

The establishment of a National TVET Authority will pave the way for more focused, quality skilled labour, which will in the long run make Egypt's industries more competitive

Labour for the Market

Egypt Network for Integrated Development

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Abstract

The establishment of a National TVET Authority will pave the way for more focused, quality skilled labour, which will in the long run make Egypt's industries more competitive.

The Need

According to the conservative estimates of the World Bank, unemployment in Egypt rose from 9.4% in 2009, to 13% in 2012. The job market is unable to absorb the more than 2.5 million university graduates or, the more than 1.5 million Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET) graduates.² In addition, Egypt placed 81st out of 133 countries in the 2010/2011 Global Competitiveness Index (GCI), dropping to 107th place in 2012/2013.³ While much of this is due to economic and political conditions, a large factor is due to the mismatch of skills and labour market needs created by an ineffective education system, and consequently underdeveloped marketable skills and industries.

The overall deficiencies in the education system and the subsequent impact on employment and income generation is reaching crucial heights in rural communities that are suffering tremendously under an economic burden, especially since the 2011 revolution. Approximately 57% of the population live in rural areas, 25% of them in rural Upper Egypt, and over 50% are unable to meet their basic needs.⁴ The economic conditions and ineffective education system consequently result in lower priority for general secondary education in rural areas. In 2011/2012, secondary education in rural areas accounted for 32% of the schools, 27% of the classrooms and 28% of students, in contrast to their urban counterparts, which accounted for 68%, 72% and 73% respectively.⁵

With a strong need to develop skilled worker capacities and increase employment, TVET is becoming more of a priority to the Egyptian government, and the Technical Education Strategy (2011/2012 – 2016-17) is a framework developed to achieve this. Currently, there are 1584 technical and vocational secondary schools, administered by the Ministry of Education, and 46 middle Technical Institutes or Technical colleges, administered by the Ministry of Higher Education. In addition to these two ministries, there are over twenty two other ministries and authorities involved in the delivery of TVET.⁶

TVET faces many of the challenges of the mainstream education system which include an outdated curriculum, low quality teachers and decrepit facilities. More critically, the main purpose of TVET, which is technical training, is missing as it is only applied through theoretical work in the classroom. Hands-on

¹ This policy brief is based on two papers, presented to the African Development Bank, *Analysis of Higher Education Policies Affecting Egyptian Rural Communities* by Mohsen Elhamdy Said and; *Analysis and Policy Recommendations for Better Access and Quality of Basic Education in Rural Upper Egypt* by Malak Zaalouk. The papers were developed as chapters in a series of papers on Social Policies Affecting Communities in Rural Upper Egypt for the Egypt Network for Integrated Development (ENID).

² World Bank. "Egypt: Workforce Development." SABER Country Report 2012.

³ Ibid

⁴ Elhamdy Said, Mohsen (2013), *Analysis of Higher Education Policies Affecting Egyptian Rural Communities*. Chapter in a series of papers on Social Policies Affecting Communities in Rural Upper Egypt for the Egypt Network for Integrated Development (ENID).

⁵ Ministry of Education (2013a), *Situation Analyses of the Secondary Level of Education in Egypt*, a report presented to the Strategic Planning Unit for 2013- 2018 at the Ministry of Education, Cairo.

⁶ Ministry of Education (2013b), *Situation Analyses of Technical and Vocational Education in Egypt*, a report presented to the Strategic Planning Unit for 2013- 2018 at the Ministry of Education, Cairo.

application of skills, or introduction of skills in sectors of industries is only available in 31 Dual System technical schools (2% of the total technical secondary schools), which were part of a Mubarak Kohl initiative.⁷ The governance system of TVET is extremely fragmented, and there is a major lack of coordination between stakeholders making accountability and monitoring very difficult. In addition, funding for TVET is mostly donor driven, and as a result any initiatives are usually implemented on a project level, as opposed to a wide reform. There are no quality assurance measures or standard accreditation methods for the training programs.⁸ There is a strong need for the alignment of all policies and governance structures of TVET that would lead the reform of this sector and introduce the necessary skills and training.

ENID Approach

ENID is advocating for the establishment of a National TVET Authority (NTA). Although there are several specialised Councils such as the Industrial Training Council, The Tourism Training Council and the Construction Training Council, as well as the Supreme Council of Human Resource Development; the establishment of a specialised NTA will bring into focus the educational as well as the vocational aspect of the training. It will also ensure that there is less fragmentation and minimise the number of agencies, directorates, and institutions currently administering TVET.

The TVET Authority would focus on all facets of education, training, and employment. The NTA would develop policies and an overall national framework for TVET development and quality assurance. It would also promote awareness of TVET in communities. In addition to providing theory and practice on education, and technical and vocational training, it would develop an effective testing/assessment of individual competencies through regular performance within an established workplace in a particular industry. Such regular assessment would not only evaluate student performances, and their ability to adapt to the workplace, it would also assess the quality of training programs the students are receiving.

The NTA would create private and public partnerships to develop innovative training programs, and increase the financial support to TVET. Moreover, the Authority would be responsible for accreditation and certification of TVET training programs. It would adapt its program focuses according to market needs, and local capacities. Ideally, it would focus on industry development by region. So the focus in rural Upper Egypt would be on agriculture, and in some governorates, on tourism. The NTA would coordinate very closely with the other specialised Councils to create skilled, capable workers.

Results

Several programs have been implemented for TVET reform. The Mubarak Kohl Initiative (MKI) is perhaps the most known reform program. It was a collaboration with the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ, now GIZ) and operated from 1994-2007. MKI aimed to establish partnerships between technical schools and employers to improve employability skills and facilitate the school to work transition. The selected schools were well equipped, the curricula updated, and teachers trained in

⁷ Ministry of Education (2011), Technical Education Strategy (2011/12-2016/17). Cairo, Egypt

⁸ Egyptian Observatory (2013), *Challenges Facing the Efforts to Develop TVET in Egypt*. <http://www.observatory.gov.eg>. Accessed May 20, 2013; Handoussa, Heba and Situation Analysis Taskforce (2010), *Situation Analysis: Key Development Challenges Facing Egypt*, Cairo and; UNESCO & UNEVOC., World TVET Database: Egypt. <http://www.unevoc.unesco.org>. Accessed December 2013.

a program parallel to the German Dual system, but adapted to Egyptian context. Students would spend 2 days a week in school and 4 days in a place of work, learning on the job, compared to their counterparts in technical secondary schools who would spend 6 days a week in a classroom.

In an evaluation study of the initiative, the employment benefits for MKI-DS graduates were found to be important. A survey conducted in 2002 showed that 86% of companies offered contracts to MKI graduates, 30% of the graduates were employed, 40% were pursuing further higher education, and 26% were looking for work. A sample survey of MKI graduates from the governorates of Sixth of October and Sohag showed that 85% had been offered employment at the time of graduation, 52.8% chose to accept employment and of those employed, 32.8% were working at the same factory where they had taken their training. Students in the MKI felt a real improvement in their skills and employment potential, estimating that they earned 20-30% more than their counterparts from technical secondary schools. They also felt that the structure of the program more readily prepared them for responsibility and work place relationships.⁹

The results of this project are important, because although it targeted a very small percentage of TVET students, it did highlight the positive impact of new curriculum development, decentralization and autonomy of operation in technical institutes, training and development of teaching staff, and solid public/private partnerships to provide training opportunities for students.

Policy Implications

To create educated, skilled labour that can be competitive on a national and international stage, there has to be quality technical and vocational training and practical application, coupled with good education. There has to be a shift from the current perception of TVET as low quality, second choice education to a perception that this is a contributing factor of human resource and economic development. This will only be achieved once there is proper quality assurance of all aspects of TVET, including its curriculum, training programs, staff, facilities and partners. To accomplish this, the National TVET Authority should have autonomy over its own administration, programs and curricula.

Legislative Level

The current governance system of TVET is fragmented at best. The NTA should be legislated to consolidate all the programs that are currently working on TVET reform. The Authority should coordinate with Ministries of Education and Higher Education but should have the autonomy to develop its own programs, with the understanding that curricula will be adapted as necessary, and projects and training programs developed based on labour demands and shifts in the economy.

Decentralization within the newly established Authority should also be built into its institutional framework. This goes beyond administrative directives for decentralisation. Policy has to clearly indicate that individual TVET institutions can make decisions regarding personnel, financial and personnel management, sectors of involvement, partnerships. This will certainly help to eradicate much of the ineffectiveness associated with central control over programs and institutions.

Policy dialogue needs to recognize the important role the informal employment and skills acquisition amongst informal sector workers. From young basic education dropouts to higher education graduates,

⁹ Adams, Arvil.V.(2010), *Mubarak Kohl Initiative Dual System in Egypt. An Assessment of its Impact on School to Work Transition*. http://www.urban-project.lviv.ua/php_uploads/data/articles/ArticleFiles_51.pdf . Accessed November 2013.

many find apprenticeship opportunities with skilled workers in the informal sector. Often they are not paid, or are paid very minimal wages in return for this learning opportunity. In addition to the fact that these workers are not fairly compensated for their work efforts, there is no certification of their acquired competencies, or any monitoring of the quality of training they receive.

Administrative Level

Curricula development has to be part of the overall reform program, not left to various individual initiatives. Teaching methods in TVET are still focused on rote memorisation and passive learning, and not providing the necessary market skills such as problem solving. Further the curriculum tends to be designed to promote very narrow specialisation in the sectors of training. The curriculum has to be addressed, as well as effective and innovative ways to enable graduates to become functional skilled workers. Focus on information technology (IT), a wider range of professional knowledge as well some business awareness would make graduates more flexible and is likely to expand their marketable skills.

The quality and type of teachers in TVET have to be reassessed. Due to the low pay, many of the skilled workers are unwilling to teach, leaving unqualified civil servants to fill the gap. Low quality teachers provide low quality instruction. This is further aggravated by the perception that TVET is low quality education provided to students who could not achieve the grades to go to mainstream secondary school. Professional development is not high on the agenda, neither is general interest in the students by most instructors.

There is no monitoring or quality assurance system in place that evaluates and measures accountability and transparency in TVET. Financing is based on an objective of expansion rather than performance outcomes. This has to be remedied with an effective monitoring and evaluation system which is developed and institutionalised with the establishment of NTA.

Public and private partnerships in TVET need to be properly consolidated. Efforts to include business and union representatives, civil society, and other private organisations in TVET governance have mostly led to the establishment of committees at the national level with government. In effect, these types of committees are ineffective because of a lack of operational responsibilities and accountability among the various stakeholders.

Social Level

Awareness campaigns on the importance of skilled labour and its contribution to the economy are paramount to the success of any TVET reform. Social attitudes mainly view TVET as dead end or the choice of those who have no choice. A mainstream Secondary School Diploma is seen as having more potential for continued study, and a way towards better employment and income. The aspects of a reformed TVET system have to be fully promoted, including the potential for employment with certification and competitiveness of the programs.

Recommendations

- A thorough review of all TVET reform programs to date has to be conducted and the lessons learnt compiled.
- A needs assessment of skills needed for the job market should be conducted, with a 10 year forecast. The results should then be used to adapt the TVET accordingly, to ensure that it covers the necessary knowledge, in theory, and in practice through industrial sector partnerships.

- A complete framework for the NAT has to be developed complete with M&E framework, methods of quality assurance, teacher training programs etc. This may seem a long term recommendation but much of the work has already been completed through the establishment of the other various specialized Councils, as well as through the various TVET reform programs. It just needs to be consolidated, adapted and developed into a functional institutional framework.

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