Internationalization of Higher Education in MENA: Policy Issues @ Skills Formation & Mobility

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1. Introduction

1. This policy issues note is focused on internationalization of higher education and the linkages and implications it has for skills mobility. Internationalization is one of the most important developments that globalization has brought to higher education worldwide. In the MENA region has turned into a quite complex undertaking. The Arab Spring has made it clear that young people in MENA are asking for more and better opportunities, opportunities to study and work, opportunities to move about the world, and opportunities to learn, to create new knowledge and new enterprises. Higher Education, migration and labor mobility are key policy area as MENA nations address the need for a strong skills base to underpin the economic and social development of the region's disparate economies. All three share an interest in the development, recognition and application of qualifications. All three share an interest in the quality of education and training and in the movement of people to get, provide and use education for their own well-being and for their nations benefit. This note is designed to be the base document for a policy dialogue between three sectors involved in the development of human capital: higher education, migration and labor mobility.

2. The MENA economies while at different points of development share an interest in the supply and demand of higher education. Some are investing heavily in higher education infrastructure, some are encouraging private investment and some are encouraging study abroad. Others are looking for strategic directions as secondary school participation is increasing and demand for further opportunities to learn is growing. Some countries are investing on attracting international students, while others are promoting their students to study abroad. All are faced with major challenges to meet high expectations from their young populations, and therefore are confronted with difficult financial and policy decisions about human capital.

3. The numbers of immigrants from MENA into OECD countries is larger than the numbers of international students going to Universities in MENA - which is understandable given the differences in the base populations. However, the size of the active skilled MENA workforce engaged outside the region underscores the importance of looking at the policy framework for student and skilled labor migration in a coherent and systematic way. The EC-Funded World Bank Program of International Migration in MENA conducted research on migration related topics and their impact on development and poverty alleviation, including the implications and impact on labor markets. (WB,2010)

4. This note seeks to frame a systematic policy discussion of internationalization of higher education and how it could help MENA countries to improve the quality and relevance of their higher education systems, and open opportunities for better skills development and help to improve high skilled labor migration. There are important interactions between the formation of skills and competencies, the acquisition of credentials and qualifications and where and how those skills are applied. This includes the quality of education, the ease with which credentials are recognized in different countries, the role of international partners and the incentives to study and work in the region and elsewhere. It brings some ideas and lessons from global good practice and points to experiences in the region which can be shared between countries at different levels of economic and socio-political development.

5. Cross-border higher education can have positive and negative impacts on the quality and relevance of national higher education. To maximize the benefits from any type of transnational education countries need good Quality Assurance (QA) mechanisms, including Certification and Accreditation procedures for cross-border education. Developing stronger Accreditation systems will link MENA institutions more closely with international standards as regional quality assurance systems tend to adopt common standards. In the case of MENA nations with significant numbers of skilled and educated

citizens living and working in other nations, accreditation may increase the likelihood of their credentials being recognized in the host nation. This will benefit the individual by increasing opportunities and reducing "under- employment." It will benefit the host nation by easing skill shortages and it will benefit the home nation by lifting higher education standards as local programs are calibrated with global qualifications requirements.

6. This note will explore how a regional approach to accreditation and recognition of qualifications could bring benefits and understanding of the complex interactions between student mobility, domestic higher education and the economic and social development priorities of the MENA countries. It will also provide evidence on the importance of setting goals for intra regional student mobility and for the student and faculty flows into the region through accreditation, student and faculty exchange, hiring incentives, research infrastructure including competitive research grants and a clear policy on the "export of educational services.

2. Context: Higher Education in MENA

7. There are over 6 million higher education students in the region, a 66% increase in the last ten years. And while the overall rate of growth is slowing there are a few nations like Syria and Morocco that have yet to face a "student surge" in demand and some like Algeria are in the middle of a move to mass higher education. Some countries in the region, such as Palestine and Libya have moved to universal higher education with participation rates at 50% or more. There are others such as Egypt, Tunisia, Lebanon and Jordan which have made enormous effort to increase enrolments and are facing high demand from increasing secondary education graduates. The growth in participation effectively democratizes higher education as it serves a broader cross section of society.

8. Part of the growth has come from government policies that promote rapid expansion and in some Gulf countries modernization and a renewed emphasis on skill development to underpin economic development and the creation of post-colonial states. Other key drivers of increased demand are demographic growth, a youth bulge in the population pyramid, expanded secondary school completion and increased participation for women in higher education in all countries, but particularly in the GCC countries, where 62% of enrolled students are female. There are more details on the coverage and scale of higher education in MENA in the companion paper on higher education financing in the region. While the economies of the region are evolving demand for university graduates is not growing in most countries. Higher education supply is concentrated in undergraduate programs, with few graduate programs. The Social Sciences and Humanities make up nearly half the available undergraduate places and just fewer than 25% are in Science and Engineering and Construction. To meet the needs of a knowledge based economy and to respond to national objectives for economic development more graduate programs and more diversity in fields of study are needed.

9. Some tertiary education systems in the region are responding through diversification the provision with new University programs, technical and professional degrees granted by polytechnic institutes, Community Colleges, and Open University programs. There is a wide interest in e-learning and distance education tertiary programs, and many countries have a goal of expanding private tertiary education provision. Financing expansion and differentiation of provision also brings some challenges and opportunities and these are dealt with in the companion paper on higher education financing in the region. But the expansion and diversification of higher education has not been paralleled by the development of quality assurance mechanisms that will maximize the benefit of greater investment and greater participation. This is a global problem as well as a regional issue because of the integration of the

region's economies with the rest of the world and because of the significant movement of people in the region and from the region to other labor and capital markets.

10. Two aspects of the higher education systems in the region warrant specific comments are student mobility and cross national provision. Both are the products of, and contributors to, the wave of globalization that has been underway since the 1980s. Globalization is essentially the easier and faster movement of capital in all its forms, human, social, financial and intellectual across national, economic and cultural borders. In recent years it has fostered the growth of global industry in the trade of educational services and increased the importance of migration and the movement of skilled individuals between economies. Cross-border tertiary education can take several forms, such as students (and teachers) travelling to study (teach) in foreign countries, educational institutions partnering with foreign institutions to offer joint educational programs or degrees, educational institutions operating campuses abroad, and educational courses being supplied across borders through e-learning or distance learning.

11. For certain countries which higher education systems do not have the capacity to meet the demand to develop their national economies, international higher education can bring positive effects. In general, cross-border higher education can bring benefits by the mere effect of mutual exchange of students, teachers and programs, and is increasingly being used worldwide for developing joint research and development programs. However, in order to benefit from any type of transnational education it is determinant to have good Quality Assurance (QA) mechanisms, including Certification and Accreditation procedures for cross-border education.

12. University partnerships (exclusively based on the principle of non-profit collaboration) are the traditional and probably most common forms of international mobility of higher education. This type of partnership often goes hand in hand with the mobility of students and academics. However, cross-border education of a commercial nature now plays an essential part in the Asia Pacific and now in the MENA region where it mostly takes the form of franchising and twinning .There are 40 branch campuses in MENA (35% of all Branch campuses worldwide). They vary in ownership, size, governance, financing, selectivity and academic offering.

2.1 Student Mobility

13. Student mobility has grown in the last twenty years. Currently, over three million higher education students study outside their own country. Of these, 230,000 (7.5%) are from MENA countries which also host over 134, 400 international students.

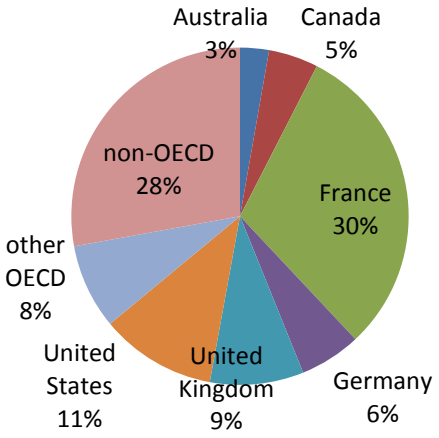
2.2 Outbound Mobility

14. Where MENA students go to study outside their countries are shaped by language, immigration policy, history, culture and perceived economic return. France is by far the main destination for MENA students. It hosts 30% of them, more than the other two main destinations, the United States (11%) and the United Kingdom (9%).

15. There are clear differences in the destinations of students from Middle East and North African countries. France is the largest, host to over two thirds of North African international students, but it is the fifth largest destination for students from the Middle East. The North African students are concentrated in France, Canada and Germany (80%) while students from the Middle East are more dispersed, studying in the United States (16.5% of them), Jordan (14%), the United Kingdom (13%), Saudi Arabia (11%) and France (8%).

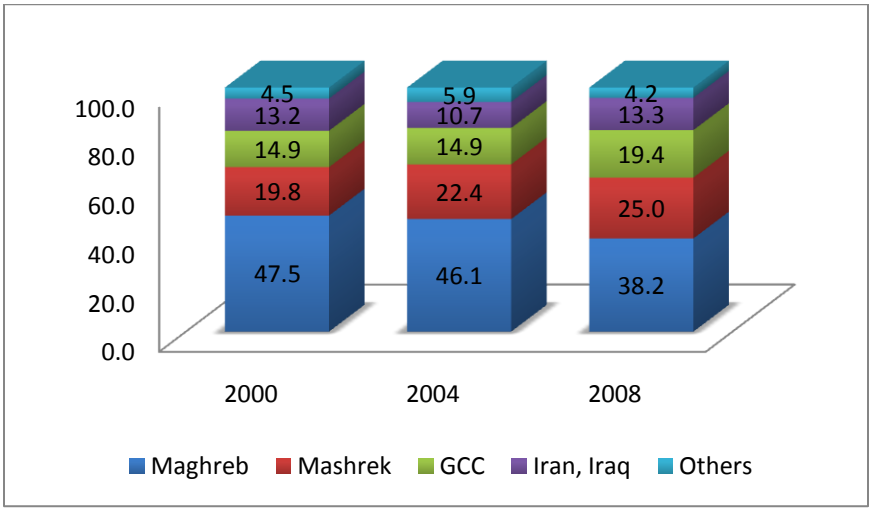
16. Notably 25% of the students from the Middle East study in other nations in the region. This creates a significant regional education market which seems to be growing in size and importance as the region's economies diversify and as countries in the Region develop internationalization strategies.

Figure 1: Distribution of MENA students studying abroad across major destination countries and regions (%) (2008)



17. Recruiting agents say the biggest areas of interest from MENA students are business studies, engineering and English as a Second Language but this may be skewed towards the US and Australian higher education sectors. (IDP 2010) Within the region the biggest cohorts of students come from Morocco, Iran, Algeria and Saudi Arabia who provide over 40% of all MENA student mobility. Egypt sends a relatively small number (8,700) or 0.4 % of its higher education students, less than Tunisia (17,900) 5 % of it's higher education students.

Figure 2: Changes in Sources of MENA Mobile students

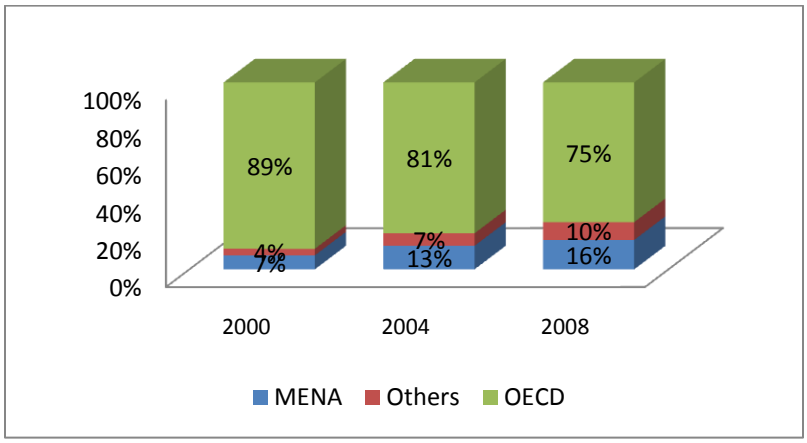


18. Although the Maghreb countries provided more than one third of all MENA students abroad (36.8% in 2008) this pattern has changed over the last ten years. In particular despite an absolute growth in the number of mobile students the proportion of students from the Maghreb fell by 10%. The change in composition came from the increased numbers of students from Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Jordan and especially from Saudi Arabia. In terms of percentages of higher education students, Qatar has 13% of its students abroad, followed by Morocco with 10%, and UAE and Oman with 7% each. For a detail breakdown of international students by country, see Annex 1.

2.3 Inbound Mobility

19. MENA is also a host region for international students: Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon are among the 30 top receiving countries in the world. Most of the international students movement is intra-regional, between MENA countries which is a product of cost, culture and language competence. Movement within the region increased between 1999 and 2007 at the expense of student mobility to North America and Western Europe. Overall, MENA countries host few students from the OECD nations, however the trend is changing as seen in figure 3.

Figure 3: Share of International students in MENA is increasing

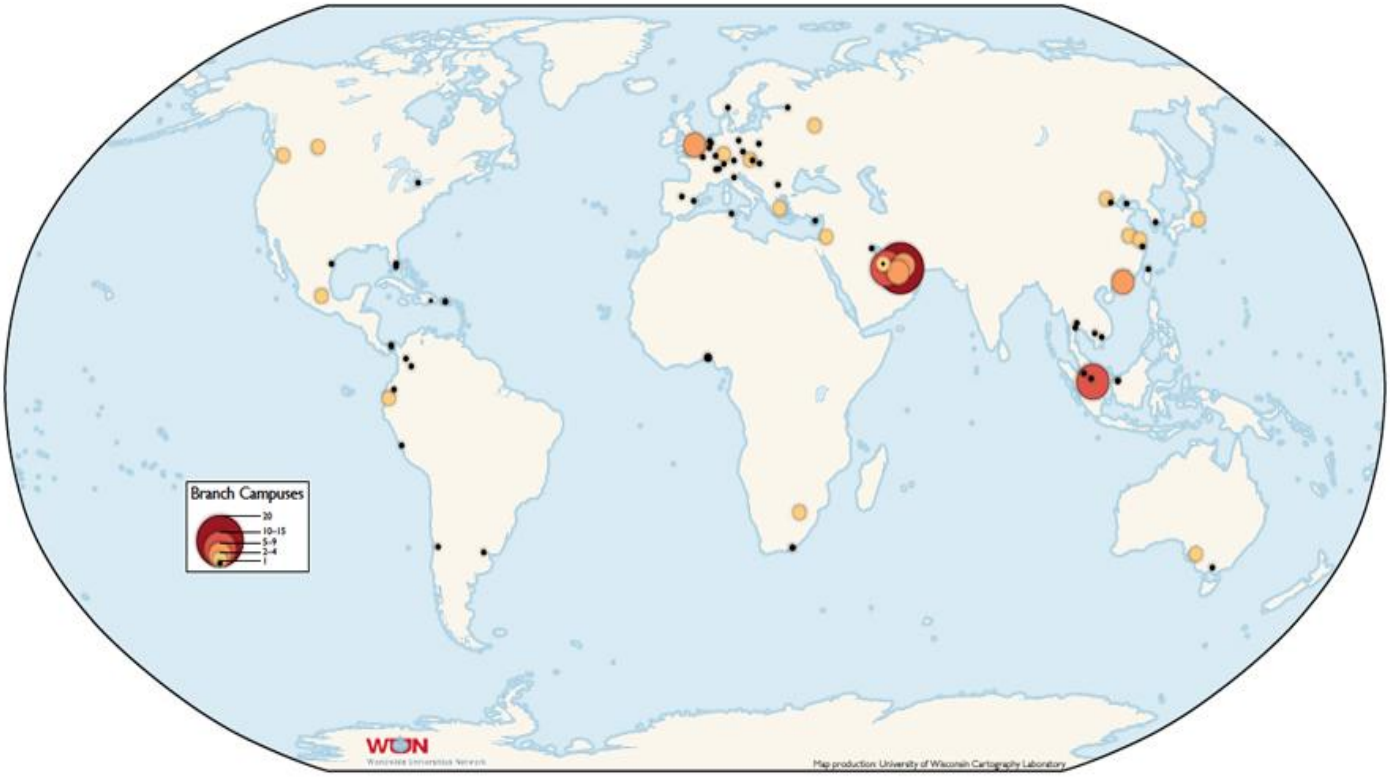


Source: UIS Data, Author's calculations

2.4 Cross National Education-Mobility of Programs and Institutions

20. One of the most distinctive features of higher education in the region is the large presence of foreign providers. The Middle East hosted 34% of all international branch campuses in 2009 according to the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, and more have open in the past two years.

21. There were approximately 160 foreign higher education campuses worldwide in 2009. (Verbik, 2009). Most opened in the past 15 years and many after 2000. Most are branches of US colleges but there are ten in the Emirates from India. Other countries with foreign campuses in the Region are Australia, the UK, Germany, Canada, France, Singapore, Russia, Iran and Pakistan. The map below shows the current distribution of branch campuses.



22. The United Arab Emirates has the most branch campuses – a quarter of all foreign branch campuses. The next strongest concentration in the region is Qatar with nine campuses and there are branches in Kuwait, Bahrain, Yemen Jordan and Tunisia. There are also institutions operated in partnership with foreign institutions in some other MENA countries. There are German universities in Egypt (German University of Cairo, opened in 2003 and operated by the universities of Ulm and Stuttgart), in Jordan, and in Oman. The French University of Cairo operates following a similar partnership model with the University of Paris-IX Dauphine, and there is a recent partnership of Paris-IX Dauphine in Tunis. There is also a French business school offering MBAs in Lebanon (ESA in Beirut) and Saint Joseph University of Beirut is one MENA institution with a branch campus, - the Law School in Abu-Dhabi. In Saudi Arabia, the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology has adopted yet another model: it has engaged world class universities to help design the curriculum of their programs and created a "Global Research Partnership" allowing its faculty and students to access to top researchers and top research facilities from four world-class research universities.

3. Movement of Labor, Skills and People

23. In addition to the movement of students there have been significant flows of people within the region, out of the region and into the region to seek employment, to enjoy personal and religious freedoms and to avoid violence, famine and persecution. One of the drivers of mobility has been the "pull" of growing economic opportunities in aging societies particularly in Europe.

24. This mobility is the continuation of previous waves of economic migration. In the 1960s, European countries were actively recruiting Maghreb workers, and in the 1970s the oil economies in the Gulf countries absorbed and until recently continued to absorb, large numbers of skilled and low-skilled

workers. For the region this has had positive and negative effects. On the positive side, remittances account between 5-20 percent of GNP in some countries, and jobs abroad represent 6 percent of total domestic (MENA) employment. But some people from MENA countries have ended up socially marginalized in poor living conditions, experiencing long periods of unemployment and underemployment and with substantial health and income risks.

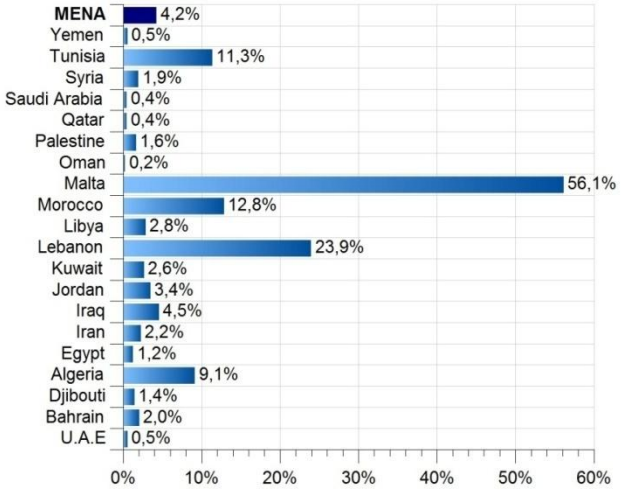
25. One assumption of managed migration has been the potential for better employment opportunities. In terms of the impact that migration can have on labor markets in MENA, a recent WB/EC report indicates that based on data from Egypt and Morocco the outcomes are modest at best. To analyze this impact it is important to look not only at the outflow of workers- and whether they succeed in finding jobs- but also in terms of the labor market decisions taken by those left behind, and in particular in households which receive remittances. In the case of Egypt there has been a positive impact seen mainly through the increase of females moving into unpaid family labor. For both Morocco and Egypt, remittances increase the probability of self-employment, predominantly low skilled, suggesting that remittances might be used as capital to develop informal activities, providing employment flexibility.

3.1 Sources, Destinations, Characteristics and Economic Activity of MENA Migrants

26. There are 5.3 million MENA youths and adults who are "migrants" in OECD countries. Most are from Morocco and Algeria (1.5 and 1.3 million respectively). The other large source nations are Iran, (600,000) Tunisia, (400,000) and Lebanon, Iraq and Egypt (300,000 each).

27. Overall MENA migrants are 4% of the Region's total active population. Some countries have very significant proportions of the active population living or working abroad: Malta is the most striking with some 56% of the active population outside the country. Other important 'exporters' of human capital are Lebanon (24%) and Morocco and Tunisia (both over 10%). Many of those who have migrated are well educated; up to 35 % of foreign born MENA migrants to OECD nations have higher education. But even they experience significant periods of unemployment.

Figure 4: OECD immigrant population, 15 years and older as a % of the total active population in the country of origin

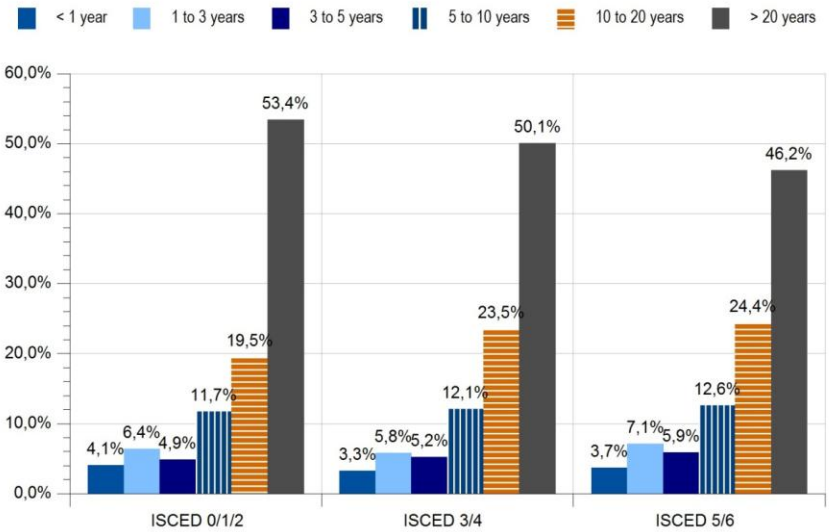


28. There are clear differences in terms of the profiles of migrants from the Maghreb, Egypt and the GCC. Migrants from the Maghreb tend to have lower levels of education, and their main destinations are France, Italy and Spain. Better educated migrants tend to immigrate to Eastern Europe, UK, the US and Canada- 50% or more of MENA immigrants in these countries had a tertiary education. The higher skilled MENA migrants tend to come from Egypt, Iran, Kuwait, Palestine, Qatar, Bahrain and Jordan where between 45 and 50% of migrants have post school educations. In contrast, less than 15% of the emigrants from Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Malta, have tertiary education.

29. The largest destination country is France with 2.3 million migrants, followed by the US with 800,000; Spain, Canada, Italy and Germany with 300,000 each. Other popular destinations are Australia, the U.K., Belgium, Sweden, and The Netherlands each with approximately 200,000. In terms of percentage of MENA migrants in relation to total migrant population in the destination countries, they account to 42% of all migrants in France, and are around 15% of the migrant population in Sweden, Spain, Italy, Germany and Belgium and only 2.6 % in the US.

30. On average, 55% of the migrants are men, most have completed education; 24% have tertiary education, 28 % have completed secondary and the balance have primary schooling or less. This is similar to the educational profile of the foreign born population in OECD countries. Most MENA migrants leaving their country of origin do so for long periods of time. Three quarters of the current stock of immigrants have been abroad for ten years or more and half of them for twenty years or more. This is true regardless of their education level (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Duration of stay and education level of the Population 15 years and older from MENA in OECD countries



31. Despite the length of stay and the relatively high levels of education many migrants are unemployed. The unemployment rate is almost three times the unemployment rate for the population in the recipient country, and it is higher for women than for men. Compared to all migrants the MENA migrant unemployment rate is higher, almost double at 20%. The inactive population- 57% of MENA born women is also higher compared to 50% of the native born and total foreign-born populations.

32. The more educated seem to be less affected by unemployment. Nine percent of those with tertiary education are unemployed, compared with 23% of those with primary, and 15% of those with secondary education. Some destination countries offer better opportunities for employment, such as the U.S. the Netherlands and Hungary, where unemployment rates are around 5-7%. Countries like Belgium, France, Turkey and Ireland have high unemployment rates, between 25-30%, and Finland, an outlier where 48% of the MENA migrants are unemployed. Migrants from Djibouti, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco have the highest unemployment rates, around 20%.

Figure 8: Unemployment Rate for MENA migrants 15 year and older in OECD countries by gender and level of education

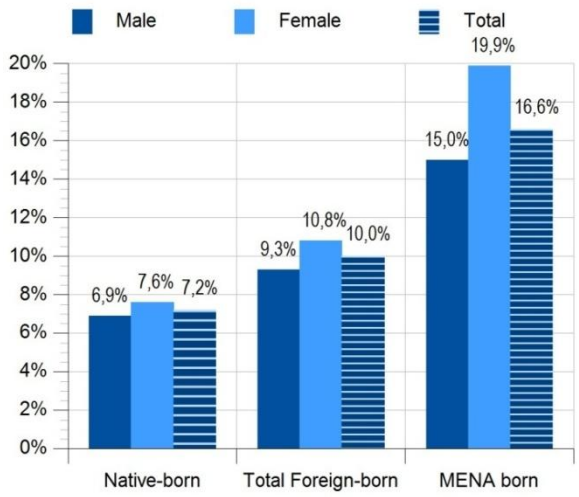


Figure 9: Comparison of unemployment rates between native born, total foreign born and MENA natives in OECD countries.

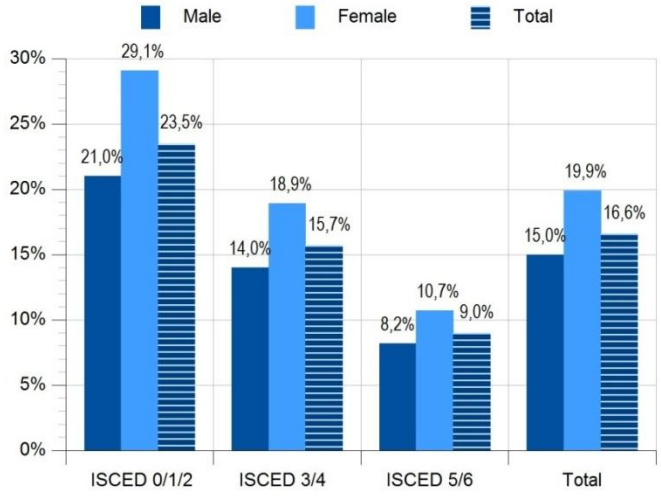


Figure 10: Unemployment rate for MENA migrants by country of destination

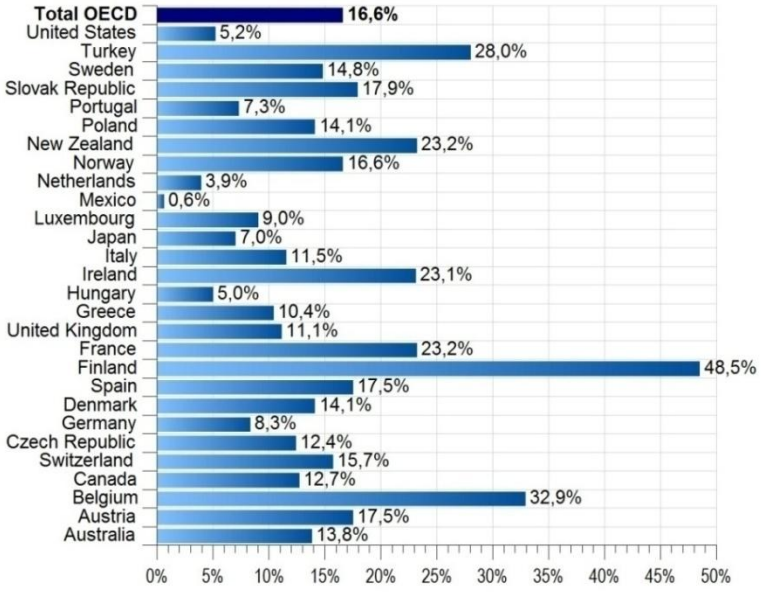
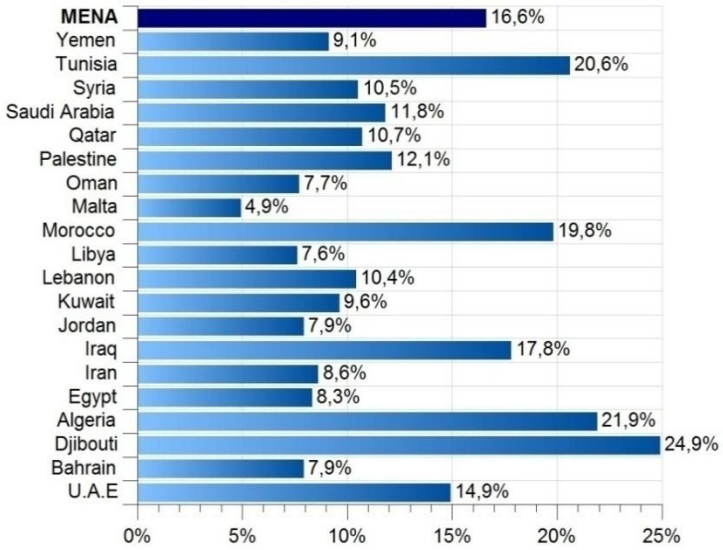


Figure 11: Unemployment rate for MENA migrants 15 years and older by country of origin.



33. These demographic patterns may change as older migrants retire from the labor market and become less attached to the host country. There may also be changes as larger numbers of international students graduate and stay for short or longer periods. Both trends will be shaped by local and global economic and social factors but both can be influenced by government policy on access to post student employment and residency visas and on portability of health benefits and social security. They can also be influenced by actions of governments on the countries of origin to attract skilled and successful scholars and researchers to return. A recent set of country case studies that include Tunis and Egypt concluded that returnees make a more positive economic impact when the skills they acquired are recognized at home, when they are attracted back rather than compelled to return and when they return after a period of time that is sufficient to accumulate capital and expertise that can be applied at home. (Sabadie etal 2010). All of these are amenable to policy action by governments and can be important elements in a nation's human development policy that includes a better pathway for the easy movement of skilled people between economies.

3.2 The Interaction of Mobility and Skill Formation

34. The numbers of immigrants from MENA is larger than the numbers of international students- which is understandable given the differences in the base populations but the size of the active skilled MENA workforce engaged outside the region underscores the importance of looking at the policy framework in a coherent and systematic way. There are important interactions between the formation of skills and competencies, the acquisition of credentials and qualifications and where and how those skills are applied. This includes the quality of education, the ease with which credentials are recognized in different countries, the role of international partners and the incentives to study and work in the region and elsewhere.

35. This is not an issue for MENA countries alone. The competition between countries to attract highly skilled workers has intensified in recent years, as reflected in the latest migration policy trends (OECD, 2005, World Bank 2011). OECD member countries increasingly promote cross-border student mobility as a way of attracting a skilled workforce and building or maintaining capacity for a knowledge-based society. It seems that students who study abroad remain there for quite some time. For example some 75% of Chinese who studied abroad between 1978 and 1999 had not returned to China any time soon after graduation. (Iguchi, 2003).

36. One of the "push" factors behind the outflow of students and migrants is the relative weakness of the local labor market. Economic growth in MENA countries has not been enough to absorb the increasing labor force. Excessive GDP volatility, the dominance of public sector employment, over dependence on oil revenues and low value-added products, and weak integration into the global economy has all depressed opportunities. This macro scenario coupled with mismatches between labor supply and demand, very slow school-to-work transition and low quality and relevance of post-basic education and training systems result in high rates of secondary school drop outs with, many entering the labour force with low basic skills. But despite their relative advantage in the labour market unemployment rates for university graduates are as high as 40% in some countries. *Higher education also increases aspiration and if local economies cannot offer educated people opportunities they are more likely to migrate to economies where their skills can be fruitfully applied. (Sabadie,et al 2010).*

37. Not withstanding the current limits of the local economies, the longer term economic and social futures of countries in the MENA region depend in part on a coherent strategy framework for education, skill development and labor mobility. One element in such a framework is cross border tertiary education,

the internationalization of tertiary education. Countries promote cross-border education because their economies and labor markets are globalized and to be competitive they promote internationally-competent workers with internationally recognized qualifications. (OECD; Bennell and Pierce, 2003; Peace Lenn and Campos, 1997).

38. Cross-border tertiary education can take several forms, such as students (and teachers) travelling to study (teach) in foreign countries, educational institutions partnering with foreign institutions to offer joint educational programmes or degrees, educational institutions operating campuses abroad, and educational courses being supplied across borders through e-learning or distance learning (Knight, 2003, 2005; OECD, 2004a). All forms of cross-border education can be delivered under a variety of contractual arrangements: development aid, not-for-profit partnerships, and trade (OECD, 2004a).

39. Another key driver for internationalization is demographic trends; many nations in MENA have large young populations and demand for higher education is increasing. Some nations face significant domestic constraints on public expenditure on education and struggle to provide a good quality higher education for increased numbers. Internationalization can be a cost-effective alternative to increased domestic provision, especially if it attracts foreign expertise and private capital.

40. As well as providing opportunities for skill formation and meeting domestic demand internationalization contributes to the efficiency of tertiary education systems in research- and by extension, to the national innovation capacity. (OECD 2008).

41. From the individual's perspective, increased opportunities to migrate make cross-border tertiary education attractive. Holding an internationally recognized qualification increases an individual's access to a wider range of economic and social communities.

4. Six Benefits of a MENA Framework for Cross-Border Higher Education

42. There are six significant advantages for countries in MENA from developing, adopting or refining their higher education and migration policies in a systemic and comprehensive manner.

4.1 Capturing Higher Education Revenue

43. International higher education students generate significant fiscal transfers between nations. They carry government and private scholarships, many are fully or partially self funded and thus carry private capital to other nations. The out flows may not be substantial but for recipient institutions foreign fee paying students are an important source of revenue for institutions, and as with any exporting industry it has important trade value. For instance in Australia it has become a key exporting sector with fees from international students amounting to 15% of total income of many public higher education institutions. In New Zealand they accounted for 13% of total revenue of all Higher education institutions in 2004. (OECD, 2008).

4.2 Wider Economic Impact

44. In addition to tuition revenue international students make a contribution to the wider economy. There is a substantial multiplier effect through expenditure on transport, housing, associated tourism and the like. The total impact can be significant in smaller economies. For example in New Zealand education has become the third largest export sector, with NZD 2.2 billion revenue in 2004(OECD,2004). And in the UK international higher education students generate 5.3 billion pounds in tuition fees and other spending in the local economy (UK Higher Education International Unit, 2010). Within the MENA region The Jordan 2020 Strategy, identified "Exporting Higher Education" as an area of potential job growth

and revenue generation. Countries like Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon that are already attracting considerable numbers of foreign students could develop internationalization strategies to increase their volume of international students.

4.3 Expanding access to tertiary education

45. Access to more university places and to a wider range of programs needs to increase for economic and social reasons. For most MENA countries, the expansion of tertiary education has been mainly at University level. There is a need to expand other forms of post-secondary education that can be more responsive to job markets and emerging technologies and which can act more quickly than conventional university programs.

46. Aspirations for post school education are also increasing and fuelling the need for greater access as economic development has increased the size of the middle class. In some cases, like in Egypt, local Universities are already over-crowded and are struggling to increase enrollments.

47. Cross border education can reduce the infrastructure cost to the State of increasing the supply of public places and be a cost effective way of diversifying the programs available to local students. It can also attract foreign direct investment and may attract domestic investment if the policy framework is amenable to private provision.

48. However the Financing of studies abroad can be a constraint. Countries interested in sending students abroad need to develop financing schemes favorable for students with high academic merit. To bridge inequity gaps that may occur from pursuing cross border tertiary education, means-tested scholarships and or loans have the potential to widen participation.

4.4 Increasing the variety and relevance of tertiary education

49. Increasing access and participation also increases the size of the cohort making the transition from education to work and that transition is stretched when the economy is weak and when alignment between education and work is poor. Cross-border education can offer students study opportunities that are more attuned to emerging needs in the labour market than those available in domestic institutions. The partnership and faculty exchange arrangements can also help domestic institutions adjust course offerings to become more relevant to the regional economy or national capacity development strategies. Countries with small tertiary education systems are able to emulate OECD countries such as Luxembourg or Iceland that have traditionally used cross-border mobility to complement domestic capacity.

50. Some countries have the overall capacity to meet all domestic student demand, but not necessarily in the fields of individual preference or in the fields most relevant for the country's economic development. This can lead to shortages in areas, like agriculture or engineering.

51. Cross border education can help to increase domestic educational capacity more rapidly than strategies that rely on local capital or local human resources which are often lacking or engaged in other sectors of the economy.

52. In a globalized economy with new skills constantly in demand, it can be very cost-efficient to develop cross-border education to profit from the newest technologies and programs available in developed countries. The employability abroad of MENA citizens is often constrained by skill level much as it is at home. Sound policies on internationalization of higher education could help MENA countries to improve the quality and relevance of their higher education systems, and open opportunities for better skills development and help to improve high skilled labor migration.

4.5 Improving the quality of tertiary education

53. Most MENA countries face problems meeting quality standards in domestic tertiary institutions. In particular many MENA countries do not have sufficient researchers and tertiary level faculty and some lack the financial resources to attract and retain the best academics or to provide competitive teaching and research facilities. Compared to those in developed countries, MENA higher education institutions are less engaged in international knowledge networks and generally have less experience and capacity to innovate. Cross-border education may offer a partial answer to these problems.

54. Expanding and improving the quality of the sector require a critical mass of high quality academics and researchers. When this is not available domestically, cross-border educational strategies can help. For example MENA faculty members and post-graduate students can study abroad to obtain higher-qualifications or develop their competencies before returning to the university sector in their home country. In addition, policies that address residency requirements, health insurance and academic research opportunities can attract foreign faculty.

55. Mexico for example, has used academic mobility strategies to improve the quality of its higher education. Between 1996 and 2002, the proportion of Mexican full-time academic staff with a degree more than doubled, from 30% to 65% through the 'Institutional Enhancement Integral Programme' (PIFI) aimed at recruiting higher qualified faculty, and study abroad opportunities especially at doctorate level.

56. Program and institution mobility can improve the quality of domestic educational provision. Foreign programs delivered at local institutions or foreign institutions operating in the country can offer students a better education or training than some domestic institutions. At their best, such programs link developing countries with cutting-edge knowledge and assist in training an effective workforce as well as faculty for the domestic system. Finally, partnerships or foreign programs may also help develop the infrastructure for more efficient teaching and research and ultimately create a more effective and cost-efficient organisation of the higher education institutions and sector.

4.6 Strengthening Research and Development

57. The international mobility of academics and students yields important benefits in terms of Research and Development, as it enhances knowledge flows, stimulates new ideas, develops cooperation for joint research and fosters innovation. Linkages between higher education institutions and other actors such as private firms and research centers help developing innovation systems. Attracting foreign researchers improves local capacity and develops research cooperation between institutions. Countries like Korea fund scholarships to under-graduate engineering students studying abroad to increase networking in technical fields and develop cooperation programs concerning latest technology. Countries like Australia, the US, Switzerland and the UK, actively seek international students to improve local research capacity.

58. While there are significant benefits from a more systematic approach to cross border higher education there are also some risks from adopting policies that open a valued cultural institution more widely. The most widely discussed risk is the loss of talent as the better educated move to more rewarding environments. It also attracts the most political attention because it is immediate, visible and tangible.

5. Managing the Risk of Talent Loss

59. Nations can "lose" talent regardless of cross border education. The global mobility of the highly skilled occurs as a result of factors as diverse as career strategies, war, and political, ethnic or religious persecution. But cross-border higher education is a powerful catalyst for long term movement. Globally, people studying outside their own country for advanced degrees, especially at the doctoral level tend to stay abroad. This is most evident in the USA where more than half of all foreign doctorate-holders, in science and engineering stayed for at least four or five years after graduation. (Finn, 2003). The mobility of highly skilled people is a complex policy issue with questions of freedom of movement and individual pursuit of opportunities as well as economic issues On the cost side, the sending country loses the human capital (and productivity) of highly skilled people, and, if their education was financed with public funds, the cost of the public investment in their primary, secondary and tertiary education. On the benefit side, highly skilled Diasporas contribute to the economy through investments, remittances and the links that foster trade, innovation and knowledge transfer.

60. Globally remittances to developing countries were valued at $325 billion in 2010 and are more than twice the value of official development aid (World Bank, 2011). The inflow of remittances to MENA was over $35 billion, a 6% growth in US $ terms in 2009. Lebanon ($8.4 billion) and Egypt ($7.7 billion) were the dominant recipients in the region. While there is no clear evidence that skilled Diasporas always contribute significantly to economic growth in the countries of origin (ILO, 2003) the scale of remittances and the size of the skilled Diaspora have encouraged increasing numbers of nations to engage their Diasporas as capacity builders.

61. The internationalization of labor markets sometimes leads to claims of "brain drain": the "emigration of skilled and professional personnel from developing countries to developed nations" (Miyagiwa, 1991). It is an old concept from the 1960s and one of its weaknesses is that shifts attention away from the underlying causes of movement of skilled people to the movement itself. Clemens (2009) argues that skilled professionals leave countries where living conditions are harsh, where training opportunities and working conditions are poor and where there is a lack of political stability. They are also attracted by salaries, career prospects, living conditions, and educational opportunities for themselves and their families.

62. The policy frameworks of higher education, immigration and labor intersect here. They share the constellation of push and pull factors that promote cross border mobility. The same factors that 'push' individuals to study overseas and the forces that 'pull' them are much the same as those attracting skilled and unskilled workers to labor markets in those countries. They include capacity constraints and bottlenecks in domestic provision, economic returns and wider opportunities.

63. What distinguishes cross border study is that it is seen as an enabler of population loss or "skill flows" (Clemens 2009) even when immigration was not the initial motivation to study abroad. Skill flow can be the result of incentives to lure international students to stay. The demand for skills in a knowledge-based economy and ageing populations lead governments to offer easier long term access to labor markets and residency.

64. Some nations, for example India have capitalized on their Diaspora beyond remittances by encouraging successful citizens to return and invest in the home economy.(Lee et al, 2006) They bring with them savings, skills, raised expectations and familiarity with well-functioning political, social and market institutions. China encourages students to return home through special financing to launch Science & Technology initiatives and business start ups. It also helps with children's education, housing and jobs for spouses. On a smaller scale Switzerland has mobilized its Diaspora through an online

network to promote scientific exchanges and by attracting scientists to return with fast track career opportunities.

65. Much of the concern about the loss of talent has focused on China and India where those studying abroad are less than 5% of the student population. Tunisia and Lebanon have 20% of tertiary enrollments abroad which increases potential skill loss both as a consequence of scale and because of the presence of communities of "like scholars" sharing cultures and traditions. There are also consequences for the domestic higher education sectors that are losing a slice of the pool of able students and the intellectual and fiscal resources they would attract or bring. McKenzie and Rapoport (2006) show that the prospect of large numbers emigrating from Mexico tended to diminish investment in education. Conversely and on a different scale, Chand and Clemens (2008) show that emigration of workers from Fiji increased investment in higher education in Fiji. It seems that where the likely destinations have skill based immigration policies demand for education at home and hence investment goes up. Given the proximity of MENA countries to Europe, and the demographic trends, there are many opportunities for skilled MENA migrants to join international labor markets. Clearly the critical factor is the quality and relevance of the skills that potential immigrants develop through tertiary education.

6. Maximizing Benefits through Stronger Quality Assurance

66. Cross-border higher education can have positive and negative impacts on improving quality and relevance of national higher education. Effective transparent Quality Assurance (QA) mechanisms, including Certification and Accreditation procedures for cross-border education will maximize the benefits for students, programs and or institutions and national systems as a whole. An important challenge for policymakers in MENA when introducing cross-border tertiary education is to assure quality assurance (QA) and institutional accreditation are in place. The growth in student mobility and program and institution mobility require transparent systems for recognition of institutions and qualifications. Both will strengthen accountability of higher education institutions. Developing stronger Accreditation systems will link MENA institutions more closely with international standards as regional quality assurance systems tend to adopt common standards. *Individuals also benefit if the processes for recognition of qualifications are easier to navigate and are fair, reliable and transparent. This is true regardless of location and regardless of where the skill was acquired.*

6.1 Who Benefits from Accreditation of Institutions and Programs?

67. Accreditation benefits students, parents, employers, the public, and the institutions and programs themselves. Students benefit because accreditation means that the knowledge and skills in their program of study are those necessary for professional practice or for graduation. It also helps them and their parents choose between institutions and invest prudently in programs of an acceptable quality.

68. Employers benefit because students from accredited programs are more likely to be able to have the skills and capabilities needed for specific roles. This makes recruitment easier and more reliable and reduces on the job training costs.

69. The general public as taxpayers and as users or consumers of services from educated people benefit because their taxes are used in reputable programs and because service providers such as doctors and accountants have reached a minimum standard.

70. Accreditation benefits institutions by encouraging self evaluation and by benchmarking that evaluation against recognized standards identifying areas for improvement. Combined these acts also enhance the reputation of the institution. Accredited institutions use their status and reputation to recruit and retain students and faculty. Their status will often give them access to government funds and grant competitions and help them attract private support.

71. Institutions can also use accreditation standards to monitor what they do and ensure they maintain or enhance quality. They can also use the standards and the accreditation process to illustrate to the public and the government that they are operating effectively and efficiently. It is a powerful form of accountability.

72. In the case of MENA nations with significant numbers of skilled and educated citizens living and working in other nations, accreditation may increase the likelihood of their credentials being recognized in the host nation. This will benefit the individual by increasing opportunities and reducing "under-employment." It will benefit the host nation by easing skill shortages and it will benefit the home nation by lifting higher education standards as local programs are calibrated with global qualifications requirements. These benefits flow to the general population in the form of better services and a more highly educated population.

Box No. 1 Functions of Accreditation

- Attests that an institution or program meets explicit and public standards;
- Helps students choose institutions and protects their interests;
- Guides the allocation and distribution of public resources;
- Stimulates a culture of self improvement and peer review to maintain and raise standards;
- Provides a basis for the transfer of credits between programs and institutions;
- Aligns programs with the requirements for professional certification and licensing;
- Establishes the standards or criteria for the regular review and revision of programs of study; and Informs the Accounts ;
- Involves the academic community evaluating and improving the work of the institution.

73. Quality assurance processes can also assist countries which decide to use cross-border tertiary education to build capacity to ensure that the foreign institutions and providers deliver robust programs in

line with national needs. In this respect, establishing transparent and clear quality assurance and accreditation frameworks for national and foreign institutions is vital.

74. National quality assurance (QA) systems monitor the quality of higher education within the country and delivery across borders and are essential for establishing institutional credibility. The lack of comprehensive frameworks for co-ordinating various initiatives across countries, together with the diversity and unevenness of quality assurance practices and organisation at the national level, generate gaps in the quality assurance of higher education provided across borders. This makes students and other stakeholders more vulnerable to low-quality provision. The issue is even more complex for online delivery across borders.

6.2 *Cross-national Q A*

75. Cross-border modes of delivery in higher education raise quality issues and require better systems of consumer protection (OECD, 2004b; OECD, 2005).Most national systems of quality assurance and accreditation focus on the quality of domestic programmes delivered by 'traditional' institutions. They are often grounded in national legal structures and codes of practice that are based on in person, same time provision. Agencies and governments need to learn about the different institutional models and systems of cross border delivery especially virtual education and the features that make them effective to ensure that local standards and assurance processes recognize and validate innovative practices.

6.3 Global Convergence of QA Standards and Processes

76. There are national and international initiatives to improve quality assurance, accreditation and recognition of qualifications of cross-border provision. An example is UNESCO/ OECD's "Quality provision in cross-border higher education" guidelines which aim to protect students against misleading information and low-quality provision and make qualifications readable, transparent and stronger in their international validity and portability. (www.oecd.org/edu/internationalisation/guidelines). These are 'non-binding' and need to be enforced through national and accreditation bodies, and by national regulations.

77. The European Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance (ESG) are a response to demands from governments, society, and higher education institutions for "mutually acceptable mechanisms for the evaluation, assurance and certification of quality" (EUA, 2001). The ESG were developed to be applicable to all quality assurance agencies in Europe, irrespective of structure, function and size.

78. To increase the value of the guidelines and to promote greater transparency the participants in The Bologna Process established a European Quality Assurance Register of quality assurance agencies to allow all stakeholders and the general public open access to objective information about trustworthy quality assurance agencies following the guidelines.

79. This could extend the reach of the guidelines past the European Higher Education Area and have a significant impact on the development of national systems of quality assurance. The question for MENA nations is whether to join in this convergence process or seek to improve comparability by different means. The choice is complicated by the presence of many US aligned branch campuses following accreditation processes that are less dependent on government actions and more closely grounded in peer review and self regulation.

6.4 The Particular Case of Branch Campuses

80. The array of transnational higher education arrangements in the region creates some confusion. There are branch campuses, academic partnerships, single discipline schools – like Cornell medical and the self styled New York University "portal." There are other variants; franchises, multiple school campuses, joint degrees, dual site and mixed mode programs. And there are many terms used to describe the different models. Creating a taxonomy of these models and studying the different incentives used to attract leading universities to the region are important research topics that go beyond the scope of this paper. In general the range of modalities found go from Partnerships- based on mutual agreements, to commercial terms such as joint ventures and franchises. As an illustration, below is a classification of the different types of agreements and examples from MENA and elsewhere. (Sashiko, unpublished)

Type of Partnership	Examples	Descriptions
Branch campuses of overseas universities (Agreement between the host government and overseas universities)	**Education City (Qatar)**	Education City is an educational district on the outskirts of Doha, and houses educational institutions including schools, research centers, university campuses, and an equestrian center. Education City's multi-institutional campus has branch campuses for United States universities, including Virginia Commonwealth University, offering a Bachelor of Fine Arts, Weill Cornell Medical College, offering 2 and 4 year medical programs, Texas A&M University, offering bachelors and masters degrees in science programs, Carnegie Mellon University, offering undergraduate degrees in business and technology, Georgetown University, offering a bachelor's degree in foreign service, and Northwestern University, offering degree programs in journalism and communication (http://education.theemiratesnetwork.com/zones/qatar_education_city.php).
Portal model	**New York Univ. Abu Dhabi**	NYU's agreement with the Emirate of Abu Dhabi to create NYU Abu Dhabi is the outcome of a shared understanding of the essential roles and challenges of higher education in the 21st century. http://nyuad.nyu.edu/about/index.html).
Joint Venture	**The Johns Hopkins Univ.-Nanjing Univ. Center for Chinese and American Studies (China)**	Established in 1986 (first university partnership with a foreign university in China). Chinese students study the US and the international system in English with American professors, while international students focus on contemporary China and are taught by Chinese professors in Mandarin. Additionally, with collaborative research projects, joint seminars and cross-registration opportunities, the center fosters a rich cross-cultural learning experience (http://www.nju.edu.cn/cps/site/njueweb/fg/index.php?id=12).
Academic partnerships	**Nazarbayev University (Kazakhstan)**	Each school within the University will have an international academic partner among the leading universities in the world with strong research, clinical and industrial base. Partners include University College London to set up the Foundation Program – First year of the undergraduate programs (basic education); Partners Harvard Medical International Inc. to set up the Medical School; Duke University to set up the Graduate School of Business; iCarnegie (affiliated with Carnegie Mellon) to set up the School of Natural Sciences; University of Wisconsin-Madison to set up the School of Social Sciences and Humanities; University of Pittsburgh Medical Center to set up the Center of Life Sciences; University of Pennsylvania to set up the Center for Education Policy; and Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (National University of Singapore) to set up the Graduate School of Public Policy (http://eng.nu.edu.kz/).
Double degree	**Nat'l Research**	The International College of Economics and Finance is an autonomous department within HSE, runs with the participation of the London School of Economics

programs	**Univ. Higher School of Economics (HSE) (Russia)**	(LSE), and offers a double degree from HSE and LSE for the BS program. The faculty of economics offers the MBA program with participation of Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam (Netherlands) (http://icef.hse.ru/en/About).
Collaboration	**Singapore-MIT Alliance (Singapore)**	An innovative engineering education and research collaboration among the National University of Singapore (NUS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). The three universities have combined their expertise and superior resources to create a distance learning environment at the forefront of current technology. In partnership with faculty from both MIT and Singapore, the program has been designed to offer students full access to every element of course delivery in both synchronous and asynchronous form: Students attend live course lectures between universities, may interact with professors through videoconferencing, and review all lectures and materials electronically (http://web.mit.edu/SMA/about/overview/index.htm).
Cross-registration	**Olin College (US)**	Mini-consortium with Babson College, Brandeis University, and Wellesley College to mutually recognize credits (http://star.olin.edu/StudentRecords.cfm#cross-registration)
University-non-University partnership	**China-Europe Int'l Business School (Shanghai)**	The leading China-based international business school, with all three programs ranked in the global Top 30 by the Financial Times. Not-for-profit joint venture established in 1994 under an agreement between the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation and the European Commission, signed by Shanghai Jiaotong University and the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD). EFMD is an international membership organization and Europe's largest network association in the field of management development, it has over 700 member organizations from academia, business, public service and consultancy in 82 countries (http://www.ceibs.edu/today/establishment/chinaeu/index.shtml).
The Erasmus Mundus - External Cooperation Windows	**European universities and third country HEIs**	Erasmum Mundus partnerships with third country HEIs are designed to foster institutional cooperation in the field of higher education between the European Union and Third-countries through a mobility scheme addressing student and academic exchanges for the purpose of studying, teaching, training and research (http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/results_compendia/selected_projects_action_2_en.php)

81. The main distinguishing feature is the extent of operational control over academic programs, standards and faculty that is held and exercised by the home institution. The tighter the control of student admissions and faculty recruitment and the closer the alignment of standards for selection the stronger the role of the home campus and the lesser opportunity for local variation. The portal model is clearly the most tightly aligned system with common standards in both locations. Partnerships and memoranda of understanding are much more loosely coupled- an expressed desire to work together. At both ends of the spectrum there are questions about how much control is exercised by the "home" institution and how much the operations of the local campus are shaped by the laws and regulations of the host nation. These are well illustrated by examining the issues that surround a policy decision to welcome or invite a cross border higher education program.

6.5 Due Diligence and Cross Border Education

82. A Minister or a government considering a proposal for a "branch campus" has many issues to work through from the credibility and commitment of proponent to the protection of potential student consumers. While these are important the most pressing is to be clear about what benefits can and cannot accrue to the host nation and how those benefits can be realized.

83. Branch campuses can:

- Diversify provision by offering academic programs that are not available in the region especially in areas of specialization or where cost structures justify centralization of infrastructure- like medicine or robotics;
- Internationalize higher education by linking the local academic community to the global community of scholars and educators;
- Transfer knowledge and expertise about teaching, learning and research and the design and operation of modern world class universities;
- Attract and retain talent in the student, faculty and research communities;
- Model new and innovative policies and practices in the operation of universities and of modern corporations- from boards of trustees to procurement procedures; and
- Exemplify free speech, democratic practice, tolerance and equality.

84. Branch campuses cannot absorb demand from a growing youth population or an aspiring middle class. Nor can they attract significant amounts of foreign direct investment into higher education. Branches are not a simple substitute for allowing or facilitating student mobility through measure like scholarships for study abroad. While they will have some impact on the margin of these three issues a branch campus does not have the scale to meet demand or attract substantial capital, or offer the full range of courses that national needs demand or individual interests seek.

85. The theory of change is that the successful establishment and operation of a branch campus or academic partnership will through observable example and opportunity to learn, motivate others to emulate or change, inspire reformers, create competition causing others to improve. It is a refinement of the lighthouse or laboratory school model of reform. To maximize the benefit to the host nation the operational basis needs to be transparent and open to all so that information about its workings flows readily to those who are to benefit. There also needs to be an active strategy of building local capacity to disseminate, replicate, operate and evaluate good practice. Without these strategies branch campuses can become "asylums", protected places, serving a few, with no connection with the surrounding community and no wider impact or public benefit.

86. In practical terms thinking about these issues will help the Minister of Higher Education or leading authorities in the recipient country, conduct the necessary due diligence on the proposal. One part of that due diligence is much like a normal commercial transaction: is the vendor reliable, reputable and recognized in the wider academic community? Are they financially stable and able to sustain a major development program? Are they experienced in cross border programs? Do they have competitors? And so on.

87. The second step is to look at the fit between the proposal and the objectives and sovereign needs of the nation. For example does the proposal respond or contribute to the attainment of national development goals like the improvement of dry land agricultural productivity or the widening of access to

health services? Or does it acknowledge language and culture requirements associated with national identity? These are difficult questions as they touch on academic freedoms and institutional independence that are hallmarks of modern universities. But these high principles are not in conflict with a nation's rights to guide and shape the direction of future economic and social development or its responsibility to protect its citizens through appropriate regulation such as academic accreditation and recognition of qualifications.

88. Nations and states around the world set different types of sovereign requirements or regulations. For example some US States have differential fees for out of state students and some set quotas on the numbers of "outsiders" who can attend public institutions or particular programs. Developing nations in the MENA region can reasonably set some sovereign requirements to maximize the benefits of their investments in higher education without intruding on the academic independence of partners.

Sovereign Requirements for Cross National Education in the Asia Pacific
➢ China: requires foreign providers to establish links with domestic institutions in order to promote knowledge exchange, limits repatriation of excess revenues and stipulates that Boards must have local members. ➢ Singapore: requires foreign institutions operating in co-operation with local providers to apply for government approval, supplying details of course content, the status of the foreign provider at home and the division of responsibilities between the foreign and local partners. Partnerships with local universities can only be created at government invitation (Singapore Ministry of Education, 2000). ➢ Malaysia's requires foreign providers to follow a five-stage approval and review process, covering educational, business and legal requirements and stipulates the subjects that Malaysian citizens must pass in order to graduate, regardless of discipline (Kandasamy and Santhiram, 2000; McBurnie and Ziguras, 2001). ➢ Indonesia requires that co-operation should not be solely for revenue purposes, should benefit all parties and be in line with national and institutional priorities and "shall be prioritised in the fields in which graduates are especially required" (Director General of Higher Education of the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia, 2000

89. The third part is to look past the immediate creation of a program to the quality assurance process. The aims of such a process are twofold:

a. to ensure that the integrity and standards of the academic programs are maintained over time; and
b. ensures that the qualifications and credentials awarded have currency, meaning and value in the global labor market and are recognized by other academies.

90. The first aim is directed at the internal processes of the institution, its admission and progression standards, its academic integrity policies, its faculty promotion and retention policies, its course development and approval processes and its requirements for the award of degrees and diploma. These are well documented and can be subject to peer review and external validation by agencies, like institutions and leaders in the relevant academic disciplines. These reviews are at the heart of many accreditation processes which recognize programs that meet the necessary standards and offer institutions advice on how to improve performance. These processes can be discipline based in for example engineering, or university wide.

91. A regional approach to sharing expertise, experience and good practice in these areas is cost effective and would strengthen the higher education sector. There are various models around the world of successful cooperation in these areas, notably the regionally based US accreditation programs and the Bologna process.

92. The second purpose of quality assurance focuses on the qualifications that are obtained by successful study. How do they compare to the qualifications of other institutions preparing students in similar fields or for the same profession? The cross regional recognition of qualifications has been an area of international cooperation for many years under UNESCO and other inter- governmental agencies. As population mobility increases and the trade in skills become more significant the importance of cross border recognition of qualifications also increases. Qualifications become passports to economic security, residency, social standing, further study and a community of professional practice.

7. A Regional Approach to Accreditation

93. A regional approach to accreditation and recognition of qualifications requires a level of consensus on the goals and reference points to be used by the national agencies in charge of quality assessment and evaluation. This should not be approached by assembling all of the standards and indicators in use in the region or by gathering detailed descriptions of the evaluation/accreditation procedures relevant to and applied within each national system. Neither approach offers the necessary analysis of the relevance, utility, applicability or transferability of standards or processes to different national settings. They fail to provide any information on the links between standards and procedures and the constraints and requirements of the national system. While assembling this information will provide knowledge on what exists it will not produce an effective regional approach to quality assurance. (ENQA, 2005).

94. More progress will be made by identifying the values that underpin commonly accepted notions (like independency, transparency and peer review) used across MENA countries. At times there will be differences in how these values are prioritized and expressed and these need to be examined systematically and thoughtfully to build mutual understandings and trust among agencies and hence make it easier to accept decisions of other parties about institutional accreditation and degree recognition. There have been some successes using such a process. For instance, quality assurance agencies in Europe have delineated some key principles to shape their work together with an aim of recognizing each other‘s accreditation decisions. In summary they are that:

- There will be regional standards for internal and external quality assurance, and for external quality assurance agencies;
- Regional quality assurance agencies will be externally reviewed regularly,
- Regional agencies which meet the agreed standards will be identified in a publicly accessible register; and
- The register will be maintained by agencies acting together to maintain standards.

95. Such a public register assists consumers, employers and students to identify professional and credible agencies, strengthens procedures for recognizing qualifications and enhance the public standing and authority of quality assurance agencies.

8. Principles for Accrediting Accreditation Bodies

96. It is easier to build trust between agencies when there are some common standards to assess the authenticity and integrity of an accreditation agency. The US Department of Education sets out some benchmarks to guide its recognition processes of the numerous national, regional and programmatic accrediting agencies. The following principles drawn from those benchmarks and from good administrative practice could be the basis of MENA framework for recognizing quality assurance or mutual recognition agencies.

Core Operating Principles of Accreditation Agencies

- Singular in purpose; involved only in quality assurance and not in the design or delivery of educational programs;
- Intellectual and fiscal capacity; solvent and appropriately staffed;
- Separate and independent; not subject to direction or control in accreditation decisions by state funding agencies;
- Voluntary and not for profit;
- Accepted by peer agencies, the academic community, the employers and relevant professions;
- Public participation and transparency in governance;
- Accurate and open records of accreditation decisions; and
- Experienced and recognized for its work in the region, discipline or programs of study.

Current Quality Assurance Structures in MENA countries

- There are QA Agencies in Egypt, Eritrea, Iraq, Jordan, Bahrain, Libya, Oman, Palestine, Yemen, Sudan and the UAE;
- The Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANQAHE) has 16 members, which have or are in the process of establishing a Quality Assurance Agency; and
- Most QA agencies are independent or semi-independent and accredit Programs and Institutions.

97. Quality Assurance is an important driver to improve the quality of tertiary education, and QA methods and systems are being revised worldwide to be more efficient in serving students, institutions and governments. One important trend is the need to measure tertiary learning outcomes in meaningful ways. In addition to serving domestic purposes, the issue of recognition of degrees obtained abroad or through foreign institutions operating in the home country is critical to promote student mobility.

98. To make the most of cross-border tertiary education, international and or mutual recognition of diplomas is key, as it can facilitate student mobility and allow students with foreign qualifications to work in their home country or, more generally, in the international labour market. In order to promote student mobility and recognition both in the sending and receiving countries, MENA countries could engage in a regional and a cross regional dialogue to promote mutual recognition of diplomas, and increase its engagement in the international convergence of QA practices. More information sharing could facilitate the recognition of their domestic degrees and the understanding of foreign qualifications in general.

9. Maximizing the Returns from Cross Border Education

99. Overall, cross-border tertiary education can assist developing countries in strengthening their higher education systems and fostering economic development. Cross-border education can expand domestic access to post-secondary education, through outbound student mobility and inbound program and institution mobility. Student and scholar mobility build international networks, which underpin national innovation and research and development systems. Partnerships between local and foreign universities through program and institution mobility can improve the quality of local provision of education services.

100. MENA countries choosing to use cross-border tertiary education to build capacity and complement domestic provision face several policy challenges. To benefit from cross border education, countries should create a framework:

- Facilitating participation in cross-border education and co-operation between foreign and domestic tertiary education institutions:
- Setting clear goals and targets for the different forms of internationalization linked with the development needs of the nation;
- Developing sound Quality assurance principles and processes to ensure that cross-border education meets the needs of students and is relevant to meet national goals and labour market needs;
- Establishing policies and procedures for ease of movement of students, faculty and skilled labour mobility; including visas and immigration policies.
- Setting goals for intra regional student mobility and for the student and faculty flows into the region through accreditation, student and faculty exchange, hiring incentives, research infrastructure including competitive research grants and a clear policies on the "export of educational services and private investment in higher education ;
- Aligning with regional and international agencies to promote Mutual Recognition of Degrees and Credit Transfer; and
- Fostering innovation and research and development capacity to adapt and respond to a constantly evolving technology-driven environment.

10. A Basis for National and Regional Dialogue

101. The observations, data and examples set out here can be used as a basis for debate, discussion and analysis with and between MENA nations.

102. Regional co-operation could begin with shared efforts to understand the complex interactions between student mobility, domestic higher education and the economic and social development priorities of the MENA countries. Topics of mutual interest include a better understanding of student flows and the programs they study in other countries. This would provide some insights into areas of under-provision in the region and assist in labor market forecasting. Joint work on the relative successes of students studying abroad, in the region, in branch campuses and in national institutions including measures such as time to

first job on graduation and relative earnings would also have policy relevance as would cross national work on longer term destinations of skilled citizens and the effectiveness of different incentives to return. An illustrative research agenda is in the box below.

A Research Agenda for MENA Student and Labor Mobility

1. ***What programs do MENA students take abroad and why?***
2. ***What are the ratios of outward and inward bound students to the base population in each MENA country?***
3. ***What are the return rates of overseas students at 5, 10& 15 years?***
4. ***What proportion of MENA students self finance their international study?***
5. ***What is the role that Branch campuses are playing in National Higher Education Strategies?***
6. ***What are the regional trends in University transformation, and what is driving them?***
7. ***What are labor market destinations, and insertion rates of domestic and cross border graduates?***
8. ***To what extent there is conversion towards QA standards and qualifications?***
9. ***What are the common elements in regional immigration policies on skilled migration?***
10. ***How effective are policies and programs facilitating movement of skilled people between nations for finite periods?***

103. The outcomes of work such as this can frame and inform a dialogue between Ministries, between government and institutions and stakeholders about the strategic directions for skill formation and the development of higher education within individual countries. They can promote systematic examination of different scenarios for the creation and application of human capital and provide opportunities for participation in policy formation for a wide range of constituencies. Similar suggestions were made in the World Bank (2009) report on longer term perspectives on labor and job mobility in the MENA region, which recommended a three stage process to assist the smooth integration of the region to the globalized skill market. Those steps would involve improving basic demographic and labor force projections, scenario building around the policy options in education, migration and social protection, open to national governments and intra and inter- regional cooperation between agencies.

104. The same observations, data and examples supplemented by the outcomes of national discussions can inform an intra regional discussion between principals – Ministers, senior officials and institutional leaders- on the opportunities and benefits of regional co-operation on matters of common interest in the area of cross border education and the mobility of highly skilled people. There are clearly synergies and cost savings from sharing expertise, experience and development work in areas such as recognition of qualifications, quality assurance, diversification of programs and the due diligence appropriate for cross border provision.

Key Topics for Regional Policy Options:

- Efforts to develop a Regional Approach for Accreditation and setting up Qualifications Framework need to be strengthened
- The above needs to be coupled with a mutual recognition on Qualifications between sending and receiving countries
- Joint research on building better pathways for student and skilled labor mobility will strengthened countries individual capacities

Annex 1- MENA Countries Exporting Students, detailed by country

Country of origin	2000			2004			2008		
	Number of mobile students	Rate of mobile students (%)	Share (%) in total MENA mobile students	Number of mobile students	Rate of mobile students (%)	Share (%) in total MENA mobile students	Number of mobile students	Rate of mobile students (%)	Share (%) in total MENA mobile students
Algeria	15 823	3,2*	11.1	24 128	3,4	12.6	21 457	2,2*	9.7
Djibouti	1 071	-	0.7	1 794	-	0.9	1 265	-	0.6
Egypt	5 737	0,3*	4.0	6 831	0,3	3.6	8 714	0,4	4.0
Libya	1 417	0,5	1.0	3 074	0,8*	1.6	2 862	-	1.3
Morocco	41 575	15,0	29.1	47 486	13,8	24.7	41 632	10,4	18.9
Sudan	2 749	1,3	1.9	2 763	-	1.4	2 072	-	0.9
Tunisia	9 110	5,1	6.4	13 875	4,8	7.2	18 152	5,2	8.2
Bahrain	1 225	-	0.9	2 300	-	1.2	2 997	-	1.4
Iran	16 242	1,2	11.4	18 451	0,9	9.6	23 500	0,7	10.7
Iraq	2 637	0,9	1.8	2 087	0,5	1.1	5 723	-	2.6
Jordan	5 627	4,0	3.9	6 976	3,3	3.6	9 004	3,5	4.1
Kuwait	4 268	13,3*	3.0	5 698	15,5	3.0	6 570	-	3.0
Lebanon	6 499	5,6	4.5	11 684	7,6	6.1	13 181	6,7	6.0
Oman	3 056	9,3*	2.1	5 368	12,9	2.8	4 781	7,6	2.2
Palestine	5 044	7,1	3.5	7 037	5,8	3.7	9 596	5,3	4.4
Qatar	861	11,0*	0.6	1 091	11,7	0.6	1 724	13,7	0.8
Saudi A.	7 904	2,0	5.5	9 487	1,7	4.9	20 802	2,9	9.4
Syria	5 441	-	3.8	10 536	-	5.5	14 516	-	6.6
UAE	3 974	9,1	2.8	4 701	6,6*	2.4	5 968	7,3*	2.7
Yemen	2 613	1,5	1.8	6 734	3,5	3.5	5 908	2,5*	2.7
ME	**65 391**	**-**	**45.8**	**92 150**	**-**	**48.0**	**124 270**	**-**	**56.4**
NA	**77 482**	**-**	**54.2**	**99 951**	**-**	**52.0**	**96 154**	**-**	**43.6**
MENA	**142 873**	**-**	**100.0**	**192 101**	**-**	**100.0**	**220 430**	**-**	**100.0**

Source: UIS data; Authors' calculations.
*Author's estimation of tertiary enrolment

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