

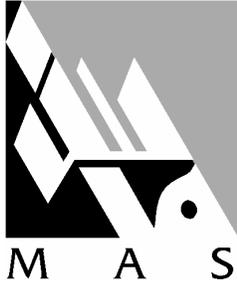


Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS)

**Implementing the National TVET Strategy:
A Prerequisite for meeting the Labor
Market Needs**

Hisham Kuhail

2015



Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute

**Implementing the National TVET Strategy:
A Prerequisite for Meeting the Labor
Market Needs**

Hisham Kuhail

2015

The Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS)

Founded in Jerusalem in 1994 as an independent, non-profit institution to contribute to the policy-making process by conducting economic and social policy research. MAS is governed by a Board of Trustees consisting of prominent academics, businessmen and distinguished personalities from Palestine and the Arab Countries.

Mission

MAS is dedicated to producing sound and innovative policy research, relevant to economic and social development in Palestine, with the aim of assisting policy-makers and fostering public participation in the formulation of economic and social policies.

Strategic Objectives

- ◆ Promoting knowledge-based policy formulation by conducting economic and social policy research in accordance with the expressed priorities and needs of decision-makers.
- ◆ Evaluating economic and social policies and their impact at different levels for correction and review of existing policies.
- ◆ Providing a forum for free, open and democratic public debate among all stakeholders on the socio-economic policy-making process.
- ◆ Disseminating up-to-date socio-economic information and research results.
- ◆ Providing technical support and expert advice to PNA bodies, the private sector, and NGOs to enhance their engagement and participation in policy formulation.
- ◆ Strengthening economic and social policy research capabilities and resources in Palestine.

Board of Trustees

Ismail Al-Zabri, Ghassan Khatib (Vice Chairman), Jawad Naji, Jihad Al Wazir, Lana Abu-Hijleh, Luay Shabaneh (Secretary), Magda Salem, Nafez Al-Hussieni, Sabri Saidam, Samir Huleileh (Treasurer), Nabeel Kassis (Director General).



Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute

**Implementing the National TVET Strategy:
A Prerequisite for Meeting the Labor
Market Needs**

Hisham Kuhail

2015

Implementing the National TVET Strategy: A Prerequisite for Meeting the Labor Market Needs

Author:

Senior Researcher: Hisham Kuhail

Research Assistant: Amani Atary

This study was funded by The Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development



Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS)
Jerusalem and Ramallah

ISBN 978-9950-374-51-5

Foreword

As part of its Research Program for 2014-2015, the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS) launched a new activity aiming at producing review articles that take stock of work done on important economic and social policy issues that touch upon Palestinian socio-economic development and that have been often revisited over the past two decades but where no closure has been reached. The articles in this series are intended to provide a reference for practitioners and students of that subject, in addition to offering proper background analysis, evidence, and policy options for actions by decision-makers. A comprehensive bibliography will be included in each article.

MAS is pleased to present another review article in the series, titled: **“Implementing the National TVET Strategy: A Prerequisite for Meeting the Labor Market Needs.”** This review has been prepared by Hisham Kuheil, former Deputy Minister of Higher Education and an expert who played a central role in preparing the TVET strategy. The review is motivated, similarly to others in the series, by the plethora of attempts at matching educational outcomes to job market needs and devising strategies for that end without implementing them. The original title of this review was: “Matching Educational Outcomes to Job Market Needs: A Review,” but the author opted for a title that summarizes the results of the review. This however, is not a substitute for a careful reading of this study, which we hope will motivate decision-makers to start implementing existing recommendations as well as discourage the duplication of past efforts.

On behalf of MAS, I would like to thank the Arab Fund for Economic & Social Development for its support, which made this publication possible.

Nabeel Kassis, Ph.D.
Director General

Executive Summary

After the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority in 1994, there was a growing consensus among Palestinians that in order to meet the challenges which the future holds, the Palestinian society needs young people who are independent, creative and willing to work, and who need training which enables them to apply their personal capabilities and to play a creative role in the development of the changing working world, technology, environmental protection and regional and international cooperation. To that end, a national strategy for technical and vocational education and training (TVET) was developed. However, the strategy has not been implemented in a way to make it an integral part of the wider educational and training system.

Numerous studies including revised implementation plans have been conducted in this field. In addition, many pilot interventions have been funded and put into practice towards the implementation of various components of the national strategy. Structural changes have been advocated and in some cases ratified. MAS stepped in this stocktaking exercise of the Palestinian TVET experience in order to come up with recommendations for specific strategic interventions needed to revitalize the TVET national strategy. As many research efforts have been spent to diagnose the problems in the TVET system, this document aims to review these efforts, summarize their results and recommendations, and synthesize them in a way that enables policy-makers involved in TVET to benefit from them, and, more specifically, a way that highlights needed actions for intervention and reform.

This study examines the existing national human resources system, specifically the vocational and technical sub-system and its adequacy to present realities, whether a mechanism for policy implementation is in place and, if so, how it operates. It also assesses the governance structures of the vocational and technical sub-system as well as its coordination mechanisms, linkages to stakeholders, and legal environment. The study also examines the strategy goals, objectives, and anticipated inputs, and maps what has been achieved since its inception.

In doing that, the study relies primarily on a critical review of major studies and reports conducted on TVET in Palestine in addition to conducting a series of interviews with key representatives at the supply and demand levels to identify the different impediments that have

prevented the national strategy from getting integrated into the educational as well as the Human Resource Development (HRD) systems in Palestine and to establish how these impediments can be addressed.

The study clearly shows the need for strategic interventions to strengthen the TVET system so that to enable it to meet the emerging challenges of economic development. Such interventions would require the adoption of policy recommendations pertaining to enhanced external productivity, effective system management, and quality improvement. The main findings of the study are clustered into relevance, system management and efficiency, and output quality.

These findings were addressed by the TVET national strategy that was developed in 2004 and revised in 2005. This strategy is, therefore, still considered the proper framework to incorporate the challenging policy choices. The re-launching of the strategy that was endorsed by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the Ministry of Labor in 2010 is definitely a step forward towards a more rationalized and coordinated TVET system. However, it still requires a true political commitment, leadership, and an enabling environment to seek a TVET system that is responsive to changing human resource requirements, is properly managed, utilizes resources efficiently, and provides quality education and training demanded by an increasingly competitive economy.

Recent experience shows that the past and present governance and administrative setups do not allow for the full implementation of the strategy components at the formal level. Therefore, a ***process-buildup approach*** towards a steady and growing momentum and the creation of a capacity to move the TVET strategy into a system approach are needed.

Such a ***process-buildup*** ultimately targets four strategic key areas: namely, system empowerment, TVET offerings, improved quality training delivery, and – most importantly – ownership. This would be feasible by focusing on the establishment of a national qualification framework, enhancing the capacity of human resources, enhancing the non-formal education approach, and establishing technical capacity to help develop the various system components.

The study identified four major action that can be taken to signal a serious progression towards the adoption of a national TVET system. These actions are strengthening governance, establishing TVET Development Center, embarking on a national endeavor to finalize the National

Qualification Framework, and perform necessary legal reforms on laws pertaining education and training.

With regards to the system governance, the review recommends revitalization of the current management structures, more specifically the Higher Council for TVET, its Executive Board, and the TVET Development Center. Without these bodies, TVET will continue to suffer from fragmentation and wastage of resources.

To signal a fresh start towards the strategy implementation, it is needed to reactivate the resolution to set up the TVET Development Center as a body imbedded within the management structure which is foreseen as the think tank of the TVET system. The overall objective of the Center will be to provide advice and technical support to the TVET system. In this capacity, it will therefore act as a technical arm to the system rather than as an implementing body for policies or plans. It should be noted here that a concept paper for the establishment of the Development Center along with an estimated budget for its startup was developed and endorsed by the Higher Council, and a Cabinet resolution to that extent was issued.

The launching of the Center will by default eliminate the need to consider any future proposed bodies or agencies since the tasks and professional duties of the Center will empower not only the management structure but the system at large. At the national level, there is an urgent need to conduct a formal assessment of economic prospects and their implications on skills. It is also vital to finalize, agree upon, and adopt the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) within the national HRD policies. These two major activities can and should be conducted without waiting for the TVET governance structure to function properly as they are considered to be prerequisites for any TVET system reform.

For that purpose, this study recommends the formation of a national committee entrusted with this task which will benefit from previous local initiatives: namely, the assessment of the needs for trained labor force carried out by the Belgian Technical Cooperation and the assessment of economic opportunities carried out by the GIZ in 2011, and in full alignment with the Arab occupational classification that was developed and approved by the Arab countries including Palestine.

The implementation of the occupational skills and occupational qualification system is considered as a prerequisite for any structural change within the Palestinian TVET system. The prime considerations

driving the establishment of the NQF are: the need to introduce occupational definitions that would facilitate consistency in the classification of occupations by decreasing the dependence on occupational titles and the urgent need to agree on the structure of the classification to reflect the current workforce in Palestine.

The review also concludes that it is of crucial importance to rethink the education sector as one integral component rather than as several sub-sectors. This is required if Palestine is to have a cohesive vision for competitive human resource development at the national, regional, and international levels. This goal can only be achieved if existing education and training laws are somehow integrated to meet that vision. To that extent, it has become of utmost importance to acknowledge and endorse at the national level a progression route to all kinds of education which necessitate TVET skill levels. Accordingly, certifications will need to be nationally acknowledged within the current education system. This will certainly change the negative perception of the TVET within the Palestinian society as a dead-end type of education.

Existing laws should cater for provisions that ensure articulation within the education and training tracks in order to secure employment of TVET graduates within the government and the private sectors. The Council for Higher Education is invited also to reconsider admission criteria for university disciplines and programs and expand the admission criteria beyond the Tawhiji grade to include prior learning assessment measures.

The above-mentioned process aims at bringing structural changes to the Palestinian TVET strategy and its implementation plan. The strategic approach builds on the results accomplished since the development of the national strategy. This means moving away from an implementation process structured on building whole components of the TVET system towards building key elements of these components as a necessary step towards initiating and developing structural changes.

As a catalyst, the Palestinian Government should focus on encouraging innovative ideas and interventions within the holistic goals and objectives of the national TVET strategy. Establishing the proper legislations, setting-up the proper frameworks, creating the proper accreditation, and installing quality assurance systems are key areas in which the government can take the lead.