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,

- **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:


- 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.
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.
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 & outside 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 are 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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