The Curious Case of TVET in Qatar

The complications of TVET policy making in a unique educational and labour market context

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FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION....

- The demographic and educational context in Qatar
- The underdevelopment of TVET in Qatar?
- Some tentative, if contrarian, suggestions for the way forward
A personal view – NOT representing that of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education

- The **Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE)** is the highest official authority on all educational affairs in the State of Qatar. It replaced the previous **Supreme Education Council (SEC)** in 2016

- **DISCLAIMER!** The views and concerns expressed here are mine based on over 10 years working in policy analysis, strategic planning and TVET plan planning within the SEC & MEHE

- Trying to reflect the **perspective** is that of a policy maker in the MEHE
The importance of education to national development is recognized by it being a central component of QNV 2030 which envisages:

A world-class educational system that equips citizens to achieve their aspirations and to meet the needs of Qatar’s society.
The Ministry’s education oversight responsibilities are discharged through 4 main education directorates, responsible respectively for:

- **Government Schools**
- **Private Schools** *(N.B. Most expatriates and around 1/3 of Qataris study in Private Schools.)*
- **Higher/Tertiary Education Institutions**
- **(Objective and Independent) School and Student Evaluations**

Other departments are responsible for such areas as infrastructure planning, strategic planning, and educational policy and research.

- **No TVET governance function**
At least 3 major attempts to define National TVET policy and to establish governance structures, as e.g. per Qatar’s National Development Strategy 2011-2016 (NDS1) and the MEHE’s own strategy: “Strengthen TVET by establishing a TVET supervisory body and adopting a new model for accreditation and licensing. The model has the following expected outcomes: (1) a framework and plan for the development of high-quality, appropriate, and well-managed TVET offerings, including a defined and agreed organizational model able to support development of TVET system capabilities; (2) development of TVET programs and outputs aligned with the needs of Qatari society and the labor market; and (3) an improved perception of TVET programs in order to increase their enrollment and better prepare the Qatari population for the labor force.” (ETSS-1 2011-2016)
Lots of International Expertise employed.........
....lots of models proposed

“Benchmark Qatar’s TVET against international good practice. Given Qatar’s context of high per capita GDP comparable to that of OECD countries, the TVET sector remains underdeveloped.” (World Bank 2016)

“Why don’t you copy the Australian, Singaporean, German, Finnish, Scottish, Swiss, Swedish, Indian ...... systems.” (Strangely not Canadian!)
The Demographic Context – some distinctive features of the population and labour force landscape in Qatar

- A majority – *c.86%* - expatriate population – whether as temporary or as long term residents. *(N.B. Effects on international data comparisons.)*

- Qatari citizens thus make up a very small % of the labour force. (Around 5% at the end of 2017)

- Close to 0% Qatari unemployment. *(0.4% 09/2017 – MDPS)*

- Most Qataris are employed in the public/semi-public sector. (Principal employers: the civil service, armed forces, police and Qatar Petroleum group companies.)
The Demographic Context – and its relevance for TVET

- In many other countries, vocational secondary school graduates typically fill entry-level jobs.
- In Qatar, these are predominantly filled by low-cost expatriate workers.
- This reinforces the perception of vocational secondary education as a second-chance, second-class track.
Some distinctive features of the education landscape in Qatar

- A very **young education system (first school established in 1949)** in an affluent, but still young and recently developed country

- A **small** system (c. 306,000 in K-12, c 300 government schools, 600 private)

- A **majority expatriate** student population (68%) – and a resulting **plethora of different national and international curricula** offered in private schools

- 1/3 of students in private schools are Qatari, ¼ of students in government schools are non-Qataris.

- Majority of **teachers are non-nationals in government schools**
Some Major Achievements (1)

- High levels of enrolment in basic education.

Gross Enrolment Rates (GER)

- Overall World GER in Secondary Education 2015
- Total Secondary 2015
- Total Secondary 2011
- Total Preparatory 2015
- Total Preparatory 2011
- Total Primary 2015
- Total Primary 2011
Some Major Achievements (2)

- Growing levels of enrolment in HE/TE, particularly among females
• **The gender gap** – females substantially outperform boys in all curriculum areas (even math and science) in local and international assessments and have far higher enrolment in HE/TE. (*But N.B. data may significantly underestimate males in TE*)

• Despite significant progress, continued **low attainment** in core curriculum areas (as reflected in continued low rankings in international studies)

• **Low return on education** (*but not to be exaggerated*) reduces incentives and depresses motivation

• **Low enrolment in STEM** disciplines in HE
The Key Challenge for the Country, for Tertiary Education Institutions and Employers

Proportion of Students Who Don’t Master Basic Skills, 2012 (OECD 2015)

To what extent does increasing TVET provision address this?
TVET provision - secondary

Male only government school. 450 students

And girls! 90 girls and 123 boys

350 students. A private school which specializes in medical science – but is this a TVET school?

- Several British curriculum schools offer BTEC Diploma courses as alternatives to A/AS levels.
- The revised (2016) Qatar National Curriculum Framework (for government schools) allows for more vocational options_streams in government schools, but these options are not currently on offer.

Very few students from specialised schools join workforce or TE in the same disciplines.
TVET in Tertiary Education in Qatar

- Plus increasing numbers of private, “training centres”
How does/can TVET Help to Address the Real Challenges for Education in Qatar? (1)

• Is there any real need or appetite for, or benefit from, specialist TVET schools or streams at the secondary level?
• Does Qatar need more TVET capacity at the tertiary level?
• Should we be encouraging more Qatars to pursue more applied and professional degrees? (Do we have the capacity for these?)
• “It is important for QU and CCQ to emphasise the experiential dimension of the educational experience of their students” (WB 2016) citing CNA-Q as a model!
How does/can TVET Help to Address the Real Challenges for Education in Qatar? (2)

• Is this right and does this not apply even more to basic (including secondary) education?
• Shouldn’t all secondary school students get some exposure to more experiential learning and at least some career-oriented content?
• Do employers want secondary school graduates with specific vocational skills or more general employability competencies (the 5 key literacies and the other so-called 21st century skills?)
Thank you.

And now.....

Questions and Answers