biologique (la filiation des enfants actuellement). La société donne l'importance au ventre (tessa), à la parenté matrilineaire au lieu du dos (rouri) ou parenté patrilinéaire. Le proverbe qui règne dans ces sociétés est que le ventre teint le bébé, c'est la mère qui donne la première identité à ses enfants. Malgré cela, on ne pourra jamais trancher définitivement dans le matriarcat au pays touareg, si on prenait compte des conditions de Diop (1967) qui écarte les Touareg d'avoir connu ce système (le matriarcat) dans leur longue histoire, et il continue à définir minutieusement, les sociétés qui ont connu le matriarcat.

Face à cette fragmentation et hétérogénéité des tribus qui constituent l'ensemble de la société, il lui faut des institutions qui la régissent afin de diminuer les conflits : tels que les stratégies d'allégeance découlant des périodes cruciales de son histoire locale, voire les différentes institutions de plaisanterie (rapports entre cousins croisés ou entre tribus nobles et artisans,...). Ainsi que leurs conséquences naissantes en tant qu'espaces de détente et de libération des fardeaux induits par la ségrégations et les différentes relations liant les tribus entre elles d'une part, les hommes et les femmes d'autre part, et définissant le tracé de la communication entretenue.

IV. Les Touareg à l'épreuve du changement

On peut expliquer le changement qui existe dans les sociétés touareg, par deux facteurs essentiels: la colonisation française qui a détruit le pouvoir politique traditionnel, tout en essayant de le gérer en fonction de ses intérêts dans la région, d'une part;

Et, d'autre part, l'indépendance des Etats où se trouvent les Touareg, donnant lieu à la constitution des Etats Nations. Si l'Algérie a essayé d'intégrer la société de la marge et la moderniser par le truchement de la gratuité de l'enseignement après l'indépendance et cela a touché même les Touareg exilés au-delà de ses frontières, comme ceux du Mali et du Niger; certains pays ont élargi le clivage entre les Touareg et le centre.

1. Changements dus à la colonisation

Défendre son territoire était une obsession des Touareg, et la possession des armes était leur grand souci: la fonction qu'ils revendiquent le plus, c'est la maîtrise de leurs territoires, le contrôle et le droit d'accès dans leurs espaces. (Gast, M., 1989 p. 5). Mais l'invasion du Sahara algérien par les Français les a laissés incapables de préserver leur système de rezzou, par lequel ils obtiennent le butin et les esclaves qui assurent la continuité de leur régime traditionnel: l'atteinte la plus flagrante à la liberté des kel Ahaggar est l'interdiction des rezzous qui a des conséquences économiques (plus de butins) mais également psychologiques (Mécheri-Saada, N., 1990 p. 138) car elle a conduit à la perte du rôle protecteur qui est l'apanage des nobles guerriers. En conséquence, cette protection et sécurité sont rendues sous forme de redevances diverses: céréales, viande, lait et autres produits. En revanche, ceux-ci ont emprunté la voie des caravanes et troqué le sel de l'Amadghour et l'armoise avec Bilad Essoudan (pays du Soudan)⁶.

⁶ On entend, par Pays du Soudan, ici, l'actuelle république du Niger.

L'introduction du système monétaire, à la place du troc avec la venue des commerçants de la région du Mزاب et Touat (Mecheri Saada, 1990 p. 139) sur le système économique traditionnel. La présence du colonialisme est devenu un facteur de perturbation avec son intervention dans l'ensemble des rituels et coutumes locales, ainsi que leur mauvaise compréhension et interprétation. (Guy, 1935)

En outre, il y a lieu de signaler la tentative de l'institution médicale européenne de construire un modèle hygiénique occidental opposé au modèle local, tout en utilisant des expressions méprisantes à l'égard des Touareg et des autres peuples qui étaient sous leur autorité. A mentionner aussi, la création d'écoles pour assurer la transmission de leurs messages civilisationnels fragiles, ce qui a engendré le refus de cette éducation et de se traiter chez les «Chrétiens» appelés «ikoufar» et, avant cela, c'était la résistance acharnée contre la colonisation dans l'ahaggar (Hoggar) et l'Azjer, ce qui a retardé l'introduction définitive des Français dans la région (Azjer p. 1914).

2. Changements dus à l'indépendance

L'un des effets majeurs de l'indépendance, a été de produire un bien-être inégal dans la société, car la pauvreté et la misère ont de tout temps hanté l'imaginaire touareg dans son ensemble. La mémoire emmagasine des milliers d'histoires douloureuses: le lien avec les étrangers (mariage), la prostitution, la nudité et la faim, etc... Egalement, l'évocation de l'épineuse question (encore de nos jours) des esclaves et de leur affranchissement et les différents débats et réactions qui en résultent, dans cette société hyper hiérarchisée, comme indiqué plus haut, ce qui a mené les institutions de l'Etat moderne à éviter d'évoquer cette question épineuse, et qui est politiquement une affaire classée. Ceci a fait perdre aux nobles et à leurs vassaux la main-d'œuvre, en les rendant incapables de les prendre en charge, c'est pourquoi ils les ont libérés. Si le problème a été résolu au niveau de l'institution, les représentations qui entourent ces esclaves n'en finiront jamais.

Il reste à noter que le pourcentage des diplômés de l'enseignement supérieur dans les sociétés touareg était le plus bas par rapport aux autres peuples avoisinants: les Haoussa ou Bambara⁷ et arabes, étant essentiellement nomades. Et que les pourcentages observés jusqu'à la fin des années 70 et le début des années 80, sont limités à l'enseignement primaire pour un pourcentage de réussite de 52% en 1978, tandis que ce pourcentage a atteint 56% et plus en 1980. (Boussada et Hajras, 1938 - 1984 p. 38). La situation n'a pas connu de changement jusqu'aux années 90, le taux de succès au baccalauréat étant très faible pourcentage.

Le passage à l'université est un rêve pour tous; de même, le transport par avion vers la capitale et les autres grandes villes a ses propres particularités et son charme. Et nul ne peut nier le rôle de l'enseignement supérieur dans la promotion sociale des enfants et de la société, car il est devenu une obsession pour tous, toute catégorie confondue, dans une société qu'on ne peut juger d'analphabète et d'arriérée, selon la conception de la société occidentale moderne, vu sa connaissance de l'écriture, vu ses lois et coutumes, etc.).

⁷ Ce sont des langues et ethnies voisines «nègres» des Touareg; et leurs parlers sont connus de ces derniers par le contact, l'emprunt et l'acculturation. Par contre, on appelle les parlers touareg par: tamahaq celle des Touareg du Nord, Tamachaq pour les Touareg du Mali et Tamajaq celle des Touareg du Niger(l'Air).

V. Comportements des universitaires vis-à-vis des traditions et des institutions

Il importe de souligner ici qu'il s'agit là d'une nouvelle problématique pour la chercheuse que je suis, sachant que j'accordais un intérêt particulier au monde des symboles, étendu et polysémique, mais mon témoignage à l'occasion de certains événements de violence à l'égard des femmes, m'a conduit à changer de trajectoire: un intérêt est alors né pour le changement survenu dans la société et qui a commencé à prendre une nouvelle ampleur comme nous le verrons plus loin.

Ne me limitant ni aux données concrètes, ni aux déclarations quotidiennes des femmes, je m'engagerais plus loin en impliquant les universitaires (parmi eux des diplômés et des fonctionnaires, et ceux qui sont en fin d'études) en qualité d'échantillon de cette enquête. (Étudiants dans les cités universitaires d'Alger et diplômés à Djanet).

La ville de Ouargla, située au Sud Est de l'Algérie, est un pôle universitaire qui attire les étudiants touareg; elle est située à 1460 km de Djanet et s'en différencie par les coutumes et le système social. Avec ses universités, Alger est une autre destination pour ces étudiants. (Cette enquête est limitée aux étudiants de Djanet et de ses environs)

Au cours des dernières années, vient la ville de Blida, à environ 50 km au Sud d'Alger. Le nombre d'étudiants dans ces trois villes est de deux cent (200), ce chiffre m'a été fourni par l'association «Aghanib» (plume) qui se charge de la préinscription des nouveaux bacheliers dans les différentes universités choisies.

Au total, l'Algérie compte 1 158 925 étudiants, et le nombre d'étudiants à Ouargla est de 20 000. Bien que nous ne puissions pas déterminer le nombre d'étudiants touareg, en l'absence d'un centre universitaire dans la wilaya d'Illizi, dont Djanet est l'une des circonscriptions. C'est aussi le cas du deuxième centre universitaire dans la plus grande ville habitée par les Touareg, Tamanrasset (aux frontières du Mali et du Niger) où le phénomène est très récent, de ce fait notre mission est devenue difficile faute de statistiques.

L'oasis de Djanet est située à l'extrême sud est, à la frontière nigéro-libyenne, à une distance de deux mille trois cent kilomètres de la capitale. L'avion est l'un des moyens de transport les mieux adaptés car deux ou trois heures suffisent pour atterrir à l'aérodrome de Djanet ; alors que par voie terrestre, on met deux à trois jours. Pour rapprocher le Nord du Sud et encourager les Touareg à l'éducation, l'Etat offre des billets gratuits, aller-retour pour les étudiants du Sud, qui seraient autrement hors de portée vu les tarifs élevés.

Comme le chercheur est confronté aux changements par le contact avec les Touareg et l'expérience et cohabitation et de l'empathie, les étudiants venus à l'université, sont influencés à leur tour par les villes différentes de par leur forme et contenu et de par leur modernisme stupéfiant, ces effets sont considérés comme «positifs» ou «négatifs» comme le soulignent les étudiants eux-mêmes.

Grâce à l'expérience de la recherche sur le terrain, il a été constaté que certains aspects de la violence et la «réforme» des concepts de la religion étaient introduit par les universitaires, et peut être par des gens venus à la région avant cela. Mais ces derniers n'étaient pas aussi efficaces dans l'immédiat. Il s'agit d'institutions modernes comme la loi positive, qui ont pu introduire une certaine violence; loi sur mesure afin de limiter les mouvements les plus intimes des femmes et les soumettre à des normes rigoureuses causées par les prêches incitatifs du vendredi, pour réajuster le comportement des femmes déviantes puis consacrer le contrôle «chirurgicale» sur le corps de ces femmes par les commissions médicales et leurs certificats avalisant la validité

ou non validité du mariage; le certificat de non grossesse est déclaré suffisant pour le mariage des filles ou pour le remariage des divorcées et des veuves; et un tel certificat est exigé pour l'achèvement de la cérémonie du mariage civil et sans lequel nul projet n'est validé.

Les villes touareg sont devenues de plus en plus attractives pour les nordistes, car elles leur fournissent des emplois attrayants et un certain confort les libérant des années de violence. Ces nordistes (de Batna, Sétif, Ghardaïa,,,) ont pénétré certains niveaux de la société traditionnelle, en saisissant l'opportunité en or pour rejoindre les femmes qui apparaissent dans les grands espaces, dévoilées, sereines et éblouissantes, dans les espaces festifs permanents. Il s'agit là d'établir des relations qui conduisent à la violence, dans la majorité des cas, et cela est dû à la promiscuité des systèmes de valeurs d'un côté comme de l'autre.

Si les universitaires de sexe masculin, préfèrent la liberté des femmes du Nord, vu la flexibilité dans le rapport, loin de tout contrôle (de la hiérarchie) qui détermine leur destin, choisir le conjoint; par contre, les filles, elles préfèrent le Sud, pensant à tous les privilèges que leur donne la société et leur protection de tout sort inconnu. Nous n'avons pas constaté le désir de vivre loin de la société, l'engouement pour l'émigration, comme c'est le cas de jeunes en général et des jeunes instruits en particulier, mais plutôt la passion de voyager et de découvrir des sociétés différentes puis le retour après s'être convaincus en fait que leur société est de loin meilleure que d'autres sociétés taxées de phénomènes régressifs tel l'addiction à la drogue, la violence, le mépris de l'autre, le non respect, etc.

On peut limiter l'intervention des universitaires aux différents niveaux des systèmes ou institutions traditionnelles aux plans suivants:

1. Sur le plan politique

Il y a des tentatives des universitaires en tant que nouveaux acteurs dans la société pour l'accès à différents niveaux des institutions traditionnelles liées à la décision «politique» et pour la transmission de leur voix aux responsables du Nord, mais leurs tentatives échouent, parce que les stratégies, adoptées par le pouvoir central et visant à se rapprocher des Touareg, à les «contrôler», consacrent la hiérarchie sociale existante avant les individus, c'est-à-dire la pérennité des nobles et ceux qui leurs ressemblent. On note également, que les jeunes filles universitaires aspirent à la promotion des femmes par le biais de l'éducation et de la réduction de l'analphabétisme. Il se trouve que les femmes, de différents âges, sont plus enclines à apprendre à lire et à écrire. C'est là un phénomène qui attire l'attention.

2. Sur le plan social

A travers les associations et les différentes initiatives individuelles (organisations) prises en charge par les universitaires, de multiples tentatives de changement peuvent se faire, les jeunes s'alignent dans des structures (organismes) qui s'opposent symboliquement à des organisations collectives sur place tout en s'alignant aux exigences du tourisme auquel on doit une renaissance économique réelle pour l'ensemble de la société. Le nombre d'agences de voyages gérées par des universitaires commence à croître. Ces derniers montrent une réticence envers les pratiques dites traditionnelles, mais ils sont obligés de les présenter, en tant que produit et pratiques des ancêtres, aux touristes qui les consomment avec engouement.

3. Les universitaires et le genre

Bien que l'enseignement universitaire ait intégré les filles et les garçons, pratiquement sans distinction, on peut introduire le genre en tant que niveau d'analyse, puisque les filles

universitaires ne constituent en aucune manière une force active. Et cela à notre avis est un aspect de changement des rôles et leur régression après avoir atteint un haut niveau d'instruction; au lieu d'en ajouter un plus à la centralité de la femme soutenue par les institutions traditionnelles, au contraire l'enseignement lui a fait perdre son efficacité et la fait stagner dans une fonction unique. Mais il y a des projets sociaux naissants des diplômées au sens moderne du terme: la création d'associations nouvelles, association de protection du consommateur, à titre d'exemple.

4. Les universitaires et le matriarcat

Comme fut la coutume, c'est la filiation matrilineaire qui est répandue parmi les Touareg, en particulier chez les Touareg de l'Azjer et ceux de l'oasis de Djanet, les plus engagés d'entre eux et cela est dû à l'étroite relation qui lie les femmes au système basé sur l'agriculture depuis des temps immémoriaux. Ce point constitue une gêne importante à ceux qui sont les plus «instruits» et les plus immergés dans les principes et les enseignements de l'Islam. Cette question entraîne d'autres comme celles des biens de l'«alkhebs», qui sont l'apanage des femmes, de leur dévoilement et les «cas de mixité» pendant les différents célébrations et rituels, ce qui crée un sentiment de «dégoût» à la suite de leur dérogations aux règles de parenté de leurs voisins, cherchant ainsi à créer un espace pour l'émergence d'une autorité paternelle par le biais du «contrôle» et la modification de certains comportements qui ne sont plus appropriés au nouveau système social dominant.

Avec l'introduction de nouveaux éléments engendrés par le contact avec les populations nordistes et sahariennes et les différentes alliances matrimoniales variées, les relations externes deviennent, jour après jour, croissantes. D'après les entretiens, il semble évident que les jeunes filles universitaires sont plus ouvertes sur l'Autre et plus intégrées dans la société d'accueil car ceci est l'extension de la fonction traditionnelle des femmes dans cette société: recevoir ceux, et en particulier celles, qui viennent du Nord, les loger et les prendre en charge. Ce qui s'est effectivement passé pour moi en tant que chercheuse. Tous étaient prêts à me recevoir solennellement, tandis que les hommes viennent pour exercer le jeu de la séduction.

5. Les universitaires et l'institution du mariage

Le mariage reste l'institution traditionnelle et symbolique qui constitue une source de consensus sur la nécessité de la sauvegarder; tout le monde préfère se marier traditionnellement, bien qu'ils critiquent certains aspects de l'extravagance et du gaspillage: coût exagéré, chameaux abattus pour la circonstance et ainsi de suite. S'agit-il ainsi de consacrer les choix tribaux structurés depuis le temps des aïeules? Ou s'agit-il de l'idée du mariage traditionnel, à garder sa forme sans le contenu, c'est-à-dire le caractère uniquement, cérémonial, en dehors du choix du conjoint?

VI. Conclusion

La société touareg vit au rythme des changements majeurs, comme le reste des autres sociétés; elle est affectée par les événements qui se passent, dans le monde en général et dans le monde musulman en particulier, ceux liés à ce dernier interviennent directement dans le cours de leurs vies et rituels. Les cérémonies de la sebeiba (la fête de l'Achoura) de cette année(2009) sont célébrées dans de tristes conditions, avec l'abstinence des femmes ayant l'expérience et les compétences artistiques et de performances, à cause des massacres de Gaza, car il est inconcevable de chanter, danser et se réjouir alors que des enfants sont massacrés et que des musulmans perdent leur vie à chaque instant; les jeunes universitaires et diplômés ont organisé

des manifestations ce jour-là pour attirer l'attention sur ce qui se passe dans le monde arabe, en se plaignant du fait que les célébrations ont eu lieu.

Les sociétés touareg ont été soumises à de nombreuses vagues d'islamisation (...au VIII^e siècle au Fezzan, lors du mouvement almoravide... Ces Berbères ont appris à connaître les sociétés islamiques durant toutes ces époques car elles ont participé pratiquement à tous les combats au nord et au sud. (Gast, M., 1989 p. 4)

Les universitaires estiment être les victimes d'un «complot» des traditionalistes qui ne veulent pas que la société progresse, mais par tous les moyens, ils les excluent pour garder la situation telle quelle; société qui se reproduit avec ses privilèges au détriment des faibles. Grâce à la science et l'éducation, les mentalités peuvent changer, les hiérarchies éclater. La notion d'origine, qui exclue et marginalise les individus, malgré leurs hautes compétences, s'effondre.

Ce thème de recherche nécessite plus d'expérimentation sur terrain, de nombreux entretiens approfondis, puisque les nouvelles valeurs que détiennent les universitaires n'ont pas trouvé un espace propre à elles car les ombres des aïeules constituent encore des «fantômes» qui ne quittent pas l'imaginaire de la descendance qui croit à la nécessité de surmonter le temps déchu. Par contre, pour celui qui rencontre cette société pour la première fois, estime que ces traditions sont au cœur de la modernité aujourd'hui et une importante ressource de la législation moderne des droits des femmes, et un pas vers l'égalité des sexes; et c'est ce que les filles universitaires commencent à sentir et palper par les comparaisons. Mais, il importe à souligner qu'une impulsion est nécessaire pour l'éducation et la généralisation de l'enseignement, à tous les niveaux, pour activer et pousser ces femmes.

Nous devons par ailleurs, faire l'étude de la société féminine et la problématique de l'enseignement, d'une manière approfondie, vu les modèles particuliers qui changent notre conception de l'analphabétisation et de l'écriture; à travers l'histoire, les femmes touareg étaient porteuses de la tradition de l'écriture, le «Tifinagh» était leur code de communication, et jusqu'à l'heure actuelle, les femmes qui en possèdent les secrets, en particulier les plus âgées, continuent à enseigner aux enfants.

La communication par l'écriture et la poésie raffinée, était la caractéristique de ces sociétés. Peut-on, dès lors, taxer cette société d'analphabétisme?

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Meeting the Requirements of the Modern Times through Development of Interdisciplinary Programs in Social Science: the Experience of the Masters Program in Democracy and Human Rights at Birzeit University*

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Abstract

The paper is an attempt to answer the following question: to what extent can interdisciplinary programs enable higher education to achieve a qualitative leap, and accordingly, what are the necessary conditions for such a leap? The paper is guided by the experience of the MA Program in Democracy and Human Rights, which was founded as an interdisciplinary program at Birzeit University in 2000. Specifically, the paper examines an empirical case study of graduates of the program conducted in 2007, which carried out an assessment of the impact of the program on the behavior of the graduates and the social, political, and cultural attitudes embodied in their world-views and ways of life, through examining the changes in their respective realities and status in the Palestinian society.

The study under review is premised on the assumption that the capacity of an educational program to influence its students constitutes the criterion of its success. Believing in the urgent need for social change and modernization, we consider the examination of the motivation for such change among graduates as the means for answering the initial question regarding the necessary qualitative leap and its prerequisite conditions. In other words, in conceptualizing this qualitative leap, there needs to be a review of the contribution of a program to the “development of rebels who are able to take a stance critical of society and to work for change” (Hashweh, 2004, 16) and who have a “sense of responsibility towards public issues” (Baber 1988, 174). Accordingly, this paper seeks to show that an interdisciplinary approach to university education is more effective in achieving the goal of social change.

In addition to this study, and in order to demonstrate the proposed hypothesis, this paper will use an analysis of social needs and how to meet them. Social change is linked to a vision of society and the role of the individual therein. Hence, it is not possible to support students in building a holistic vision of the world through programs that limit analysis and vision to a specific field of knowledge. Moreover, there is an urgent need to find ways of linking educational programs to daily experience, outside the scope of acquiring employment skills.

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I. Introduction

This research paper is an attempt to answer the following questions: To what extent can interdisciplinary programs² allow higher education to realize a qualitative leap? What are the necessary conditions to achieve that leap? Knowing that the capacity of study programs to influence learners into following the planned direction constitutes a benchmark of success for these programs, is there agreement with those who believe that a process of societal change and modernization is more than necessary? In addition, if intellectuals should play a central role in this process, then examining the drive for change among graduates of the academic programs in social science offers an answer to the problematic areas discussed in this research paper. This is because the extent of measuring the performance of academic programs goes beyond the university and engulfs graduates' performances, positions and practices. Moreover, by examining how far the program contributes in «educating rebellious individuals, capable of having a critical eye looking at their society and acting for change» (Hashweh, 2004, p. 16), as well as in «raising their sense of responsibility towards public issues» (Baber, 1988, p. 174), are the central elements in this answer.

Our first hypothesis is that any possible examination of academic program outputs aimed at triggering a societal change is mostly limited to developing a conviction that playing an active role in society is a necessity, and to empowering the graduates to use their skills of criticism and analysis in order to rationally determine their [change-related] objectives. Having the conviction to make change come true, necessitates a critical perception (a must for any intellectual), which requires a capacity for abstraction. The prevailing trends (which are targeted by change advocates), be it a scientific trend or a political regime, constitutes a system often based on expressions and conceptions that guarantee its reproduction, with limited changes which are at best an enhancement of conditions serving those concerned with its survival.

«One task of the intellectual is the effort to break down the stereotypes and reductive categories that are so limiting to human thought and communication» (Said, 1996-b, p. 12 -13). In order to break this vicious cycle, that is the reproduction of the prevailing trend, there is a need for projects that nurture critical thinking, according to Edward Said. These are projects that are characterized by a reciprocal mediated nature, which means that they position themselves, with intent, at cross points that are open to criticism in the continuous systematic discourses. However, each program proposes new knowledge themes as a minimum (Said, 1996-A, p. 54). Said noted that this task requires «organic intellectuals» (according to the concept of Gramsci in his «Prison Notebooks»). They are distinguished as being «actively involved in society, meaning they constantly struggle to change minds and expand «markets» unlike «traditional intellectuals»

² These are programs that intend to integrate several knowledge disciplines into a new discipline on the contrary of multidisciplinary programs that combine several knowledge disciplines with teaching by respecting their independence at the level of the curriculum and the boundaries. The interdisciplinary programs try to respond to the relatively new scientific, professional and social needs left aside in the classical knowledge disciplines. They are also considered as a means to go beyond the problematic of having different knowledge and practical domains tackled in different disciplines. For instance, teaching human rights is considered an example of a knowledge domain having introductions in many disciplines including, Law, Philosophy, Political Science and Education. Moreover, delving into this domain necessitates a level of knowledge in issues pertaining to other disciplines such as, Economics, International Relations, Environmental Science and other. Multidisciplinary programs can often rely on professionals (other than academics) in teaching, research and program conception. These programs also tend towards a larger interaction with the society than programs conceived around a single knowledge field.

(such as teachers, priests and civil servants) who seem to be «doing the same kind of work year in year out» (Said, 1996-B, p. 22).

Our second hypothesis is that it is the multidisciplinary approach to higher education which is more effective in achieving the targeted change in society. This hypothesis emanates from the fact that societal actors, capable of making the change come true, can assume this role because they can break the cycle of stereotyping and prejudices that, as Said explains, imposed by short-sighted patriarchal hegemony (Said, 1996-A, p. 58). This is easily achievable through multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary approaches, where it is possible to create (or innovate) new curricula to study and analyze different phenomena, related to the researchers' goals and not their position (often determined by the field to which they belong). In addition, this hypothesis is based on the conviction that the necessary vision for believing in change can only be reached in the context of the social actors' vision of their position in the world according to a certain world view of their own. The latter enables them to conceptualize the starting point from which they will set off for change, and determine its goal. Said says that there's a need for crossing more frontiers and for inching towards more intervention in the systemic intersected activities (Said, 1996-A, p. 58).

As for the third hypothesis, it stipulates that the student-instructor partnership in defining the educational program is a precondition for societal change emanating from the program. This hypothesis does not eliminate the leading role of instructors and doesn't mean, in any case, to run after market requirements (the labor market or the latest trends). Instead it means to guide students in their research towards their true practical and individual interests in order to be able to use the academic space to mold their critical and creative side in their daily situations.

The colonial condition has led to a distortion of the will of the Palestinians who are forced to put the issue of national liberation on the top of their priorities regardless of their backgrounds and interests. This situation has created an imbalance between the different aspects related to the democratic structure and thus, to the procedural aspects of democracy, which are directly related to sovereignty and to the shape of the state. Therefore, national liberation became for many Palestinians a fundamental demand which comes before dealing with inequality and social injustice, and is thus one of the intended results of building a democratic regime. Therefore, we will try in this paper to examine the attention given, by graduates, to the socio-economic aspects of democratic life. This is because in our view, this attention reflects a change compared to prevailing patterns, and is far more complex and abstract in the current Palestinian context. On one hand, paying attention to the different aspects of social justice means abandoning the psychology of being victimized and in despair, which has been nurtured by the colonial condition over the decades. This attention also reflects the ability of the program's graduates to conceptualize the next step after the liberation process on the national agenda imposed by the colonial condition. While the balance between «the chaos of struggle» and «the order of the state» is still inching towards the first, the ability to reflect on the «order of the state» requires a vision capable of extracting one's self from the current reality of the battlefield in order to be able to imagine the construction process amidst the operations of destruction.

II. Methodology

1. The case studied in this paper

In order to examine the motivation and the ability to contribute to change in line with the hypotheses listed above, it is possible to use indicators related to the desire of change, to the

conviction that change is necessary, and to acting for change. It is also possible to use indicators related to critical thinking, the ability of abstraction, and the possession of analytical skills.

This paper examines this issue based on a specific case study, the experience of a Masters program in Democracy and Human Rights (the program), which was founded as an interdisciplinary program at Birzeit University. Specifically, this paper is based on an empirical study conducted in 2007 covering the graduates of the program. It sought to establish an impact assessment of the learning process on the graduates in terms of their behavior and their social, political and cultural positions, as well as how the learning process is ingrained in their world view and lifestyle³.

The Masters program in democracy and human rights was established in 1999 to fill the need for responsible national academics in the public sphere, and specifically in education, civil society, and law enforcement agencies. This was at a time when the Palestinian society was hoping to successfully build national Palestinian institutions in preparation for statehood.

The program was designed to combine democracy and human rights in a single interdisciplinary program and to be a mediator between the research-based Masters (aimed primarily at training research academics), and an «executive» Masters program (aimed at supplying institutions with qualified and active cadres). Moreover, in order to combine the two parts of the program (democracy and human rights), and its orientation (research and practical), the program was designed to address the main concerns topping the agenda of those interested in the issues of democracy and human rights in the contemporary world, as well as to focus on aspects of particular importance in Palestine in those days. Hence, the curriculum focuses on the issues of freedom in their various aspects and manifestations as well as elections, transitions, political culture, education, citizenship, social justice, international human rights law, international humanitarian law, criticisms of democracy and criticism of the new colonial political (ab)uses of human rights.

In the curriculum, the Arab dimension seems obvious through the existence of special courses. These deal with the reality of democracy and human rights in the Arab world, the study of the Arab constitutional systems in the context of their protection of human rights principles and the nature of political regimes emanating from these constitutions, and so on.

In order to activate the research branch, the program was designed to encourage students to do research and engage in cooperative programs with other universities. As for activating the practical branch, in addition to the program, an outreach unit was designed to connect with the community. Its main goal is to interact with institutions and key individuals in the process of building a political system and defending and preserving human rights, so that students could get familiar with the practical aspects and daily practices related to the issues which they are exposed to during the learning process. The outreach unit had an overloaded agenda and ambitious objectives. In addition to keeping students in touch with everyday life, it was expected that students' contact with the institutions of civil society would improve their chances of getting jobs upon graduation and that being in contact with political figures would mold their skills, so as to form groups of pressure, change or networking, etc. These elements lead to promoting discussion in classrooms, linking theory to practice, and paying attention to daily issues. In addition, the issues are dealt with through theory and analysis, and ultimately, used as topics for research papers presented by students as part of the requirements. Furthermore, these topics, after passing the test of real debate, can become an important part of the mechanisms used

³ The author already presented the results of this empirical study from another point of view in his paper entitled «The impact of teaching democracy and human rights on the nature of integration in the political life» in: Al-Sayyed M. (ed.). 2009. P.p. 209 - 298. (Arabic).

to determine research projects that must be dealt with in the program. This is as a mechanism involving teachers and students in research work to promote the research part of the program. One of the motivations behind this ambitious design of the program was recognizing the need for faculty development based on the features of the program, i.e. creating a group of professors who will be able to meet the requirements of an interdisciplinary program rather than a multidisciplinary one. The vision was to develop a new research field at the university, rather than follow the curriculum which is «a set of isolated isles» taught by professors from those disciplines that intersect in this program: philosophy, law, political science, education, sociology, and economics.

2. Indicators

The research focused on two main topics: first, the world view⁴ in the broader sense; second, political involvement which is considered as all activities destined to contribute to a change of a political nature. Amongst these activities, we mention participating in demonstrations, being interested in circulars and newspapers, following political events, and voting in general elections (Katz, et al. p. 2001, 412). In addition to these two topics, other criteria were taken into account such as to have a critical view and a sense of responsibility towards society and the public sphere. It was because of the nature of the case study, and the restrictions imposed by the data used, that the issue of democracy, and the tendency towards it (the quest for democratization) was adopted as an example of desired change. In this context, the involvement of graduates in political life and in civil activities, their interest in societal activities and the public sphere, and any other factor that would enable them to contribute to a change incarnating the principles of democracy, will be seen as an indicator of the program's success in contributing to the education of «intellectuals».

3. The Respondents

During the field research, the number of graduates in the program in February 2007 amounted to 77 female and male graduates, who enrolled in the program between 2000 and 2004, and graduated between 2002 and 2007. Among them, males accounted for 58%, keeping in mind that the research assistant and the field researcher were able to interview 49 of the 77 graduates. The respondents' ages ranged from 24 to 52, with an average of 34 and males accounted for 54% of them. They enrolled in the program between 2000 and 2004, and completed graduation requirements between 2002 and 2007. They also spent an average of 3 years to conclude the program. There were 69% of the respondents who lived in cities, 27% in villages, and 4% in refugee camps. The income of 76% of them ranged between \$500 and \$1400, while 4% of them had an income lower than \$500, and 20% of them gained more than \$1400. These students had obtained a bachelor's degree (BA) in different disciplines according to the following distribution: Social Sciences (Political Science, History, Economics, Geography, Sociology, and Journalism) 41%; Psychology, Education and Social Service 18%; Languages 20%; Sharia and Islamic Studies 4%; Business Administration 2%; Law 10%; and Science 4%.

⁴ Since the term is uncommon in Arabic discourse, it was defined in this paper's questionnaire as: a concept reflecting how an individual perceives the existence and all surrounding elements, close or far, as well as how he/she views the present and the future. This perception is often expressed through: ideology, faith, religious belief (or disbelief), optimism, pessimism, an absolute conviction in freedoms and a system of values (the vision of morals, law, customs and traditions) as well as a scientific vision based on causal relations.

The respondents are active in the three sectors: the public sector at 33%; civil society at 36%; and the private sector at 31%.

The characteristics of those enrolled in the program, in terms of age, social status, ability to compete, and willingness to take initiatives, which is evident since they joined this program, are all positive assets. In fact, these characteristics indicate that they are capable to contribute in bringing about societal change, or at least in playing an active role in the development of the socio-political life. The top factor that reinforces these assets is that the respondents have a clear orientation which expresses their desire for change. In fact, 67% of them said that they share a genuine interest in the issues of democracy and human rights, which was their first motive when they joined the program.

It is also noteworthy that the specificity of respondents, by being under occupation, but at the same time also active participants in a political system «in the making», imposes on the results of the research additional determinants. The latter constitute, in addition to a tendency towards democracy, a tendency towards freedom, which is just as important and indicative. However, it is necessary to recall here that in the context of the general atmosphere in Palestine (the resistance) that the tendency towards liberalization becomes the product of the extremely limited educational process. Moreover, an altered perception of resistance with its methods and concrete objective and an awareness of the restrictions imposed by the colonial condition, are the best indication of the impact of the education process on learners. For this reason, analyzing how graduates perceive the colonial condition and its end will be one major focus of this paper in addition to the two above-mentioned axes.

4. Field Research

A research questionnaire was designed to conduct 45-minute interviews (on average) over the phone, with the program's graduates. The questionnaire was divided into several sections and tackled the private sphere (with its related personal, family and direct social environment components), the public sphere (political life and civil work), and the professional sphere.

In addition to basic data about the respondents, the questionnaire tackled the issues of their knowledge, skills, values and practices and tried to explore their priorities through questions about the importance of democracy and human rights principles and political development issues. This was done primarily using a scale of four degrees (very important, important, insignificant, and not important at all).

The methodology adopted in the questionnaire resided primarily in comparing the graduates' situation and perceptions before and after entering the program, so as to avoid the methodological difficulties which would have resulted from the need for control groups if the research was to take a different turn.

Among the factors that are usually taken into account in similar studies, we mention the economic situation of the respondent's family, his marital status, environment, social background and class. For these factors are strongly linked to the interest in political issues and engagement. In addition, it is well known that all forms of education foster political engagement. Thus, it is common to include in such studies a group of other programs to validate the impact of the studied program. However, the mentioned questionnaire was not large enough to examine all these aspects, and the size of the studied group did not allow the statistical analysis of such data. Moreover, political involvement has a key specificity in Palestine. This is expressed in contradictory ways, of which the growing general political apathy in society is not the least important.

For the above-mentioned reasons, we decided to take into account all of the variables and to focus

on two factors to discover the features of this program. The first consists in analyzing the change occurring among the same individuals in order to neutralize factors related to the environment and background, and then asking respondents about their appreciation of the program's role in bringing about change (if ever that happened). The second factor was to examine the issue of critical thinking. This is an issue which was clearly noted through interviews with students enrolled in the program (did not yet graduate) along with students in other programs who have studied courses in this program, and among a concentrated group of respondents. Hence, it was clear that what distinguishes this program, from the students' viewpoint, is its strong critical thinking compound. Since critical thinking is largely indicative of the desire for change, we accepted the assumption that examining the program's impact on students reasonably reflects, from this perspective, the impact illustrated through the questionnaire.

In addition to the research questionnaire, a number of undergraduate students enrolled in the program attended various meetings in order to identify their motives for entering the program and to examine some of the results of the field research conducted on graduates, so as to get a comparison. In addition, students from other programs who studied courses in this program were also interviewed for comparison purposes as well.

A section of the questionnaire was reserved to allow respondents, by answering the open-ended questions, to evaluate the program and make observations about it.

In the context of the research methodology, it is important to note that the author of the program could be biased, for he is one of the founders of the program, and a member of the Program Council since its inception. Although I am personally convinced of being impartial in my research, I, nonetheless, believe that the reader should take the author's impartiality into account.

III. Field research data

Initially, before delving into the details of the search results, it would be appropriate to examine some of the data contained in the answers to the questionnaire, which can shed some light on the hypotheses of this paper and some of the constraints that were discussed above. The answers included a repetition of some observations, among which, an expression of imbalance between the theoretical and practical (applied) aspects of the program and the lack of linkage between the two sides. This observation has been accompanied by similar observations such as the lack of practical elements in the program (practicum), or the need to organize the involvement of students in practical training (i.e. internships) focused on gaining and molding practical skills as well as the lack of field visits.

I believe that these observations point to three issues related to our topic. First and foremost, the desire to act (activity) and a sense of insufficient non-applied knowledge (change). Second, a handicap in the program structure which should be rectified (this goes beyond the scope of this paper). Third, graduates are not convinced of the importance of impartiality (which will be referred to again as we shall see).

According to some answers to other questions, the need for practical skills has been emphasized. In fact, graduates indicated that the program left a great impact on them in the field of research skills (received a grade of 78)⁵, then theoretical understanding (74), followed by political analysis

⁵ The analysis adopts a score for each index according to the following equation: the grade = (the percentage of those who consider the topic of question to be very important* 100) + (the percentage of those who consider the topic to be important* 67) + (the percentage of those who consider the topic to be of little importance* 33).

(68), and finally practical skills (50). It is also noteworthy that research skills are in fact practical skills for those who intend to work in the academic sphere. As for the others, who intend to work outside the academic institution, they felt the need for a practical background.

It should be noted that the respondents were aware of the most important targeted outputs of the interdisciplinary Program. Specifically, 63% of the respondents indicated that they would rejoin the program if their aim was to promote their critical thinking. They also expressed that the most important aspects in promoting this is the quality and content of courses (received a grade of 94), then free discussion and debate in the classroom (93), followed by the efficiency of the faculty (90), then the personality of the course's instructor (85), teaching method (83), program management (80), and eventually grades (56).

1. Limited theorizing ability

While the first two factors (relating to the desire to act, and the willingness to make changes to the structure of the program) seem obvious, the third factor (related to abstraction and theorizing) indicates that, in conjunction with other discussions with the respondents, trust in «theorizing» is limited. Thus, we find that the motives for change are available, just as the desire, but the vision remains unclear. Although the respondents believed (having followed the program) that they now master their research skills more than other skills, they did not strongly feel that research work could constitute a practice in itself. This is the case even though a significant number of them work in the area of research in one way or another. Moreover, the proportion of active workers among the respondents was 98% (and the other 2% chose to remain inactive). Those working can be classified in the following professions: Educators, 17%; workers in educational administration, 10%; Administrators, 15%; Information and Public Relations, 17%; researchers and information analysts, 10%; fieldworkers, researchers, and practitioners in social service, 8%; political assistants (assistant to a political figure), 8%; agents in the security services, 6%; lawyers, 4%; liberal professions, 4%; and other (including members of the Palestinian Legislative Council), 4%.

I think that the lack of a clear vision creates the feeling of futility, although there are ways for action and the issue of vision is reflected again in the observations made by the respondents. This was about the need to deepen the partnership between students and faculty, and the need for discussion forums and workshops. Moreover, the program provides a higher degree of partnership than other programs in the university and in other Palestinian universities. As a matter of fact, 55% of respondents reported that they had participated, in one way or another, in a debate about the program presentation's content and nature at the university. A further 67% said they have done so through the periodic meetings between the program's administrators and the students, while 30% expressed that they had also participated, but through discussions with the program's professors. Another 26% participated through the management of the program, and 11% through evaluation using the website of the University. It is difficult to explain the repeated observations about this partnership other than by the gap between students' active role in this partnership, and their feeling of being unsatisfied of what is offered. Anyway, the students' desire to contribute to the program's development reflects their conviction of being able to act, as well as a successful detachment from learning approaches based on «lectures» shows that they are persuaded by this approach.

2. A «Traditional Organic» Intellectual?

Contrary to the perception that intellectuals are either organic or traditional, the graduates of the program believe that it is possible to include the role of an organic intellectual in that of a

traditional one. In fact, 37% of the respondents indicated that the program had a great impact on their work, whereas 53% of them considered this impact as strong, 8% considered it weak and 2% said the impact was never felt. In addition, 94% of the respondents indicated that they had already raised the issue of human rights in the workplace. On the other hand, 29% pointed out the modification of their tasks and/or functional responsibilities after graduation, with 86% of them who believe that this modification is linked to their enrollment in the program, and 92% of those believe that the change is linked to the program's content.

The possibility of combining the two «contradictory» attributes could be summarized in the conviction of possibly playing a limited role in bringing about change. This is only imaginable in the context of a strong recognition of the distribution of roles in society, and the acceptance of this distribution. I think that what explains this «contradiction» is a combination of political alienation due to the Palestinian situation, and the important role played by the educated youth in the institutions, where they belong and work. Thus, they play the role of an organic intellectual in the micro-society that they can significantly influence, and content themselves with the traditional role in a society where the scope of influence seems to be narrower if not blurred.

3. The attributes of graduates capable of bringing about societal change

It is easy to note the graduates' maturity in terms of their ability to positively interact with the community. In fact, 94% of the respondents said that the program impacted their ability to accept different viewpoints. Also, 96% of the respondents are convinced that an individual (or individuals) has a significant role to play in bringing about change within the community.

a. World view and the status of the respondents in it

Regarding the impact of the program on the graduates' world view and their perception of their own stance, 92% of them said that their world view has changed after attending the program. In addition 87% of them indicated that this change reflects a better knowledge of democracy and human rights, while 9% said that this change only reflects a better knowledge of the field of human rights, and 4% stated that it only reflects a better knowledge of democracy. Moreover, 94% of the respondents declared that their interest in the issues of democracy and human rights had increased since they first entered the program.

When asked about the nature of the occurring changes (in an open question), the respondents said their views changed in a number of areas, including:

- General understanding: some respondents indicated that they have a better understanding and are more aware of their surroundings, and they realized the importance of certain aspects of change, such as the economic one. In addition, they have become more interested in politics and international relations. Some respondents also pointed out that their views had become more inclusive, and more pronounced, and that they had gained a better defined vision of the future.
- Customs and traditions (in terms of role and status): respondents said they are convinced of the need for balancing out customs and traditions, on the one hand, and freedoms on the other. They also evoked the need to rid and free society of certain customs. Some respondents also indicated the existence of certain problematic areas in customs and traditions concerning the freedom of women, for example. Some said they have been able to distinguish between moral values, customs and traditions.
- Freedoms and rights: respondents said that they gained greater understanding of the issues of freedoms and rights, and they now believed more in achieving them. One of them said he realized that «freedom is a whole, take it or leave it». Others noted

that they gained greater and deeper understanding of the issues of rights, pointing out aspects which caught their attention after entering the program such as children's rights. One respondent stated that he can presently notice «gender discrimination in the workplace», and that he now understands «the meaning of the right to work and its relation to society and individuals' viewpoints». Another respondent pointed out that he gained «an absolute faith in freedom, by respecting principles, establishing them in a righteous way and respecting diversity.»

- The position of ideology, rationality, causality, analysis and criticism: some respondents talked about a loss of confidence in ideology, and an orientation towards an analysis of reality in a scientific manner. This being a scientific and rational perspective to analyze things and an enhancement of the ability of criticism as well as a distancing from acquired facts and pursuing truth (which remained veiled) according to one respondent.
- The difference between theory and practice and between reality and hope: the respondents said they became more deeply aware of the gap between practice and theory in the application of human rights. They were also pessimistic about the application of the principles of democracy and human rights in the absence of international justice. They also noted a clear favoritism of the super powers and in the presence of a colonial background, the application of international law. Hence, they realized the need for change at the global and national levels. They also evoked, repetitively, the need to improve the legal framework to protect and preserve these rights.
- Religion: some referred to an internal debate about the relationship between religion and freedom and the distinction between freedom of belief and freedom of religion, for example.

Thus, it seems clear that the world view of the graduates became more extensive. They found themselves compelled to identify their position in daily situations in a responsible manner (i.e. they feel responsible about their positions and do not believe in the need to follow common perceptions or choose from them).

b. Responsibility towards public issues and the tools to assume that responsibility

Expressing the feeling of personal responsibility towards the community is the most important factor enabling individuals to continue to work for change. The results of the field research show encouraging signs in this regard. In fact, when asked about their different ways of expressing themselves on the issues of democracy and human rights, the respondents' first answer was discussing with others within their entourage (received a grade of 78), then participating in conferences, workshops and lectures (69), writing and publishing (64), and finally, appearing in the media (49).

The respondents consider that the most appropriate ways to transfer or disseminate the principles of democracy and human rights in the community are first, outreach and education (received a grade of 93), followed by being a «role model» (88), and establishing these values through laws (80).

c. Critical orientation and distancing from common patterns

The results of the survey indicate that students were able through the study to acquire perceptions related to democracy and human rights, which are different from the prevailing pattern that is marketed by the media and institutions involved in promoting democracy and human rights. When respondents were asked about the extent to which some concepts holders are of a democratic essence, the separation of powers came up first (with a grade of 98), however, periodic elections came in the sixth place (88), free market economy came in ninth

(59), while accountability ranked second (95) and, social justice and equality came third (91). As for participation in decision-making and freedom of information and expression, they came in fourth place (90). Finally, individual freedom ranked seventh (85), and public interest ranked eighth (83).

When respondents were asked to choose only one concept which expresses the essence of democracy, 31% of them chose social justice and equity, 18% chose the separation of powers, 14% opted for periodic elections, and 12% selected accountability, whilst the other concepts got a rate ranging between 2% and 6%. This shows that the procedural conception of democracy, adopted by many writers and thinkers studied by students did not seem convincing to them. Moreover, 74% of the respondents said their interest in democracy stems from political and social spheres, while 14% responded that their interest emanates from the social sphere, and 12% said it emanates from the political sphere, which is in contrast to the prevailing paradigm. The same phenomenon can be observed as for the respondents' position on human rights issues. Hence, when asked about the importance of some of the principles of human rights and international humanitarian law, the respondents confirmed that the issues associated with colonialism ranked first, although the survey was conducted in a period of recrimination of the internal Palestinian scene. Thus, the right to life came in the first place (with a grade of 98), then came the protection of civilians, prisoners and the wounded (96), followed by preventing genocide and ensuring punishment, and abolishing time limitation for war crimes and crimes against humanity (93). The second set of questions revolved around social rights, with right to social security, and the right to education in third place (93 - the same grade obtained by the issues of preventing genocides and war crimes). As for the third set, it was related to civil rights, with the freedom of belief, opinion and expression, as well as freedom and security in the fifth place (90), then came the right to a fair trial and the prevention of torture in the seventh rank (89). This was followed by economic rights, with equality, the right to work and equal pay for equal work (88). As for the protection of personal space and freedom of movement, they came in tenth place (84). In addition, freedom of association and the right to property came in the twelfth place (78), and the freedom to marry without any restrictions due to race, nationality or religion for both sexes ranked last (70).

Having a sense of responsibility towards society was apparent in this part. In fact, when respondents were asked about their (personal) priorities, protection of personal freedoms came up first (with a grade of 95), followed by national liberation and education (94). Political participation ranked fourth (88), and health fifth (84). Democratization came in sixth (82) and income seventh (80). We believe that having different priorities, the conceptual ones and those related to personal preference reflects an awareness of societal needs in terms of social responsibility not selfishness. This constitutes an important component of success in any societal work needed for change.

The whole picture becomes clear when we see priorities change once respondents are reminded of the problematic situation, related to the importance of the democratic character of the Palestinian system under occupation. In fact, when respondents were asked to classify different elements in the current context according to importance, national liberation ranked first (with a grade of 97), followed by combating corruption (93), then by improving the economy (88), and the democratic transformation came last (74). It is noteworthy in this context that respondents evaluated the necessity to accompany the democratic transformation process with the national liberation process and graded it 86. Moreover, 36% of the respondents consider that the violations of human rights committed by the Palestinian Authority and by Israel are at the same level of seriousness.

4. The socio-political activities of graduates

a. The impact of the program on the graduates' activities and status

84% of the respondents considered that the program granted them distinctive skills compared with other colleagues at work who did not join the program. As for the impact of these skills, it was greatest regarding social status (with a grade of 77), followed by the profession (73), then personal life (69), and finally political activity (61).

Moreover, 63% of respondents said that the program opened up new horizons for change within the community, and 20% of them responded either «no opinion» or «I do not know».

Additionally, 84% of respondents said that the program contributes to building the students' theoretical and practical capabilities. There were 37% of them who indicated that these capabilities are cultural ones, 29% pointed out that they are social, and 12% noted that they are professional. Another 12% indicated that these capabilities are political. Finally, 10% said, these capabilities are related to many fields.

b. Engaging in political life

39% of respondents declared that they have no political affiliation, while 90% said that they encourage others to political participation, and 78% of them reported that they are engaged in political life. 22% of those who do not consider themselves as involved in political life seek to become so. According to data provided by this research, 81% of the graduates participated in the recent legislative elections, 79% participated in the presidential elections, and 65% in local elections.

59% of the respondents reported that they are engaged in voluntary organizations. Of these, 51% are members of human rights organizations, and 14% are members in unions. 55% of all the members said their membership was voluntary, while 10% of them are staff members, and 35% are members who regularly participate in relevant activities. It was 86% for those who declared that they take part in other forms of voluntary activities, a third of which was rights related. 37% of these activities are in the social sphere, and 23% are in the cultural field. Furthermore, 94% of the respondents encourage others to engage in voluntary work.

VI. Conclusion

1. General remarks

Data provided by the results of the questionnaire support the hypotheses of this paper (elaborated above) to varying degrees. This is because the program hasn't achieved its full potential yet, in terms of results and student numbers, but also because of research limitations and the parameters that we mentioned at the beginning of this paper.

These data show that it is possible to contribute to the creation of an effective change nucleus in society through higher education. Likewise, skills which are necessary for activating the role of youth in social change aren't gained through one discipline, but lie in building individual capacities and convictions which confirm that change is possible. The data indicated that the means adopted by the group of respondents are characterized, most importantly, by relying on the graduates' personal qualities not their specialization.

This research, although limited, indicated clearly that the group of graduates surveyed had a clear vision of changing priorities in the context of various tasks preceding change (though the tasks are interlinked). Liberation comes first, followed by living in dignity, including freedom and the economic situation, and then comes the procedural issues (although respondents are aware that these issues are a priority in the political system). From my point of view, this classification sheds

light on a sense of responsibility towards society. Furthermore, it reflects a certain ambiguity regarding the necessary practical steps to bring about change.

Many respondents were uninterested in theorization, which explains the previously mentioned ambiguity. This is related to the program's imperfections on the one hand, and to its nature, which is dominated by the operational aspect, on the other. However, this is also related to the respondents' social and intellectual maturity.

It is important to clearly note the imbalance in the respondents' system of priorities. Despite the fact that the respondents are well aware of the need to distinguish between the priorities in different contexts, they are undoubtedly aware that it is unacceptable to remain in a state of "schizophrenia" concerning the priorities, i.e. changing positions according to each case. However, in this conclusion I consider that the colonial condition leads necessarily to this dichotomy and creates a state of false consciousness as a defense mechanism against the feeling of being incapable of achieving change, despite desire, readiness, and having a [clear] goal.

2. Field research results

The following is a summary of what we believe is the hypothesis supported by field research results among those hypotheses mentioned in this research:

First, it can be said, with a certain degree of confidence that the program contributed to the training of organic intellectuals, in the sense that it provided them with a model of an analytical and critical environment convinced of the viability of change. However, the program made little achievement in terms of the students' abstraction ability, which is primordial in order to regroup various tasks in one agenda without falling into the trap of "destroy[ing] the achievements of the past to be able to build upon them". Nevertheless, if one considers the nature of the respondents' political engagement, limited success in training organic intellectuals is clearly noted. In fact, although the level of involvement of the program's graduates in the political life surpasses the average, this involvement is characterized by some reluctance which is typical to traditional intellectuals. Concerning the sense of partnership with their teachers, graduates consider themselves as "organic students" in the program.

Secondly, concerning world view, it can be concluded that the program has succeeded in promoting the adoption by its students of a critical, flexible and rational world view that is enlightened and not paternalistic.

Thirdly, the results, mentioned above, show a great deal of graduates' involvement in societal activities aimed at change. Moreover, it is clear that they are trying to play a leading role in the community in various areas related to their work, their profession, their role as citizens, and activists. This means that they feel responsible towards public issues, and are using all available tools to achieve this purpose.

Fourth, the data show that the multidisciplinary introduction provided students with significantly larger creative contexts than those that could be provided by an introduction geared towards the legal and technical aspect of human rights defense, for example. This, of course, does not underestimate the importance of the technical aspect or its necessity. Nevertheless, activity opportunities associated with individual skills and qualities, remain more likely to adapt to societal tasks than activities limited to one technical or professional field, which may have been one of the prevailing pattern's most important means of auto-defense.

3. Discussion

As noted above, the sense of responsibility towards society and the public sphere, and rationality

are the key features of the position of any active intellectual who seeks to bring about societal change. However, the need for these qualities to be in synergy in order to bring about change does not mean they are equal, or that they are isolated from the socio-economic context. In the case of the Arab world, which continues to suffer under neo-colonialism, it is worth paying particular attention to the concept of rationality and rational choice (which is one of the most prevalent mental justifications for the democratic choice) in terms of meaning and significance of rationality, as well as its comprehensive human definition. The concept of rationality is linked to two modern and contradictory heritages. One is the embodiment of eurocentrism which is capable of playing a neo-colonial role if it is treated in a non critical way (ultimately, rationalism becomes synonym to market liberalization, to the adoption of the [irrational] consumerism, and to the prevalence of what can be described as the “culture-value approach” on the expense of other life and political system necessities, despite all the racial motivations embedded in it). As for the second heritage to which the concept of rationality is linked, it is the heritage of enlightenment, where the majority (i.e. with the ability to assume responsibility) is the central concept of rationality that becomes, in this context, a critical cognitive requirement, for decision-making and being responsible for these decisions.

If we compare this multidisciplinary program with the traditional programs, which provide attendants with a knowledge system and specific skills, it is clear that the program’s graduates have acquired skills (non-systemic) designed by this program to help convince them of the necessity of change, and of their capacity to contribute to it. The program also aims at helping them adopt the values of democracy, human rights and freedom in a profound and complex way, which can only be achieved through a single discipline. How can one imagine the position of someone studying democracy from the perspective of political science without addressing its economic and social aspects?

In particular, it is important for students not to emphasize the political and procedural aspects of democracy (and the political system in general), for this could be an important achievement in the Palestinian case in which the desired prospective state is a dream of the public. A state with characteristics embodied 15 years ago in a peripheral structure (the Authority), which seemed generally ambitious to the youth.

The secret of the mentioned dichotomy can be summarized by the fact that the graduates’ priorities, according to their own words, reflect, in fact their individual priorities as well as the colonial reality they live in. Clearly, all priorities fade away when there’s a need for achieving the national liberation missions. Furthermore, according to the research data, we can’t say that the respondents have shown a significant change compared to fellow graduates of traditional programs, in terms of leaning towards a different vision of resistance, various means and objectives (although we do not exclude it).

Although respondents recognize the intersection of the different tasks, it is difficult to explain the prevalence of national liberation issues, without analyzing these issues by dismantling the repercussions of the colonial structure on those living under occupation. For they are prisoners of a colonial reality that established an integrated and interrelated system, affecting everyday life, laws, education, roads, geography, employment opportunities, taste, priorities in life, and finally, what might be called the “colonization of minds”. One of the manifestations of the latter, which is rarely argued, resides in the emergence of a pseudo consciousness among those living the colonial condition. This pseudo consciousness is created by community members through different ways and forms. One of which lies in trying to rationalize the confrontation that is losing, day after day, its rationality (in the context of rationality associated with Western modernity, whereas its utility

becomes gradually less pronounced). This is true although this rationality becomes every day more reflective of individual humanness (in fact, the inability to bear repression and oppression and trampling on human dignity under occupation, gets exacerbated with the increase of these phenomena and through time).

The occupier continuously works on depriving the occupied people from all means of resistance, except those which lead, when used, to the destruction of both parties. Thus, the occupier attempts to make resistance so expensive so it would become meaningless (i.e. irrational). Hence, the occupied faces two choices: either losing all sense of humanness (dignity), by accepting the colonial reality, or resorting to options which do not seem to any vigilant analyst feasible or beneficial. Those living in these conditions understand instinctively that the solution for this dilemma lies in the establishment of a new awareness system which allows working on the creation of a new reality. Certainly, this is a practical way out, and would have been effective if it were not so wrong.

Reviewing the results of the field research exposed in this paper, must raise questions about the reasons for the low degree of conformity between the respondents' values and their political and social development. I think there are two potential interpretations for this phenomenon, which could be combined. The first is related to the pseudo consciousness referred to earlier, and which constitutes a desirable perception of reality combining the great ambitions of a people yearning for freedom, and despair of recurring defeat. As for the second interpretation, it is the establishment of a set of values, which have found their way into the minds of the Palestinian youth in their quest for surpassing the enemy. This was achieved through moral superiority.

In conclusion, we believe that problems facing students at Birzeit University are not limited to them, even those associated with the colonial condition. Despite their intensity, these problems are not unique. In fact, all the countries of the "Global South" suffer from the repercussions of their colonial past on their "marginal" present. Hence, youth suffers from alienation and "schisms". Therefore, multidisciplinary programs which do not add disciplinary isolation to political and economic isolation, and which allow graduates to innovate using their own tools instead of the disciplinary tools that they do not make, have additional benefits nowadays in the higher education system in the Arab world.

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The Lebanese University and the Issue of Social Integration An Analytical Survey Study*

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the views of the Lebanese University students about national issues, and vary when expressed by students from single or multiple-unit faculties on the one hand, and by students in the first or final year on the other hand during the academic year 2008–2009. A questionnaire was used to measure students' religious, social, and political behaviors that motivate them to take these views. The sample consisted of 518 students representing 32.7% of the total student population in five faculties, three of which are unified and two are divided. The study showed the following results: 1) Diminishing role played by unified faculties in enhancing communication and national integration among students. 2) There was a quantitative and qualitative development among first-year students in supporting the idea of unifying faculties in one location compared to their senior classmates. 3) Christian students felt more strongly about preferring marriage partners of the same general religion while Muslim students were more likely to emphasize the sect within the religion as a basis for choice. 4) Students were wary of expressing their views freely on campus. 5) Social communication, though not high, was happening among students who belong to the same religion.

I. Introduction

The feature that distinguishes the academic institution from other social ones is that it constitutes a platform for higher education and critical intellectual production. It is also a space that allows convergence and interaction between individuals from different religious and geo-political backgrounds, through the discussion of different issues related to society. If we suppose that social and national integration in Lebanon is one of the main objectives that the national university seeks to achieve and deepen in a unified national framework (University Guidebook, 1998), this implies that the university does not operate in a social or cultural void. Instead, as Parsons (1955) has explained, the university is rather part of the general socio-cultural structure that is concerned with intellectual aspects of society. Thus, the social function of a university is of great significance and it must be thoroughly analyzed in order to reveal the impact of interaction among students and the level of convergence among them. Pressing questions are to be raised about the repercussions of this interaction imposed on students who have to be in the same

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location for four, or even more, successive academic years, amidst diverse values and opinions in academic settings (Murad, 1973). It is as important to know whether such an interaction has created room for convergence over certain communal, religious and national issues or, on the contrary, pushed students toward revitalizing the state of competition, conflict, and partisan affiliations. Did it enhance loyalty to the pre-academic historical and social backgrounds that they acquired through their socialization by parents, school, and religious institutions who spoon-fed them some values within a limited cultural context where the sectarian affiliation prevails over the patriotic belonging, and where the individual must connect to life through his sectarian affiliation and his connections with the religious and secular leaders of his community? However, from a theoretical viewpoint, the university takes the individual to a wider space, and plays the role of a mediator between inherited primary affiliations and newly acquired orientations. It also offers an opportunity to truly interact with different social values, to rethink them and approach them from an objective perspective. Thereby, the main hypothesis of this study revolves around the role of the Lebanese University in the national integration process, through the influences of space and time on interaction among converging student groups, and on the extent to which they reject or tolerate each other. It also reveals the role of unified faculties in enhancing social and national integration among students.

The mere fact that the issues of integration, unity, and political sectarianism in Lebanon are frequently raised indicates that society lacks consensus and cohesion when it comes to these concepts. For this reason, the National Accord Document of 1989 underlined the need for “revisiting and developing curricula in order to consolidate national belonging, fusion, spiritual and cultural openness, as well as unifying history and civic education textbooks” (article 5). Furthermore, it is given that these curricula, just like the Lebanese people, seek to achieve a full national unity and to create a well-knit national society in which citizens enjoy security and peace of mind (Center for Educational Research and Development, 1977, p. 1 - 13).

The subject of this study is divided into two essential issues:

First: There is a problem among university students who have diverse views about concepts that are linked to national unity, as this remains an obstacle to national integration.

Second: The role of the Lebanese University as a wide space that allows students to come together, thus facilitating the national integration process and highlighting its role in the process of reform and building the future of the unified nation.

But, has the university been able to achieve positive interaction and national integration among students through the unity of space? Or has it been a victim of cultural and political polarization, which in turn leads to ruptures and intensifies competitiveness and conflicts among student groups that live side by side? Is the acquired education at the pre-university level immune to change? Has the university been incapable of breaking through this culture, despite its efforts to gather and mingle students together? Has it also failed to build the culture of recognizing the other and his natural right to a different of opinion? In addition, has it failed to give the priority to unified syndical interests of students as well as free competition, as opposed to primary allegiances and fanatical and sectarian affiliations? Or has the current situation of students become a microcosm of the larger Lebanese divisions?

In this context, this study highlights the nature of the social function undertaken by the university. In addition, the impact of the space and time frames and their effectiveness in terms of orienting the behavior and tendencies of students in different aspects of their social life, is also addressed.

II. Methodology

1. **Layout:** this study is divided into two parts.

The first part is a theoretical frame for reviewing relevant literature, methodology and questions, as well as determining the social function of the university as a tool for change in order to achieve national and social integration of different social components.

The second is an applied frame that includes an analysis of the opinions of a sample of students in the academic year 20082009- in order to answer the questions raised by this study and to test its hypotheses.

2. **The population of this study:** This is represented by unified² faculties in the Hadath campus (Medicine and Pharmacy) and outside the Hadath campus (Agriculture), and by non-unified faculties represented by the two branches of the Faculty of Law: The first branch (located inside the Hadath campus) and the second branch (located outside the Hadath campus), as shown in Table 1.

This choice aims primarily at identifying the impact of integrating faculties in one building, and the influence of such a process on the interaction and tolerance among students.

3. **The sample of the study:** This study is based on a random scattered sample comprising 518 male and female students from four faculties of the Lebanese University, in the first and the last³ year. The study covered 32.7% of the total number of faculty students, and the degree of resemblance with the original society reached a level of complete conformity in some practical faculties (in the faculty of Pharmacy for instance), and a resemblance of more than 5 to 20 in the faculty of Law.

Table 1: The composition of the student sample by gender

			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
Faculty	Non-unified	Number	130	198	328
		%	39.6	60.4	100
	Unified	Number	67	123	190
		%	35.3	64.7	100
Total		Number	197	321	518
		%	38	62	100

² In this paper, "unified" is used to refer to single unit faculties, while "divided" or non-unified is used to refer to multiple unit faculties.

³ The terms "First year" and "Last year" have been adopted due to the differing numbers of years to graduate in the different faculties covered by the study.

Table 2: The composition of the student sample by religion

			Religion			Total
			No answer	Muslim	Christian	
Faculty	Non-unified faculty	Number	21	154	153	328
		%	6.4	47	46.6	100
	Unified faculty	Number	7	102	81	190
		%	3.7	53.7	42.6	100
Total		Number	28	256	234	518
		%	5.4	49.4	45.2	100

Based on the data of the tables 1 and 2, the sample was distributed as follows:

- Males: 38%; Females: 62%.
- Muslims: 49.4%; Christians: 45.2%.

4. Data collection

A questionnaire was designed and directly filled in by students during classes. The questions contained in the questionnaire were either close-ended with two choices, or open-ended to allow students to add their personal opinions and viewpoints. Some questions were inspired from previous questionnaires⁴.

5. Data analysis and interpretation methods

Excel and SPSS programs were used in analyzing data, through simple and complex frequency tables and goodness-of-fit test (chi square) to identify significant statistical differences between variables.

The content of this survey was decided in the light of events that occur in different faculties and based on previous studies, especially those undertaken by Theodor Hanf (1973), Joseph Jabra (1972), Adnan El Amine (1977) and Adnan Al Amine and Mohammad Faour (1998). These studies came to certain common conclusions about the impact of sectarian and religious affiliation on the role that universities and schools play. It was observed that universities became an identical copy of the divisions in the religious and sectarian society in general. Whereas the study undertaken by Barakat (1977) about the political orientations of university students showed that family and religious affiliations are complementary. Therefore, the more one drifts away from one's family the further one is away from religion, and the more one is integrated into one's family the more one is attached to one's religion and communal affiliation.

This study was undertaken after a long time from the previous ones, and after a time period that was marked by denominational and sectarian incidents that affected even members of the same community. This may entail a state of consciousness and change in mentalities, which may

⁴ Some questions from previous surveys were added (ElAmine & Faour, 1998, pp. 419 - 435)

deepen the successive generations' conviction that national affiliation prevails over all other considerations and does not contradict any other affiliations.

III. The results of the field study

These are presented in this part through three dimensions:

1. The religious dimension and its impact on national integration.
2. The social dimension and its impact on cooperation and integration among students.
3. The political dimension and its repercussions on national integration and interaction among students.

1. The religious dimension and its impact on national integration

Numerous theories and publications have tackled the concept of religion whether as a phenomenon imposed by the collective conscience which dominates individuals and leads to political and social stability (Durkheim, 1967), or as an important factor which affects social changes and is related to the daily behavior of individuals (Weber, 1967). In addition, religion has also been seen as a unifying drive which creates a spirit of social solidarity among individuals through cultural values and beliefs preached by any religion (Ibn Khaldoun). Therefore, religion can reflect the social conflicts that arise in a society, whether as an excuse to justify the hegemony of governors, thus "religion is the opiate of the masses", or as a tool used by social forces to express political opposition and rebellion, and in this case, "religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature" (Marx et al., 1968). However, no matter how much these orientations differ or converge, they all point to the fact that religion is inspired from a complicated social, economic, political and historical reality, and that the evolution of religion is closely linked to the evolution of this reality. Amidst such contradictions, one may wonder if religious diversity is a healthy phenomenon or a social disease that ought to be eradicated in order to achieve stability. In fact, monotheist religions emerged in peace, without any conflicts or hostilities. None of them had the ambition of annihilating the others, and all the prophets were sent to this world to make justice prevail (Said, 1998). In reality, the difference between religions is not about the concept of good and evil, but rather about viewpoints and ways of worship. Even if the three religions do not converge when it comes to essential creeds (Arnaldez, 1986), some of their elements and basic beliefs are interconnected and similar (Gedner, 2005). One has the freedom of choosing his own religion and practicing religious rites secretly or openly. But this freedom reaches its limits when it threatens social security and stability.

Nonetheless, the main problem in Lebanon lies in the "sectarianisation" of religious disparities in political competition, and also in the controversial exploitation of religion in political competition. The National Accord Document underlines the importance of "harmony between religion and the State" (paragraph B), which presupposes a healthy relation between religion and politics, in such a way that religion does not impose itself by force, but is rather the fruit of faith and commitment, and politics does not resort to violence under the cloak of religion. Instead, politics should be based on religious diversity and religion must not be exploited in political competition. However, this hypothetical harmony often turns into a threat for the entire national entity.

In this context, numerous questions are raised concerning the relation between religion and political divisions and the ensuing repercussions on national integration among students in the Lebanese University. Do religious diversity and the subsequent denominational and sectarian diversity affect divergence among students? How does this reflect on cohesion as well as

social and national integration among students? Did religious diversity create social barriers and weaken the integration process among university students? In this regard, it is extremely important to highlight the differences between religion, which is the creed and the theological beliefs of a certain community (Barakat, 1986), and sectarianism which is a social structure with specific numbers, institutions, slogans and traditions (Nassar, 1970), and which expands and grows stronger at the expense of the central state.

Thus, our hypothesis sustains that a politicized religious diversity, or in other words, the political exploitation of religion and sect, produces a divergence among students, and that the university with all its components, as a space for gathering and acquiring knowledge, will constitute a factor that contributes to eliminating such a divergence and transforming it into positive interaction and concordance among students. Therefore, unified faculties will be more efficient than non-unified faculties in the process of national integration, for it allows a positive interaction among students from various regions and political backgrounds. Moreover, students who have been in university for four years or more (i.e. who are in their final academic year) will be more in harmony and tolerant than students who have only been interacting for a few months (first year students), and who are still affected by their familial and sectarian integration into their primary communities. In a bid to test this hypothesis, we sought to identify the orientations of students through a number of criteria and variables linked to the reflection of their religious affiliation in their attitudes and their behavior towards others, whether at the level of marriage, friendships or collaboration with people from other religions.

a. Religious commitment

Table 3: Student religious practices by academic year

			The practice of religious rites					Total
			Sometimes	Some of them	All of them, regularly	Not at all	No answer	
Academic Year	First	Number	72	127	109	18	1	327
		%	22	38.8	33.3	5.5	0.3	100
	Final	Number	21	94	71	3	2	191
		%	11	49.2	37.2	1.6	1	100
Total		Number	93	221	180	21	3	518
		%	18	42.7	34.7	4.1	0.6	100

X2 is significant (0.02)

The commitment to religious obligations or the absence of such a commitment is not a parameter of faith or atheism, nor is it a parameter of one's citizenship. This is because every pious person is definitely a citizen, but not every citizen is a pious person or a believer in the traditional sense, based on the practice of rituals. In this regard, the opinions of students who are newcomers to university will be compared to those of their classmates who have spent more than four years in the same university. This is in order to unveil the changes and the knowledge acquisition that

occurred during this period of time, which could transform religion into an important factor that enriches social relations, or at least exclude it from impacting relationships with others (Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and give to God what is God's).

Table 4 shows that the percentage of individuals who regularly fulfill their religious obligations reached 33% in the first year and 37% in the final year. This fact points out that final year students are more committed to religious practice compared to their classmates, with a slight difference of only 4%. If we add the percentage of individuals who practice their rituals irregularly (some of them + sometimes), then the percentage of practitioners reaches 60% of the total.

If we add together the percentages of individuals who practice, regularly and irregularly, their religious rituals, then the sum of the two exceeds 95%; whereas the percentage of those who do not practice at all decreases to 4%. These results are similar to previous ones (ElAmine and Faour, 1998), for they show that 94% of university students have one thing in common: faith in God. Only as little as 6% are atheists. Whereas if we add the three variables in the case of the first and the final year, it turns out that first year students are less committed to their religious obligations, even if by only 3%. In fact, this percentage reached almost 94% compared to 97%, which contradicts the study undertaken by Barakat 1977, which showed that university students drift further away from religion and the further they are from family.

b. Choosing a spouse from another religion as an indicator of convergence among students

Table 4: The opinions of students about their preferences when choosing a spouse by academic year

			How do you prefer to choose your spouse?					Total
			I do not ask	No answer	From my religion	From my confession	From my region	
Academic year	First	Number	95	4	144	82	2	327
		%	29.1	1.2	44	25.1	0.6	100
	Final	Number	41	2	90	58	0	191
		%	21.5	1	47.1	30.4	0.0	100
Total		Number	136	6	234	140	2	518
		%	26.3	1.2	45.2	27	0.4	100

X2 not significant

This table shows disparities between first and final year students when it comes to their preferences when choosing a spouse. It seems that first year students are more flexible, even if by a slight difference, in the adoption of religion as an essential determinant of their choice. When observing the percentage of those who do not ask about the religion of their spouse it can be seen to reach 29% compared to 21% in the final year. Moreover, the percentage of students who prefer to marry someone from their own religion reaches 44% in the first year compared to 47% in the final year. These results are in line with the information contained in Table 3, regarding the decreasing percentage of first year students who practice their religious rituals in comparison

with final year students. This contradicts the hypothesis that we suggested as to which final year university students are more open and more flexible in tolerating others, and first year students are still influenced by their primary communities, being family and sect. Such a fact raises many questions concerning the negative role of the university in the integration process. Furthermore, this tendency gains importance as we notice that the high percentage of students who consider religion as the main determinant when choosing a spouse increases in unified faculties, especially in the faculty of pharmacy where it reached 59% and in agronomy 49%.

Table 5: Preferences when choosing a spouse by religion

			The preferences of choosing a spouse					Total
			I do not ask	No answer	From my religion	From my sect	From my region	
Religion	No answer	Number	15	1	9	3	0	28
		%	53.6	3.6	32.1	10.7	0	100
	Muslim	Number	68	2	66	119	1	256
		%	26.6	0.8	25.8	46.5	0.4	100
	Christian	Number	53	3	159	18	1	234
		%	22.6	1.3	67.9	7.7	0.4	100
Total		Number	136	6	234	140	2	518
		%	26.3	1.2	45.2	27	0.4	100

X2 is significant (0.000)

The data contained in Table 5 shows some convergence in the opinions of Christian and Muslim students who do not ask about the religion of the other person when choosing a spouse. However, when it comes to those who prefer a spouse from the same religion, their opinions diverge: the percentage of Christian students reaches 68% compared to 26% among Muslim students. This fact is reversed when it comes to selecting sect as a criterion for choosing the spouse: the percentage of Muslim students reaches 47% whereas that of Christian students is around 8%.

Table 6: Preferences when choosing a spouse by gender

			The preferences of choosing a spouse					Total
			I do not ask	No answer	From my religion	From my sect	From my region	
Gender	Male	Number	77	5	71	42	2	197
		%	39.1	2.5	36	21.3	1	100
	Female	Number	59	1	163	98	0	321
		%	18.4	0.3	50.8	30.5	0	100
Total		Number	136	6	234	140	2	518
		%	26.3	1.2	45.2	27	0.4	100

X2 is significant (0.000)

The table above reveals that females are much stricter in the choosing process. Whereas the percentage of males who do not ask about the religion of their spouse reaches 39%, the percentage of females who feel the same way does not exceed 18%. The same applies to the adoption of religion as a determinant in the choosing process: This percentage exceeds 50% among females compared to 36% among males. Such disparities appear as well regarding sects, for the percentage of females reaches 30% compared to 21% in the case of males. These figures show that when it comes to choosing a spouse, males have a wider margin of freedom compared to females who are more committed to observing their social legacy. Thus, the knowledge acquired in university as well as the interaction among students failed to change the hierarchy of values among females.

c. Befriending people from other religions as an indicator of national integration

Table 7: Friendships among students from different religions by type of faculty

			Befriending people from other religions			Total
			To a certain extent	No	Yes	
Faculty	Unified faculty	Number	43	8	277	328
		%	13.1	2.4	84.5	100
	Non-unified faculty	Number	14	1	175	190
		%	7.4	0.5	92.1	100
Total		Number	57	9	452	518

X² is significant (0.05)

Table 8: Friendships among students from different religions by academic year

			Befriending people from other religions			Total
			To a certain extent	No	Yes	
Academic year	First	Number	34	7	286	327
		%	10.4	2.1	87.5	100
	Final	Number	23	2	166	191
		%	12	1	86.9	100
Total		Number	57	9	452	518
		%	11	1.7	87.3	100

X² not significant

Tables 7 and 8 show that the percentage of students willing to befriend people from other religions is very high. This is at the level of unified faculties (92%) or non-unified faculties (84%), with the highest percentage at the level of pharmacy (96%). This applies to the academic years

as well; the first year percentage reaches 88% and the final year percentage almost 87%. This means that making friendships with people from other religions is viewed as a social matter while choosing a spouse from other religions is viewed as a religious matter.

d. Sectarian affiliation and its impact on national affiliation

Divisions deepen among students when the student elites that form within the university enlist in denominational and sectarian conflicts. This in turn leads to a deeper regression into a narrow world dominated by the color and the smell of sectarianism, where each religious community seeks to marginalize and eliminate the other communities.

Table 9 shows that the percentage of students who prioritize their sectarian affiliation over their national affiliation exceeds 28% of the total sample, whereas those who give priority to their national affiliation account for more than 46%. This includes all faculties. These results are in line with other studies undertaken in the late 1990’s (ElAmine & Faour, 1998). However a slight difference has been registered between unified faculties (medicine, agronomy and pharmacy) and non-unified ones, where the percentage of students who give priority to sectarian affiliation reaches 26% in unified faculties compared to a 30% in non-unified faculties.

Table 9: National and sectarian affiliation of students by faculty

			The relation with community				Total
			Is stronger than my belonging to Lebanon	Comes in second place	Does not concern me	No answer	
Faculty	Non-unified faculty	Number	99	137	89	3	328
		%	30.2	41.8	27.1	0.9	100
	Unified Faculty	Number	50	104	31	5	190
		%	26.3	54.7	16.3	2.6	100
Total		Number	149	241	120	8	518
		%	28.8	46.5	23.2	1.5	100

X2 is significant (0.05)

As for the academic years (Table 10), statistics show that the percentage of first year students is high (30%), against 26% for final year students. Even though the difference is negligible, it remains a significant indicator of the interaction among students in various faculties, despite the diversity of their affiliations. The low percentage of final year students who give priority to sectarian affiliation at the expense of national affiliation in comparison with first year students, shows that our hypothesis is accurate; national allegiance is enhanced the longer students coexist and the more they know about the importance of national allegiance.

Table 10: National and sectarian affiliation of students by academic year

			The relation with community				Total
			Is stronger than my belonging to Lebanon	Comes in second place	Does not concern me	No answer	
Academic year	First	Number	98	143	82	4	327
		%	30	43.7	25.1	1.2	100
	Final	Number	51	98	38	4	191
		%	26.7	51.3	19.9	2.1	100
Total		Number	149	241	120	8	518
		%	28.8	46.5	23.2	1.5	100

X2 is not significant

2. The social dimension

Relations and cooperation between people are some of the essential pillars of citizenship. These relations grow and are transmitted from one generation to the next through cultural characteristics, in order to guarantee a long-lasting situation and to achieve their common goals. In fact, a nation cannot be reduced to land, it is rather a network of relations among citizens, which entails solidarity against common threats, and gives individuals a social value regardless of their religious or communal affiliations. The concept of social communication is perceived as a characteristic that distinguishes people who are committed to participation, collaboration and interaction with others. Thus, social communication is the direct means for reviving the spirit of solidarity between social classes and it serves as a basis for building new concepts such as cooperation, interaction and synergy in order to achieve integration and social cohesion (Durkheim, 1960).

Within this understanding, cooperation is confined to groups with common goals, such as university students for example, who are the subject of our study. In this context, what is the role played by the university in creating such communication and synergy among students? Does the heritage from their primary community work as a catalyst for forming groups on a religious or sectarian basis impermeable to university in terms of penetration and integration within a unifying national frame? In this regard, we shall seek to examine the degree of cooperation among students from the angle of religious diversity on the one hand, and from the perspective of their communication and gathering in a unified university campus for several years on the other.

a. Religious diversity: An impediment or an incentive to social communication?

Tables 11 and 12 show high percentages of students who do not face any difficulties in communicating with others: 61% in non-unified faculties compared to 69% in unified faculties. However, the percentage of students who find it relatively difficult to communicate with classmates from a different religion exceeds one third of the total number of surveyed people: 34% in non-unified faculties and 29% in unified faculties. This slight disparity highlights the positive

role played by unified universities in the process of communication and convergence between adepts of different religions. This distribution of percentages applies, with slight differences, to students according to academic years (Table 12). Results are almost similar, whether in the case of the absence of communication difficulties (almost 64% in both academic years) or in that of limited difficulties (23%). The percentage of recognition of extreme communication difficulties with people from other religions, whether at the level of faculties or academic years, is very small and does not exceed 4%.

Table 11: Communication difficulties between students and people from other religions by type of faculty

			Communication difficulties among students from different religions				Total
			Extreme	To a certain extent	None	No answer	
Faculty	Non-unified faculty	Number	14	112	201	1	328
		%	4.3	34.1	61.3	0.3	100
	Unified faculty	Number	2	56	131	1	190
		%	1.1	29.5	68.9	0.5	100
Total		Number	16	168	332	2	518
		%	3.1	32.4	64.1	0.4	100.00

X2 is not significant

Table 12: Communication difficulties between students and people from other religions by academic year

			Communication difficulties among students from different religions				Total
			Extreme	To a certain extent	None	No answer	
Academic year	First	Number	10	106	210	1	327
		%	3.1	32.4	64.2	0.3	100
	Final	Number	6	62	122	1	191
		%	3.1	32.5	63.9	0.5	100
Total		Number	16	168	332	2	528
		%	3.1	32.4	64.1	0.4	100

X2 is not significant

b. Unified faculties and their role in social communication

The data in tables 13 and 14 shows that more than half of the surveyed students support the role played by unified campuses in bringing students together and promoting interaction. It turned out that students in unified faculties are more enthusiastic about the idea of unification than their colleagues in non-unified universities (61% against 52% respectively) (Table 13). However, these results seem to be reversed at the level of academic years. While more than 63% of first year students give a great importance to the role of unified campuses in convergence among students, the figure decreases to 42% in the case of final year students (Table 14). We believe that the divergence in student opinions is due to their experience through the events that they have witnessed, having spent several years in university.

Table 13: Student opinions of the role played by unified university campuses in the convergence among them by faculty

			Convergence among students				Total
			yes	To a certain extent	No	No answer	
Faculty	Non-unified faculty	Number	171	123	30	4	328
		%	52.1	37.5	9.1	1.2	100
	Unified faculty	Number	117	61	9	3	190
		%	61.6	32.1	4.7	1.6	100
Total		Number	288	184	39	7	518
		%	55.6	35.5	7.5	1.4	100

X2 is not significant

c. Cooperation between students: National or religious background?

Data in tables 15 and 16 shows conformity at the macro level. That is, 32% of the sample members are willing to cooperate with their colleagues with no reserve, while 28% cooperate with some reserve and 37% refuse to cooperate with others. If we consider that partial cooperation between students reveals a state of wariness or hesitation among them, then such cooperation cannot be classified as serious and effective. This in turn means that the university finds itself in a state of regression and fails to create national unifying frameworks to bring students together. As a matter of fact, two thirds of the surveyed students show no willingness to cooperate in a serious and complete manner. At the level of faculties and academic years, the percentage of cooperation or non-cooperation is the same, where the ratio of each variable reached one third or slightly more.

Table 14: Student opinions of the role played by unified university campuses in the convergence among them by academic year

			Convergence among students				Total
			yes	To a certain extent	No	No answer	
Academic year	First	Number	208	101	12	6	327
		%	63.6	30.9	3.7	1.80%	100
	Final	Number	80	83	27	1	191
		%	41.9	43.5	14.1	0.50%	100
Total		Number	288	184	39	7	518
		%	55.6	35.5	7.5	1.40%	100

X2 is significant (0.05)

Table 15: The degree of cooperation between students by faculty

			Cooperation among students				Total
			Yes	Sometimes	No	No answer	
Faculty	Non-unified faculty	Number	106	97	119	6	328
		%	32.3	29.6	36.3	1.8	100
	Unified faculty	Number	62	50	74	4	190
		%	32.6	26.3	38.9	2.1	100
Total		Number	168	147	193	10	518
		%	32.4	28.4	37.3	1.9	100

X2 is not significant

The data contained in the table 17 concerning the entities that students cooperate with show that the Lebanese University plays a meager role in national integration and its deepening among students. This may be due to two main reasons: **The first** one is related to the low percentage of students who cooperate with each other (only 12% of the total sample). **The second** reason is the exclusivity of cooperation among students who belong to the same religion or the same region (10% and 2% respectively, distributed as follows: 59% Muslims and 41% Christians). It is also noteworthy that 91% of unified faculty students do not seem to cooperate with their colleagues, especially in Medicine and Pharmacy, the two faculties which are supposed to achieve the highest level of cooperation due to the nature of these specializations.

Table 16: The degree of cooperation among students by academic year

			Cooperation among students				Total
			Yes	Sometimes	No	No answer	
Academic Year	First	Number	109	87	123	8	327
		%	33.3	26.6	37.6	2.4	100
	Final	Number	59	60	70	2	191
		%	30.9	31.4	36.6	1	100
Total		Number	168	147	193	10	518
		%	32.4	28.4	37.3	1.9	100

X2 is not significant

Table 17: Religion of those who students cooperate with, by faculty

			Religion of those who students cooperate with				Total
			From one religion	From one region	Irrelevant	No answer	
Faculty	Non-unified	Number	47	7	258	16	328
		%	14.3	2.1	78.7	4.9	100
	Unified	Number	7	5	173	5	190
		%	3.7	2.6	91.1	2.6	100
Total		Number	54	12	431	21	518
		%	10.4	2.3	83.2	4.1	100

X2 is significant (0.001)

3. The political dimension

Paul Valery describes politics sarcastically as “the art of preventing people from taking part in affairs which properly concern them”⁵. If the current state of the system of governance in Lebanon does not encourage participation, how is it possible to incite people to participate in systems which do not really need their participation? (Messara-a,1995) Does this mean the exclusion of youth from participation? What future awaits university students in public interest?

⁵ <http://www.elwatan.com/Le-11-decembre-1960-a-ete-un>

It is true that student movements in Europe have led significant changes at the national level in the 1960's. Nonetheless, student movements in Lebanon did not emerge motivated by global national motives aimed at introducing universal changes that serve the general national interest. They rather operated according to narrow sectarian or ideological priorities (they participated in the Lebanese Civil War 1975). Instead of taking the general national interest into account, they sought to reduce the nation to their own interests. This was in such a way that the Lebanese people forgot that this country is theirs, with their jobs and careers being the only link that tied them to this country (Massara, 1995-b). Thus, the distance between youth and politics grew gradually larger, as a result of the failure in creating unifying national frameworks for the entire Lebanese people.

a. The Lebanese political system: An impediment or an incentive to participation?

There were 55% of the students who expressed their willingness to participate in political life because they believe that there are no impediments that keep them from occupying political positions in the future. On the other hand, a high percentage of 42% stated that they are unwilling to participate in politics for different reasons. At the level of faculties, 57% of unified faculty students believe that there are no obstacles that prevent them from occupying political positions, compared to 54% in non-unified faculties (table 18). These percentages show that students' opinions of occupying political positions are relatively equally divided, only varying between acceptance and refusal. This phenomenon is interesting and strange at the same time, especially as human beings are by nature thirsty for power. However this decrease in the percentages reveals the gap between politics, politicians and people's interests, as well as the monopoly of power by religious and familial leaders. This tendency is further supported by the accusations and the criticism addressed at politicians by students due to the unsatisfactory performance they perceive. Politicians are also accused of corruption and held responsible for the inheritance of power and the poor performance of current political parties. Furthermore, 11% of queried students expressed their fear of assassination and murder.

Table 18: Students' attitudes towards the obstacles to occupying political positions in the future, by faculty

			Obstacles to occupying political positions			Total
			No	Yes	No answer	
Faculty	Non-unified faculty	Number	178	143	7	328
		%	54.3	43.6	2.1	100
	Unified faculty	Number	108	77	5	190
		%	56.8	40.5	2.6	100
Total		Number	286	220	12	518
		%	55.2	42.5	2.3	100

X2 is not significant

Students who have expressed their willingness to participate in elections and in the electoral campaign can be added together because they are considered as students who give a particular importance to the electoral process. Thus, they account for 51% of the total sample, while students who have not specified their attitude towards participation as well as those who will boycott the elections account for 48%. We noticed a certain balance between the percentages of students who are enthusiastic towards elections, those who would boycott them and those who

are indifferent towards them. As for disparities, they were clear at the level of academic years. In fact, the percentage of those who are willing to take part in elections and in electoral campaigns reached 44% among first year students compared to almost 63% of final year students. We believe that this disparity is due to the participation of final year students in political life, especially that they are now one step from graduation, thus they might have the ambition of occupying certain political positions.

Moreover, those who have not taken a clear stand on elections account for 41% in the first year compared to 24% in the final year. This fact is of particular significance in terms of final year students' understanding of the necessity of participation in parliamentary elections.

There are two key issues in this survey. The **first** one is the low percentage of students who were willing to participate in electoral campaigns, which did not exceed 13% of the total sample. The **second** issue is the high percentage of students who did not express any interest in elections and who did not specify their attitude towards them, which accounted for almost 35%.

As for the opinions and the orientations of students concerning external threats to Lebanon, they were distributed horizontally across different dimensions and included more than 30 possibilities. However, the dominant preoccupation of students was about external threats, more precisely Israel which was mentioned in more than 223 answers out of a total of 518. This was stated as the only threat or as a combination of threats which also included the United States of America, Syria and moderate Arab states. Syria was recurrently mentioned as a source of threats less frequently than Israel. Syria's name occurred almost 80 times, whether alone or with Iran and Israel. Moreover, international ambitions were mentioned as frequently as 83 times⁶. As for the rest of the answers, they varied from preoccupations due to the economic situation along with the increasing migration, to internal divisions, fear of war, fragmentation, and Hezbollah's weapons. This disparity in attitudes towards common national issues is somewhat gloomy, for it constantly exacerbates fragmentation and divisions, which makes national integration an extremely difficult and complicated process.

Table 19: Students' attitude towards participation in parliamentary elections, by academic year

			Attitude towards elections					Total
			Will vote	Will participate in electoral campaign	Will boycott elections	Do not know	No answer	
Academic year	First	Number	92	53	47	134	1	327
		%	28.1	16.2	14.4	41	0.3	100
	Final	Number	102	18	24	46	1	191
		%	53.4	9.4	12.6	24.1	0.5	100
Total		Number	194	71	71	180	2	518
		%	37.5	13.7	13.7	34.7	0.4	100

X2 is significant (0.000)

⁶ These rates and frequencies were taken from the main database of the field study.

b. Attitudes towards national identity

A small percentage, not exceeding 5% of the total sample, believes the Lebanese have achieved their national identity independently. However, 47% of students believe that the Lebanese have failed to achieve their national identity, and 42% doubt this achievement or consider it as incomplete. This means that 89% of students doubt or do not recognize that the Lebanese have achieved their independent national identity. This belief might be based on the incapacity of the Lebanese people to solve their problems themselves without any foreign intervention (Table 20).

Table 20: Students' opinions of achieving national identity by the Lebanese people by faculty

			Achieving national identity by the Lebanese				Total
			Yes	To a certain extent	No	No answer	
Faculty	Non-unified faculty	Number	20	151	137	20	328
		%	6.1	46	41.8	6.1	100
	Unified faculty	Number	6	68	109	7	190
		%	3.2	35.8	57.4	3.7	100
Total		Number	26	219	246	27	518
		%	5	42.3	47.5	5.2	100

X2 is significant (0.006)

As for the opinions of students by academic year, they are relatively similar to the opinions of students in faculties: 42% of first year students and 56% of final year students believe that the Lebanese were unable to achieve their national identity⁷. Nevertheless, consensus and conformity were clear in the attitudes of students by faculty and by academic year, regarding the achievement of national identity by the Lebanese: no more than 5% for both cases. This fact raises many questions, most importantly about national allegiance and faith in political leaders who run the parties.

c. Freedom of expression on university campus

It appears that the percentage of students who express freely their opinions is weak for it does not exceed 34% of the total. Those who cannot express their opinions totally or relatively well, account for almost 63% of the total sample. The distribution of these percentages was unequal between faculties. The percentage of students who express their opinions freely reached 38% in non-unified faculties while it reached approximately 28% in unified faculties. Similarly, the percentage of students who cannot express their opinions totally, or relatively well, reached 68% in unified faculties compared to 59% in non-unified faculties (table 21).

⁷ These percentages were taken from the main database of the field study.

Table 21: Distribution of students' opinions on freedom of expression on campus by faculty

			Freedom of expression				Total
			Yes	To a certain extent	No	No answer	
Faculty	Non-unified faculty	Number	124	112	84	8	328
		%	37.8	34.1	25.6	2.4	100
	Unified faculty	Number	54	83	47	6	190
		%	28.4	43.7	24.7	3.2	100
Total		Number	178	195	131	14	518
		%	34.4	37.6	25.3	2.7	100

According to our estimates, students fear expressing their opinions freely due to several factors:

1. The university campus is located in a denominationally homogenous geographic region.
2. The area is dominated by political movements and parties that share the same orientation.
3. Some students belong to rival political movements, or come from regions that are different from the university location in terms of religion or confession.
4. Students do not trust each other.

Thus, the unity of place encompassed by the university, as a space that brings students together, plays a negative role that includes contradictions and some repulsion among students.

Table 22: Student opinion of Lebanon's Arab identity by faculty

			Lebanon has an Arab identity				Total
			Yes	To a certain extent	No	No answer	
Faculty	Non-unified faculty	Number	197	72	32	27	328
		%	60.1	22	9.8	8.2	100%
	Unified faculty	Number	117	38	21	14	190
		%	61.6	20	11.1	7.4	100%
Total		Number	314	110	53	41	518
		%	60.6	21.2	10.2	7.9	100%

X2 is not significant

d. Belonging to Arabism

The issue of identity and national affiliation in Lebanon was a controversial topic and subject to different interpretations. In 1989 the National Agreement put officially an end to this controversy,

considering that “Lebanon is Arab in belonging and identity” (Preamble to the Constitution, clause b). What happened actually to this issue later, taking into consideration the conflicts that Lebanon witnessed in the last years? The data in Table 22 show that most of the students (60%) agree that Lebanon is Arab in identity and belonging. As for students who disagree, they only account for 10%, and those who have some reservations in their position account for 21% of the total students.

IV. Conclusion

The study revealed that the Lebanese University, as a geographic and human space, cannot achieve and enhance national integration among students on its own. As a matter of fact, external factors such as family, social environment, media, and others affect the consciousness of students; define their social behavior and their positions from each other more than the university does. The daily political discourse which resorts to denominational and sectarian incitement in various forms of media inevitably influences the behavior of individuals and students, outside and inside the university. No matter what the capacities of the university are, it does not have the mechanisms that enable it to cope with external factors. These mechanisms are kept and then used by financial, religious and media institutions to achieve their goals, thus becoming the tools to terrorize and exclude others. Therefore, the slogan of unifying academic faculties in a bid to achieve social and national integration is meaningless, as long as reform and the changing of mentalities start with the early upbringing of individuals and their primary civic, social and national education. In fact, university students carry the heritage of primary communities, and the university could not produce serious changes, especially in correcting stereotypes about others. It requires support from external mechanisms in order to allow achievement of the required national integration. This study showed that the integration of students in their religion and their sect is greater than their national integration, and that social communication and cooperation are achieved, if ever, among students who belong to the same religion. Moreover, the repulsion of students who refrain from participating in political life explains the regression of politics and the state of frustration and isolation among students, especially when it comes to their conviction that the Lebanese people have yet to achieve their full national identity.

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Private Universities in Egypt: Are they Venues for Democratic Attitudes and Behavior?

Nadine Sika¹

Abstract

Public Universities remained the main arbiters of higher education in Egypt until 1996, with the only exceptions being the American University in Cairo, and the Arab Academy for Science Technology and Maritime Transport. However, in 1996, a presidential decree established four private universities, which later paved the way for the establishment of many other private universities in Egypt. By the year 2005, almost 40,000 Egyptian students were attending private universities.

In an effort to understand the political attitudes and behaviors which the growing numbers of students acquire from higher education in Egypt, this study answered the following questions: Do students who attend private universities have more tolerant and democratic political attitudes and behaviors as opposed to students who attend public universities? Can private universities, which are less controlled by Egyptian security and police, become agents of social change and thus lead to democratization in Egypt?

To answer these questions, the researcher first analyzed the political science programs offered in Future University (FUE), the American University in Cairo (AUC) and Cairo University (FEPS). Which courses do students in all universities have to attend? Second, the researcher studied the amount of availability of student groups/clubs and unions, and the popularity of these different groups. After the input of these different universities was examined, the researcher employed a survey study on sophomore and junior students belonging to these three Universities to understand the difference in their democratic political attitudes and behaviors.

The study yielded the following results: Students at AUC have shown the most positive attitudes toward equality, tolerance and liberty. There was no substantial statistical difference between students of Cairo University and Future University. The political engagement of AUC students was highest, however, students at FEPS and FUE have shown positive interest in political engagement, through high participation in simulation Models.

I. Introduction

Public Universities have remained the main arbiters of higher education in Egypt until 1996, with the only exceptions being the American University in Cairo (AUC), and the Arab Academy for

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Science Technology and Maritime Transport. However, in 1996, a presidential decree established four private universities, which later paved the way for the establishment of many other private universities in Egypt. By the year 2005, almost 40,000 Egyptian students were attending private universities. Many studies have been conducted to understand the economic impact of these universities in enhancing the employment opportunities for students, and creating citizens who can actively engage in the complex world market of today. However, no study has been carried out regarding the output of these universities regarding their influence on the political attitudes and behavior of students. Universities disseminate political knowledge, values and behaviors to students which are important in creating awareness, political knowledge and skills to their students (Bakry, 2003; Somit, et al. 1958; Galston, 2001; Niemi and Junn, 1998; Torney-Purta, et al. 1999). In this sense, it is important to understand the type of knowledge which is transmitted to Egypt's private university students and their influence on the political knowledge, attitudes and behavior of students. Private Universities are important herein, because they are not under the state security apparatus which is widely spread in public universities.

Therefore, the study of private universities in Egypt is important to shed light on their impact on the political socialization process of their students. Faculties of Economics and Political Science are important in this regard especially since the political science classes therein are mainly concerned with transmitting political knowledge. Findings have suggested that targeted education for the enhancement of civic knowledge and civic engagement skills can encourage students to become active democratic citizens when they graduate (Hillygus, 2005).

Earlier attempts at identifying university students' political attitudes and behaviors have concentrated on outputs of either Cairo University and/or AUC (Bakry, 2003). Moreover, an important study has been conducted by Kandil (2008) concerning the political attitudes of higher educated citizens in Egypt. This study found that citizens who obtained higher education, have positive attitudes toward the belief in political engagement. However, this belief is not articulated in real engagement, since the study found out that these same citizens rarely vote and rarely participate in associations. Therefore, it is important to build on this study and understand the difference between political attitudes and behaviors of citizens who belong to different academic backgrounds.

In an effort to understand the political attitudes and behaviors which the growing numbers of students acquire from higher education in Egypt, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

- Are Egyptian private universities agents for teaching students democratic political attitudes and behaviors?
- Do students who attend private universities have more tolerant and democratic political attitudes and behaviors as opposed to students who attend public universities?
- Can private universities who are less controlled by Egyptian security and police become agents of social change which can lead to democratization in Egypt?

To answer these questions, the researcher first analyzed the political science programs offered in Future University (one of the newest private universities in Egypt), the American University in Cairo (the oldest foreign private university in Egypt) and Cairo University (which celebrated its hundredth anniversary in December 2008). Which courses do students in all universities have to attend? Second, the researcher studied the amount of availability of student groups/clubs and unions, and the popularity of these different groups. After the input of these different Universities was examined, the researcher employed a survey study on sophomore and junior students belonging to these three Universities to understand the difference in their democratic political attitudes and behaviors.

This study employed Jack Dennis' (1973) flow of interest paradigm as the method of the study. His paradigm concentrates on investigating ten dimensions, three of which were utilized in this study:

1. Content (the content of the transmission to the new members within the system).
2. Sub-cultural and Group Variation (the differences amongst sub-cultural groups within the same system).
3. The extent of impact of the political system (the influence that the political system exerts upon individuals) (1973, 88).

These three dimensions were employed to understand the effect which is exerted by the different universities upon the political attitudes and behaviors of students. The content in this case is the different classes offered to students by their respective faculties. The sub-cultural and group variation is analyzed through drawing comparisons between a public university (Cairo University) a private university (Future University) and a foreign private university (American University in Cairo). This is to analyze the extent to which the university environment affects the political socialization process. The extent of impact of the political system is studied to measure the intensity of the political socialization process on all three types of universities, and the resulting political behavior, through employing a questionnaire for sophomore and junior students.

II. Political Science Department's Regulations in the three Universities

1. Cairo University Faculty of Economics and Political Science (FEPS)

a. Curriculum

The mission statement of FEPS is to advance the culture of Quality Education in Egyptian Universities. This requires the enhancement of the education experience for students who would graduate to be able to work in the labor market with the necessary personal skills. Second, the Faculty's objective is to develop a curriculum which creates a balance between theory and reality, and which builds work ethics like commitment, loyalty, proficiency and distinction. The Faculty's slogan is "Commitment, Excellence, and Distinction" (Al Baradei, 2007, 14).

For students to acquire their Bachelor Degrees from the Faculty of Economics and Political Science (FEPS), they need to complete four years of higher education. After their freshmen year, students choose their major. As of their minor studies, students decide their concentration therein in their junior year. In the year 1996 /97, the faculty created two new sections, an English section, and a French section, in which the students study some of their classes in English and some in French, according to the students' wishes (Student Guide, 2007 /08, 73). Students who show exceptional learning capabilities are given opportunities for summer internships in different governmental and private institutions, like for instance in the People's Assembly, Non Governmental Organizations, Banks, and newspapers (Ibid, 75).

After the completion of their bachelor degree, students in CU FEPS will have completed forty six classes, the majority of which are in political science, with only six elective classes. The classes offered by the faculty are basic political science classes, with no specializations in a certain field. The curriculum includes basic political science, international relations and Arab politics classes. There are no classes offered which focus specifically on democracy or democratization studies, the closest subjects are Civil Society and Human Rights, which are electives.

b. Student Union and Clubs/Groups

In addition to the classes offered by the Faculty of Economics and Political Science in Cairo

University, the faculty has an important office, the Community Affairs and Environmental Development Office. This office is headed by the Vice President for Community Affairs and Environmental Development. It was created by the Prime Minister decree number 1147 /1988, “to develop the students’ skills and capabilities so as to create a new generation that is more aware of the major societal and environmental problems and thereby capable of proposing solutions to them” (FEPS, 2007, p. 6). Within this framework there are many research centers like the economic, political, surveys and statistical research centers. However, under the umbrella of this office lie also students’ activities, like the employment fair, and the Simulation Models of the Model Arab League and the Model United Nations for Example. Moreover, the student Union which is selected at the beginning of each academic year falls under the direct control of this office.

The Student Union is comprised of six committees, which are supervised by one academic staff from the faculty (Student Union p. 2008). These committees are concerned with student affairs and activities. For instance, they conduct sports, arts and cultural activities in the Faculty. However, according to a research assistant at the faculty, the majority of students are not committed and/or interested in the Student Union, and its accompanying clubs. She contends that there is much intervention by the state security in their activities, and before doing any simple cultural or sports event, the student union needs permission first. As a consequence, very few students are interested in applying for candidacy for the Student Union, and very few go to vote for a representative in the Union. At certain times, like for instance in the year 2006, no student was interested in contesting for the Assistant Secretary for the Technical Committee, and thus the contestant thereof was appointed².

2. Future University in Egypt Faculty of Economics and Political Science (FUE)

a. Curriculum

The mission statement of the Faculty of Economics and Political Science in Future University in Egypt is to contribute to the overall sustainable development process in both the Arab world and Egypt. In this regard, an up-to-date curriculum is developed which should help students to meet the national and regional needs of development in a globalized world. To this end, FUE wants to train students to be able to work in economic, financial analysis, diplomatic corps and international organizations and public policies analysis. Last but not least, students should acquire learning abilities which would help them in conducting research and reports in the domains of economic, political and administrative management (Faculty Rules, 2006 /07, p. 3).

Future University requires all students to complete four years of higher education with a minimum average of 2.0 GPA. Students are required to study six courses, outside their major field in computer science or math for instance. All University students are required to complete two English language courses (Faculty Rules, 2006 /2007, p. 4). In addition, all economics and political science major students have to complete 41 classes in their major field of study, eight of which are electives.

Political science courses at FUE are the same courses offered at FEPS, there is no concentration in a particular political science field. There are only general topics in international relations,

² Interview with female Research Assistant at FEPS who refused to make her name public, on the 12th of February 2009.

political theory and Arab studies. No classes are offered for the study of democracy or comparative democratic studies. The closest classes to democracy studies are human rights and civil society, like FEPS. Hence, the substance of the political science department is the same in both Universities, with the same range of classes being offered. The only difference herein is that FUE is not regulated by State security, which might give both professors and students more advantage to express their opinions freely during the lectures.

b. The Student Union and Clubs

Student Activities are under the supervision of the Student Life and Welfare Department. These activities include social, sport and cultural activities (FUE, 2009). There are more than twenty small clubs, mainly charity clubs, environmental clubs and cultural clubs, which organize events and trips. All clubs need to obtain the consent and permission from the Student Life and Welfare Department's chair to conduct their activities. There is no Student Union in FUE, which is a drawback for democratic procedure in this University. The researcher asked the assistant for the Student Life and Welfare Department's chair the reason thereof, and the answer was that the University does not want to be mired in political and Islamic problems with the students. The policy of FUE is to first teach students to become "harmonious" members of social, cultural and sports clubs, which would then pave the way for a "rational" student union³. However, according to FUE sophomore students, the student clubs are puppets of the University authority, and they mainly conduct cultural activities like concerts and sports activities like games between different universities. As a consequence, many students are disinterested in being active members of these clubs⁴. As to the simulation Model activities, there is no Model activity in FUE; however, students from FUE are able to participate in the CU or AUC models without any problem. Thus the extracurricular activities in FUE, whether in the form of clubs, unions or Models for students are still embryonic and are therefore contributing to a very limited and targeted type of civic engagement, which is in the same line as the University authority. Hence, students are not able to explore for themselves the proceedings of democratic governance through their daily interaction in student activities.

3. The American University in Cairo Department of Political Science (AUC)

a. Curriculum

The major objective of the department of Political Science at AUC is to foster an understanding of contemporary world politics and to develop a "knowledge about, and an appreciation of, the complex mechanisms, authoritative structures, and the allocation of values, which characterize contemporary human communities" (AUC Catalogue, 2008 /09). Students are required to develop their analytical and comprehensive skills for the presentation of their oral and written work. Thus the political science department is more concerned with the short term benefits and knowledge of world politics today, rather than with the long-term employment opportunities of its students.

Students are required to complete 40 classes to obtain a degree in Political Science. Students have to fulfill an average of ten to fifteen courses from the Core Curriculum, which vary from English and Arabic language courses to Scientific Thinking and Philosophy. In addition, students

³ Interview conducted with Khaled Abdel Hanid, Assistant to the Chair of the Students' Life and Welfare Department, on the first of March 2009.

⁴ Interview conducted with three sophomore political science students, Ahmad Salama, Marwa Nasr, and Hadya Mohammed at FUE, on the first of March 2009.

are required to undertake four courses from different social sciences and humanities disciplines, which range from history, culture to sociology. These regulations are University regulations for all students and are not only for political science students. Students are required to accomplish eight compulsory courses in Political Science, and one Macro economics course. As of the rest of the classes, students may choose a specialization field, namely Political Science, International Relations, Middle East Politics, Political Economy, and Public and International Law. Concerning the minor, they can choose any minor in any other discipline in University, and not necessarily from the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, under which Political Science is a department. Each of these specializations has a minimum of three requirements which students need to undertake, and the department offers them a number of elective classes which they may choose from. As with both other institutions, there is no concentration in democratic studies, the closest classes offered to the study of democracy are international human rights law.

b. The Student Union and Clubs

The student Union, academic clubs, cultural clubs and community service clubs' activities at AUC are under the supervision of the Office of Student Organization Activities Unit (Student Government, 2008). The Student Union represents all AUC degree students, i.e. all majors are represented therein. The president of the Union is elected four weeks after the end of every academic year by all students. Each constituency of the students' body, undergraduates, graduates, study abroad, and English Language Institute and freshmen students is represented in the Student Council. This council is considered to be the legislative branch of the SU. The executive branch of the Student Union consists of the treasurer, the vice president and the chair persons of the all committees. There are five committees, an academic, an activities club, a services club, public relations and coordination clubs, which are concerned with the general campus life and extracurricular activities of the students (Student Government, 2008).

In addition there is the Student Judicial Board, which consists of five students. They are elected annually during the spring semester, before the Student Union elections, to act as a monitoring body for the Student Union Elections, in addition to addressing students' concerns regarding University regulations and elections. The Student Judicial Board also monitors financial policies and the transactions which are adopted by the Student Union (Student Government, 2008). This kind of student body, which enhances the trust of students to participate in university affairs, enhances the political awareness and knowledge of student and helps them develop democratic political attitudes and behavior. In this regard they become motivated by thinking for the general well being of their university rather than their own self-interest (Harriger and McMillan, 2007; Colby, et al. 2007).

Concerning Clubs and Associations, there are almost nineteen academic clubs, like political science association, mass com association and the like. In addition there are different Cultural Programs, under which there are almost eight cultural clubs like dancing, and choir; Community service programs, where there are almost fifteen clubs, in addition to other community service projects and conferences. All these Associations and Clubs are supervised by the Office of Student Organization Activities, however, when a club is approved by the Office of Student Organization, the club is free to conduct any activity without the scrutiny of the university authority.

As to the simulation Models activities at AUC, its Cairo International Model United Nations was the first of its kind to be conducted in Egypt, and was originally founded in 1989 by a political science professor with some of his political science students. It is the oldest student activity at AUC and is one of the largest student-run Models outside North America (CIMUN Road, 2008).

III. Differences between the three Universities

In FUE, unlike FEPS, the faculty's long-term goal is to train students to be employed in similar fields to their studies, while FEPS wants to train students for general economic opportunities in different economic fields.

The University and Faculty requirements and regulations of FEPS, FUE and AUC, differ in many aspects. However, the difference between FUE and FEPS is less than the difference between both Universities and AUC. The first two institutions have more constraints on students' behavior in the simplest manner of merely choosing the courses which they are required to study. The amount of collateral courses which are offered in both Universities is much higher than that of AUC. In both FUE and FEPS, students' choices are limited to the year of schooling. During their freshmen and sophomore years, students may choose between only three classes. On the other hand, students at AUC have many options, and are able to concentrate on different subjects, according to their will. FUE and CU, do not offer concentrations within the political science discipline, and rely on teaching students general issues. In FUE unlike CU and AUC, however, all students are required to study Human Rights, which in general is an important subject for all students to enhance the knowledge of one's rights amongst students.

Concerning the range of courses which are offered to students beyond the scope of political science; AUC has the highest distribution, whereby students are required to study different subjects, which open up their horizons to different disciplines and ideas. FUE, gives some variety to students, who are required to also study different subjects like Sociology and Scientific thinking for example. However, students in FUE are not offered any philosophy classes, which are essential for introducing liberal education. FEPS is the least Universities which offers different horizons for studies for students, whereby students are only limited to the study of the different fields offered in their faculty, with the only exception being math, which is offered to students as collateral subject. Thus students are not introduced to other humanities, social sciences or science classes which widen the horizon of thought for students beyond the scope of their studies.

Concerning Student Unions and Clubs, AUC has by far the highest number of student clubs and the most effective student union body. The idea of having a judicial body which supervises elections and monetary issues in University, introduces the students to a wider scope of democratic procedure. Moreover, the student Union body which consists of different representatives who are subject to their constituencies makes students in the whole University aware of the operative procedures of a real democracy. The student activities, clubs and Union in FEPS are constrained with the idea of "security" and red lines, which the students are not allowed to cross. The fear by the general police security in CU, of an Islamic leadership in University puts constraints on all student activities. This on the other hand, has drawn students away from public life in their faculty, and made them more drawn into the Model Simulations which are not under the constraint of the security police. Hence, students are not introduced to the operative procedure of democracy, in FEPS. FUE, has a small number of clubs, however, this may be due to the fact that FUE has only been operative for three years. However, there is no Student Union in FUE at all. There have been some attempts to create one in the past year, with no success. Such a constraint on the ability of students to express their opinions and to be represented to the school board and to represent their opinions to the faculty is a major drawback to the socialization of students toward democratic political behavior.

Through studying and analyzing the different political science departments in three different Universities in Cairo, the researcher has two major hypotheses which will be tested through the

survey study. First, political science students at AUC have more democratic political attitudes and behavior, since they are exposed to more options and choices concerning the subjects which they choose to study, and concerning the type of Associations they may participate in. Second, political attitudes and behavior of both FEPS and FUE students are similar to one another. Students in both institutions are not politically active, due to the absence of a vibrant associational life in both universities. The next section will study the difference in political attitudes and behaviors of sophomore and junior students belonging to these three different Universities, to see whether students in private universities, which are not constrained by the police and security force, have more democratic attitudes and behavior than those of Cairo University Students.

IV. The Survey

The survey was administered to measure the difference in the democratic attitudes and behavior of students who belong to different universities in Egypt. Accordingly, the researcher set questions pertaining to students' attitudes regarding religious and gender equality, individual liberty and tolerance towards the other. As to the understanding of students' political behavior, the questions were addressed towards their membership in different associations and their voting behavior inside their respective universities.

The study encountered a difficulty in the number of students answering the questionnaire at AUC. There are only twelve students at AUC who gave in their survey, and thus the results of some answers may not be representative of the whole AUC political science students' body.

1. Social Background

Students' background was examined in the first part of the survey, to understand the differences regarding their school backgrounds, their gender, and their reading habits. These three major facts will shed some light on their current democratic political attitudes and behaviors in addition to their different university socialization. In this regard, the study showed that the majority of students in FEPS and FUE graduated from Thanaweya Amma, 97% and 53%. Students at AUC graduated mainly with foreign diplomas. The majority of all students under study were females, which constituted 66% of the whole respondents in all three universities.

Newspaper reading was the most popular amongst all University students, followed by reading books. Newspaper reading was highest amongst FEPS students, where 63% of all respondents argued they read Al-Ahram on a daily basis. At AUC, 25% of students said they read foreign newspapers rather than Egyptian ones.

2. Democratic Political Attitudes

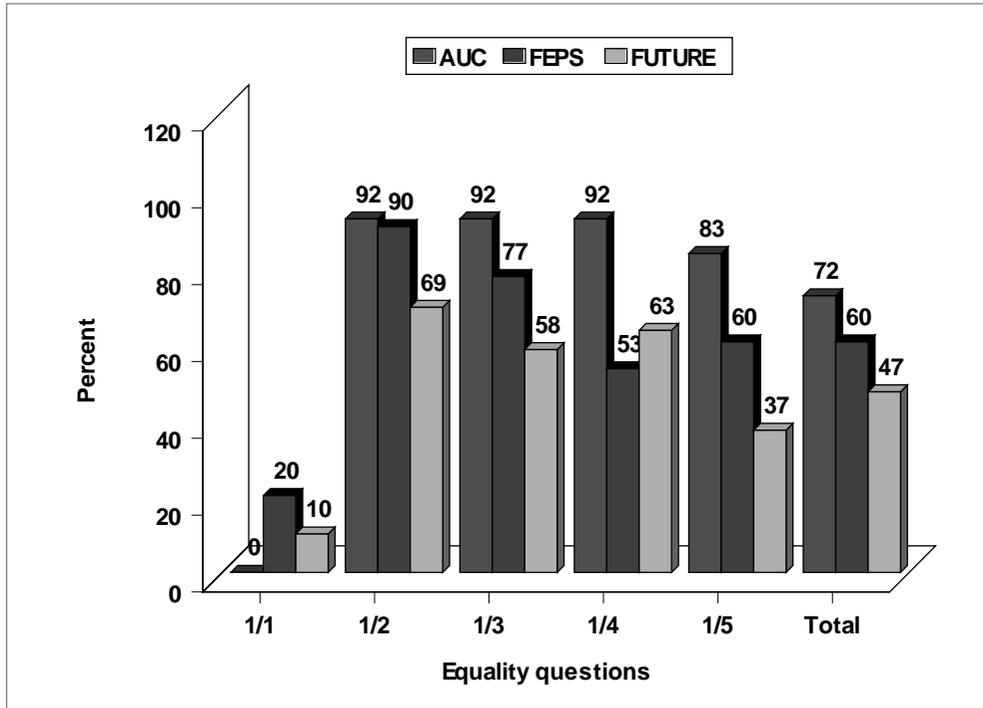
a. Equality

Investigation into thoughts on equality focused mainly on gender and religion. The attitudes of equality/inequality were measured through five questions, three questions were directly related to gender issues, and two questions were related to religious issues.

Concerning gender equality, students were asked many questions, amongst which was the ability of women to be judges (Question 1 /4). The clear majority of AUC students, 92% believed that women are competent to be judges, whereas 53% of FEPS believed in the statement. Hence, from another perspective, 34% of FEPS students, of which females are a large number, regard themselves as incompetent to be a judge. In general students had positive attitudes toward religious equality, with AUC having the most egalitarian attitudes. For instance, students were

asked whether Christians should hold high offices in the Egyptian Intelligence services (Q. 1 /5). FUE students scored the least concerning religious equality, where only 37% agreed. One can discern from figure 1, that AUC students have the most egalitarian attitudes regarding both gender and religious equality, followed by FEPS and then FUE.

Figure 1: Positive answers by students concerning equality questions



Other questions on equality:

1 /1: If a man and a woman have the same job, the man's salary should be higher.

1/ 2: A man or a woman who is competent enough can become the president of my university.

1/ 3: A Christian who is competent enough can become the president of my university.

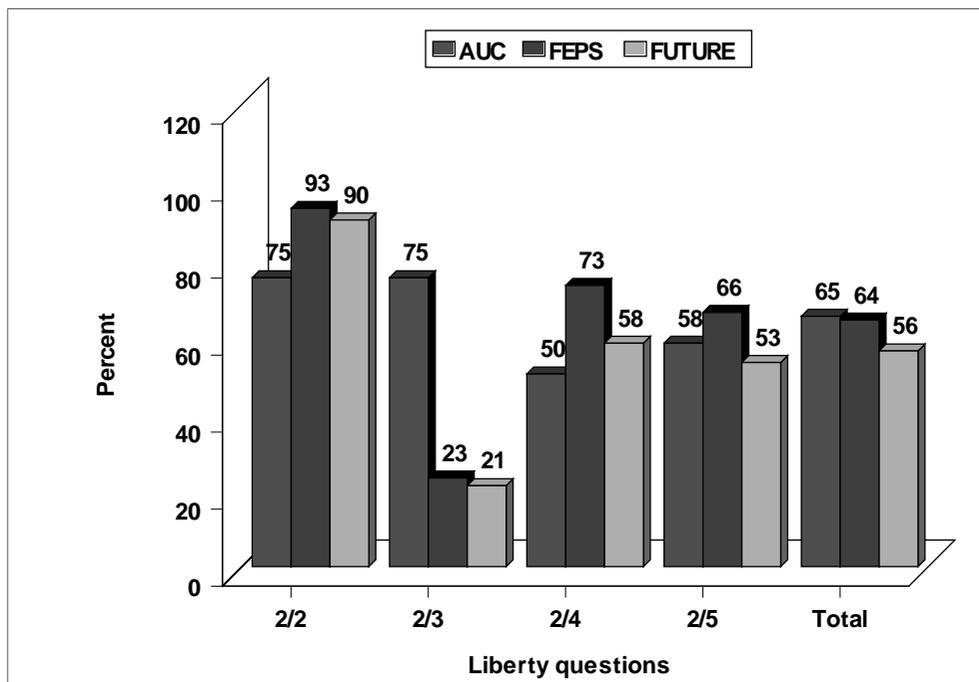
b. Liberty

Investigations into attitudes on Liberty were applied through indirect comments on freedom of thought, and religion. For instance, students were asked to comment on whether atheists should be allowed to discuss their beliefs freely (Q. 2 /3). The majority of FEPS and FUE students, 70% and 53% disagreed, whereas 75% of AUC students agreed with the statement. Students' answers concerning liberty show that FEPS and FUE students are more interested in obtaining freedoms for themselves, which fall within the boundaries of the cultural norms of their environments. However, when a cultural taboo (like atheism) was addressed, both FEPS and FUE students refuse the notion of freedom. It is noteworthy to address two important issues herein. First, is the amount of exposure to different nationalities and cultures, which students encounter in their respective universities. At AUC, students have exposure to both foreign (mainly Arab and American) students and professors, which makes them more inclined to accept people from different backgrounds. On the other hand, both FUE and FEPS students are only exposed to

Egyptian students and professors. At FUE, however, the percentage of students who have American Diplomas was almost 30% and hence they might have been exposed to different cultures during their high school years. It is important to highlight the fact that 53% of FUE students obtained Thanaweya Amma, and 53% of respondents at FUE refused to let atheists discuss their beliefs freely. Second, is the exposure of students in these universities to different thoughts and ideas other than their respective disciplines. At AUC students are obliged to study philosophy and literature amongst other science and social science classes through the core curriculum. These different disciplines render different ideas and beliefs to students which make them accept different beliefs and opinions. On the other hand, both other universities do not have these two criteria, of which the second is essential.

The majority of students in all Universities believed that when public order is at risk, it is more important to attain order than individual freedom (Q. 2/ 5). The highest majority was to be found at FEPS with 66%, followed by AUC with 58% and 53% for FUE students. Such a response is understandable given the general political environment in the Arab world. Students at this stage of schooling have entered their universities after the American invasion of Iraq, with all its consequent state and security failure. See figure 2.

Figure 2: Students' positive answers regarding liberty



Other questions on liberty:

2/ 2: The government's most important responsibility is respect of freedoms of individual.

2/ 4: University professors should be free from any constraints in their lectures.

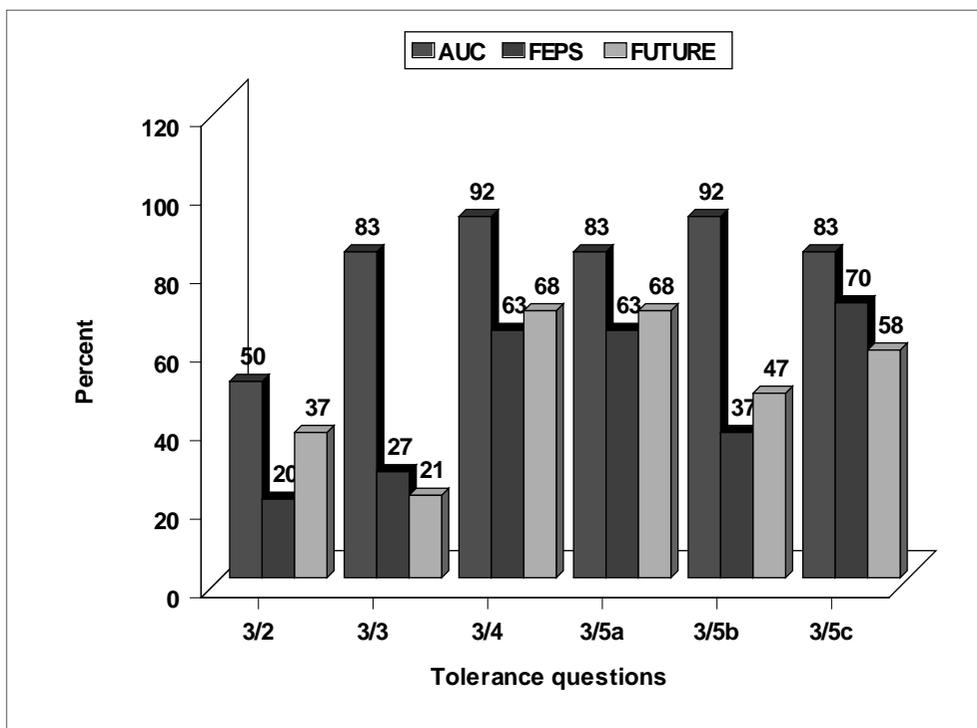
c. Tolerance

Investigations into the value of tolerance were conducted through adopting Peffley and

Rohrschneider's scale on tolerance (2003). As a consequence of their answers, students were then asked whether they would agree for this/group individual to hold public office (Q. 3 /2), hold public demonstrations (Q. 3 /3), and hold public meetings in which they can express their opinions freely (Q. 3/ 4). The last question was concerned with tolerance addressed the issue of whether students have friends who hold different political (Q. 3/ 5a), religious (Q. 3/ 5b) and social (Q. 3/ 5c) ideas than their own. See figure 3.

The findings concerning which group the students disliked the most varied, dramatically between the three groups. Apart from showing the student's level of tolerance, this question showed the general political inclinations of the students who belong to different universities. These ideas/opinions are beyond the scope of this research; however, they need to be further investigated. The absolute majority of AUC and FUE respondents disliked the Muslim brothers, with 83% for the first and 47% for the second. As to FEPS students, they mostly disliked Nawal al-Saadawi, with 40%, followed by the National Democratic Party in Egypt with 30%.

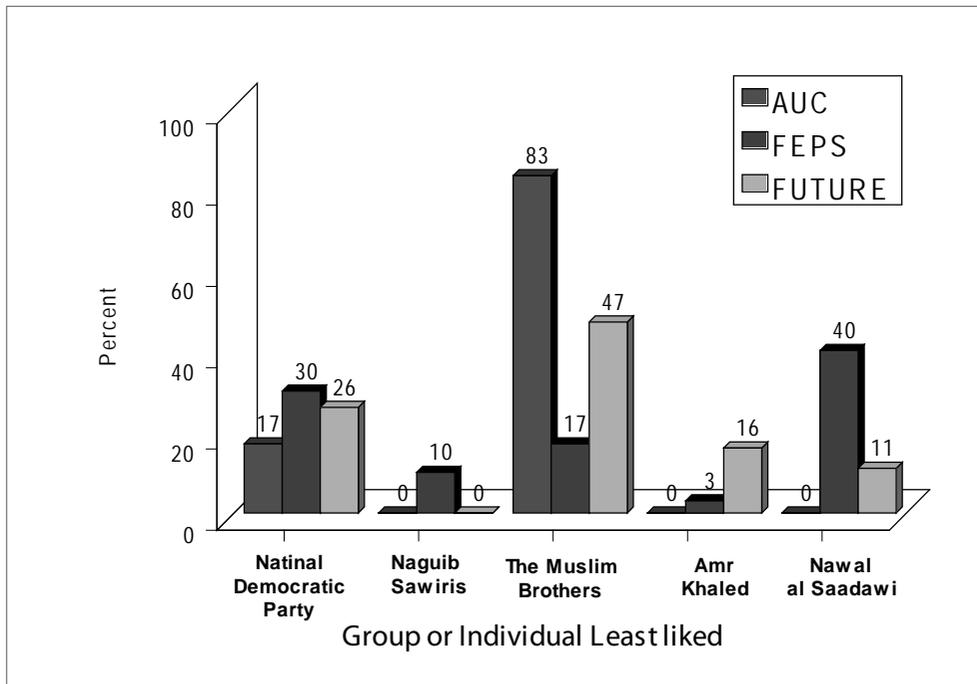
Figure 3: Students' answers regarding tolerance



When tolerance questions were developed to ask whether students believe the most hated group should be able to hold public office, publically demonstrate, and hold meetings, respondents at AUC showed most tolerance, and FEPS showed the least. Students at AUC were

the only ones who argued that they have friends who disagree with them concerning religious matters.

Figure 3 show that AUC students have higher tolerance levels than both FEPS and FUE students. It is important to regard the school background of all students as well, where as argued before, the majority of AUC students were exposed in their high schools and at their university to different nationalities. Thus as Miller and Sears (1986, p. 234) show “.... the individual’s pre-adult and early adult social environments are stronger contributors to adults’ social tolerance than is the



current adult environment. Adult learning *usually* reinforces earlier learned norms and values (barring cataclysmic events or societal upheavals)... Basic social and political attitudes tend to be stable, in good measure because the life situations of most individuals remain fairly stable”.

Figure 4: Groups/individuals who are mostly disliked by students

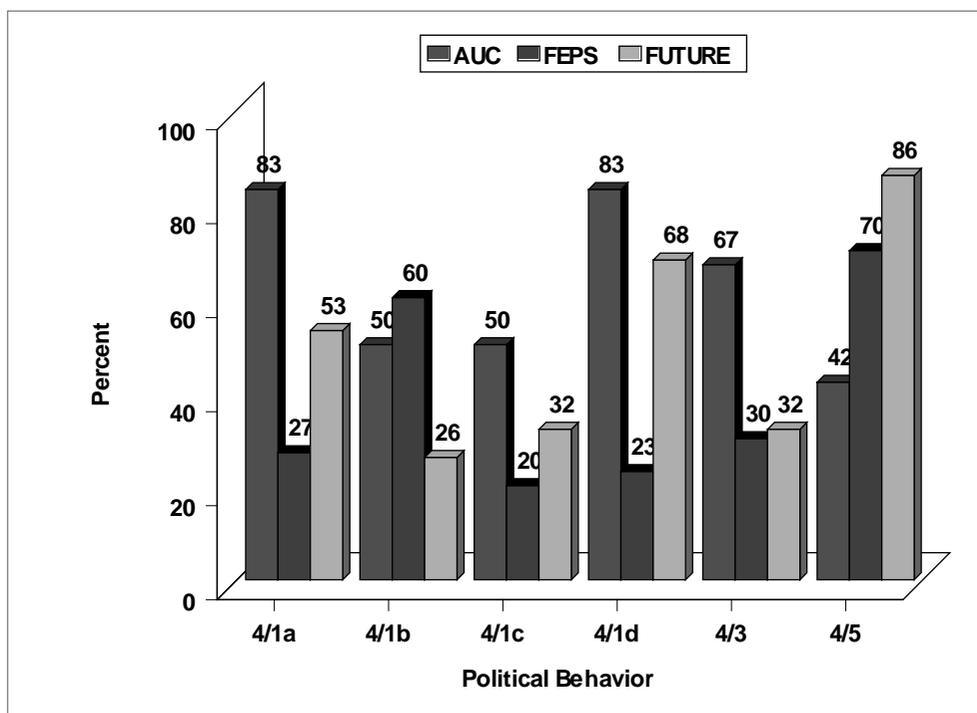
3. Political Behavior and Engagement of Students

Analysis regarding political engagement of students was conducted through investigating whether students have ever signed a petition (Q. 4/ 1a), joined a boycott (Q. 4/ 1b), attended demonstrations (Q. 4/ 1c) or voted in their University elections (Q. 4/ 1d). Moreover, they were asked if they are members of any club/group (Q. 4/ 3), or if they participated in a Model simulation before (Q.4/5). Participation in different activities at University is believed to enhance organizational skills. According to Amber Seligson’s findings (1999), youth who participated in

community development organizations were more politically active and voiced their demands to local and national authorities more frequently than others.

Concerning students' answers regarding signing a petition, there were significant differences between all students in the different universities. Signing petitions was highest amongst AUC students, and least amongst FEPS. Regarding boycotts, FEPS showed the highest behavior, while FUE showed the least. As of participation in Demonstrations, 50% of AUC students participated therein, while a small percentage did in both FUE and FEPS. The small percentage of FEPS students in demonstrations is phenomenal, since Cairo University is well-known for students' demonstrations regarding many internal and regional political matters. Hence, the disinterest of FEPS students in demonstrations needs further investigations, since it is unclear whether they do not participate in demonstrations, as a result of fear of police force, or is it as a result of disinterest in participating with other faculties in their University?

The question pertaining to whether students participate in their University's elections yielded different results. First, 83% of AUC students said that they do vote, whereas a very low percentage



of students in FEPS, 23% said that they vote. The low turnout in voting by FEPS students is in accordance with the interview conducted by the researcher earlier, in which it was found out that the Student Union in FEPS has a lot of constrained and is controlled by the police force. Concerning membership in Associations, AUC students were the most engaged, where 67% of students said they belonged to an association or a club. Twenty seven percent at FEPS and 29% at FUE said that they do not participate because the groups of their respective faculties do not make a difference.

Figure 5: Political behavior of students

Concerning participation in any simulation Model, students in FUE, showed most interest, with 86%. This finding shows that students at FUE and also FEPS are keen on political participation, when they know that they have matters in their own hands, like the situation of the Models. The simulation Models are run by students, for students, where there is no intervention by any university authority in their proceedings. Thus in AUC where students have different venues to express their opinions and engage in different associational activities; their political behavior is divided between their different interests. While, the high percentage of FUE and FEPS participants in the simulations vis a vis their low participation in university elections, shows that students are politically engaged. However, they choose the area in which they believe that their participation may be influential, rather than participating in an organization or in elections, where the outcome of the elections might be rigged or influenced by political considerations. Therefore, the high difference in the level of engagement of AUC students versus the rest, is dependent on the level of trust, which the students feel towards the association in which they will engage in. For example students at AUC trust in their electoral body and institutions, and therefore, they are eager to actively engage therein. Their University has shown integrity and transparency in the process of elections especially through the student judicial body. Moreover, the university executive takes students' suggestions and petitions seriously. For instance when AUC moved from downtown to the outskirts of Cairo, the parking fees inside the University were 3000 L.E. per month at the beginning of the 2008 Fall semester. However, after receiving students' complaints through petitions and through articles written in the weekly university paper "the Caravan", the University changed the fees to 1500 L.E. Thus students trust that their voice will be heard, and can make a difference. On the other hand, students at FEPS do not have high voting turnout, since they believe that their votes will not be counted through an impartial manner. Moreover, they do not trust in the capability of the student body to bring about real change in the conduct of their faculty affairs. Nevertheless, they were highly engaged in the simulation Models, where they know that the security will not get involved its general proceedings. In FUE, students are highly engaged in the Model simulations, even though they do not have one in their own University. This shows that students are politically active and want to engage in different associations, however, only when they know that their voice will be heard and will make a difference.

V. Conclusion

The analysis of the different political science departments of the three Universities and the survey study of political science students therein, confirmed the researcher's hypothesis; that AUC students tend to have more democratic political attitudes and behavior. The political science curriculum along with the core curriculum at AUC, have positive outputs on students' democratic attitudes and behavior. Concerning the political science curriculum, its tendency to make students elect the classes they prefer, gives the students a sense of freedom of choice and opinion. Concerning the core curriculum, which emphasizes studying different fields than the major, especially fields like philosophy and literature, opens students' horizons and exposure to different perspectives. Thus the output is that students are more inclined towards democratic attitudes such as gender and religious equality, liberty and tolerance. Moreover, as discussed before, AUC students are more exposed to different cultures in their university campus, which makes them more tolerant of the "other". The departments' slogan of enhancing knowledge

about the different authoritative structures in the world, and enhancing values of the world community, resulted in enhancing democratic attitudes amongst students. As of democratic political behavior, the level of trust which students feel towards their University apparatus has shown high differences in the level of political engagement by AUC students vis a vis the rest of the students.

FUE and FEPS political science departments on the other hand, are almost identical. There is a slight difference therein, where FUE students are required to take extra science and social science classes. However, none of these classes are concerned with philosophy and/or literature. The non-exposure of these students to different thoughts and philosophies from around the world, makes it difficult for them to attain more democratic attitudes especially regarding religious equality, individual freedom and tolerance. The case is more evident in the case of FEPS, in which students are only exposed to economics, statistics and political science classes. Herein, students have failed to tolerate liberal feminist thinkers like Nawal al-Saadawi. Both Universities slogans concerning the development of students who are capable to become actively engaged in the economy, rendered students whose levels of equality, liberty and tolerance are not as high as their AUC counterparts. As of the political behavior of students in both Institutions, students have shown apathy concerning political engagement in their respective universities, whether in membership levels in associations, or in elections for the student body. However, the researcher attributes this apathy to the low level of trust the students have towards their respective universities. It is understandable for public universities' students to act in this manner, since political action is constrained in their universities with the security forces embezzlement therein. However, Private Universities are free from security intervention, and have more space to foster an open and free associational life. Therefore, private university clubs and groups should be given more freedoms and should be entirely left to students to manage. This will make students more acquainted with democratic deliberations. The high percentage rate of FEPS and FUE students' participation in the simulation models shows that when students are allowed to conduct their own affairs without intervention by any authority, they excel in their political engagement. This outcome is in accordance with Kandil's (2008) findings in which university graduates believe in the importance of political engagement, however, they do not engage themselves.

Therefore, for private Universities in Egypt to become venues for democratic political attitudes and behavior, they should offer students more courses from other disciplines. This will help students become exposed to different philosophical and scientific ideas beyond the prism of their own studies. Moreover private universities should open up their political space and widen the capability of students to become part of a vibrant associational life, which is effective and not marred by rules from the executive body of the university. Student Unions should become an integral part of university life, instead of avoiding their establishment, through the fear of becoming entrenched in Islamist politics.

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Ahfad University for Women Beyond Academic Excellence: Social Responsibility and Civic Engagement

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Abstract

This paper exemplifies the role of universities in contributing to community development and social welfare by getting involved in activities beyond the academic realm. It highlights the engagement of universities in social responsibility (SR) and civic roles taking the experience of Ahfad University for Women (AUW) as an example. The aim is to develop more understanding of the role of universities in social responsibility (SR) and civic engagement (CE), and enhance learning from real experiences.

The paper starts by exhibiting some theoretical aspects about SR and CE and the contextual factors within which AUW strives for both academic excellence and meeting its social commitments. This is followed by highlighting the evolution of AUW, with focus on its mission, vision, philosophy and goals.

Further, the paper presents the University contribution in achieving MDG 2 and how the activities carried by AUW contribute in achieving education for all, as an approach to SR&CE. The rest of the paper focuses on presentations of the activities and practices of AUW towards achieving social responsibility and civic engagement, with some practical experiences of projects recently implemented by AUW within the frame of SR&CE.

Finally, the paper highlights some of the challenges facing AUW while assuming its role in SR & CE.

I. Introduction

Universities are the main pillars on which Higher Education policies and strategies are constructed and implemented. Equally, universities are the most important institutions where the needs and demands of societies in terms of human capital are identified and fulfilled. Thus the role of universities, as social institutions, extends beyond the provision of the immediate educational services. Universities are expected to play a significant role in serving their communities by being socially responsible and actively engaged in a variety of activities that help the communities to strive for development and advancements. Thus this paper has delved in the arena of the civil engagement and social responsibility SR of universities, trying to achieve the below mentioned objectives.

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1. Objectives

The purpose of this paper is mainly to:

- a. Develop more understanding of the role of universities in civic engagement and social responsibility
- b. Highlight the policies, strategies and actions which affirm the role of, Ahfad University for Women (AUW) in civic engagement and social responsibility.
- c. Reflect how AUW activities contribute in community development.
- d. Identify the challenges encountered by AUW while assuming its civic role.

2. Methodology

This paper is guided by a mixed paradigm of doing research as it is basically within the «real world research» paradigm, where the scrutiny of a social reality is its focus. It also builds on the constructivist approach where the researchers see their task is to understand the multiple social constructions, meanings and knowledge around the phenomena (Robson, 2002) as given by the research informants and documents.

The paper has greatly utilized secondary data from different sources mostly AUW related documents, reports and research studies.

Primary data has been obtained through interviews with some top level senior employees providing information in the relevant aspects. A sample of six individuals has been purposively selected using non-probability sampling techniques targeting those who could best reflect on the policies and practices of AUW in civic engagement and social responsibility. These included the President of the University, Vice-president for Academic Affairs, Vice-President for Financial Affairs, Deans of Schools, the Director of the Institute of Women, Gender and Development Studies, and the Executive Director of Babiker Bedri Scientific Association for Women Studies.

Data analysis followed a simple qualitative data analysis technique by creating categories that imply the different components of the actions of AUW and identify how they feed as civic and SR actions.

II. Theoretical underpinnings

1. Contextual Socio-Economic Background

According to UN human Development Index 2006, Sudan was categorized as a low – income, food deficient country and ranks as number 141 out of 177 countries and territories . Among Sudan's 36 million people, life expectancy at birth is 58 for women and 55 for men. More than half of the women are illiterate, as are three out of ten men. About 17 percent of children under the age of five are under weight (WFP, 2007).

Sudan is still poor in health provision and the morbidity rate is high owing to many reasons among them are malaria, diarrhea, communicable diseases and the like. The nutrition status of Sudanese people is poor and malnutrition is widely spread due to food shortage and imbalanced diet. Despite of the progress made in Sudan in terms of health, economic and social services provision, communication and transportations, still the coverage of these services is skewed and in some places or regions has declined. Gender inequality and gender gaps are prevalent due to various socio-cultural factors, lack of political commitment, and limited resources of civil societies; these are manifested in great feminized poverty.

Sudan ecosystem is fragile and is deteriorating rapidly due to multiple factors, mostly socio-economic changes, which result in excessive grazing, falling of trees, soil erosion, desertification,

over-hunting, land degradation and declining biological diversity. In addition the civil war that continued for over two decades in the south and the conflict that broke out in 2003 in Dar Fur had displaced about 2 million people. The civil war has torn the country; it has depleted its natural and human resources, destroyed its infrastructure and driven the villagers out of the rural areas into refuge, internal displacement and migration. The refugees are sheltered along the neighboring countries. The internally displaced gathered in camps outside the big cities in the North, South, West and East after their villages had been raided, burnt, and their livestock been stolen.

Moreover, Sudan has witnessed a massive population movement (civil conflict, drought, and major floods), and increased population growth, disparities among regions in service provision, high illiteracy rates among poor urban and rural women, in addition to harmful customs, traditions and practices. Addressing these challenges have become the major directive for the establishment of community oriented programs at Ahfad University particularly, the Rural Extension and Development program and the establishment of specialized schools to serve the community such as the School of Rural Extension Education and Development, School of Health Sciences, and the School of Medicine AUW.

2. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Corporate Social Responsibility means different things to different people and is defined as the «managerial obligation to take action to protect and to improve society as a whole while achieving the goals of the business» (Hatten, 1997). The manager of any socially responsible institution should be inspired to achieve goals, obey the law, act ethically and be a good corporate citizen meeting the needed level of civic engagement.

CSR and the level of commitment to it, guide strategic planning and the philosophy of any institution stems from it. It is the obligation of any institution to maximize the positive impacts of its operations and maximize the impacts of these operations on the well-being of the society at large. There are four basic levels of SR cited in the literature; economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic (ibid):

a. Economic responsibility

Historically the primary role of business - mostly relevant to CSR- has been economic. The concept has lately been extended to cover all types of institutions and their economies with focus on the utilization of resources and energy in activities designed to increase social benefits.

b. Legal responsibility

Laws can be seen as the society's codes of right and wrong which exist to ensure that individuals and institutions do what is considered right. These codes change all the times as laws are added, repealed, or amended in an attempt to change public sentiment. Examples are laws protecting consumers, the environment and some laws are ensuring equity and equality especially at the workplace. SR implies strong commitments towards the laws and regulations within their context as well as some of the laws that stems from international mandates and agreements (ibid).

c. Ethical responsibility

Ethics are the rules of moral values that guide decision-making by groups and individuals. Ethical responsibilities of institutions are about how its decisions and actions show concern for what its stakeholders (employees, customers, and the community) consider as fair and just.

d. Philanthropic Goodwill

Philanthropy is the highest level of social responsibility as illustrated in the literature. This includes participating in programs that improve the quality of life, raise the standard of living

and promote goodwill. The difference between ethical responsibility and philanthropy is that the latter is not seen as an obligation; rather it is seen as a voluntary action and a contribution to the society to make it a better place (Hatten, 1997).

Philanthropy is not limited to the wealthy, average citizens (individuals, institutions) can be and are philanthropic.

Universities as institutions, and sometimes as businesses (private universities) are seen as bodies acting in a socially responsive and philanthropic manner. By doing so, they assume both their obligatory role and philanthropic goodwill (ibid).

III. Why SR in Universities?

A short answer would be that the world has changed in deep and challenging ways which demand that new generations of managers and public officers take into considerations much more than the economic and financial performance in their decision – making, strategies and practices.

Universities are where leaders of tomorrow will be formed in their understanding of the world, in the scientific frameworks they apply, and in their «coat» of values.

As universities change in their values, understanding and practices, so does the practices of the future decision makers.

Eventually, through a new professional class and their values and practice, a new culture is formed for all society.

This is precisely the same reason that SR is of great social value because it changes the values and practices in organizations, and helps forming a new culture and starts deploying a culture of sustainability and development (Loria, 2008).

Thus a new social contract is needed in which collaboration and exchange among sectors is at the prelude of the activities of these sectors in order to face the challenges of a constrained reality.

1. Higher Education and MDG 2: Universal Education

Millennium Development Goal (MDG) #2 mobilizes world leaders to ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere - boys and girls alike - will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling (grades 1 - 5). Universities are key institutions of civil society. They help in creating knowledge and developing the skills needed to provide effective services to the community and to advice higher education government policy. They train national citizens to become future leaders, policy-makers, scientists, teachers and other professionals who achieve and sustain the universal education goal. AUW since its inception, and for the future ahead is committed to this goal.

2. The Evolution of Ahfad University for Women

Ahfad University for Women (AUW) was the first non-governmental and non-profitable women's university in the whole of the African and Arab region. The founder of girls' education in Sudan (Sheikh Babiker Bedri,) lived at a time where girls and young women were nurtured towards subjugation, domesticity, and ignorance. Having the gift of persuasion and foresight, Sheikh Babiker Bedri in 1907 persuaded the society, British and local government ruling at that time and opened, in his own home, the first classroom where girls received their education. His son Prof. Yusuf Bedri, who succeeded him in 1954 continued to develop schools to be the pioneer of non-governmental higher education in Sudan (AUW Prospectus, 2006).

Yousif Badri influenced by that heritage of leadership became committed to find new ways to serve the Sudanese communities through higher education. He formed a committee of Sudanese

scholars to help in developing a vision he outlined for disciplines that can be taught at the new college to serve new market needs and to create new horizons.

Hence, the choice of the first two schools: one is Family Sciences with emphasize on nutrition education and home economics was selected as the most appropriate discipline to address the communities and family needs. This was the first time for this specialization to be taught within a Sudanese university.

The second school is Psychology and Preschool Education. Also, it was a new specialization to be offered to serve the market with specialists in managing and teaching in kindergartens, as well as specialists in promoting psychological health. It is worth noting that Ahfad Kindergarten opened in 1936 was the first in Sudan to substitute the Khalwa, which is exclusively a religious pre-school establishment for boys, of the age five to nine.

Hence, the vision is to modernize education from childhood and to give the people prospects of a healthy life physically and psychologically.

The commitment to the different communities of Sudan, especially rural people, made Yousif Badri think of a course to engage the students with rural people through their study program. Hence, the course of rural extension was introduced in 1972 to the students of family sciences and then in 1974 became a university requirement. The fundamental mission is to create from those female students leaders in their societies with first-hand experience of identifying local people's needs and addressing them. Moreover, graduating empowered females who have skills to address these needs and become role models and change agents. Social change and the training of future change agents was the vision that guided for the establishment of further schools, disciplines or programs. The School of Management was then opened in 1976, the School of Rural, Extension, Education and Development opened in 1987, School of Medicine with community and problem based orientation opened in 1990, and School of Pharmacy opened in 2001. The evolution of Ahfad University for Women is characterized by the establishment of unique units, centers, institute and postgraduate studies. The Ahfad University College for Women was given the status of a full fledged university in May 1995 (AUW, 2008).

3. Mission, Vision, Philosophy and Goals

a. Mission

Since its inception AUW has a mission, which is to provide quality education for Sudanese women to become change agents, bridge the gender disparity in education, and participate in community development projects.

b. Vision

AUW vision is to create proactive women change agents and leaders from all parts of Sudan who can participate actively in the development of their families and communities.

c. Philosophy

The philosophy of AUW is to prepare women to assume responsible roles in families, communities, and in the nation.

d. Goals

- 1) Prepare students and promote their skills to become leaders in diverse areas of knowledge and intellectual spheres.
- 2) Develop appropriate curriculum that would lead to promote the students' analytical and critical skills in order to contribute effectively for the improvement and enhancement of the Sudanese communities and people.
- 3) Encourage scientific research in general and in women's and gender issues in particular

taking account of the importance of disseminating research findings through different tools of publications, public debates, conferences and media.

- 4) Develop outreach programs that are directly related to serve the outside communities particularly in rural areas. These could be various programs of comprehensive nature for continual education, distant education, training, advocacy or awareness raising activities in a way to make the university an effective tool and seat for civic engagement with special focus to reach the rural communities.
- 5) Create networking and close partnerships with the civil society, public and private sectors whether nationally, regionally or internationally. These partnerships could be in areas of joint curriculum development to serve the needs of the society, state and the market as well as contribute to the promotion of technology for services and production purposes.
- 6) Establish good cooperation with other universities and academic or research institutes nationally, regionally and internationally in different spheres of knowledge promotion particularly as pertaining to develop appropriate and relevant curriculum and technology that serves the ever changing needs of Sudan (University Act, 1995).

4. The Role of AUW in Achieving MDG 2

a. Knowledge/Education: targeting the needy and the poor

AUW seeks to reach girls between age 16 -21 and older age groups such as mature students. The university provides scholarships based for those who cannot afford to pay fees for higher education, especially those coming from areas of conflict where women suffered double discrimination; from the patriarchal ideology and from the civil war and tribal conflicts. As a group representing the marginalized, AUW offers them special discretion in enrollment regulations as well as scholarships to study in its various programs. The university makes an effort in raising funds from partners to sponsor the scholarships and to convince local and state authorities to facilitate for the students residence in Omdurman within the vicinity of the University campus. The first comers, coming to Ahfad from Darfur, South, and East, are considered as pioneers and received full board residence at AUW campus to encourage parents to send their daughters to study at AUW. A special program was then opened to lead to a Bachelors degree in Rural Development, Extension and Education in 1986 that continued to enroll only students from disadvantaged areas, South, Nuba Mountains, Darfur, East, and Blue Nile areas. In 1998, it offered places for other students. This positive discrimination policy made AUW stand as the main university which has substantial numbers of graduates from these states (AUW, 2008).

AUW has excelled in its affirmative action in student admission policy which has continued to create a diversified student population in relation to ethnicity, culture and religion representing different parts of Sudan, and African countries such as Ethiopia, Eriteria, Nigeria, Comoros Island (AUW, 2005).

AUW extends its education mission to reach poor urban communities and rural areas in Sudan through the university mandatory annual fieldtrips and family attachment projects. The outputs of these rural areas (covering 40 - 50 rural areas in Sudan) are community awareness raising and development projects. These (annually themed) projects target community problems such as health, sanitation, and environment, female genital mutilation (FGM), girls' education, income generating activities, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases. The family attachment program is followed within the School of Medicine and is conducted by the medical students, where each student is attached to a poor family to monitor the health conditions of the family until the student has graduated (Badri, 2005).

Other means of reaching the grassroots is through collaboration with its outreach arms: The Babiker Bedri Scientific Association for Women Studies (BBSAWS) and Community Animators Friendly Association (CAFA). To maintain the mission of AUW in education, just to mention some, BBSAWS offered activities such as literacy classes, rehabilitation of schools, and financial support to primary students in disadvantaged areas to continue their education (BBSAWS Report). Some of the activities undertaken by CAFA in support of disseminating information are awareness raising programs, advocacy, and campaigns on reproductive health issues, gender-based violence, targeting females and males' adolescents, youths, and the elderly (CAFA Performance Report 2004 - 2008).

Moreover, the university in its efforts to ensure that poor children receive basic education a micro-credit project was established to provide poor women with funds to set up an income generating activity to help them to pay for their children's education (AUW, 2008).

b. Research

AUW strives to strengthen research and training capacities. Research activities are encouraged to contribute in solving some of the country's social problems, through students' graduation research projects, which are guided towards tackling social issues and concerns. Social justice, gender equality and women empowerment, peace culture and conflict resolution are examples of research projects undertaken by students. This will help integrating student and faculty members' engagement in research projects and consultancies addressing community and social development. The following is a sample of studies that were undertaken by AUW faculties in contribution to peace and conflict resolution, a major concern to all Sudanese communities.

- 1) Book on "Sudan between Peace and War, IDP in Khartoum, Southern and Western Kordofan:, UNIFEM, Kenya, 1998.
- 2) A document on " The Initiative to Facilitate Women Participation in the Peace Process", in collaboration with CARE international, 1999.
- 3) Production of three training manuals, two on Peace Building and Conflict Resolution and one focusing on Peace Education within schools.
- 4) Research Report on Darfur under Siege. AUW and Tufts University, USA.

c. Women Empowerment Project

Women empowerment is one of Ahfad's goals. The project has two fold objectives: one is to empower national citizens in integrating gender mainstreaming in policies, programs, and projects. Second, to empower the powerless poor women through provision of micro-credit so that they become self-sufficient and gain control over their lives and improve their living standard through regular income, as will be later explained in Section VII.

IV. Civic Engagement Role of AUW

The philosophy of AUW of being community oriented and graduating potential change agents in their local communities makes the university to be people-oriented biased towards those disadvantaged women to help them, through community development activities, to play a crucial role in their communities. This philosophy led AUW towards shouldering a prominent role in civic engagement and participation as a means of achieving the University social responsibility.

1. Objectives towards SR and civic engagement CE

The uniqueness of AUW in comparison to many other universities is in its commitment and social responsibility towards all Sudanese people through its various civic engagements being

broadly reflected by the implementation of the various activities conducted by AUW aiming at the following outputs (AUW Prospectus, 2006):

- a. "Degree requirement courses that engage the students with the communities or the formal institutions of both the public, private and international bodies".
- b. "All outreach and extra curricula activities of academic, cultural and creative nature done by staff, students and administrators using and involving all available national resources and international partnerships".
- c. "Wide range coverage of population for its capacity building and institutional strengthening activities. The target population includes university students, staff, administrators, NGOs, media personnel, politicians, planners, lawyers, youth, grassroots organizations, civil servants professionals, and many others working at the public and private sectors".
- d. "Production of information, education and communication (IEC) materials directed to the local people or youth or any other special target groups for awareness raising. Also, educational materials that disseminate civic engagement activities of AUW and, that encourage social responsibility and empowerment among the students".
- e. Sponsorship to poor students and students from disadvantaged areas with free education at AUW".
- f. "Encouraging research that serves communities, the people as well as direct students to relish values of peace, social responsibility and have vision for improving quality of life.»
- g. To help in and/or offer Services to the public especially in remote rural areas, displaced camps and sub-urban shanty areas".
- h. "Engaging in national activities directly, or by linking to others or offering AUW spaces and staff time to debate or celebrate national issues or figures."
- i. "Activities undertaken by AUW arms, which are independently registered as NGOs and serve AUW's mission and goals and represent civic engagement activities" (AUW, 2008).

2. Civic engagement policies

- a. AUW policy is to adhere to principles of democratic values, equality, inclusiveness, respect to diversity, human rights and dignities, resolving conflict peacefully; allowing for the promotion of persons potentials and respecting individual freedom within the law.
- b. Policies of developing curriculum that is community oriented, that allows AUW to achieve its vision, mission, goals and objectives are followed. The curriculum is also designed in a way to meet international standards. Knowledge is Sudanized through case studies, training and community outreach activities integrated in the curriculum (see for details university requirement courses such as rural extension course, women studies, environmental and population studies courses, see also family and field attachment programs and brochures of the master degree programs).
- c. Policies of encouraging the development of programs and projects that allow AUW to maximize its civic engagement, also offer space to staff promotion and self education. Examples of them are projects to eradicate female genital mutilation, promote reproductive health, visionary leadership, culture of peace, and raise awareness on good governance and democracy.
- d. Research and capacity building programs that would enhance the internationalization objectives as well as social responsibility achievement such as those developed with Western universities in Norway, Holland, Germany, and Tufts or at regional level with American University in Cairo (AUC), American University in Beirut (AUB), Dar al salaam

and Nairobi universities.

- e. Using the university facilities to offer services for staff, students and the neighborhood and catchments areas within the university radius (e.g. kindergarten, primary and secondary schools, health center, hospital, farm).
- f. The policy of students' intake stipulates that tuition waiver is provided to needy students from all reigns of Sudan. Such students usually comprise about 30% of the annual intake. (AUW, 2008)

3. Strategies and Mechanisms

- a. Reaching to all Sudanese sectors by offering diverse activities contributing to capacity building and institutional strengthening.
- b. Instilling in students and staff the values of volunteerism and social responsibility.
- c. Promoting students and junior staff communication and leadership skills within class and at outreach activities.
- d. Enhancing students and staff potentials for maximum self-realization through offering various curricula, extra-curricula, outreach activities and networking opportunities.
- e. Becoming actively engaged in national and international links serving Sudanese people and achieving AUW vision, mission and goals.
- f. Influencing policies, institutions and legislations to achieve a transformed society of gender equality, overall justice and security through various advocacy programs, conferences, solidarity activism and targeted short courses and extra-curricula activities.
- g. Another strategy of establishing other institutionalized or informal arms that could contribute in AUW achieving its objectives and to be in line with its vision, mission and goals is the establishment of NGOs such as Babiker Bedri Scientific Association for Women Studies (BBSAWS), and Community Animators Friends Association (CAFA).

V. Reflections on AUW Praxis toward Social Responsibility and Civic Engagement

The analysis of the interviews and documents aimed at exploring the role of Ahfad University for Women in social responsibility /civic engagement and how its curricula and extra-curricular activities contribute to community development. As well as identifying the various challenges that AUW encounters in assuming its role in civic engagement. Hence, the data from the interviews, supported by relevant documents, is analyzed into thematic categories.

1. AUW Curricula: Community Oriented and Socially Responsive

The results of the interviews and analysis of relevant documents revealed that AUW provides community oriented curricula that are responsive to current and changing community needs. The curricula are a mix of learning and service provision as is explained below:

- a. The university has required courses to be taken by all students registered for Bachelors Degree, which include Rural Extension, Population Studies, Reproductive Health, Environmental Studies, Women and Gender Studies, Career Development, Research Methodology, Talents Development Skills, and Introduction to Behavioural Sciences. Issues of gender, democracy, poverty, population, and, human rights have been integrated into the undergraduate as well as the postgraduate courses. The aim from these university required courses is to instill in the students values of love, tolerance,

cooperation, loyalty, critical thinking, altruism, and civic responsibilities. Also, to develop students who become responsible citizens able to define their goals, needs, and to serve for achieving better life for the local community and the nation as a whole.

- b. Rural Extension Program which was started in 1973 involves annual field trips to rural areas by fourth year students across all specializations. Students conduct outreach activities to raise awareness in poor rural communities as well as undertake assessment studies for advocating for needed development projects.
- c. Family attachment program in the School of Medicine: students are attached to families in the neighboring areas of the university and other underserved urban areas.
- d. The School of Management contributes in development of the small enterprise sector through its curricula, analysis of faculty and students' research, students' in-service training reports and regular contacts with the business and relevant governmental sectors which provide students with skills to influence the development of this important sector.

2. Involvement of Community in Curricula

AUW has always ensured the involvement of the local and national community in the development of its curriculum. This is achieved through technical advisory committees that govern and monitor individual academic programs. These committees are usually composed of national experts, business representatives, and potential employers of graduates and beneficiary community members. Regional, age and gender variations are always considered in the formulation of these committees that meet regularly to assist in design and evaluation of programs. Moreover, a good proportion of undergraduate and graduate students' researches are carried out to assess the curricula with regard to the needs of the communities and economy. Also through the Rural Extension Program, baseline data and the studies at large are used to modify curricula to meet the community needs. AUW carries curricula revision every four to five years based on the feedback from the different activities and supervised by the technical advisory committees.

3. Research Activities

A large share of AUW research projects addresses issues of community needs and welfare of Sudanese people as has been mentioned in the interviews. AUW carries out different types of researches i.e. policy oriented research, action oriented research, knowledge production research and scientific researches. As mentioned earlier, community involvement is part and parcel of the research identification process. For instance, AUW respond to research areas and topics identified through community oriented programs (rural extension field trips), business companies, relevant civil society organizations (CSOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), the state (SAP, Sudan MDGs report, RH policy, Women Empowerment Policy), base line surveys and needs assessment e.g. Marawi Dam, National Statistics and Census Centre. Some of these research studies are conducted by AUW as an academic institution and sometimes jointly with its partners. To enhance the university's social responsiveness in coordinating policy-influence research activities, AUW recently established the Research and Grants Unit.

Moreover, the university provision of services (which will be mentioned in the upcoming sections), also, helps to identify research areas both for staff and students' research projects. AUW Reproductive Health Centre contributes to identify research themes. In addition, the outreach program of field attachment for the medical students helps to generate research topics within medical field. The biomedical research community at AUW was initiated mainly to contribute to Sudanese wellbeing by focusing on community related problems and concerns.

It also stands as service provision through patient's referral to central hospitals and through collaborative work with the national control programs for tropical diseases. Moreover, in other schools the summer training and field attachment provide the different schools with a variety of research topics/themes. Experimental researches were conducted and action researches were established in areas related to appropriate technology where projects for solar cooker and bio-gas were initiated (AUW, 2008).

4. Training

Moreover, AUW provides training services targeting different groups: women, youth, community leaders, policy makers, health personnel and others. Through these service learning activities, faculty members in the university build their capacities in teaching and find opportunities to engage in serving the community. Many of these training programs have also informed the university curricula, such as the Regional Training on Integrating gender and Rights in Reproductive Health, which has informed courses in health education and behavioral and social health, as well as trainings in Gender Sensitive Planning, Research and Evaluation. In addition, such trainings also contribute in strengthening the capacities of national citizens in integrating gender mainstreaming into policies and programs.

5. Service Provision

The efforts of AUW in social responsibility and commitment towards improvement of poor urban areas as indicated in the interviews with top management and from the analysis of documents, this is done through the following services:

a. Ahfad Family Health Center

It was established in 1994 with the support of the UNFPA. Its aims are to serve staff, students and neighboring areas, specially displaced people by offers a wide range of services including ANC, FP, nutrition, diabetes, counseling and others. The Centre also offers outreach activities in association with Family Attachment Program (FAP)

b. Ombadda Teaching Hospital

The hospital aims to provide training for medical, pharmacy & dietetics students. It also provides services to Ombadda community (population of over 1 million and a half), and internally displaced people (IDPs) from Southern and Western Sudan. The services available are pediatric, obstetric and gynecology (including antenatal and postnatal care), ophthalmology, orthopedic, medicine, surgery, Psychiatry casualties. Supporting services include x-ray, laboratory, and an outpatient clinic.

c. University Teaching Farm

It is one of the students training units situated in West of Omdurman, adjacent to displaced camps. The farm has potential to become a training avenue for IDPs in basic livelihoods skills development in: farming techniques, food production and food security, appropriate technology for farming and food production. The farm also offers the community drinking water to supplement few existing water points.

d. Early Childhood Development Centre (ECDC)

The AUW ECDC do not only serves as a training centre for AUW students but it also provides training services in early childhood development to other kindergartens in the different states of Sudan. Moreover, it offers child care service to AUW staff and neighbouring community. It is also training centre to kindergarten teachers and supervisors working in national and private child-centres.

e. English Language Unit

It provides services for both the university and society. Regarding the former, the unit teaches general English to different schools, centers and institutions, designs and evaluates syllabi to the different schools, centers and institutions, and train students to be teachers. In the latter, The Unit extends its training services to different universities staff to help them teach in English (e.g. Upper Nile University), trains teachers of private and government schools to enhance their communication skills and organizes courses for government different sectors (General Admission office, customs officersetc) to develop their English language.

6. Community Mobilization

Many of the AUW faculty members together with some graduates are involved in informal work experiences where they use their expertise in areas of specializations to engage in voluntary services in NGOs, networks and informal coalitions. The existence of two NGOs inside the AUW has provided better opportunities to the AUW faculty members and graduates to engage in these informal duties. These NGOs provide services of awareness, training, research and production of knowledge for the community. They benefit from the inputs of the AUW faculty members and others. When engaged in these activities, the AUW faculty members share experience with other partners as well as gain insights into the reality of lives of people they serve, thus use these perspectives to restructure their individual courses and training programs.

The AUW also involves its alumni through a very coherent network that allows them to reflect on the usefulness and deficiencies in the curricula they studied at AUW. The alumni are also regularly involved in training programs the AUW carries out as well

As in service provision through its out-reach work.

7. Extra Curricula Community Oriented Activities

The results of the interviews and relevant document analysis (AUW, 2006 and 2008) revealed that Ahfad's extra curricula activities feed into national and international community issues/agendas. AUW celebrate occasions and events related to its mission as presented in the following paragraphs:

a. International Days

AUW Celebrates the International Women's Day through the University Annual Women's Week. The themes of the women's week are related to International Conference on Population Development (ICPD), Gender Equality and women Empowerment issues and peace. Students formulate sub themes on which they plan and perform activities including drama, music, choral, etc. The celebrations of the population and food days, which have been organized separately, mainly aim at raising awareness of students, government and communities of food and population issues. As well students perform different activities to deliver messages tackling issues of hunger, poverty, reproductive health, etc.

b. Student Associations

Students are encouraged to form and join different societies at the university such as drama, sports, music association. Also they join ethnic associations and students leagues. There are other forms of association which have been formed by the staff and open for students' families and the community such as Senior Citizens and Friends of Deaf and Mute Association.

c. AUW Out-reach Arms

Those are voluntary organizations formed through an initiative of AUW and hosted within the university campus, namely: Babiker Bedri Scientific Association for Women Studies (BBSAWS),

Community Animators Friendly Association (CAFA), and Sudanese American Foundation for Education (SAFE), carry outreach programs in terms of training, awareness raising, networking, research activities and provision of references and text books to universities mainly by SAFE through donating books from American universities to AUW and other Sudanese universities.

8. Links: National, Regional and International

AUW has several Links at the National, Regional and International Levels. These links include: capacity building for the staff (Ph.D. and M.Sc.), programs in terms of conducting Summer School, student and staff exchange programmes, research as well as institutional strengthening.

- a. Links at the National level with Sudanese universities, such as University of Khartoum, Gezira, Sudan, Juba, Alazhari, Shandi, Kassla, Al Obied, aims at strengthening capacity building of the universities staff, joint research and curriculum development and teaching.
- b. Links at the Regional level, AUW is Anchor Institute for the Visionary Leadership Programme (VLP), partner of Center of African Family Studies (CAFS) (Kenya), WHO EMRO these include conducting joint courses, capacity building to AUW staff, other NGOs and universities staff.
- c. Links at the international level: Linkage with Manchester, Reading, Iowa State university, Humboldt University, Beilefeld University, Bonne University., Free University., Maastricht, Institute of Social Studies (ISS), Leiden and Amsterdam Universities, Cape Town University, University of Western Cape, South Africa , Suez Canal University, American universities in Beirut and Cairo, and others in Africa, USA, Asia and Middle East. The link includes staff training, curriculum development, research and summer schools.
- d. Bilateral and multilateral links: these included support of foreign governments and UN agencies to AUW infrastructure, institutional strengthening and funding staff capacity building and projects.

9. Diffusion of Knowledge

Another means that emphasizes AUW commitments towards women empowerment is through production of two journals. Those are:

- a. Ahfad Journal is an outlet for national, regional and international links, analyzing issues affecting women in Sudan and in other developing countries.
- b. Promising Half is for students and by students. It includes articles on women's and gender issues and concerns of the students.
- c. Women Magazine which is published twice a year by the BBSAWS.

10. Advocacy and Awareness Raising

AUW in Collaboration with national and international organizations conduct and/or organize conferences on issues of gender, human rights and reproductive health. The purposes are to formulate policy recommendation, advocate for these issues and raise awareness. Example of such activities is:

- a. AUW in Collaboration with the Khartoum center for Human Rights and Environmental Development and with the support of Sudan Organization against Torture (SOAT) developed and led a Conference on Human Rights Education during the period 15th -18th December 2003.
- b. A conference on Sudanese Women Situation: Challenges and prospects was conducted on January 2004 by AUW supported by the Netherlands Embassy.

- c. A regional conference on violence against women was conducted on September 2004 by AUW in collaboration with BBSAWS and Institute for Human Rights, Geneva.
- d. A Conference on violence against women was conducted on September 2004 by AUW in collaboration with BBSAWS and Institute for Human Rights, Geneva.

VI. AUW Civic Engagement: Practical Experiences in Implementing Community Development Projects

This section presents examples of projects implemented by AUW which reflects its contributions in SR and civic engagement in community development.

The University through collaboration with different international partners executes and implements projects that seek to empower women, achieve positive social change in attitudes, behaviours and practices and to lead to community mobilization and development. Examples of these projects are:

1. Project Title: Women Empowerment and Gender Mainstreaming

AUW Partner: UNFPA

Executing and Implementing Agency: AUW

Duration: 4 years

a. Executive Summary

This Women Empowerment and Gender Mainstreaming project set of activities intends to contribute to the Gender component of the Country Program, which is primarily sensitization of national citizens in integrating gender mainstreaming in their policies, programs and projects. It is also an endeavor to contribute in realizing MDG 3, women equality, equity and empowerment. The project activities such as capacity building training workshops on gender mainstreaming, budget analysis and auditing issues, as well as scientific studies, advocacy and awareness raising sessions will altogether contribute to achievement of the stated outputs. Manuals and materials produced and published will provide substantive information and guidance for training and awareness raising of intended target population.

b. Project Outcome

Gender equality and Human Rights of women and adolescents including Reproductive rights are integrated in national policy, development framework and laws.

c. Expected Output

Gender mainstreaming and women empowerment issues promoted and integrated in the national policies and plans.

d. Intellectual Empowerment

This is done through capacity building trainings intended to promote national capacities knowledge related to conceptualization of gender, gender analysis and gender mainstreaming. They were sensitized to the importance and practical implementation of gender mainstreaming at institutional and programme levels.

The training workshops in gender sensitization conducted (free of charge) as a series of at least 4 per year for an average of five days. They target mid-level personnel in ministries (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of International Cooperation), governmental bodies such as Central Bureau of Statistics, National Population Council, and non-state actors, such as NGOs and civil society organizations CBOs, academic institutes and different networks. (AUW – UNFPA Annual Report 2007 and 2008).

e. Economic Empowerment

The university strives to empower poor women economically and increase their income through administering a revolving fund program. It is one of the benevolent activities of AUW that target beneficiaries from poor urban neighboring communities close to Ahfad University for Women. The project was initially supported by UNFPA in 1997 and has been solely sustained by the university since 2005 (AUW Revolving Fund Report, 2007).

f. Objectives

The primary objectives of this program are to empower the powerless poor women through provision of micro credit so that they become self-sufficient and gain control on their lives and improve their living standard through regular income. The revolving fund aims at creating a link between improving the economic status of women via income generating activities (IGA) and their capacity to improve their reproductive health status and their families well-being through regularly utilizing Ahfad Family Health Centre, as well as, to empower women with decision-making abilities.

g. Target Group

- 1) The program targets the urban poor (including university labours), displaced and those living below the urban poverty line, in terms of poor housing conditions, lack of water and electricity facilities, illiteracy .
- 2) Priorities are given to women, female-headed households, women as sole breadwinners and if any of the family earners have a disability.

h. Orientation

A house to house survey and analysis of the beneficiaries' standard of living is done for identification of genuine cases. The beneficiaries usually receive an orientation before getting the loan, about how to manage the loan to increase their income, and to make them feel confident about taking decisions related to financial decisions at the household level and about RH and the harmful traditional practices as well.

i. Grants and Monitoring

Each year a grant of about 5,500,000 Sudanese Dinars is disbursed to about 55 poor families to help them in establishing income generating activities. Regular monitoring about thirty two field-visits (in Umbadda area) to IGA beneficiaries' homes were undertaken by the IGA coordinator to monitor their activities and make sure they visit Ahfad Family Health Centre for utilization of contraceptives, pre- and- antenatal care, pap-smear exam, nutrition consultation, child growth and monitoring and other needed services. The repayment rate has been maintained to 97%.

j. Impact of the revolving fund

- 1) It had a positive impact on women empowerment in terms of being financially independent, ability to communicate and negotiate, gained wider knowledge about importance of education, family planning and antenatal care.
- 2) Women have more accessibility to reproductive health services in terms of affordability and empowerment of making their own decisions regarding use of those services.
- 3) Improved women's skills in business and boosted their self-confidence and esteem, a way towards regaining control of their own lives (AUW Revolving Fund Report, 2007).

2. Project Title: House –to –house education on HIV/AIDS

Partners: Sudan National AIDS Program and UNICEF

Duration: One Year

a. Introduction

In May 2008, and in collaboration with the Sudan National AIDS Program and the UNICEF, the AUW has carried out an outreach house-to-house activity through 45 field trips with 400 students from the university. The activities of these field trips included house to house visits, public talks, seminars and role plays. Also the students have been engaged in individual and group discussions with the members of the households, using the IEC materials developed by the SNAP and UNICEF, and public discussions through the outdoor activities during the whole trip period. Through this activity, coverage of an estimated 6000 households was achieved. Moreover, the students also managed to reach another 63,000 people through outdoor activities such as public talks, seminars and role plays inside the villages. Within these activities, pre and post-testing of the community knowledge about the HIV/AIDS through the pre-designed questionnaire was carried out.

The Rural Extension Program at Ahfad University for Women includes scientific field trips to explore the life of rural people and the means and ways for proper interventions to improve the quality of their life style. The key participants in the program activity are the students and faculty members at AUW who train both the students and the rural communities especially women. Other stakeholders are government officials and NGOs working in the area.

The Program includes theoretical, practical and application part (in form of the field trips).

b. Objectives of the Rural Extension Program and Field Trips

- 1) To provide the students with first hand knowledge and skills about life of people in the rural communities.
- 2) To increase knowledge and competency among the university staff in planning and managing extension programs.
- 3) To raise the awareness of the rural community about the important health and development issues pertaining to their good quality of life.

c. Other related objectives

- 1) To expose and train students to deal with issues of rural life.
- 2) To allow the students to practice methods of social research in collecting and analyzing data related to the needs of rural communities.
- 3) To train students in the field of development and to encourage them to act as agents of change.
- 4) To train students to design and develop simple educational and disseminate information to rural committee.

d. Scope and geographic coverage of the trips in 2008

The States covered by the field trips this year were: Khartoum, , White Nile, River Nile, Blue Nile and North Kordofan. The main theme of the field trips this year was raising the awareness of the community about HIV/AIDS.

e. Outcome of the activity

This year, 2008, the program in collaboration with the Sudan National AIDS Program and the UNICEF has covered some 50 rural areas in 5 of the northern states of the Sudan. The aim of this collaborative activity is to test the newly developed IEC materials through house to house education by the AUW students. Through its different activities this project has contributed to improving the knowledge and awareness of the communities about a crucial health problem, and also it served staff and students in developing their capacity to interact with the community and assume their role as change agents.

3. Project title: An initiative to promote Democracy, Human Rights and Culture of Peace through involvement of Youth

AUW partner: Europe Aid

Implementing body: Babiker Bedri Scientific Association for Women Studies (BBSAWS)

Duration: November 2007- September 2008

3.1 Activity 1: TOT training workshop on Democracy, Human Rights and Culture of peace.

a. Training Objective

To train trainers on how to use the manuals on Democracy, Human Rights and Peace in training of teachers, parents and secondary school students.

b. Participants

15 Participants (3 males and 12 females) were carefully selected from active members of BBSAWS and AUW. Trainers were selected based on the following:

Committed and active members who have already conducted training in any of the organization areas of concern priority was given to those with experience in the Democracy, Peace and Human rights.

c. Training outcome

15 members of AUW staff and BBSAWS were trained on how to use the manuals on Democracy, Human rights and peace in training youth. This group was qualified to take part in the training workshops of AUW students and supervisors who will accompany the students in the fieldtrip.

3.2 Activity: Teachers and parents training workshop in Khartoum Sate

a. Training Objective

To promote secondary school's teachers and members of parent's council understanding of the concepts of Democracy, Human Rights and Peace.

b. Results of the training

Eight teachers and six parents were trained in the issues of democracy, human rights and culture of peace. Their capacity in promoting these concepts was enhanced and they have shown great interest to engage in these issues.

3.3 Activity: Ahfad University Staff training Workshop

a. Participants:

Targeted participants were AUW staff members accompany the students in the annual field trip to Kordofan State. According to the project plan 10 supervisors were to be invited to the training workshop, however Ahfad University adopted the theme on civic education this year and hence the training was extended to all supervisors .A total of 45 staff members were included in this training workshop.(Please note that Ahfad University paid the cost of training of the additional participants)

b. Objectives of the workshop

- 1) Train AUW staff on concepts of peace, democracy and human rights.
- 2) Raise AUW staff capabilities to become better TOT in relation to the pre-mentioned topics.
- 3) Train the participants on the important messages that could be carried during the next field trip to the community.

c. Topics covered in the workshop

- 1) Democracy
- 2) Human rights
- 3) Culture of peace

3.4 Activity: Training workshops for CBOs members in Kordofan State:

a. Workshops Objectives

All training workshops in Kordofan were designed to fulfill the following Objectives:

- 1) To raise participants understanding of the concepts of democracy, human rights and culture of peace.
- 2) To prepare cadres who will be able to work in promoting these concepts among the community.

b. Training topics include

- 1) Definition of Democracy.
- 2) Principles of Democracy.
- 3) Citizenship and citizens
- 4) Election procedures.
- 5) Human rights
- 6) culture of peace

c. Outcome of the workshops

- 1) Participants' awareness regarding the concepts democracy and the election, citizenship, human rights, culture of peace has been raised.
- 2) As TOT components were included in the training activities, this created a group with improved capacities and skills to be future trainers within their communities.
- 3) The participants made special recommendations and requests to help in any future election practices.

VII. Challenges facing AUW Role in SR and CE

On the basis of the data collected in this study and from our own observation as faculty members in AUW, there are several challenges identified that encounter AUW in expanding and maintaining its social responsibility towards community welfare. They are classified into external and internal factors.

1. External Factors

- a. The top management stressed that lack of funds represents a major barrier as AUW mainly relies on tuition fees, which is not fully paid due to the economic deteriorating situation and pressures on students' families. Sometimes AUW seeks external support from some UN agencies and NGOs, which is not always helpful due to the political situation of the country.
- b. Moreover, the international community signifies a challenge, for instance the sanctions on the Sudan government inhibit AUW to receive funds for undertaking projects within the framework of its SR and CE.
- c. The broader environment constitutes another major challenge, such as the escalating poverty and conflicts, which demand from AUW more civic engagement.
- d. The Ministry of Higher Education does not have an affirmative policy for higher education institutions to be engaged in civic activities neither does it have incentives for those universities who are more aware of their social responsibility. Hence, this put more

- pressure on universities that are socially responsive.
- e. Another major challenge is the community's demands and high expectations for immediate benefits from AUW civic activities, which sometimes could be beyond the capacities of the University.
 - f. Moreover, there is resistance to change at the community level, particularly in changing attitudes, perceptions and social behaviour.

2. Internal Factors

- a. As mentioned earlier, the role of higher education institutions in civic engagement is not yet well established in Sudanese universities. Although AUW mission endeavors to promote social responsibility as a core value, some faculty members are resistant to getting involved in community-related programs. This is mainly due to the staff lack of belief and/or culture of voluntarism and philanthropy within the academic environment. The lack of incentives for faculty to be involved in civic activities perpetuates this situation.
- b. Also, many students are not interested in engaging with communities' activities unless they are part of the evaluated course work. In additions, some students face strenuous demands on their time, particularly if they need to work to fund their studies. In addition, the gap between the community needs and the students' interests might impact negatively on their availability for civic engagement.
- c. The limited resources and logistics of AUW hinder the university from strengthening its connection with the private sector and government bodies, particularly in the rural areas where joint effort is needed to contribute towards community welfare.
- d. Although the University has a documentation service unit, it is noticed that there is little focus on documenting AUW extensive civic activities. Besides, there is lack of media publicity of AUW philanthropic activities. This is important to inform different and interested stakeholders in supporting AUW in achieving its civic mission.

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*Dossier: Higher Education
in Saudi Arabia*

Experience of Scholarships to Foreign Universities in Saudi Arabia: A Model for Investment in Human Resources & Their Contribution to Development

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Abstract

Through programs of scholarships to study abroad, the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education seeks to train and develop Saudi human resources, with the aim of enabling them to become competitive in the labor market and scientific research, and provide key support to public and private Saudi universities. The most important specific aims of the scholarship programs are: sending qualified Saudis to study at the best universities in various countries around the world; achieving high academic and professional standards; exchanging scientific, educational and cultural expertise with various countries around the world; building qualified, professional cadres; and raising levels of professionalism among them.

This paper provides the following: a historical overview of Saudi programs of scholarships to study abroad; the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques program of scholarships to study abroad as an example of investment in human resource skills in support of overall national development; numbers of scholarships given, the target countries, the educational stages and disciplines covered, and the disciplines encouraged by the Ministry in the service of development plans; and, finally, a summary of the needs of the Saudi labor market and their relationship with scholarship programs.

I. Introduction

The (CTHMSP), with its many phases, represents an unprecedented advancement and a qualitative change to higher education in The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. So far, the program has admitted some fifty thousand male and female students. This distinct program provides the opportunity for thousands of Saudis to advance with determination and energy in the areas of scientific innovation in pursuit of the noblest sciences and highest scientific degrees. Their contact with others in the same field equips them, upon returning to their homeland, with new knowledge, modern skills, an understanding of different cultures and civilizations, the relevant know how, and the ability to communicate with others in order to contribute to the advancement of the country and on its labor force promotion.

This paper is presented with a concern for the strategic planning and careful consideration for the continuity of the success of the program and for the achievement of its goals. This is according to

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the manner in which it was originally devised, the purposes that its managers seek, and with the conviction that the wheel of science never stops and should never do so.

Objectives of the paper

This paper aims at achieving the following objectives:

1. To introduce the history of scholarships in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
2. To shed some light on the CTHMSP as a model for investment in human resources.
3. To describe the enrollment procedure for self-funded students in the Scholarship Program.
4. To provide statistics of scholarship beneficiaries by: gender, academic level and the host country of study.
5. To present a summary of the needs of the Saudi labor market and its relation to the scholarship programs.

II. History of Scholarships in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Scholarships to foreign universities started in the reign of King Abdul-Aziz bin Abdul Rahman Al Saud, when a group, keen on developing education in the Kingdom submitted a written proposal to King Abdul-Aziz. Having examined it, the King summoned and notified them that a committee had been established to study their proposal. The committee was formed of Sheikh Hafiz Wahba, Assistant Deputy of His Majesty the King; Mr. Saleh Shata, Deputy Chairman of the Shura Council; Sheik Saleh Nasif, member of the Shura Council, in addition to the submitters of this proposal. This six-party committee drafted the outline of the first scholarships and submitted its report to King Abdul-Aziz who approved the scholarship project. In 1927, three years after entering the holy city of Mecca, the King ordered that the Saudi mission be sent to Egypt immediately, along with the three submitters of the proposal and six other students. The decree made provision for the expenses of the mission related to the allowances of the individuals and the supervisor of the mission. In addition, it also stated as a condition that the scholarship student must work after graduation in the field assigned to her/him by the government.

In 1929, King Abdul-Aziz sent an urgent mission to London consisting of three employees from the post office of the holy city of Mecca to receive training in the Marconi Company in Chelmsford, England, on how to establish and run wireless communication networks. In 1935, he also sent ten students from Saudi Arabia to study aviation in Italy.

In 1936, the government sent the first mission to Switzerland, consisting of two students, to study law and political science. In the same year, one scholarship student was sent to Istanbul to study engineering. After that, missions were successively sent to Europe and The United States, especially after the discovery of oil in the Kingdom.

In 1936, the King ordered the establishment of a preparatory school for the missions. This was the first high school in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to be based on the modern system that facilitates the enrollment of students in university colleges.

The first educational mission eligible to attend universities outside the Kingdom was sent to the universities of Egypt and elsewhere to study different sciences and disciplines.

The second mission, consisting of ten students, was then sent to Egypt to study Sharia sciences, the Arabic language and the Principles of Education and Pedagogy. In the same year, a regulating system for overseas scholarship affairs was created. This included the cost of living, medical treatment and supervision of conduct through a special management board established for this purpose.

The third mission was sent in 1942 to the American University of Beirut in Lebanon, Cairo

University, Alexandria University, Dar Al Uloom College, and the College of Shariah. A boarding house called The Saudi Missions House was also established in Cairo and Alexandria. This house was the first to be established outside the Kingdom to attend to the affairs of scholarship beneficiaries. It acted as the residence of students, providing them with food, drink, clothing, treatment, and taking care of their personal and academic expenses. Students were left thus with no obligation, but to focus on their studies. It may have been the first cultural attaché to be established outside the Kingdom. The fourth mission that followed in 1943 went to Egypt as well. After that, successive missions were sent to Europe and The United States (AlAnsary, 1972). In 1969, the number of scholarship beneficiaries from the Kingdom reached 192 and the number doubled in the years 1977- 78 to finally reach 8,216 male students and 880 female students². The scholarship phase in the 1970s coincided with the beginning of the government's economic planning. This phase started with the second Five-Year Plan in 1975. During this phase, the list of host countries of study broadened to include Europe and The United States, and the scholarship program developed to allow scholarship beneficiaries to pursue graduate studies and government employees to pursue master degrees. It also allowed assistant professors and lecturers from universities to pursue master and doctorate degrees (AlTalib, 2008). Aspiring to continue with its educational development policy, to open new horizons for scholarships and to import diverse expertise from the world to the Kingdom, the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia launched the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz Program in 2005. The Program is considered the largest scholarship program in the history of not only the Kingdom but the whole world. It aims at sending more than 50,000 male and female scholarship beneficiaries, over a period of five years, to different countries in Europe, as well as to the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and East Asia.

III. The CTHMSP as a Model for the Investment of Human Resources

1. Program Definition

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz Order Number 5387/mb, issued on 26 May 2005, launched the CTHMSP. Which consists of five phases, four of which have been completed at present (2009). The program will undergo further study after the completion of the fifth phase and its continuation will be determined in the light of the results. The CTHMSP sends Saudi students, both male and female, to continue their studies in the best universities around the world at the following levels: Bachelor, Master, Doctorate, and Medical Fellowship

2. Mission

To actively develop, prepare and qualify Saudi human resources to be world-competitive in the labor market and academic research. In addition, to be a high caliber base in Saudi universities as well as the public and private sectors.

3. Goals

- a. To sponsor competent, eligible Saudis to continue their studies in a variety of universities around the world.
- b. To work on setting high level academic and professional standards through the Scholarship Program.

² <http://www.saudiforum.us/vb/showthread.php?t=48872>

- c. To exchange scientific, educational and cultural expertise with a variety of countries around the world.
- d. To develop qualified professional people in the work environment.
- e. To promote and develop the level of professionalism of Saudi nationals.

4. Scholarship Conditions

The following are the most important conditions for those who wish to apply for a scholarship:

- a. The applicant must be a Saudi citizen.
- b. The applicant must not be occupying a government position.
- c. Studies must be regular and full-time in the host country of study and the student must be completely dedicated to her/his studies.

5. Majors, Fields of Study and Countries in which the Ministry Encourages Enrollment in order to Serve the Directions of Development Plans and the Labor Market in the Kingdom

The CTHMSP provides scholarships in many scientific majors selected according to the needs of most of the public and private sectors. These are as follows:

- Medicine, Dentistry and Medical Fellowships
- Pharmacy
- Nursing
- Medical Sciences: Radiology Sciences, Laboratory Sciences, Biomedical Technology and Physiotherapy.
- Health Sciences: Nutrition and Administration
- Engineering: Civil Engineering, Architecture, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Industrial Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Environmental Engineering, Communication Engineering, Automotive Engineering
- Computer: Computer Engineering, Computer Science, Networking etc.
- Basic Sciences: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology
- Other Disciplines: Law, Accounting, E-Commerce, Finance, Insurance and Marketing

A number of countries from every continent, distinguished by their educational systems, were selected for the CTHMSP. Emphasis was placed on the following countries: the United States, Canada, a number of European countries, such as Britain, Germany, the Netherlands and Italy. Other countries included: China, India, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand for the following majors: Medicine, Dentistry and Applied Medical Sciences including Nursing, Radiology, Health Sciences, Medical Laboratory and Biomedical Technology.

IV. Number of Scholarship Students till the Time of the Preparation of this Paper

The number of scholarship students from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia studying in different countries around the world was, until April 2009, 61,969 male and female students. Of these, 45,734 students are funded by the Ministry of Higher Education through the CTHMSP, 6,783 students are funded by government sectors and universities, and 9,452 are self-funded students³. The following tables and figures show the number of scholarship beneficiaries of the Ministry of

³ Ministry Deputy for planning and information affairs, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2009.

Higher Education through the CTHMSP (keeping in mind that these numbers are changing since the scholarship program is still ongoing).

Table 1: Number of scholarship students funded by the Ministry, other government sectors and self-funded students

Student Category	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Scholarship student	25,893	12,813	38,706	71 %
Scholarship employee	3,780	2,093	5,873	11 %
Self-funded student	7,958	1,542	9,500	18 %
Total	37,631	16,448	54,079	100 %

Figure 1: Percentage of scholarship students funded by the Ministry, other government sectors and self-funded students

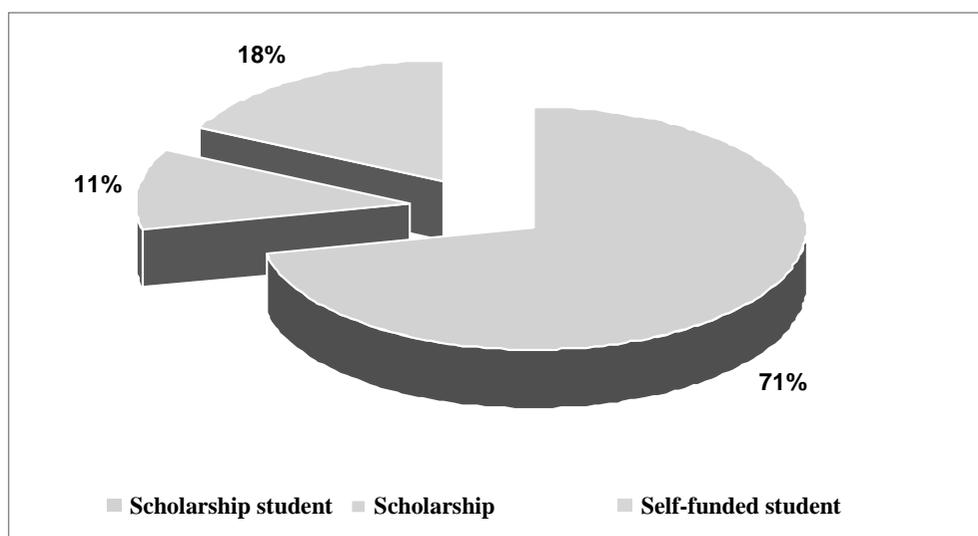


Table 2: Number of scholarship students funded by the Ministry according to gender

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	25,893	67 %
Female	12,813	33 %
Total	38,706	100 %

Figure 2: Number of scholarship students funded by the Ministry according to gender

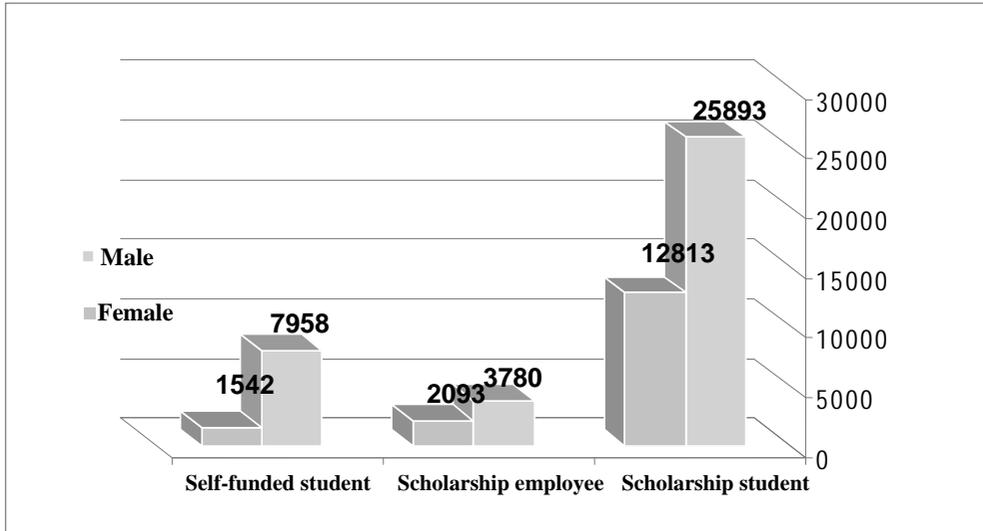


Table 3: Number of scholarship students funded by the Ministry according to level of study.

Level	Number	Percentage
Bachelor's	16,275	42 %
Master's	4,851	13 %
Doctorate	799	2 %
Fellowship	3,195	8 %
Other	13,586	35 %
Total	38,706	100 %

Table 4: Number of scholarship students funded by the Ministry according to host country of study

Country	Number	Percentage
The United States	12,199	31.5 %
Britain	7,029	18 %
Australia	4,818	12.5 %
Canada	3,975	10.5 %
Jordan	2,296	6 %
Egypt	1,589	4 %
New Zealand	1,626	4.5 %
Malaysia	796	2 %
The Emirates	465	1 %
Other	3,913	10 %
Total	38,706	100

V. A Summary of the Needs of the Saudi Labor Market from the Labor Force and its Relation to the Scholarship Program

The population growth rate in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is considered high compared to other population growth rates around the world. According to the data from the Ministry of Planning 2009, the population of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia reached 23 million in 2007 with a growth rate of 2.3 %, of which 73 % are Saudis (BinOubeid, 2000).

With this relative increase in the population growth rate in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the population census data for the year 2003 reveals that the Saudi population is concentrated in the young age group, since approximately 67 % are under the age of 30. The increase in the population growth rate has led to an increase in the number of incoming job seekers into the labor market. This has doubled the burden on the government and private sectors to create new job opportunities and/or take the necessary measures to replace the foreign labor force with the national labor force (Directorate of General Statistics, 2003).

The data from the Ministry of Planning (2009) indicate that the size of the labor force working in the government and private sector in 2006 reached 7.8 million workers, 46% of which were Saudis. There are 1.13 million workers in the government sector, 86% of which are the Saudis. There are 6.64 million workers in the private sector, 40% of which are the Saudis. The average annual growth rate of the labor force in the private sector (according to the statistics of the Eighth Development Plan, 2005) was 2.2 % during the 1999 – 2004 periods. The available data

on the national labor force and the foreign labor force reveal an increase in the national labor force and a decrease in the foreign labor force in both government and private sectors since the middle of the last decade. This indicates the orientation of both the government and the private sector towards employing Saudi nationals' citizens entering the labor market.

It is only natural for the process of employing the national labor force and/or replacing the foreign labor force (especially that which has recently entered the labor market) with the national labor force to encounter difficulties and challenges. Some of these difficulties are related to demographic factors, others to the government's employment and economic policies, still others to the characteristics of the national and the incoming foreign labor force, and to education and training (BinOubeid, 2003).

The government and the private sector are increasingly orientated towards employing the national labor force, and this is a positive orientation. However, the successive development plans (from the Fourth Plan 1985–1990 until the Eighth Plan 2005–2010) indicate that the number of jobs required in the labor market for citizens is much less than the number of young job seekers in that working age group (BinOubeid, 2003). This calls for the need to create new jobs and job opportunities for citizens seeking employment.

The challenges concerning education and work, according to some studies, are related to the relevance of the educational system to the needs of the labor market and the failure of the training programs to redress the skill deficiencies in some citizens. In spite of the increased expenditure on education and the increase in its output during the development boom of the Kingdom for more than three decades, this quantitative development was not accompanied by a similar qualitative development to meet the needs of the labor market. Similarly, the training programs failed to meet the need for workers equipped with skills required by the labor market. As the demand of the government and private institutions increased for specialized professionals in medical, engineering and scientific domains, the Ministry of Higher Education was compelled to seriously seek the best means to qualify citizens to obtain suitable jobs, fulfill the needs of the labor market with the required professions and provide manpower in all domains. The Ministry of Higher Education adopted two approaches to confront the challenges related to the inadequate relationship between the labor market and the training and educational programs:

The first approach: Establishing many new universities and limiting their educational programs to disciplines related to the labor market.

The second approach: Supporting scholarships to foreign universities through the CTHMSP which was established in 2004, with emphasis on the domains in which the labor market is suffering an obvious deficiency, such as Medicine, Medical Sciences, Pharmacy, Dentistry, Engineering, Computer Science, Accounting, Finance, Insurance and Law.

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Development of Student Admission Criteria in Saudi Universities: the Experience of the National Center for Assessment in Higher Education *

Faisal Bin Abdullah Mashary Al Saud¹

Abstract

In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as in other Arab countries, the demand for university education has increased over the past two decades, accompanied by grade inflation in secondary education; hence, there was a need to formulate admission criteria that ensure the selection of the best applicants for the various disciplines while safeguarding equity and equal opportunities. To achieve this general objective, The National Centre for Assessment in Higher Education was established as an autonomous national body to provide universities with standards and tests that can be used for admission. By employing such standards and tests, the Centre aims to avoid improvisation and arbitrariness in the development of admission tests and to standardize objectives, material, style and implementation. The Centre also aims to unify admission criteria across universities and promote the use of standard measurement methods that are capable of forecasting the level of student performance at university. Moreover, it aims to impact public education positively by promoting education that is oriented toward developing the desired capabilities and skills. Since the introduction of these standards and tests in 2003, significant integration has been achieved among the various admission criteria; namely, the General Certificate of Secondary Education, the aptitude test, and the achievement test. This integration bolstered trust in the admissions results, both in terms of their credibility in offering fair competition for students and in their predictive ability as a whole.

This paper presents a short description of the National Centre for Assessment in Higher Education project in Saudi Arabia, which was established in 2002. It deals with the philosophy and need for such a centre, as well as earlier examples of such institutions in advanced countries. It also presents a summary of the tests and standards offered by the Centre, in terms of their objectives, nature, method of implementation, and beneficiaries. Finally, the paper focuses on the quantitative aspect, clarifying how the Centre's tests and standards have reduced failure rates at universities and improved the quality of university education.

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I. Introduction

The education systems in many Arab countries are undergoing reform in an attempt to resolve problems related to increased competitiveness in higher education. These problems arise naturally from the spread of pre-university education and the labour market's need for qualified university graduates across a range of specializations. In comparison with world ratios, this increase in demand in some Arab states, including Saudi Arabia, covers the low index of students enrolled in post-secondary education for the targeted age category.

Although this phenomenon is healthy, it exerts pressure on the university educational system and gives increased importance to the General Secondary Education Exams that are required for entry to universities. This led secondary schools to raise the GPA figures for their graduates so that they would have a stronger chance to compete for university seats. The inflation in the General Secondary Certificate (GSC) grade stems from the fact that these grades were gradually entrusted to schools. Starting in the 2007 - 2008 academic year, the entire GSC grading in Saudi Arabia was placed in the hands of schools. This test decentralization led to evaluation disparities between schools and adversely affected equality of opportunity regarding entry to university education.

Public education officials deemed it necessary to distinguish between graduation from secondary education and enrolling in university education. The Ministry of Education aims to increase enrolment rates in public education and reduce failure and drop out rates; this issue needs to be dealt with separately from considerations of the GSC degree as the most important criterion in university admission.

II. The National Centre for Assessment in Higher Education

Despite the continuous expansion of university education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, some specializations benefit more than others from the increased demand in the labour market and there is more competition for admission to these specializations; hence some universities have adopted admission tests to select the best candidates. With the surge in these tests and the increase of their utility, the Ministry of Higher Education sought to coordinate the universities' efforts at a national level and to include higher education in general. It was made clear that these tests should be built upon sound scientific foundations and meet the goal of choosing the best candidates in a just manner.

For this purpose, the Ministry of Higher Education submitted to the Higher Education Council a memorandum to establish The National Centre for Assessment in Higher Education as an independent centre for the development and production of tests and standards. Royal Decree number 8/ 471, dated 19 /6 /1421 H (2000), was published ratifying the Council of Higher Education's decision. Endorsed by the Council of Ministers, the decree includes the following:

1. The university admission requirements should encompass tests in addition to the High school GPA. These tests should be prepared according to the following criteria:
 - a. Tests to measure students' abilities, skills and attitudes.
 - b. Tests to measure academic achievement.
2. Testing could be repeated more than once a year.
3. The establishment of a centre for educational assessment called "The National Centre for Assessment in Higher Education", which is financially and administratively independent

and will have a Board of Directors headed by the Minister of Higher Education.

4. The collection of a fee corresponding to the tests preparation costs to cover the centre's operational expenses, inclusive of the development and research conducted for this purpose.

The Royal Decree establishing the centre also stipulated that the centre prepares tests and standards to be used for profession licenses in relation to education outputs.

Since its establishment, the National Centre for Assessment in Higher Education (Centre) has strived to meet its goals in serving higher education institutions (HEIs). It has adopted a streamlined administrative structure in harmony with its nature of work, characterized by speed, accuracy and control. The Centre has also sought to benefit from part-time professionals in different consultative committees. Figure (1) shows the Centre's organizational structure. The following is a brief description of the structure's elements:

The Board of Directors: The Board of Directors is the Centre's highest authority; it establishes rules and regulations, strategic plans, annual budgets, and the Centre's final accounts; it also approves new measurement projects.

The Higher Consultative Committee: The Higher Consultative Committee is headed by the Chairman of the Board of Directors. The members of the Higher Consultative Committee include the Centre's Director and some of the members of the Board of Directors. It provides consultation and follow-up regarding the Centre's work in general.

Director of the Centre: The Director of the Centre supervises the Centre and its different units; he also tracks the daily progress of current projects.

Measurement and Tests Unit: This unit specializes in the preparation of tests and standards. This involves designing tests, adopting test dimensions, holding training sessions for item writers, overseeing item writing, arbitration and reviewing, preparing test models, undertaking item analysis, test control, test results control and test standardization.

Operations Unit: This unit deals with applying the tests: This involves the selection of test centres, identifying centre capacity and equipment, scheduling test administration, follow-up registration, formation of test committees, training observers and supervisors and scheduling their work, supervising test administration, printing test booklets, preparing test materials for delivery and delivering them, and supervising the archives and the printing press. All of the above mentioned processes and procedures are carried out in a way that guarantees security and quality at all times.

Research and Studies Unit: The unit is responsible for conducting research and studies related to the Centre's tests and standards, providing the Measurement and Tests Unit with results analysis and test standardization. It also develops the Centre's standards, provides consultation and training in standard measurement, and supervises the library and information centre.

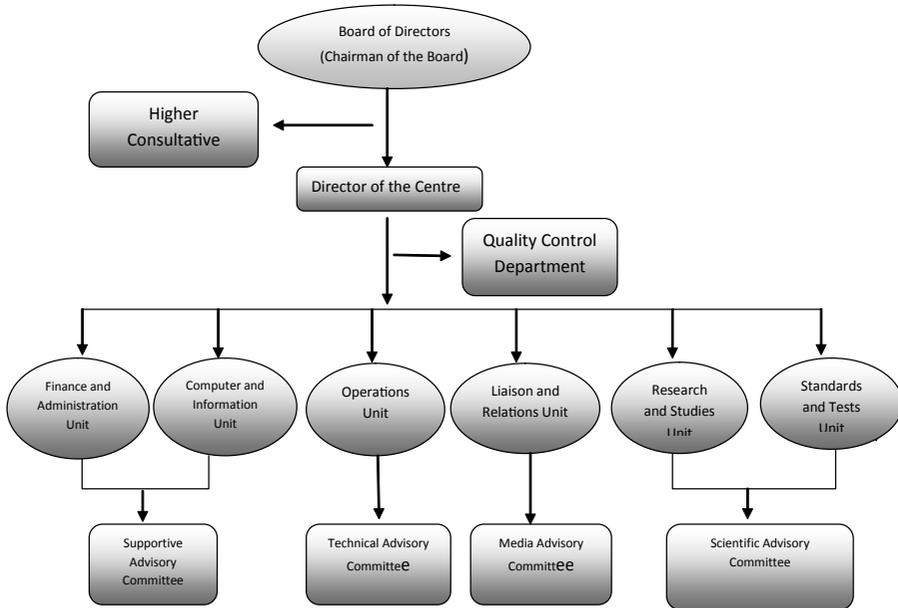
Communication and Public Relations Unit: This unit specializes in student and candidate affairs in terms of registration and publication of results, arranging meetings, visits and public seminars, publishing of centre-related materials and brochures, and managing the Centre's website.

Computer and Information Unit: This unit has the responsibility of providing, operating, and developing I.T. systems related to the Centre's work. It is also responsible for the management of information and data related to the tests, and for the supervision of technical procedures concerning the tests.

Finance and Administration Unit: This is a supportive unit that deals with the administrative and financial affairs of the Centre, its personnel, part-time consultants and other collaborators.

Quality Control Department

Figure 1: Organizational structure of the center



This department deals with the quality control of all the Centre's affairs. It establishes the standards of security and all related rules. This is especially relevant to all tests and test-related information, but encompasses all procedures involved. The department also works to streamline procedures, to enhance efficiency and quality, and seeks to obtain and maintain the Centre's program accreditation from international organizations and bodies.

Consultative Committees: Consultative committee members are specialists in the Centre's various fields of work. Each committee is headed by the Centre's Director or his deputy, his aides, and some professionals with experience in the committee's work.

The Objectives of the Centre: The Centre seeks to meet an array of goals, the most important being the following:

1. Play a leading role in the development of educational assessment instruments at all levels of higher education.
2. Contribute to the raising of performance and efficiency levels in higher education by measuring educational and achievement indicators, and developing positive aspects of education.
3. Prepare, submit, and manage admission tests for the HEIs.
4. Fulfil the need for specialized professional tests to strengthen and enhance requests from businesses and professions, working to their needs and specifications.
5. Provide consultative services to measurement centres and departments in education institutions.
6. Pursue scientific research and conduct studies specialized in the field of educational measurement.

III. Examples from international experiences

Some developed countries, especially the United States, sought to organize the measurement and assessment process in education in the early twentieth century. In China this was begun even before the 1949 Revolution. Many other countries have attempted to standardize the measurement and assessment process in their educational system, as in India, Turkey, Australia, the Philippines and some Scandinavian countries.

In addition to governmental and independent assessment centres, centres have been established in universities, serving only the universities and the surrounding environment. There are also special centres owned by private institutions or by a consortium of universities and private companies. All these centres have one common goal: improving education through measurement and assessment. Some of the most prominent services delivered by these centres are university admission tests aimed at providing reliable and valid instruments to enable universities to select students in a fair manner and to ensure low attrition rates. Admission tests constitute an indicator of the enrolled students' level in any university, which in turn influences the university's international ranking (Monks, J and Ehrenberg, R, 1989).

With the expected increase in the number of students wishing to enter universities, universities have paid great attention to the selection of the most qualified and able students. In fact, Crouse (1985) has indicated that the use of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) by colleges enables them to better predict the success of their students.

Hereafter, the tests used in some countries for university admission will be reviewed.

China: The National College Entrance Examination is almost the only criterion for admission to Chinese universities. Students take it in the last year of high school. Poor performance in this test implies that the student has lost the opportunity to attend university studies. The Chinese Ministry of Education has been preparing, supervising and offering this test since 1978.

South Korea: The Korea Institute for Curriculum & Evaluation (KICE) was established in 1998 and is the body responsible for assessment and evaluation tests in Korea. The Korean government is responsible for the institute's supervision and financial support. The institute offers many university admission tests, the most important being the:

- Medical Education Eligibility Test (MEET)
- College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT).

Australia: The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) is the body responsible for admission tests to enter universities in Australia. One of the most important university admission tests in Australia is the International Student Admissions Test (ISAT). The Council also provides the Medical School Admission Test (MSAT) and the Australian Law Schools Entrance Test (ALSET).

Turkey: The Turkish State has passed through several stages until it reached the current university admission tests system. It is called the Student Selection Exam (ÖSS - Öğrenci Seçme Sınavı). The body responsible for the test is the Student Selection and Placement Centre (ÖSYM - Öğrenci Seçme Yerleştirme Merkezi). This Centre is affiliated to the Council of Higher Education and is financed through fees collected from candidates who applied the centre's tests.

Japan: The competition among Japanese students to enter university is unrivalled. Japanese universities require high levels of performance, based on a general admission test common to all universities and a second test specific to each university. Japanese universities attach little importance to high school records or grades.

The common test is used in more than 132 universities and educational institutions. It is prepared and administered by The National Centre for University Examination (NCUE). The second test is

prepared by the university, applied after the publication of the NCUE test results; and limited to students who have passed it. The students who do not pass the university test have only one other chance of admission to another university in the same year.

Finland: The first admission test undertaken in Finnish universities goes back to 1852; it was a criterion for admission in the University of Helsinki. This test measured the applicant's general knowledge and the extent of his knowledge of Latin. The current test now measures the applicant's knowledge and skills required for university studies. The Matriculation Examination Board prepares, administers and grades the test.

United States of America: Admission tests are one of the most important conditions for admission into American universities. The two main bodies responsible for the university admission tests process are the Educational Testing Services (ETS) and the American College Test (ACT)².

ETS prepares and supervises the admission test known as the Scholastic Assessment Test or SAT. ETS also prepares aptitude tests related to the faculties of medicine, dentistry, and law. In addition, achievement tests related to specific courses such as mathematics, sciences and others, are prepared. The use of SAT began in 1926 and remains the most famous and the most used of all admission tests in the United States.

ACT offers the test known as the American College Test. This test is intended to supply universities with information concerning students wishing to enrol by measuring the student's acquisition of basic skills. It is used for university admission in some U.S states.

Sweden: University education selection is based upon the student's performance in secondary school; this test is unified and codified for all courses at the national level. It allows a comparison of students in one or in all of the courses all over Sweden, based on common criteria.

However, some experts began to study the possibility of using an admission test for higher education applicants. After having examined a large number of world tests and having studied their selective value, the Sweden Scholastic Aptitude Test was adopted.

IV. Unified tests goals

Unified national tests seek to meet many objectives including:

1. Ensuring tests are consistent in terms of substance, style, and goals.
2. Contributing to the standardization of admission criteria in various HEIs and facilitate the admission procedure.
3. Removing the burdens and costs of admission tests provided by each university separately.
4. Increasing objectivity and the fair selection of students to universities.
5. Using new standards in addition to the high school GPA for admission to universities.
6. Building standardized tests constructed on a universally recognized scientific basis.
7. Using selection methods able to predict the success of the student at the university.
8. Ensuring a positive impact on general education by informing teachers of the mental abilities to be tested, and encouraging a reduction the memorization-related tasks.

V. Tests offered by the Centre

The Centre offers four main tests used in the university admission process:

² The original name was American College Testing Program, In late 1996 they changed the name to ACT (pronounced «A - C - T») (<http://www.act.org/aboutact/index.html>)

1. The General Abilities Test (GAT).
2. The Scientific Achievement Test (SAAT).
3. The Standard Test for English language proficiency (STEP).
4. The Graduate Aptitude Test.

1. The General Abilities Test

This is a two and a half hour test, in Arabic, measuring the analytical and inferential ability of the student. These capabilities are built and refined through learning, experience, educational attitudes, and critical reading, both within and outside the school.

The test consists of two parts: verbal and quantitative.

The test measures learning ability, regardless of the uniqueness of individual subjects since it measures the ability of the test-taker in each of the following areas:

- Reading comprehension
- Logical relationship recognition
- Basic mathematical concept issue resolution
- Inference
- Perception of patterns in relationships

The Centre publishes two versions of aptitude tests, one for the scientific track and one for the humanities track; versions differ in the weight and level of the quantitative part of the test.

Students are evaluated and their grades monitored based on their performance within a group (norm-referenced test); test versions are equated and calibrated based on a mean score of (65) and a standard deviation of (10).

2. The Achievement Test

This is a three-hour test, aimed at knowing the extent to which the student possesses the fundamentals studied in high school. The test focuses on the basic knowledge that the student needs in college. The questions encompass various levels of knowledge; there are questions that require comprehension, others that require application and some that require inference.

The achievement test is divided into two types:

- a. The Achievement Test in natural sciences relates to courses in biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, and the English language. Questions are equally divided among these courses.
- b. The Achievement Test in human sciences, relates to courses in the Arabic language, legal sciences, history and geography.

3. The Standard Test for English language proficiency (STEP)

This is a two and a half hour test determining the applicant's level of English language proficiency. The test consists of 100 questions distributed among the test sections of reading comprehension, syntax (grammar), listening comprehension and compositional analysis.

The test aims to be used for the following requirements:

- a. Admission to English language departments.
- b. Exemption from certain English language courses.
- c. As a placement test for English programs.
- d. Certify students' English language proficiency level for use in teaching, for the enrolment in graduate studies, or in business and other areas.

4. The Graduate Aptitude Test

This is a special test for university graduates wishing to pursue Masters and PhD studies or to join post-university programs. It consists of three parts: a verbal section, a quantitative section, and a section dedicated to logical analysis and interpretation.

The Centre also offers tests and measures of a professional nature, including:

1. The General Tour Guide License Test.
2. The Regional Tour Guide Test.
3. The Teacher Professional Competences Test.

The Centre is currently preparing another set of tests, including:

1. Arabic Language Test for non-Arabic speakers.
2. Engineering Professional Test (for the Saudi Council of Engineers).
3. Interest Inventory and ability Test (for the Human Resources Development Fund).
4. Investigators Professional Competencies Test (for the benefit of the Bureau of Investigation and Public Prosecution).
5. Tests for giftedness and creativity (for the King Abdul Aziz and his Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity).

VI. New admission standards

Universities gradually began to see the benefits of the Centre's tests system and began to adopt them as admission criteria.

Some universities used to adopt the high school GPA as the only admission criterion, while some used their own admission tests. Now, however, the Centre's tests, in addition to the high school GPA, are the new unified university admission criteria.

Students are able to take the Centre's tests in locations close to their residence and at a time of their choosing. After taking the required tests, they can then apply to any of the Kingdom's universities in person or electronically. The Centre provides universities with the student results, reporting the highest grade obtained by the student. The data reported is then put in the university database as a reference for student admission.

The following tests represent the criteria used by universities for admission:

1. The High School GPA: it applies to all disciplines and is given a ratio ranging between 20%-60%.
2. The Abilities Test: for all disciplines; it is given a ratio ranging between 30%-40%.
3. The Achievement Test: for some specializations; it is given a proportion ranging between 30%-40%.
4. The English language proficiency test (STEP): for English language disciplines in some universities. The students having the best performance are chosen if they have also met the discipline's general admission conditions.
5. The Graduate Aptitudes Test: used by some universities to select candidates for some Graduate programs.

Since the Centre is independent from universities, it doesn't impose specific weights to the tests, but lets the universities choose what is suitable for them. However, on the basis of its research, the Centre recommends optimum proportions giving the highest correlation to the performance at the university.

Having applied these standards for six years, universities' admission officials have noted the Centre's tests ability to discriminate between students. This was not possible with the high school

grades alone, where student grades were too close, therefore making it difficult to discriminate between them. Universities have also benefited from the Centre's tests in terms of determining the student's specialization track and helping to ensure student retention in their specialization fields.

VII. The Centre's contributions to the improvement of education efficiency

It was mentioned earlier that the Centre's tests aim to directly enhance university education, and indirectly contribute to the improvement of pre-university output, through:

1. Focusing on the aspects of thinking, analysis, inference, and critical reading of the student.
2. Creating a competitive setting among students for achievement and good learning methods.
3. Improving higher education's input by giving priority to people with higher skills and capabilities, leading to the improvement of higher education's output.
4. Placing students in specializations according to their skills and abilities, and therefore properly utilizing university places and raising student performance levels in those disciplines.
5. Creating a stimulating and productive learning environment through the achievement of the tests' and standards normative goals.

To make sure that the goals are achieved, the following is done:

1. Preparing periodic studies linking university performance to admission criteria, including the grades obtained by students in the Centre's tests, in order to determine their importance and usefulness in predicting and improving performance.
2. Studying students' performance (tests and exams) in university, and provide feedback to public education and higher education officials.
3. Monitoring school performance and school district performance through their students' results in national measurements. This allows strengths and weaknesses to be identified in order to benefit from the strengths and to avoid the factors that led to weaknesses. Monitoring includes publication of school ranks based on student performance in the Centre's tests.
4. Raising awareness on the factors facilitating enhancement in educational performance. Organising raining programs for teachers and educational supervisors, and preparing standard measures governing the teaching profession.

Some Results: Some of the Centre's studies have led to results concerning student performance at the university level. It should be noted that these results concern the period preceding the central Grade-12 test abolition.

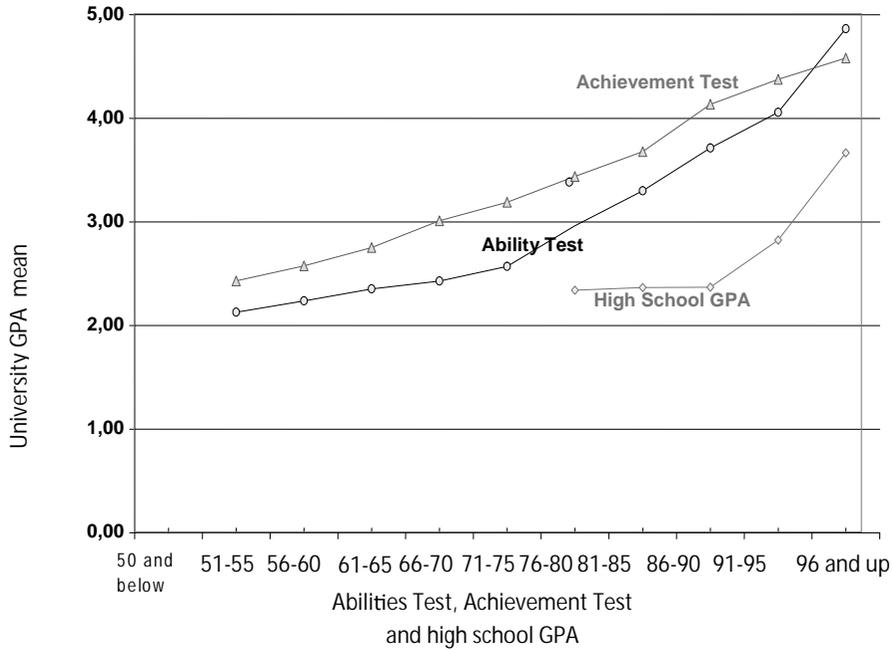
Some of the results:

1. The General Abilities Test showed a correlation with the university cumulative GPA of 0.45 for the first year in the case of scientific discipline students. In many cases, the correlation with the Abilities Test was far in excess of the correlation with the high school grade.
2. The General Abilities Test raised the total correlation by 38%.
3. In the science colleges, the Achievement Test showed a correlation with university performance ranging between 0.51 and 0.59, making it the most important predictor of university performance.

4. The Achievement Test alone has raised the total correlation by 55%, this ratio exceeded 100% in some colleges, meaning that the test has doubled the correlation.
5. The universities have witnessed an improvement in performance, the GPA having risen from 2.71 in 2003 /2004 (1424 /1425 H) to 2.93 in 2005 /2006 (1426/ 1427 H).
6. The university drop-out rate in the first year fell from more than 25% in the first year of application to 14.8%.

The diagram below illustrates the relationship between admission criteria, namely: the high school GPA and the Abilities Test grade, the Achievement Test grade, with the university first year GPA before the decentralization of the high school tests. The figure shows a positive correlation between student grades obtained in the Abilities Test and the Achievement Test with first year GPA at the university along the entire range of grades. However, the correlation for the high school GPA starts only after 90%. That is to say that high school GPA below the 90% rate is unhelpful to discriminate between students.

Figure 2: Relationship between admission criteria and the university GPA (before abolition of general secondary school tests)



VIII. The Centre outside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The National Centre for Assessment in Higher Education has presented its experience at seminars and meetings attended by admission and registration officials in Arab Gulf States. This has led to the application of the Abilities Test in The Kingdom of Bahrain (University of Bahrain), the Sultanate of Oman (Sultan Qaboos University), and the State of Qatar (The University of Qatar). The University of Bahrain - the main governmental university in the Kingdom of Bahrain – has

adopted the test and used it as an additional university admission criterion for all students. The Centre is administering the test twice a year at the University of Bahrain for high school students expected to graduate and wishing to enter university.

Many Gulf and Arab universities have adopted the Centre's tests as an admission condition for students graduating from Saudi colleges. Also, universities in the Arab Republic of Egypt and in the Republic of Sudan have recently adopted the Centre's tests as a condition for the admission of all Egyptian and Sudanese citizens graduating from Saudi high schools.

Subsequent to visits by delegations from many European, Australian and New Zealand universities, these universities have adopted the Centre's tests as criteria for the nomination of students on scholarships for medical studies programs in these universities.

IX. Summary of lessons learned from the experience

1. The Saudi experience in the field of national university admission tests is a new one in the Arab world; this experience has benefited from successful international experiences in the field of student selection for university education.
2. Although university admission in the Kingdom is mainly to governmental universities, these universities have decided, individually, to apply these tests as admission criteria, and to give these tests weights according to their importance. No university has made its own tests following the introduction of these national tests.
3. The establishment of The National Centre for Assessment in Higher Education has brought many benefits, some to students, some to the universities, and some to education in general. In general, the National Centre for Assessment has contributed to increasing confidence in students admitted into university programs and in reducing their attrition rate. It has strengthened equity and fairness in the university admission systems.
4. The Saudi experience did not encounter any restrictions to any particular practice and, on the basis of studies carried out by the Centre it has modified and improved its practices.
5. Among the benefits emanating from the establishment of a Centre specializing in educational assessment is the support it gives to assessment projects relevant to the educational and professional community.
6. The Centre has focused on general cognitive educational goals. These are not guaranteed by the simple presence of these tests within the universities. Convergent efforts are necessary to maintain these common interests.
7. The financial and administrative autonomy of the Centre has played a major role in its success; the Centre's reliance on self-financing from test fees is also an important factor in operational efficiency. However, it is proposed that a part of the annual budget allocated for education be utilized as an open subsidy to support the Centre.
8. The Centre's work in the field of measurement and professional testing has played a key role in shaping the assessment experience as well as raising public awareness concerning the importance of assessment and its noble goals. In addition, it has become clear that assessment is not only related to university admission, but has a much broader impact on the quality of the educational system which in turn has positive effects on the development of the country as a whole.

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Higher Education in Saudi Arabia 1998 - 2008: Towards Building a Knowledge Society*

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Abstract

The paper aims at exploring the progress of higher education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) in a decade (1998 - 2008), and studying and analyzing the challenges the sector of higher education (HE) has faced as well as the achievements it has accomplished. The paper uses the descriptive-analytical approach in treating the data and information and the issues it deals with. It overview the progress of HE in KSA in relation to international changes, to regional and Arab challenges, as well as to national changes and challenges. It presents a descriptive background of the Kingdome regarding geographical and demographic aspects and its implication in terms of offer and demand. Then there will be an explanation of the Strategy through which the MOHE responded to changes and challenges, by introducing a range of plans, initiatives and short and long term projects. Through these plans and initiatives it was possible for MOHE to gradually overcome the challenges and to transform them into productive programmes and projects so as to reach achievements on different level and areas. These have been shown through a number of performance indicators of development. The paper also presents a number of institutions, centers and bodies that emerged from the Development Strategy, in addition to implemented programmes and initiatives, along with the indicators of performance that were used to measure the efficiency of these programmes in developing the HE system and improving its quality and excellence.

I. Introduction

During the current decade, Higher Education is witnessing great dynamics and interest at both international and Arab levels. Many international bodies (like strategic planning centers, academic accreditation bodies, quality assurance organizations, etc) search for the most efficient strategies and appropriate methods to develop university education in a way that aligns with modern forms and methods. These are used to structure Higher Education Institutions and urge them to play an active role in building a knowledge society, developing scientific research, enhancing quality of the educational process, serving and developing society by balancing between globalization requirements in the 21st century and individual needs along with local society needs. HE in KSA

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is an influencing and influenced part of this developmental dynamics. It is in fact going through a great developmental phase in form, content, quantity, and quality, aiming at using the most recent global trends in HE literature, notably that of building a knowledge society and developing a productive knowledge-based economy. The development and modernization movement has encompassed structures, performance philosophies and trends, research, as well as the scientific, educational and developmental components of programs. It also included the establishment of a number of universities and colleges in different regions and provinces and the restructuring of a large number of departments and majors in compliance with overall national development requirements and labor market needs. All this was linked to issues related to quality and standards. The accelerated growth and development in the HE system along with surrounding factors and changes are necessarily reflected in the different HEIs in terms of their roles, input, processes, and output. Therefore, there is a need for a comprehensive scientific strategy to develop HEIs, to control and optimize development processes, and measure the expected level of performance that each educational institution should comply with in order to ensure quality and excellence.

A World Bank report entitled "Building Knowledge Societies: New Challenges Facing HE, 2002" indicates that HE has faced unprecedented challenges since the beginning of the 21st century, resulting from the impact of globalization, the information and communications revolution, and the increasing importance of knowledge as a development factor. However, there are opportunities emanating from these challenges, since the role of education in general and of HE in particular seems more influencing than ever in knowledge economies and knowledge-based societies. HE also plays a vital role in the creation of intellectual ability, as the production and use of knowledge depend on it. It promotes continuing education to renew the knowledge and skills of all individuals. At the same time, new types of HEIs and new forms of competition urge traditional institutions to accelerate the pace in changing their modes of operation and performance and to benefit from the great opportunities provided by new Information and Communication Technologies.

In accordance with these developments, a number of countries have sought to introduce radical shifts in their HE systems, particularly through changing funding and management methods, institutional excellence, establishing evaluation and accreditation mechanisms, reforming curricula and through technological innovation. However, development has been uneven and irregular with clear disparities between HE systems in developing countries and those of developed and industrialized countries. The report shows that most developing countries and countries in transition are struggling to overcome the difficulties resulting from inappropriate reactions to existing challenges. Certain issues have not yet been settled, notably, the sustainable expansion of HE coverage, reducing inequity in admission opportunities, the improvement of quality and educational relevance, and the adoption of efficient administrative structures and practices. Despite the fact that rates of enrollment in HE have risen significantly in all developing countries, the enrollment gap between most developed and developing countries has widened. In many countries, outdated administrative practices have prevented HEIs from adopting the change and implementing reforms and innovations.

This report confirms that in this context, developing countries and countries in transition face a double challenge: on the one hand, there is a need to settle existing problems surrounding their HE systems, such as coverage, equity, quality, and administration. On the other hand, the aforementioned countries are - like industrialized countries - confronted to new challenges resulting from the establishment of knowledge-based societies and democratic societies. The main concern is about the ability of these countries to adjust and form their own HE systems in a way that can help them confront these old and new challenges.

This paper considers a knowledge society as an integrated system (with knowledge economy as one of its components) that takes into account the production and use of knowledge in all fields including scientific, medical, engineering, human and social specializations. This suggests focusing on the two kinds of knowledge mentioned by Else and Roberts (2000): the frontier knowledge, produced by research, development and innovation and the transferable knowledge, interested in social and human knowledge and transferred from generation to generation. Bakri (2008) affirms that five axes should be considered while building a knowledge society system:

- **Strategy axis:** that works on developing the necessary plans.
- **Technology axis:** that involves the technologies we need or the technologies from which we can benefit.
- **Institutions axis:** that concerns institutions operating in the various knowledge fields, including education, scientific research, innovation and creativity institutions, media institutions, institutions that provide goods and services using renewable knowledge.
- **Knowledge environment axis:** that should contribute in enhancing knowledge cycle activities and benefiting from them, not obstructing them.
- **Knowledge cycle axis:** it is at the center of previous acts and includes knowledge production, dissemination and use, which lead to sustainable development.

Al Qotob (2008) indicates that the philosophy of excellence in university education is based on the following pillars:

- The comprehensive analytical critical vision of the reality of university education in its interaction and its relation with social reality namely its changes, crises and forward movement.
- Establishing methodological paths that university education should follow and that are explored through excellence in international experiences, expertise and models.
- Monitoring principles and norms adopted by university education and goals that should be attained in the future.
- Introducing new organizational visions to university education so that it overcomes current obstacles and crises, uses global experiences and adopts national characteristics as dynamic mechanisms confirming their existence.

1. Purpose of the paper

This paper aims at examining the evolution of HE in KSA during the period 1998- 2008 by studying and analyzing the challenges it has faced and the achievements the HE sector has made. KSA seeks to build a knowledge society and an economy that is based on the production, dissemination and use of knowledge to accompany contemporary world trends and develop the HE system in all fields. Moreover, this paper also intends to highlight the most important features of the Ministry's strategy to develop the university education system and to show the most prominent performance indicators related to the strategy's axes.

2. Questions

This paper is based on a central question: What are the main features of the HE evolution in the country during the period 1998 -2008 and what are the most important axes of the strategy used to develop the HE system in KSA?

Two other questions emerge from this central question:

- What are the development programs and plans included in the short term path of the strategy?

- What are the development programs and plans included in the long term path of the strategy?

3. Methodology

This paper used the analytical descriptive approach to process data and information and study the cases handled, which means that it does not only describe the data and information, but also explains and analyzes them to deduce the main indicators.

The presentation and discussion methodology is based on the following four sections:

Global changes: This section deals with the changes the HE sector faces at the global level.

General descriptive background of KSA: It provides descriptive information on the country from geographic and demographic viewpoints and deals with the growth of the HE sector and in the context of supply and demand.

Local changes and challenges: It seeks to identify the challenges and changes that influence HE locally.

The Ministry's response to the changes. This section reviews plans and initiatives and the strategy adopted by the Ministry to respond to, or address, different changes, including introducing developmental programs for the Ministry and for HEIs and the ways to benefit from opportunities and to decrease pressure on the system.

II. Global changes facing HE

The main global changes that face HE are as follows (World Bank report, 2002, Ammal, 2006, Cooke, 2002, Frank & Richard, 2004):

1. Human societies have gone through major shifts from agrarian societies to industrial ones up to knowledge societies that focus on the production, dissemination and use of knowledge in various productive activities and services,
2. The growing and developing role of service sectors in keeping abreast of such shifts,
3. The development in the role, resources, and mechanisms of HE as a service sector to respond to these shifts,
4. The quality of training of citizens and the vital role that HE plays in making competent individuals, and empowering them in terms of their command of information, skills and applied knowledge. In addition to the quality of the programs offered by HE,
5. The transformation of knowledge into a profitable investment through promoting new ideas such as science parks, technology incubators, intellectual property, global pioneering, etc.
6. The restructuring of the plans, programs, and methods of universities in order to provide students with the necessary knowledge and skills and enable them to go into a labor market that relies on knowledge,
7. The increase in admission capacity in accordance with the growth of social demand to higher education, as a consequence of the global demographic explosion,
8. The emergence of new concepts in HE literature that international organizations have adopted and to which local policies have responded. On the quantitative level, there are concepts like: right to education, education for all and equal opportunities. On the qualitative level, there are concepts like: quality, academic accreditation, educational return, cost, the developmental role of education, and the internal and external efficiency,
9. The emergence of modern means of communication, the accelerating progress in

- technology, the sweeping orientation towards globalization and internet access, as well as the new educational forms like distance learning, E-learning, and virtual universities,
10. The diversification of HEIs funding sources,
 11. The importance given to HE relevance,
 12. HEIs administration, its particularity and program quality.
 13. Quality enhancement at different levels in HE.
 14. Coping with these changes requires large financial resources and qualified staff.

III. General descriptive background of KSA

As an introductory remark to this section, a number of Saudi geographic, demographic and social features need to be highlighted:

1. KSA covers a vast geographical area equivalent to 2.250.000 km which is close to a quarter of Europe's area and fourfold the area of an industrialized country like France;
2. KSA has one of the highest population growth rates in the world (2.5%);
3. The young constitute the largest proportion of the Saudi population. The Saudi age structure is as follows (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2007):
 - 0 - 14 years: 40%
 - 15 - 24 years: 22%
 - 25 - 64 years: 34%
 - 65 years and above: 4%
4. The geographical distribution of communities is characterized by a wide dissemination over an area that almost equals that of a continent.
5. There is a gap between supply and demand (number of high school graduates and available seats in HEIs); the number of high school graduates has actually increased by 400% between 1993 and 2008.

IV. Local changes and challenges that HE faces

The major local changes and challenges that HE faces are the following (Al- Ohali, 2007):

1. The large geographical area of the country, it nearly equals that of a continent and is almost a quarter of Europe's area.
2. The rapid population growth; KSA has one of the highest population growth rates in the world. One example that clearly shows this is the number of high school graduates that has increased by 400% during the 14 years between 1993 and 2008.
3. The young constitute the largest proportion of the Saudi population (ages from 15 to 24 those who are destined for enrollment in HEIs).
4. The large geographic distribution of communities in an area that almost equals that of a continent, their different structures and age categories have added another burden on HEIs.
5. The Saudi economy was almost totally dependent on one resource (petrol), which exposes the economy to many changes and shifts according to the local, regional and international circumstances.
6. The increase in the number of high school graduates and the widening gap between supply and demand (number of high school graduates and available seats in HEIs). The admissions problem reached a peak in 1995 because of the lack of alternatives to

universities, especially in technical and vocational education. The government had made great efforts to solve the admissions problem.

7. For different economic and local reasons (notably after the 1991 Gulf war and its economic repercussions), the evolution of HEIs did not proceed at a normal pace, which resulted in some decline in the implementation of the Ministry's plans.
8. The plurality and diversity of HEIs supervising authorities, which reduces the effectiveness, integration, and productivity level of the HE system.

V. How did the Ministry respond to the changes and challenges?

Despite all the global changes and local challenges faced by HE, there have been some clear and obvious achievements made by Saudi universities, particularly their efforts aimed at ensuring the manpower for the last 50 years in both the public and private sectors. Universities have also contributed in development-related research and studies. As for the response to the above-mentioned global and local changes, the Ministry and universities did not address HE issues blindly; as they based their action on an integrated scientific approach with essential pillars. These notably include: taking into account the goals, policies and programs resulting from the country's five year development plans, benefiting from international experiences in developing the HE system through a set of programs and procedures; and short, middle, and long term plans. Thus, there are two development paths:

- The short term path: It concentrated on admission, capacity and HE relevance.
- The long term path: In addition to continuing focus on admission and relevance issues, HE addressed the following: quality, diversification of financial resources, scientific research, overseas scholarships schemes, modernization of administrative regulations, international partnerships and strategic planning.

Developmental initiatives, plans and programs had the following distinctive features and characteristics:

1. Diversity and comprehensiveness of all HE sectors.
2. Flexibility in responding to local, regional, and international changes.
3. Taking society's needs into consideration and keeping up with development requirements.
4. Benefiting from international experiences and dealing with globalization positively.
5. Creating a competitive environment among universities and providing the necessary support to promote creativity and excellence.
6. Ensuring total quality criteria in programs and institutions and guaranteeing attainment of highest quality levels.
7. Allowing universities and HEIs to mutually benefit from their experiences through inter-learning and ensuring that they become learning organizations.

To have a clear comprehensive vision of the adopted strategy in the development of the HE system in KSA, in both paths regarding plans and initiatives, the questions in this paper will be addressed as a comprehensive central question allowing the reader to see the principal components of the strategy. This section of the paper relied on a number of Ministry reports (Ministry of HE, 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009). For organizational and methodological purposes related to the nature of this paper, the plans and initiatives were distributed into the following themes:

1. Admission and capacity
2. Compliance with development needs and the labor market
3. Quality

4. Diversification of funding sources
5. Scientific research
6. Overseas scholarships schemes
7. Modernization of administrative regulations in HE
8. International partnerships
9. Strategic planning

As mentioned previously, the Ministry's response to changes and challenges can be summarized in two paths: short term plans and programs and long term plans and programs.

1. Admission and capacity

Short term planning: With the widening gap between supply and demand, between high school graduates and available seats in HEIs and the increase by 400% of the number of high school graduates between 1993 and 2008, the Ministry has begun implementing the following initiatives:

- a. Reducing the gap between supply and demand by increasing admission opportunities in universities and boosting capacity, which led to the following:
 - 1) Increase of admissions in both private and governmental universities, which soared from 68,000 seats in 2004 (before the affiliation of Girls' Colleges and Teachers Colleges to the MOHE) to almost 205,000 seats in 2008, an increase of up to 201%.
 - 2) The number of admitted students during the first semester of 2008 in all HEIs (including universities) reached 250,000 male and female students.
 - 3) The universities capacity rate in 2008 reached 88% of the number of overall high school graduates, which is one of the highest world admission rates.
 - 4) The number of private HEIs stood at 7 universities and 20 colleges. More than 100 preliminary permits have been issued to allow the establishment of more private colleges. 10,000 scholarships were awarded to outstanding male and female students in private colleges and universities.
- b. The expansion of Community Colleges. The establishment of Community Colleges refers to the importance of HE program diversification to ensure a qualified workforce to meet society's needs and carry out development plans. Their academic achievement and cooperative training characterize Community Colleges, which offer applied and vocational majors required by the labor market. As examples of these majors include: Applied Medical Sciences, Computer and Network Technology, Biology and Microorganisms Laboratory Technician, English Language, Marketing, Financial Management, Accounting, and others. Some programs were even designed in coordination with the chambers of commerce.

Community Colleges have two main programs:

- 1) Developmental programs that prepare high school graduates to go into the labor market in productive areas and consolidate their skills through training programs.
- 2) Transition programs that provide an opportunity for outstanding students to pursue a university education.
- c. The development of applied programs and diplomas presented by universities through deanships of community services and applied studies colleges. These programs and diplomas are characterized by the following:
 - 1) They are designed according to labor market needs.
 - 2) They focus on applied and skilled aspects.

- 3) They are so diverse that they admit high school graduates and theoretical major graduates, and develop them to conform with the available labor opportunities in the public and private sectors.
- d. The establishment of parallel education programs in universities that cater for students who are unable to enroll in morning (regular) programs and disciplines. Parallel education programs are presented with the same quality of original programs with just the timing difference as they are provided during the evenings.

Long-term planning:

It focuses on completing growth in the following aspects:

- Geographical growth
- Quantitative growth
- Qualitative growth

Long-term planning is also about developing the elements of the academic environment.

These include:

- The learning environment
- The faculty member
- The student
- The learning programs and plans

Development also included the two sectors of HE:

- Governmental universities and colleges (HE)
- Private universities and colleges (HE)

Long-term planning contains a set of strategic plans, programs and projects such as:

- a. Completing the quantitative and qualitative growth in HEIs. The main indicators for this growth until the end of 2008 were:
 - 1) The establishment of 12 new governmental universities, with applied scientific faculties covering different majors such as all branches of the Health Sciences (Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Applied Medical Sciences, Nursing), Engineering Colleges, and Computer and Business Techniques. Thus, the number of governmental universities is now 20.
 - 2) In four years, the number of universities has increased from 8 to 20. Studies will be transferred within the next two years to new university campuses for the following universities: Jazan University, Najran University, Al-Baha University, University of Tabuk, AlJouf University, Northern Borders University and colleges in other provinces.
 - 3) The number of faculties has reached 423 in 76 provinces; they used to cover 16 provinces in the past. Nearly 700,000 male and female students attend them today.
 - 4) The number of accredited colleges in new universities is 190, attended by over 170,000 male and female students.
 - 5) There are 7 private universities and 20 private colleges that have scientific and applied majors in different fields.
 - 6) More than 100 preliminary permits have been issued to allow for the establishment of private colleges. In 2008, 9 definitive licenses were issued, as well as 19 preliminary licenses, 6 general accreditation licenses and 10 special licenses.

Due to this expansion in university education, the number of colleges has increased as shown in the table 1:

Table 1: Indicators of growth in universities and colleges affiliated to the Ministry of HE

	Unit	2002 /2003	2008*	Growth rates
		Total	All faculties affiliated to the Ministry after adherence of Girls' Colleges, Teachers Colleges and Health Colleges	
1	Governmental universities	8	20	% 150
2	University Colleges	199	423	%113
3	Colleges of Medicine	7	19	%171
	Colleges of Dentistry	3	11	%267
	Colleges of Pharmacy	3	13	%333
	Colleges of Applied Medical Sciences	3	24	%700
	Colleges of General Health and Health Informatics	0	1	-
	Nursing Colleges	0	5	-
	Health Colleges and institutes	0	50	-
	Engineering Colleges	7	26	%271
	Colleges of Sciences	7	27	%285
	Colleges of Computer	3	18	%500
	Community Colleges	20	52	%160
4	Teaching hospitals (included in the universities budgets)	3	12	%300
5	Private Universities	1	7	%600
6	Private Colleges	4	20	%400
7	Number of students enrolled in governmental and private colleges and universities affiliated to the Ministry	67,855**	205,000	%201

* Data after teachers and girls colleges as well as health Colleges were affiliated to the Ministry on 21/6/2007 (5/6/1428 AH).

** These statistics do not include students who enrolled in Teachers Colleges and Girls' Colleges not affiliated to the Ministry at the time.

These colleges had the necessary financial allocations for installations and equipment. They also assigned the qualifications of teachers and faculty members they needed.

- b. Completing the plans for university education expansion in different regions and provinces. In addition, facilitating HE opportunities for all male and female students in their regions in line with any development plans. The main indicators are:
- 1) An increase in the number of regions where HE opportunities are available from 9 to 13 administrative regions.
 - 2) An increase in the number of provinces to 76.
 - 3) An increase in the number of Colleges from 199 to 423.
 - 4) The growth rate in different sectors:
 - Governmental universities: 150%
 - Private universities: 600%
 - University colleges: 113%
 - Private colleges: 400%
 - Enrolled students: 201%

Table 2: Geographical distribution of colleges in different Saudi regions

	Unit	2002/ 2003	2008*	Growth rates
		Total	All faculties affiliated to the Ministry after adherence of Girls' Colleges,	
1	Number of regions where HEIs are found	13	13	% 0
2	Number of provinces where HEIs affiliated to MOHE are found	65	76	%17
3	Number of university colleges in the regions	199	423	113%
3	Riyadh	46	105	128%
	Mecca	42	74	76%
	Medina	15	33	120%
	Kassim	15	28	87%
	Eastern Area	26	49	88%
	Asseer	18	38	111%
	Hael	5	12	140%
	Tabouk	5	12	140%
	Baha	6	12	100%
	Northern Frontiers	4	12	200%
	Jouf	7	21	200%
	Jazan	7	14	100%
Najran	3	13	333%	

* Data after teachers and girls colleges as well as health Colleges were affiliated to the Ministry on 21/6/2007 (5/6/1428 AH).

2. Compliance with development needs and the labor market

Its main indicators until the end of 2008 were:

- a. The Ministry of HE in coordination with universities has restructured colleges, programs and majors. The main indicators are:
 - 1) The reduction of admissions in some departments, the merging of existing departments, the separation of departments, the transformation of some facilities into Colleges, limiting studies to postgraduate level or shutting down some departments in light of the labor market needs. The admission rate this year (2008) in labor market-related majors is 82.73%.
 - 2) Opening new colleges and departments was limited to required majors in the labor market like Medical majors, Engineering, Computer Science, Information Systems and Biology. All recently opened Colleges (the number being 104) have majors that are included in those directly related to labor market requirements. This has led to an increase in the rate of admissions in market-oriented majors (85.57%) for male students and (70.21%) for female students in governmental and private colleges affiliated to the Ministry of HE.
- b. The expansion of private HE which is a great aid in implementing the policies of compliance with development needs and the labor market. The private HE list of regulations stipulated that majors provided by private colleges' majors should be compliant with market needs. In light of that, the majors in private HE were mainly those related to Health, Applied Sciences, Engineering, Computer and Business, all are 100% related to labor market needs.
- c. King Abdullah Overseas Scholarship Program, which is an essential project to achieve HE graduates employability. In fact, these scholarships are only given for scientific and applied majors that are fully related to development needs.

3. Quality

Its main indicators until the end of 2008 were:

- a. Review of the plans and curricula in light of outcome-based learning. This is a recent trend that the majority of global universities have started to focus on due to its importance in improving output quality. It is aligned with another trend in university education: problem based learning. The most important indicators are:
 - 1) Many universities have reviewed the plans and curricula of some departments and developed them according to the recent world trends, development requirements and labor market needs. Thus, the admission rate in majors needed in the labor market has increased to reach 82.73%.
 - 2) All new governmental and private universities and colleges plans and curricula are 100% based on development and labor market needs.
 - 3) Community College plans and curricula have been linked to labor market needs in coordination with chambers of commerce.
- b. Development of university education output through a two-path plan:
 - 1) The academic specialized path concerned with students' development in their field of specialization.
 - 2) The skilled practical path that focuses on developing students' skills in communication, the use of technology and personal skills. This is through identifying the skills contained in the programs of prestigious universities and some applied universities

- in advanced countries and through linking students to a real working environment during their studies.
- 3) To achieve the goals of this program, some universities have implemented the preparatory year program (called deanship in certain universities) and have made it compulsory for some majors.
 - 4) Centers were established to develop and refine personal skills, communication, research and self-learning skills for male and female students.
 - 5) Many agreements have been concluded with a number of partners and institutions to train students and organize periodic field visits.
- c. Increasing universities' external efficiency by controlling the output and verifying its quality through the National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA).

The main indicators until the end of 2008 were:

- 1) The NCAAA completed the self assessment requirements for institutions, as well as the national qualifications framework. It also ensured the commitment of programs, students, administration and faculty members to quality requirements among many other requirements.
 - 2) During the last 3 years, the NCAAA has sought the help of European, American and Australian experts and has examined assessment, accreditation and quality assurance models in a number of countries.
 - 3) Assisted by many experts, the NCAAA started its pilot actions, then made the preliminary assessment of its mechanisms,
 - 4) A number of Engineering programs in some universities have been accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET).
 - 5) Administration programs in some universities have been accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)
 - 6) Dentistry programs in some universities have been accredited by the Association for Dental Education in Europe (ADEE), so has the Educational Diploma Program by the British quality foundation and the blood bank by the American Association of Blood Banks (AABB).
- d. The establishment of deanships or agencies for academic development at universities. Its main indicators until the end of 2008 were:
- 1) Quality and development deanships, agencies, units and offices were established.
 - 2) Twin relations have been established with some international programs. There has also been cooperation with global universities to benefit from their experiences in HE administration and to optimize the educational process (this will be presented in detail in the section on international partnerships).
- e. Increasing universities' internal efficiency through assuring the quality of university education input. The National Center for Assessment in Higher Education (NCAHE) can guarantee this by developing admissions tests at universities, in particular: the abilities test and achievement test.
- 1) Using admission tests has resulted in reducing waste, decreasing the number of years students spend to graduate and in reducing failure and dropout rates.
 - 2) In identifying students' performance weaknesses, admission tests have enabled the MOHE to develop general curricula and learning environment in a convenient way.
 - 3) The NCAHE's test results were accepted by HEIs in the Gulf region and in some foreign countries like Britain and the USA.

- 4) The MOHE considered it as a good indicator for nominating students for scholarships abroad through the King Abdullah Overseas Scholarship Program.
- f. Supporting the centers of excellence in research and preparing them for their research programs.

Its main indicator until the end of 2008 was the approval to support 12 research centers of excellence. Table 3 shows these centers.

Table 3: Centers of Excellence in Research in Saudi universities

	Name of the center	University
1	Center of Excellence in Environmental Studies	King Abdulaziz University
2	Center of Excellence in Genomic Medicine Research (CEGMR)	King Abdulaziz University
3	Center of Excellence Research in Petroleum Refining and Petrochemicals	King Fahd University
4	Center of Excellence Research in Renewable Energy	King Fahd University
5	Center of Excellence for Research in Engineering Materials	King Saud University
6	Center of Excellence In Biotechnology Research	King Saud University
7	Date Palm Research Center	King Faisal University
8	Excellence Research Center for Contemporary Issues (phase II)	Al - Imam Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University
9	Excellence Center of Science and Mathematics Education (phase II)	King Saud University
10	Center of Excellence in Osteoporosis Research (phase II)	King Abdulaziz University
11	Center of Excellence in Desalination Technology (phase II)	King Abdulaziz University
12	Center of Research Excellence in Corrosion (phase II)	King Fahd University

- g. Supporting the innovation and excellence project of the faculty members, first implemented by the Ministry during the previous year.

Its main indicators until the end of 2008 were:

- 1) In pursuing the implementation of the project for the second consecutive year after its success was praised by the faculty members of Saudi universities. These members have benefited from the training programs implemented by the project in many fields. These include fields related to the development of teaching methods, the use of technology in teaching, keeping pace with world developments in the research field and in the skills of information sources diversification.
- 2) The Ministry has encouraged universities to compete in offering training programs. Universities have presented 180 programs to the Ministry. After the scientific and financial arbitration, 41 training programs were funded and implemented through 174 training sessions.

- 3) The number of Saudi faculty members participating in training programs at some universities has sharply increased compared to the previous year. The increase rate has even attained 100% in many programs.
- 4) Some universities have contracted with distinguished trainers at foreign universities. The following table shows the names of foreign universities and houses of expertise that have been consulted in order to provide qualified trainers for the program this year.

Table 4: Foreign expertise contracted by Saudi universities in the innovation and excellence project

	University	Foreign expertise
1	Al - Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University	University of Pennsylvania, USA
		University of New England, Australia
		Gulf Arab States Educational Research Center
		De Bono Thinking Center
2	King Saud University	Centre for University Teaching, University of Ottawa
		Biggio Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, Auburn University
		POD Network in HE
		Oregon State University, USA
3	King Abdulaziz University	Virginia Tech University, USA
		The World Bank Group - Middle East and North Africa
		University of Bristol, Department of Continuing Education, Britain
		Australian Universities Quality Agency
		University of Manchester, UK
4	King Fahd University	Centre for University Teaching, University of Ottawa
		York University, Canada
		University of Illinois, USA
		Tony Bates Associates Ltd, Canada
		University of Kansas, USA
5	Taibah University	Dokeos Company, Belgium

4. Diversification of financial sources

The main achievements in this field until the end of 2008 were:

- a. The increase of public support. The Saudi government boosted its support for HE in all branches and levels. Suffice to say that the Ministry's budget 3 years previously was 325 million riyals and it has now reached 10 billion riyals. 8 billion of the last two years' budget surpluses were allocated to new universities and colleges.

- b. A threefold increase in the budgets of certain universities over the last 4 year (335%).
- c. A 130% increase in the Ministry's expense rate over the last years, at an average of more than 32% per year for both public and private sectors.
- d. Adoption of the concept of productive university through research institutes, studies and research.
- e. Development of university resources: consultations, endowments, donations, and research chairs.

5. Scientific research

The main achievement in this field is the focus on many patterns of scientific research:

- a. Basic scientific research
- b. Contract research; institutes that focus on contract research with public and private sector institutions and bodies were put in place:
 - 1) The Research Institute at King Fahd University carried out many types of contract research that amounted to over 400 million riyals.
 - 2) King Abdullah Institute for Consulting and Research carried out research worth more than 250 million riyals.
 - 3) King Abdulaziz Institute for Research and Studies prepared research that amounted to more than 100 million riyals.
- c. Science parks are a new trend aimed at developing the knowledge economy and narrowing the gap between scientific innovation and commercial application. Its main indicators until the end of 2008 were:
 - 1) The establishment of the Dhahran Techno-Valley at King Fahd University, with an area of 450000 m². Long-term contracts were signed with a group of global and local companies.
 - 2) The establishment of the Riyadh Techno Valley at King Saud University, with an area of 1,000,000 m². The project was inaugurated and contracts were signed with local and foreign companies.
 - 3) The establishment of a fully developed science park by King Abdulaziz University. The park was preceded by the establishment of 4 research chairs in the fields of incentives, osteoporosis, AIDS and water.
- d. Centers of excellence: It is worth noting that despite the financial difficulties that scientific research faced in the past, a large number of our universities' staff managed to obtain patents that were registered in America, Japan and some European countries. A number of these were awarded the King Abdulaziz medal of excellence and first order.

6. King Abdullah Overseas Scholarship Program

The main achievements in this field until the end of 2008 were:

- a. Within this program, the state allocated more than 7 billion riyals for scholarships in prestigious universities in a number of countries. These included: the USA, Britain, Germany, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, France, Japan, Malaysia, China, India, Singapore, and South Korea.
- b. More than 28,000 male and female students obtained scholarships abroad during the previous 3 years (2005- 2007). Over 7,000 male and female students are expected to benefit from such scholarships in the year 2008.
- c. The number of students who have scholarships was 2,600 at the beginning of the project

in 2005. It has now reached more than 54,000 and the program is still being supported and in progress.

- d. King Abdullah Overseas Scholarship Program aims at awarding scholarships to ensure a quality global HE output in majors the country needs in all degrees: Bachelor, Masters, PhD, or medical fellowships. The following areas of study are included in the program:
- 1) Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences
 - 2) Engineering, Information Technology for postgraduate studies
 - 3) Law, Regulations and Arbitration for postgraduate studies
 - 4) Engineering for bachelor degree in Germany in cooperation with DAAD.
 - 5) Scholarships for persons with special circumstances (orphans) in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs.
 - 6) Civil Aviation specializations in cooperation with the high authority for civil aviation.
 - 7) Special Education specializations in cooperation with Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz Charitable Foundation.
 - 8) Specializations in Human Sciences at Oxford University in cooperation with Prince Sultan University.
 - 9) Political and Financial Sciences at the Science Po University, France. - Public management and Public Policy for postgraduate studies in cooperation with Lee Kuan Yew Institute, Singapore.
 - 10) Touristic specializations in cooperation with the Supreme Commission for Tourism.
 - 11) Disability specializations in cooperation with Prince Salman Center for Disability Research.

7. Modernization of administrative regulations in HE

The main achievements in this field until the end of 2008 were:

- a. A unified HE sector. In fact, decisions were adopted to affiliate Girls' Colleges and Teachers Colleges to the Ministry of HE. All programs and majors in these colleges were thus restructured in the following manner:
 - 1) Programs and majors were restructured in more than 100 Girls' Colleges and were adjusted to labor market needs. There were 573 departments including 672 sections with new names and new sections.
 - 2) As for Teachers Colleges, their majors were restructured to comply with development and labor market requirements with a special focus on Sciences, Mathematics, Computer science and English Language.
 - 3) Recently, 50 Health Colleges and a Health Institute were transferred from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of HE. These colleges are now being developed and restructured and their departments modernized.
- b. A number of special rules and regulations related to HE have been adopted, like those related to university professors, students, tests, scientific research, equivalence of diplomas, etc. These rules and regulations are periodically reviewed to reflect local and international developments.
- c. Conducting scientific studies on how to improve the performance of faculty members on the basis of "reward for performance". This arrangement aims at motivating university professors; creating a competitive academic environment; and encouraging creativity, innovation and production, taking into account all scientific educational changes. After these studies, the government approved, in its meeting on 22/08/09, a number of incentives and honorarium to encourage faculty members.

8. Establishment of international partnerships with reputable global HEIs

The main achievements in this field until the end of 2008 were:

- a. The establishment of links and partnerships with a number of international programs, and cooperation with global universities to benefit from their experiences in HE system development, and improvement of educational process at both old and newly established universities. In this regard, the Minister of HE, with a delegation consisting of a number of university directors, visited ministries, universities and centers in France, Britain and Germany this year. A number of agreements were signed during these visits. The Ministry agreed on a number of cooperation memorandums and executive programs with other ministries in the following countries: India, Azerbaijan, Italy, South Africa, Korea, Iran, China, Jordan, Syria, Sudan, Algeria, the Philippines, Pakistan, France, Malaysia, Austria, Poland, Tunisia, Uzbekistan, Russia, New Zealand, the Czech Republic, Australia, Singapore, Morocco, Ireland and Argentina.
- b. The Ministry provided support for certain universities to conclude agreements and partnerships with world colleges and research centers. For example, King Fahd University concluded around 54 agreements with universities and research centers in France, the USA, Britain, India, China, Germany, Sweden and Singapore. King Abdulaziz University also concluded over 25 agreements with world colleges and research centers. King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals established strategic and cooperative links with global institutions and local centers. The number of active agreements reached more than 21. The National Center for e-learning and distance education has contracted with a global think tank and had a successful encounter with Meteor Group, Malaysia.
- c. Support for programs at some universities through contracting with outstanding teachers and Nobel Prize winners scientists. Saudi universities seek to attract outstanding researchers and professors to teach and supervise postgraduate students. For example, King Saud University signed service contracts with 14 Nobel Prize winning scientists. King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals has also attracted a group of outstanding foreign professors.
- d. Support for the establishment of international advisory boards at some universities. Their philosophy is based on attracting distinguished global advisors and benefiting from them to develop the university. For example, King Fahd and King Abdulaziz Universities created each International Advisory Board and organized many advisory meetings for these boards.
- e. Development of the innovation and excellence project for the faculty members. The Ministry had embarked on the project the previous year through contracting with some universities and outstanding trainers at foreign universities. It also established partnerships with international houses of expertise to provide qualified trainers for the program this year. For example, Al - Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University contracted with the University of Pennsylvania, USA, De Bono Thinking Center and New England University, Australia. Kin Saud University contracted with Oregon State University, USA, Centre for University Teaching, University of Ottawa and POD Network in HE. As for King Fahd University, it contracted with the University of Illinois, USA, York University, Canada, and the University of Kansas, USA.

9. Strategic planning

The main achievements in this field until the end of 2008 were:

The Ministry of HE has embarked on a comprehensive development process. It prepared a long term plan for university education within the country to promote its positive aspects and face the present and future challenges in a project called “The Future Plans for HE in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia” (AFAQ). The scope of the project was limited to university education, including governmental and private universities and colleges affiliated to the Ministry of HE while taking into account common subjects with other relevant stakeholders.

The project aimed at preparing a 25 - year plan that defined the HE vision, its mission, needs, types, output quality and funding methods. It also developed an executive plan for the first 5 years and put in place a mechanism to adopt strategic planning methods in HEIs.

The planning process relied on a number of basic principles emerging from commitment to the teachings of Islam and aspirations and directives of the political leaders who took care of different developmental aspects, particularly education. It also relied on achieving HE policy goals and building on initiatives and the achievements of the recent years in the university education sector. These principles are: planning based on a futuristic vision, harmonization with other national plans, keeping up with global experiences and trends in HE, expansion of stakeholders’ participation and including their aspirations, building strategic planning culture at universities and commitment to ensure quality.

To guarantee the strategy’s comprehensiveness of all HE aspects, they were distributed into 8 tracks; admission and capacity, faculty members, staff and students, programs and curricula, research and innovation, governance (organization and management), financing, IT and infrastructure.

Strategic goals of the future plan for higher education:

1. Ensure admission of qualified students in HEIs and respond to the increasing demand.
2. Meet future requirements to increase knowledge, satisfy labor market needs, develop society and increase external efficiency.
3. Increase internal efficiency of HEIs.
4. Ensure a balanced ratio of students’ numbers to faculty members so it can be in line with the overall rate of world best practices.
5. Increase the rate of faculty members who hold a PhD, develop their skills, motivate and retain them.
6. Upgrade staff performance, increase their qualifications and develop their skills.
7. Increase students’ competitive abilities, develop their skills and enhance their aptitude.
8. Promote the educational content, teaching and learning methods and evaluation patterns with the use of innovation and diversity.
9. Enhance the quality of academic programs, and obtain local and global accreditation.
10. Provide sufficient numbers of researchers in line with world rates.
11. Increase spending on scientific research adjusted to the overall rate of world best practices.
12. Raise research and innovation productive capacity and enhance its quality.
13. Strengthen scientific research management methodology, ensure its consistency and provide an encouraging environment.
14. Promote flexibility and response while maintaining institutional accountability within the university education system.
15. Excel in leadership, cooperation and transparency with the university education system.

16. Keep providing free university education and diversifying financial sources.
17. Provide a high-speed, low cost communication internet network among HEIs.
18. Ensure harmonization and integrity of IT strategies, systems, educational, research and administrative applications in HEIs.
19. Produce and publish a digital cognitive content in all fields to be made available to HE staff and students and society.
20. Continue the development of infrastructure and create a motivating environment for the educational process and scientific research.

VI. Conclusion

This paper has examined the strategy adopted by the Ministry in coordination with universities to respond to, or address, various local and international changes and challenges. It also addressed relevant developmental programs inside the Ministry and HEIs along with the ways to benefit from opportunities and decrease pressure on them. International experiences were in fact used to develop the HE system through a set of programs, procedures, short, middle and long term plans. The development strategy can be summarized in two paths:

- The short-term path: It concentrated on urgent strategic issues, like admission, capacity and HE graduates employability.
- The long-term path: It focused on the issues of admissions; HE graduates employability and other strategic matters. These included: the development of academic environment elements (educational environment, faculty members, the student, plans, study programs), the development of girls' HE, quality promotion, King Abdullah Abroad Scholarship Program, the compliance between education output and the labor market, new university projects, the promotion of private HE, the development of scientific research, the modernization of rules and regulations, optimal use of HE administrative technique (transformation of the ministry and universities to electronic institutions), global partnerships and international cooperation, and the strategic HE plan in KSA for 25 years (AFAQ).

This paper also examined a group of institutions, centers, and bodies that emanated from the development strategy as well as implemented programs and initiatives. It mentioned the performance indicators that measure the program's efficiency in the HE system development and the rise of quality and excellence levels.

The following indicators were the most important to carry out this developmental strategy:

1. An increase in the admission and capacities in HEIs; the rate even reached 88% of overall secondary school graduates for 2008.
2. An expansion in the establishment of governmental universities; their number reached 21 encompassing several scientific, engineering, applied, medical and administrative majors.
3. An expansion of private Higher Education; the number of private colleges reached 7, beside 20 private colleges, where all majors (100%) are linked to the labor market and development needs.
4. Granting external scholarships to over 50,000 students in majors closely related to developmental needs and the labor market within the King Abdullah Overseas Scholarship Program.
5. Establishment of 13 excellence research centers in various scientific, engineering and technical fields.

The Ministry will pursue the development of the strategic and institutional process through the following steps:

1. Continue the expansion of HE so it covers all cities and provinces in the country.
2. Keep working on establishing a strong relationship with the sectors of finance, business, scientific and social institutions.
3. Benefit from useful globalization trends like the enhancement of the transparency level, governance and modern administration, development of HEIs and their infrastructure according to the most recent international criteria.
4. Enhance the quality level and address quality by guaranteeing its inputs.
5. Promote research, development and excellence whether at one university or through several universities and link scientific research to national development needs and labor market requirements.
6. Continue to establish partnerships and alliances with outstanding Arab and global HEIs.

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Higher Education for Girls in Saudi Arabia and its Relevance to the Labor Market*

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Abstract

Saudi Arabian girls have made concrete progress in education, obtaining the highest academic degrees in various branches of knowledge. However, higher education statistics reveal that most of them are in the field of education. Moreover, year after year, large numbers of new graduates fail to find jobs. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has recognized this problem and adopted policies aimed at adapting girls' higher education to development needs and the labor market. This study highlights the problem and the policies adopted through a set of structural measures.

The methodology of this study is based on data collection and analysis of statistics on the impact of relevance policies on the restructuring of higher education for girls. One of the most prominent conclusions is that inputs to higher education have in general improved, so that the majority of available disciplines now correspond to the needs of the public and private labor markets.

I. Introduction

Despite the historical delay of women's enrollment in education in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) in general, girls' higher education (HE) has witnessed significant leaps during the last three decades. The establishment of colleges and institutes in many regions, provinces and cities has grown and the participation rate of women in HE has increased and exceeded that of men. Saudi women have made concrete steps in the education field and have received the highest academic degrees in various branches of knowledge. Education at all levels, and in particular HE, started to attract a large number of Saudi girls who look forward to serve their society and participate in the labor market. However, the observation of girls' HE statistics shows that the majority of HE is concentrated in the teaching field. In fact, there was an urgent need for female graduates in education to work in the schools whose number were increasing day in day, out as a result of the spread of women's education.

However, year after year, the saturation of the labor market with female teachers led to the

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accumulation of a large number of female graduates unable to find job opportunities. The Ministry of HE, aware of this problem, adopted structural policies aimed at orienting girls' HE to make it compatible with development needs and labor market requirements. To this end there was a need to adopt new and diversified policies for the development of human resources and to make strategic planning for the employment of manpower, especially the female labor force. This was becoming increasingly important in light of the changes occurring in Saudi society. This study focuses on this problem and on the policies adopted by the Ministry concerning that issue. Development plans focused on highlighting the role of women in the Saudi labor market and underlined the need to ensure wider work opportunities for them and to search for alternatives to which women's potentials could be oriented. In addition, the Council of Ministers called for the widening of women's work areas, the issuance of licenses allowing women to practice economic activities, and the establishment of units and sections for women in the government departments. The Shura Council, for its part, called through a comprehensive national education strategy, for the expansion of education, work and training opportunities for Saudi women in a way that suits their nature and does not conflict with the Islamic Shari'a. This could be done by restructuring HE, formulating curricula that are oriented to the majors needed in the labor market, expanding the program of Human Resources Development Fund, and benefiting from the Information Technology to widen the areas of distance work for women.

The number of students enrolled in HE has significantly increased beyond expectations and capacity plans. Consequently, the number of graduates in some majors has exceeded the employment needs of state sectors. However, the government and private sectors are still in need of graduates in other majors. Despite the controversy raised in many forums regarding the role of the university in society and whether the university's mission is to ensure a job-oriented training or an educational training, the national duty requires to orient the government's efforts in a complementary way toward serving the nation and its citizens. This includes benefiting to the maximum from the educational output, given the enormous efforts that are deployed in the training of students. Therefore, employment bodies, whether governmental or private, should clarify their planned needs of manpower over an adequate period of time (for example 10 years or more). In addition, HE institutions and the relevant bodies should unite their efforts in order to ensure the employability of graduates.

II. Developments in girls' HE in KSA

In KSA, girls' education did not officially start until 1960, nearly 30 years after the foundation of the country. In that year, the state declared the establishment of the «General Division for Girls' Education» to develop plans and curricula regarding the different stages of girls' education. In KSA public education for boys started more than 35 years before that of girls. The social and economic circumstances in the Arabian Peninsula had a decisive impact on that, since girls' education had been limited then to existing private schools and Quranic schools that used to teach the Quran as well as reading and writing basics. History records the courageous step that King Faisal made when he managed, to stand up to and face the opposition to girls' education at that time.

Within a short period of time, everyone in the country realized that girls' education was conducted according to a strict and well-studied educational and administrative plan. This encouraged people to enroll their daughters in schools and to constantly call for the establishment of more schools in the villages and hamlets. Thus, girls' education became one of the brightest aspects of education in KSA (Al Hamid and others, 2007).

The secondary level (governmental) in girls' education started in 1964 with the opening of a secondary school with 21 female students enrolled. From that time, secondary schools for girls were successfully established all over KSA. The number totaled 797 schools with 165,329 enrolled students in 1995. In 2004, the number of these schools increased to 1,974 with 426,309 enrolled students (Al Hamid and others, 2007).

The enrollment of females in Saudi universities started in 1961 - 1962 at the College of Arts and the College of Administrative Sciences at King Saud University, which was founded in 1957. In the beginning, female students enrolled in the university accounted for 5% of the total then it increased to 8.2%.

Since its foundation in 1967, King Abdul-Aziz University in Jeddah as open to girls. It started with 30 female students and 68 male students. In the same year, the College of Education in Mecca (it was affiliated to the Ministry of Education) also allowed girls to enroll and their number there reached 29. In 1968, Imam Mohammed Ben Saoud Islamic University offered the same opportunity and enrolled two girls.

In 1971, the General Division for Girls' Education opened the first Girls' College of Education which included 12 departments and in which 82 students enrolled (Al Bakr, 1994).

Colleges of education for girls then started to be successfully established reaching a total of 102. Some of these colleges include scientific departments such as: Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Zoology, Botany and Microbiology, and Computer Science. Others include humanities departments such as: Educational Sciences, Social Sciences, and Literature. There are also colleges which specialize in Home Economics.

The target of the First Development Plan (1970 - 1975) was to provide more education opportunities at all levels, from primary to university level, taking into account the strengthening of educational institutions and enhancing the efficiency of its study programs. With the opening of new areas for females in university education in many regions of KSA, the proportion of women enrolled in universities increased from 5.5% to 14.1% of all Saudi students in 1970 (Al Bakr, 1994). And with the increase of secondary school graduates, the proportion of women enrolled in universities increased from 29.5% in 1981 to 61.8% in 2001 (HE Statistics, 2002).

The annual average of the increase in the number of female students enrolled in HE during the First Development Plan represents a remarkable phenomenon since it reached nearly 50%, whereas that of males was 21.2%. This phenomenon is due to the many opportunities for girls' enrollment in universities, and the absorption of a large number of students by women colleges. In addition, the opportunities for females to enroll in HE increased, so the number of female students enrolled in Masters programs reached 882 in 1986 while that of male students was 2,332. As for PhDs, the number of students was 221 for females and 666 for males (Al Bakr, 1994). Majors available for female students until 1981 were as follows: 90% were studying general and humanity courses of which 48% were enrolled in Letters, Social Sciences and Religious Sciences. In addition, 10% were enrolled in Business and Economics, 30% in Education, and about 12% in scientific studies including Medicine. In 1991, the proportion of female students decreased to 36% in Social and Human Sciences and in Islamic Studies, but it increased to 38.8% in Education. However, it did not exceed 11% in Natural Sciences and 5% in Medicine. (Al Bakr, 1994).

In 2004, the percentage of female students reached 58.8% of all students enrolled in HEIs at Bachelor level. The largest numbers of female students enrolled were in the field of Education, which accounted for 46.5% of all female students. In 1991, the percentage of female students enrolled in Business and Economics, Computer Science, Journalism, Media, and Natural Sciences reached respectively 19.3%, 40.3%, 23.2%, and 25.4% of all students enrolled in these fields.

The proportion of female students continued to range between 37.7% and 42.2% of all students enrolled in the Health Sciences from 1981 till 2004 (HE Statistics, no 24 - 27).

The number of graduates has doubled during the years of development plans. During the seventh 2000 - 2004 development plan, the total number of graduates at Bachelor level reached 199 thousand students of which 66% were females (Eighth Development Plan, 2005 - 2009, p.423).

Table 1 shows the distribution of male and female students enrolled in HEIs according to the field of study during the years 1980 - 1981, 2000 - 2001, and 2005 -2006.

Table 1: Distribution of BA/BS students, according to gender and field of study
a. For the year 1980- 1981

Field of study	Females	Males	Total	% of females	% of males
Health Sciences	1138	1665	2803	40,6	59,4
Engineering Sciences	0	5715	5715	0	100
Educational Sciences	4232	3998	8230	51,4	48,6
Agricultural Sciences	79	1060	1139	6,9	93,1
Natural Sciences	835	2453	3288	25,4	74,6
Business, Economics and Social Sciences	1649	7349	8998	18,3	81,7
Islamic Studies and Humanities Studies	8146	16190	24336	33,5	66,5
Total	16079	38430	54509	29,5	70,5

Source: HE Statistics in KSA, academic year 1980 -1981, no 4

b. For the year 2000 -2001

Field of study	Females	Males	Total	% of females	% of males
Health Sciences	4917	6738	11655	42,2	57,8
Engineering Sciences	205	11889	12094	1,7	98,3
Educational Sciences	173565	34010	207575	83,6	16,4
Agricultural Sciences	1471	3129	4600	32	68
Natural Sciences	11601	16849	28450	40,8	59,2
Business and Economics	15385	14543	29928	51,4	48,6
Social Studies	5268	11574	16842	31,3	68,7
Islamic Studies	6135	21829	27964	21,9	78,1
Humanities Studies	14686	20998	35684	41,2	58,8
Law	0	888	888	0	100
Others	0	1708	1708	0	100
Total	233233	144155	377388	61,8	38,2

Source: HE Statistics in KSA, academic year 2000 -2001, no 24

c. For the year 2003- 2004

Field of study	Females	Males	Total	% of females	% of males
Health Sciences	8634	13118	21752	39,7	60,3
Architectural and Civil Engineering	190	4857	5047	3,8	96,2
Other Engineering Sciences	0	8023	8471	0	100
Educational Sciences	173698	45628	219326	79,1	20,9
Computer Science	9890	14622	24512	40,3	59,7
Manufacturing and Productive Industries	2857	0	2857	100	0
Agricultural Sciences	0	1320	1320	0	100
Veterinary Medicine	0	756	756	0	100
Natural Sciences	25864	11845	37709	68,6	31,4
Management Sciences and Economics	24262	28582	52844	45,9	54,1
Journalism and Media	3898	12911	16809	23,1	76,9
Social Sciences	9979	6623	16602	60,1	39,9
Islamic Studies	20417	40429	60846	33,6	66,4
Humanities Studies	42508	23151	65659	64,7	35,3
Law	0	227	227	0	100
Other	3489	1504	4993	69,9	30,1
Total	325686	213596	539282	60,4	39,6

Source: HE Statistics in KSA, academic year 2003 - 2004, no 27

The number of male and female students enrolled at Diploma level³ has developed from 1999-2000 to 2004 - 2005 in KSA. However, the percentage of female students decreased by 40% from 1999 till 2005 due to the decision of the General Division for Girls' Education to upgrade Intermediate colleges and allow them to grant Bachelor degrees instead of Diplomas.

³ The Diploma is a two years study open to holders of a Secondary degree, or a degree from secondary teachers institutes.

Figure 1: Students enrolled at Diploma level (from 1999/ 2000 to 2004/ 2005)

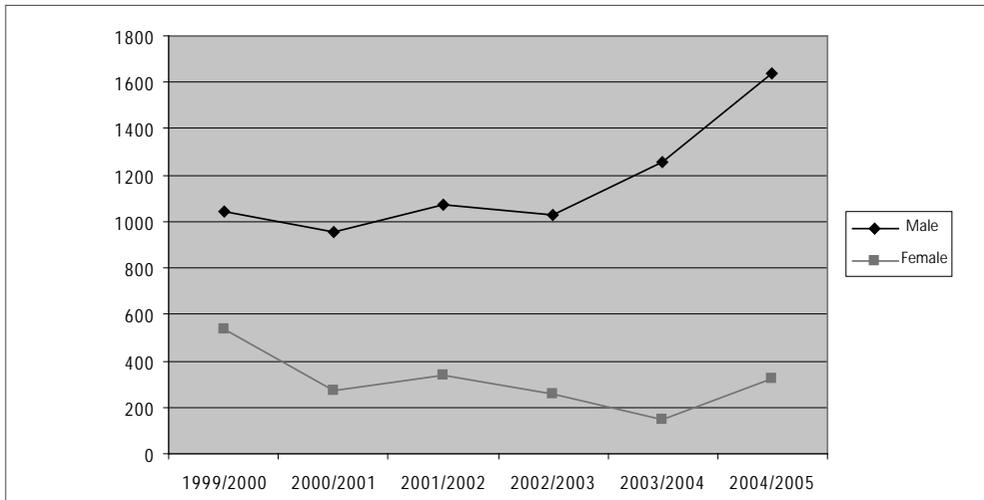
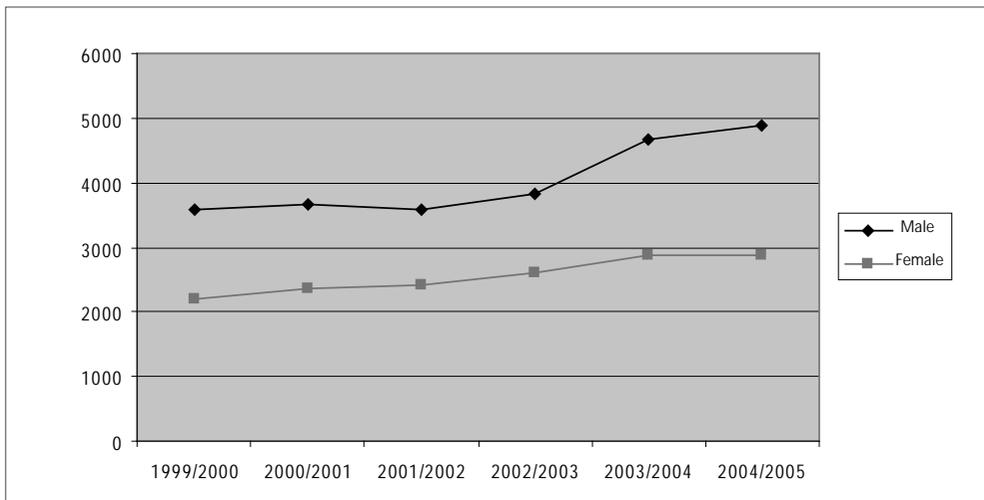


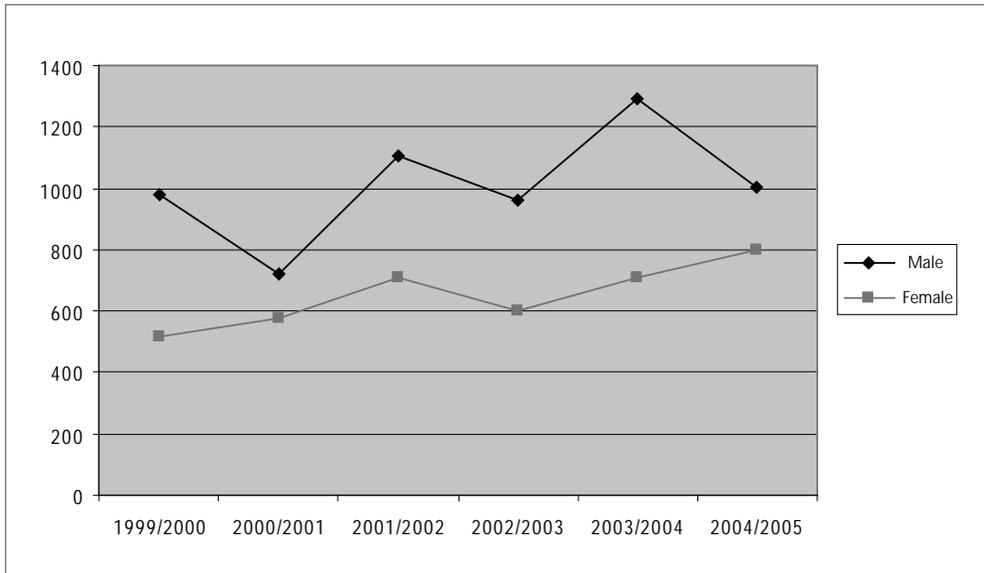
Figure 2 shows the development of the number of male and female students enrolled at Master level in KSA from 1999 - 2000 to 2004 - 2005. The number of female students increased from 2,188 to 2,883, a 31,8% increase.

Figure 2: Students enrolled at Master level (from 1999 /2000 to 2004/ 2005)



In addition, the number of male and female students enrolled at PhD level in KSA has developed from 1999- 2000 to 2004 -2005 as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Students enrolled at PhD level (from 1999 /2000 to 2004 /2005)



Since the beginnings, the state has offered opportunities of scholarships and international studies for both male and female students who comply with scholarship conditions. It has also recently adopted the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz Scholarship Program which is considered the largest scholarship program. Its budget is ten billion riyals and the number of students of both sexes that were granted scholarships through this program reached 420,000 students. 6,000 of these scholarships were allocated to specific governmental bodies. This program aims at achieving an outstanding quality for international HE output in scientific and applied majors that are related to development needs. Scholarship beneficiaries are sent to prestigious universities in a number of developed countries such as: the United States of America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, France, Japan, China, India, Singapore, and South Korea to obtain Bachelor degrees, Master's degrees, PhDs, and fellowships in Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Nursing, Engineering, Computer Science, Accounting and Law.

III. Women and the problems of the Saudi labor market

The relationship between the output of HE in terms of females and the needs of the labor market cannot be studied without observing the social and cultural context of this relationship, as there are two major issues in that context. The first one is related to the participation of women in the Saudi labor market, and the cultural, organizational and social challenges and constraints they face. The second issue is related to the Saudi labor market, its nature, the opportunities available in it, as well as the identification of its needs and the forces that influence it.

As a preliminary step towards discussing this problem, it is indispensable to shed light on the demographic composition of Saudi society and the nature of women's work, as well as the structure of the labor market. In fact, statistical reports indicate that the total population in Saudi Arabia has tripled between 1975 and 2005 to reach 23.6 million people, and this number is expected to grow to 29.3 million by 2015. The examination of the demographic trends shows

that that the rate of annual population growth was 3.9% between 1975 and 2005; however, it is expected to drop to 2.1% during the period between 2005 and 2015. As for the urban population, it has jumped from 58.3% to 81% during the period from 1975 to 2005, and it is expected to reach 83.2% by 2015 (Human Development Report, 2007).

In the mid-nineties KSA started facing the problems in securing employment for the increasing number of graduates of both sexes, as a consequence of the large increase in population. This increase is actually due to the growth of the number of births in the late seventies and early eighties in parallel with the rise in incomes and the availability of housing finance and housing loans during the economic boom of 1978 - 1985 (Al Eqtisadiah newspaper, 2006)

The Saudi market includes the government sector and the private sector. It is noted that the government sector represents the largest area for the absorption of female Saudi workers, while their absorption in the private sector remains minor.

Saudi women have entered the work force in the government sector since the establishment of the General Division for Girls' Education in 1960 and their appearance in the records of the General Bureau of Civil Service. However, the organizational structure did not include female workers. Employment applications of women were submitted to this Bureau, but due to the increasing number of applicants and graduates, it was necessary to establish women's sections in that Bureau to assume the responsibility of completing the necessary procedures for women's employment.

The sector of Education includes the largest proportion of females participating in the governmental labor market. This proportion reached around 87.6% in 2002 of the total number of women working in the government sector. This was followed by those employed at several public sectors (5.81%), then that of women working in the health domain (4.9%), and finally the female faculty members (1.6%). (Al Mashouh).

Given that the government sector is saturated with female employees, the recruitment of female graduates in that sector has been decreasing year after year. In 2006, "Al-Eqtisadia" newspaper indicated that the number of female applicants for teaching posts in KSA reached 73.5 thousand while the total number of available posts was 7.71 thousand, according to the records of the Ministry of Civil Service. Thus, 89% of applicants to job posts will not find a job, which constitutes a burden on the labor market.

According to the job classification of the Ministry of Civil Service, the job opportunities available for Saudi women with HE degrees are concentrated in medical assistance occupations (X-ray, Laboratory, Physiotherapy, Dental and Nursing). This Ministry has also created other new positions that were not available before for the recruitment of women: in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Saudi Red Crescent, the General Directorate of Passports, and the General Organization for Social Insurance. A number of new posts were actually created in some of these institutions. (Al Mashouh)

During the last 15 years, employment policies in KSA tended to charge the private sector with the major responsibility of providing job opportunities due to the saturation of the majority of government sectors. However, the proportion of women's participation in the labor market in the private sector, which suffers from a large number of foreign workers, is still very minor. This is due to several reasons such as:

1. The delayed attention given to the training of female workers for the appropriate occupations.
2. The lack of training capacities in terms of training bodies, curricula, and level, necessary to respond to labor market needs.

3. The severe shortage of labor market services due to the absence of data and accurate information about available vacant positions.
4. The limited scope for women work areas and the inadequacy of the offer in Saudi woman qualification and experience to the demand of the private sector .
5. The high costs of Saudi workers and their low acceptance of the conditions and the work system in the private sector.
6. The modest employment opportunities available to women in the private sector. "These are employee replacement opportunities, and belong mostly to educational, health and the social jobs". (Al Eqtisadiyah newspaper, 2006, p.28).

According to statistics from the Council of Labor Force for the year 2001 - 2002, the number of female workers in private business with more than 20 female workers, is very low since it does not exceed 11,905 workers overall. This number represents 5.3% of the total number of the Saudi female labor force. (Al Mashouh).

Many reports confirm the insignificant contribution of Saudi women to the labor market and to public life compared to their total number which constitutes nearly half the Saudi population. For example, the Riyadh Chamber of Commerce and Industry examined the contribution of Saudi women to the labor market from 1983 to 1999, and demonstrated the horrific waste of human resources in national development. The percentage of active women ranged between 2.6% and 2.9% of the total Saudi working-age population, and between 5.1% and 5.8% of Saudi working-age female population, which means that it has increased by less than 1% during 15 years. This percentage is low compared to the contribution of women around the world (between 14% and 40%), and the contribution of women in the Gulf Cooperation Council that has reached an average of 15%. (Center for Research and Studies in the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 1999).

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in employment for women within the Saudi society, and the search for work areas that are consistent with Saudi women's social, cultural and religious characteristics, as these are among the matters that affect the attention of state officials at all levels. In fact, the Council of Ministers called for the widening of women's work areas, and the issuance of licenses allowing women to practice economic activities, and the establishment of units and sections for women in government departments. Moreover, the Shura Council called for a comprehensive national strategy for education in 2004 that addressed the expansion of education, work and training areas for Saudi women in a way that suits their nature and does not conflict with the Islamic Shari'a. This could be accomplished by restructuring HE, formulating curricula oriented to the specializations needed in the labor market, expanding the program of the Human Resources Development Fund, and benefiting from Information Technology to widen the areas of distance work for women.

Perhaps the most important point that we can deduce from the analysis of the previous data is that participation of women in the labor market should be widened, by enlarging the scope of work fields opened to them, by preparing them for this participation in educational and training institutions, and by promulgating legislation and regulations that expand women's participation. This is especially relevant as the political position of the state is clear and it stresses on equality and on the right of work for citizens of both sexes.

An examination of the five-year development plans shows that the importance of human development was not overlooked despite the significant reliance of the majority of these plans on foreign workers. These plans have focused on highlighting the role of women in the Saudi labor market and on underlining the need to ensure broader fields of work for them and to search for several alternatives in which women's potentials can be oriented. On the other hand,

educational authorities, in both general and higher education, have considered to provide educational opportunity for all girls and the majors that are suitable to them (Al Bakr, 1996).

After analyzing many local and global statistics, Al Shemiry (2002) thinks that the percentage of unemployment for women in KSA is large and it implies economic and social problems that society must be aware of. The researcher also confirms in his study that the inability of the society to broaden women's work areas is due to several reasons. The most important one is that a faction of the population does not accept the contribution of women to the labor market, and this section, through its legally unjustifiable pressures, affects other larger sections of society that were also still reluctant to accept women working. The other reasons reside in labor systems and their incompatibility with working women, and also in the lack of transportation services and nurseries. Thus, the researcher deduced the importance of considering women's work as to the decision of the Islamic authority and to the nature and the degree of the need for women's work. In a field study conducted in the city of Riyadh, concerning the motivations of Saudi women towards work and the problems they encounter, Al Nemr (1989) concluded on the presence of a combination of factors affecting women's participation in development, as well as a number of obstacles influencing the scanty weak participation of women. The main obstacle is possibly the difficulty of providing transportation services, in addition to the lack of the public's appreciation for the contribution of women in the workforce. Al-Nemr explained this by saying that there is a cautious acceptance by society of women's work outside the home, as well as the difficulty that women face in balancing between work and household duties, and this may be due to the labor systems.

As for Al-Husseini (1992), the study indicated that new areas of work for Saudi women can be available through the establishment of women's factories run by women, or through their participation in the administrative activities in the bodies that need women's services such as courts, municipalities, notaries, or in commercial activities, in computer and research centers, hospitals, medical test laboratories and ministries. The study also showed that both men and women agree that working women should not mix men.

In a field study conducted on women working in various government departments in the cities of Jeddah and Mecca, focusing on the obstacles standing in the way of women's work, Halawani (2000) concluded that there are 6 obstacles facing women's work. The main ones being: the fact that supervisors are men, the internal work environment, family obligations, as well as some general constraints such as the limited available areas of work.

Researchers in the structure of the Saudi labor market are aware that this market suffers from a number of problems that are not related to the lack of university graduates of both sexes in most market areas, but rather to the influences, forces and interests that control job Saudization and the expansion of capital and investment projects. This led to the limited areas of work and the emergence of a significant unemployment rate among female workers, many of whom do not find a job consistent with the customs and traditions of Saudi society. Consequently, these women are obliged to stay at home or to work in a field that is not related to their majors. In both cases, the usefulness of women's educational background decreases, as well as the opportunities to benefit from their capabilities and capacities (Al Nemr, 1989).

Other reports and studies also confirmed the existence of problems related to the educational system, the academic curricula and the labor market structure that aggravated the problem of employability. One of these studies is that of Khattab (1998) in which he indicated that the academic curricula are still inculcating the traditional roles of women which resulted in disseminating feelings of fear, distrust and skepticism concerning joining applied majors due to

the sensitivity of woman's situation in a society governed by customs and traditions. He also indicated that the admission of women to universities for scientific majors is limited. Also, a study on Saudization and job opportunities prepared by the Center for Research and Studies in Riyadh Chamber of Commerce and Industry, underlined that the most important reasons for the low contribution of women to the labor market is the incompatibility between the majors of female graduates and labor market needs. In fact, enrolment in theoretical major is prevailing, for female who are already enrolled as well as for those who will be enrolled in the future. The study shows that the number of female graduates increased at an annual rate of 5.17% between 1993 and 2000. In addition, the sixth Development Plan showed that female graduates in Islamic Studies and Social Sciences represent 57.5% of the total number of female HE graduates who newly joined the labor market in 2000.

IV. Policies adopted by the Ministry of HE to achieve employability

The KSA understood that it must face the problem of employability through a holistic plan that is not limited to a specific institution or a sector. For this reason, the Council of Ministers decided to form a ministerial committee composed of the relevant ministries in order to study the issue in a comprehensive way and to suggest detailed recommendations accompanied by a working mechanism for each of the concerned sectors. The Council of Ministers approved these recommendations. Some of them are related to HE and are listed below.

1. Recommendations concerning HE

- a. Orient the admission to HEIs towards the majors needed in the labor market, and to include in the curricula of university colleges all the basic skills and modern techniques required in the labor market.
- b. Revise the programs of Education Colleges as well as teacher training colleges of both sexes to make them compatible with labor market requirements.
- c. Accelerate the adoption of new study options in HE such as E-Education, distance education, partial attendance regulation, evening education, enrollment and to work on the quality of output.
- d. Continue encouraging the private sector to establish private colleges in various regions of the Kingdom, taking into consideration the comparative advantage of the economic and environmental activities in order to meet labor market needs in these regions.
- e. Increase the expenditure on HE in line with the number of students expected to be admitted to HEIs. In addition to enhancing cost efficiency and the use of financial resources.
- f. Examine the ways of rationalizing the costs of university education and identify the appropriate means to achieve this.
- g. Prepare a long-term plan (25 years) under the supervision of the HE Council to identify the needs of post-secondary education, its types, the quality of its output and the methods of financing it.
- h. Prepare a study, under the supervision of the HE Council, aimed at identifying the input of girls' HE, its output, its curricula, and its processes in order to achieve development requirements and meet labor market needs.
- i. Diversify the resources of HE through the individual efforts of universities such as: concluding cost-driven contracts in the areas of training, community service and

continuing education programs, and rehabilitation programs; and accepting in-kind and financial contributions from individuals and private sector institutions.

- j. Consider the establishment of a joint cooperative program between the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of HE, and the Ministry of Civil Service in order to fill the teaching posts.
- k. Review the applied educational system and select the best system (hour system, semester system, annual system).
- l. Prepare an action program that includes a timetable for the implementation of the abovementioned recommendations

2. Mechanisms for implementing recommendations related to HEIs:

- a. The National Commission for Academic Accreditation & Assessment (NCAAA) undertakes the task of assessing and developing educational programs, and adopting the appropriate majors for the labor market.
- b. The Ministry of HE, the Ministry of Education, the General Organization for Technical Education and Vocational Training, the Public Administration Institute should intensify rehabilitation programs for graduates of both sexes whose majors are incompatible with labor market needs.
- c. The HE institutions include in their curricula the basic skills required in the labor market.
- d. The Council of Ministers Decree No. 87 of 17 /6 /2002 regarding the provision of loans and subsidies for the private HE sector should be implemented in an accelerated way.
- e. The Council of HE develops a formula based on accurate statistical data as a support for HE, which is compatible with the increasing number of enrollments in HEIs.
- f. The deans of students affairs and academic orientation in HEIs prepare, in coordination with the Council for Chambers of Commerce and Industry, integrated programs that prepare students to enter the labor market.

3. Efforts by the Ministry of HE to ensure the employability of HE graduates

During the last six years, the Ministry of HE started to implement a plan aimed at making a rapid and major change in the structure of HE in universities. The following are the main aspects of this change:

- a. This period has witnessed a quantitative and qualitative expansion of universities: 12 governmental universities were established, and all their colleges are specialized in Applied Sciences which include various majors such as Health Sciences (Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Applied Medical Sciences and Nursing) as well as Colleges of Engineering, Computer Science, and Business administration. Thus, the total number of governmental universities supervised by the Ministry of HE became 20. In addition, University colleges were established in more than 77 provinces, therefore, the total number of colleges reached 44 in which around 700 000 students of both sexes are enrolled. As a result of this expansion in universities, the number of colleges has increased as shown in Table 2.

These colleges were provided with the financial resources needed for installation and equipment, and the needed human resources both administrative staff and faculty.

- b. This period also witnessed the expansion of private HE: 7 private universities were established, as well as 17 private university colleges. More than 100 preliminary permits for the establishment of new private colleges were delivered.

Table 2: Growth rates in universities and colleges supervised by the Ministry of HE

Unit	2003 Number	2009 Number	Growth rate
Governmental Universities	8	20	150%
University Colleges	199	440	121%
Colleges of Medicine	7	21	200%
Colleges of Dentistry	3	12	300%
Colleges of Pharmacy	3	15	400%
Colleges of Applied Medical Sciences	3	29	867%
Nursing Colleges	0	5	
Health Colleges and Institutes	0	50	
Colleges of Engineering	7	32	357%
Colleges of Sciences	7	28	300%
Colleges of Computer Science	3	21	600%
Community Colleges	20	46	130%
Teaching Hospitals (included in the budget of the universities)	3	12	300%
Private Universities	1	6	500%
Private Colleges	4	40	900%
New Students in governmental and private universities and colleges*	67,855	201,053	196%
New Students enrolled in all HE institutions*	136,723	205,813	51%

* For the year 2008/ 2009

Source: HE Center for Research and Studies (2009) **Growth Indicators in HE**, under publication: Al-Riyadh

The most important result of the abovementioned expansion in governmental and private universities was the increase in admission to universities from 68,000 in 2003 to 201,053 in 2008, It was a 196% increase. It is to be noted that this quantitative expansion was accompanied by the spread of university education in various regions and provinces of the Kingdom and by the availability of university education opportunities for all students in their regions in conformity with the Development plans.

It is also to be noted that, until recently, employability was not a problem given that the country was in urgent need for all the graduates of university education in all specializations. But, with the implementation of successive development plans and the increase of the number of university graduates, the labor market became gradually saturated with some specializations and therefore the problem was aggravated year after year. It was clear for the stakeholders in HE that it is difficult to change the structure of the programs and majors in a short period of time. For that reason, the Ministry adopted a plan comprising important policies in order to attain larger employability rates. Some of

these policies are listed below:

- 1) The restructuring of colleges, programs and majors which includes the following procedures that are carried out according to labor market needs: reduce admission in some departments, merge existing departments, separate some departments, convert some of them into colleges, limit some departments to post-graduate studies, or eliminate some of them. The trend towards restructuring the majors is clearly shown in King Khaled University. This university was composed of two branches: King Saud University and Imam Mohammed Ben Saoud Islamic University. After a number of restructuring decisions, the percentage of students admitted for the first semester of this year in market-oriented majors was 82.73%. At Qassim University, the admission to a number of departments such as Geography, History and Sociology was stopped and the admission to other majors was rationalized. Thus, the percentage of admissions to market-oriented majors reached 83.58%. At King Faisal University, admission to the following majors was stopped: the Department of Economics and Agricultural Extension, the Department of Agricultural Biotechnology, the Department of Agricultural Systems Engineering, and the Department of Home Economics Education. In addition, all the departments of the College of Agricultural and Food Sciences were restructured through merging or separating the majors. Thus, the proportion of students admitted for the first semester reached 80.63% for boys and 66.25% for girls according to Table 3.

Table 3: Percentages of students admitted to governmental and private universities and colleges affiliated to the Ministry of HE, for the first semester of the 2006 - 2007 academic year, classified according to the relation between the major and the labor market

University	Males			Females			Total		
	Total number of admitted students	Market-oriented majors (%)	Majors slightly related to the labor market (%)	Total number of admitted students	Market-oriented majors (%)	Majors slightly related to the labor market (%)	Total number of admitted students	Market-oriented majors (%)	Majors slightly related to the labor market (%)
University Umm Al-Qura	5 523	75,39	24,61	3 173	51,65	48,35	8 696	66,73	33,27
Islamic University	642	51,40	48,60				642	51,40	48,60
Al-Imam Mohamed Ibn Saud Islamic University	4 317	67,27	32,73	1 390	68,99	31,01	5 707	67,69	32,31
King Saud University	8 907	77,79	22,21	4 109	64,81	35,19	13 016	73,69	26,31
King Abdul-Aziz University	5 860	75,00	25,00	3 428	45,65	54,35	9 288	64,17	35,83

King Fahd University of Petroleum & Minerals	2 687	100,00	0,00				2 687	100,00	0,00
King Faisal University	1 812	80,63	19,37	1 917	66,25	33,75	3 729	73,24	26,76
King Khaled University	3 758	84,51	15,49	394	65,74	34,26	4 152	82,73	17,27
Qassim University	3 785	82,17	17,83	326	100,00	0,00	4 111	83,58	16,42
Taibah University	1 798	94,38	5,62	1 420	94,51	5,49	3 218	94,44	5,56
Al-Jouf University	3 419	100,00	0,00	113	100,00	0,00	3 532	100,00	0,00
University of Ha'il	618	100,00	0,00	490	100,00	0,00	1 108	100,00	0,00
Jazam University	603	100,00	0,00				603	100,00	0,00
Taef University	1 566	77,52	22,48	1 939	68,85	31,15	3 505	72,72	27,28
King Abdul-Aziz University for Health Sciences	30	100,00	0,00	125	100,00	0,00	155	100,00	0,00
Scholarship students among high school graduates	4 960	100,00	0,00	247	100,00	0,00	5 207	100,00	0,00
Private universities and colleges	9 220	100,00	0,00	3 551	100,00	0,00	12 771	100,00	0,00

Source: Center for HE Research and Studies (2008) Achievements of the Ministry of HE. Al-Riyadh

- 2) Opening new colleges and departments that offer only the majors required by the labor market such as Medical and Engineering majors, Computer Science, Information Technology, and Natural Sciences. In fact, in all 104 colleges that were opened recently, the majors are directly related to labor market needs. Thus, the proportion of admissions for the first semester in 2006 - 2007 to market-oriented majors has increased to 85% for male students and 70% for female students as shown in Table 4. In more details, it is to be noticed that, in the same year, the proportion of admitted students to market-oriented majors has reached 100% in 5 governmental universities, 2 private ones and 17 private colleges, and for all scholarship beneficiaries outside KSA. The proportion of admissions to market-oriented majors varied in other universities.
- 3) Expansion of Community Colleges. Their philosophy is based on the importance of HE program diversification to ensure a qualified workforce to meet the needs of society and carry out development plans. In fact, Community Colleges prepare secondary school graduates to enter the labor market in productive areas through rehabilitation programs. They also promote the acquisition of skills through training programs. This contributes to providing the labor market with much needed intermediate skills. In addition, these colleges provide the opportunity to complete a university education according to transitional programs for outstanding students.

Table 4: Statistical summary of the number of students admitted to governmental and private universities and colleges affiliated to the Ministry of HE, for the first semester 2006- 2007 classified according to the relation between the major and the labor market.

Total	Males				Females				Total			
	59505				22622				82127			
	Market-oriented majors		Majors slightly related to the labor market		Market-oriented majors		Majors slightly related to the labor market		Market-oriented majors		Majors slightly related to the labor market	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
82127	50917	85,57	8588	14,43	15884	70,21	6738	29,79	66801	81,34	15326	18,66

Source: Center for HE Research and Studies (2008.), Achievements of the Ministry of HE. Al-Riyadh

- 4) The King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz Scholarship Program is considered as a major program aimed at achieving employability of HE graduates, as it is restricted to scholarships for Applied Science majors that are related to development needs.
- 5) After the decision of the Council of Ministers to separate 18 Teacher training Colleges and 102 Girls' Colleges from the Ministry of Education and affiliate them to universities, the Council of HE decided to entrust the Boards of Universities with conducting in-depth studies on the restructuring of the colleges related to these universities and submit recommendations to the HE Council. This Council decided, after considering the recommendations, to establish a committee at the level of directors of the Ministries of Finance, Civil Service, Education, Economy and Planning, Labor, and HE. The committee was in charge of preparing an in-depth study on these recommendations based on the visions of universities and their perceptions regarding the restructuring process, in light of development considerations and the national needs for appropriately qualified now and in the future, and also in light of the contents of the relevant national development plans. The universities took into consideration the plan of the Ministry of Education for the coming years (2004 - 2014) regarding the need for male and female teachers for basic education and for all the majors. They also identified the needs for the private sector by communicating with its institutions and the relevant sectors. The recommendations focused on the restructuring of 98 colleges to become 97 new colleges in which 573 scientific departments were restructured to become 672. The restructuring process aimed also at making these colleges compatible with labor market needs and able to meet national needs for human resources in all development majors. Although these efforts were not limited to university education for girls and they involved both sexes, many of them directly affect the restructuring of the available majors for women and aim at making a quantum leap in their future employability.

4. Outcomes of the employability efforts through statistical comparisons

The efforts of the Ministry regarding employability are illustrated by the trend to increase the majors that are obviously market-oriented and reduce the majors which are only slightly

demanded in the labor market. This will be demonstrated through statistical comparison. A number of indicators demonstrate the outcomes of the policies adopted by the Ministry aimed at increasing the number of students in majors highly demanded in the labor market and to reduce the number of students in majors slightly demanded in the labor market. The comparison was conducted for the period between 2002 and 2007. It should be noted that this comparison was made on HEIs affiliated to the Ministry of HE (governmental universities - private universities and colleges). To illustrate this development, the comparison was conducted on the growth of the number of admitted students and the number of enrolled students. Table 5 shows the growth rates of the number of students admitted to universities and institutions affiliated to the Ministry of HE. In fact, this rate has reached around 30% for secondary school graduates from 2002 to 2007. Also, the percentage of admission to universities has increased by 48% whereas the percentage of admission to Teacher Colleges and Girls' Colleges decreased by nearly 35%. The same table also illustrates the percentage of students in majors slightly related to the labor market. The proportion of students in Islamic Studies dropped by 34%, the proportion of students in Social Sciences decreased by 12%, and the proportion of students admitted to the major of Education also dropped by 7.27%.

Table 5 also shows the increase in the proportion of students admitted to majors whose output is related to labor market needs: some of the Arts and Human Sciences majors such as Arabic language and other languages, Economics and Business, Natural Science, Engineering Science, Computer Science and Computer Engineering, Medicine and Dentistry, Applied Medical Science and Pharmacy, Languages and Translation as well as other professional and applied majors.

In general, the number of students admitted to employable majors in university colleges (except for Teacher Colleges and Girls' Colleges) has increased by approximately 72% whereas the number of students admitted to majors slightly related to the labor market decreased by 23% compared to their number in 2002 / 2003.

As for Table 6, it shows the growth rates of the number of students enrolled in universities and institutions affiliated to the Ministry of HE between 2002 / 2003 and 2006 / 2007. In fact, the overall number of students enrolled in universities has increased by 71% and there is also an increase in the number of students enrolled in market-oriented majors such as: some of the Arts and Human Science majors such as Arabic language and other languages, Economics and Business, Agricultural and Veterinary Science, Natural Science, Engineering Science, Computer Science and Computer Engineering, Medicine and Dentistry, Applied Medical Science and Pharmacy, Languages and Translation as well as other professional and applied majors.

In general, the number of students enrolled in market-oriented majors in university colleges (except for Teacher Colleges and Girls' Colleges) has increased by approximately 99% in 2006 /2007 whereas the number of students enrolled in majors slightly related to the labor market decreased by 9% compared to their number in 2002 /2003.

Table 5: Comparison of the numbers of admitted students between 2002 and 2006

Discipline	Admitted students (2002/2003.)			Admitted students (2006/2007.)			Growth rates			Employability
	Male students	Female students	Total	Male students	Female students	Total	Male students	Female students	Total	

Islamic Studies	7962	1976	9938	5286	1297	6583	-33,61%	-34,36%	-33,76%	Majors slightly related to the labor market
Human Sciences	7583	2783	10366	10765	4887	15652	41,96%	75,60%	50,99%	Market-oriented majors
Social Sciences	1193	833	2026	1105	679	1784	-7,38%	-18,49%	-11,94%	Majors slightly related to the labor market
Education	2391	3005	5396	2172	2831	5004	-9,16%	-5,79%	-7,26%	Majors slightly related to the labor market
Economics and Business	3252	1742	5094	11848	4480	16328	253,46%	157,18%	220,53%	Market-oriented majors
Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences	1771	403	2174	1780	467	2246	0,51%	15,88%	3,31%	Market-oriented majors
Natural Sciences	5118	3317	8435	8016	3159	11175	56,62%	-4,76%	32,48%	Market-oriented majors
Engineering Sciences	2397	35	2432	3771	39	3810	57,32%	11,43%	56,66%	Market-oriented majors
Computer Sciences and Computer Engineering	854	696	1550	1955	889	2844	128,92%	27,73%	83,48%	Market-oriented majors
Medicine and Dentistry	1432	754	2186	1919	1145	3063	34,01%	51,86%	40,12%	Market-oriented majors
Applied Medical Sciences and Pharmacy	331	211	542	1791	1552	3343	441,09%	635,55%	516,79%	Market-oriented majors
Languages and Translation	920	384	1304	1364	602	1966	48,26%	56,77%	50,77%	Market-oriented majors
Other (Community, Intermediate Diploma...)	11923	3933	15856	19807	5698	25505	66,12%	44,88%	60,85%	Market-oriented majors
Total	47227	20072	67299	71579	27725	99303	51,56%	38,13%	47,55%	Market-oriented majors
Teachers Colleges and Girls' Colleges	9005	108619	117624	3256	73666	76922	-63,84%	-32,18%	-34,60%	Majors slightly related to the labor market
Total (overall)	56232	128691	184923	74835	101391	176225	33,08%	-21,21%	-4,70%	

Market-oriented majors (without Teachers Colleges and Girls' Colleges)	35681	14258	49939	63016	22918	85932	76,61%	60,74%	72,07%	
	75,55%	71,03%	74,20%	88,04%	82,66%	86,54%				
Majors slightly related to the labor market (without Teachers Colleges and Girls' Colleges)	11546	5814	17360	5863	4807	13371	-25,84%	-17,32%	-22,99%	
	24,45%	28,97%	25,80%	11,96%	17,34%	13,46%				
Market-oriented majors (including Teachers Colleges and Girls' Colleges)	35681	14258	49939	63016	22918	85932				
	63,45%	11,08%	27,01%	84,21%	22,60%	48,76%				
Majors slightly related to the labor market (including Teachers Colleges and Girls' Colleges)	20551	114433	134984	11819	78473	90293				
	36,55%	88,92%	72,99%	15,79%	77,40%	51,24%				

Source: Center for HE Research and Studies (2008), Achievements of the Ministry of HE, Al-Riyadh

Table 6: Comparison of the numbers of enrolled students between 1423 and 1427 AH

Discipline	Admitted students (1423-1424 AH.)			Admitted students 1427-1428 AH.)			Growth rates			Employability
	Male students	Female students	Total	Male students	Female students	Total	Male students	Female students	Total	
Islamic Studies	19648	5371	25019	26234	11065	37299	33,52%	106,01%	49,08%	Majors slightly related to the labor market

Human Sciences	23276	10039	33315	23749	16829	40578	2,03%	67,63%	21,80%	Market-oriented majors
Social Sciences	8960	6456	15416	2298	3793	6091	-74,35%	-41,25%	-60,49%	Majors slightly related to the labor market
Education	12214	12610	24824	12113	15880	27993	-0,83%	25,93%	12,77%	Majors slightly related to the labor market
Economics and Business	15791	9213	25004	17402	14802	32204	10,20%	60,67%	28,80%	Market-oriented majors
Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences	3335	497	3832	6025	2698	8723	80,66%	442,86%	127,64%	Market-oriented majors
Natural Sciences	13389	9039	22428	37959	23205	61164	183,51%	156,72%	172,71%	Market-oriented majors
Engineering Sciences	13374	197	13571	19884	333	20217	48,68%	68,83%	48,97%	Market-oriented majors
Computer Science and Computer Engineering	8385	4023	12408	11351	3934	15285	35,37%	-2,22%	23,19%	Market-oriented majors
Medicine and Dentistry	4697	2790	7487	6895	3776	10671	46,80%	35,34%	42,53%	Market-oriented majors
Applied Medical Sciences and Pharmacy	4703	3567	8270	6460	7392	13852	37,36%	107,23%	67,50%	Market-oriented majors
Languages and Translation	2483	1467	3950	4710	4743	9453	89,67%	223,31%	139,30%	Market-oriented majors
Other (Community, Intermediate Diploma...)	12515	4564	17079	48001	32920	80921	283,55%	621,30%	373,80%	Market-oriented majors
Total	142770	69833	212603	223081	141370	364451	56,25%	102,44%	71,42%	
Teachers Colleges and Girls' Colleges	29989	214666	244655	35110	227470	262580	17,08%	5,96%	7,33%	Majors slightly related to the labor market

Total (overall)	172759	284499	457258	258191	368840	627030	49,45%	29,65%	37,13%	
Market-oriented majors (without Teachers Colleges and Girls' Colleges)	101948	45396	147344	182436	110632	293068	78,95%	143,70%	98,90%	
	71,41%	65,01%	69,30%	81,78%	78,26%	80,41%				
Majors slightly related to the labor market (without Teachers Colleges and Girls' Colleges)	40822	24437	65259	40645	30738	71383	-0,43%	25,78%	9,38%	
	28,59%	34,99%	30,70%	18,22%	21,74%	19,59%				
Market-oriented majors (including Teachers Colleges and Girls' Colleges)	101948	45396	147344	182436	110632	293068				
	59,01%	15,96%	32,22%	70,66%	29,99%	46,74%				
Majors slightly related to the labor market (including Teachers Colleges and Girls' Colleges)	70811	239103	309914	75755	258208	333963				
	40,99%	84,04%	67,78%	29,34%	70,01%	53,26%				

Source: Center for HE Research and Studies (2008), Achievements of the Ministry of HE. Al-Riyadh

V. The future of employability for the female university graduates

The two tables show that there is an annual increase in the participation of women in the labor force in KSA and that the public sector is the major employer for more than 90% of the total number of working women, while the remaining 10% are employed by other sectors. Hence, efforts aimed at enhancing the employability of female university graduates should focus more on the private sector, while creating new opportunities in the government sector. It is also evident that there are policies and strategies adopted by HEIs that have started to show concrete results in achieving employability.

In order to achieve better results in the field of employability, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Continue the restructuring of girls' HE in conformity with their characteristics and with the labor market requirements that must be identified every 5 years.
2. Expand the field of education, training, and employment for Saudi women in compliance

- with their nature and without violating the principles of the Shar'ia.
3. Expand vocational, technical and legal education for girls.
 4. Urge the Labor Force Development Fund to establish programs for the training and employment of women.
 5. Expand university majors related to distance work such as technical majors, editing, writing reports, etc., given their consistency with the nature of women and with their roles in the family.
 6. Consider opening positions for women in the following areas: in the public and governmental bodies and institutions that offer services related to women; units or departments exclusively for women, particularly in the legal, industrial and medical fields; and in the areas of security, accounting, health and media.
 7. Increase the job opportunities available to Saudi women in the educational, medical, legal, and technical private sector and also in the media and information systems in the private sector.
 8. Provide women with soft loans for the implementation of investment projects.
 9. Develop and promote the idea of productive households and cottage industry to help women perform certain occupations in their homes, under the auspices of a public institution for productive households.
 10. Intensify professional guidance towards female students in secondary school to help them choose the majors needed in the labor market. This would be done through long-term planning that ensures the suitable output for the market requirements and then orients the female graduates toward them.
 11. Continue the expansion of Colleges of Medicine and Nursing and affiliate them to hospitals; increase Medical Science Colleges given that the Health sector has the capacity to absorb more females.
 12. Rehabilitate the graduates accumulating on waiting lists, according to the actual needs of the labor market.
 13. Involve women in the advisory committees concerned with the decisions affecting the status of women, so that these decisions take into consideration the reality of women.
 14. Open branches for women that can be extended and expanded all over the Kingdom.
 15. Review the regulatory procedures and modify them according to modern life changes, and to establish systems and regulations in the private sector aimed at reducing differences between public and private sectors in this regard.
 16. Establish data bases that contain qualitative information and allow for identifying the types of activities required by the labor market and to continually update them in view of the numerous and various advantages that can be brought to fruition at both the social and economic levels.

VI. Conclusion

This study attempted to shed light on the problem of employability of Saudi female HE graduates. It is known that HE issues are concentrated in the following four major domains:

1. Admission and capacity
2. Funding
3. Quality
4. Employability

It is also known that it is impossible to study each of these domains separately. Employability, for example, cannot be studied without a clear perception of the ability to ensure funding and to achieve the elements of quality, and of the volume of admission and capacity impacts.

The study also demonstrated that the relationship between the output of girls' HE and labor market needs cannot be examined without observing the social and cultural context of this relationship. It also demonstrates that the nature of the Saudi labor market requires the observation of the opportunities available in it, as well as the identification of its needs and the forces of influence in it.

The study focused on the efforts implemented by the Ministry of HE in order to achieve employability through many ways. It also illustrated the outcomes of these concrete efforts during the last few years. These outcomes represented clear evidence on the orientation of HE towards applied and scientific majors in parallel with a reduction in the majors with which the labor market is already saturated.

Given that employability is a problem from which many countries around the world suffer, this study was comprised of suggestions and recommendations aimed at achieving employability based on the study's findings, the reality of girls' HE and the problems facing the Saudi labor market.

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Quality Improvement and Quality Assurance in Saudi Private Higher Education Institutions*

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Abstract

This paper reviews the most prominent measures adopted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in support of private higher education and quality assurance and improvement. The paper presents the measures taken to lease government land at nominal prices and provide soft loans, and the impact of these measures on the growth of the private higher education sector. The paper also deals with the quality assurance and improvement methods contained in the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques scholarship and academic accreditation project, which makes quality results a precondition for receiving grants. Finally, the paper presents the proposed solutions and future perspectives.

I. Introduction

In the era of knowledge and of understanding the economy in communities, both public and non-public education play an increasingly important role in promoting economic solidarity, social cohesion, individual development, sustainable development and the spread of the culture of peace and global citizenship. Our views about the way we live, the way we learn, and the way we work and think about work have changed. In addition the acquisition of knowledge is no longer compatible with the skills that were provided by traditional formal education. Thus, a new model based on an all-inclusive and environmentally sound human development must be established in order to train students to contribute to knowledge rather than just receive it. This model has actually led to new challenges and opportunities for Higher Education Institutions, whether they are governmental, private or mixed institutions (Gupta, 2005).

The concept of private (Ahli)³ higher education (HE) is not new. In Asia, private higher education institutions (HEIs) represent an essential part of HE as a whole. Indeed, private HE has played a major role in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan (Taipei), Indonesia, and the Philippines. In these countries, the proportion of students enrolled in private HE exceeds 80%. In addition, private HE is growing rapidly in China, Vietnam, Cambodia and other republics of Central Asia. However, it is to be noticed that private HEIs at the post-secondary stage are, in general, in the lower ranks

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³ In Saudi Arabia the private higher education is called "Ahli" since it is a not-for-profit. All terms "private" in this paper refer to this concept.

regarding status, despite the existence of some private universities of great distinction such as Waseda University and Keio University in Japan, De La Salle University and Ateneo De Manila University in the Philippines, Yonsei University in South Korea and Sanata Dharma University in Indonesia. These universities are prestigious in their respective countries and provide elite degree training. (Altbach, 2002).

There is also another category of new private HEIs that are specialized in such fields as Business, Technology and Education with the sole aim of providing employable graduates and high-quality academic degrees. The Asian Institute of Technology in the Philippines and the National Institute of Information Technology in India fall under this category (Gupta, 2005).

As for China, the non-governmental HE sector is comprised of more than 1200 institutions, even if not all of them are licensed by the government. By late 2002, 4 private colleges were authorized to grant Bachelor Degrees, whereas 129 private colleges were allowed to grant degrees lower than Bachelor level. In China, the private sector represents 10% of the overall enrollment in post-secondary education (Yan and Levy, 2003). Private educational institutions in Shanghai and Beijing have a reasonably good reputation while the colleges in Shenyang do not share this.

Unlike China, private HE in post-communist Russia emerged only a decade ago, along with a significant increase in the contribution of the private sector to the establishment of private HEIs. In Russia, there are more than 500 private educational institutions representing 10% of the overall students enrolled in HE in market-oriented majors such as Economics, Law, Psychology, Sociology, Social Services, Business Administration as well as other fields that do not require huge investments, equipment and research facilities. Similarly in Vietnam, private HEIs account for 12% of all students.

Private HE has witnessed a rapid growth in Malaysia where there are 691 private institutes and universities as well as 4 foreign universities. Malaysia is one of the few countries that allowed private HE to operate a long time ago, but without fully recognizing these institutions. Recently, the Malaysian government imposed some restrictions on the funding of programs for studying abroad and then went on to work on attracting foreign students from neighboring countries by transforming Malaysia into an international learning center. Indeed, the proportion of foreign students enrolled in Malaysia reached 60% between 1997 and 2000. Malaysia depends on the private sector to meet the high demand for HE and technical skills and to increase revenues from abroad (Lee and Levy, 2003).

The private sector is achieving success in HE in the Middle East as well. In Afghanistan, for example, in addition to the political and economic changes, there are a number of changes in the education sector as well. The Afghan government is effectively planning to establish their first private university: The American University in Afghanistan which will follow the American model. In this university, English will be the language of instruction and instructors will become from the United States.

In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), the number of private HEIs has reached a total of 24 universities and colleges granting Bachelor & Masters degrees in majors closely related to labor market needs. As part of the policy of private sector encouragement, the government granted licenses to private sector institutions authorizing them to establish 2 new universities and 36 new colleges. The colleges will be established in 9 cities, in addition to the 6 colleges that are already in place and licensed by the Ministry of HE.

In Latin America, it was the Catholic Church that founded the oldest private universities and institutions, but the trend is now for the establishment of private for-profit universities. For example, The University of the Americas garnered huge profits despite the criticism of the

academic community in Chili regarding the low quality of teaching and high fees. However, this private university is proud of its access to the international scene and of the international relations it has built (Bollag, 2003).

In most Western European countries, public universities are still dominant over private ones whereas private HE is becoming more successful in Eastern Europe. In the United Kingdom and many other countries, the distinction between public and private colleges is becoming increasingly blurred. One of the reasons behind this is the competition from private educational institutions at the post-secondary stage, as they are more accessible to the general population and are market-oriented. Another reason is the change in the general policies concerning the initiative of private HEIs. Moreover, a number of new institutions are financed by a combination of public and private resources. In conclusion, it is worth noting that governments in most countries pay little attention to the private sector and are no longer hostile to it (Levy, 2002).

With great interest, KSA is expanding the basis of HE, in terms of private sector participation, opening private universities and colleges to contribute to meeting development requirements in a way that complements public HE. In 1997, the Council of Ministers issued a decree authorizing the establishment of private educational institutions, and then the HE Council issued a number of decisions providing for regulations and procedures. The sixth Development Plan (1994 - 1999) included among its objectives, the expansion of the HE base through participation of the private sector in the opening of private colleges. Indeed, Decree 33 of 1997 that was issued by the Council of Ministers authorized the private sector to establish non-profit educational institutions on sound administrative, scientific and financial bases in order to contribute to meeting development requirements and therefore complementing the role of public universities. (General Directorate for private HE, 2009).

II. Regulations related to private universities and colleges: An historical overview

In 1991, the Ministry of HE started to prepare studies on private (Ahli) HE. Then, the Council of Ministers issued on 18 /2 /1997 AD Decree No. 33 which entrusted the Ministry of HE with preparing a new vision for the establishment of private colleges. This decree also enabled the private sector to establish non-profit educational institutions. Thereafter, the HE Council issued Decision No. 3 /10/ 1998 of 6 /2 /1998 , which approved the regulations relating to non-profit private colleges, enabling charity foundations to establish non-profit private colleges. Then, the Council of Ministers Decree No. 127 of 8 /6 /1998 entrusted the Ministry of HE with the establishment of charity foundations.

On 4 /1 /1999, the Minister of Higher Education issued Decree No. 334 which approved the executive rules for the establishment and licensing of educational charity foundations at the post-secondary level.

The Council of Ministers Decree No. 212 of 1 /9 /2000 stipulated the approval of the regulations related to private colleges, which enabled the private sector and charity foundations to establish private colleges. Then, the Decree of the Minister of HE No. 35 /1/ 1398 of 15 /1/ 2001 stipulated the approval of the executive rules and the administrative and technical procedures for the regulations related to private colleges. As for land leasing, the Council of Ministers issued on 6 /4 /2002 Decree No. 78 that approved the leasing of government land at low prices and the provision of soft loans for private educational institution projects.

On 9 /2/ 2003, the Royal Decree No. 7/B/6024 was issued approving regulations regarding private

universities. Finally, the Royal Decree No. 6304/MB of 18 /8/ 2006 approved the scholarship scheme for private HE students of both sexes.

III. The relationship between private colleges and the Ministry of HE in KSA

The Ministry of HE in KSA has set the standards, rules and foundations underlying the relation between this Ministry and the private colleges in KSA. The major part of this relation is based on a sound educational approach regarding the application of the academic administration functions. The major principles of this relation are defined in the following points:

1. Joint planning

The planning proceeds through two phases:

- a. 1st phase: it is the initial phase of the private college project requiring the development of a clear vision of the objectives of the college, the extent of its contribution to the development in KSA through the proposed specializations, and the existence of demand for these specializations so that the private college would not face problems in the future. To this end, the founders submit a feasibility study which is assessed by experts before granting them a preliminary license.
- b. 2nd phase: it is the phase of planning during the operation of the college through forming a Board of Trustees in the college, consisting of:
 - Five members among the founders or nominated by them.
 - An academic representative designated by the Ministry of HE.
 - Two faculty members specialized in Saudi universities, designated by the Ministry of HE.

The purpose of establishing the Board of Trustees is to form a working team composed of both of investors and academics so that the educational level at the college is continuously developed, and investors can participate in such strategic decisions related to the college as: the expansion in student numbers, the different majors, scientific research, the selection of faculty members, as well as the methods of financing this expansion.

2. Joint organization

The Ministry of HE laid the necessary foundations to set the relationship between the Ministry and the private colleges from an organizational perspective. This is approved by both parties for the smooth flow of information between them. This is achieved as follows:

- a. The General Accreditation Committee in the Ministry evaluates the college based on the extent of the college's compliance with accreditation standards. It also orients the college toward redressing any shortcomings in order to maintain the reputation of the college and that of HE in the Kingdom.
- b. The Ministry evaluates the curriculum of each major through:
 - Asking an accredited governmental university or an accredited research and consultation institute (in the same majors) to evaluate the educational plan of the institution.
 - The final approval of the programme is granted by the General Licensing and Accreditation Committee.
- c. Joint Supervision

It is done in two ways:

- 1) Self-supervision: its source is the college, and it is done through reports prepared and submitted by the college. These could be academic, financial or administrative reports, or those required by the Ministry.
- 2) Field Supervision: it is done through specialized committees that conduct periodical visits agreed upon by the Ministry and the private college. The purpose of these visits is to evaluate the relationship between students and faculty members, as well as the administrative staff, in order to identify the extent of academic and personal satisfaction of all parties, which is necessary for the success of the college. This ensures the following to the Ministry of HE and the private colleges in the Kingdom:
 - The private colleges continue to operate.
 - A good revenue is achieved, which helps the college to expand in scientific research, and develop academic, technical, administrative programs and facilities.
 - The objectives of the development plan are attained through the training of graduates required by the labor market.

IV. Support and incentives offered to the private HE sector:

Based on the generous support and exceptional care provided by the government to education in general, and on the honorable support provided by the government to encourage the private sector to practice different economic activities, many decrees favorable to private HE, and encouraging the investors to expand their activities in the private sector were issued. Some examples of this support are listed below:

1. The Council of Ministers Decree No. 87 of 6 /4 /2002 approved the leasing at low prices of sound government land owned by the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and other government authorities. This was in order to establish licensed private colleges, through a rent contract between the private college and the relevant government authority. The contract term extends over the duration of the license period delivered for the establishment of the college. In addition, this contract should be concluded in coordination with the Ministry of Finance and National Economy, the Ministry of HE, the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs as well as the relevant government authority.
2. The Ministry of Finance and National Economy coordinates with the Ministry of HE in granting soft loans to licensed private colleges, as was the case with private hospitals, for which the Council of Ministers Decree No. 1832 of 27 /9/ 1973 was issued.
3. The Royal Decree No. 6304/MB of 18 /8/ 2006 approved the HE Council decrees regarding a scholarship scheme for private HE students of both sexes.

The Ministry of HE strives to identify other incentives that can be directly provided to private universities and colleges in order to support their cause in serving the nation, as they provide the labor market with qualified male and female graduates in different specializations. The scholarship scheme will be extensively examined in other sections of this paper.

V. Steps towards licensing private colleges in KSA

The Ministry of HE in KSA is the authority that grants licenses for private universities and colleges. The General Licensing and Accreditation Committee for private colleges has been formed, headed by the president of one of the universities. The executive and procedural rules organizing private colleges suggested by the Committee provide for the criteria to be used by the Ministry of HE to license university colleges. Some of the aspects of the regulations of private colleges and the rules organizing them are:

1. Abiding by the rules regarding the relation between the Ministry of HE and university colleges.
2. Achieving the major objective set for private sector investment in private HE.
3. Following the sequence of procedures needed to acquire the final license for university colleges. The four stages are:
 - a. Preliminary License: it aims at clarifying the objective of establishing the college, what it will add to HE in the Kingdom through the specializations it will provide, and how serious the license applicants are.
 - b. General Accreditation: it addresses the provision of the minimum number of buildings (teaching halls; laboratories; library; offices of faculty members, other teachers, lecturers and administrative staff; extra-curricular activities; sports activities, etc.)
 - c. Special Accreditation: it addresses the availability of equipment for laboratories, workshops and libraries; as well as the qualification of the faculty members, and other teachers and lecturers. It also checks whether the qualifications of the administrators comply with the posts suggested in the college organizational structure. Moreover, it evaluates the study programs by specialized committees in accredited universities; and the determination of the Board of Trustees in the college.
 - d. Final License: its procedures focus on the review of all the previous stages, ensuring the necessary guarantees for the continuation of the college. To ensure the desired output of such university colleges, specialized committees accomplish periodical follow-ups in which they meet faculty members, students, and administrators and review the academic courses taught in the college. And finally, after the students graduate, these committees evaluate their performance in the labor market.

VI. Quality assurance and improvement

Student scholarships are one of the most important instruments used by the ministry for quality assurance and improvement. In fact, the King has approved the scholarships project for private higher education students through the decree No. 6304 dated 12 /9 /2006 within the Higher Education Council's decisions adopted in the 43rd meeting. The project's most important features and achievements, the results, and the continuous studies and observations based proposals during the application, will be explored hereunder.

1. Important features

One of the most important features of the project is its duration - five years - with a maximum of 10,000 scholarships granted; the percentage of scholarship beneficiaries should not exceed 30% of the total number of university and college students.

The Ministry of Higher Education provides two types of scholarship: The full scholarship to

students having obtained a high school “very good” rating and more, and the semi scholarship for students with a “good” rating. The applicant should satisfy the following criteria to obtain a scholarship:

- a. Saudi national
- b. good reputation and conduct
- c. study one of the specified disciplines (according to the labor market needs)
- d. have obtained the required average specified for the full or semi-scholarship
- e. Not to exceed the usual period given to get his degree
- f. To attend universities and colleges at a regular basis.

2. Achievements

The Ministry has immediately started planning and organizing for the implementation of the scholarship project according to the king’s guidance. It has done the following:

- a. Formation of committees and specialized teams with the beneficiaries and the National Commission for Assessment & Academic Accreditation, in order to define conditions and implementation mechanisms.
- b. Preparation of a scholarship guide to be distributed to private universities and colleges students.
- c. The communication campaign:
 - 1) A circular was sent to all universities and colleges, including a reference to the king’s approval of the scholarships project, with an appendix containing the project’s most important features.
 - 2) An advertisement was published in local newspapers concerning the governmental scholarship project describing the project’s main features.
 - 3) The features and conditions of the scholarship project were added to the private university education page on the Ministry’s website.
- d. The private university and college scholarship program website (www.fap.edu.sa) was set up in cooperation with the Ministry’s computer department and in coordination with one of the companies specialized in this field. This was done in order to register male and female students wishing to obtain a scholarship according to a well-defined mechanism and meeting the scholarships’ conditions. The website began operation from the second semester of the 2007/2008 school year, so that the scholarship acceptance and renewal process could be achieved online. Several workshops related to this process were organized for scholarship managers in private universities and colleges.
- e. Procedures concerning 8,160 scholarships between the 2006/2007 academic year and the 2009/2010 academic year were finalized and then the disbursement of scholarship amounts was done to the concerned students.
- f. Scholarship for the children of diplomats: According to the Royal decree No. 8626, dated 9/10/2007, the children of Saudi diplomats, employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or other governmental entities, are covered for those enrolled in Saudi private universities and colleges. This is according to the scholarship provisions and in coordination with the director general of academic affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A circular is sent to all the Kingdom’s diplomatic representations abroad stating this change, as previously the envoys’ children were not covered by the scholarship program terms and regulations. This will lead to an increase in the number of scholarships granted by up to 160, therefore exceeding the number of 8,000 scholarships dedicated to the four phases.

- g. The National Commission for Assessment & Academic Accreditation (NCAAA) was mandated to visit new private universities and colleges to build their capacities in scholarship management.

3. The stages

The scholarship program provides for five stages; four of which have been completed between the 2006-2007 academic years and the 2009/2010 academic year. 8,160 scholarships were granted amounting to a total of 326,571,000 SAR.

a. The first stage for year 2006 /2007:

The National Commission for Assessment & Academic Accreditation was mandated to visit all private universities and colleges and to prepare a detailed report concerning the eligibility of each university or college for the academic scholarships project. The Commission has actually created specialized work groups to visit every private university or college, and prepared detailed reports on visit results. Then, the registration phase for both male and female students began on the ministry's website – private higher education - followed by the nomination phase elaborated by private universities and colleges. Upon receipt of the lists of applicants, the Ministry carried out the following:

- 1) Verification of the candidates' names and the compatibility of grades with scholarship terms and conditions, especially for the disciplines approved by the high council and the disciplines eligible for scholarships according to the report by the National Commission for Assessment & Academic Accreditation.
- 2) Verification of the compatibility between the student's discipline and his/her cumulative average and what is indicated in his/her academic record for the last semester.
- 3) Verification of the names of students and the classification accuracy in each college according to the highest cumulative average.
- 4) Verification of numbers of candidates in the university or college, which should not exceed the number set by the ministry.
- 5) Exclusion of some students who do not meet scholarship requirements such as discipline and the cumulative average.
- 6) Allocation of money for each scholarship according to the formula set in the scholarship project, after approval by the Royal Court students selected for scholarships.

This stage concerned students in the following private universities and colleges: Prince Sultan University, Prince Mohammad Ben Fahed University, Dar Al Hekma College, Effat College, Al Baha Private College of Science, Jeddah College of Business Administration, Suleiman Faqih College of Nursing and Medical Sciences, Ryad Dentistry and Pharmacy college, Ibn Sina National College, and Al Yamamah College. Accordingly, students from two private universities and eight colleges have benefited from the scholarship project at this stage.

b. The second stage for the 2007 / 2008 academic year:

At this stage, it was important to make sure that all necessary measures which guarantee good conduct were performed according to the first stage. For this purpose, the scholarship program was presented to the students who meet the conditions and in the following private universities and colleges: Prince Sultan University, Prince Mohammad Ben Fahed University, Al-Faisal University, Dar Al Hekma College, Effat College, Al Baha Private College of Science, Business Administration College, Suleiman Faqih College of Nursing and Medical Sciences, Ryad Dentistry and Pharmacy College, Ibn Sina National College, Al Yamamah College, and Abha's Prince Sultan

College for Tourism and Management. Accordingly, students of three private universities and nine colleges have benefited from the scholarship project at this stage.

c. The third stage for the 2008/ 2009 academic year:

At this stage, it was important to make sure that all necessary measures guaranteeing good conduct were performed according to the first stage. For this purpose, the scholarship program was presented to the students who meet the conditions and in the following private universities and colleges: Prince Sultan University, Prince Mohammad Ben Fahed Civil University, Al-Faisal Community University, Al Yamama Community University, Dar Al Hikmat Community Faculty, Effat Community College, Al- Baha Community College for Sciences, Community Business Administration College, Suleiman Faqih Nursing and Medical Sciences Faculty, Ryad Dentistry and Pharmacy Faculty, Avicenna Private College, and Abha's Prince Sultan College for Tourism and Management. Accordingly, students of four private universities and ten colleges have benefited from the scholarship project at this stage.

d. The fourth stage for the 2009 / 2010 academic year:

2,000 scholarships were granted to male and female students in five private universities and nine private colleges amounting to 80 million SAR. These scholarships will come into force starting from September 2009.

A total of 8,160 scholarships were granted during the four stages, amounting to 326,571,000 SAR.

Table 1 shows the number of scholarships and the sum disbursed between 2006 and 2009. Figures 1 and 2 summarize student numbers and sums disbursed between 2006 and 2009 respectively

Table 1: The numbers of scholarships and the amount disbursed between 2006 and 2009

University / College	First stage 2006/2007		Second stage 2007/2008		Third stage 2008/2009		Fourth stage 2009/2010	
	No.	Amount (SAR)	No.	Amount (SAR)	No.	Amount (SAR)	No.	Amount (SAR)
Prince Sultan University	438	5,705,000	539	18,470,000	252	8,840,000	422	14,960,000
Prince Mohammad Ben Fahed University	162	2,335,000	220	6,520,000	160	5,040,000	315	10,600,000
Al Faisal University	-	-	20	940,000	15	720,000	49	2,380,000
Dar AL Hekma College	38	665,000	218	7,730,000	200	7,140,000	189	6,650,000
Effat College	28	450,000	60	2,120,000	30	880,000	76	2,680,000
Al Baha Private College of Science	29	325,000	57	2,280,000	17	425,000	87	3,215,000
College of Business Administration	135	1,075,000	288	5,760,000	193	4,210,000	214	6,480,000
Suleiman Faqih College of Nursing and Medical Sciences	46	380,000	50	880,000	45	670,000	1	20,000
Riyadh College of Dentistry	378	8,555,000	378	21,380,000	319	18,230,000	167	9,415,000

Ibn Sina National College	181	4,005,000	206	10,395,000	116	6,080,000	200	10,050,000
Al Yamamah College	177	1,250,000	243	4,860,000	108	2,560,000	242	5,390,000
Abha's Prince Sultan College for Tourism	-	-	16	276,000	13	244,000	55	1,016,000
Saad College	-	-	-	-	-	-	32	1,600,000
Batterjee College	-	-	-	-	-	-	187	10,720,000
TOTAL	1612	24,745,000	2295	81,611,000	1468	55,039,000	2236	85,176,000

Source: The Public Administration for private of Higher Education, 2009

Figure 1: Number of students benefiting from scholarships between 2006 and 2009

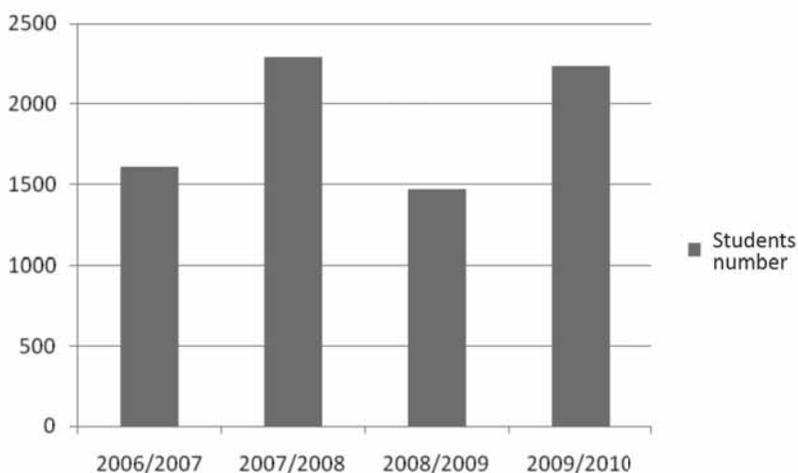
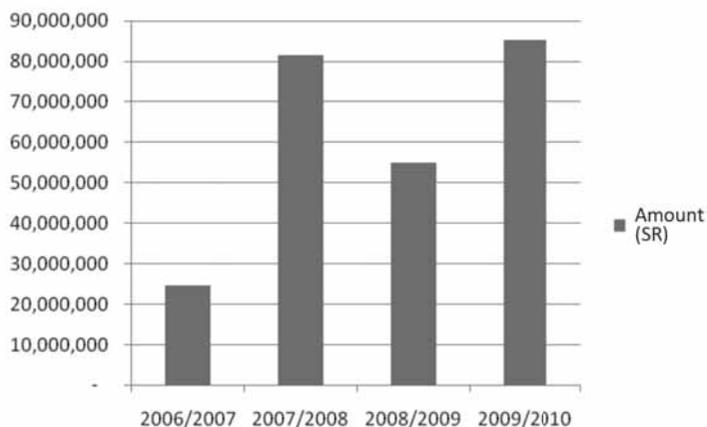


Figure 2: Amounts disbursed under the scholarship program between 2006 and 2009



4. The results

The results of the scholarship program since its implementation are as follows:

- a. 8,160 scholarships were granted to private universities and colleges for both male and female students during the four stages of project implementation, amounting to 326,571,000 SAR.
- b. The children of Saudi expatriates were granted scholarships according to scholarship program provisions, but they do not enter the trade-offs.
- c. A number of students from private universities and college were covered in order to reduce pressure on public universities and colleges.
- d. Private universities and colleges were supported in increasing their student populations.
- e. Saudi students in other Arab states were encouraged to study in private Saudi universities and colleges.
- f. The private sector was encouraged to invest in opening new universities and colleges with specializations meeting the needs of the labor market.

5. Recommendations:

The ministry was keen to improve the scholarship project through continuous follow-up of its implementation and taking into consideration the viewpoints of the beneficiaries (students and private HEIs). The ministry has also conducted continuous studies during project implementation.

Major recommendations were as follows:

- a. Continuing the scholarship project for male and female students in private universities and colleges on a yearly basis.
- b. Increasing in the number of scholarships granted from 2,000 to 4,000 annually, and raising scholarship ceiling to 50% of all students in private universities and colleges. This is because of the increase in the number of private universities and colleges compared with their number at the time of the project's adoption in 2006 and of the increase in the number of students (both male and female) in private universities and colleges.
- c. Increasing scholarship amount for the majors of Management, Accounting and Law from 20,000 to 40,000 SAR in order to cover 50% of current university and college fees. It was observed the sum indicated in the project for these majors adversely affected the choice of these majors by students.

VII. Conclusion

The Ministry of HE strives to guarantee a powerful and credible start for private HE in the labor market, to ensure the quality of its output and the continuation of its role side by side with public universities. In addition, it seeks to ensure that the various programs it provides are compatible with labor market requirements. Furthermore, it strives to make sure that the most up-to-date scientific and technical developments in the world enable these colleges to effectively contribute to the education and training of the Saudi labor force, in order to meet labor market requirements. The main content of the licensing process is to define the acceptable standards to ensure a high quality in the performance of private HEIs and in the level of their programs, and to guarantee that these institutions are able to maintain the required level now and in the future. The Ministry plays a considerable role in the follow-up of these establishments and the operation of private colleges in KSA, in all fields. This is through licensing, the assessment of their programs and their academic and administrative staff, as well as the assessment of the performance of their graduates in both governmental and private sectors.

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