

# SYMPOSIUM EXTERNAL REPORT

EMPLOYABILITY, SKILLS AND OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE ARAB WORLD

27-28 January 2015 | Cairo, Egypt

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[www.britishcouncil.org.eg/symposium](http://www.britishcouncil.org.eg/symposium)



# PREFACE

The Arab world is overwhelmingly young, with two thirds of the population below the age of 29 years. According to the International Finance Corporation's (IFC) Regional initiative 'Education for Employment', 25 per cent of Arab youth are unemployed<sup>1</sup>, making this one of the highest rates of unemployment in the world.

This unemployment rate costs the region between \$40 and \$50 billion a year of lost opportunities<sup>2</sup> which could be spent on solutions to the education and employment deficit in the region. However, significant increases in public spending on education in recent decades have not correlated positively with improved education attainment levels. Scores from international testing systems such as TIMSS (Trends in International Maths and Science Study), PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment), PIRLS (Progress in International Reading, Literacy Study) and English proficiency scores judged by annual school surveys remain disappointingly poor over successive cohorts for those countries in the region which have participated in these studies.

Clearly the challenge is not easily reduced solely to increased funding. Systemic changes are needed which are prioritised, strategic, integrated and costed in order to help young people develop the skills needed for meaningful employment. Integration is especially important and requires collaborative planning from government, business, educational institutions, parents and students. This is one of the key lessons that the Cairo Symposium returned to in many of its working sessions and recommendations.

The Cairo Symposium was jointly organised by the British Council and the League of Arab States and underlined both organisations' strong interest in education, English language and skills development, and the facilitation of employment opportunities for young people.

Since 1945, the League of Arab States has committed itself to education in its member countries, and creating a better future for generations of young people in the region. Today, the League is trying to meet the requirements of a new globalised world based on digital and online solutions, social media, and greater flexibility of education service delivery models. All of these have created a huge demand to acquire and improve communication skills, especially in the English language, for young people. The need to upgrade and develop education in the region led the League to create the Department of Education and Scientific Research in the League's General Secretariat in 2004.

The British Council, founded in 1934, is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. It works in over 100 countries, bringing international opportunities for young people to life, every day. The British Council has decades of experience in supporting sustainable change and improving people's lives in the Middle East and North Africa especially in the areas of English, education and employability. This has led to long-term relationships on the ground in the public, private and voluntary sectors, and a comprehensive understanding of the region in terms of education, English language, skills development and employability.

This report highlights the key discussions that took place during the Symposium, the insights shared and the ideas generated as potential outcomes that could sustain the momentum of the event. The British Council and the League of Arab States welcome further feedback on any of the points raised in this report and look forward to working closely with the individuals and institutions that helped to make the inaugural Symposium a success.

<sup>1</sup> IFC-World Bank Group Education 4 Employment Initiative website <http://www.e4earabyouth.com>

<sup>2</sup> IFC-World Bank Group Education 4 Employment Initiative website <http://www.e4earabyouth.com>

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# 1- BACKGROUND

The British Council and the League of Arab States launched the first Symposium on employability, skills and opportunities for young people in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in Cairo in January 2015.

## 1.1- CONTEXT

The British Council and the League of Arab States (LAS) launched the first Symposium on employability, skills and opportunities for young people in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in Cairo in January 2015. The Symposium provided a unique opportunity to bring together leaders from the worlds of government (including 9 ministries represented from the region), business, academia and civil society to discuss the challenges facing the countries of the region in developing the skills of young people, both in the education system and as part of wider labour market strategies.

The topics covered in the inaugural Symposium reflected the strong interests of the British Council and the League of Arab States in English language skills, education, and hard and soft skills development for employability. Both organisations agree that there is a need for holistic, integrated planning across the education sub-sectors as well as with business in order to develop the skills of young people in the MENA region. The importance of this is clear: the Middle East North Africa region having more than 200 million people under the age of 29 and one of the highest rates of youth unemployment globally at 25%.

It is evident that the causes of youth unemployment are various, but at the same time closely connected.

They include:

- Quality and relevance of education – this applies across the school system and also affects universities and technical vocational education (TVET);
- Young people have little opportunity to develop the kinds of skills needed for the jobs market (especially English language, and other hard and soft skills) when they are in school, college or university;
- Population growth – the population of MENA tripled between 1970 and 2010 to over 350 million. By 2050 it is estimated that the region will have a population of nearly 600 million, the overwhelming majority of whom will be under the age of 25;
- Economic crises, leading to prolonged unemployment especially for young people;
- Demotivated youth, partly due to the lack of opportunities open to them;
- Weak national planning frameworks to tackle the issue of education and youth employment;
- Lack of reliable information about labour market needs and weak employer engagement in education reform;
- Labour market policies which do not support flexible employment – including employment protection regulation, which means businesses tend to prefer more experienced workers.

With the above in mind, the Cairo Symposium was convened on the understanding that concerted action is required in all of these areas.

The creation of education systems that are fit for purpose requires the supply and demand aspects of skills development and employability to be brought together.

## 1.2- SYMPOSIUM THEMES AND OBJECTIVES

The Cairo Symposium provided a forum for analysing young people's employability needs across the countries of the Middle East and North Africa, highlighting the development of technical, language (especially English) and other transferable skills as key contributing factors to enhanced employment opportunities.

People with good English and other well-developed soft skills are more able to interact with and help drive the global economy. They tend to have better access to internationally provided education and are more likely to become globally aware and internationally connected, developing the additional contacts and skills which will help them find employment. With those enhanced networks, connections and skills, they are also able to contribute to the growth of the businesses they join or start their own enterprises, creating further employment in the process.

Better alignment and implementation of skills training with the future needs of industry will help to address the youth employment challenge in the Middle East and North Africa. This was one of the very clear messages that emerged in Symposium discussions.

The policy and implementation dimensions of connecting supply and demand factors to enhance opportunities for young people were discussed in detail at the Symposium. This is clearly an area that requires more attention and lessons can be learned from examples of good practice in the region and further afield.

The Symposium was structured around three principal themes:

**Employability:** the interaction of individuals, education, business and the labour market

- English (and other language) skills and the world of work
- Soft skills development
- Skills gaps, mismatches and interaction between education and the needs of the labour market
- TVET, higher education, language policy and employability

**Skills:** the dimension of teaching methodology and pedagogy

- How skills are planned for and implemented in education reform around the region
- Dimensions of skills provision and delivery in the education system, including:
  - Classroom and training room practice
  - Work-based training
  - Training for education professionals
  - Curriculum reform
  - Qualifications and certification – implications for teaching and learning

**Opportunities:** the needs and challenges of the labour market across the MENA region

- The socio-economic context of education, skills development and employability across the region: human development, social equity and livelihoods challenges
- Social entrepreneurship
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills: STEM skills in the MENA region
- Social learning platforms for young people
- Core Skills for Work framework
- Qualifications and certification –pathways for skills development and employment.
- Changing perceptions of TVET.

Input from invited speakers and panellists stimulated discussions around these key issues, taking into account from the outset the wider socio-economic contextual issues before narrowing the focus to the skills, employability and opportunity sub-themes; the role and needs of the private sector, and how greater interaction between the worlds of work and education can bring benefits to the quality of skills development in schools, colleges and universities, and ultimately to employment opportunities for young people.

Discussions and knowledge-sharing with key government officials from across the region provided delegates with the opportunity to influence action to improve skills development and provide targeted support to human development reform initiatives across the Middle East and North Africa.

The Symposium had identified a number of objectives for the event itself and for collective action going forward:

- To facilitate **evidence-based discussion** about the skills development of young people - English, language and literacy skills in general; soft and technical skills; and the preparation of young people to enter employment - among senior government officials, business leaders, representatives of international organisations, NGOs, academics, thought leaders and the media;
- To support delegates from different countries in **identifying strategies** to articulate improvements to the development of skills as part of an integrated approach to education provision and labour market strategy across the region;
- To discuss the **role of the private sector and NGOs in working alongside government** to link education provision to the skills needs of the labour market; and
- To draw up a list of **recommendations for improving skills development** across the region, addressing the needs of the labour market with particular emphasis on technical and soft skills development, access and quality issues across all sectors.

### 1.3-SYMPOSIUM STRUCTURE

The Symposium was a two-day event comprising three plenary sessions, four interactive panel discussions, and twenty-seven speaker-led sessions, developing ideas related to the three themes of the Symposium. The complete programme is attached in Annex 1.

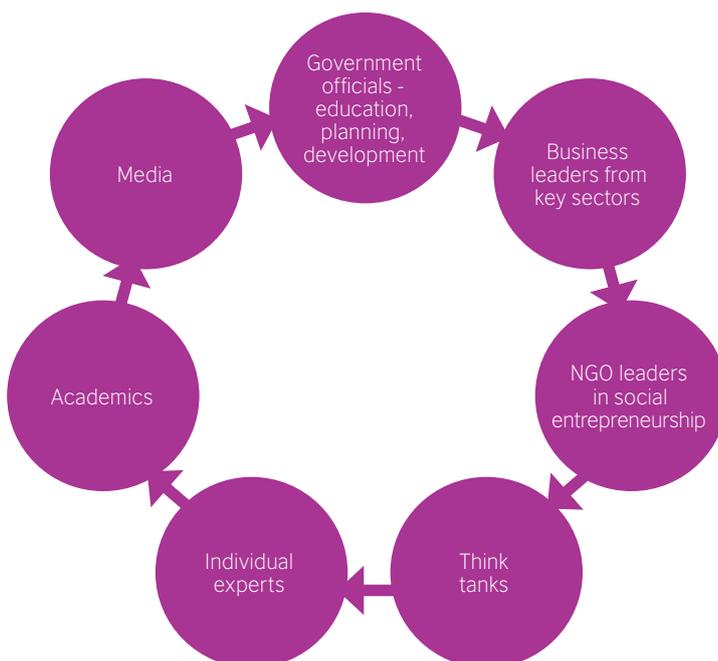
The event prioritised networking opportunities through which case studies and examples of best practice were shared and discussed. To expand the knowledge sharing beyond the walls of the venue, some of the sessions were live-streamed on the Symposium website and all other sessions were recorded and have been made available online (<http://www.britishcouncil.org/en/symposium>). In the month following the Symposium, more than two million people interacted with the event through social media and by viewing different videos. This was in addition to media coverage across the region, including print and TV.

### 1.4-DELEGATES

More than 100 delegates from 14 countries around the Middle East and North Africa, UK and elsewhere participated in the Symposium (Annex 2 contains a complete list of delegates). Delegates were drawn from the following fields:

Representatives of these groups comprised:

- Officials in ministries of education, industry, labour or planning with decision making powers and expertise in the areas of education policy and planning; labour market strategies, and research and development;
- Officials from UK government;
- Business leaders;
- Education experts, researchers and representatives from consulting firms;
- Representatives of NGOs active in entrepreneurship, youth development, enterprise development, and education; and
- Representatives of international organisations and donors with strong interests in education, human development, skills and employability;
- Members of the Arab and international media.



In addition to these groups, the British Council, as part of the build-up to the Symposium, conducted an online survey to capture the views of young people across the region through its regional Facebook page<sup>3</sup>. Young people were asked to give their views on the quality and relevance of their education and training experiences and how that has supported their transition to employment. The survey also explored their perceptions of the skills they consider to be important to be successful in gaining employment. Many of their suggestions and observations, which were highlighted during the Symposium, coincided with the discussions of the experts and policy-makers during the event (the survey results are contained in Annex 3).

## 1.5 - SYMPOSIUM OPENING SESSION

The opening and welcome speeches were given by HE Dr. Badre Eldin Allali, Assistant Secretary General and Head of the Social Sector at the League of Arab States; Mr. Adrian Chadwick OBE, Regional Director MENA, British Council; and HE John Casson, British Ambassador to Egypt. The keynote address was delivered by HE Dr. Mohamed Youssef, Egypt's Deputy Education Minister for Technical Education and Vocational Training. All of the speakers underlined the importance of the focus of the Symposium for the countries of the Middle East and North Africa. The need for integrated thinking between the education system, business, and civil society through public-private partnerships was stressed several times. Despite general agreement about the nature and scale of the challenges facing the countries of the region, it was also observed that education results, student achievement and youth employment have generally fallen significantly behind international standards.

At the same time, the region has seen some successes in enhanced access to primary and tertiary education especially for girls; improvement in literacy rates; and increasing attention to English language skills development and TVET reform. In the broader context the opening of the Symposium also made reference to the fact that there could be no political success in the region without opportunities being created for young people, so that they can visualise a better future with decent jobs and improved livelihoods. In the keynote address, HE Dr. Mohamed Youssef used the example of Egypt to structure his observations and recommendations. He emphasised the importance of the TVET sector to economic development, indicating that more than 50% of Egyptian students who complete basic education (around 2,000,000 students) enter the technical education stream, enrolled in 2000 technical schools nationwide.

Dr. Youssef summarised some of the key challenges facing the countries of the region:

- Addressing the skills mismatch between what is currently being supplied by TVET institutes and what employers in the labour market need. Improving the employability skills of students and focusing more on leadership, team building, work ethics, discipline as well as health and safety issues.
- Expanding practical and work-based training opportunities for students, through productive school models, dual education and schools within factories.
- Improving the literacy and numeracy skills of technical education graduates as well as providing them with education pathways to higher education. Upgrading facilities and improving school infrastructure, providing career guidance and counselling for students and parents was also stressed.

Annex 4 contains further details of the opening session speeches.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/LearnEnglish.BritishCouncilMENA>

## 2- PANEL DISCUSSIONS

This section of the report describes how the key themes of the Symposium were approached by the four panel discussions that were set up to stimulate further discussion among the delegates.

Each panel session included expert panellists from the region and the UK and the discussions were facilitated by a moderator to allow time for interaction with the delegates.

### 2.1- THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES ACROSS THE MENA REGION: education, employability, and skills development across the region.

This panel discussion focused on the broad challenges and opportunities facing young people in the region. Scene-setting opening remarks addressed the following topics:

- The importance of developing English skills as a catalyst for young people to take advantage of opportunities
- Skills development in general
- Challenges within the education system, and between the education system and employers
- Mismatch between supply of and demand for skills
- Human development, social equity and livelihoods
- The role of social entrepreneurship as a driver of change

The lead experts on this panel were:

- Dr. Iman Bibars, Regional Director, Ashoka
- Dr. Dahlia Khalifa, Head, Education for Employment Initiative and Program Leader Skills Development, MENA, IFC-World Bank Group
- Mahmoud El Sherbiny, Executive Director, Industrial Training Council, Egypt
- Magda Zaki, Director Education and Scientific Research Department, League of Arab States
- John Knagg, Senior Adviser English Language Teaching, British Council.

The discussions were moderated by Yosri Foda - broadcaster and journalist.

The most significant topics explored through this opening panel discussion related to:

- **Social entrepreneurship** as a driver of change. Society can benefit from developing 'change makers' who can transform challenges into opportunities for themselves and for wider groups of young people. It was recommended that a sharper focus needs to be placed on addressing legislation that encourages SMEs and social entrepreneurship in the region.

- **English** as the international language for business and international communication is important for all students and workers. The development of functional English skills is sometimes seen as the preserve of middle-class elites, creating both a social and economic barrier to young people from poorer backgrounds who cannot access private schooling which is often delivered through the medium of English. Panellists were clear that support should be given to governments to improve English provision in state schools so that access to English is enhanced and developing English language skills becomes an attainable good for all students. At the same time, equal attention needs to be given to Arabic literacy skills, as this is another area of concern with many students leaving school with low levels of proficiency especially in writing.
- The policy issues related to **youth employment and empowerment** should not be looked at solely as a social challenge, but as a wider economic issue. If employers do not find the skills needed, they will not be competitive; they will not grow and will not create more jobs. Young people in this region face multiple employment and skills issues; (i) economic recession, (ii) weak education systems which do not meet their needs, and (iii) conflicts and wars that hinder access to education and skills.
- The challenges for governments in the region in **education reform** include fast-growing populations which results in increasing numbers of students putting pressure on an already over-burdened system; low levels of public spending in education infrastructure; and levels of investment in teachers and trainers. Regulatory restrictions to entry by the private sector in education seldom allow it to share the burden through public private partnerships. Education and skills is not simply a government-owned problem; it is a societal problem.
- More focus should be given to **research and information** for young people about priority sectors in each country and the jobs needed. Research in priority growth sectors should be accompanied by government facilitation to encourage private sector employers and their representative federations to establish sector skills councils to inform and direct educators to develop appropriate programmes. The government should act more as a facilitator and enabler, as well as a supplier.
- **Negative perceptions of ‘blue-collar’ work and TVET** is a major issue, encouraging young people to pursue education that leads to more generic administrative jobs and seek government jobs which in many markets are perceived as ‘safer’ and more secure. The issue needs a comprehensive strategy to improve the situation: providing appropriate training; creating awareness and understanding of the role of the TVET sector so that it is seen as a viable option not as a remedial, second-class alternative to higher education; creating contracting regulation; improving labour market efficiency, including the informal sector which is a large employer in the region; encouraging life-long learning; and facilitating self-employment through legislation, reduced bureaucracy and enhanced business services for SMEs.
- **Skills development pathways** need to be established between TVET and higher education so that systems are more flexible and responsive to the interests of young people.
- The issue of **gender** should be prioritised. While women’s enrollment in higher education is high and comparable to international standards in many countries of the region, this does not translate well into women’s participation in the labour market, which drops off alarmingly when women move into their late 20s.

## 2.2- THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY

The second panel session focused on the importance of English language as a key employability skill. The discussions also addressed the issue of scaling up teaching and learning English as a foreign language in the region. The panellists, with interaction from the delegates, focused attention on the following topics:

- Identification of key skills gaps
- Demand-side factors from the labour market
- Supply-side factors from government
- Linkages between the education authorities (policy makers and planners) and the private sector
- The needs of young people
- Examples of good practice.

The lead experts on the second panel were:

- Dr. Hanan Bennoudi, Associate Professor at Ibn Zohr University and Head of English Department at Universiapolis University, Morocco
- Shahinaz Ahmed, Egypt Country Director, AMIDEAST
- John Knagg, Senior Advisor English Language Teaching, British Council
- Dr. Elizabeth Erling, Open University, UK
- Dr. John Simpson, Senior Advisor English for Education Systems - Sub-Saharan Africa, British Council

The moderator was Eric Lawrie, Regional Director English MENA, British Council.

In addressing the issue of English as a key skill for education and employment, the panellists led detailed discussions on the following issues:

- Although good quality research and data are limited in the MENA region it was generally agreed by the panellists and delegates that **English language as a skill does improve access to employment opportunities** for young people and that there is a correlation between English and employability on the one hand and English and economic growth on the other.
- **English as a subject and as a skill.** Proficiency in any language (native language or English as a second language) does not necessarily mean that young job seekers have the necessary communication skills for the workplace and that distinction should be made between communication and language proficiency skills. Both should be clearly embedded into curricula so that English is taught both as a subject and as a skill.
- **English as an enabler and a barrier.** Although English as a skill is important for the labour market in the region, some employers use this to discriminate against less privileged social classes at the screening stage in some of the countries in the region. By supporting governments to improve their provision of English language in all state schools such discriminatory practice can be reduced.
- **Mother tongue and English.** The participants and panellists underlined the importance of concentrating on mother tongue languages in the early years of education. Research from other regions indicates that proficiency in the child's first language increases the ability to learn other languages. This suggests that government efforts to introduce English from the first years of the primary cycle will not deliver positive results. This is an area where international organisations can provide technical assistance. The British Council, for example, is actively working with governments around the region to enhance English provision.

- Emphasis was given to the need to improve **teacher training** so that the skills set of teachers around the region can be enhanced to provide more child-centred, communicative English in the classroom. This will enable children to learn English as a skill, rather than simply as an academic subject.
- **English and global competitiveness.** Increasingly, governments are viewing the upgrading of English skills as a driver of economic competitiveness. In Morocco, for example, where French is the second language, a shift towards English is being implemented to improve the country's global competitiveness.
- In order to achieve **high rates of return on investment** when it comes to the provision of English in schools, colleges and universities, countries in the region must adopt an integrated, holistic perspective, to develop practical strategies which address issues of:
  - governance
  - financing and resource allocation
  - improving teacher status and professional development
  - use of technology to expand digital and blended learning models which make use of online and mobile technology
  - integration of interpersonal and soft skills in tandem with language skills
  - focusing on the development of Arabic literacy and skills enhancement, using communicative methodologies that are delivering positive results in the teaching of English worldwide, and
  - enhancing service delivery.

## 2.3- REGIONAL EDUCATION REFORM AGENDAS:

### How skills are planned for and implemented in all levels of education

The third panel discussion on the second day of the Symposium covered reform trends in the region at basic education, TVET and higher education levels. It also looked at some of the reform initiatives that have taken place in recent years in the UK especially following the economic recession and how this could provide some useful lessons for the MENA region.

The following topics provided a background for the discussions between panellists and delegates:

- Reform in Schools, TVET, Higher Education
- Classroom and training room practice
- Training for education professionals
- Curriculum reform
- Challenges and opportunities.

The panellists on this occasion were:

- Professor Karim Tahboub, Palestine Polytechnic University
- Samya Bou Hamad, Head of English Department, Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD), Lebanon
- Bill Malcolm, Group Director of International Quality Assurance & Assessment Services, City & Guilds, UK
- Hedi Triki, Senior Adviser to the Minister, Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment, Tunisia
- Gail Campbell, Director Education MENA, British Council.

The moderator for this panel was David Knox, Director Society MENA, British Council

The discussion covered the following areas of the skills reform agendas around the region and in the UK:

- Recent research in Lebanon indicated the main **employability skills** lacking in most pre-university students:
  - communication skills
  - leadership
  - team work
  - problem solving
  - foreign languages, and
  - numeracy skills.

Policy makers are currently drafting ways to incorporate these skills into the curriculum for children from the age of six. In Tunisia, TVET reform is taking a holistic approach focusing on structural reform of the system where governance is being addressed; coordination with all stakeholders including other ministries and civil society is being encouraged; the image of TVET is being enhanced to make it an attractive option; and labour market information systems are being improved to forecast future trends and needs more effectively.

- **Integrating employability skills into pre-university systems** was discussed with the following presenting potential for positive impact:
  - expanding extra-curricular activities for students that focus on life skills
  - incorporating more soft skills in national curricula
  - providing more effective career guidance and counselling services and providing accurate information about labour market needs, and
  - encouraging NGOs and alumni bodies to become more involved in skills development activity for teenagers.

- **Integration between pre-university education and higher education**

is needed because the outcomes of pre-university education affect the outcomes of higher education results.

- Education practice at all levels needs to change from a system based on memorisation and rote learning to a greater focus on **developing problem solving and creative thinking skills**.
- **The characteristics of effective TVET systems** were highlighted:
  - developing national qualifications frameworks (NQF) backed up with clear standards
  - modularising programmes and qualifications to address different needs and interests of individuals who often have to balance learning and employment
  - qualifications and programmes reflect the needs and input of employers
  - quality assurance and accreditation of TVET providers and qualifications including internal and external validation to encourage innovation and professionalism
  - developing key performance standards linked to incentives, and
  - integrated national development priorities which pull together all the relevant elements of education provision and employment needs.

All of these characteristics provide clear guidance and pathways to students, job seekers and employers are planned in an integrated way, and consequently add value to the system.

- **Engaging employers and parents** in all aspects of reform and the setting of occupational standards especially with TVET in order to improve perceptions about its function and value.

- **Good practice from Bahrain** was highlighted, where some of the polytechnics employ 50 per cent of their tutors from industry and the rest from academic backgrounds. This develops an integrated approach to teaching and learning so that the links between what happens in the classroom and the real world of work is at the centre of the process.
- Education finance and resource allocation is a critical challenge in most countries in the region affecting where investment is made, the quality of provision and education outcomes. Panellists indicated the magnitude of this by making some comparisons in terms of spending and instructor/student ratio: the average annual budget spent on university students in the region is \$700 per student compared to \$10,000 in other regions and the instructor/student ratio is 1:31 compared to 1:15 in other regions.
- Some of the **key lessons from the UK** experience in improving employment rates after the economic recession include:
  - expansion of effective youth employability initiatives such as adult apprenticeships and relevant curricula development
  - placing employers at the heart of education reform initiatives, and
  - raising the quality of provision to create more marketable graduates who will be valued by employers.
- **Building skills for foreign labour markets.** This is particularly important for those countries where a large percentage of the labour force works abroad. This encompasses the development of English skills so that migrant workers can also fill jobs at the top of the value chain as well as in the more traditional technical areas.

## 2.4-DRAWING SYMPOSIUM THEMES TOGETHER:

### Challenges/Ways Forward

The closing panel discussion presented an opportunity to draw the Symposium themes together; reflect on discussions that had taken place over the two days of the event; and identify forward plans for action that can be supported by government, business, international organisations and academic partners around the region.

The experts panellists on this occasion were:

- Dr. Mohamed Youssef, Deputy Minister of Education for TVET, Egypt
- Dr. Hanan Al Khalifa, Head of Research and International Development, Cambridge Assessment, University of Cambridge
- Simon Perryman, Executive Director UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) UK
- Christine Hofmann, Skills Development Specialist, International Labour Organisation (ILO)
- Adrian Chadwick OBE, Regional Director Middle East and North Africa, British Council

The moderator was Yosri Foda, broadcaster and journalist.

The discussions of the final panel concentrated on the following topics:

- The **complexity of the challenges** to be addressed in the region was stressed. Areas of good practice discussed during the Symposium were acknowledged, however. The urgency to formulate solutions that work at scale is a priority as the growing number of young people in the region represents a real social development challenge. Education solutions need to be linked to strategies in the labour market and aligned with overall national sustainable development priorities.
- From the **perspective of the ILO** there are three important priorities to be addressed in the region:
  - social dialogue - between government, employers and also workers' associations and unions
  - youth employment - examining supply, demand and matching services. The focus needs to be on improving the quality of skills on the supply side underscored by the rights of young people for such skills. The demand side needs to consider the needs of the labour market and disseminating information to all stakeholders through public employment services and the provision of life-long career guidance.
  - strategic cooperation between education and business needs to be prioritised developing the potential for work-based learning (particularly apprenticeships) in the region, which has been proven to be the most effective learning model in equipping people with work skills.
- From the perspective of the **UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES)** the following insights were offered:
  - putting employers in the driving seat of the skills agenda makes sense as they are the end-users of the products that come out of the education system
  - it should be understood that decent jobs need good skills and this is important for a productive economy, not just for social issues
  - the need for effective labour market intelligence to provide evidence-based solutions
  - employment should not just be about the first job, but a more integrated approach should be developed helping young people in getting in, getting on in their job through continuous in-service training and moving up by progression
  - the UK has invested heavily in building work experience for young people to get on the employment ladder, through traineeship programmes for students and adult apprenticeships for young adults
  - all skills issues should be underpinned by quality standards and robust assessments of institutions and businesses involved in the training process
  - in order for governments to expand work-based learning and particularly apprenticeship, there should be effective incentives in place for employers.
- Dr. Hanan Khalifa of **Cambridge Assessment** summarised her recommendations for the way forward in the following areas:
  - policy makers in the region need to understand that no one size fits all and that adopting different models from different countries will not necessarily work. Solutions have to be fit for purpose for the country context
  - the need for integrated and holistic planning solutions, and
  - the need for the region to anticipate further challenges and to address them before they occur.

- From the perspective of the **British Council**, as co-organisers of the Symposium, Adrian Chadwick reflected on the principal issues that had formed the core of the Symposium discussions:
  - complexity and urgency of the challenges in the region
  - working at scale to achieve systemic impact
  - the need for holistic and practical strategies
  - expanding digital and blended learning especially as a supporting mechanism to classroom based practices in the English language teaching and learning across the region
  - encouraging evidence-based research about English as a key skill for employment in the region to support appropriate strategy formulation and to add value to assumptions and anecdotal evidence
  - employer engagement in all stages of the reform process
  - addressing the negative perceptions and status of TVET
  - embedding the right skills in the curriculum, developed through a comprehensive consultative process involving all stakeholders, and
  - life-long learning, transitional competencies and career guidance.
- The **Egyptian Deputy Minister for Education** summarised his perspective on the challenges and policy solutions and endorsed what other panellists had proposed:
  - Several countries have piloted different approaches and initiatives in their reform processes, but impact and results have been limited. Exposure to international experience of what works and what does not may be important but a customised, country-specific system is required
  - Governance and financing of the system need reform, establishing effective leadership and partnership with all stakeholders
  - Effective, sustainable and institutionalised employer engagement is a necessity at all levels: school, development of curricula and standards level, and at the policy and governance level
  - Some of the priorities for Egypt which could also be relevant to other countries in the region include:
    - expansion of different forms of work-based learning and training, through joint public private funding of schools in factories
    - adult apprenticeships, learning from the UK experience
    - effective initiatives related to the transition from school to work, including a national system for life-long career guidance
    - creating a balance between soft and hard (technical) skills for learners and jobseekers, and
    - challenging the negative perceptions towards TVET.
  - Delegates suggested establishing task forces to take forward key areas as an outcome from the Cairo Symposium, acknowledging the challenge of having regional action plans since countries are at different stages and have different priorities. However, task forces can be set up to lead on different aspects of the challenges outlined above, grouped by country-needs. Establishing a strong research agenda to better understand some of the dynamics involved in education, skills development and employability would be an appropriate way of starting the process.

## 3- PLENARY AND BREAKOUT SESSIONS

This chapter of the report provides an analysis of the main issues and linkages that were covered in the plenary and breakout sessions of the Symposium where specific topics and case studies (related to the three themes of the Symposium) were explored in detail.

Short abstracts about both panel and breakout sessions and some of the discussion points can be found in Annex 5. Presentations as well as the recordings of both plenary and breakout sessions can be accessed through the Symposium website: [www.britishcouncil.org/eg/en/symposium](http://www.britishcouncil.org/eg/en/symposium)

### 3.1- PLENARY SESSIONS

Three plenary sessions, together with the panel discussions outlined in the previous chapter, helped to form the backbone of the Symposium programme. They were designed to provide in-depth discussion regarding the cross-cutting themes as well as to provoke further discussion among delegates. The three plenary sessions were led by:

**Magda Zaki**, Director of the Education and Scientific Research Department at the League of Arab States outlined the role of the League in promoting education in the region,

**Simon Perryman**, Executive Director of the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) highlighted the UK's experience in engaging employers in developing skills and employment, and

**Dr. Hanan Khalifa** of Cambridge Assessment in the UK, illustrated the profile of an impactful higher education graduate and how to achieve this, based on international case study material.

The detail covered by the three plenary talks is outlined below:

#### **League of Arab States: mission and role in education development**

The League of Arab States' mission includes support of a well-educated and knowledgeable Arab society, and one that offers jobs for young people. In addition to having the responsibility of drafting common resolutions, policies and plans for education across the Arab world and following up with them through Presidential Education Summits, the League also works on the following education related issues that are relevant to the symposium themes:

- promoting E-learning across the region
- gathering data and managing a regional observatory through its sister organisation, ALESCO (Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation)
- developing regional policies and programmes for education for people with disabilities
- promoting the teaching of English as the second language in all the League's countries
- promoting technology in education, and
- promoting teaching quality and integrating soft skills to improve employability in the region.

Delegates urged the League to take a more leading role in promoting cooperation at the policy and implementation level between member states and also to activate the role of its sister agency, the Arab Labour Organisation.

### Engagement of employers

Skills are a rapidly growing priority across the UK. Simon Perryman's plenary explored some of the most pressing skills challenges the UK has faced, including the hollowing out of the middle of the labour market and the need to help more young people to get jobs which build into careers. Some of the measures being taken by UK Government include improving apprenticeships, simplifying standards and qualifications, and driving skills development through co-investment with industrial skills partnerships in important sectors of the economy.

The discussions which followed from the presentation included some key messages based on the UK experience that could be relevant to the MENA region, as follows:

- the UKCES's role as a non-departmental agency in creating impact through employers' insight, providing research, intelligence and support to investment in standards and innovation
- success should be measured by a wider set of outcomes, not just educational attainment
- earning and learning, through the encouragement of work-based learning through traineeships and apprenticeships, and providing incentives for employers
- putting employers in the lead of skills development and encouraging top CEOs in different sectors to become champions for skills and employment, and
- the role of Sector Skills Councils could be something the region can learn from in institutionalising employer engagement in priority sectors.

### The profile of a higher education

**graduate** Globalisation and the emergence of knowledge-based economies have focused attention on higher education as a driver of economic growth and development. Over the last decade, the higher education landscape in the Arab world has changed significantly with diversification in available programmes, technical and professional degrees, and delivery modes. Most countries in the region have witnessed a shift from an emphasis

on public institutions to growth in private institutions, foreign universities with local campuses, and partnerships between local and foreign universities. Despite these developments, there are increasing concerns voiced by employers of university graduates regarding insufficient competency in soft skills including foreign language proficiency. In addressing this shortcoming Dr. Khalifa described the outcomes that successful education systems need to balance in order to produce impactful individuals, including:

- increasing rigour in traditional core subjects in how they are taught, learned and assessed
- strengthening enabling subjects such as languages and soft skills and
- improving personal attributes by broadening experiences through curricular and non-curricular activities and through linkages between education and business.

The discussions that followed highlighted the challenges and potential solutions for the region in improving higher education. These are summarised below:

- higher education institutes often lack clear language proficiency policies that stipulate entry or graduation level
- lack of quality (i.e. internationally recognised) assurance measures restrict graduate mobility
- measurement of soft skills is a particular challenge
- focus should be on K-12 students and changing the focus from teaching to learning, and training teachers to think differently
- creating long-term strategies that are implemented and are not subject to political expediency
- greater investment in online and digital platforms that suit the needs of young people, and
- the need for a paradigm shift in the region to create more awareness about what is needed and engaging all stakeholders, including employers and parents, through public information and advocacy campaigns.

### 3.2- BREAKOUT SESSIONS

During the two days of the Symposium distinguished speakers from the region and the UK presented in-depth case studies and examples of good practice on a wide range of topics relevant to the themes of the Symposium. The table below provides a list of the breakout sessions:

The discussions during the breakout sessions centred on the urgency to accelerate the reform process at all levels of education and skills development in the region in a holistic manner in order to support economic growth and create decent job opportunities. While good practices were highlighted across the region, issues of impact and scaling up remain a major challenge.

Themes	Topic	Country or sub-region
English Language	Defining roles for English in the nexus of skills for employability	Global trends and MENA
	A long and winding research road: challenging the stereotypes of the young Gulf Arab student	Gulf region
	English language and employment: Evidence from job ads in Jordan	Jordan
	English – Foreign Language or 21st Century skill? Problems and solutions	Global trends
	Towards a new learning model: learning English online	Morocco
Education, TVET and skills reform	A Skills Based Economy - linking training, work and industry	UAE, Saudi Arabia and the UK
	Skills imbalances in the labour market – causes and corrections	Egypt
	Skills development and Tunisian reform of vocational training	Tunisia
	The role of local authorities in supporting skills development in Egypt	Egypt
	Transforming the TVET sector in Iraqi Kurdistan	Iraq
	Education in North Africa	North Africa
	Changing the perceptions of vocational education	UK
Higher education Reform	The “Allure of Easy”: challenges of private higher education in Egypt	Egypt
	Employability issues in the Moroccan higher education system	Morocco
Quality assurance, standards and qualifications	Impact of the UK Quality Assurance model in skills development in Yemen	Yemen
	Mapping skills and competencies for effective workplaces	Egypt
	Connecting the dots: qualifications for employability	UAE, Egypt and UK
Employability and skills mismatch	Enhancing employability in North Africa – ILO policies, tools and approaches	North Africa
	Soft skills: cross matching education and employment needs in Lebanon	Lebanon
	Labour Market characteristics in Lebanon: structural challenges hindering youth employability	Lebanon
	Bridging the gap between public education and the private sector: challenges and lessons learned	Egypt
	The Triple Helix Model: government, industry and education between success and failure	Egypt
	Internal and external employability perspectives among youth in the Arab world	Egypt and MENA
	Overview of young graduates employment opportunities in Tunisia	Tunisia
Entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurial Learning Community (ELC) in Libya	Libya
	Social Entrepreneurship: an alternative strategy for youth civic engagement and economic inclusion	Lebanon
	Social enterprise for employability at the extremes: a Gaza case study	Palestine

Both presenters and delegates highlighted specific areas that require attention including:

- focusing on establishing sound regulatory environments (NQFs, quality through licensing training and recognising international awarding bodies), validating outcomes of training, links with industry and employability programmes for young people
- drafting national human development strategies
- collecting and sharing data about labour market skills and competences with relevant stakeholders which can then transform this information into training approaches and curricula
- providing career guidance to young people in a way that is linked to opportunities, and
- exploring the key drivers in raising the profile and acceptability of technical and vocational education.

Further attention in the region should be given to encouraging the expansion of private sector provision of education, especially in well-regulated higher education to ensure quality. Examples were shared of initiatives and measures established to promote the relevance and diversification of higher education programmes, the enhancement of quality assurance systems along with the development of integrated information and guidance to students and national monitoring systems of graduates in Morocco.

English language as a key skill for securing employment was extensively discussed, and it was generally agreed that there is a positive relationship between English language skills and socioeconomic opportunities for individuals and societies. Research conducted in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries<sup>4</sup>, for example, indicates that the overall level of English language proficiency in schools (and universities) is low. This has an impact on students' overall education performance, ability to enter further (or higher) education, choice of universities and study programmes, and eventual employability. Moreover, results from this recent research show there are "disconnects" between the

education/skills levels of students, the entry levels desired by universities for higher education, and the expectations of employers. Some of the priorities in terms of teaching English in the MENA region that were discussed included; (i) the need to focus on the selection, pre- and in-service training of teachers; (ii) encouraging the learning of English outside the classroom for young children; (iii) debates about the age at which second language learning should start—clearly an area that would benefit from further research in the MENA region; and (iv) the need to expand digital, online and blended learning.

In terms of employability and the need to reduce the gap between supply and demand aspects of skills in the region, the discussions centred on: (i) the need for stronger employer engagement at all levels; (ii) participation of social sector partners; (iii) embedding soft skills into educational and training programmes; (iii) enhancing labour market information systems, as well as career guidance for students and parents; (iv) expanding work-based training and active labour market programmes and (v) creating incentives frameworks to encourage cooperation and diversify service delivery mechanisms.

Finally, promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment was highlighted as an important tool not only in reducing youth unemployment, but in tackling serious social development issues. Bottom-up solutions, such as social entrepreneurship, directly empower young people in a way that can have greater resonance and relevance. Delegates agreed that there are several ways policy-makers can encourage entrepreneurial activity:

- integrate social entrepreneurship into formal and informal education
- assist civil society organisations to promote the purpose and value of social entrepreneurship
- free up the space for civil society to provide quality support to young entrepreneurs
- provide access to low-interest financing mechanisms for young entrepreneurs, and
- develop favourable legislation to promote SMEs and entrepreneurship.

<sup>4</sup> Vale, David, Performance of Gulf Arab Students in English Study, British Council, 2014

# 4- SYMPOSIUM OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MOVING FORWARD

## 4.1- SYMPOSIUM OUTCOMES

The Cairo Symposium confirmed that the development of skills and employability for young people is one of the most pressing and complex challenges facing governments, educational institutions, business and civil society organisations across the MENA region.

The Symposium delegates agreed that the 100+ million people between the age of 15 and 29 in the region are generally acquiring skills that do not match the needs of the labour market, causing social and economic challenges for the region. Despite increased spending on education in recent decades, good results in terms of access and some successful reform pilots, impact has been limited and current learning outcomes are not encouraging.

The challenges include structural deficiencies in the education and training systems at all levels; low quality and relevance of supply outcomes; weak links between education and business; unreliable and partially used labour market information to inform skills planning; underdeveloped career guidance tools; negative perceptions of TVET, and ineffective policies and practices that facilitate the transition from school to work.

These topic areas can form the core of task force initiatives, along the lines of the suggestions put forward in the final panel discussion at the Symposium. It may be necessary to prioritise and sequence them according to the needs of various partner institutions and to link these priorities to on-going work being undertaken by government and international organisations active in the region.

The British Council and League of Arab States are committed to establishing regional initiatives to take forward some of the key outcomes of the Symposium through joint research partnerships and establishing collaborative projects.

Under the three Symposium themes of employability, skills and opportunities, the following areas were agreed by both policy-makers and practitioners as priority outcomes for the region:

Priority Outcomes	Specific Topic Areas
English language teaching	There was general consensus that English, as a 21st century skill, is a key mechanism which facilitates access to employment and international communication in the global economic environment. However, structural reform is needed to clarify what needs to be learned and how to enhance teacher training; and to take advantage of online and digital technology and resources. The British Council is an important partner in the region active in these areas. It was agreed that there is need for more evidence-based research to show the role and value of English at both the individual and the country levels.
Governance and strategy	Although most countries in the region have education reform strategies and the Education and Scientific Research Department of the League of Arab States has a mandate to support common resolutions for education policy among its members, it was generally agreed that often these strategies are not holistic or integrated, sometimes not fit for purpose or not being implemented. Often strategies change with successive governments causing gaps in implementation or the discontinuation of what could be considered as successful approaches. Some countries have underdeveloped governance structures characterised by fragmentation and unclear leadership. This causes competing agendas and poor coordination among key players in the system. It was agreed that governance structures at all levels of education require attention and especially in the areas of quality assurance, system financing and the participation of stakeholders.
Employer engagement	One of the key outcomes of the Symposium has been the weak link between educators and employers in the region. Although there are some promising indications in terms of partnerships (for example, the Egyptian Enterprise Training Partnership (ETP) model), there is still more room for development in this area. UK experts in the Symposium highlighted examples where the region can benefit from institutionalising employer engagement, namely the Sector Skills Councils model and the experience of harnessing genuine buy-in from top CEOs in the skills reform agenda. Experts advised that rather than trying to engage everyone at once, focus should be on starting with priority sectors with a genuine interest and then others will follow eventually moving from employer engagement to employer ownership.
Quality and qualifications	One of the major deficiencies in the system in the region is related to the quality of outputs. Quality assurance of all aspects of the system is underdeveloped, with no recognised standards; no unified methods for curriculum development and teachers' initial and in-service training; underdeveloped assessments; unrecognised certification and the lack of appropriate (international) accreditation for educational institutions. It was broadly agreed that national qualification frameworks need to be strengthened as a priority to provide greater guidance and clarity to governments, employers and enhance opportunities for young people. Positive examples were shared about UAE initiatives with support from UK partners. Other examples of good practice in this area include Oman and Bahrain.
Teachers' Professional Development	The development of teachers is a critical component in improving teaching and learning in the classroom. Attention should be given to this area in terms of the provision of adequate resources to recruit and retain good quality teachers; put in place robust pre-and in-service training programmes; provide incentives for good practice and institute performance management approaches to deal with poor performance; invest in interactive and communicative methods of training, teaching and learning to enhance the acquisition of skills through critical thinking and problem-solving approaches and move away from teacher-centred rote learning.
Employability and soft skills	The relationship between poor skills sets and low levels of employability was returned to throughout the Symposium by a large number of speakers. Skills such as communication, teamwork, problem solving, leadership, work ethics, creativity, innovation and resilience have been cited as the key things that employers look for in school and university graduates. Yet after years in the formal education system few graduates demonstrate such skills. Discussions centred on how these skills should be embedded in curricula and what methods can be adopted to do so. Examples of good practice were given from experiences in basic education in Lebanon and UK, where clear policies exist to incorporate and measure soft skills. But these are not routinely found in the MENA region.

Priority Outcomes	Specific Topic Areas
TVET reform	TVET is clearly one of the major catalysts for economic development in the region. If the system can produce skilled workers according to the needs of employers this will supply the foster business development and economic growth, attract foreign and domestic investment and improve countries' international competitiveness. However, TVET in the region needs restructuring in terms of governance, quality, relevance and the perceptions of its status in society. A paradigm shift is required to transform TVET from a second-class option for low performing students and dropouts to an attractive and legitimate alternative to more academic routes. Governments, educational institutions, parents and students need to take this on board. But this can only be done in parallel to the upgrading of the TVET subsector as an engine of a knowledge-based economy providing value to individuals, employers and nation economies.
Labour Market Information Systems (LMIS)	LMIS is underdeveloped in the region with limited tools for forecasting future needs and analysis that can benefit education planning and curricula development as well as the introduction of new programmes. Even when it happens, there is limited evidence that the information and analysis is transferred to the appropriate education planners. There is considerable scope for investing in capacity development of those involved in the technical aspects of LMIS design, data collection and analysis.
Social entrepreneurship	A key outcome of Symposium discussions was the realisation of the role of social entrepreneurship and self-employment as a stabilising force and source of opportunities for young people during periods of political transition in the MENA region. Young entrepreneurs in the region need to be seen as change makers trying to solve their local problems and improving their own and community livelihoods. However, in order to develop and expand social entrepreneurship, several issues need to be addressed: integrate social entrepreneurship into formal and informal education; assist civil society organisations to promote the purpose and value of social entrepreneurship; free up the space for civil society to provide quality support to young entrepreneurs; provide access to low-interest financing mechanisms for young entrepreneurs and develop favourable legislation to promote SMEs and entrepreneurship. During the Symposium one presentation focused on the national plan in Lebanon to expand an entrepreneurship culture starting from incorporating it into curricula, to national campaigns to encourage youth to pursue self-employment in a country where 75 per cent of employees work for the government.
Work-based learning	One of the most effective methods of learning which is relatively untapped in the region is work-based learning. Several different models were discussed during the Symposium including dual education, productive school units and schools within factories, models of modern traineeship and apprenticeship. This is something where the region can benefit from the UK experience.
Higher education reform	The region has seen tremendous expansion of both public and private higher education provision over the last few decades. However, the quality is still questionable with lack of appropriate quality assurance and accreditation by external bodies. While enrollment of women has increased and in some countries exceeds that of men, this has not been reflected in women's participation in employment. Some Gulf countries have shown impressive developments in higher education with strong partnerships with international universities but most other countries in the region still lag behind.
Transition from school to work	Effective policies and programmes are required to facilitate the transition from school to work in the region. This starts with developing practical life-long career guidance and counselling. It also requires the development of legislation and expansion of active labour market programmes which are fit for purpose and are properly evaluated to ensure impact. The development of effective public employment services is also required, as pointed out by research from the ILO which indicates that it is underdeveloped in the region. There seems to be a misconception among educators that the future employment of their graduates is beyond their core responsibilities.

## 4.2- RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MOVING FORWARD

Based on a range of sources, the recommendations for future implementation of the many good ideas that came out of the Symposium are recorded in this section of the report. The first part addresses further actions related to Symposium outcomes and specifically actions to be taken by the British Council to maintain the momentum of this event. The second part looks at some of the recommended improvements to the content and structure of future events based on the feedback of delegates. This is contained in Annex 6.

In concrete terms a key outcome of the Symposium was enthusiasm from many of the representatives to commit to a range of activities to take forward the discussions:

- the British Council will commit to organising another similar event in the region in early 2016 focused on priority themes;
- organising a series of country-specific or sub-regional policy dialogue events addressing some of the above priority areas;
- Egypt and Libya have committed to working with the British Council on pilot initiatives linked to improving employer engagement;
- the British Council encourages delegates to collect available data and resources available about the importance of English as an employability skill in their country to be able to share it in the next event. In the first half of 2015 the British Council will publish a report on research into the role of English in the region and aims to use this as a catalyst to stimulate further detailed research;
- the British Council will expand the scale of its support to teacher training for English around the region and encourages other organisations to become partners;
- the presentations and videos of the Symposium sessions are now available through the website to create awareness about the topics and engage other stakeholders.

The following areas have been identified as those where the region could benefit if further explored with relevant national and international partners including the British Council:

- the piloting of adult apprenticeships as an effective model for preparing young people for the workforce that will reduce the gap between skills supply and demand and will allow employers to share in the cost of training using the concept of earning and learning for young people in the region;

- examining further the governance of education systems including standards, certification, accreditation and assessment (TVET being identified as a special priority).
- Improve the governance of TVET leading to holistic and comprehensive strategies.

### **Recommendations for improving the Symposium Format**

The following is a list of recommendations for improving the Symposium format and focus based on feedback received from delegates and internal feedback from the British Council team:

- a different location each year will be considered, creating a 'road-show' to cover more countries in the region;
- encourage international organisations and donors working in the region to show-case the cross-cutting initiatives they are developing as a way of sharing good practice;
- the number of breakout sessions should be reduced as part of a smaller, more focused event. Alternatively the scale and duration of the event should be increased to allow for the rich variety of topics and speakers;
- employers should be well-represented in the Symposium programme, given the need expressed for integration planning and implementation;
- the participation of young people from the region could be incorporated in the Symposium, depending on its purpose;
- a half-day round table could be held as a side event to the Symposium for ministers, business leaders, educationists, civil society leaders and young people to share ideas and formulate joint initiatives; and
- the inclusion of thematic sessions on priority economic sectors could be considered as well as panel discussions that include sub-regional interests or country specific discussions depending on the duration and focus of future events.

# ANNEX 1

## SYMPOSIUM PROGRAMME

### Day 1

08.00	Symposium Registration Main Ballroom Foyer
09.00	<b>Main Ballroom (Magenta)</b> Welcome and Opening Speech: <b>Ahmed El-Ashmawi</b> , <i>Symposium Programme Director and Senior TVET Advisor, British Council</i>
09.10	<b>Opening Addresses</b> <b>HE Ambassador Dr Badre Eddine Allali</b> , <i>Assistant Secretary General and Head of Social Sector, League of Arab States</i> <b>Adrian Chadwick OBE</b> , <i>Regional Director Middle East and North Africa, British Council</i> <b>HE John Casson</b> , <i>British Ambassador to Egypt</i>
09.45	<b>Keynote Address</b> <b>HE Dr Mohamed Yousef</b> , <i>Deputy Education Minister for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), Government of Egypt</i>
10.15	<b>Setting the scene for the Cairo Symposium</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Symposium Aims</li> <li>• Symposium Purpose</li> <li>• Symposium Structure</li> </ul> <b>Symposium Facilitators: Ahmed El-Ashmawi and Noha Aiad</b> , <i>International Relations Officer- Education and Scientific Research Department, League of Arab States</i>
10.30	Tea/coffee break
11.00 - 12.15	<b>Main Ballroom (Magenta)</b> <b>Panel discussion</b> <b>The socio-economic challenges and opportunities across the MENA region: education, employability, and skills development across the region:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social challenges of young people</li> <li>• Human development, social equity and livelihoods challenges</li> <li>• Linkages between education provision, entrepreneurship and employment: roles, responsibilities, opportunities</li> </ul> <b>Panellists</b> <b>Dr. Iman Bibars</b> , <i>Regional Director, ASHOKA</i> <b>Dr. Dahlia Khalifa</b> , <i>Head, E4E Initiative for Arab Youth, Program Leader, Skills Development, MENA, IFC-World Bank Group</i> <b>Mahmoud El Sherbiny</b> , <i>Executive Director, Industrial Training Council (ITC), Ministry of Industry and Foreign Trade, Egypt</i> <b>Magda Zaki</b> , <i>Director Education and Scientific Research Department, League of Arab States</i> <b>John Knagg</b> , <i>Senior Advisor English Language Teaching, British Council</i> Q and A session <b>Moderator: Yosri Foda, Journalist</b>
12.15	Lunch
13.15	<b>Main Ballroom (Magenta)</b> <b>Plenary presentation</b> <b>Magda Zaki</b> , <i>Director Education and Scientific Research Department, League of Arab States</i> ‘The Role of the Arab League in Promoting Education’ Q and A session <b>Moderator: Robin Rickard, Director Jordan and Levant Cluster Lead, British Council</b>
14.00	Tea/coffee break

14.00 - 14.45	<p><b>Main Ballroom (Magenta)</b></p> <p><b>Plenary presentation</b></p> <p><b>Simon Perryman</b>, Executive Director UK Commission for Employment and Skills UK ‘Engaging employers in developing skills and employability - the UK experience’</p> <p>Q and A session</p> <p><b>Moderator: Ahmed El Ashmawi, Symposium Programme Director and Senior TVET Adviser, British Council</b></p>
15.00 - 15.45	<p><b>Room: Magenta (Main Hall)</b></p> <p><b>Tony Degazon and Bill Malcolm</b> UAE A skills-based economy: linking training, work and industry <b>Moderator: Martin Rose, Consultant MENA, British Council</b></p> <p><b>Room: Lavender and Lime</b></p> <p><b>Dr Mohamed El Fateh, Egypt</b> Skills imbalances in the labour market: causes and corrections <b>Moderator: Philip Rylah, Director Examinations, MENA, British Council</b></p> <p><b>Room: Magnolia and Jade</b></p> <p><b>Eng. AbdulHakim Ahmed, Yemen</b> Impact of UK quality assurance model in skills development in Yemen <b>Moderator: Mirna Sabbagh, Director Programmes and Partnerships, British Council, Lebanon</b></p> <p><b>Room: Scarlet and Maroon</b></p> <p><b>Room: Saffron and Sepia</b></p> <p><b>Prof Ghada Barsoum, Egypt</b> The ‘allure of easy’ – challenges of private higher education in Egypt <b>Moderator: Robin Rickard, Director Jordan and Levant Cluster Lead, British Council</b></p>
16.00 - 17.15	<p><b>Main Ballroom (Magenta)</b></p> <p><b>Panel discussion</b></p> <p><b>The relationship between English language skills and employability:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identification of key skills gaps</li> <li>• demand-side factors from the labour market</li> <li>• supply-side factors from government authorities</li> <li>• linkages between the education authorities (policy makers and planners) and the private sector</li> <li>• the needs of young people</li> <li>• examples of best practice</li> </ul> <p><b>Panellists</b></p> <p><b>Dr Elizabeth Erling</b>, Open University, UK <b>Dr John Simpson</b>, British Council Senior Adviser English <b>Shahinaz Ahmed</b>, Egypt Country Director, AMIDEAST <b>John Knagg</b>, Senior Adviser English Language Teaching, British Council <b>Prof Hanan Bennoudi</b>, Associate Professor at Ibn Zohr University and Head of English Department at Universiapolis University</p> <p>Q and A session</p> <p><b>Moderator: Eric Lawrie, Regional Director English MENA, British Council</b></p>
17.15 - 17.30	<p><b>Day 1 Round-Up and Announcements</b></p> <p>Symposium Facilitators: Ahmed El-Ashmawi and Noha Aiad</p>
19.30	<p><b>Evening Gala dinner at Al Saraya Boat Restaurant, Zamalek</b></p> <p>(Welcome remarks by: HE Ambassador Dr Badre Eddine Allali, Assistant Secretary General and Head of Social Sector, League of Arab States, and Mark Stephens, Country Director, British Council, Egypt)</p>

## Day 2

08.30 -08.45	<p><b>Review of themes discussed on Day 1</b> Symposium Facilitators: Ahmed El-Ashmawi and Noha Aiad</p>
09.00 -09.45	<p><b>Main Ballroom (Magenta)</b> <b>Plenary presentation</b> <b>Dr Hanan Al Khalifa</b>, <i>Head of Research and International Development, Cambridge Assessment, University of Cambridge</i> <i>'Towards having an impactful higher education graduate'</i> Q and A session <b>Moderator: Ahmed El Ashmawi, Symposium Programme Director and Senior TVET Adviser, British Council</b></p>
09.45 - 10.15	Tea/coffee break
10.15 - 11.00	<p><b>Room: Magenta (Main Hall)</b> <b>Martin Rose, Consultant, MENA</b> <i>Education in North Africa</i> <b>Moderator: Ahmed El-Ashmawi, Cairo Symposium Programme Director</b></p> <p><b>Room: Lavender and Lime</b> <b>Hedi Triki, Tunisia</b> <i>Skills development and Tunisian reform of vocational training</i> <b>Moderator: Elizabeth Erling, Open University, UK</b></p> <p><b>Room: Magnolia and Jade</b> <b>Dr John Simpson, Rwanda</b> <i>Defining roles for English in the nexus of skills for employability</i> <b>Moderator: David Knox, Director Society MENA, British Council</b></p> <p><b>Room: Scarlet and Maroon</b> <b>Prof Mohammed Aboussalah, Morocco</b> <i>Employability issues in Moroccan higher education system</i> <b>Moderator: Mirna Sabbagh, Director Programmes and Partnerships, British Council, Lebanon</b></p> <p><b>Room: Saffron and Sepia</b> <b>David Vale, Consultant UK</b> <i>The long and winding research road: challenging the stereotypes of young Gulf Arab students</i> <b>Moderator: Philip Rylah, Director Examinations, MENA, British Council</b></p>
11.15 -12.00	<p><b>Room: Magenta (Main Hall)</b> <b>Christine Hofmann, ILO Egypt</b> <i>Enhancing employability in North Africa – ILO policies, tools and approaches</i> <b>Moderator: Eric Lawrie, Director English, MENA, British Council</b></p> <p><b>Room: Lavender and Lime</b> <b>Dr Jihad Hamdan, Jordan</b> <i>English language and employment: evidence from job ads in Jordan</i> <b>Moderator: Robin Rickard, Director Jordan and Levant Cluster Lead, British Council</b></p> <p><b>Room: Magnolia and Jade</b> <b>Dr Mokhtar Jwaili, Libya</b> <i>Entrepreneurial learning communities</i> <b>Moderator: John Knagg, Senior Adviser Learning and Teaching, British Council</b></p> <p><b>Room: Scarlet and Maroon</b> <b>Oussama Ghneim, Lebanon</b> <i>Soft skills: cross-matching education and employment needs</i> <b>Moderator: James Hampson, Deputy Director, British Council Egypt</b></p> <p><b>Room: Saffron and Sepia</b></p>

12.15 - 13.15	<p><b>Main Ballroom (Magenta)</b></p> <p><b>Panel discussion</b></p> <p><b>Regional education reform agendas: How Skills are planned for and implemented in all levels of education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools, TVET, Higher Education</li> <li>• Classroom and training room practice;</li> <li>• Training for education professionals</li> <li>• Curriculum reform</li> <li>• Challenges and opportunities</li> </ul> <p><b>Panellists:</b></p> <p><b>Prof Karim Tahboub</b>, <i>Palestine Polytechnic University</i></p> <p><b>Samya Bou Hamad</b>, <i>Head of English Department, Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD), Lebanon</i></p> <p><b>Hedi Triki</b>, <i>Senior Adviser to the Minister, Ministry of vocational training and employment, Tunisia</i></p> <p><b>Bill Malcolm</b>, <i>Group Director of International Quality Assurance &amp; Assessment Services, City &amp; Guilds, UK</i></p> <p>Q and A session</p> <p><b>Moderator: David Knox, Director Society MENA, British Council</b></p>
13.15	Lunch
14.00 - 14.45	<p><b>Room: Magenta (Main Hall)</b></p> <p><b>John Knagg, UK</b></p> <p><i>English – foreign Language or 21<sup>st</sup> century skill? Problems and solutions</i></p> <p><b>Moderator: Mirna Sabbagh, Director Programmes and Partnerships, British Council Lebanon</b></p> <p><b>Room: Lavender and Lime</b></p> <p><b>Matthew Anderson, UK</b></p> <p><i>Changing the Perception of Vocational Education</i></p> <p><b>Moderator: Ahmed El-Ashmawi, Cairo Symposium Programme Director</b></p> <p><b>Room: Magnolia and Jade</b></p> <p><b>Prof Hanan Bennoudi, Morocco</b></p> <p><i>Towards a new learning model: learning English online</i></p> <p><b>Moderator: Elizabeth Erling, Open University, UK</b></p> <p><b>Room: Scarlet and Maroon</b></p> <p><b>Zeinab Abdel Razak, Egypt</b></p> <p><i>Mapping skills and competencies for an effective workplace</i></p> <p><b>Moderator: Riham Botrous, Programmes Manager, British Council Egypt</b></p> <p><b>Room: Saffron and Sepia</b></p> <p><b>Farah Osman, Egypt</b></p> <p><i>Bridging the gap between public education and the private sector: Challenges and lessons learned</i></p> <p><b>Moderator: Eric Lawrie, Director English MENA, British Council</b></p>
14.45 - 15.00	Running tea/coffee
15.00 - 15.45	<p><b>Room: Magenta (Main Hall)</b></p> <p><b>Dr Nihal Al Megharbel, Egypt</b></p> <p><i>The role of local authorities in supporting skills development in Egypt</i></p> <p><b>Moderator: Martin Rose, Consultant MENA, British Council</b></p> <p><b>Room: Lavender and Lime</b></p> <p><b>Amany Moemen, Egypt</b></p> <p><i>The triple helix: government, industry and education – between success and failure</i></p> <p><b>Moderator: John Simpson, Regional Education and English Adviser British Council, Sub Saharan Africa</b></p>

15.00 - 15.45	<p><b>Room: Magnolia and Jade</b>  <b>Dr Ghada El-Kot, Egypt</b>  <i>Internal and external employability perspectives among youth in the Arab world</i>  <b>Moderator: David Vale, Freelance Researcher, UK</b></p> <p><b>Room: Scarlet and Maroon</b>  <b>Gilbert Doumit, Lebanon</b>  <i>Social entrepreneurship: civic engagement and economic inclusion</i>  <b>Moderator: Claire de Braekeleer, Director Partnerships, British Council Egypt</b></p> <p><b>Room: Saffron and Sepia</b></p>
16.00 - 16.45	<p><b>Room: Magenta (Main Hall)</b>  <b>David Crowther, Pearson Qualifications International, UK</b>  <i>Connecting the Dots: Qualifications for Employability</i>  <b>Moderator: Philip Rylah, Director Examinations, MENA, British Council</b></p> <p><b>Room: Lavender and Lime</b>  <b>Kamal Hamdan, Lebanon</b>  <i>Labour Market Characteristics in Lebanon: Structural Challenges Hindering Youth Employability</i>  <b>Moderator: Jonathan Gayther, Director English, British Council Egypt</b></p> <p><b>Room: Magnolia and Jade</b>  <b>Yusuf Mustafa, Iraq/Kurdistan</b>  <i>Transforming the TVET sector in Iraq Kurdistan</i>  <b>Moderator: James Hampson, Deputy Director, British Council Egypt</b></p> <p><b>Room: Scarlet and Maroon</b>  <b>Ismail Haddad, Tunisia</b>  <i>An overview of young graduates' employment opportunities in Tunisia</i>  <b>Moderator: Gail Campbell, Director Education MENA, British Council</b></p> <p><b>Room: Saffron and Sepia</b>  <b>Marilyn Garson, Palestinian Territories</b>  <i>Social Enterprise for Employability at the Extremes: a Gaza Case Study</i>  <b>Moderator: John Knagg, Senior Adviser Learning and Teaching, British Council</b></p>
17.00 - 18.00	<p><b>Main Ballroom (Magenta)</b>  <b>Panel discussion</b>  <b>Drawing Symposium Themes together: Challenges / Way Forward</b>  <b>Panellists:</b>  <b>Dr Mohamed Youssef</b>, Deputy Minister of Education for TVET, Egypt  <b>Adrian Chadwick OBE</b>, Regional Director Middle East and North Africa, British Council  <b>Dr Hanan Al Khalifa</b>, Head of Research and International Development, Cambridge Assessment, University of Cambridge  <b>Simon Perryman</b>, Executive Director UK Commission for Employment and Skills UK  <b>Christine Hofmann</b>, Skills Development Specialist, ILO</p> <p>Q and A session  <b>Moderator: Yosri Foda, Journalist</b></p>
18.00 - 18.15	<p><b>Wrap-Up and Thanks</b>  <b>Symposium Facilitators: Ahmed El-Ashmawi and Noha Aiad</b></p>

# ANNEX 2

## GUESTS OF HONOUR

Name	Titles	Country
HE Dr. Badre Eddine Allali - Welcome Address	Assistant Secretary-General and Head of Social Sector, League of Arab States	Morocco
Adrian Chadwick OBE - Opening Address	Regional Director Middle East and North Africa, British Council	UAE
HMA John Casson - Opening Address	British Ambassador to Egypt	Egypt
HE Dr. Mohammed Youssef - Keynote Address	Deputy Education Minister for Technical and Vocational Education and Training	Egypt

## DELEGATES

Name	Titles	Country
Abdulkhik Hashem Othman Ahmed	Quality Assurance Manager, Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training	Yemen
Abeer Abdelwahed	Press	Egypt
Abeer Shosha	Press	Egypt
Adel Hasan	Director of Vocational Review, Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training	Bahrain
Ahmed Abdel Hakim	International Finance Corporation (IFC)	Egypt
Ahmed El Ashmawi	Symposium Lead Facilitator & Senior TVET Advisor, British Council	Egypt
Ahmed El Assal	Ministry of Higher Education	Egypt
Ahmed Ismail	Director - Egypt, Pearson Qualifications International	Egypt
Ahmed Mohamed Hassanien	Press	Egypt
Aline Kiwan	Regional Marketing and Communications Manager - MENA, British Council	Lebanon
Amany Moemen	Chairman's HR Counsellor Industrial Development Authority (IDA), Ministry of Industry and Foreign Trade	Egypt
Aya Hatem Morad	Press	Egypt
Bill Malcom	Director of International Quality Assurance & Assessment Services, City & Guilds	UAE
Carlos Mohr	Advisor GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit)	Egypt
Christine Hofmann	Skills Development Specialist, International Labour Office (ILO)	Egypt
Claire de Braekeleer	Director Partnerships, British Council Egypt	Egypt
Claudia Marinaro	Programme Manager (Education/TVET Sector)	Egypt
Dahlia Khalifa	Head, E4E Initiative for Arab Youth, International Finance Corporation (IFC) - World Bank Group	Egypt
Daiana Saad	Press	Egypt
Dalia Adel	Regional English Project Manager, British Council	Egypt
Dalia Farouk	Press	Egypt
David Crowther	Pearson Qualifications International, UAE	UAE
David Knox	Director Society MENA, British Council	UK
David Vale	Consultant	UK
Edwin Berk	Director, New Business, MENA/A, Development Alternatives Inc	Egypt

Elizabeth Erling	Open University	UK
Eric Lawrie	Regional Director English MENA, British Council	UAE
Farah Osman	Operations Manager	Egypt
Faten Hammami	Regional Coordinator ENDA Inter-Arabe	Tunisia
Fouad Chafiqi	Director of Curriculum, Ministry of National Education	Morocco
Gail Campbell	Director Education MENA, British Council	Egypt
Ghada Amin	Executive Director of Shura Foundation	Egypt
Ghada Barsoum	Professor, American University in Cairo	Egypt
Ghada El Kot	Professor in Human Resources and Organisational Behaviour Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport	Egypt
Gilbert Doumit	Managing Partner of Beyond Reform & Development	Lebanon
Hadeer Ramadan	Logistics Assistant	Egypt
Hanan Khalifa	Head of Research and International Development, Cambridge Assessment, University of Cambridge	UK
Hanane Bennoudi	Associate Professor, Ibn Zohr University and Head of English Department at Universiapolis University	Morocco
Hedi Triki	Senior Adviser to the Minister, Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment	Tunisia
Hossny Dakhly Mohamed	Press	Egypt
Hussien Afifi	Press	Egypt
Iman Bibars	Regional Director, ASHOKA	Egypt
Ismail Haddad	General Director of Technological Studies, Department of Partnership, Ministry of Higher Education	Tunisia
Jalila Shugaaldeen	Education, Health & Social Protection Unit Head, Social Fund for Development	Yemen
James Hampson	Deputy Director British Council	Egypt
Jihad Hamdan	Chief Field Education Programme, United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)	Jordan
John Knagg	Senior Advisor English Language Teaching, British Council	UK
John Simpson	Senior Advisor English for Education Systems - Sub Saharan Africa, British Council	Rwanda
Jonathan Gayther	Director English, British Council	Egypt
Kamal Hamdan	Executive Director at the Consultation and Research Institute (CRI)	Lebanon
Karim Tahboub	Palestine Polytechnic University	Palestine
Khalid Abdelhay Ahmed	Press	Egypt
Khalid Ellafi	Director Programmes, British Council	Libya
Laura Schmidt	Advisor for Labour Market Oriented Training, Employment Promotion Programme (EPP), GIZ	Egypt
Lina Younes	National News Agency	Lebanon
Luma Jayyousi	MENA Regional Arabic Translator, Regional Office	Jordan
Magda Zaki	Director Education and Scientific Research Department, League of Arab States	Egypt
Mahmoud El-Sherbiny	Executive Director, Industrial Training Council (ITC), Ministry of Industry and Foreign Trade, Egypt	Egypt
Mansour Attia	Press	Egypt
Marilyn Garson	Early Recovery, Business and Livelihoods Lead, Office of the Director of Operations, UNRWA Gaza	Palestine
Mark Stephens	Country Director, British Council Egypt	Egypt
Martin Rose	Consultant MENA, British Council	Morocco
Matthew Anderson	Executive Director - TVET UK	UK
Mirna Sabbagh	Director Programmes and Partnerships, British Council, Lebanon	Lebanon

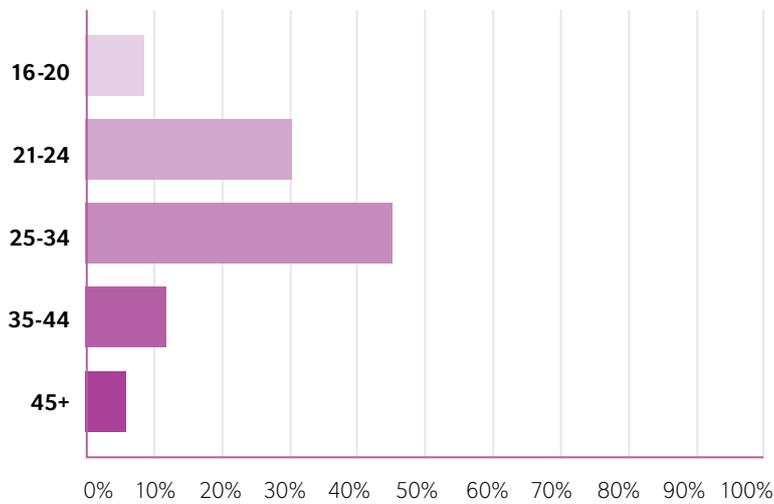
Mohamed Aboussalah	Director of Higher Education. Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Professional Training.	Morocco
Mohamed El Fateh	Adviser to Minister of HE	Egypt
Mohamed El Khashab	National Center for Human Resources Development (NCHRD)	Egypt
Mohamed Fikry Abdulshafy	President, Enterprise TVET Partnership (ETP) Union	Egypt
Mohammed Abdullah Al-Mutawakel	Project Manager Arab Countries - International Services, GIZ	Jordan
Mokhtar Jwaili	Chairman of the Libyan National Board for Technical and Vocational Education	Libya
Mona Gammal	Director - Megacom Management Consulting services	Egypt
Nassim Ershad	Gulf Director, Pearson Qualifications International	UAE
Nesrine Ghnaim	International Cooperation Coordinator	Tunisia
Nick Walsh	Journalist	UAE
Nihal Megharbel	Advisor to Minister of Planning	Egypt
Noha Aiad	Symposium Facilitator: International Relations Officer- Education and Scientific Research Department, League of Arab States	Egypt
Noha Faltas	Programme Specialist, AMIDEAST	Egypt
Noha Waleed	Regional English Project Officer, British Council	Egypt
Oussama Ghneim	Head of TVET Department- Centre for Educational Research & Development	Lebanon
Paul Maloney	Senior Regional Communications Manager, Marketing & Communications	UAE
Paul Mongey	Journalist	UAE
Philip Powell-Davies	Symposium Programme Director & Education and Social Development Consultant	UK
Philip Rylah	Director Examinations, MENA, British Council	UAE
Randah Ramadan	Conference Planner	Egypt
Robin Rickard	Director Jordan and Levant Cluster Lead, British Council	Jordan
Rose Gad	Communications Manager, British Council Egypt	Egypt
Saber Abou Zeid	Egyptian Technical Colleges Project (ETCP)	Egypt
Sajida Tabbara	Dean of Humanities, Bahrain Polytechnic	Bahrain
Sameh EL Kashef	Executive Director, Building Materials ETP	Egypt
Samia Ayoub	Under Secretary for Vocational training, Ministry of Manpower	Egypt
Samya Abou Hamad	Head of English Department, Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD)	Lebanon
Sarwah Burhan Qader	Operational Support Officer - Programmes & Projects - British Council Erbil	Iraq
Shaaban Abdelfateh	Press	Egypt
Shahera Youssef Younes	New Business Specialist, MENA/A, Development Alternatives Inc	Egypt
Shahinaz Ahmed	Egypt Country Director, AMIDEAST	Egypt
Shereen Mamdouh	Press	Egypt
Sheriff Salah	League of Arab States	Egypt
Simon Perryman	Executive Director - UK Commission for Employment and Skills	UK
Sultana Almswari	Education Project Officer, Social Fund for Development	Yemen
Tony Degazon	Regional Manager Middle East and North Africa, City & Guilds	UAE
Waddah Ali Abdullah Ali	Skills for Employability Assistant, British Council	Yemen
Yosri Foda	Chief Moderator - Journalist & Broadcaster	Egypt
Yousif Abdullah Mustafa	General Director of Technical and Vocational Education - Ministry of Education Kurdistan	Iraq
Zeinab Abdel Razak	Assistant Director Donor Projects, International Cooperation and Project management, Egyptian Banking Institute	Egypt

# ANNEX 3

## RESULTS OF YOUTH SURVEY

### Q1 What's your age group?

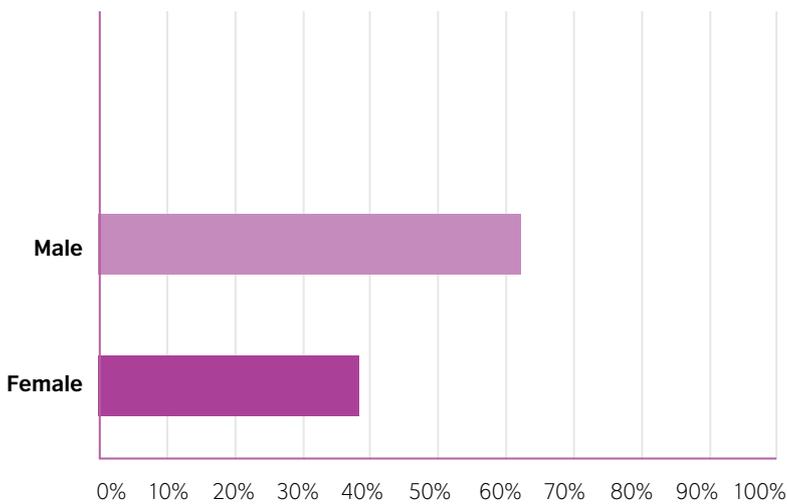
Answered: 36 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
16-20	8.33% 3
21-24	30.56% 11
25-34	44.44% 16
35-44	11.11% 4
45+	5.56% 2
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

### Q2 What is your gender?

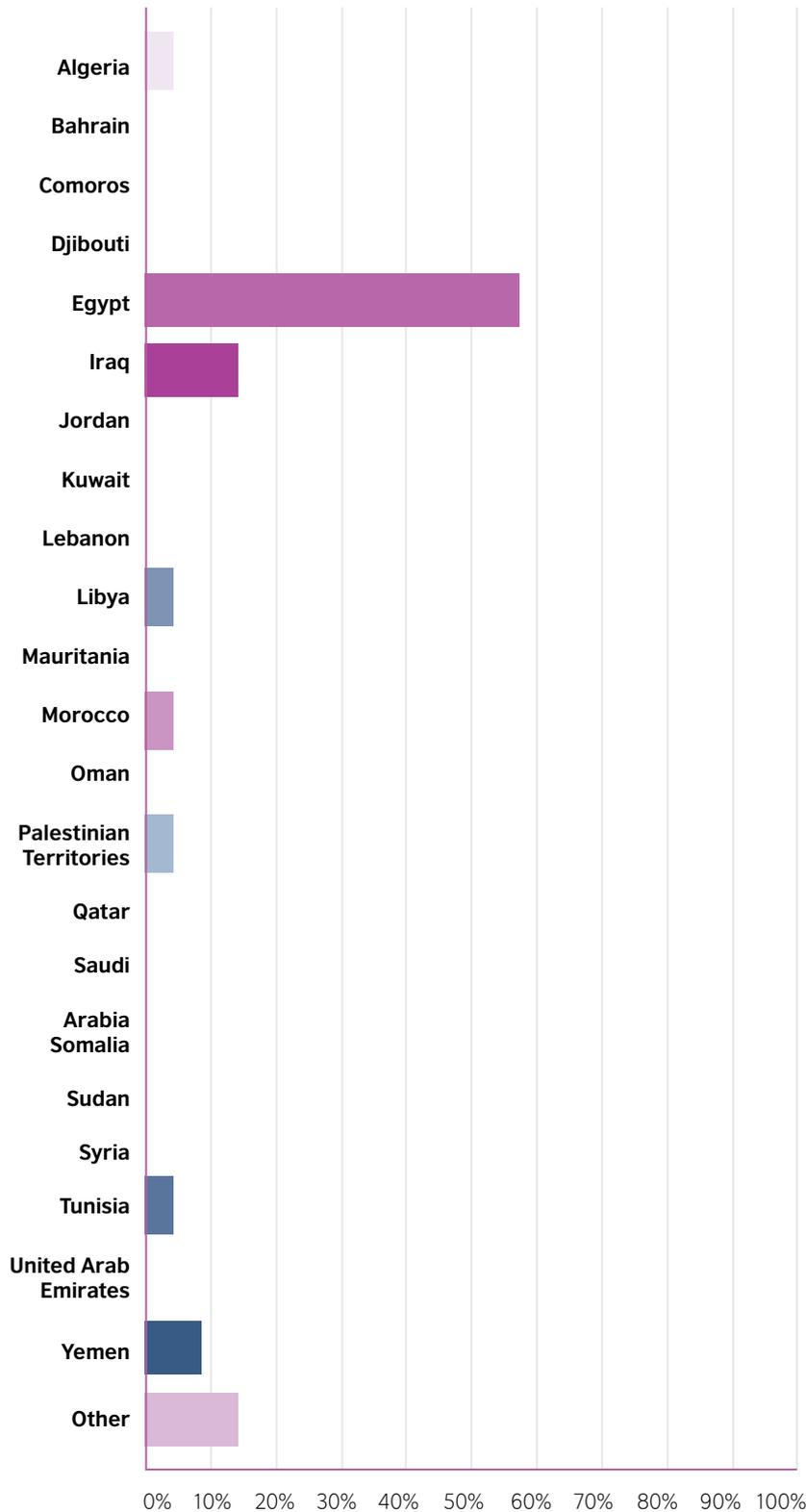
Answered: 36 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Male	61.11% 22
Female	38.89% 14
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

### Q3 Country of origin

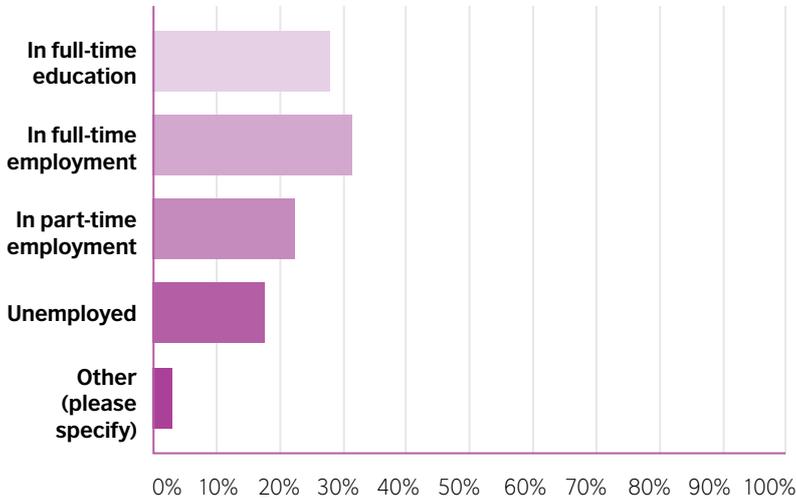
Answered: 36 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Algeria	2.78%	1
Bahrain	0.00%	0
Comoros	0.00%	0
Djibouti	0.00%	0
Egypt	58.33%	21
Iraq	13.89%	5
Jordan	0.00%	0
Kuwait	0.00%	0
Lebanon	0.00%	0
Libya	2.78%	1
Mauritania	0.00%	0
Morocco	2.78%	1
Oman	0.00%	0
Palestinian Territories	2.78%	1
Qatar	0.00%	0
Saudi Arabia	0.00%	0
Somalia	0.00%	0
Sudan	0.00%	0
Syria	0.00%	0
Tunisia	2.78%	1
United Arab Emirates	0.00%	0
Yemen	8.33%	3
Other	5.56%	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>36</b>

**Q4 Please state your status now**

Answered: 36 Skipped: 0

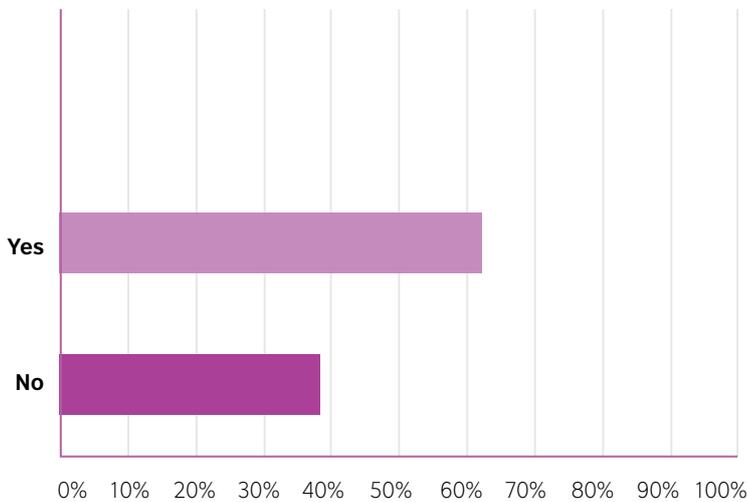


Answer Choices	Responses
In full-time education	27.78% 10
In full-time employment	30.56% 11
In part-time employment	22.22% 8
Unemployed	16.67% 6
Other (please specify)	2.78% 1
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	preparate to ielts	1/21/2015 3:41 PM

**Q5 Are you satisfied with the education you received or receiving now?**

Answered: 36 Skipped: 0



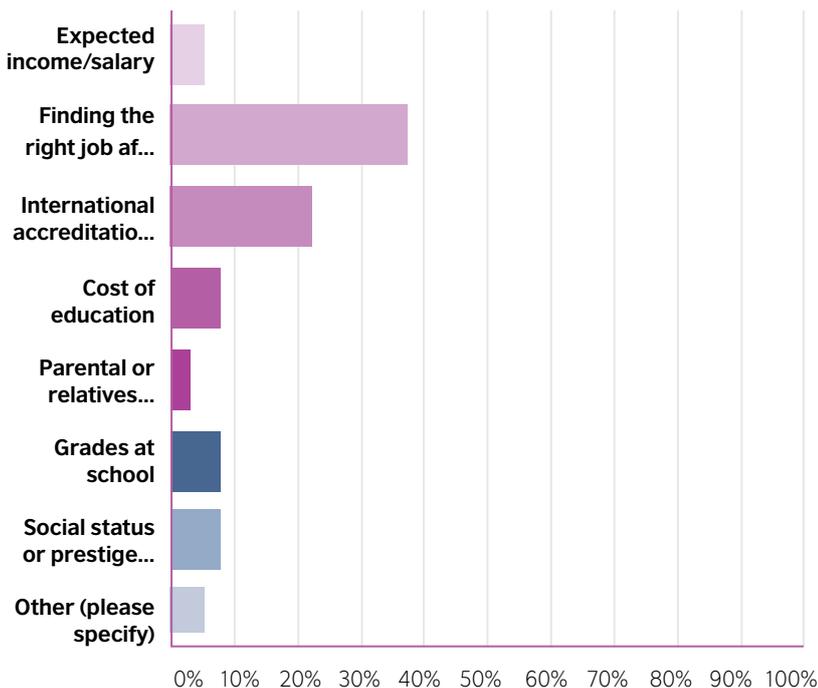
Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	61.11% 22
No	38.89% 14
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

#	Please specify why	Date
1	we take in the subject 5 lectures instade of 10 lectures at least. No one is interested in guiding us or help us in any problem faced us. Also the lecturers are not interested at all of making their students understand the content of the subject.	1/24/2015 11:35 AM
2	Teaching	1/23/2015 8:22 PM
3	I am satisfied because i am trying to make the best use of the education i am receiving now	1/23/2015 5:45 PM
4	I believe that the education I got was very poor, and I think I didn't reach to my potentials.	1/21/2015 8:37 PM

#	Please specify why	Date
5	Because when i was in secondary school ..there were two years their marks affect on which college you can enter..in the first year i scored 93%..this mark was good to complete in maths way to can enter engineer field..but my father insist to complete science to be doctor..so i failed and got 85..and the two years become 89 and i enter commerce and now not find job..bad story but fact.	1/21/2015 7:47 PM
6	It help me to remember what I got in school and give me a chance to hear words correctly (listening)	1/21/2015 5:07 PM
7	Because the material we study at the university is theoretical not practical and that means a cut rope when start work if we had an opportunity to get a job.	1/21/2015 4:52 PM
8	receiving now	1/21/2015 3:04 PM
9	Because it didn't satisfy my eagerness for education and my teachers weren't as good as I wished.	1/21/2015 5:43 AM
10	It hasn't gave me any benefit yet	1/20/2015 10:37 PM
11	because I want to upgrade my self and my job abilities	1/20/2015 9:36 PM
12	because i make my knowledge	1/20/2015 9:30 PM
13	There're no more opportunities to get what you wish to be as they limit in our country.	1/20/2015 6:31 PM
14	Am still gaining more information	1/20/2015 6:30 PM
16	Teaching of English in Egypt is conducted in terms of English as a Course Material, and not as a Language. This renders Egyptian students unable to speak, write, or even read English skillfully enough to learn anything, or score a decent job!	1/20/2015 6:14 PM
16	Its a quality education.	1/20/2015 5:34 PM

**Q6 What is the most important factor in determining your choice of education, if you had the freedom to choose?**

Answered: 36 Skipped: 0

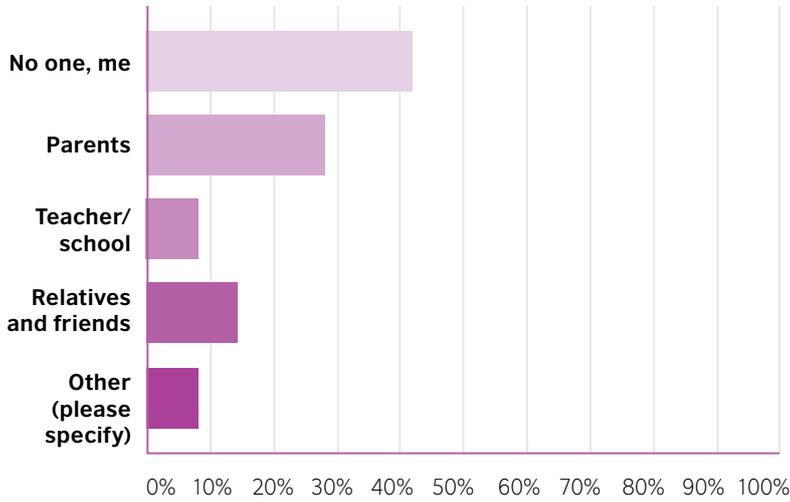


Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Expected income/ salary after graduation	5.56%	2
Finding the right job after graduation (job prospects)	38.89%	14
International accreditation of the degree (quality)	22.22%	8
Cost of education	8.33%	3
Parental or relatives advice	2.78%	1
Grades at school	8.33%	3
Social status or prestige after graduation	8.33%	3
Other (please specify)	5.56%	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>36</b>

#	Other (specify)	Date
1	If I feel I will find my self in this education and its future career or not	1/23/2015 5:45 PM
2	It's very useful for my work	1/20/2015 6:30 PM

**Q7 Who advised you on which field of education and career to select?**

Answered: 36 Skipped: 0

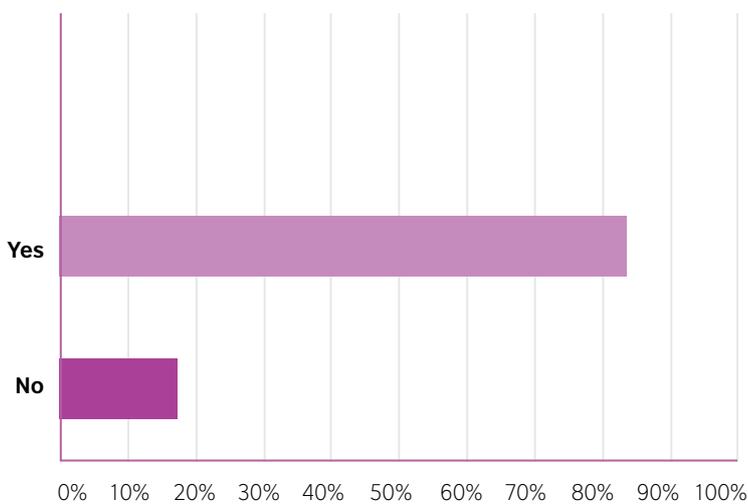


Answer Choices	Responses
No one, me	41.67% 15
Parents	27.78% 10
Teacher/school	8.33% 3
Relatives and friends	13.89% 5
Other (please specify)	8.33% 3
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	No one,not me.It come accidently,but i really love it	1/23/2015 5:45 PM
2	it was depending on my grades at school first of all	1/20/2015 10:05 PM
3	My manager	1/20/2015 6:30 PM

**Q8 Do you think it was the right advice?**

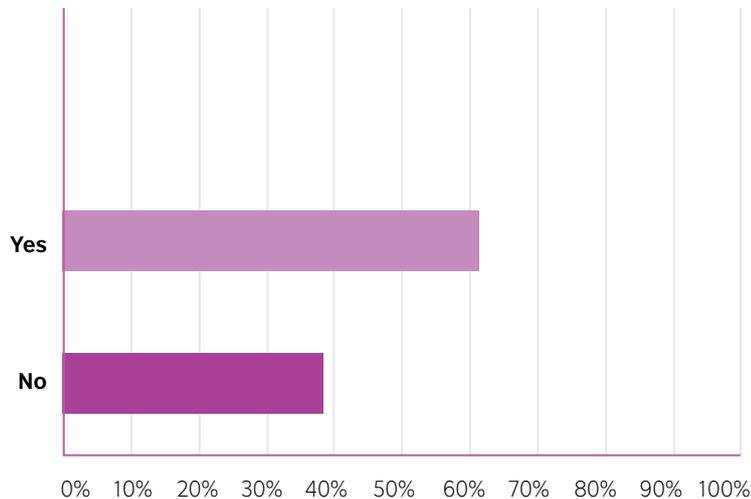
Answered: 36 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	83.33% 30
No	16.67% 6
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

**Q9 Would you advise your younger sister or brother or relative to study the same today?**

Answered: 36 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	61.11% 22
No	38.89% 14
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

**Q10 How do you think the education in the Arab world could be improved? (Your recommendations will be discussed in the Cairo Symposium)**

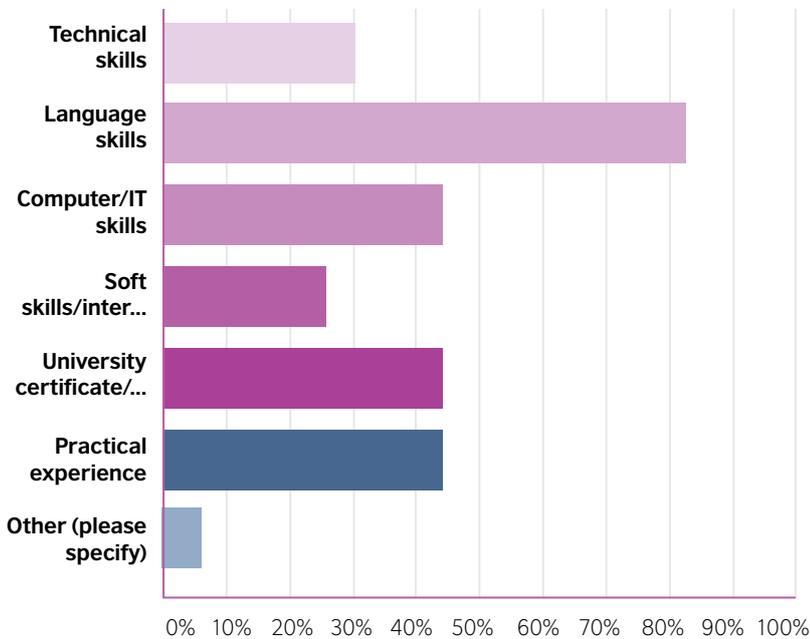
Answered: 36 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	try to use online learning	1/25/2015 8:05 PM
2	Good understanding of the subjects and experience transfer specially to young children	1/25/2015 3:31 AM
3	I can build a sophisticated education centers, clean and teachers High expert	1/25/2015 1:58 AM
4	I think the faculty or school should be more careful in choosing the lecturers basing on how is able to make the student love the subject and understand it . Also,i wish that all exams in all facuilites be based on MCQ question rather an articals questions because the current evaluation criteria is not fair at all	1/24/2015 11:35 AM
5	It can be developed by using new technology..	1/23/2015 8:36 PM
6	Right courses for teaching team	1/23/2015 8:22 PM
7	It could be improved if we could convince teachers with their rule,and prepare them well, educationally and psychologically.And if we could make students aware of their rights and duties.	1/23/2015 5:45 PM
8	Linking education training, and labor market needs Continuous training and practice Language Learning	1/22/2015 7:23 PM
9	i don't know !!!!!	1/22/2015 5:57 PM
10	Of course any thing can improve to get more benefits	1/22/2015 7:06 AM
11	teach all modern things in each field	1/21/2015 11:54 PM
12	Not improved	1/21/2015 11:39 PM
13	Poor education resulted in graduating weak teachers. Those weak teachers are now educating a whole generation. I think breaking this cycle is very important. Bringing qualified professors from abroad to the faculties of education can help. So that in few years we can have a cadre of good fresh graduated teachers. Ministries of education need to know that exported books is not enough, they should know that curriculum is more than books. So when importing books we need to make sure that curriculum is replicable as well. We also need to find passionate teachers. This can happen through using tests to measure the skills of students who apply to faculties of education. We know that most of teachers are lacking the skills of using the appropriate teaching methodologies. Last but not least our countries need to determine its strategic priorities and this should be reflected in our education policy. Solutions are cost but it worth trying.	1/21/2015 8:37 PM

#	Responses	Date
14	Must more freedom for the desire of the student ..which field he or she like to study ..not mark only...	1/21/2015 7:47 PM
15	To improve education we should have enough money ,we need material to realize experience with different ways to make people understand lessons	1/21/2015 5:07 PM
16	By inserting more practical courses and letting students be a bit free to express and criticize fuddy-duddy way of teaching. Besides, take the students' comments into consideration.	1/21/2015 4:52 PM
17	i dont know but i will come to be there i will think it	1/21/2015 3:41 PM
18	yes . could be improved	1/21/2015 3:04 PM
19	It's good becuase I study in Cairo university and don't know about other universities	1/21/2015 1:22 PM
20	By establishing an Arab accreditation system. Different sciences should be taught in Arabic.	1/21/2015 5:43 AM
21	Case studies , simulations programs , training.	1/21/2015 2:38 AM
22	no	1/20/2015 11:02 PM
23	There are so many ways to improve education,for example,we should take care of the students,teachers,curriculumns and more important we should CARE!!	1/20/2015 10:37 PM
24	students need to be exercised more and more and they have to focus on the required section for the work market	1/20/2015 10:34 PM
25	There I elementary education that should be given to every one , after that education should be focused on the thing that you are good on and the thing that you desire and improve that skill on you. This mean that you will get your education not depending on your grades at school or your ability to pay for a well education in a private school or university. The whole thing will focus on your strength, I think this will give more motivation for people and comfortability.	1/20/2015 10:05 PM
26	by increase the education budget more than today and yesterday	1/20/2015 9:36 PM
27	is improved because we have a lot of means to get the information	1/20/2015 9:30 PM
28	in my country the teachers concentrate to the books more than concentrate to the working out of classrom.if the focus to the working and make the studant work and learn the idea that will be better.	1/20/2015 7:44 PM
29	Education depends on three elements (teacher, students, curriculums ) to get the best result they should be contact to each other . A teacher should be a friend to his students this will give them stimulate to be more active.About cuuriculums ,they should be standard on the purposes of Arab communities .	1/20/2015 6:31 PM
30	I think all the Egyptian students in British council will speak English fluently	1/20/2015 6:30 PM
31	Arab countries are not developed because of the difficulties in education, especially in the Department of English Language to the lack of practice and the teaching staff and the proper methods for students	1/20/2015 6:22 PM
32	Arab countries are not developed because of the difficulties in education, especially in the Department of English Language to the lack of practice and the teaching staff and the proper methods for students	1/20/2015 6:22 PM
33	Arab countries are not developed because of the difficulties in education, especially in the Department of English Language to the lack of practice and the teaching staff and the proper methods for students	1/20/2015 6:17 PM
34	Education of English in the Arab world should focus on the practice of correct pronunciation, and the today's idioms and the most common technological terms.	1/20/2015 6:14 PM
35	With the quality of education.	1/20/2015 5:34 PM
36	To combine internship with theory have real targets and have will to emprove it	1/20/2015 5:17 PM

**Q11 In your opinion, what are the two most important things needed today to help you get a job? (You can choose more than one answer)**

Answered: 36 Skipped: 0

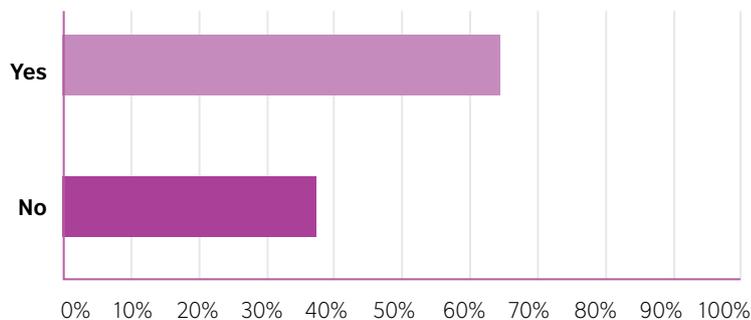


Answer Choices	Responses
Technical skills	30.56% 11
Language skills	83.33% 30
Computer/IT skills	44.44% 16
Soft skills/interpersonal skills	27.78% 10
University certificate/qualification	44.44% 16
Practical experience	44.44% 16
Other (please specify)	5.56% 2
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

#	Other (specify)	Date
1	nepotism and favoritism	1/21/2015 4:52 PM
2	the first of all is communication	1/20/2015 10:05 PM

**Q12 After graduation from school/college/university, did you get any further training or education?**

Answered: 36 Skipped: 0

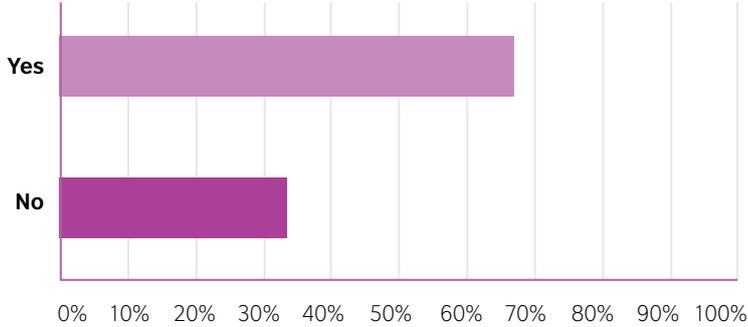


Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	63.89% 23
No	36.11% 13
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

#	If yes, please specify	Date
1	its all technical training concerning ISO 17025, lab SOPs	1/25/2015 3:31 AM
2	upgrading course's in same field (maritime field)	1/22/2015 7:06 AM
3	After university I did a two years (preparatory for master)	1/21/2015 8:37 PM
4	ICDL	1/21/2015 7:47 PM
5	network( link camera,server, alarm)	1/21/2015 5:07 PM
6	I am studying at the university to get M.A. degree, different workshops and improving my skills technically and personally seminars.	1/21/2015 4:52 PM
7	I haven't graduated yet	1/20/2015 10:37 PM
8	courses english,courses economic development	1/20/2015 10:34 PM
9	English and french course , computer courses , professional training to get international certificates	1/20/2015 10:05 PM
10	An English course at the ministry of defense	1/20/2015 6:30 PM
11	training for perfecting for the purposes of best doing my tasks	1/20/2015 5:17 PM

**Q13 If you are employed, are you satisfied with your job?**

Answered: 36 Skipped: 0

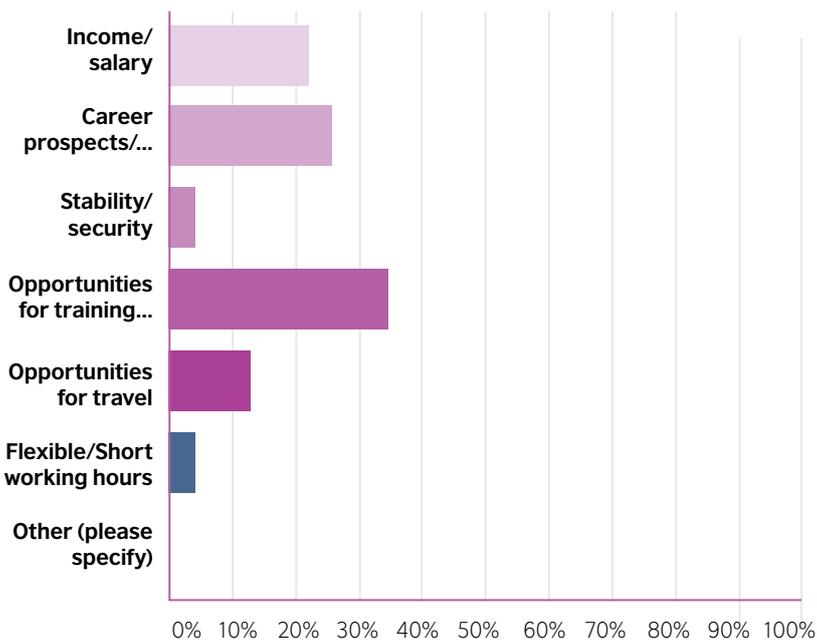


Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	66.67% 24
No	33.33% 12
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

#	If No, why not?	Date
1	Hope more improvements	1/25/2015 3:31 AM
2	i am not an employed	1/24/2015 11:35 AM
3	I am not employed yet	1/23/2015 5:45 PM
4	Because i have no jobl	1/21/2015 7:47 PM
5	BeCuase I have to follow up stupid people and stupid rules and laws!	1/21/2015 4:52 PM
6	Courses on English teaching methodology.	1/21/2015 5:43 AM
7	I still a student	1/20/2015 10:37 PM
8	There is no progress, no caring of the post graduate studies I have geten, low motivation. The labor law does not applied correctly.	1/20/2015 10:05 PM
9	is depent on job	1/20/2015 9:30 PM

**Q14 What is the most important thing you look for in a new job?**

Answered: 36 Skipped: 0

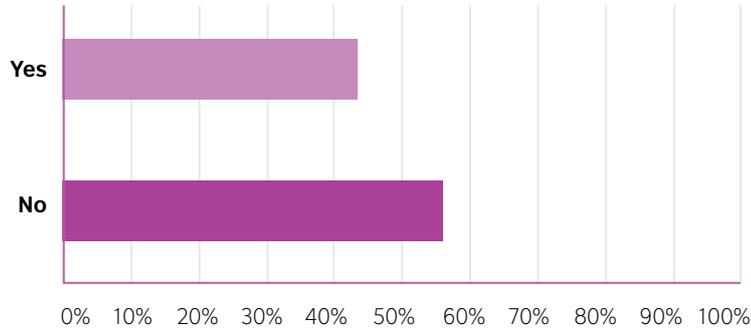


Answer Choices	Responses
Income/salary	22.22% 8
Career prospects/future	25.00% 9
Stability/security	2.78% 1
Opportunities for training and self-development	36.11% 13
Opportunities for travel	11.11% 4
Flexible/Short working hours	2.78% 1
Other (please specify)	0.00% 0
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

#	Other (specify)	Date
	There are no responses	

**Q15 Did your school/college/university prepare you with the right skills for your first job?**

Answered: 36 Skipped: 0

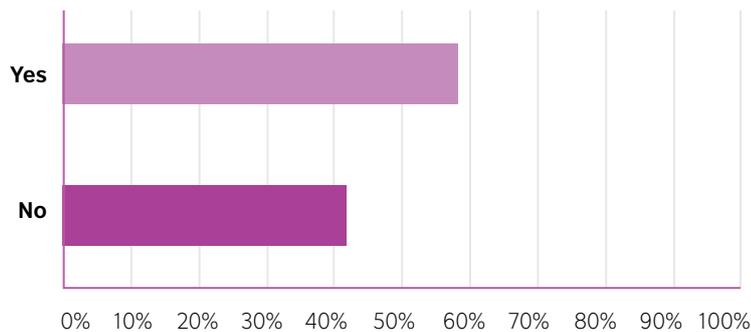


Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	44.44% 16
No	55.56% 20
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

#	If no, what was missing?	Date
1	i feel that there is big diffrence between education here and international institute	1/25/2015 8:05 PM
2	almost everything , i need for rehabilitation myself whit all skills	1/24/2015 11:35 AM
3	Practical learning was missed	1/23/2015 8:36 PM
4	There is only focus on curricula not on skills at all.	1/23/2015 5:45 PM
5	All the practical part was missing, and even the theoretical part was inadequate .	1/21/2015 8:37 PM
6	Becuae in our societ..if you know important government employee ..you can have anice job chances	1/21/2015 7:47 PM
7	In lack of material I find a difficultyin my first job as an IT	1/21/2015 5:07 PM
8	experience	1/21/2015 4:52 PM
9	As I mentioned before my teachers weren't as good as I wished.	1/21/2015 5:43 AM
10	Almost everything needed is missing	1/20/2015 10:37 PM
11	Computer and language skills	1/20/2015 10:05 PM
12	There's no opportunities to get a job in my specification after graduation ...!!	1/20/2015 6:31 PM
13	The whole education system in our country is very weak	1/20/2015 6:30 PM
14	Training on the interpersonal skills, and looking for the job opportunities.	1/20/2015 6:14 PM
15	It just needs to be revived.	1/20/2015 5:34 PM
16	Depth	1/20/2015 5:17 PM

**Q16 If you are employed now, is your job related to your field of study?**

Answered: 36 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	58.33% 21
No	41.67% 15
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

# ANNEX 4

## OPENING SESSION DETAILS

The opening and welcome speeches were given by HE Dr. Badre Eldin Allali, Assistant Secretary General and Head of the Social Section at the League of Arab States; Mr. Adrian Chadwick OBE, Regional Director MENA, British Council; HE John Casson, British Ambassador to Egypt and the keynote address was delivered by HE Dr. Mohamed Youssef, Egypt's Deputy Education Minister for Technical Education and Vocational Training. Dr. Allali welcomed the participants on behalf of the League of Arab States and the Secretary General Dr. Nabil El Araby, and he underlined the importance of the seminar's topic for Arab countries. He stressed the need to look at education reform by focusing on the three pillars of students, teachers and systems, enhancing curricula in the region to incorporate more innovation, languages, competition, soft skills and blended learning opportunities. He highlighted that this should happen with the support of civil society as well as public-private partnerships.

He also explained that one of the League's priorities is to encourage its members to engage young people more in policy development. Dr. Allali also urged the delegates to think of issues related to youth with disabilities and how to integrate them in the labour market through decent jobs suitable for their needs. Finally Dr. Allali highlighted the League's appreciation of the partnership with the British Council in the Cairo Symposium as well as other issues related to promoting English. Addressing the seminar on behalf of the British Council, Adrian Chadwick highlighted the magnitude of the situation related to youth employment and skills mismatch in the region and the urgent need to address it by governments and partners in the region. He emphasised the fact that despite education and youth employment being a priority in the region for a long time, results and outputs have lagged behind international standards. However, he also highlighted some of the

successes, such as access to primary and tertiary education especially for girls; improvement in literacy rates; increasing attention to TVET reform as well as increased private education.

The importance of creating partnerships between education and business was also reiterated. Mr Chadwick highlighted some of the topics and speakers included in the Symposium and outlined the recent work of the British Council in the region related to English language and the expansion of the blended learning model between classroom and digital learning which has proven effective, especially in the Maghreb.

The British Ambassador to Egypt, HE John Casson, welcomed the audience and emphasised the importance of the Symposium's topic in the wider political challenges and opportunities facing the region. He noted that whether people take the large and growing number of Arab youth as a burden for governments or an opportunity for prosperity and development will depend on the solutions and innovations provided in the region. He stressed that no political success will be achieved in the region without the opportunities for young people in the region to visualise a better future with decent jobs and improved livelihoods. The Ambassador reminded the audience that Britain is Egypt's largest foreign investor and through this investment they are not just creating jobs for young Egyptians but also through the work of the British Council they are also working with local ministries to improve education and skills, thus looking at the problem from both the supply and demand side. In concluding, the Ambassador urged the delegates and practitioners to share experiences and come up with solutions during the two days of the Symposium keeping in mind three important issues; building partnerships, being practical and working with passion to address challenges.

In his Keynote address, HE Dr. Mohamed Youssef outlined the future plans for reforming the TVET sector in Egypt. He started by emphasising the importance of the TVET sector to economic development also indicating that more than 50 per cent of Egyptian students who complete basic education enter the technical education stream, totaling about two million students enrolled in 2000 technical schools nationwide. Dr. Youssef explained that Egypt is working in parallel to develop the five aspects of the TVET process: student development, teacher development, curriculum development, school facilities and infrastructure development, as well as policies related to the transition from school to work. The following are the key challenges and initiatives on the agenda for TVET reform in Egypt, many of which are shared with neighbouring countries in the region:

- addressing the skills mismatch between what is currently being supplied by TVET institutes and what employers in the labour market need. Dr. Youssef explained that they are in the process of addressing this by creating a new level of graduates (skilled workers) that are needed in greater numbers than the technician level currently being provided by the system. This will also require activating the National Skills Standards and unifying their utilisation.
- improving the employability skills of students and introducing subjects in leadership, team building, work ethics, discipline as well as health and safety issues.
- expanding practical and work-based training opportunities for students, through productive school models, dual education and schools within factories. In addition to providing the practical skills employers are asking for, this will also provide additional income for students coming from underprivileged backgrounds who often drop out of school to support their families.
- improving literacy and numeracy skills of technical education graduates as well as providing them with education pathways to higher education but in the technological fields of study with accredited programmes. This will both provide the higher level skills as well as improve the image of TVET.
- training teachers in practical skills so that theory and practice are combined.
- the Ministry is currently cooperating with various donors to develop a unified manual for curriculum development that is fit for the Egyptian context and to avoid fragmentation and mis-coordination. It will be based on DACUM (Developing a Curriculum - <http://www.dacum.org/>) methodology and the process will include representatives from large, medium and small employers
- Dr. Youssef also mentioned the challenging task of upgrading facilities and infrastructure of schools, which has started focusing on training workshops and laboratories.
- In relation to the transition from school to work, he mentioned that the Ministry has established a dedicated unit for this to support students finding jobs. They will also focus on life-long career guidance and counselling for students and parents. They also established a number of regional market observatories to inform decision-makers about market needs and trends.
- Dr. Youssef mentioned the upcoming TVET Reform project, which is the second phase of cooperation with the European Union, co-funded by both sides and worth 117 million Euros. It is aimed at improving governance, quality and relevance of TVET and the transition from school to work. He emphasised the intention was to build on the outputs of the first phase of the project, one of which was the establishment of 12 sectoral Enterprise TVET Partnerships (ETPs), organisations that link employers to reforms in skills modeled after the UK Sector Skills Councils but modified to suit the Egyptian context.
- The Deputy Minister concluded his keynote speech by emphasising the Prime Minister's vision in improving the governance of the TVET system, encouraging cooperation and integration rather than the competition and fragmentation that is currently the case due to the many players in the system.

# ANNEX 5

## DETAILS OF PLENARY AND BREAKOUT SESSIONS

### Plenary Sessions

Plenary session title	The Role of the Arab League in Promoting Education
Speaker	Magda Zaki, Director Education and Scientific Research Department, League of Arab States
Moderator	Robin Rickard, Director Jordan and Levant Cluster Lead, British Council
Session Abstract and topics	<p>The session outlined the work of the LAS in fostering education in the region, starting with the establishment of the Education and Scientific Research Department back in 2004. The Department of Education of the League of Arab states acts as a bridge between, on the one hand, the various educational organisations and the political bodies of the Arab World and, on the other hand, the international community. In this respect the Department acts through a series of forums that comprises all the joint Arab League's activities such as: the Arab-South American Forum, the Arab-European Forum, the Arab-Japanese Forum and so on.</p> <p>It is part of the Arab League's mission to support a well-educated and knowledgeable Arab society, and one that offers jobs for young Arabs. In addition to having the responsibility of drafting common resolutions, policy and plan for education across the Arab World and following up with them during periodic Presidential Education Summits, the LAS also works on the following education related issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting E-learning across the region</li> <li>• Combating illiteracy in the region</li> <li>• Gathering data and managing a regional observatory through the sister organisation, ALESCO</li> <li>• Looking into regional policies and programmes for education for people with disabilities</li> <li>• Promoting the teaching of English and transforming it as the second language in all Arab countries</li> <li>• Promoting technology in education</li> <li>• Introducing the E-museum, promoting Arab culture and art</li> <li>• Promoting diversity and understanding by creating cultural awareness and understanding between east and west as well as incorporating cultural topics in education curricula</li> <li>• Supporting the education of refugees by securing scholarships in host countries as well as expanding e-learning platforms for them.</li> <li>• Promoting teaching quality and integrating soft skills to improve employability in the region</li> </ul>
Delegates' discussion points	<p>The following are some of the topics addressed within the questions and comments by the delegates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can the LAS be more effective in bridging the gap between the supply and demand for skills among countries in the region? This is done through several ways starting with drafting common education and training policy for the region, collecting and disseminating information and data gathered through the ALESCO observatory and using education organisations like the Arab Academy to provide relevant programmes at the micro level.</li> <li>• There should be a more prominent role for LAS among other international organisations like the EU and the World Bank in promoting and developing education and employment in the region.</li> <li>• The role of the Arab Labour Organisation should be more effective in the region.</li> </ul>

Plenary session title	Engaging employers in developing skills and employability - the UK experience
Speaker	Simon Perryman, Executive Director, UK Commission for Employment and Skills
Moderator	Ahmed El-Ashmawi, Symposium Facilitator, British Council
Session Abstract and topics	<p>Skills are a rapidly growing priority across the UK. They are now there showing strong growth and employment as they emerge from a long and deep recession, but continue to address the challenges faced by mature Western economies of global competition and accelerating technological change, coupled with the need for austerity budgets by Government to bring down the debt burden. The UK needs to do more for less. They need new solutions, including re-balancing the respective roles of Government and the private sector in tackling skills issues. The session briefly explored some of the most pressing skills challenges the UK is facing including the hollowing out of the middle of the labour market and the need to help more young people to get jobs which build into careers. Perryman then described the measures being taken by Government to improve apprenticeships, simplify standards and qualifications and drive skills development through co-investment with industrial skills partnerships in important sectors of the economy.</p> <p>Some of the key messages incorporated in the presentation relevant to the MENA region included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The UKCES's role in creating impact through employers' insight, providing research and intelligence and support the investment in standards and innovation;</li> <li>• Success should be measured by a wider set of outcomes, not just educational attainment;</li> <li>• Earning and Learning, encourage work-based learning through traineeships and apprenticeships, providing incentives for employers.</li> <li>• Working at supporting youth to Get in, Get on and Move up the employment ladder;</li> <li>• Putting employers in the lead of skills development and encouraging top CEOs in different sectors to become champions for skills and employment. The UK is moving from employer engagement to employer ownership;</li> <li>• The role of Sector Skills Councils could be something the region can learn from in institutionalizing employer engagement in priority sectors.</li> </ul>
Delegates' discussion points	<p>The following are some of the topics addressed within the questions and comments by the delegates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What were the key success factors in the UK that could be useful lessons learnt for the region? According to Perryman these factors which are relevant now to the region included; (i) a burning platform, the government needed to urgently address youth skills and employment issues, they wanted market-led approaches in addition to austerity measures which meant sharing the responsibility with the private sector, (ii) Skills is a global currency needed to make the country competitive and productive so it was crucial to progress and overcome the economic crisis, (iii) the UK was lucky that the leaders of the private sector are genuinely passionate about youth employment and want to give time and effort to solve issues.</li> <li>• Education in the Arab region is still supply driven with limited employer engagement often supported by pilot donor programmes.</li> <li>• Active Labour Market Programmes were not extensively discussed during the presentation but the new traineeship programme providing modular short work-based experiences for young people as well as the larger apprenticeship model are examples of this in addition to other national work programmes.</li> <li>• Delegates asked about the feasibility and benefit of conducting long-term forecasts of labour needs in such a dynamic global economic environment. Perryman said that this is a challenge but the broad-brush indicators have proven to be accurate about certain priority occupations and sectors.</li> </ul>

Plenary session title	Towards having an impactful higher education graduate
Speaker	Dr Hanan Khalifa, Head of Research and International Development, Cambridge Assessment, University of Cambridge
Moderator	Ahmed El-Ashmawi, Symposium Facilitator, British Council
Session Abstract and topics	<p>Globalisation and the emergence of knowledge-based economies have focused attention on Higher Education (HE) as a driver for economic growth and development. Over the last decade, the HE landscape in the Arab world changed significantly with diversification in available programmes, technical and professional degrees, and delivery modes. Similarly, most countries in the region witnessed a shift from an emphasis on public institutions to rapid growth in private institutions, foreign universities with local campuses, and partnerships between local and foreign universities. Despite these achievements, there are increasing concerns voiced by employers of university graduates regarding insufficient competency in soft skills including foreign language proficiency.</p> <p>This session considered the changing landscape of HE by discussing three questions. Firstly, which skills should educators focus on? In responding, the speaker explored the interaction between education and labour market needs and shared perceptions in the Arab World, on the benefits of English language as a socio-economic driver. Secondly, how can HE incorporate these skills? In answering, Dr. Khalifa explored the value of developing relevant policies. Thirdly, whose responsibility is it to ensure having a well-rounded graduate? In responding, she addressed the role of various stakeholders.</p> <p>Some of the key messages and information incorporated in the presentation relevant to the regions included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over the last decade, at least 100,000 Arab students have crossed a national or territorial border for the purposes of education and are now enrolled outside their country of origin?</li> <li>• In 2012 the number of Universities in the Arab states rose to more than 500 universities, nine million students and 250,000 faculty members?</li> <li>• The non-public sector today accounts for at least 45 per cent of higher education institutions in the Arab region?</li> <li>• The top five skills required for employment according to recruitment agencies are: Leadership skills 62 per cent, Management skills 62 per cent, Interpersonal skills 53 per cent, Innovation and creativity 45 per cent, Resilience 43 per cent?</li> <li>• The salary gap between similarly skilled individuals with and without English is considerable, ranging from five per cent in Tunisia to 75 per cent in Egypt and even 200 per cent for some workers in Baghdad?</li> <li>• Of the total skills mentioned in online job ads, non-technical skills represented 26%?</li> <li>• The proportion of young university graduates with high qualifications who are unemployed in the year 2010 reached 21.9 per cent in Tunisia, 24.8 per cent in Egypt, 17.8 per cent in Morocco, and 15.5 per cent in Jordan, compared to an average of 3.5 per cent in the European Union and 3.3 per cent in the OECD countries?</li> <li>• The region will have to create over 100 million jobs by 2020 to employ the young men and women joining the Arab States employment market?</li> <li>• 91 per cent of HR decision-makers think it is likely that, in the next five years, people will be recruited on their ability to deal with change and uncertainty?</li> </ul> <p>Dr. Khalifa concluded by outlining the outcomes that successful education systems need to balance in order to produce impactful individuals and that included; (i) increase rigour in traditional core subjects, (ii) strengthening enabling subjects such as languages and soft skills and (iii) improving personal qualities and attributes by broadening expectations against curricular and non-curricular activities through linkages between education and business.</p>

Delegates' discussion points	<p>The following are some of the topics addressed within the questions and comments by the delegates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional education institutes especially higher education do not have clear and communicated language proficiency policies that stipulate the entry or graduation level and are not fit for purpose for the subject or discipline of study.</li> <li>• Lack of quality assurance measures in place and if they exist are they just locally or internationally recognized to encourage mobility of graduates and recognition.</li> <li>• How can institutions and society measure soft skills being taught? An eight-step model for that was outlined starting with clearly defining the skill being measured and ending with scoring and feedback to students.</li> <li>• How can the region's academic institutions start to really produce impactful graduates needed in the market? Focus should be on K to 12 students and changing the methodology from teaching to learning and training teachers to think differently.</li> <li>• It is important for the region to create strategies that are implemented and do not change with the change in ministers.</li> <li>• While private institutions are quicker to develop and reform, large public academic institutions with large student bodies and faculty will take time and effort but will start with quality training for teachers, relevant curricula and effective and modern teaching support material utilizing technology.</li> <li>• Paradigm shifts are required in the region to creating more awareness about what is needed and engaging all stakeholders including employers and parents, through marketing campaigns.</li> </ul>
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## Breakout Sessions

Session title	A Skills Based Economy - Linking Training, Work and Industry
Speakers	Tony Degazon, Regional Manager, MENA City & Guilds, UAE and Bill Malcolm, Group Director of International Quality Assurance & Assessment Services, City & Guilds, UK
Moderator	Martin Rose, Consultant MENA, British Council
Session Abstract and topics	<p>A skills based economy raises standards, improves working lives and supports economic growth. Countries in the MENA region are currently investing heavily in establishing TVET systems to deliver job relevant skills for industry. Some of the key questions to explore include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you establish a dynamic skill based economy that is focused on high standards of output and quality?</li> <li>• What are the key interdependencies, policies and reforms in the education sector that are needed to ensure success?</li> <li>• What are the key challenges for effective vocational training?</li> </ul> <p>A number of initiatives in other countries are considered and parallels and lessons are drawn to support TVET reform.</p> <p>The presentation highlighted some of the key initiatives that UAE and Saudi Arabia are taking to reform their TVET system focusing on establishing a sound regulatory environment (NQF, quality through licensing training and recognising international awarding bodies), validating outcomes of training, links with industry and employability programmes for youth.</p> <p>The presentation also highlighted the experience of Ireland in improving links to work.</p>

Session title	Skills Imbalances in the Labour Market – Causes and Corrections
Speaker	Dr. Mohamed El Fateh, Adviser to Minister of Higher Education, Egypt
Moderator	Philip Rylah, Director, Examinations, MENA, British Council
Session Abstract and topics	<p>In Egypt, among the most important aspects of the disruption in the labour market is the mismatch between the outputs of the education and training systems compared with the competencies needed for employment. This is evident in statistics released by the Central Agency for Public Mobilization And Statistics (CAPMAS) which indicate:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Imbalances in educational attainment structure evident by the distribution of qualifications among the workforce aged 15 years and above: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 per cent illiterate</li> <li>• 30 per cent below intermediate qualification</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Imbalances due to mismatch between the learning and training outcomes and skills required by the labour market which is indicated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 49.5 per cent unemployment among intermediate qualification holders, and</li> <li>• 35 per cent unemployment among university and above graduates.</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>The presentation continued to outline some important statistics about the Egyptian education, training and employment landscape and outcomes and provided some of the required reform initiatives, which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completing the components of an effective Human Resources Development system</li> <li>• Drafting a national human development strategy in line with the country's overall development plans and priorities;</li> <li>• Placing legislation the governs the relationship between education and training;</li> <li>• Establishing a National Qualifications Framework to facilitate life-long learning;</li> <li>• Review of the funding mechanism for education and training where employers share in this;</li> <li>• Establishing functioning education, training and employment observatories</li> </ul>
Session title	Impact of the UK Quality Assurance Model in Skills Development in Yemen
Speaker	Abdulhakim Ahmed, Quality Assurance Manager, Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training, Yemen
Moderator	Mirna Sabbagh, Director Programmes and Partnerships, British Council Lebanon
Session Abstract and topics	<p>In 2009 talks began on how the UK can help Yemen improve technical and vocational skills. Since then Yemeni institutions have been exposed to several developmental processes in terms of skills, performance, and employer engagement in order to create changes needed in the TVET sector.</p> <p>The work started with three institutions and developed into 13 partnerships by the end of the programme. The impact helped to create skills development changes at the individual, institutional and national levels.</p>

Session title	The "Allure of Easy": Challenges of Private Higher Education in Egypt
Speaker	Dr. Ghada Barsoum, Professor, American University in Cairo, Egypt
Moderator	Robin Rickard, Director Jordan and Levant Cluster Lead, British Council
Session Abstract and topics	<p>Private institutions are playing an increasing role in higher education in Egypt. Globally, private institutions have been classified as elite, semi-elite and demand absorbing, with the majority falling within the last category. This presentation addressed issues related to private higher education and the conundrum of meeting demands of affordability and quality in Egypt.</p> <p>Some of the discussions centred around the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23 per cent of Higher Education in Egypt is private and the trend is likely to continue</li> <li>• Recommended by international donors to increase competition; finance growth; and to meet increasing demand</li> <li>• Law did not differentiate between for-profit and not-for-profit institutions</li> <li>• Case studies from Egypt revealed that: (i) institutes mostly governed as company, with board of executives- headed by owner/ son, (ii) depend on instructors from public institutions as department heads and senior faculty as part-timers, (iii) bulk of teaching is provided by junior faculty, few PhDs, weak or no publication record, (iv) strong focus on marketing, interactive websites, helpful staff on the phone, (v) providing infrastructure and "affordability", (vi) quality assurance units in both institutions, but mandate confused with student affairs and grievances offices, (vii) students blogging about fee manipulation, private tutoring, exam rigging.</li> <li>• According to students, education is based on memorisation and focuses on passing exams not learning and the focus is for the institution to have high passing rates.</li> </ul>
Session title	Education in North Africa
Speaker	Martin Rose, Consultant MENA, British Council
Moderator	Ahmed El-Ashmawi, Symposium Facilitator, British Council
Session Abstract and topics	<p>The research that Martin has conducted focused on five countries in North Africa, Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia. These five countries have invested heavily in education since independence, achieving impressive quantitative results, but also seeing huge youth – and particularly graduate – unemployment. This disastrous, and politically dangerous, situation stems from a continuing, though diminishing reliance on public sector employment; a failure to achieve major quality improvements in school and university; the constant absence of real linkage of curricula to labour market realities and needs; and slowness to reform effectively the whole system of vocational education so that it becomes a viable alternative pathway.</p> <p>The presentation is based on research undertaken for the British Council in 2014, presented in a report called Education in North Africa (nyp). The conclusion is that the need for pragmatic, donor driven reforms to education systems and labour markets is pressing and unarguable - but that education cannot ever become an entirely pragmatic business, responsible as it is for producing thinkers, citizens and social critics.</p>

Session title	Skills development and Tunisian reform of the vocational training
Speaker	Hedi Triki, Adviser to the Minister of Vocational Education and Employment, Tunisia
Moderator	Dr. Elizabeth Erling, Open University, UK
Session Abstract and topics	<p>The presentation discussed the rise in youth unemployment in Arab countries, and namely graduate unemployment, in addition to the increasing number of education dropouts has shed the light on the necessity of reconsidering the currently adopted policies in human resource development and their output relevance to actual labor market skills and competences needed.</p> <p>According to the Tunisian experience in dealing with the above challenges, developing a vocational training system in order to ensure employability will require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners will need to acquiring skills according to labour market needs</li> <li>• Sharing information about needed labour market skills and competences with</li> <li>• TVET institutions which are required to transform this information into training approaches and curricula</li> <li>• Encouraging internships and work-based learning in order for learners to acquire the skills needed by employers</li> <li>• Integrating additional skills and competences to promote employment through i) teaching foreign languages (namely English), (ii) acquiring ICT skills, (iii) work ethics, (iv) work health and safety and (v) inclusion of entrepreneurship learning in curricula</li> <li>• Improving workforce employability skills through training and re-training</li> <li>• The increasing number of graduates lacking vocational training has created an inversed pyramid of skills: An increased unemployment rate coupled with a significant decrease in mid-level competences</li> </ul>
Session title	Defining roles for English in the nexus of skills for employability
Speaker	John Simpson, Senior Advisor English for Education Systems - Sub-Saharan Africa, British Council
Moderator	David Knox, Director, Society MENA, British Council
Session Abstract and topics	<p>The presentation began by looking briefly at what makes for a strong economy in today's globalised world, and the knowledge and skills sets that contribute to this. Then outlined the role of language, especially the global language of English, as a gateway or portal to relevant knowledge and skills as well as an important means of international communication. Situating English as a basic skill in and for the 21st century.</p> <p>The talk presented evidence (although not through an academic study or a systematic review of the literature) of a positive relationship between English language skills and socioeconomic opportunities for individuals and societies. This was followed by consideration of the complementarity of skills sets – language, 'soft' and technical – which are needed for employability in the MENA region and more widely.</p> <p>Dr Simpson showed how language is embedded within 'soft' and technical skills and is effectively the 'glue' which binds them together. He outlined what this means for the planning of skills development in education by illustrating a number of ways in which the synergies between language, here English, and the other skills sets can be exploited in ways that optimise learning and strengthen the acquisition of all skills.</p>

Session title	Employability issues in the Moroccan Higher Education System
Speaker	Dr. Mohammed Aboussalah, Director of Higher Education. Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Professional Training, Morocco
Moderator	Mirna Sabbagh, Director Programmes and Partnerships, British Council Lebanon
Session Abstract and topics	<p>The presentation was divided into three parts as follows:</p> <p>1- Description of the Moroccan higher education system, its organisation, some key figures and the major reform projects implemented since the adoption in the year 2000 of the law organising higher education in terms of governance, pedagogy and the interaction between the university and its regional, national and international socio-economic environment.</p> <p>2- Reform measures undertaken by the Ministry in terms of training &amp; employment adequacy to meet labour market needs particularly those of large structural projects launched in Morocco. These measures promote the relevance and diversification of the training programmes, the enhancement of a quality assurance system along with the development of an integrated information and guidance to students and a national monitoring system of graduates.</p> <p>3- Description of the major cooperation programmes and projects aiming at the implementation of measures that facilitate the employability of university graduates. Also discussed the challenges and perspectives that strengthen the employability of young graduates and tackle the difficulties encountered.</p>
Session title	A long and winding research road: challenging the stereotypes of the young Gulf Arab student.
Speaker	David Vale, Freelance Researcher, UK
Moderator	Philip Rylah, Director, Examinations, MENA, British Council
Session Abstract and topics	<p>Results from International studies such as PISA (15 year olds), TIMSS &amp; PIRLS (4th and 8th Grade students) – as well as High Stakes English proficiency exams such as IELTS (usually 17+ year olds) indicate that the overall level of English language proficiency in schools (and universities) is low across the GCC region. This has an impact on students' overall education performance, ability to enter further (or higher) education, choice of universities and study programmes, as well as eventual employability. Moreover, results from the recent Research outlined in the Presentation shows there are clearly gaps, as well as “disconnects” between the education/ skills levels of students, and the entry levels desired by universities for higher education – and by employers. The research also showed that GCC policy makers and, including those in educational institutions, are aware of these difficulties and are trying to bridge these gaps – with varying degrees of success.</p> <p>The above is a challenge and opportunity for the Institutions such as the British Council in the region who wish to understand what the challenges are for Gulf students learning English and developing their skills – and certain key Questions emerged as focal points for the Research: Why do the present education systems seem to be failing their Students? Why do students complete school and university education without achieving the desired language of English? What perceptions do Ministries – and Students currently have of standards, what are their benchmarks, and what is being done to improve these? What are the skills gaps and disconnects - and how best might these be bridged?</p> <p>This Presentation looked at some of the key qualitative findings of the field study – which interviewed more than 100 key stakeholders (“those that know”) across the GCC regarding the performance of Gulf Arab Students in English – in their school and higher studies as well as employers' views on their new employees. The Research confirmed commonly held views regarding the factors involved, and identified the gaps and disconnects that underlie these factors – as well as highlighting some of the costs. Most interestingly, the findings indicate clear opportunities for stakeholders across educational divides, and for the private sector, to step up and support new practical models that might take forward improvement. The presentation also outlined the sometimes unusual research journey that took place – and provided the audience with an opportunity to critically examine and discuss the findings and recommendations.</p>

Session title	Enhancing employability in North Africa – ILO policies, tools and approaches
Speaker	Christine Hofmann, Skills Development Specialist, International Labour Organisation
Moderator	Eric Lawrie, Regional Director English MENA, British Council
Session Abstract and topics	<p>The presentation started with an outline of the ILO mandate and strategies in the region and focused on ILO policies, available tools and methodologies and how they have been applied under different technical cooperation projects in the region. Approaches range from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of skills needs for trade and economic diversification,</li> <li>• Upgrading of informal apprenticeship,</li> <li>• Strengthening career guidance and public employment offices,</li> <li>• Introducing innovative active labour market policies such as Job Clubs.</li> <li>• Skills anticipation</li> <li>• Improving access to skills development for disadvantaged groups</li> <li>• Entrepreneurship</li> </ul> <p>Some of the lessons learnt and ways forward discussed included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the meaningful participation of social partners in shaping up the skills development agenda, and in implementing skills development programmes</li> <li>• Institutional capacity building is paramount for proper implementation and sustainability</li> <li>• Shape up the incentives framework around skills development systems</li> <li>• Improve skills anticipation to strengthen the market relevance of training programmes</li> <li>• NGOs and other community organizations are crucial partners but need to be part of a system of service delivery</li> <li>• Weak coordination leads to loss in effectiveness and efficiency of implementation</li> <li>• We need more and better partnerships</li> </ul>
Session title	English language and Employment: Evidence from Job Ads in Jordan
Speaker	Jihad Hamdan, Education Programme, UNRWA, Jordan
Moderator	Robin Rickard, Director Jordan and Levant Cluster Lead, British Council
Session Abstract and topics	<p>The presentation explored the status of English as reflected in newspaper job advertisements (ads) in Jordan over a period of two decades. The study shows a steady increase in the percentage of English ads paralleled with a steady decrease in the percentage of Arabic ads.</p> <p>Further, the results indicate a significant increase in the percentage of ads (English and Arabic alike) that tend to precondition employment with English proficiency. Moreover, the rank of vacancy type demanding proficiency in English has changed over time. In 1985, secretarial jobs (e.g. secretary, receptionist and clerk) were in the lead, followed by administrative and engineering jobs. However, the picture has changed. More recent figures show that administrative, computer and sales vacancies have started to top the list.</p> <p>In conclusion, it was confirmed that English has become a fact of life in the Jordanian labour market.</p>

Session title	Entrepreneurial Learning Community (ELC) in Libya
Speaker	Dr. Mokhtar Jwaili, Chairman National Board for Technical and Vocational Education, Libya
Moderator	John Knagg, Senior Adviser English Language Teaching, British Council
Session Abstract and topics	<p>The presentation started by an overview of the role of entrepreneurial learning (EL) in enhancing the culture of entrepreneurship and how small and medium-sized enterprises have created a positive impact in countries that encourage EL such as Tunisia, Algeria and Jordan. The population segment most affected by unemployment is the youth 15-24 age group representing about 49 per cent of the unemployed. There are several problems hindering the education system in general and TVET education in particular in Libya, which include poor infrastructure, low quality of provision, weak links with enterprises and related industries, lack of coordination between different educational entities. As part of restructuring the education sector to become proactive in analysing and responding to developments in the labour market, a new initiative has been introduced - Entrepreneurial Learning Community (ELC) - which provides a real opportunity to shift from government provided jobs to self employment, entrepreneurship and the creation of small and medium-sized enterprises. The main aim of the initiative is to encourage, promote and sustain long term entrepreneurial engagement (collaboration) among all stakeholders in the education system including educational providers from kindergarten up to postgraduate level with their communities, industry partners (private and public) government representative and international education related organisation, which will lead to creating an entrepreneurial learning implementing plan (strategy).</p>
Session title	Soft Skills: Cross matching Education and Employment Needs in Lebanon
Speaker	Oussama Ghneim, Head of TVET Department- Centre for Educational Research and Development, Lebanon
Moderator	James Hampson, Deputy Director, British Council Egypt
Session Abstract and topics	<p>The presentation was structured around five main areas:</p> <p>Part 1: What do enterprises need from their employees? Enterprises need skilled employees who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can do the required job with all its aspects (HARD SKILLS)</li> <li>- Have good attitudes: loyalty, safety, saving: energy, time, materials, places (SOFT SKILLS)</li> </ul> <p>However it was discussed that enterprises mainly focus on "Hard skills" related directly to the implementation/execution of the job. The hard skills are most closely scrutinised when a job seeker applies for a job.</p> <p>Part 2: What is the school's role? As defined in most countries, Education has to prepare good citizens with the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Certain level of knowledge and core subjects (science, maths, languages, history.)</li> <li>-Innovative and able to solve problems that he/she could face,</li> <li>-Aware of his/her rights and duties,</li> <li>-Able to work and contribute to the wellbeing of the society</li> </ul> <p>Part 3: What are schools doing? In order to respond to the market needs, schools, specifically in the TVET sector, are focusing more on hard skills. They aim to meet the needs of business.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Enterprises have to move faster to satisfy the needs of society, so the skills required are constantly changing.</li> <li>-School structure is not flexible. It is not able to change in parallel with the changes in the market. Furthermore, it cannot teach for an "unknown" future.</li> </ul> <p>Part 4: What is missing in our education? -Soft Skills are missing -Schools are not delivering adequately the main objectives of education: such as citizenship, culture, literacy (science, languages, maths), entrepreneurship skills, -Innovation, awareness about rights and duties, loyalty, etc....</p> <p>Part 5: What do schools have to do? School must focus more on the soft skills at least in the following three areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Communication: (Languages)</li> <li>-Entrepreneurship (leadership, management, financial literacy)</li> <li>-Quality (Decent work, laws, regulations, Environment, ISO).</li> </ul>

Session title	Labour Market Characteristics in Lebanon: Structural Challenges Hindering Youth Employability
Speaker	Kamal Hamdan, Executive Director, Consultation and Research Institute (CRI), Lebanon
Moderator	James Hampson, Deputy Director, British Council Egypt
Session Abstract and topics	<p>The presentation highlighted the labour market characteristics in Lebanon and focused on analysing the profile of the labour force in correlation with the economic policies and growth trends.</p> <p>It discussed the importance of understanding the consequences of a free and open market, highly relying on consumption and imports, and has a growing share of services and trade sectors on the expense of a low value added industry and agriculture. The presentation also highlighted the predominance of micro and small types of enterprises in Lebanon, and the significance of the informal economy, and how it limits job creation opportunities, increases unemployment rates and strengthens migration trends and all the associated employment and training challenges.</p> <p>In light of these structural challenges, the presentation illustrated the main characteristics of the labour force; through addressing economic activity rates and labour participation, employment by sector, work status, occupation, and the profile of the unemployed. It also presented other social aspects related to employability, such as income of employed and salaried workers, high poverty rates and the lack of proper social safety nets.</p> <p>Finally, the presentation tackled the main characteristics of labour market supply and demand.</p>
Session title	English – Foreign Language or 21st Century Skill? Problems and Solutions
Speaker	John Knagg, Senior Adviser English Language Teaching, British Council
Moderator	Mirna Sabbagh, Director Programmes and Partnerships, British Council Lebanon
Session Abstract and topics	<p>This presentation looked at the position of English in the world and in national education systems, and at its status as a foreign language or a 21st century skill. It then addressed the response of governments and societies worldwide to the growing demand for English within the education system at all levels and also within the world of work.</p> <p>The presenter gave examples of innovative projects designed to develop English skills in different contexts, and draw out some principles to be applied in the development of English improvement within wider educational reform programmes. These included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on the selection and initial as well as in-service training of teachers. They are the most important aspect especially as there are shortages in quality and quantity all over the world;</li> <li>• Autonomy of schools and decentralisation</li> <li>• Encouraging the learning of English outside the classroom for young children</li> <li>• Start learning English at an early age</li> <li>• Harnessing technology in teaching English</li> <li>• Understanding the economic benefits of English as a global 21st century skill</li> </ul>

Session title	Changing the perception of vocational education
Speaker	Matthew Anderson, Executive Director TVET-UK
Moderator	Ahmed El-Ashmawi, Symposium Facilitator, British Council
Session Abstract and topics	<p>The negative image of TVET and thus the low status of all involved in the process, institutes, teachers and students are a common challenge and important problem to be addressed.</p> <p>The presentation highlighted the importance of technical education for our society but is it our first choice for us or our kids? It explored some eye-opening realities and clarified that this is not just a government problem it is everyone's problem and we all have a role in addressing the issue.</p> <p>Vocational training is often seen as a second class education and it is hard to attract young people of the right caliber hence the results of the system are often not valued by employers. Anderson looked at the key drivers in raising the profile and acceptability of vocational education across MENA and globally by highlighting the following roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government – systems, rules, flexibility</li> <li>• The infrastructure – learning environment, facilities</li> <li>• Employers – engagement in the process</li> <li>• The youth – their role in their own future and attitude to it</li> </ul>
Session title	Towards a new learning model: Learning English Online
Speaker	Prof. Hanan Bennoudi, Associate Professor at Ibn Zohr University and Head of English Department at Universiapolis University, Morocco
Moderator	Dr. Elizabeth Erling, Open University, UK
Session Abstract and topics	<p>Recently, Ibn Zohr and Universiapolis Universities in Morocco have adopted a new learning model for teaching English using British Council Learn English Pathways platform and the APTIS test. This has resulted in language level improvement despite the difficulties and the challenges faced. The presentation outlined the work conducted as a part of this new learning model and highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ibn Zohr University chose to use the platform as a complementary course to improve its students skills in most of its institutions (The Business School, the Faculty of Humanities, the School of Technology). More than 1,200 students registered for the online courses as a new, modern, easy and comfortable tool to improve their English ;</li> <li>• Universiapolis University focused on using LearnEnglish Pathways resources and face to face interaction to enhance reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. More than 1,000 students registered for the courses including students from the Business School (ISIAM), the Tourism School, the Communication &amp; Human Sciences School and the Engineering School ;</li> <li>• No change and no innovation happens out of context. Both universities have taken this challenging decisive action and piloted the LEP project with British Council in Morocco because there is a national context.</li> <li>• Morocco, like many other countries in the region is witnessing the birth of many innovative projects in different domains. In education, the ministry of education launched the English Baccalaureat in September 2014. This is a major change in the strategy of Moroccan education because English will be used as a medium of instruction in subjects like Maths, Physics and Earth &amp; Life Sciences (SVT).</li> <li>• In addition the Minister of Higher Education declared in an interview that researchers, PhD applicants and University teachers must have a good level in English because all scientific research and publication is carried out in English. To quote Mr. Daoudi 'No one who does not master the English language is illiterate'</li> <li>• This shows the desire to increase the English speaking capacity of the country and better equip the future workforce in priority areas of the Moroccan economy like Tourism, Fishing, Renewable Energies...etc</li> </ul>

Session title	Mapping Skills and Competencies for Effective Workplaces.
Speaker	Zeinab Abdel Razak, Head, International Cooperation and Donor Projects Unit The Egyptian Banking Institute, Egypt
Moderator	Riham Botrous, Programmes Manager, British Council Egypt
Session Abstract and topics	<p>The presentation highlighted how in a number of countries new entrants to the labour market as well as specific positions require certifications that allow them to perform their jobs efficiently and effectively with regular checks on the validity of their certificates. Similarly National Qualification Frameworks (NQF) and/or Minimum Competency Requirement (MCR) are required to provide guidance and assurance.</p> <p>These mandatory certification procedures as well as NQF/ MCR should be considered seriously by regulators to act as a monitoring body for different sectors. The Framework could be used for recruitment, selection, succession planning, compensation and rewards. The Framework will assist professional institutions in aligning their curricula to meet industry needs in developing skills and to ensure that there is a steady supply of quality professionals in both existing and new growth areas.</p> <p>Also it will enable mapping of skills competencies against international institutions to ensure required globalisation and standardisation. The development of skills and competencies should be part of a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) approach, to confirm that employees will remain competent and updated in their knowledge and skills and that they are committed to a philosophy of life-long learning.</p> <p>This should add value by linking learning directly to practice, helping individuals keep their skills up to date, and preparing them for greater responsibilities. This can boost confidence, strengthen professional credibility, and accordingly align with international requirements while responding to local needs.</p> <p>Information was given about what the Egyptian Banking Institute is doing to foster the above.</p>
Session title	Bridging the Gap Between Public Education and the Private Sector: Challenges and Lessons Learned
Speaker	Farah Osman, Operations Manager, Education for Employment Foundation Egypt
Moderator	Eric Lawrie, Regional Director English MENA, British Council
Session Abstract and topics	<p>The presentation explained that youth unemployment could only be remedied through public-private partnerships that seek to bridge the gap between public education and the needs of the private sector. This is most successful when training programmes are market-driven, youth are encouraged to be accountable and engaged, and the private sector is both financially and strategically invested.</p> <p>The presentation addressed the challenges and lessons learned that Education For Employment Egypt (EFE Egypt) has gained in its six-year history of providing market-driven training and job placement to Egypt's unemployed and marginalised youth. Some of the key lessons learnt included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapt value proposition in response to the market</li> <li>• Secure corporate buy-in at through dedicated corporate engagement staff, with engagement at every stage</li> <li>• Focus on positioning and competition to ensure stakeholder commitment</li> <li>• Utilize creative and varied messaging to different stakeholders</li> <li>• Balance horizontal competencies with highly-tailored vertical competencies</li> <li>• Leverage partnerships to engage stakeholders (e.g. government, NGOs, training centres)</li> <li>• Streamline operations and harness online potential</li> <li>• Bring the workplace to the classroom, and the classroom to the workplace</li> </ul>

Session title	The role of local authorities in supporting skills development in Egypt
Speaker	Dr. Nihal El Megharbel, Advisor to Minister of Planning, Egypt
Moderator	Martin Rose, Consultant MENA, British Council
Session Abstract and topics	<p>The presentation started with defining the problem of unemployment in Egypt which was a result of the following key challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diminishing economic activities since 2011,</li> <li>• Unclear and conflicting legislation for promoting small and medium enterprises,</li> <li>• A growing and unregulated informal economy,</li> <li>• Weak performing education and TVET system that does not supply the skills needed by the labour market,</li> <li>• Underdeveloped programmes that facilitate the transition from school to work and</li> <li>• Inefficient labour market policies.</li> </ul> <p>The presentation then focused on the Government's intended policies to address the following three issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- The role of skills development in combating unemployment in Egypt</li> <li>2- The role of local authorities in supporting the skills development system</li> <li>3- Developing an institutional framework for skills development in Egypt</li> </ol>
Session title	The Triple Helix Model: Government, Industry and Education between success and failure
Speaker	Amany Moemen, Chairman's HR Counsellor Industrial Development Authority (IDA), Ministry of Industry Trade and Small and Medium Enterprises, Egypt
Moderator	John Simpson, Senior Advisor English for Education Systems - Sub-Saharan Africa, British Council
Session Abstract and topics	<p>The presentation highlighted how we live in an ever-changing world, constantly surrounded by overwhelming changes and challenges, a world in which we can no longer go on without having a clear answer to critical questions: How do we want our future to be? What do we need to do to realise it? We look forward to a future in which higher income, sufficient employment, and better global opportunities are realities. This however, needs from us to seriously rethink the present and to reconsider our performance with the aim at faster growth and a better utilisation of our real capabilities. In Egypt the "youth bulge" needs to be addressed. It represents a big window of opportunity that should be utilised before it is gone. The potential of youth as a source of economic growth and alleviating poverty is huge, assuming given they acquire the right skills. Unfortunately little progress has been shown in this area to date</p> <p>In this presentation The Triple Helix Model in Egypt: Government, Industry and Education was presented and the role of each of them in bridging the gap between the demand and supply of a qualified skillful labour force. The presentation concluded with the following recommendations for empowering the skills agenda in Egypt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of an accurate labour market intelligence system that maintains current and future employer needs and paves the path for setting informed skills strategies.</li> <li>• Setting SMART National TVET objectives, aligned with relevant national development strategies.</li> <li>• Placement of national legal frameworks aiming at accountable, transparent governance of TVET systems.</li> <li>• Improvement and intensifying focus of TVET provision towards guaranteeing employment opportunities, promoting perception of skills, and fulfillment of employer requirements.</li> <li>• Establishment of national accreditation and certification systems for delivery of employer-recognised vocational qualifications.</li> </ul>

Session title	Internal and external employability perspectives among youth in the Arab world
Speaker	Prof. Ghada El Kot, Professor in Human Resources and Organisational Behaviour Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, Egypt
Moderator	David Vale, Freelance Researcher, UK
Session Abstract and topics	<p>The main idea of the presentation focused on the employability and the main factors affecting it either internally and externally. Factors such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal and informal career management practices,</li> <li>• Effective Training,</li> <li>• Job experiences,</li> <li>• Education and tenure in current jobs was considered.</li> </ul> <p>The presentation then gave an overview of the situation of youth in the Arab world with the challenges and opportunities presented. Attention was also given to the importance of the interaction between education and labour market needs and how to prepare young people to fit into the market with the right skills and knowledge needed for the job.</p>
Session title	Social Entrepreneurship: An Alternative Strategy for Youth Civic Engagement and Economic Inclusion
Speaker	Gilbert Doumit, Managing Partner of Beyond Reform & Development, Lebanon
Moderator	Claire de Braekeleer, Director Partnerships, British Council Egypt
Session Abstract and topics	<p>The presentation explored how social entrepreneurship is a stabilising force for youth during periods of political transition in the MENA region. More and more, in the wake of collapsing states and hesitant private investors, young entrepreneurs in the region engineer ways to solve their local problems related to the environment, water, education, agriculture, health, and human rights. This recent phenomenon not only fills the political vacuum, but it also reintegrates youth on the periphery and gives them a stake in the economic prosperity of the country.</p> <p>While the rise of entrepreneurial youth is remarkable, it does not remove the responsibility of governmental and non-governmental organisations. There are three ways actors can encourage entrepreneurial activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate social entrepreneurship into formal and informal education;</li> <li>• Build the capacity of civil society to provide quality support to young entrepreneurs;</li> <li>• Give access to low-interest financing mechanisms for young entrepreneurs.</li> </ul> <p>The presenter argued that by promoting social entrepreneurship, we are not only reducing youth unemployment, but we are at the same time tackling chronic social issues. Bottom-up solutions, such as social entrepreneurship, directly empower the youth and help restore their faith in the political system.</p>

Session title	Connecting the Dots: Qualifications for Employability
Speaker	David Crowther, Director of International Products and Global Partnerships, Pearson, UK
Moderator	Philip Rylah, Director, Examinations, MENA, British Council
Session Abstract and topics	<p>The presentation specifically addressed the themes of the symposium, focusing on the policy and implementation dimensions of connecting supply and demand factors to enhance opportunities for young people. The presentation began with highlighting the global phenomena of youth unemployment and how qualifications benefits all stakeholders; governments, providers, employers and learners.</p> <p>The presenter covered the following topics;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The key role of qualifications and certification in connecting supply and demand, and therefore enhancing opportunities for young people</li> <li>2) Posing questions: are qualifications delivering this in the Arab world? What do we need to do more effectively to open up opportunities for young people, and prepare them for the world of work?</li> <li>3) A vision - for qualifications which are localised and reflect the real needs of employers; but which are matched to international frameworks, standards and levels. That embeds employability skills as well as knowledge. And that are therefore relevant, reliable and portable.</li> <li>4) How do we deliver more relevant qualifications? Qualification design, embedding employability skills, stakeholder engagement</li> <li>5) The challenges – gaining deeper engagement from stakeholders?</li> <li>6) Some case studies of how Pearson has done this in the Arab world with case studies from UAE and Egypt.</li> </ol> <p>The presentation concluded with the following key messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocational education is an ecosystem; to deliver this value, collaboration between all stakeholders is essential</li> <li>• Qualifications and certification have a central role to play in bringing together the stakeholders to develop programmes that deliver real value and career success for learners</li> <li>• Qualifications must reflect both international standards to be credible, but equally must reflect local context and local economic and social priorities</li> <li>• Qualifications must balance the focus between knowledge, skills and behaviour</li> </ul>
Session title	Transforming the TVET sector in Iraq Kurdistan
Speaker	Yusuf Mustafa, General Director of Technical and Vocational Education - Ministry of Education, Kurdistan Government
Moderator	James Hampson, Deputy Director, British Council Egypt
Session Abstract and topics	<p>The presentation highlighted how we need to make TVET a relevant and valuable educational option for young people. There are several areas that need to be focused on in order to achieve this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defining and promoting TVET option as well as organising and regulating its provision;</li> <li>• Enhancing the contribution of the private sector so that employment needs are factored in to education skills provision;</li> <li>• Planning the supply of skills in the light of an understanding of future business needs;</li> <li>• Providing career guidance to young people in a way that is linked to opportunities;</li> <li>• Promoting TVET and encouraging students to follow TVET pathways;</li> <li>• Systematising TVET pathways and standards as part of a national strategy.</li> </ul>

Session title	Overview of young graduates employment opportunities in Tunisia
Speaker	Ismail Hadad, General Director of Technological Studies, Department of Partnership, Ministry of Higher Education, Tunisia
Moderator	Gail Campbell, Director Education MENA, British Council
Session Abstract and topics	<p>This presentation dealt with the issue of young graduates' unemployment evolution in Tunisia trying to draw a parallel with what is observed in most developed economies where unemployment is generally less prevalent among young graduates. This relationship is, however, contradicted by the Tunisian case where the paradox of young graduates' unemployment rate is about twice the global rate.</p> <p>To begin with, this phenomenon is taking significant proportions. The presentation started by giving an overview of the main characteristics of unemployment among university young graduates. In the second part, the presenter considered the issue of long-term structural unemployment. According to INS statistics, the general trend of unemployment among young graduates of higher education is increasing. The latter rose from 10.4 per cent in 2001 to 22.9 per cent in 2010, 12.5 points in a decade and the number of young graduates to fivefold, from 31,800 to 157,300 during the same period.</p> <p>Thus, we can identify two main types of problems that explain graduate unemployment in Tunisia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The existence of a real mismatch between the skills of young people and those needed by business.</li> <li>• The inability of the economy to create enough jobs to absorb the additional demand, in this context, and at the present time, an industrial strategy that incorporates the use of university graduates among its priorities is essential to cope with unemployment.</li> </ul>
Session title	Social Enterprise for Employability at the Extremes: a Gaza Case Study
Speaker	Marilyn Garson, Early Recovery, Business and Livelihoods Lead, Office of the Director of Operations, UNRWA, Gaza
Moderator	John Knagg, Senior Adviser English Language Teaching, British Council
Session Abstract and topics	<p>The talk started with the questions, "How much of employability is life experience, and how much is practice?" "How many highly employable adults will say that they acquired their marketplace skills in a classroom, and how many learned on the job?" "How do you become employable in settings where there are no part-time jobs for high schoolers?"</p> <p>Unemployment fuels unemployability. For young people whose work and lives differ from the assumptions of employability, original solutions are needed.</p> <p>Social enterprise designs the business around the challenge. It uses market income to fund social solutions. At the extremes, social enterprise lets us place the employment cart before the employability horse. In a learning workplace, people can be employed and then, with practice, become employable.</p> <p>To succeed in difficult places, social enterprise needs unexpected partnerships, like UNRWA's support of an IT-outsourcing enterprise – the Gaza Gateway – to address Gaza's 75% unemployment rate for IT graduates. UNRWA offered its own IT needs as seed projects, creating employment to create employability.</p> <p>Social investments and purpose-built solutions like these should be the rule, where conventional employability assumptions do not apply.</p>

# ANNEX 6

## FEEDBACK FROM DELEGATES

It was important for the British Council to get feedback from delegates about the event and whether it had met its objectives and if it was of benefit to them. This was done using scorecard questionnaires, and a number of delegates were invited to take part in in-depth recorded interviews to evaluate their perceptions of the Symposium. These interviews provided valuable qualitative feedback. Generally, the Symposium was evaluated as successful, of high quality and contained an excellent level of discussions, and the British Council was perceived as an important partner in the region in the field of English teaching, education, skills and employability. The following summaries the feedback received on the Cairo Symposium:

### Expectations before coming to the Symposium?

- Keen to learn about experiences from the region and the UK
- Importance and relevance of the topic of skills and employability
- Networking opportunities
- Opportunities for establishing partnerships
- Share own experiences
- Benefiting from a practical event.

### Positive feedback

- Most participants agreed that the event was of high quality
- The Symposium met most people's expectations
- Participants' knowledge was enhanced and they found at least one idea which has potential that they plan to investigate further in terms of its applicability to their own area of work

- Many interviewees were very impressed with the quality and variety of presentations and speakers. They felt the Symposium themes were well linked and complemented each other appropriately.
- Delegates agreed that the Symposium provided an excellent level of discussion that addressed the issues of youth employability, skills and opportunities in the Arab region
- Participants thought that the Symposium identified possible strategies to support improvements in skills development in the region
- Ample discussion time was dedicated to the topic of employer engagement.

### Feedback on areas for improvement

- Although participants were impressed with the variety of topics and speakers, they thought the number of parallel breakout sessions did not allow participants to attend sufficient of the sessions. Some sessions had small audiences, the programme days were too long and time management was affected by this structure
- More participants from the employer side should be present and invited on more panel discussions
- There was no youth representation from the region and their participation in future may enhance discussions
- It was not clear from the start regarding the Symposium outcomes in terms of collective actions and roadmaps for development at the regional level, and
- There was not enough representation from the Gulf countries.

