

DEBATE

Riad TABET, President of Berit International Holding SA

Il est évident que le problème de la main d'œuvre et de l'emploi est lié à la formation de l'éducation mais aussi au secteur de production et à la croissance. Dans nos pays du Moyen-Orient et les pays arabes nous produisons très peu de choses. Si l'on exclut le secteur de l'énergie, notre balance commerciale est largement déficitaire au profit des pays industrialisés.

Or, nous avons le financement, nous avons la main d'œuvre, il nous manque la technologie. En associant l'importation de la technologie plutôt que des biens, avec la main d'œuvre dont nous disposons et le financement qui ne pose pas de problème, nous pouvons contribuer à la création d'emploi.

Mais il y a aussi un autre facteur, c'est la coopération entre les secteurs de production et l'université. Nous ne pouvons pas continuer à former des universitaires dans différents secteurs qui vont au chômage ou à l'exportation. Il doit donc y avoir une orientation en fonction des besoins au niveau de la production et cela nécessite une coopération entre les secteurs de production et les universités. Merci.

A Qatari participant

Thank you for the good organisation of this conference. I have a comment on what Dr Mona said. I do not have any problem on the ideas she has on Egypt's problems; however, during her intervention she said that in 2013 she had opposed a religious government that wanted to impose itself on secular Egypt. However, in reality, I oppose what she says because the government that came into power on 25 January was not a religious government. A religious government is a government that relies on its powers from God; this is not what happened in Egypt at all. Egypt is not seeking to become a secular society; this is what we saw after we issued the first constitution after 2011. There was no popular wish to turn Egypt into a secular country. Thank you.

Abdallah HAZAIMEH

Thank you. First of all, I want to thank the panel for their presentations. I have a couple of comments for the groups. I will start with Miss Mona. I did not see the connection between the topics of the panel, diversification of education, and the last part, I believe, employment with the political statements. I hope that she can make that connection. I heard about the turmoil, about the political rising and women's equal rights, but that did not translate to the topic of the panel or the presentation. As an academician here, I did not see the connection. If you could make that clear at some point.

On the other hand, I have another comment for Mr Musha about the future skills needed. Actually, I do not think there is a problem with the skills the university is teaching. From 29 years in the US and working in the industry, with skills for universities there, the world needs engineers, traditional engineers. There is a shortage and demand for engineers. There is a shortage in IT. There is huge need for IT, engineering technology, the high-skill technology base. We are flooding the market in the West and even the Arabic market, with degrees, I do not want to call them useless, but the market does not need them. We have too many business degrees in the US and here. Maybe they think it is the easiest or quickest route to being rich but we still lack programmers, for example. The world is desperate for programmers and IT engineers. These are still the old basic skills needed over the years and we still need them. I am not sure when you guys talk about future skills, what those future skills are. I hear these buzzwords when I go to conferences in the US and I come back here. I read the reports coming from all the industries, wanting these old traditional engineers and IT skills. Thank you.



Hamda Hassan AL-SULAITI, Secretary General, Qatar National Commission for Education, Culture and Science

First of all, I would like to thank all the speakers. There is one important point that was not raised by the speakers, which has to do with the issue of teachers; the training of teachers. When we speak about education, the students are at the core of it but it is the teachers who guide and mentor them. If the teachers do not get good training, they will not be able to put their students on the right path. Using technology inside schools will be a waste of government money if teachers are unable to use this technology. Our kids today at two years old can just open a mobile device, a phone or tablet, and just open a game and start playing it. Teachers must understand and acquire such technological skills. How can I use them to serve the educational process? How can I direct and guide and mentor the students to acquire a lifetime skill that they can use for their own lives? How can I ensure that our students acquire research, creative, and innovative skills? We have students in Qatar and on some of the projects they can create mobile applications, not just use the mobile but create a whole mobile application. Today, we need somebody to manage this process, to train the people who manage this process. We must change the educational institutions that train the teachers so that they can be developed and brought up-to-date because the teachers are the basis for guiding and mentoring students and managing the educational process.

Mohammed KABBAJ, President of Lafarge Morocco, Chancellor of Euro-Mediterranean university of Fès and member of the Hassan II Academy of Science and Technology, former Advisor to His Majesty the King Mohammed VI, former Minister of Finance and Foreign Investment, Morocco

Other questions? Do you have some comment? Ahmed.

Masood AHMED, Director, Middle East and Central Asia Department, International Monetary Fund

Let me just make two comments. I think that the point that was raised was correct. While there are new skills that people are trying to develop, whether entrepreneurial skills or other skills, there are already many areas of existing skills that we are not enough training our people to. We are training them to the skills that were maybe useful for some of the jobs they did yesterday but are not what the market is asking for today. As you say, there is a shortage of programmers worldwide; are we training enough people in that area? I think that is really one of the key points I agree with you on.

The second thing is that I think you raised a very important point, that you cannot change the educational system without focusing on the teachers and giving them the equipment, skills, and training so that they can play their role and are confident in empowering their students. Clearly, we have to invest a lot and much more in terms of time and resources to bring our teachers up-to-date and comfortable with the new skillsets. I agree with you on that.

Uri DADUSH, Senior Fellow, OCP Policy Center, former Director of the International Economics Program at Carnegie, former Director of the International Trade, Economic Policy, and Development Prospects Departments, World Bank

Thank you very much. As so much of the discussion has focused on education, I will make a point about that but also I will bring us back a little to reality in terms of job creation. I think that the education issue is a very important one, obviously, and one that is especially important in this region, simply because of the large numbers of young people and the levels of unemployment among young people. In the end, I think it has been said, you need a strong governance system for education; I think this is one of the big failures in Morocco, a country I know a little bit about. I also believe, this is my personal view, that there is not enough guidance for students; by that I mean the creation of incentives. In the United States, where I live, it is taken for granted that everyone is going to study and somehow things will shuffle



around so that everybody is going to be happy. The reality is that kids have absolutely no idea what the job market is going to be 15 or 20 years from now. We do not know but we have some kind of guidance. I am all for putting in place some kind of incentives for kids; there are various ways of doing that to give them some guidance in the direction that has been mentioned, about the kinds of people we need. I completely agree that there is too much focus on business education.

The second point I want to make is to go back to the basics for jobs. In the end, the creation of enough jobs is the combination of two factors. On the one hand, demographics, the supply of young people, which is slowly being corrected and 10 years from now it will be a better picture, in this region where there is a very special situation. The other fundamental, which is absolutely critical, is economic growth. If you do not have economic growth, you are simply not going to be able to generate good jobs and enough jobs. Of course, that is a much more complex topic. What strikes on in the region is the absence of a strong, formal private sector. The big question is what do you need to create a big, formal private sector? That is the underlying question for job creation.

Mohamed KABBAJ, President of Lafarge Morocco, Chancellor of Euro-Mediterranean university of Fès and member of the Hassan II Academy of Science and Technology, former Advisor to His Majesty the King Mohammed VI, former Minister of Finance and Foreign Investment, Morocco

Merci beaucoup, la conclusion que je tire de cette séance c'est que la taille des problèmes est tellement importante que nous avons réellement besoin d'une nouvelle façon d'approcher ces problèmes, à la fois au niveau de l'éducation et au niveau de l'emploi dans ces pays, c'est finalement l'originalité que nous pouvons apporter dans notre région. Merci beaucoup à tous pour votre participation.