The case of Egypt: Success in reforming the TVET-system and shaping the society
Reflecting more than 15 years of experience with an innovative apprenticeship approach in Egypt
MUBARAK-KOHL INITIATIVE FOR DUAL SYSTEM (MKI-DS) – THE CASE OF EGYPT:

Success in reforming the TVET-system and shaping the society

Reflecting more than 15 years of experience with an innovative apprenticeship approach in Egypt

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Summary

The Mubarak-Kohl Initiative Dual System (MKI-DS), which started in 1994 as a Egyptian-German Technical Cooperation Programme, financed by the German Government and supported via the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ is now a wholly Egyptian owned and managed programme, with governance and implementation of TVET in the hands of both the private and public sectors. For three years students in MKI-DS secondary technical education programmes normally attend formal schooling in schools of the Ministry of Education twice a week plus work and learn in the workplace on four days a week. A recent tracer study of graduates shows a demonstrable impact on the development of vocational identity among young people. Quantitative and qualitative results show an impact on current employment, career plans, job selection, labour market knowledge and job search behaviour. The programme equips graduates with the confidence to make informed choices, negotiate job quality, and work with employers in the context of interactive employability. The programme impact counters prevailing negative cultural perceptions and attitudes regarding the labour market and increases the opportunities for ongoing employment. The joint governance approach increases the resources available and ensures that training is demand-oriented.

Keywords: TVET, Dual System, Interactive employability, school/work transition

Abbreviations

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<td>Enterprise Training Partnership</td>
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1 Introduction

School systems in developing countries have often proved inadequate in terms of transmitting labour market oriented skills, attitudes, behaviour and general know-how that facilitate the transition of young people from the formal education system into the labour force. In the face of this, education systems have looked for a way of combining theoretical and practical education and training, with varying success. Education & training approaches that directly connect formal general schooling and vocational careers, and which focus on facilitating school-to-work transition by increasing the employability of trainees differ from traditional apprenticeships. Evidence suggests that the Mubarak-Kohl Initiative for Dual System (MKI-DS) in Egypt is achieving increased employability and contributes to a better school-to-work transition of graduates.

1.1 Egyptian Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) context

In Egypt, 32% of the population is between 15 and 29 years of age and it is expected that, between 2005 and 2010, 790 000 individuals will enter the labour market annually. Growth in the working age population (15 to 64 years) is 2.4% with a more rapid increase in the rural areas where 57% of all Egyptians live. Unemployment in Egypt has decreased in recent times but the proportion of new entrants among the unemployed has continued to climb, confirming that unemployment in Egypt is youth-linked. Around 80% of those who are unemployed in Egypt are in the 15 to 24 year old age cluster and estimates are that 32% of young men and 59% of young women in the cluster have no jobs. The ratio of female to male unemployment remains at 4:1 overall, one of the highest in the world. Among graduates of secondary schools, unemployment rates reach 70% and 22% of graduates from higher educational backgrounds are officially recorded as unemployed. Approximately 600 000 entrants from the school and university systems are looking for a maximum of 200 000 jobs each year. A further complicating factor is that, where job vacancies exist, job-seekers are often not well-matched to the vacancies and, in many cases labour market information is difficult to access. In Egypt, free schooling is guaranteed by the constitution and higher education at universities is highly subsidised. More than 90% of students are enrolled in public schools at all levels of education. Since 1960, there has been a large increase in the number of children enrolled in primary or secondary education (from 42% in 1960 to 95% in 2005/6) and the bulk is concentrated in basic education at the primary level. The number of university students has increased from 1.6 million in 2001 to two million in 2006, despite the fact that a university degree is no longer a guarantee of

1 El Mahdi A and Roushdy, R November 2007
2 Assaad, R 2008, p.12
4 Amer, M 2007, p.3
5 OECD 2007, p.13
employment as it has been in the past. This phasing out of government-guaranteed opportunities has impacted mainly on women graduates for whom the public sector has been the major job provider. There are limited employment opportunities for women in the private sector as the public sector declines.

The overall Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system in Egypt is largely government-led and suffers from inadequacies which can be summarised as:

- Inability to raise sufficient resources for the operation of institutions and to keep up with new developments at the different levels;
- Inadequate performance in the past, leading to a lack of trust from the private sector in the government-led TVET system;
- Inadequate training for TVET teachers and instructors;
- Teaching of curricula that do not meet private sector workforce needs, focussing mainly on educational attainment (theory) and certificates.

The TVET system in Egypt is complex and diverse. It involves about 22 ministries and agencies, as well as 27 donor supported projects. The government has put forward a number of reforms of education, training, labour market and employment policies. In recognition of the need to reform TVET, the Supreme Council for Human Resource Development, reporting to the Prime Minister and chaired by the Minister of Manpower and Migration, was established in 2000 to design a national TVET and employment strategy. The strategy was finalised in August 2002 with the objective of designing a TVET system that is responsive to market needs. A number of steps have been initiated. Delivery agents include a number of ministries, government agencies (such as the Productivity Vocational Training Department [PVTD] of the Ministry of Trade and Industry), individual companies as well as private sector based or related institutions - inter alia: Regional Units for Implementing the Dual System (RUDS) as well as the National Centre for Human Resource Development (NC-HRD) or Enterprise Training Partnerships (ETPs) to secure the link between education/training and the business sector. A key element of the overall formal system remains technical secondary schools (TSS) which fall under the Ministry of Education.

About two-thirds of students in secondary education attend technical secondary schools (TSS) which provide either three or five years of schooling. Graduates from the five year programme, which has only recently been introduced, acquire the grade of technicians. TSS students can choose between three fields of specialization: industry, agriculture and commerce. The distribution is as follows (2005/6 figures): 49% in the industrial track; 40% in the commercial track; and 12% in the agricultural track. The intention of the TSS system is to equip a large segment of youth with the necessary technical knowledge and skills for the attainment of comprehensive development and preparation for the workforce. The vast majority of TSS graduates have to master the challenge to enter directly into the labour market. Currently 2.4 million students are enrolled in TSS. However, only 50% of enrolled TSS

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6 El Mahdi A 2000, p.1
7 CID Consulting April 2009, p.7
8 Amer M 2007 p.8
students successfully graduate and a large proportion of them leave school to go into unemployment, mainly as a result of the low quality of the courses and their lack of relevance to labour market needs. Graduates from the TSS are ill-equipped for the labour market and usually need retraining and adaptation to the world of work which seems to be a major challenge. Educational credentials are increasingly devalued in the Egyptian labour market as they fail to provide the skills demanded in the private sector. The figures suggest that there is still a major challenge to the Egyptian government to address the issue of post-primary education in an innovative way that successfully includes the majority of young people. Approximately 15.3% of the recurrent expenditure on pre-university education is allocated to technical secondary education and the annual average per student expenditure at that level is LE 1 582 for industrial, LE 1 384 for commercial and LE 1 397 for agricultural students. One of the key problems facing the Egyptian industry is the thousands of technical labour force members graduating every year from secondary technical school who cannot be accepted by industry because of their poor technical skills and poor work ethics and attitude. Improving the situation is high on the government’s agenda of educational reform. This will also require addressing budgetary allocations.

Despite the problems, the proportion of TSS graduates has increased sharply. The male labour market has become increasingly dominated by TSS graduates who now make up over 30% of the male working age population in both urban and rural areas. An increasing number of women are also TSS graduates, up from 4% in 1988 to 24% in 2006. The employment rate among TSS graduates is, however, not encouraging. This is despite the Ministerial Decree No 62, dated 01.03.2007, which states that the “overall goal of the system (Vocational Education and Training [VET]) is to make available a spectrum of skilled labourers who are well technically and scientifically trained on the production facilities and modern technologies, and in conscience (sic) with the needs of the companies and business sectors and the labour market in general, which enhance the workability of the young people, either inside or outside Egypt”. Despite this, and despite the ongoing consultation aimed at producing an integrated educational strategy including technical and vocational education, most TVET institutions lack funds, lack clear standards for curriculum development and training delivery, lack practical training requirements, and are supply-driven. Educational certification focuses on educational career pathways. Skills standards required at the labour market are not available in a systemic and systematic way. Therefore, the connection between the TVET system and the industries it serves and which are the market place for its outputs is weak.

The situation with regards to unemployment and unemployability is further exacerbated by attitudes to the labour market and the non-acceptance of certain labour market opportunities which are culturally determined.

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9 Assaad R 2008, p.31
10 CID Consulting April 2009, p.10
11 Amer M 2007; Assaad 2007
12 Included here are the National Skills Standards Project, the Skills Development Project, and the TVET Policy Reform Project.
13 DRAFT 2009 EHDR, Chapter on TVET and Youth, p.2 - 3
1.2 The Egyptian cultural context and its impact on young job seekers

An understanding of Egyptian culture can provide important insights into attitudes, values and beliefs about work and work ethics and their relevance to the improvement of employability on which the key intervention, the MKI-DS described in this paper is based.

Contributing cultural factors which cut across the demographics but impact particularly on young people include:

♦ Difficulties in vertical mobility in a society which is segregated along class lines, with a small upper and middle class and a large lower and lower middle class. Class corresponds with social status and breaching the class barriers is perceived as being nearly impossible, a perception compounded by fears of downward movement.

♦ TVET is traditionally seen as a poor second choice in terms of education (with general education preferred) because the options it creates in terms of employment are seen as being less valuable in terms of culture (i.e. marriage ability).

♦ A desire for employment that provides an opportunity for social advancement, even if it does not have long-term potential.

♦ A focus on family and a conservative approach to gender issues.

♦ The centrality of culture as “a strong pillar of identity, on which perceptions and work ethics are based.”

♦ A belief, based on fact, that education and certificates improve social status, irrespective of their relevance. Improved social status means having the ability to marry and establish a family.14

These cultural perceptions impact directly on how work is seen. Both men and women are influenced. Men are under high pressure to perform as providers of family income. Women are still mostly expected to be housewives and mothers and are more controlled than men. This impacts on what type of work is seen as being suitable for them. The management and leadership style in Egypt has been described as “control-fear-symbiosis” where control and fear perpetuate each other and create a hostile working environment with low productivity, low motivation and fear of innovation and change. Communication, information flow and reflection would be essential steps to break this vicious cycle. Pertinent to this paper is whether the MKI-DS intervention, or dual systems in general, contribute to this in the way they support the transition from school to work.15

As noted in Part II of the recent tracer study of MKI-DS graduates, while co-operative dual systems of technical vocational education began on a limited scale in the sixties in Egypt, there has been a surge of such systems in recent years, and, although they are not exactly modelled on the MKI-DS, they incorporate many of the elements of school/workplace learning approach and design.16 The MKI-DS is used here as an example because of the tracer study done which enables us to look at impact overall, and because of its early initiation of the dual system which has been taken as an example by others. In

14 Amry S August 2008
15 Amry S August 2008
16 CID Consulting April 2009, p.13
addition, despite improvements, an OECD report published in 2008\textsuperscript{17}, noted that “further efforts along these lines and more business involvement are needed. TVET lacks proper follow up and evaluation mechanisms”. This adds to the value of the MKI-DS tracer study. The OECD report also notes that “TSS schools and training centres are under-equipped and outdated. Teachers are poorly qualified and remunerated, lack motivation and suffer from low social status and poor career prospects. Curricula are reviewed infrequently and are widely regarded as obsolete. Moreover, they lack co-ordination, especially in relation to standardisation of curricula, which results in severe discrepancies in the qualifications and skills acquired by graduates of different schools and training centres.”\textsuperscript{18} Despite some government efforts to improve the situation, the general consensus is that far more industry participation will be needed if new systems are to succeed.\textsuperscript{19} This is something which MKI-DS has attempted to address.

\subsection*{1.3 The MKI-DS}

The success of the MKI-DS, which is the substance of the thesis of this paper, needs to be seen against the characterisation of the Egyptian economy, the Egyptian labour market and the Egyptian culture described above. The MKI-DS is an attempt to address some of the major deterrents to an effective labour market system among young people in the country.

It started as a government-led programme, initiated under a government-to-government agreement and implemented with support from Egyptian Ministry of Education (MoE) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (MBZ) who commissioned the German Technical Co-operation (GTZ). It was introduced in 1994 and was the first initiative towards establishing the links between technical education and industry/the labour market. References were made to the German model of apprenticeship, but with important adaptations to the Egyptian context and system. Core is the public-private partnership (PPP) on policy level as well as with regard to steering, financing and implementing of technical education. This has led to the introduction of new curricula agreed by both business sector and MoE, the training of trainers and a demand-driven orientation to technical training and the renovation of the physical infrastructure of a selection of technical schools. MKI’s aim was to have graduates’ qualifications become more relevant to the labour market.\textsuperscript{20} The programme involved a combination of a practical work placement and work-process experience with formal schooling. Students at the post-primary level (TSS) spend three years attending formal education for two days a week and working in factories, companies or workshops for four days a week.

The MKI-DS was originally a bilateral technical development co-operation programme between Germany and Egypt but is now a fully and sustainably

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{17} CID Consulting April 2009, p.3  
\textsuperscript{18} CID Consulting April 2009, p.8  
\textsuperscript{19} CID Consulting April 2009, p. 10  
\textsuperscript{20} CID Consulting April 2009, p.12
\end{flushleft}
integrated and growing scheme within the Egyptian education system.\textsuperscript{21}
Public private co-operation in governance has meant that regional and sectoral coverage as well as occupational profiles, the content of the programmes and curricula are designed by joint committees and only then approved by the Ministry of Education. The rights of the state to manage the affairs of the country are recognised, but corporate sector institutions\textsuperscript{22} are included in governance structures as an integral part: at local level in the form of the Regional Units for Implementing the Dual System (RUDS); at a national level by the National Centre for Human Resources Development (NC-HRD). "Over the years, it has become accepted that training geared to specific company needs can be realised successfully in Egypt without having to strictly adhere to one model of dual, co-operative learning systems. The concept offers a wide range of possibilities to realise the approach and accommodates the realities of various sectors, regions and industries. The pivotal aspect of it is that the business sector and Ministry of Education both engage in the design of the learning and assume joint responsibility for the outcomes."\textsuperscript{23}

In quantitative terms, its achievements include the following:

\begin{itemize}
  \item 22 out of 27 governorates in Egypt offer the MKI-DS option;
  \item 76 technical secondary schools participate (as of scholastic year 2008/2009);
  \item 1 900 companies accommodate and train students;
  \item There have been 20 000 graduates (13\% of them female);\textsuperscript{24}
  \item Nearly 13 000 students are currently enrolled;
  \item 31 occupational profiles for service, industrial and construction sectors have been developed and implemented, including electrical technician, construction mechanic, cook, farm machinery mechanic, ready made garment worker, housekeeper, heavy equipment maintenance mechanic and general administration clerk;
  \item The growth rate of enrolment in the MKI-DS is rising exponentially per year. For the up-coming year(s) the development path is further influenced by the EU supported TVET Reform program with a variety of flexible cooperative training programmes under sectorial ETPs.
\end{itemize}

Sustainability has been assured through legalisation and institutionalisation in the form of a specific legal framework and the fully-Egyptian governance structure, with the partners including the Ministry of Education and business organisations (federations, business associations, investor associations) and companies.\textsuperscript{25} \textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{21} The MKI-DS is now legally integrated at the Ministry of Education, Decree Nr. 361 of 10.11.2008, with a regular budget.
\textsuperscript{22} Those intermediary institutions are operative units of the business sector and are registered as NGOs. They are financially sustainable through service fees paid by companies involved in MKI-DS.
\textsuperscript{23} CID Consulting April 2009, p. 12
\textsuperscript{24} There are different monitoring sources: conservative figures announce 18 000
\textsuperscript{25} Law No. 62/2007 provides the legal framework for MKI-DS.
\textsuperscript{26} The MKI-DS is now legally integrated at the Ministry of Education, Decree Nr. 361 of 10.11.2008, which opened the way to a regular budget.
The most important impact, however, has been in the way in which the programme has enhanced the transition from general schooling to vocational careers through a form of apprenticeship that has built vocational identity, moving technical career choices from a dead-end option to interactive and dynamic employability.

1.4 Apprenticeship – from the classroom to the workplace: the making of interactive employability and the link to job quality

Innovative apprenticeship involves dual VET arrangements with an emphasis on in-company learning. Interactive employability is a pre-requisite for gainful and acceptable employment on the side of individuals/jobseekers (who should become and stay employable) and potential employers (including the staff of human resources in a company) who should be able to employ effectively and retain good recruits. Employers and jobseekers need to be able to exchange information, articulate and consider interests, needs and expectations, and to enter into a dialogue with the intention of reaching a balance of interests which makes the transition from school to workplace optimal for both jobseeker and employer. Inherent in this is agreement about job quality which combines standard-related factors with individual perceptions and expectations of what a good job is (taking into account, for example, cultural, regional and gender aspects, as negotiated both individually and through representation by youth organisations, trade unions, private sector institutions, government institutions and so on.)

Interactive employability and job quality apply, in the Egyptian context, to both formal and informal employment. The latter is estimated to be about 40% of total employment in Egypt.

The mutual understanding between employer and employee of what each values in the work situation, and the accommodation of both sets of interests, is most likely to result in the desired outcome of improved productivity and improved employment status, to the benefit of both parties. Given the importance of a multifold understanding of job quality and perceptions of job quality, attempts to use specific standards to categorise job quality, particularly those based on norms of industrialised societies, become suspect. This is not to suggest that standards not be applied at all, but such application should be done with considerable caution. In Egypt the level of compliance with regulatory standards generally is not high and with regard to labour law, non-compliance is common. Informality is often used as a way of avoiding compliance with the law and employers/companies do not seem to be aware of the potential for joint agreements with employees, leading to mutual gains. Where the inherent tendency is towards what has been described as a Pharaonic model (control-fear-symbiosis), this leads to low retention rates among young employees.

27 www.MKI-vetEP.com
28 MKI-vetEP, November 2008, p.1
29 The International Labour Organisation (ILO) describes “decent work” as “Opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity”. Assaad R 2008, p.5
30 MKI-vetEP 2008, p. 2
It is, however, the thesis of this paper, that, where a system such as MKI-DS is used to substantially improve and facilitate the transition from school to the workplace, it develops interactive employability through exposure of future employees to the workplace and of employers to the needs and priorities of the future jobseekers. In this way agreement is reached on job quality with results that are evidenced by the tracer studies of MKI-DS graduates discussed below. Indications are that job quality in such situations improves over time.\textsuperscript{31}

1.5 The methodology of the tracer studies

Two tracer studies of the MKI-DS have been done, one in July 2007 and one in March 2009, by CID Consulting\textsuperscript{32}. The findings described below rely heavily on the second tracer study which allowed for evaluation of the results based on the refined version of MKI-DS. The tracer study covered recent graduates from the 2008 MKI-DS batch and compared them with those from the TSS and PVTD systems in Egypt. The sample comprised a total of 90 MKI-DS graduates, of whom 77.4\% were male and 22.6\% female, and 70% were from the Sixth of October governorate (belonging to the catchment area of Cairo as a megacity) and 30\% from the Sohag governorate (largely rural). The total number of MKI-DS graduates in both governorates is 537 and thus estimates based on overall sample have a 95\% confidence level and 9.5\% confidence interval. The age of the MKI-DS graduates interviewed ranged from 17 to 21 with a mean age of 18. Graduates from eight different MKI-DS specialisations were interviewed: 29.2\% General Administrative Clerk; 19.1\% Electrical Installation; 18\% Industrial Mechanics; 12.4\% Ready-Made Garments; 10.1\% Automotive Mechanics; 7.9\% Construction Mechanics; and, 3.4\% Industrial Electronics. Females were divided equally between two MKI-DS specialisations: General Administrative Clerk and Ready Made Garments.

A questionnaire for graduates was developed as the main research tool. The questionnaire was developed by conducting two focus group discussions with a sample of graduates from the two governorates included. Surveyors were rigorously trained and the study tool was piloted. With the exception of three telephone interviews, all the others were conducted face-to-face. There were difficulties in getting updated contact information, hence fewer graduates from the Sohag governorate were included than was initially intended. Raw data was entered using SPSS software and then analysed to produce in-depth results. CID Consulting also conducted two focus group discussions with parents and friends of graduates on the understanding that peer pressure and parental pressure play an important role in graduates' decision-making processes regarding the labour market. Secondary sources were used to extend understanding. One-to-one interviews with key officials and stakeholders in both the MKI-DS and TSS were conducted to determine major differences between the two systems. Desk research was done on existing initiatives in TVET in Egypt and the CID Consulting team brought together key figures from MKI-DS, TSS and PVTD to discuss the differences between the

\textsuperscript{31} Assaad R 2008
\textsuperscript{32} CID Consulting 2007; CID Consulting March 2009
systems based on key system elements, implementation modalities and partners, aspects supporting effectiveness and existing gaps.

In the tracer study in 2007, three graduation classes were included (1997-1998; 1998-1999; 2002-2003), from three governorates and eight fields of specialisations. Approximately 87% of the sample was male, compared to 13% female. The two sets of figures are not directly comparable and comparisons will only be made where possible and useful. It should be noted, however, that recommendations made in the first tracer study report (such as updating curricula according to the needs of the labour market, and provision of counselling and placement services for graduates) have been followed in certain ways.
2 Tracer study implications

2.1 A shift in traditional approaches to the labour market among graduates of the MKI-DS

In this section we look at the ways in which the MKI-DS has promoted school-to-work transition as evidenced by the results of the 2009 tracer study.

Evidence from the tracer study suggests that there are key areas in which the MKI-DS has had an impact with regard to enhancing the results of the traditional TSS:

- Increasing interactive employability;
- Enhancing the relevance of the workplace training;
- Increasing the information flow about the labour market;
- Loyalty to job and vocational identity;
- Commitment to further learning;
- Increased ambition to become either better in a job or increased entrepreneurship.

Of the graduates in the sample, 93.3% believe that technical education is preferable to general education because, mostly, it teaches a profession, provides early exposure to practical experience and increases job opportunities. The vast majority (94.3%) think that MKI-DS is preferable to TSS for reasons such as being both theoretical and practical, building relationships between them and the factories, having better curricula, the prestige associated with it (i.e. it has more credibility than the TSS), and employers preferring MKI-DS graduates and treating them better.

Of the sample, 56.2% are currently pursuing further studies (significantly more in the urban Sixth of October governorate). Nevertheless, a high percentage of those who are continuing their education are doing this while working, with the implication that they are contributing to the expenses of going on with education, if not actually paying tuition fees. While overall more men than women are continuing their studies, 40% of the females in the Sixth of October sample are doing so. More graduates seem to opt for shorter length courses. This indicates both a concern about opportunity cost, and a commitment to a chosen area of study and a desire to further qualifications in it. The six most popular fields are Technical Administration, Automotive, Information Systems, Electrical Installation, Commerce/Management and Technology. More than half those enrolled are enrolled in the same subjects as those they took in the MKI-DS. Of those who had the General Administration Clerk MKI-DS, 85.7% who were currently pursuing their studies had not changed their field of specialisation. This also applied to 75% of those who had an Automotive MKI-DS degree and were currently pursuing studies. This was not the case among the few who had pursued an Industrial Mechanic MKI-DS diploma (certificates) but the absolute number here was, in any case, much smaller. Graduates who were pursuing different courses gave various reasons, including poor grades, lack of appropriate institutions, and preference. Nevertheless, the results show both a commitment and loyalty to the job/field of specialisation and to continuing study in the respective field. It
is worth noting that the vast majority of TSS graduates do not pursue further technical studies (only 8% do).  

Evidence that the MKI-DS has produced young workers who are now actively questioning interrogating the quality of their jobs in a constructive manner can be found in the tracer study. In general, this evidence needs to be sought in the retention rate which has traditionally been very low with first-time employees in jobs in Egypt. Increased retention suggests happier employees and employers which is what one would expect from interactive employability and negotiation about job quality.

Of the sample, 52.8% reported that they were currently employed (more in 6th October than in Sohag and more males than females). Only 23.6% of the sample neither work nor pursue studies and, further disaggregated - only 15.9% of the males neither work nor pursue studies while this applies to 50% of the females. The report on the findings notes that approximately half the graduates interviewed went into the job market, either as full time employees or as both employees and studying further. The report notes: “The fact that they all get a taste of work and are drawn into the cycle of regular employment is a significant finding. It draws a profile of an emerging technical vocational graduate who has acquired an acceptance of the discipline of the industrial workforce and the work ethos of the private sector. It also demonstrates that many young Egyptians have made a deliberate decision to enter the labour force at a relatively young age and see themselves growing in it as a career path.” This speaks to both increasing retention and increasing vocational identity.

Approximately 32% of those currently working were employed in the factory where they had been trained during MKI-DS and the findings show an emerging relationship between MKI graduates and MKI companies. According to the research report “(i)t would seem that MKI factories have begun to recognise the training and preparation provided to graduates as a criterion for employing them. It would also seem that graduates have begun to acquire a profile which is rendering them attractive as potential workers to the companies who now have firsthand experience with the nature of MKI training and qualification.” This is much more marked in 6th October than in Sohag. When the consultants compared graduate retention between 1997/8 and 2007/8, it had gone from 9.1% to 31.9% overall (they included additional governorates used in the earlier study). This suggests that the MKI-DS has been learning from past experience and increasing its efficacy.

The notion of increased vocational identity was borne out by the finding that 36.9% of graduates in the sample saw themselves working in a factory/company in their field of specialisation after another ten years, 25% said they would own their own workshop/company, 22.6% said they would have finished their studies and become engineers. A further 13.1% saw themselves working abroad, while only 10% did not know yet, and 2.2% said they would have worked abroad and returned to Egypt. Another 2.2% said they would be married and not working (all females). Two thirds of the sample

33 CID Consulting March 2009, p 3
34 CID Consulting March 2009, p.26
said it would prefer to work in Egypt rather than abroad, suggesting that graduates’ perception of the local labour market is improving (compared with other studies). This, as the report notes, “is a positive trend towards the retention of young graduates and an investment made in a potentially skilled labour force.”

That said, 74.5% of those who are working currently are prepared to travel within Egypt to find a better job. This, says the report, “points to the relationship between experience with employment and job mobility. A willingness to consider moving for better opportunities seems to have been engendered by the experience of working and gaining an income.” Those currently employed believe that they have an opportunity to choose between jobs (53.2%) but those not employed were far more likely to feel that they had to take what they could get. In general, these findings suggest that graduates are beginning to ask questions about job quality for various criteria and this is likely to have a long-term effect on the quality of jobs offered.

The report notes that a fair number of respondents are thinking of owning their own enterprises in the future. While this is an emerging trend among young people in Egypt and cannot be wholly attributed to the MKI-DS, some credit must be given to the personal firsthand experience of MKI graduates in both factories (during the MKI-DS experience) and workshops (afterwards while pursuing further studies) and their market experience in working conditions, business models, risk factors and potential earnings. To some degree, it also seems to reflect a shift in the Pharaonic model which encouraged neither learning nor innovation. MKI graduates often have experience of working in an MKI partner company as well as working in workshops where they find their own placements, providing them with an opportunity to conduct their own assessment of market based business realities, market share, pricing practices, production process etc and thus to acquire labour market information that informs their choices and their negotiating skills.

It is notable that, when asked to rank criteria for choosing a job, the six most selected criteria in descending order for males were: salary, in the graduates’ field of specialisation, treatment in the workplace, insurance, fixed working hours and proximity between home and work. While some of these would be expected, the prominence of treatment at work again suggests a more negotiated approach to the work relationship than is traditional in the Pharaonic mode.

Other criteria which had some prominence included opportunities for career development, degree of knowledge and experience I

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35 CID Consulting March 2009, p.44
36 Again, there were gender and geographical differences, with women and rural respondents, unsurprisingly, being more likely to opt to stay in Egypt. Nevertheless, the percentage of urban males making that choice does seem to be increasing.
37 CID Consulting March 2009, p.50
38 For women, proximity of work and home was of more importance than treatment in the workplace, reflecting the cultural norms which still inhibit the relationship between women and the labour market.
39 More than half the sample asks about industrial safety/accidents in the workplace before accepting a job. The importance here is in the “asking” rather than accepting and, then, if unhappy, just leaving the job. It indicates a more interactive approach and one which has the potential to improve job quality.
will acquire, efficiency of management and managers. Salary remains a key determinant and MKI-DG graduates believe they should earn more than TSS graduates. They also thought they would have a better chance of finding a job than a TSS graduate.

The most common reason given for preferring to work in factories/companies at present, rather than opting for immediate self-employment, is a belief that learning and experience in factories/companies, given the larger capital they have, is greater. All of this adds to a picture of an enhanced understanding of the labour market and of interactive employability and job quality. The need to have friends or relatives in the workplace, previously highly-rated, is now one of the lowest criteria for job selection, for both men and women.

There are also indications that young Egyptians are becoming more networked in their approach to the labour market, making use of newspapers and the internet in their search for jobs. Nevertheless, family, friends, personal connections and relatives remain the main source of information about the job market. In the rural areas, television is a more used vehicle for job search than the internet which is increasingly popular in urban areas.

2.2 The role of the governance structures

The sustainability of the indicators of success from the MKI-DG lies, to a large extent, in the way in which governance of the programme has been harmonised between the private sector and the state and the Union of Investors' Associations through the Regional Units for the Dual System (RUDS) as an autonomous body responsible for promoting MKI-DG and following up on in-company training. One of the objectives of implementing the dual system of vocational education and training in Egypt was to create cooperation between the state and the private sector to improve technical secondary education by offering learners the opportunity for practical, enterprise-based learning while still in school. The success of MKI-DG lies in its ability to offer relevant labour market-oriented vocational education and training, giving the private sector a prominent role in the process. Key here is that the private sector and the Ministry of Education both engage in the design of the learning and assume joint responsibility for the outcomes.

As noted above, to harmonise the relationship between the private sector and the state, the Union of Investors’ Associations established the Regional Units for Dual System (RUDS) entitled as an autonomous body responsible for

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40 Where they did opt for self-employment as an immediate option, it seemed to be about a resistance to being “controlled”. Again, this kind of understanding is likely to improve job quality in the future. Longer term, a high percentage would like to have their own factory or workshop. The report notes that it would be useful to see if this preference for entrepreneurship arises from the MKI-DG approach but this would require a study among TSS graduates which has not yet been done. The report continues (p.49): “Indeed the contact with formal industries and companies seems to have allowed them to savour the experience of regular, disciplined and organised employment. The length of time spent establishing a rapport with the workplace and adapting to its rhythm seems to have equipped youths with a willingness and preparedness to stay in the workforce. For some it even equipped them with the maturity to dream of a future of enterprise ownership and self-employment.”

41 Again, this is more marked in the urban areas than in the rural areas.

42 CID Consulting April 2009, p.12
promoting MKI-DS and following up on in-company training. Twenty-one RUDS function on the governorate level to regulate enrolment and ensure quality of training inside the factories. The role of the RUDS is to assess the needs of partner private sector companies with regard to the training, invite students to apply, screen applicants, match them with enterprises and monitor their progress during the company-based training phase. Furthermore, they are involved in final examination, in particular the certification of the practice part (specific certificate). The RUDS is responsible for ensuring that the demand-orientation under the dual system is fulfilled.\footnote{CID Consulting April 2009, p.13} \footnote{The RUDS is also responsible for developing courses for the training of the existing workforce.}

Curriculum for the theoretical segment in technical schools (in which MKI-DS students do well, passing the same tests as TSS students although they only spend two days a week in the classroom) and plans for in-company training are formulated in co-operation with representatives of the business sector, based on the actual needs of the labour market and the business sector.

Obviously, the idea of combining schooling with workplace and work-process experiences is starting to trickle down into the system with new forms and new partners:

The Ministry of Education now operates – additionally to the “classical” MKI-DS – a form of dual system schools where agreements are made with private sector companies to provide training and schooling within the company compound. Training is monitored by the Ministry of Education staff. Or: sometimes training is delivered in “blocks”, students spending a certain number of weeks in school and then an equivalent number of weeks inside the enterprise. There have even been individual cases where major private businesses have obtained ministerial decrees to establish vocational schools inside their own premises to provide education and training highly specific to their own industries. All these initiatives and schools are supervised by the Ministry of Education and are required to observe the specified number of hours for theoretical instruction and practical training as mandated by the Ministry of Education.

As yet, however, no comparison has been done to test whether these variations on the MKI-DS produce comparably good results, going beyond simply employment in quantitative terms by including the elements of interactive employability and job quality enhancement discussed above. In both these areas, the direct involvement of the business sector in governance and implementation clearly has an important impact and ensures that there is a two-way learning stream between the training process and the employment environment. Those schemes which include the private sector are able to build on the substantial equipment capacity of the sector, on its connection to the markets and the availability of highly skilled and experienced people to do the training. The MKI-DS tracer study reflects the value of this configuration and provides encouragement to the government, in co-operation with the business sector, to attempt to make the changes needed to form a cohesive system. But certain weaknesses still have to be addressed.
2.3 Weaknesses that remain

Despite the evidence that the MKI-DS has a positive effect on graduates in terms of attitudes and qualifications related to work, finding and keeping work, studying further, seeing themselves as having multiple options, and improving their ability to negotiate for jobs with higher quality, neither MKI-DS nor similar dual system approaches, can be seen as a panacea for all ills.

The results of the tracer survey show clearly that the beneficial affects of the approach are more significantly felt by urban men than by either rural men or women in general. Urban women do, however, benefit more than rural women who have the least return on investment with regard to MKI-DS. Women and men have different attitudes to work and these attitudes are shaped by different influences and expectations. Women have not yet replaced the concept of the centrality of marriage and motherhood with other possible career-centred or dual-centred concepts. The 2009 tracer study shows that women have fewer expectations and achieve less as a result of the MKI-DS than do men. This finding is in line with others that show, for example, that rural Egyptian girls from poor households continue to experience the lowest levels of educational attainment.45

In addition, the impact of an approach such as the MKI-DS is not immune to the vagaries of economic conditions and when, as at the moment, there is a global economic slump, then this is likely to have a considerable impact on the effectiveness of the dual system in assisting graduates to successfully enter the labour market. It would, however, be a mistake to abandon an approach which has shown considerable promise in breaching the gap between school and workplace because of what must be assumed to be a cyclical and/or temporary global economic decline. There is sufficient evidence to indicate that the approach not only means that graduates have more labour market-related options, but that they gain a level of confidence which is likely to have short- and medium-term effects on interactive employability and longer-term effects on the quality of jobs in Egypt and the labour market in general.

45 Langsten R, Hassan T, January 2009
3 Conclusions and recommendations for future research

The Egypt National Action Plan for Youth Employment for 2010 to 2015 calls for a reduction in youth unemployment to 15% by 2015 and, in order for this to be achieved, it recognises that the TVET system must be made more demand-driven and the link between education and work strengthened. Both, the findings of the tracer study and the steps currently being taken by the government to introduce more dual system approaches, suggest that the combination of work and learn is the direction best suited to TVET in Egypt. The plan recognises that the MKI-DS has played an important role in raising the level of relevance and quality of the technical education and vocational training system in Egypt. As the majority of young people of near school-leaving age access technical secondary government institutions, this understanding is of major significance.

Some conclusions and suggestions for future innovations and future research:

♦ The data show an approximate gender balance for enrolment in the TVET sector in education. There should, therefore, be potential to introduce new specialisations trades and occupations which may be more culturally suited for young women. Whether the cultural values can or should be challenged to the extent of encouraging young women to choose non-traditional options remains a moot point. Nevertheless, as Part II of the CID study suggests, there are areas such as home-based care for the elderly, care givers for children, hospitality trades and so on which could be culturally accommodated. There also seems to be the possibility that the media, in particular, television and other forms of visual communication, could play a more constructive role than it currently does in shifting cultural perceptions about the role of women, particularly in rural areas where television is a major source of information.

♦ The significant difference between urban and rural impacts needs to be addressed. This requires looking at appropriate workplaces, quality of formal schooling and cultural considerations, and should involve the business sector in those areas.

♦ The success of the direct involvement of the private sector through RUDS suggests that in future someone should look for ways to make this connection and ensure that the private sector is involved in recruitment, curricula, training, monitoring and, through providing state of the art equipment in the workplace, sharing the financial burden involved in technical education.

♦ As the approach clearly benefits all stakeholders, from parents and learners through to companies and workplaces, an adequate balancing financial formula for contributions should be worked out.

♦ While there is a need for greater coherence in the overall system, this should not prevent allowance being made for innovative variations from which everyone can learn. This assumes some kind of enhanced and
functioning quality assurance and accreditation system with overall national recognition.

♦ The kinds of impacts emerging from MKI-DS, related to work culture, vocational identification, breaking through the control-fear-symbiosis to create the possibility of real negotiation around job quality through interactive employability, should be seen as an integral part of the approach.

♦ This might mean including specific learning modules around these issues, ensuring that curricula reflect and workplace trainers recognise their importance.

♦ More comparative studies need to be done between the MKI-DS approach and others now emerging in the TVET system so that the best features of each, and those that produce the best possible labour force outcome, can be combined.
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