

# **BUILDING EFFECTIVE EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

CONFERENCE REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

22-23 February 2012  
Tunis, Tunisia

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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British Council would like to acknowledge the support of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Arab Partnership Initiative in delivering the Building Effective Employer Engagement in Vocational Education initiative in Tunisia.

This report provides a summary of the Building Effective Employer Engagement in Vocational Education, International Conference, held in Tunis from 22-23 February 2012.

The report includes: background information and context; the aims and objectives of the conference; details of programme content and input from speakers and workshop facilitators; key points arising from conference discussions; and the key recommendations arising from the event.

# CONTENTS

|                                                                     |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....                                             | 3  |
| BACKGROUND .....                                                    | 4  |
| CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES .....                                         | 7  |
| CONFERENCE OVERVIEW .....                                           | 8  |
| KEY POINTS ARISING FROM CONFERENCE DISCUSSIONS .....                | 15 |
| SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS .....                         | 16 |
| NEXT STEPS .....                                                    | 19 |
| APPENDIX 1: PROGRAMME .....                                         | 21 |
| APPENDIX 2: LIST OF KEY SPEAKERS<br>AND WORKSHOP FACILITATORS ..... | 25 |



## **ABOUT THE CONFERENCE**

THE MINISTER OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION WAS IN ATTENDANCE TO HEAR AND RESPOND TO THE CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS. THIS DEMONSTRATED THE COMMITMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT TO DRIVE FORWARD REFORMS IN VET AND PROVIDED RECOGNITION THAT THE CONFERENCE WAS A MAJOR MILESTONE IN HELPING TO BUILD EFFECTIVE EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT IN TUNISIA.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Improving the quality of Vocational Education and Training (VET) is one of the key reform agendas being addressed by governments throughout the Middle East and North Africa.

With a few notable exceptions, skills training is essentially supply-led and is often based on outdated curricula that do not adequately prepare trainees for today's job market. In Tunisia, employers and industry currently have limited involvement in the education sector and consequently modest influence on the training that young people receive. There is therefore a need to bring employers in Tunisia closer to the planning and delivery of VET, to help make VET demand-driven and more adaptable to change.

As part of the Skills for Employability Programme in Tunisia the British Council, working in partnership with l'Agence Tunisienne de la Formation Professionnelle (ATFP), l'Union Tunisienne de l'Industrie du Commerce et de l'Artisanat (UTICA) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, delivered a conference on 'Building Effective Employer Engagement in Vocational Education'. The conference, which was held at UTICA in Tunisia from 22-23 February 2012 aimed to showcase the expertise of the UK, Egypt and other countries in the region, in order to inform thinking about the next steps that Tunisia can take to ensure that training better meets the changing needs of business.

The conference was attended by around 200 delegates including employers, policy makers, agencies, educational leaders and young people. Focusing on four major sectors – Construction, Engineering, Health and Tourism – the conference included formal presentations, group discussions and facilitated workshops led by key speakers from Tunisia, the UK and Egypt.

The recommendations emerging from the conference can be broadly summarised as follows:

- A.** Build the capacity of organisations within the system to support VET reform;
- B.** Ensure the curriculum reflects the needs of businesses, sectors and regions;
- C.** Develop mechanisms to help identify skills needs at company, sector and regional level;
- D.** Ensure legislation and funding supports the development and delivery of VET programmes;
- E.** Develop strategies to promote the benefits of VET and encourage participation;
- F.** Encourage partnership and collaboration between key agencies and organisations;
- G.** Promote and secure the continuing professional development of VET trainers;
- H.** Ensure qualifications have currency and the endorsement of employers;
- I.** Implement mechanisms that can ensure the provision of high quality VET;
- J.** Ensure training courses incorporate work placement.

'The key issue is how to prepare the young people to be more employable.'

**Brahim Toumi, Director, l'Agence Tunisienne de la Formation Professionnelle (ATFP)**

# BACKGROUND

Improving the quality of Vocational Education and Training (VET) is one of the key reform agendas being addressed by governments throughout the Middle East and North Africa.

With a few notable exceptions, skills training is essentially supply-led and is often based on outdated curricula that do not adequately prepare trainees for today's job market.

To address this there is a pressing need to bring employers in the region closer to the planning and delivery of VET, as part of the process of making VET delivery demand-driven and more adaptable to change and progress. Currently in Tunisia employers and industry have limited involvement in the education sector and consequently modest influence on the training that young people receive. This situation is mirrored in countries throughout the region.

Over the past two decades the UK has transformed its VET system. Central to this has been the involvement of business, especially through the creation of Sector Skills Councils, which has led to enhanced vocational curriculum development, accurate and relevant benchmarking of skills, improved labour market intelligence and accreditation of skills development.

These advances have helped to ensure that VET evolves and remains relevant, year on year.

Other countries in the region are also now beginning to develop mechanisms that can help promote and support greater employer involvement in the design, development and delivery of VET programmes.

For example, good practice has begun to emerge through recent work undertaken in Egypt which, alongside the UK, can offer valuable insight into the different approaches that can secure VET reform.

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‘The topic is really at the heart of the concerns in the Ministry.’

**Mariam Lissari, Head Advisor of the Minister's Cabinet for Vocational Education and Employment**

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As part of the Skills for Employability Programme in Tunisia and following similar, highly successful events in Egypt and Libya the British Council, working in partnership with l'Agence Tunisienne de la Formation Professionnelle (ATFP), l'Union Tunisienne de l'Industrie du Commerce et de l'Artisanat (UTICA) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, delivered a conference on 'Building Effective Employer Engagement in Vocational Education'.

The conference, which was held at UTICA in Tunis from 22-23 February 2012, aimed to showcase the expertise of the UK and other countries in the region, in order to inform thinking about the next steps that Tunisia can take to ensure that training better meets the changing needs of business.





## **CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES AND OVERVIEW**

THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE WERE TO BRING TOGETHER TUNISIAN, UK AND INTERNATIONAL EXPERTISE. THE CONFERENCE WAS ATTENDED BY AROUND 200 DELEGATES, INCLUDING EMPLOYERS, POLICY MAKERS, AGENCIES, EDUCATIONAL LEADERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE.

# CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of the conference were to bring together Tunisian, UK and international expertise, in order to:

- Identify the main issues preventing employers from becoming more involved in, and investing in skills development in the region;
- Explore the main concerns of employers regarding current approaches to TVET and the key skills deficits;
- Showcase examples of employer engagement from the UK and internationally and explore how such examples may be adopted or adapted for Tunisia;
- Explore what stakeholders in Tunisia want to learn from the UK in the area of employer engagement and identify opportunities for future international collaboration;
- Identify practical steps that can be taken to facilitate greater employer engagement in Tunisia and gain Ministry approval for these steps;
- Identify recommendations for policy reform to support greater employer engagement in Tunisia; and
- Provide an international networking opportunity for professionals with a direct interest in Employer Engagement.

The conference was intended to help stakeholders, including employers, educational leaders and policy makers in Tunisia develop:

- Greater understanding of the importance of effective employer engagement, the obstacles to developing effective employer engagement in Tunisia, and strategies for overcoming these obstacles;
- Greater buy-in to the employer engagement process and a clear understanding of steps that they and others can take to make employer engagement more effective in Tunisia; and
- Greater understanding of how good practice in the UK and other countries can inform employer engagement development in Tunisia and improved contacts with relevant experts in the UK and internationally.

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‘The discussion groups were very interesting.’

**Afshan Baksh, Higher Education and International Manager,  
Harrow College**

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# CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

The conference was attended by around 200 delegates, including employers, policy makers, agencies, educational leaders and young people.

The event was opened by the Conference Chair - Ms Melanie Relton, Regional Vocational Education Manager, Middle East and North Africa, British Council. Three short key note speeches were also given by Ms Eunice Cook (Director, British Council, Tunisia), Mr Brahim Toumi (Director, l'Agence Tunisienne de la Formation Professionnelle), and Mr Hichem Elloumi (President, la Fédération de l'Electricité et de l'Electronique), which helpfully provided the context for the conference and set out some of the issues that would be explored.

The key note speakers emphasised that VET must be more responsive to employment needs in both public and private sectors but that this could only be achieved through effective communication and partnership between government, employers, educators and other agencies. The speakers expressed their confidence that the conference would help to initiate a more effective dialogue between stakeholders and provide a platform to explore different mechanisms for employer engagement, drawing on UK and wider international experience.



Formal presentations were given during the morning of Day 1 and these were as follows:

- Mr Abdelaziz Halleb (Vice President, la Fédération de l'Electricité et de l'Electronique) talked about **'Employer Engagement in Training, the Tunisian Experience'**. Mr Halleb set out the key initiatives and developments for vocational training and higher education in recent years and the progress that had been made to engage companies and professional organisations in training. He emphasised that whilst there had been significant progress, this was not sustainable in the longer term and that:
  - a) UTICA must continue to promote the importance of training as part of companies' business;
  - b) enterprises should adopt a continuous approach to training and development;
  - c) professional organisations should receive funding to better define and guide training; and
  - d) a decision should be made on the legal framework for the organisation and management of training centres, to ensure that there is 'a control of training by employment and the involvement of enterprises'.
- Ms Theresa McDermott (Assistant Director, UK Commission for Employment and Skills) talked about **'The UK's Experience of Employer Ownership'**. Ms McDermott outlined the policies and strategies that the UK has adopted to encourage employers to take 'ownership' of the process of defining standards and developing and delivering high quality provision to meet the needs of industry, young people and the UK economy. She outlined some of the lessons learned as well as how the system had evolved to maximise impact and secure value for money in procuring the right products, at the right time and at the right price. She emphasised that public investment in skills solutions is now only considered where there is evidence of strong employer investment in, and ownership of, the skills agenda.
- Mr Ahmed El-Ashmawi (Senior TVET Expert and Board member of the Egyptian Quality and Advisory Network), talked about **'The Egyptian Experience of Employer Engagement'**. Mr El-Ashmawi provided an overview of Egypt's experience of employer engagement, including the key challenges, how these have been overcome and the approaches that have been taken to promote and support increased participation of employers in TVET. In particular, he described the role of the sectoral Enterprise TVET Partnerships (ETPs), which had been established to ensure enterprises (working with TVET providers and other stakeholders) have a leading role in shaping TVET in their sectors.
- Mr Richard Marsh (Employer Services Director for the National Apprenticeship Service) talked about **'Employer Engagement, Apprenticeships and Return on Investment'**. Richard focused on the role that employers play in the design and delivery of Apprenticeships and how this has benefitted young people, individual businesses and the UK economy as a whole. He emphasised that UK businesses were actively encouraged to consider apprentices as part of their recruitment plans and that a large proportion of businesses employing an apprentice had reported increased productivity and reduced employment costs. Evidence also suggests that apprentices themselves are generally more productive and loyal to their employers.

Delegates took part in smaller discussion groups during the afternoon of Day 1 and then again on Day 2. The discussion groups, which were facilitated by representatives from Tunisia and the UK, provided delegates with the opportunity to explore in some detail the challenges of engaging employers in VET, how these challenges could be overcome and the specific approaches that could be used to support this, drawing on the experience of the UK, Egypt and other countries.

Delegates remained in the same discussion groups throughout the conference to provide continuity and to facilitate the development of an agreed set of recommendations, which were presented to the Minister of Vocational Education at the end of the conference. A full summary of the recommendations that emerged from these discussions is provided under 'Summary of conference recommendations' below.

Facilitated workshops were held during the afternoon of Day 1 and then repeated on Day 2. These workshops were aimed at sharing good practice about the way UK employers engage with different aspects of VET in specific sector contexts, i.e. Construction, Engineering and Manufacturing, Health and Tourism.

Delegates selected two workshops to attend during the conference (one on Day 1 and the other on Day 2) to match their own specific needs and interests.

Each workshop can be summarised as follows:

- **Workshop A: How to Help Construction Employers Engage in Apprenticeships.** This workshop, which was led by Robert Checksfield (Construction and Engineering Consultant), outlined the main issues that are driving vocational education and training in the construction industry and the approaches that have been taken by the industry to help young people prepare for employment, with a particular focus on Apprenticeships. The workshop explained the mechanisms that have been put in place by Construction Skills, the Sector Skills Council for the construction industry in the UK, to encourage and support employers, employer federations and other interest groups to engage proactively in the design and delivery of Apprenticeships and provided some examples of good practice exemplified through case studies.
- **Workshop B: Engineering and Manufacturing – the Skills Agenda and Supporting Employers.** This workshop, which was led by Matthew Scarff (Business Innovation Manager, EMTA Awards Ltd) and Colin Moody (Director, Pera Consulting) explained the current educational landscape in England regarding Engineering and Manufacturing, from secondary education to university, and how the Government has supported industry to ensure it can drive educational policy and change. The workshop particularly focused on Engineering Apprenticeships, including information about how Apprenticeships can work, with examples of best practice. The workshop also explored how additional support services within the UK, such as the Manufacturing Advisory Service, is helping UK manufacturers to streamline their processes, reduce waste, become more energy efficient and generally improve and grow their business.

- **Workshop C: Engaging Health Sector Employers in the UK.** This workshop, which was led by Brian Payne (Executive Director of Strategy, Skills for Health), briefly explained how employer representation in UK VET has evolved over the last 50 years, leading to the establishment of the current network of Sector Skills Councils. The workshop then focused on the practical experience of Skills for Health, the Sector Skills Council that represents health sector employers in the UK, on developing employer engagement to secure support for the design, development and delivery of VET products and services to meet the specific needs of the health sector.
- **Workshop D: Securing the Engagement of Small and Micro Businesses in Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism.** This workshop, which was led by Marc Robertson (Consultant in Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism), outlined the role of People 1st, the Sector Skills Council that represents employers in the hospitality, passenger transport, travel, and tourism sectors in the UK. The workshop explored some of the problems that can be caused by the conflicting priorities and perspectives between government, educators and employers, and how these problems can be overcome through structured approaches to engagement and on-going dialogue. The workshop focused particularly on the needs and expectations of small and micro businesses in the hospitality, leisure and tourism sectors.

To celebrate the establishment of a partnership between Harrow College and Dudley College in the UK and le Centre de Formation et d'Apprentissage de Bizerte (CFA Bizerte) in Tunisia, Workshop A was replaced with an alternative workshop on Day 2 of the conference.

This was led by Ms Afshan Baksh (Higher Education and International Manager, Harrow College) and Mr Sanjeev Ohri (Director, Worldwide Operations, Dudley College).

This workshop focussed on: a) showcasing and sharing good practice in the practical steps needed to engage employers effectively and how to sustain these partnerships long-term; and b) talking in more detail about the Skills for Employability project and in particular the proposed project for the Centre de Formation et d'Apprentissage de Bizerte' to 'CFA Bizerte.

The aim of the project is to support CFA Bizerte in developing robust processes for Career Orientation, Advice and Guidance, Employer Engagement and Quality Assurance, thus meeting the developmental needs of the partner, its community and local employers.

In order to achieve this, the UK partners will share good practice in these fields, specifically based around the vocational area of Fashion and Textiles and bringing UK expertise to the Tunisian education sector.

A panel discussion was held at the end of Day 1 to consolidate understanding of key issues and answer questions raised by delegates. The panel discussion was chaired by Ms Melanie Relton with input from Mr Abdelaziz Halleb, Ms Theresa McDermott, Mr Ahmed El-Ashmawi, Mr Richard Marsh, and Mme Samira Hached.

During the morning of Day 2 a group of Young Tunisians (Mr Adnene Farouki, Mr Ons Bouhajja, Mr Walid Hfassa, Ms Emna Amara; Ms Meriem Massoudi and Ms Raouia Briki) spoke about their experience of training, how far it had equipped them for the world

of work, what is currently working well in Tunisia, what they would like to see changed and how they think that might be achieved.

They were joined by Mr Aymen Khelifi from the Vocational and Tertiary Training Centre of Grammarth, who provided a different perspective on how links between vocational study programmes and employment can be made.

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‘The employer engagement is crucial in the quality of professional training.’

**Samira Hached, Director Communication, Agence Tunisienne de la Formation Professionnelle (ATFP)**

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Key points that emerged during this session were that:

- Students are eager to get work experience as part of their vocational preparation and training;
- High quality vocational training needs to be more widely available;
- There is a need to combine theory and practice in more post-graduate courses;
- The 2008 law needs to be reviewed to take account of VET participants; and
- Employers must engage in the process by making their needs known.

At the end of Day 2, Mr Abdelwaheb Maatar (Minister of Vocational Education) was in attendance to hear the recommendations of each discussion group.

In his response to these recommendations, the Minister indicated that there was a clear need to fill the gap between training and employment, to ensure young people had the skills that employers need.

He added that employers have a critical role to play in achieving this and that there is a critical need to ensure parity of esteem between academic education and VET.

He recognised that the challenges of reform could be overcome by drawing on the experience of other countries, but he also emphasised that the solutions must be fit for purpose for Tunisia.





## **KEY POINTS AND SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE**

A DISTINCT LACK OF ENGAGEMENT BY EMPLOYERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF VET PROGRAMMES - THERE IS CERTAINLY A LACK OF PRACTICAL TRAINING IN COMPANIES, EITHER THROUGH WORK PLACEMENT OR OTHER TYPES OF IN-COMPANY TRAINING.

# KEY POINTS ARISING FROM CONFERENCE DISCUSSIONS

A range of points arose from the discussion groups, which can be summarised as follows:

- The VET infrastructure requires modification, especially in more disadvantaged areas. For example, equipment used for training is either non-existent, out of date or needs replacing. The capacity of many organisations to adapt to meet changing needs and demands is also a significant issue;
- The vocational curriculum does not adequately reflect the needs of industry and focuses almost entirely on theory, rather than giving learners the practical experience they need to acquire the skills for work. In addition, the curriculum is not updated frequently enough – the law currently requires the curriculum to be updated every 5 years, which is not sufficient to ensure that it takes account of the changing needs of industry;
- There is an absence of appropriate diagnostic tools that can help to identify skills needs at a sectoral and regional level. Individual companies also lack the tools and expertise that can help them identify the skills they need to compete successfully in both national and global economies;
- There is a lack of knowledge and understanding about the availability of funding, or how it can be accessed and used to benefit companies in supporting VET;
- Poor communication has led to a lack of awareness and understanding about the benefits of VET and the mechanisms relating to the development and delivery of VET programmes. In addition, there is a lack of high quality careers guidance available to young people;
- There is a general lack of competence in training institutions. In particular, trainers lack relevant and recent industry experience, the technical and pedagogical skills they need to undertake their role, or the motivation to acquire and maintain these skills on an on-going basis;
- The quality of VET across institutions is generally inconsistent and in some cases quite poor. The development of a set of minimum standards, along with mechanisms to ensure adherence to these standards will be an important consideration if the quality of VET is to be guaranteed in the future;
- The status of vocational qualifications and their place within the National Qualifications Framework needs to be confirmed. Vocational qualifications should be endorsed by employers, provide clear progression opportunities for young people and facilitate workforce mobility;
- Most companies are unable to provide individuals to coach and mentor trainees and there is generally no provision in companies to follow-up on any external training that has been provided. In some cases, companies are reluctant to train their employees on the basis that they will claim a higher salary or leave the company immediately after the training ends;
- There has been a lack of partnership and collaboration between different stakeholders, which means that there are no shared values or objectives for VET.

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‘Very interesting recommendations. We need to make sure there is a concrete implementation and follow up.’

**Salhi Faleh ( ATP agent )**

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# SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations emerging from the conference discussions can be grouped under 10 broad headings as follows:

## A. BUILD THE CAPACITY OF ORGANISATIONS WITHIN THE SYSTEM TO SUPPORT VET REFORM

- i. Establish adequate VET infrastructures in disadvantages areas
- ii. Encourage industry to support VET Centres by providing equipment (to be used in training) at discounted prices – consider a regional weighting to help address imbalances in provision between the north and the south
- iii. Ensure VET Centres have the capacity and authority to adapt their programmes to meet labour market needs, based on sound market intelligence and advice from employers
- iv. Ensure companies understand the need to hold follow-up sessions with learners about the training they have received
- v. Give more autonomy to the different educational structures

## B. ENSURE THE CURRICULUM REFLECTS THE NEEDS OF BUSINESSES, SECTORS AND REGIONS

- i. Change legislation to ensure the curriculum is updated every three years as a minimum and that it can adapt to the changing needs of industry
- ii. Professionalise curriculum development through sectoral committees involving ATFP, UTICA, industry and appropriately remunerated trainers
- iii. Ensure curriculum and associated training is developed and piloted, based on the needs and demands of industry and the priorities of the region in which it is provided
- iv. Link curriculum development to national occupational standards and ensure all training has a value in terms of its relevance to industry needs and requirements
- v. Embed the concepts of the professional and training environment into the middle school curriculum in order to develop an entrepreneurial culture from a young age

‘The BEEET Conference offered an excellent opportunity to network with key international partners and build positive relationships that will last into the future.’

**Theresa McDermott, Assistant Director Investment, UKCES**

### **C. DEVELOP MECHANISMS TO HELP IDENTIFY SKILLS NEEDS AT COMPANY, SECTOR AND REGIONAL LEVEL**

- i. Develop diagnostic tools to support the analysis of employment and skills needs at sectoral and regional level
- ii. Develop diagnostic tools to help individual companies identify the skills they need to ensure they remain competitive and, which can support wider analysis at sector or regional levels

### **D. ENSURE FUNDING SUPPORTS THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF VET PROGRAMMES**

- i. Review the funding system taking into consideration the results of satisfaction surveys
- ii. Create a new funding framework with a co-managed fund (administration, professionals) for the collection of the TFP (tax on vocational training)

### **E. DEVELOP STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE THE BENEFITS OF VET AND ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION**

- i. Develop an effective communications strategy that addresses all relevant stakeholders (trainers, colleges, schools, employers, government, learners and their parents), in order to raise awareness, improve public perception of the importance and value of VET, promote VET programmes and encourage active participation in their development and delivery
- ii. Develop high quality careers information and guidance for each sector, which can be made available through sector websites, schools and by VET Centres, to include information about:
  - Jobs and skills requirements
  - Relevant qualifications and progression routes
  - Training centres in each region
  - Availability of internships
  - Case studies and success stories
- iii. Create an information centre at UTICA to guide and help professionals understand the various tools and the funding of training
- iv. Review and rationalise the VET colleges and specialities maps
- v. Develop incentive measures and raise awareness of investors in the interior of Tunisia

## **F. ENCOURAGE PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN KEY AGENCIES AND ORGANISATIONS**

- i. Create a Tripartite Committee (ATFP, British Council and UTICA) to follow up on the recommendations of the conference
- ii. Create a forum that brings together all key stakeholders in the VET sector, which can promote on-going discussion and facilitate development
- iii. Encourage and support the active participation of employers in the process of training and in the development of professional training programmes, working with VET Centres as appropriate
- iv. Ensure the system is sufficiently flexible to allow Centres to interact effectively and innovatively with enterprises
- v. Promote the success of existing joint mechanisms and social dialogue and use these to provide a basis for expansion into different sectors
- vi. Create a directory of sector businesses incorporated in the collective agreement

## **G. PROMOTE AND SECURE THE CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF VET TRAINERS**

- i. Ensure trainers (in training institutes and the workplace) receive appropriate and adequate training (pedagogical and technical) to international standards, prior to undertaking their role
- ii. Ensure that trainers keep up-to-date on curriculum changes and maintain the currency of their knowledge and understanding by having regular hands-on experience in industry
- iii. Motivate trainers to participate in training sessions, e.g. by providing assistance re logistics and covering costs

## **H. ENSURE QUALIFICATIONS HAVE CURRENCY AND THE ENDORSEMENT OF EMPLOYERS**

- i. Ensure that the position regarding the National Qualifications Framework is clear
- ii. Encourage co-certification abroad to ensure work mobility
- iii. Encourage systematic validation of the Diploma by enterprise as well as the Ministry

## **I. IMPLEMENT MECHANISMS THAT CAN ENSURE THE PROVISION OF HIGH QUALITY VET**

- i. Conduct further research, as appropriate, to evaluate the quality of training provision
- ii. Introduce a minimum quality standard relating to the systems, procedures and expertise of VET Centres and avoid thinking solely in terms of figures and numbers of trainees registered
- iii. Implement an independent system of pedagogical advice, support, mentoring, inspection and audit to ensure adherence to these minimum standards
- iv. Recognise adherence to the minimum standards through an appropriate form of endorsement or certification
- v. Provide a similar form of endorsement or certification to employees of the ATFP to ensure overall quality of the system

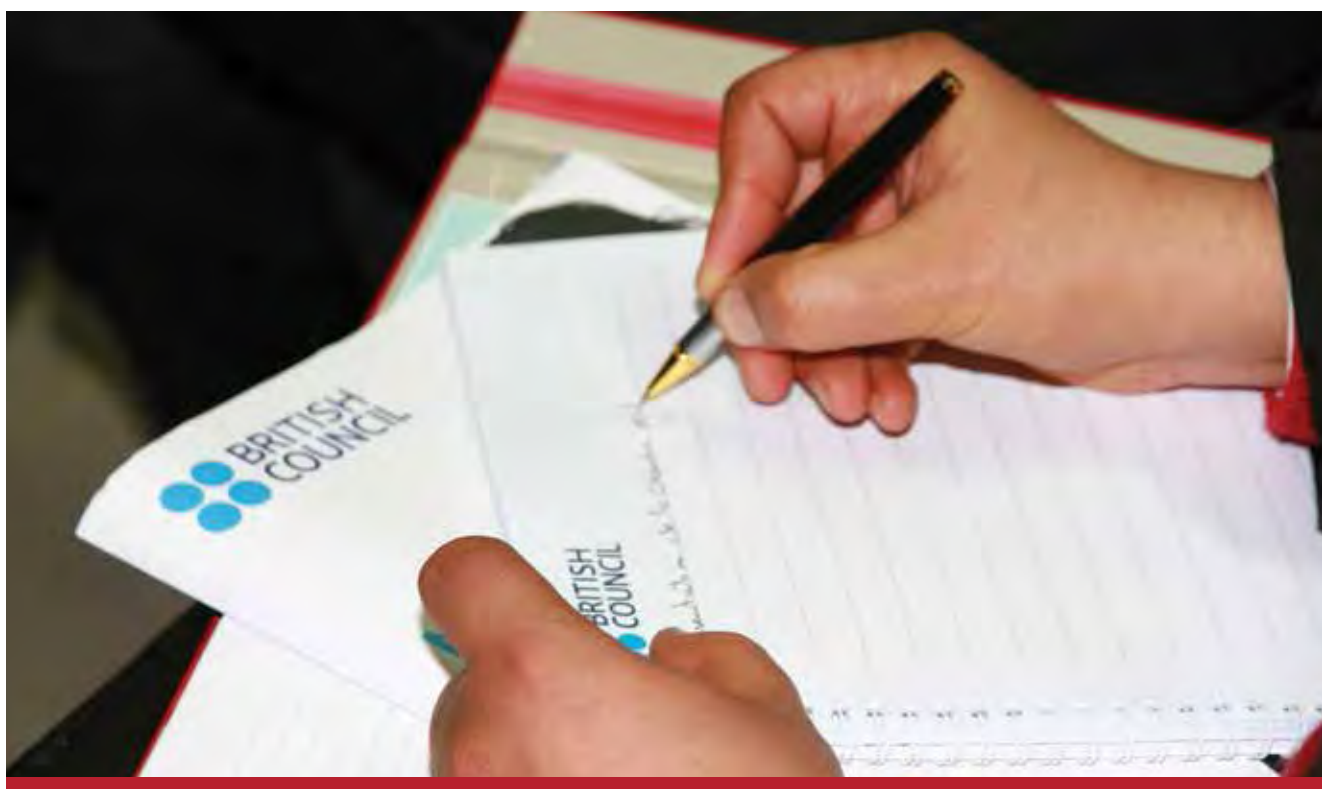
## **J. ENSURE TRAINING COURSES INCORPORATE WORK PLACEMENT**

- i. Review the legal framework for work placement to consider the interests of all parties
- ii. Develop the capacity of training centres and enterprises to implement training courses that incorporate work placements
- iii. Encourage VET Centres to develop a commercial department for the placement of learners based on their business skills, needs and availability

## NEXT STEPS

A number of practical steps should be taken over the course of the next few weeks, in order to maintain progress:

- Ensure conference recommendations and copies of the various slide presentations are made available to conference delegates on the British Council web-site;
- Organise early meetings between the British Council, UTICA and AFTP to review, rationalise and prioritise the conference recommendations, and agree actions and timescales;
- Identify high profile employer champions that can help to support and drive VET reform;
- Consider organising small scale events and meetings with and between key stakeholder groups to consider the more detailed development of proposals, based on identified priorities;
- Engage in follow up discussions with UKCES, NAS, individual SSCs and other relevant organisations in the UK and Egypt, as appropriate, to obtain further information and guidance that can support the implementation of conference recommendations.





**APPENDIX 1:**  
PROGRAMME FOR DAY 1

**APPENDIX 1:**  
PROGRAMME FOR DAY 2

**APPENDIX 2:**  
LIST OF KEY SPEAKERS AND WORKSHOP FACILITATORS

# APPENDIX 1: PROGRAMME FOR DAY 1

## 22 February 2012

|             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 08.30–09.20 | Registration and filmed interviews                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 09.30–09.50 | <p><b>Welcome and introductions</b></p> <p><i>Melanie Relton</i>, British Council (Chairperson)</p> <p><i>Eunice Crook</i>, Director, British Council Tunisia</p> <p><i>Brahim Toumi</i>, Director, l'Agence Tunisienne de la Formation Professionnelle (ATFP)</p> <p><i>Hichem Elloumi</i>, President, la Fédération de l'Electricité et de l'Electronique (FEDELEC)</p>                                                                                                             |
| 09.50–10.15 | <p><b>Challenges of Employer Engagement in Tunisia</b></p> <p>This opening presentation set out, from an employer's perspective, the extent to which training needs are being met, how employer engagement is working in Tunisia and what needs to change.</p> <p><i>Abdelaziz Halleb</i>, Vice president of Electricity and Electronic Sector Council</p>                                                                                                                            |
| 10.15–10.40 | <p><b>The UK's Experience of Employer Ownership – Achievements and Lessons Learned</b></p> <p>This presentation outlined the policies and strategies that the UK has adopted to encourage employers to take ownership of the process of defining standards and developing and delivering high quality provision to meet the needs of industry and the UK economy</p> <p><i>Theresa McDermott</i>, Assistant Director (Investment), UKCES</p>                                          |
| 10.40–11.00 | <b>Coffee and filmed interviews</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 11.10–11.35 | <p><b>The Egyptian Experience of Employer Engagement</b></p> <p>This presentation provided an overview of Egypt's experience of employer engagement, including the key challenges, how these have been overcome and the approaches that have been taken to promote and support increased participation of employers in vocational education and training</p> <p><i>Ahmed El-Ashmawi</i>, Senior TVET Expert and Board Member of the Egyptian Quality and Advisory Network (ETQAN)</p> |
| 11.35–12.00 | <p><b>Employer Engagement, Apprenticeships and Return on Investment</b></p> <p>This presentation provided another perspective on employer engagement in the UK, focusing specifically on the role that employers play in the design and delivery of Apprenticeships and how this has benefitted both individual businesses and the UK economy as a whole</p> <p><i>Richard Marsh</i>, Employer Services Director, National Apprenticeship Service</p>                                 |

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| 12.10–13.00 | <p><b>Group Discussion: Framing the Debate on Employer Engagement in Tunisia</b></p> <p>Working in small groups, delegates explored the challenges of engaging employers in vocational education and training and how these could be overcome in Tunisia. Delegates also considered questions for the panel discussion later in the afternoon.</p> <p><i>Samira Hached</i>, Director Communication, ATFP</p> <p><i>Rafika Bacha</i>, Director Training UTICA</p> <p><i>Neil Shaw</i>, Regional Adviser in Vocational Education and Training, Middle East and North Africa, British Council</p> <p><i>Fatma Bennour</i>, Tunisian Hospitality Sector Council (la Fédération Tunisienne de l'Hôtellerie (FTH))</p> <p><i>Dhafer El Oued</i>, General Secretary, l'Union Régionale de Ben Arous de l'UTICA</p> <p><i>Mustapha Baccouche</i>, Responsable of the Universities Relationship at l'UTICA</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 13.00–13.50 | <b>Lunch and filmed interviews</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 14.00–15.00 | <p><b>Facilitated Workshops: The Experience of UK Industry</b></p> <p>UK experts shared their experience of the approaches that have been taken by different sectors (Construction, Engineering, Tourism and Health) to engage employers in vocational education and training.</p> <p>The titles of the workshops were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. How to help construction employers engage in apprenticeships</li> <li>B. Engineering and manufacturing – the skills agenda and supporting employers</li> <li>C. Engaging health sector employers in the UK</li> <li>D. Securing the engagement of small and micro businesses in hospitality, leisure and tourism</li> </ul> <p>Delegates selected and attended one of the workshops on day 1 of the conference and another workshop on day 2.</p> <p>Workshop A: <i>Robert Checksfield</i>, Consultant in Construction and Engineering</p> <p>Workshop B: <i>Matthew Scarff</i>, Business Innovation Manager, EMTA Awards Ltd and Colin Moody, Director, Pera Consulting</p> <p>Workshop C: <i>Brian Payne</i>, Executive Director of Strategy, Skills for Health</p> <p>Workshop D: <i>Marc Robertson</i>, Consultant in Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism</p> |
| 15.00–15.20 | <b>Coffee and filmed interviews</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 15.30–16.30 | <p><b>Panel discussion</b></p> <p>This provided an opportunity to follow up on key points arising from day 1 of the conference and elicit suggestions for solutions that informed the discussions on day 2.</p> <p><i>Melanie Relton</i> (Chairperson)</p> <p><i>Abdelaziz Halleb</i></p> <p><i>Theresa McDermott</i></p> <p><i>Ahmed El-Ashmawi</i></p> <p><i>Richard Marsh</i></p> <p><i>Samira Hached</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 16.30       | <b>Close</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

# APPENDIX 1: PROGRAMME FOR DAY 2

## 23 February 2012

|             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 08.30–09.20 | Registration                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 09.30–09.45 | <b>Review and recap of key issues emerging from day 1 of the conference</b><br><i>Melanie Relton</i> , British Council (Chair)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 09.45–10.30 | <b>Young Tunisians' Skills Priorities</b><br>Young Tunisians talked about their experience of training, how far they think it has equipped them for the world of work, what is currently working well in Tunisia, what they would like to see change and how they think that might be achieved.<br><i>Adnene Farouki</i> , President of the Tunisian organism of the trainees and graduates of the Vocational Education.<br><i>Ons Bouhajja</i> , Young Entrepreneur<br><i>Walid Hfassa</i> , World Skills participant and Young Entrepreneur                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 10.30–10.50 | <b>Coffee and filmed interviews</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 11.00–12.00 | <b>Facilitated Workshops: The Experience of UK Industry</b><br>This presentation provided an overview of Egypt's experience of employer UK experts shared their experience of the approaches that have been taken by different sectors (Construction, Engineering, Tourism and Health) to engage employers in vocational education and training.<br><br>The titles of the workshops were as follows:<br>A. How to help construction employers engage in apprenticeships<br>B. Engineering and manufacturing – the skills agenda and supporting employers<br>C. Engaging health sector employers in the UK<br>D. Securing the engagement of small and micro businesses in hospitality, leisure and tourism<br>Delegates selected and attend one of the workshops on day 1 of the conference and another workshop on day 2. day of the conference, during conference registration.<br><br>Workshop A: <i>Afshan Baksh</i> , Higher Education and International Manager, Harrow College and <i>Sanjeev Ohri</i> , Director, Worldwide Operations, Dudley College<br>Workshop B: <i>Matthew Scarff</i> , Business Innovation Manager, EMTA Awards Ltd and <i>Colin Moody</i> , Director, Pera Consulting<br>Workshop C: <i>Brian Payne</i> , Executive Director of Strategy, Skills for Health<br>Workshop D: <i>Marc Robertson</i> , Consultant in Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism |

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| 12.10–13.00 | <p><b>Group Discussion: Opportunities for Building Effective Employer Engagement in Tunisia</b></p> <p>Working in the same groups from day 1 of the conference, delegates discussed ideas, learning, suggestions and inspiration that emerged and explored in some detail the approaches that could be taken to enhance employer engagement in Tunisia. Discussion took account of current arrangements, how these differ from models used in other countries, what changes could be beneficial and how such changes might be implemented in Tunisia.</p> <p><i>Samira Hached</i>, Director Communication, ATFP<br/> <i>Rafika Bacha</i>, Director Training UTICA<br/> <i>Neil Shaw</i>, Regional Adviser in Vocational Education and Training, Middle East and North Africa, British Council<br/> <i>Fatma Bennour</i>, la Fédération Tunisienne de l'Hôtellerie (FTH)<br/> <i>Dhafer El Oued</i>, General Secretary, l'Union Régionale de Ben Arous de l'UTICA<br/> <i>Mustapha Baccouche</i>, Responsable of the Universities Relationship at l'UTICA</p> |
| 13.00–14.00 | <b>Lunch and filmed interviews</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 14.00–15.00 | <p><b>Group Discussion: Opportunities for Building Effective Employer Engagement in Tunisia (continued)</b></p> <p>Working in the same groups, delegates refined their thinking on the approaches that could be taken to enhance employer engagement in Tunisia, identify priorities and agree recommendations.</p> <p><i>Samira Hached</i>, Director Communication, ATFP<br/> <i>Rafika Bacha</i>, Director Training UTICA<br/> <i>Neil Shaw</i>, Regional Adviser in Vocational Education and Training, Middle East and North Africa, British Council<br/> <i>Fatma Bennour</i>, la Fédération Tunisienne de l'Hôtellerie (FTH)<br/> <i>Dhafer El Oued</i>, General Secretary, l'Union Régionale de Ben Arous de l'UTICA<br/> <i>Mustapha Baccouche</i>, Responsable of the Universities Relationship at l'UTICA</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 15.00–15.20 | <b>Coffee and filmed interviews</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 15.30–16.20 | <p><b>Recommendations for Building Effective Employer Engagement in Tunisia</b></p> <p>Groups fed back and shared their recommendations with other conference delegates - conclusions about next steps were shared with the Minister of Vocational Education</p> <p><i>Melanie Relton</i>, British Council (Chair)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 16.20–16.35 | <p><b>Closing remarks and next steps</b></p> <p><i>Melanie Relton</i>, British Council (Chair)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 16.35–16.45 | <p><b>Response from the Minister of Vocational Education</b></p> <p><i>Abdelwaheb Maatar</i>, Minister of Vocational Education, Tunisia</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 16.45       | <b>Close</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

# APPENDIX 2: LIST OF KEY SPEAKERS AND WORKSHOP FACILITATORS

## Conference Chair

Mrs Melanie Relton, British Council  
(Chairperson)

## Key note speakers

Ms Eunice Crook, Director,  
British Council Tunisia

Mr Brahim Toumi, Director,  
l'Agence Tunisienne de la Formation  
Professionnelle (ATFP)

Mr Hichem Elloumi, President, la Fédération  
de l'Electricité et de l'Electronique (FEDELEC)

## Formal presentations

Mr Abdelaziz Halleb, Vice President of  
Electricity and Electronic Sector Council

Ms Theresa McDermott, Assistant Director  
(Investment), UKCES

Mr Ahmed El-Ashmawi, Senior TVET Expert  
and Board Member of the Egyptian Quality  
and Advisory Network (ETQAN)

Mr Richard Marsh, Employer Services  
Director, National Apprenticeship Service

## Discussion Group Facilitators

Mme Samira Hached, Director  
Communication, ATFP

Mme Rafika Bacha, Director Training UTICA

Mr Neil Shaw, Regional Adviser in Vocational  
Education and Training, Middle East and  
North Africa, British Council

Mme Fatma Bennour, Fédération tunisienne  
de l'Hôtellerie (FTH)

Mr Dhafer El Oued, General Secretary of the  
Regional Union of Ben Arous, UTICA

Mr Mustapha Baccouche, Responsable of the  
Universities Relationship at UTICA

## Workshop Facilitators

Mr Robert Checksfield, Consultant in  
Construction and Engineering

Mr Matthew Scarff, Business Innovation  
Manager, EMTA Awards Ltd

Mr Colin Moody, Director, Pera Consulting

Mr Brian Payne, Executive Director of  
Strategy, Skills for Health

Mr Marc Robertson, Consultant in Hospitality,  
Leisure and Tourism

Ms Afshan Baksh, Higher Education and  
International Manager, Harrow College

Mr Sanjeev Ohri, Director, Worldwide  
Operations, Dudley College

## Young Tunisians

Mr Adnene Farouki, President of the Tunisian  
organism of the trainees and graduates of  
the Vocational Education.

Mr Ons Bouhajja, Young Entrepreneur

Mr Walid Hfassa, World Skills participant and  
Young Entrepreneur

Ms Emna Amara

Ms Meriem Massoudi

Ms Meriem Karmous

Ms Raouia Briki

Mr Aymen Khelifi, Vocational and Tertiary  
Training Centre of Gammarth









**BUILDING EFFECTIVE EMPLOYER  
ENGAGEMENT IN VOCATIONAL  
EDUCATION: INTERNATIONAL  
CONFERENCE**

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