Aligning Higher Education Outcomes with Labor Market Needs
Aligning educational outcomes with the labor market needs, increases employment opportunities for graduates. However, the gap between them --especially in Arab countries-- is dramatically increasing due to the vast development in the concept of globalization, free trade, regional alliances, communication media and information systems.

This is not matched with equal development in the efficiency of higher education institutions, leading to a state of “structural deficiency in the relationship between educational systems and the labor market.”
This structural deficiency may be rectified through comprehensive coordination strategies which depend on the interaction between the various private and public sectors.

Is this lack of alignment a temporary phenomenon or a chronic problem?

The World Bank statistics of 2012 confirm that the Arab World is ranked number 6 among the eight world areas within the knowledge index and the knowledge economy index, with its four tenets.
This deficiency is evidenced in the lack of academic and professional/vocational skills required by the labor markets, which increased the rate of unemployment among the youth to exceed 25% of all qualified youth. This percentage is double of the international figures, and among females it rose as high as 30%.

A (2013) Kuwait University study on the relationship between the university outcomes and the labor market needs, showed that 16 specializations needed by the labor market are not covered by the university.
The study showed that the Faculty of Shari’a had graduated 6 times the needs of the labor market, whereas the Faculty of Science satisfies only 17% of the market needs, within the next five years. Likewise, the Faculty of Medicine answers only 28% of these needs.

Valid Orientation:
To save higher education of this dilemma, it is necessary to build a framework for quality assurance which is consistent with the fundamental mechanisms of change, and devising strategies that take into consideration the concept of “EDUCATION FOR EMPLOYMENT” (E4E), and to—somehow—keep away from the concept of “education for education”. 

توجه مستحق:
إخراج التعليم الجامعي من النفق المظلم القابع به، لابد من بناء أطر لضمان الجودة بما ينسجم مع متطلبات محركات التغيير الرئيسية ووضع الاستراتيجيات التي تأخذ بعين الاعتبار مفهوم التعليم من أجل التوظيف والابتعاد نسبياً عن مفهوم التعليم لأجل التعليم.
The Status Quo of Higher Education in the Arab World: (Problems and Difficulties)

1. Students enrolled in public universities make 80% of the total number of university and community college students, which negatively affects the efficiency of these institutions.

2. Both public and private universities graduate about one million students a year, most of whom are in the humanities and theoretical specializations. This does not answer the labor market needs.

3. Public education graduates keep away from enrolling in technical, vocational, and training tracks, with only 20% of whom joining these institutions.
4. Lack of institutional methodology to coordinate between higher education outcomes and market needs.

5. The dynamics of market needs and requirements for renewable skills, against the slow pace of universities to answer such needs.

6. Dearth of academic research on labor market needs.

7. Shortage of databases designed for following up the performance of graduates in the labor market.

8. Poor participation of the private sector in planning for academic and training programs, and drafting course descriptions which meet the labor market needs.
The Principles of Public Policies Geared towards Boosting Educational Systems and Upgrading their Outcomes:

1. Placing “education” as a priority in the political agenda of the governments of these countries.

2. Adopting the method of development and organizational reform, which deals with the (engineering) of procedures and resources, incentives to promote better performance, follow up and accountability.

9. Poor quality assurance standards, and lack of monitoring and evaluation systems for higher education outcomes.

السياسات العامة الهدف من الاهتمام بجودة نظام التعليم ورفع كفاءة مخرجاته:

1. ضرورة وضع التعليم كأولوية في الأجندة السياسية لحكومات الدول.

2. اعتماد أسلوب التطوير والإصلاح الهيكلي الذي يعني (مهندسية) الإجراءات والموارد وتعظيم الحوافز والمشاركة في قياس النتائج.
Effective School Supported by Engaged and Efficient Education System

Efficient Students with Local & International Comparative Skills

Values

Educational Leadership

Developing & Improving Curricula

Improving Teachers’ Performance

Maximizing the effectiveness of Educational Outcomes (Knowledge and Skills)

Improving School Environment

Policies

(شكل 1)
Developing the Organizational Framework for Educational Institutions: Thinking, Planning, Implementation, & Follow up

Role of Educational System in Social and Economic Development

Global Environment

Council of Ministries

Society (Parents & the Community)

Parliament

Local & International Consultation Teams & Committees

Higher Council of Education

Ministry of Higher Education

- Operational Goals
- Operational Plans
- Setting National Standards
- Developing Educational Strategies
- Planning
- Drafting Key Performance Indicators

- Achieving Key Performance Indicators
- Coordination for Effectiveness

Implementation

- Tackling the Operation (implementation)

- Preparing Educational Outcomes
- Reporting on Deviations
- Adjusting Intervention Plans

- Accreditation
- National Center for Measurement & Evaluation
- Evaluation & Measurement

- Developmental Model

- Increasing the Role of Education
- Review of Educational System
- Vision, Mission, & Values
- Achieving Institutional Excellence

NGO

N.G.O

- Raising Standards
- Improving the Quality of Education
- Enhancing the Educational System
- Developing Educational Policies
- Providing the Necessary Resources

- Tackling the Socio-Economic Development

- Global Environment
3. Reviewing and developing the labor legislations governing public and private labor markets to develop the network of legislations to value the skills, experience, and rare/needed specializations that would encourage the youth to join vocational and technical education.

4. Encouraging private investment in higher education, and establishing specialized higher education universities and institutions.

5. Developing human resources in the educational sector through attracting qualified personnel to the higher education sector and training them, while adopting a good system of incentives for rewarding distinguished groups.
Policy for Boosting Basic and Applied Scientific Research:

Facing the challenges confronting scientific research, such as:

- Most research is intended for faculty members’ promotion to higher academic ranks and not to be applied for community service.

- Only 5-10% of the faculty member’s academic activities is dedicated to actual research, while “teaching” takes the great bulk of these activities.
- لا يتجاوز النشاط البحثي الفعلي لعضو هيئة التدريس من 5 – 10% من مهامه الأكاديمية والتي توجه معظمها للتدريس.

- Lack of incentives for full-time researchers.

- غياب أنظمه محفزة للباحث العلمي المتفرغ.

- Poor cooperation between the industrial sector and higher education institutions.

- إعادة النظر في آليات التقويم والمتابعة.

- Reconsidering evaluation and follow-up procedures.

- إنشاء مراكز للرصد والتنبؤ والبحوث في دراسات السوق والبيانات والأحصاءات اللازمة لاتخاذ القرار، وخاصة فيما يتعلق بتحديد التخصصات والمهن والمستويات المهارة المطلوبة.

- Establishing monitoring and research centers specialized in market studies, data and statistics needed for decision making, especially in determining specializations, professions, and skills needed.

- انشاء هيئات مستقلة للاعتماد وضمان الجودة.

- Establishing independent commissions for accreditation and quality assurance.
Thank you