ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The British Council would like to thank Jim Playfoot, White Loop Limited who led on the conference programme and prepared this report.

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 Perceptions of Skills initiative in Tunisia.
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ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

THE CONFERENCE WAS HUGELY OVERSUBSCRIBED: AN ANTICIPATED ATTENDANCE OF 100 ALMOST DOUBLED, WITH THE LEVEL OF ENTHUSIASM A CLEAR INDICATION OF THE IMPORTANCE STAKEHOLDERS PLACED ON ADDRESSING THE ISSUES BEING EXPLORED.
INTRODUCTION

In January 2012, a two day event was held in Tunis to explore the challenges around the perceptions of Skills.

The conference, part of the British Council’s ‘Skills for Employability’ programme, brought together all relevant stakeholders: policy makers, educators, employers and young people. International speakers were invited to share their experiences, to explore the issues within Tunisia and engage with assembled participants through a series of workshops and discussions.

The conference was hugely oversubscribed: an anticipated attendance of 100 almost doubled, with the level of enthusiasm a clear indication of the importance stakeholders placed on addressing the issues being explored.

Within a context of significant social, political and economic change, attendees were passionate and direct in their assessment of the challenges and opportunities facing Tunisia in terms of skills and vocational education.

The engagement and endorsement of the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Education was led by the Minister himself who provided the welcome address and expressed the importance of the themes of the conference for Tunisia and the Region.

This report offers key findings from the conference activities and provides a set of concrete recommendations and potential next steps as identified by the conference participants.

The intention of the British Council is to follow up on these recommendations through further engagement and partnership.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Changing Perceptions of Skills conference saw delegates drawn from all key stakeholder groups explore passionately these challenges in depth.

Tunisia faces significant challenges around creating opportunity for its young people. Like most countries in the world, skills-based employment and vocational education options suffer by comparison to white collar professions and academic, university-based study.

If Tunisia is to capitalise on the opportunity for change and growth created by the recent revolution, all stakeholders must work together to create better pathways from education into employment and these must be supported by a more proactive approach to entrepreneurship and enterprise creation.

Opening the two-day conference, the Minister for Employment and Vocational Education identified vocational education as a critical aspect of the employment challenges currently facing Tunisians. Acknowledging the damage that unemployment was doing to a young, highly motivated population, he highlighted the need to create a more balanced approach to education that married practical and theoretical knowledge.
Brahim Toumi from l’Agence Tunisienne de la Formation Professionnelle (ATFP) pinpointed the need for better partnerships between industry and education.

He also highlighted the need to measure the employability of an individual against their ability and achievements rather than their academic performance.

In order to change the perception of skills, the technical and vocational education system needs reform. It is only through improving education provision and demonstrating the impact on employment and opportunity that the perception of skills will improve.

This reform will involve every aspect of the system including:

• Engagement with employers around curriculum design and delivery
• Redefining the value and progression routes associated with vocational qualifications
• Addressing poor facilities in vocational training centres
• Tackling the quality, knowledge, skills and motivation of vocational teachers and trainers
• Attracting students to vocational education as a first choice and raise the bar on entry requirements

Alongside changes to the system itself, there are evident challenges around the communication and marketing of skills and vocational education:

• The debate around skills is narrow and relies on negative and often outdated ideas about vocational education
• It is not only young people’s perceptions that need to be addressed: parents and employers remain a considerable barrier towards changing perceptions
• The mainstream media is typically uninterested in vocational education
• There are not enough high profile success stories demonstrating the value of choosing a vocational pathway
• The message around skills needs to be delivered in schools through orientation and career guidance but this is typically poor or absent altogether

If Tunisia is to address these challenges, a range of solutions will be needed involving all key stakeholders.

Change should be underpinned by a firm commitment to developing policy and practice that reflects the best international examples but that is rooted in the specific national and regional context in Tunisia.
Reform of the vocational education system is critical. In this regard, the following recommendations are suggested:

• A root and branch review of the current vocational system to analyse every aspect of current practice and policy and develop a roadmap for future reform

• A programme of teacher training, recruitment and ongoing professional development to better equip teachers to deliver high quality, industry-standard education and training

• New mechanisms (policy; legal; institutional) to connect employers with the design and delivery of education and training and to connect vocational experiences more directly with employment

• Improvements to orientation and career guidance services from primary school onwards and including support for those currently unemployed

• Reform of the vocational qualifications system to create progression opportunities between vocational and academic pathways

• Development of better market needs analysis tools to better inform all key stakeholders (including educators and employers) of current and future labour market needs

Alongside reform to the vocational system, the communication and messaging around vocational education and skills development needs to be addressed.

Changing the system will not, in itself, change perceptions. To do this we need to:

• Design and launch a campaign aimed at young people, using social media and through activities in schools, that fosters an understanding of career options and educational pathways; support this with high quality online resources

• Identify and collate success stories and individual case studies that can be used to demonstrate the value of vocational education

‘Well done to include all concerned people.’

Choubaieb Behi, Student
• Target parents and employers – through the mass media – and challenge their negative preconceptions about skills and vocational education

• Enable young people to explore career options for themselves and give them the tools and information they need to make more informed choices about both their future employment and the educational pathways that might impact on this

• Engage employers more actively in becoming vocal and visible supporters of vocationally trained candidates; connect employers more openly and directly with educational experiences.

The conference, and the recommendations presented here, are initial stages of the process.

The British Council is committed to collaborating with partners in Tunisia and beyond to bring about positive change and help transform both the provision of vocational education and the perceptions of skills.
The low status of skills is a significant challenge facing societies and economies throughout the world and an obstacle to attracting people of calibre - particularly the young - into jobs upon which the future efficiency and prosperity of their societies depend. To the detriment of the skills sector, the preference of young people - and just as significantly, their parents - too often remains the traditional white-collar, often office-based, professions. Skills has a considerable image problem and countries around the world are increasingly recognising the negative impact this has on developing an effective workforce equipped to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

The UK is keenly aware of the historically poor image of skills and has developed strategies to address this including the introduction of a network of national skills academies and an emphasis on mixing academic subjects and TVET, rather than separating these through guiding young people down either an academic or a skills route, as is often the case in continental European countries.

The British Council’s international Skills for Employability programme is itself another example of the UK’s efforts to address the negative perception of skills.

Although progress has been made in this area, the UK recognises that a great deal of work remains to be done to propagate a more aspirational image of skills and thereby attract more of the best young people in society into vocational education and training. The UK recognises too that it is vital for countries to share experiences and lessons learned in order to identify mutual challenges, seek opportunities for collaboration and explore imaginatively how to change the ways skills are viewed.

The low status of skills is an international problem; international approaches offer the best prospect for finding effective solutions.

As part of the Skills for Employability programme, the British Council delivered the first of two interlinked international conferences on the theme of ‘Changing Perceptions of Skills’ in Tunisia on 19-20 January 2012. The second event was held in Egypt on 14-15 February 2012.

The emphasis of both conferences was to share experiences, explore innovative ideas and lessons learned in order to identify constructive approaches for tackling the low status of skills.
The following objectives were set prior to the conference:

- To identify the main factors perpetuating a negative image of skills and explore the degree to which these factors are internationally relevant
- To showcase initiatives to address the negative image of skills, assess their effectiveness and explore lessons learned
- To share ideas for developing new strategies that foster a positive image of skills, including policy development to end the ‘ghettoisation’ of skills, enhancing the role of careers guidance in attracting young people to skills, exploring the dynamic between employers and educators and enhancing the role of media and technology in promoting positive images of skills
- To build relationships between key stakeholders internationally concerned with improving the image of skills
- To explore opportunities for future collaboration internationally to address the negative image of skills
- To deliver a series of practical recommendations for actions that will change the perception of skills

Invited delegates were drawn from across the different key stakeholder groups including employers, those working in the VET sector, students, trainees and representatives from policy making bodies.

Delegates were predominantly from Tunisia although there were international contributions from the Middle East and North Africa region and the UK. In total, around 180 delegates attended over the course of the two days.

The conference, and the subsequent follow-up activities, will seek to achieve the following outcomes:

- Raised profile of skills in Tunisia
- Improved understanding of the key challenges involved in changing perceptions of skills and of potential strategies to address these challenges
- Increased buy-in of key stakeholders to work to improve the status of skills
- Improved relationships and networks nationally and internationally to help improve the status of skills
THEMES AND PRINCIPLE CHALLENGES

Through interactive workshops and discussions, the conference participants identified a set of challenges and themes that affect the perception of skills in Tunisia.
THEMES AND PRINCIPLE CHALLENGES

These are summarised below:

RAISE THE QUALITY, IMPROVE THE PERCEPTION

• The design of the curriculum needs to be updated and more relevant to the workplace
• The delivery of the curriculum is inconsistent and varies from centre to centre
• Trainers and teachers are often inadequately qualified and are not given requisite professional support
• The quality of vocational students is typically low with little thought given to their individual abilities and little or no focus on entry requirements
• The quality and modernity of facilities does not reflect real world working conditions

SCEPTICISM TOWARDS THE VALUE OF THE QUALIFICATION

• Students believe that a vocational qualification will lead to a low paid job with no prospects
• Parents believe vocational education is the choice of the academic failure and is a ‘dead end’
• Vocational qualifications are not aspirational; the principle aspiration remains an academic pathway
• There is a lack of guidance to explain how a skills pathway can lead to positive employment outcomes

NO SENSE OF PRIDE; NO AMBASSADORS FOR SKILLS

• Students from vocational education do not celebrate their achievements or share their experiences with others
• Teachers and trainers are demotivated and do not project a positive attitude towards their profession
• There is a lack of success stories and visible role models who can demonstrate the value and impact of choosing a skills pathway
EMPLOYERS ARE NOT POSITIVELY ENGAGED IN EDUCATION DESIGN AND DELIVERY

• There is a lack of input from employers into the design of the curriculum
• Many employers are unwilling or unable to play a role in delivering the curriculum
• There is a disconnect between labour market needs and the outputs of educational institutions: both the data and the sharing of this data needs to be better
• Work placements and apprenticeships are often abused by employers who exploit these schemes as a source of ‘cheap labour’
• Some employers take the view that graduated vocational students provide a source of low-paid workers

POLICY DOES NOT SUPPORT POSITIVE PERCEPTION

• Positive perception has to be driven by government but the relevant ministries are not taking the initiative
• There is a lack of quality control across the vocational education system leading to negative perceptions
• The (centralised) management and organisation of training and work placements needs fundamental reform with greater emphasis on feedback and on the assessment of impact

CAREERS AND EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE (ORIENTATION) IS SEVERELY Lacking

• Significant issues exist around orientation and signposting from primary school upwards – young people are not aware of the choices they have, particularly in relation to vocational education and employment
• Little information exists that connects educational choices to career pathways
• The advice and information currently provided is out of date and often not matched to the individual’s talents or passions
• Careers advice tends to be casual (from parents for example) and will focus on traditional notions of a ‘good job’ (medicine, engineering etc.)

‘Generally, all seminars you have organised around the VET, have held relevant themes and brought together a carefully targeted audience.’

Samira Hached, Director of Communication and Information at ATFP
NO PLATFORM FOR COMMUNICATING THE VALUE OF SKILLS

• The debate around skills is narrow and doesn’t reach everyone
• Parents are often ill-informed or unaware of how educational choices and pathways will impact on employment prospects
• The media are typically uninterested in skills and vocational educational and tend to revert to the ‘old’ arguments
• If positive change is happening, people won’t hear about it: there is not a common understanding of how to communicate the message
• A ‘change in mentality’ is needed but how?

As the themes outlined above demonstrate, there exist significant challenges around both the provision of vocational education and skills and around the way in which skills and vocational education are communicated.

Alongside these challenges, certain themes emerged strongly, some with a particularly local feel.

The following key points arose as being of priority to the conference participants:

There must be structural or policy changes that impact on the value and progression routes of vocational qualifications

Currently, the system of vocational education in Tunisia offers students the option of completing a Brevet de technicien supérieur ‘BTS’ vocational qualification. This qualification is viewed as a ‘dead end’ in that, if it doesn’t result in a job, there are no educational progression routes for students to pursue.

The academic and vocational pathways are completely divergent and therefore vocational students can feel isolated from alternative educational options if they choose a vocational qualification. Unless this changes, there will persist a scepticism towards the value of vocational qualifications in Tunisia.

Not everything needs reform: in some cases, we need to improve and build on what is there

There was concern amongst participants that an event such as this would assume or would conclude that every aspect of the current system is in need of reform. Not only is this unrealistic in terms of what, in the short term, will be achievable but, also, it is probably not an accurate assumption.

There are existing structures in place (qualifications; institutes; legislation) to support the healthy growth of the vocational sector and, in some cases, these existing procedures need to be more effectively enforced and current guidelines more closely followed. A thorough review of what works and what doesn’t work would shed valuable light on this and help Tunisians identify where they can best apply effort and resources.
Any solution needs to be owned by Tunisians and needs to be geared towards a Tunisian context

Historically, Tunisia has looked abroad in order to inform the future direction of its education policy. There has, in the past, been exploration of the Canadian, German and French vocational models (amongst others) and while all have value, the strategy to be implemented now needs to be designed and owned by Tunisians and needs to take account not only of the national context but also the (internal) regional context, with significant differences between urban and rural needing to be reflected.

Parents and employers are the critical stakeholders in the battle of perception

When we are thinking about changing perceptions of skills, there are challenges with every stakeholder group. That said, young people appear to be increasingly open to the idea that vocational pathways might, today, represent a positive educational choice. Negative perceptions are more prevalent amongst parents and employers.

Parents, it seems, maintain a view of vocational education from an earlier time when its value and relevance was low and the vocational route was the choice of the failed student. The view of employers is more mixed (with some embracing vocational students but others still preferring academically qualified individuals). Perceived value from an employer’s perspective tends to relate both to the specific sector (with some sectors more positive than others) and to the specific vocational school in which the student studied. Certain schools were viewed as better than others in terms of the efficacy of the education provided. Greater consistency of delivery would go some way to addressing this challenge and improving perception amongst employers.

‘I am an intern in the VET and the seminar topic touches me closely’

Khalil Ben Sarhane, Trainee
The quality, expertise and motivation of trainers is absolutely critical.

The fundamental importance of teachers and trainers emerged as a critical aspect of the challenge. This manifests in a number of ways: teachers and trainers are the ambassadors for the training they provide. They have to demonstrate passion, motivation and enthusiasm for what they do. In many cases – and this may be down to the low status and pay within the teaching profession – this is not evident. Furthermore, teachers and trainers are critical of the success of curriculum delivery.

Regardless of the quality and relevance of the course being taught, if the teacher is not adequately equipped with requisite teaching methods and is not fully up to speed with the relevant industry knowledge, they will not be able to deliver an effective and impactful educational experience that meets the expectations of learners and employers.

The narrative around vocational education and skills has not changed for 30 years but the provision has: we need to identify and champion success as a driver for mindset and image change.

Although many delegates identified a range of challenges in relation to the skills sector in Tunisia, there was also a sense that public perceptions and, critically, the narrative propagated within the media, was out of step with reality.

There are success stories and there is clear evidence of the impact and potential of vocational pathways. The challenge is to find these examples and champion them as a mechanism to change the narrative and, ultimately, change the mindset.
SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS

HAVING IDENTIFIED A SET OF KEY CHALLENGES THE CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS THEN FOCUSED ON DEVELOPING CONCRETE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PERCEPTION OF SKILLS IN TUNISIA.
SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS

These are presented below and have been divided into two categories: Recommendations for Improving the Vocational Education and Skills Sector and Recommendations for Changing the Perception of Skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS SECTOR

SHORT TERM (within 12 months)

- Conduct a thorough diagnosis of the current vocational training system in order to identify strengths, depict weaknesses and create a strategy for moving forward; ensure that this focuses in part on exploring ways of better using existing tools, structures and policies.
- Conduct a needs analysis within training centres to identify what equipment and hardware is needed in order to deliver industry-standard training.
- Develop a strategic plan for engaging employers more effectively in the design and delivery of vocational qualifications.
- Establish a programme of teacher training that will improve the competency of vocational teachers across all sectors; this training should be designed in collaboration with industry and should be more thorough than is currently the case. Alongside this, review the incentives for individuals to become vocational teachers and improve pay and conditions for vocational teachers in line with the findings of this review.
- Design and launch pilot training schemes in certain sectors and with a selection of employers and provide high quality skills training linked to a guaranteed job prior to the commencement of that training.

MEDIUM TERM (1-3 years)

- Invest in and improve the quality of the facilities within the vocational training centres (in light of the findings of the needs analysis mentioned above) in order to make facilities commensurate with the standards required within industry.
- Reform and invest in orientation and career guidance mechanisms. Analyse what is currently in place and build more effective processes that start in primary school and continue throughout secondary education. Ensure careers guidance staff have sufficient understanding of the careers that they are advising on; design and implement a new assessment process to help students explore and understand what they’re good at, at age 14.
- Design and implement new apprenticeship and work placement models – based on international best practice and involving employers from all sectors and of all profiles - that address the current challenges around work placements (namely lack of follow through, poor retention, employer abuse of the system, lack of supervision of trainees from employees and low conversion between work placement and permanent employment).

‘Different people profiles enabled a rich and fruitful exchange.’

Hatem Amara, Member of Ministry of Education cabinet
• Reform the vocational qualifications system to create more convergent pathways between academic and vocational education and to generate greater opportunities for progression from vocational education

• Implement more effective market needs analysis processes that can create baseline data for labour market demands going forward; this must be done in collaboration with industry sectors, must be ongoing and involve all relevant agencies in order for data to be shared across different stakeholders; employers should be able to articulate their particular needs every two to three years as a minimum

• Reform the selection policy currently in place for entrants into vocational schools; there should be a higher threshold of achievement in order for students to be accepted onto courses and processes in place to assess the particular skills and attributes a candidate has prior to them being accepted onto a vocational course

• Embed elements of entrepreneurship or enterprise education into every vocational training experience and create more opportunities for students to engage with start-ups and SMEs

• Design and implement a ‘re-guidance system’ for those who have failed to find employment after leaving education or who have decided they want a change of direction; link this to labour market data indicating where current and future employment opportunities will be

LONG TERM (3 years and beyond)

• Improve the quality assurance of education and training provided through the establishment of better observation and inspection processes within vocational centres. Improve teacher and trainer performance assessment and link this to pay

• Foster a more active and positive culture of ongoing continuing professional development for trainers and teachers and ensure that industry specific knowledge is continually updated through engagement with relevant employers and employer groups

• Establish laws to compel companies to engage in education and training design and delivery and create better incentives for private sector companies to do this. Where needed, create new institutions to support and enable this engagement in a sustainable way
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGING THE PERCEPTION OF SKILLS

SHORT TERM (within 12 months)

- Conduct research with young people exploring the particular drivers for their education and career choices, where they source their information and advice from and what the main influences are on their decision making processes; use this as the basis for a communications strategy
- Design and launch a media campaign (informed by research) to engage with young people around the values and benefits of skills and the potential of vocational pathways. Deliver this campaign through social media (Twitter; Facebook etc.) and create and support an ongoing dialogue between young people and other key stakeholders
- Design and launch a mass media campaign aimed jointly at employers and parents in order to communicate the ‘new reality’ of skills and vocational education. This should be run through traditional media channels (TV, radio, newspapers) and should focus on demonstrating the benefits of young people opting for a vocational pathway as well as connecting this to the economic and social value that this choice may bring in the long term
- Source success stories and positive case studies within the skills sector and communicate these stories to all stakeholders including young people, parents and employers; create ambassadors for vocational training
- Uncover the top hundred earners in Tunisia who have been through vocation education and publish this list as part of a coordinated media campaign
- Capitalise on the patriotic aspects of the Tunisian revolution by focussing part of the communications campaign on the value of trades and skills in relation to the building of a new Tunisia

‘The seminar was motivating for me professionally, it made me look at the bigger picture.’

Chelbi Taroub – Student
MEDIUM TERM (1-3 years)

• Create a framework and set of tools for training young people to research their own career options. As part of this, connect young people to individuals working within the skills sectors and facilitate a dialogue between the two

• Create more complimentary knowledge around individual skills careers and make this widely available (particularly to young people) through the internet. This will enable young people to gain a much deeper understanding of the value of skills and of the options available to them

• Design and deliver ‘vocational taster’ sessions in schools allowing young students the chance to try vocational education for one hour a week as a means of opening their eyes to the possibilities within the skills sector. Include engagement with successful individuals working within the skills sector as part of this process

LONG TERM (3 years and beyond)

• Explore ways in which primary schools can better engage with their students around skills and vocational education and look at developing elements of the primary curriculum that connect with this and that focus more on skills and less on the diploma

• Create a culture of engagement amongst employers that ensures they become flag-bearers for the skills agenda and that supports them in promoting skills and vocational pathways within their businesses, sectors and within society as a whole

• Create a change of mindset amongst parents, employers and young people through consistently demonstrating the value of a vocational education and the positive impact this can have on long-term employment opportunities. Engage the media in this mindset change through building relationships and establishing and maintaining positive dialogue
**NEXT STEPS**

The recommendations outlined in the Summary of the Conference Recommendations provide significant guidance and direction in terms of possible next steps. The British Council is committed to working with partners in Tunisia to help implement these recommendations wherever possible.

In the short term, the British Council will work principally with the ATFP to do the following:

- Disseminate the conference report to all key stakeholders and all those present at the conference for feedback and comments
- Agree on immediate (and achievable) priorities for follow up and produce plan to guide follow up activities
- Follow up consultancy visit to engage with relevant individuals and organisations and execute first stages of follow up plan
- Follow up consultancy report to identify further specific areas of focus where British Council, in collaboration with partners, can bring value

Although the action points listed above do not specifically reference the recommendations made in the previous section, the approach needs to be informed principally by further consultation, research and engagement.
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

**19 January 2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09.00–09.30</td>
<td>Registration and filmed interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>09.30–09.45</td>
<td>Welcome and introductions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mr Abdelwaheb Matar, Minister of Vocational Training and Employment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mrs. Eunice Crook, Director, British Council Tunisia</td>
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<tr>
<td>09.45–10.00</td>
<td>Framing the Debate</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Aims and Objectives of the conference</td>
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<td>Mr Neil Shaw, Regional Vocational Education Adviser, Middle East and North Africa, British Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>09.50–10.15</td>
<td>Perceptions of Skills</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Challenges and Opportunities in Tunisia</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mr Brahim Toumi, Director General Agence Tunisienne de la Formation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Professionnelle, ATFP</td>
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<td>10.15–10.40</td>
<td>International Case Study</td>
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<td>Challenges and Opportunities in the UK</td>
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<td>Ms Jan Hodges, CEO, Edge Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.40–11.00</td>
<td>Coffee and filmed interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.00–11.20</td>
<td>International Case Study</td>
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<td>Challenges and Opportunities in the United Arab Emirates</td>
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<td>Dr Naji Al Mahdi, Executive Director, National Institute for Vocational Education, United Arab Emirates</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.20–12.15</td>
<td>The Status of Skills</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Young participants’ Perceptions This session provided an opportunity to hear young peoples’ views on perceptions of skills, how these perceptions are shaped, and what might be done to improve the poor image of skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ms Abir Djeri Bia, Winner of the Catering Competition in Algeria</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ms Malek Hammar, Winner of the Tunisian Enterprise Challenge</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ms Siwar Mezghanni, Secondary School Student</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mr Rafik Makni, Secondary School Student</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mr Maher Oueslati, Vocational Education Graduate</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
12.15–13.15  **Working Group Discussions**  
**Understanding the Challenges**  
These initial discussion sessions provided an opportunity to share and compare experiences, identify the key challenges and assess how far these are similar across countries and across sectors.

**Workshop facilitators:**  
Mr. Ali Belhiba, Director of the VET and Apprenticeship college El Oamarane.  
Mr. Mustapha Lakehal, Advisor to the Director General of ATFP.  
Mme Samira Hached, Director General of Communication at ATFP.  
Mr. Abdelaziz Halleb, President of FEDELEC Federation of Electricity and Electronics.  
Mr. Neil Shaw, Regional Vocational Education Adviser, Middle East and North Africa, British Council  
Mr. Jim Playfoot, TVET Consultant

13.15–14.15  **Lunch and filmed interviews**

14.15–15.15  **Facilitated Workshops Sessions**  
Delegates selected three out of four parallel sessions delivered by UK experts sharing their experience and focusing on different approaches to addressing the low status of skills.

**Themes:**  
• Apprenticeships  
• Careers Guidance  
• Employer Engagement  
• Media representation

**UK experts:**  
Mr. Rajeeb Dey, Founder and CEO, Enternships  
Marlena Topple, Project Manager, Prospects  
Ms. Kate O’Connor, Executive Director, Creative Skillset  
Ms. Jan Hodges, CEO, The Edge Foundation

15.15–15.45  **Coffee and filmed interviews**

15.30–16.30  **Panel discussion**  
Challenges and Suggested Strategies for Enhancing the Status of Skills in Tunisia  
This discussion session provided an opportunity to follow up on some of the key points from the morning session and elicit suggestions for solutions that informed the discussion session on Day 2.

**Key challenges, opportunities and key recommendations were pulled together based on notes taken from the various parallel sessions**

This session was conducted by:  
Mr. Jim Playfoot, TVET Consultant  
Mr. Neil Shaw, Regional Vocational Education Adviser, Middle East and North Africa, British Council  
Mme Samira Hached, Director General of Communication at ATFP

16.45  **Close**
### APPENDIX 1: PROGRAMME FOR DAY 2

**20 January 2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09.00–09.30</td>
<td>Coffee and filmed interviews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 09.30–09.40 | Review of Day 1 and Preview of Day 2  
  *Mr Neil Shaw*, Regional Vocational Education Adviser, Middle East and North Africa, British Council |
| 09.40–10.40 | Facilitated Workshop  
  Delegates selected three out of four parallel sessions delivered by UK experts sharing their experience and focussing on different approaches to addressing the low status of skills.  
  **Themes:**  
  - Apprenticeships  
  - Careers Guidance  
  - Employer Engagement  
  - Media representation  
  **UK experts:**  
  *Mr Rajeeb Dey*, Founder and CEO, Enternships  
  *Ms Marlena Topple*, Project Manager, Prospects  
  *Ms Kate O’Connor*, Executive Director, Creative Skillset  
  *Ms Jan Hodges*, CEO, The Edge Foundation |
| 10.40–11.10 | Coffee and filmed interviews                                          |
| 11.10–12.10 | Facilitated Workshop Sessions  
  Delegates selected three out of four parallel sessions delivered by UK experts sharing their experience and focussing on different approaches to addressing the low status of skills.  
  **Themes include:**  
  - Apprenticeships  
  - Careers Guidance  
  - Employer Engagement  
  - Media representation  
  **UK experts:**  
  *Mr Rajeeb Dey*, Founder and CEO, Enternships  
  *Ms Marlena Topple*, Project Manager, Prospects  
  *Ms Kate O’Connor*, Executive Director, Creative Skillset  
  *Ms Jan Hodges*, CEO, The Edge Foundation |
Assessing the Opportunities
The discussion sessions enabled participants to share the ideas, learning and best practice. This came out of the earlier sessions and discussions around the range of approaches that might be taken to tackle the low status of skills in Tunisia.

Workshop facilitators:
Mr Ali Belhiba, Director of the VET and Apprenticeship college El Omarane.
Mr Mustapha Lakehal, Advisor to the Director General of ATFP.
Mme Samira Hached, Director General of Communication at ATFP.
Mr Abdelaziz Halleb, President of FEDELEC Federation of Electricity and Electronics
Mr Neil Shaw, Regional Vocational Education Adviser, Middle East and North Africa, British Council
Mr Jim Playfoot, TVET Consultant

Defining the recommendations
The discussion sessions enabled participants to share the ideas, learning and best practice. This came out of the earlier sessions and discussions around the range of approaches that might be taken to tackle the low status of skills in Tunisia.

Workshop facilitators:
Mr Ali Belhiba, Director of the VET and Apprenticeship college El Omarane.
Mr Mustapha Lakehal, Advisor to the Director General of ATFP.
Mme Samira Hached, Director General of Communication at ATFP.
Mr Abdelaziz Halleb, President of FEDELEC Federation of Electricity and Electronics
Mr Neil Shaw, Regional Vocational Education Adviser, Middle East and North Africa, British Council
Mr Jim Playfoot, TVET Consultant

Coffee and filmed interviews

Plenary Feedback
Mr Neil Shaw, Regional Vocational Education Adviser, Middle East and North Africa, British Council

Closing Remarks and Next Steps
Mr Neil Shaw, Regional Vocational Education Adviser, Middle East and North Africa, British Council

Close
APPENDIX 2: LIST OF KEY SPEAKERS AND WORKSHOP FACILITATORS

Welcome Address
Mrs Eunice Crook
Director, British Council, Tunisia

Mr Abdelwaheb Matar
Tunisian Minister for Vocational Training, Tunisia

Key Note Speakers
Mr Neil Shaw
Regional Vocational Education Adviser, Middle East and North Africa, British Council

Ms Jan Hodges
CEO, The Edge Foundation, United Kingdom

Mr Brahim Toumi
Director General of the National Agency of Vocational Training (ATFP), Tunisia

Dr Naji Al Mahdi
Executive Director, National Institute for Vocational Training, United Arab Emirates

Facilitated Workshop Presentations
Mr Rajeeb Dey
Founder and CEO, Internships, United Kingdom

Ms Kate O’Connor
Executive Director, Creative Skillset, United Kingdom

Ms Marlena Topple
Project Manager, Prospects, United Kingdom

Ms Jan Hodges
CEO, The Edge Foundation, United Kingdom

Young Tunisian Perspective
Ms Siwar Mezghanni
Secondary School Student

Ms Abir Djeri Bia
Winner of the Catering Competition in Algeria

Mr Maher Oueslati
Vocational Education Graduate

Mr Malek Hammar
Winner of the Tunisian Enterprise Challenge Award

Mr Rafik Makni
Secondary School Student