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Higher Education Reform Experts



Ministry of Education
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Rethinking Lebanese Higher Education

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Present Higher Education Strategy: Elements & Achievements

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World reality:

Emergence of the fundamental role of higher education institutions:

- Benefits of Human resources, experts and qualifications, research.
- Fundamental contribution to human development.
- Development of a knowledge society

Result of Globalization:

- Internationalization of education
- Considering HE as a Service Sector.
- Higher Education one of the most important cross-border services available (the Convention on the liberalization of trade in services - the World Trade Organization).
- Mobility of labor & students

In this situation,

How the international communities deal with the HE sector ?

- **The European Union:** developing European HE area (LMD, ECTS, DS), ensuring the quality and reliability in institutions of HE (EQAR), & the mobility (Internationalization, Tuning, Transparency, etc.).
- **Arab Strategy for the development of higher education** focused on Developing the sector (mainly public), Quality Assurance, Accreditation & Research
- **The conferences of Arab Ministers Responsible for Higher Education** since 2000 (Cairo) to 2005 (Yemen) Focused on ensuring the quality and the need for the establishment of national bodies or authorities for the evaluation and accreditation.
- **In Lebanon, all national conferences since 2001** *All WS & Conferences Focused on the need of a new policies for HE, to introduce quality assurance procedures, to develop a new law for HE, to restructure HE system, to monitor the system, etc.*

Outline:

- 1- A historical background concerning HEIs, Regulations and Reforms concerning the sector in Lebanon.
- 2- Strategic plan for HE
- 3- Action Plan: What has been done? & Where we are ?
- 4- Difficulties
- 5- The road ahead ?

Historical Background:

- **History:**
 - 1st HEI in 1866, 8 HEIs before 1961, 17 before 1996,
 - HE law in 1961, Regulations for Equivalency, Engineering, and colloquium exams (1955 to 1965), Decrees for licensing, audit, TC committee, criteria in 1996.
- **1999-2000:** The Lebanese government had licensed **25** HEIs, passing the number of HEIs to 40 private and one public,
 - **Now:** 47 HEIs, 1 public
 - This increasing was without planning or existing national policy for higher education,
 - A challenge for the DGHE **created in 2002,**

Students & Staff:

Students:

- The number increases through 12 years by 45 %
- 132645 students in 2004 => 197000 in 2016, with 55% female
- Net increase of students' Number in the private:
 - Private 65836 in 2004, 125000 in 2016 (63%),
 - Public university (LU) (66809 in 2004 to 72000 in 2016 (37%).
- Number of foreign students increases from 9.6% in 2004 to 16.6% in 2010 and decreases to 10% in 2016

Staff:

Human resources have been developed:

- Number of academic staff increased from 12000 in 2004 to 21000 in 2016 with 38% female,
- Also a net increase in administrative and technical staff

HE system in Lebanon:

- Old with good experience
- Multi divers system (American, French, now European, etc.)
- Major role in developing human resources in Lebanon and the region
- HEIs are non profit (by the law)
- High autonomy of HEIs (academic, financial) even public one.
- Lack of accountability.
- Problems of Governance.
- Expansion of the sector (41 in 2002, 47 Now).

Questions:

- What to do? How?
- To whom is the responsibility?
- Who is responsible of the developing HE system?
- Who will define the Mission & the Vision for the HE system in Lebanon & How to do that ?

It is The responsibility of all stakeholders:

State, Public & private HEIs, Socio-economic partners

National Mobilizations:

- Conference "HE & Knowledge Economy", Parliament, Beirut 30/10/2001.
- Conference "HE in Lebanon & the impact of licensing new universities", order of engineers, Beirut 23/1/2002.
- Conference "Attracting Arab and foreign students to HEIs in Lebanon", Economic and Social Council, Beirut, Sep. 2002.
- Series of conferences "Reorganizing Higher Education in Lebanon", organized by the DGHE, Beirut, 10 to 24 Feb. 2004.
- Audit of Higher Education institutions, 2003-2004, with SGS, APAVE, TUV-HELAS.

Strategic Framework:

Through these conferences, General principles were adopted that constitute the foundations for Strategic Framework for HE in 2005.

Strategic Framework (1)

1- Adoption of a charter for national HE:

- to Consider HE as a national priority,
- to provide educational opportunities for all,
- to put a map of the spread of HEIs,
- to assure for every body the right to have an education with good quality,
- to assure paths in the system,
- to put and apply precise specifications and criteria for licensing,
- to make the state take the responsibility of regulating education.

2- Build the capacity of higher education administration:

- the development of the structure of the DGHE,
- building an information system that provides data about HE,
- to reconsider the governing bodies,
- the dissemination of information about higher education,
- to strengthen the research system.

Strategic Framework (2)

3- **Update legislation governing higher education:**

- the laws and decrees of private higher education,
- the law of the Lebanese University,
- Charter for the duties and rights of Staff, students & workers in HEIs.

4- **Strengthening the capacity of the Lebanese University:**

- the development of the structure of the university, a new law,
- the development of educational and research resources,
- updated full-time legislation,
- securing facilities and equipment,
- the development of New specialties,
- the development of mechanisms for assessment.

Strategic Framework (3):

- 5- Ensure quality standards and quality assurance in HE :**
 - Quality assurance and/or accreditation bodies,
 - Academic mechanisms to assess institutions and to provide quality assurance,
 - common rules of information between the administration and institutions.

- 6- The development of new missions for HE :**
 - meeting the needs of economic development,
 - development of human resources capacity,
 - continuous training opportunities.

Strategic Framework (4):

7- Put HE in line with the knowledge economy:

- acquire IT skills,
- promote the most promising sectors of higher education such as: information and communication technology, energy and environment,
- make educational programs more suited to the requirements of the labor market,
- involvement of HEIs in the development of educational systems.

8- Promoting scientific research in HEIs:

- consider the scientific research as an "essential element" in HE,
- promoting the establishment of research centers in HEIs,
- make scientific research as a duty of faculty members,
- consider scientific research as "key role factor " in the economic development.

Action Plans:

- 1- Define responsibilities and actors
- 2- Planning in priorities.
- 3- Put Schedule timelines
- 4- Analyze resources (human and financial)
- 5- Go in Execution

Difficulties:

- 1- Political context
- 2- Administrative context
- 3- Financial context
- 4- Human Resources

What Has been Done (1)

Starting 2004:

Strategy, Action plans and Reforms to develop and monitor the sector

- Audit of all HEIs (External Bodies)
- Dissemination of Quality Assurance And quality control culture
- New Decrees and Decisions
- Activate commissions in the DGHE: (EQ, TC, Eng. Com, CHE, etc.)
- Active collaboration between DGHE & Universities.
- New procedures for Licensing, Starting-Up and Recognition of Degrees
- Official Information system about HEIs & Procedures
(Website: www.higher-edu.gov.lb)
- Promoting Lebanese HE System Worldwide.
- Training on EQA (IIEP), etc.
- Promoting Research (National & International Projects)

What Has been Done (2)

- **2007**: Higher education strategic policy (plans and proposals).
- **2006-2014**: Structural measures projects with the European and Lebanese universities (14 Projects): External Quality Assurance, Student services, Employment Offices, Orientation, Career services, International relations, Employment Observatory, Distance Learning, etc.
Now: Participation in other Erasmus plus projects
- **2010-2014**: Training with Erasmus+ & HERE: LO, LMD, EQA, Students services, Credit system, etc. 2015: ELearning (Debate), Civic Engagement, IQA

What Has been Done (3)

- **2012-2013**: Benchmark on the governance in higher education institutions (WB project): 29 university from Lebanon.
- **2012**: Regulating Doctoral Studies: Decree Number 10068 /2013
- **2013**: Regulating paths VTE to HE
- **2013**: Regulating Licensing in Medical schools
- **2014**: New law for higher education ratified by the parliament
285/2014: Frame work for the governance of higher education institutions, management, finance, autonomy, participation, students and faculty members rights, QA and accreditation.
- **Since 2014**: 2 Other laws in discussion in the parliament (ratified by the government):
 - Creating LQAA agency: Autonomy, standards ... indicators, etc.
 - Reorganizing the DGHE structure.
- **2014-2015**: Tuning Engineering, Architecture & Medical schools studies

Where We Are? (1)

At the Local, Regional & International levels:

- Partnerships between Universities in & out side the country (Tempus then Erasmus+ projects helped in this direction – 75 bilateral or multilateral projects),
- Exchange of experts in Evaluation & QA procedures,
- Double & Joint degrees.
- Exchange for recognition (National authorities, ERIC-NARIC network) & accreditation with European agencies, CTI, FEANI, FIBAA, EVALAG, HERES, etc.
- Bilateral & multilateral agreements between regional & European HEIs,
- Tuning to internationalize competencies & facilitate mobility,
- EQA & Accreditation of HEIs by European Agencies
- Networking with regional & international associations
- Local Taskforces (Governance, Monitoring system , QA, HERE, Competitions, etc.)

Where We Are? (2)

At the Level of HE Institutions :

- Progress at the level of governance
- Implementation of QA procedures in most Universities
- EQA & Accreditation in some HEIs
- Ability of most of HE Institutions to align with the national policy
- Trained staff on QA.
- More transparency
- Partnerships with MEHE, other ministries & Labor market

At the Level of regulation of the Sector:

- Procedures to Regulate Licensing, Starting Up and Recognition
- Visible Information System about the sector
- Reinforcing collaboration between HEIs & DGHE
- Reinforce Cooperation with All stakeholders
- Training Experts on EQA
- Success of disseminating QA Culture
- 3 major laws regulating the sector,

The road ahead

Continue the action plan, & Develop a NQF

Still there is many difficulties ??

- **Political:** the project laws wait to be ratified by the parliament,
- **Resources:** Need of Human & Financial,
- **Engagement of Stakeholders:** MEHE, HEIs,
Orders & Syndicates.
- **Implement New procedures and indicators for licensing:**
Social & Community Needs Assessment, Capacity of the sector,
Ethics & Code of conduct, Review of the strategy, implementation
of the new law of HE, etc.

Thank you



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