

WEBINAR REPORT

Human Capital & Knowledge Economy Policy Consultation Series

"Redirecting Education and Training in Kuwait"

16th March 2021, 10:00-12:40 (Kuwait time







"Redirecting Education and Training in Kuwait"

16th March 2021 // 10:00-12:40 (in Kuwait time)



DR. TAREK ELSHEIKH Opening Remarks
Representative of the UN Secretary-General



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SEUNG JIN BAEK Moderator Economist at UNRCO

SPEAKERS



MR. DANILO PADILLA Education Programme Specialist UNESCO Office for the Gulf States and Yemen



MR. ETAYEB ADAM Regional Representative for UNICEF



MRS. AFERDITA SPAHIU Education Specialist, UNICEF Regional Office for Middle East and North Africa



MR. KISHORE KUMAR SINGH Senior Skills and Employability Specialist Regional Office of Arab States, Beirut













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1. Background



In Kuwait, as one of the High-Income Countries (HIC) in the Arab region, strengthening of human capital becomes a major driver, not only for accelerating sustainable economic transformation and diversification but for reducing inequalities and aspiring to strengthen partnerships to achieve development priorities in the Kuwait National Development Plan (KNDP) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in an integrated manner.

In this respect, under the overall direction and guidance of the UN Resident Coordinator Office in Kuwait (UNRCO Kuwait), the five UN agencies, including the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and the World Bank collaborated to produce a policy brief, namely "Unlocking Human Capital Potential in Kuwait as Global Actor in the Knowledge Economy" where strategic investment in education is identified as one of the most critical development areas to accelerate the process of the knowledge economy in Kuwait.

2. Objective & Expected Outcomes



The main objective of this **Policy Consultation Series - Redirecting Education and Training in Kuwait** is thus to discuss, based on the analytical findings and viewpoints from the policy brief, priority areas of cooperation between the UN and the government of Kuwait to support KNDP policies and programmes into result-based projects to enhance **quality of education** (incl. early childhood) **and technical and vocational education and training (TVET)** in Kuwait.

These are fully in line with the UN-Kuwait Strategic Cooperation Framework – Outcome One, Advanced institutional and individual capacities for economic growth and diversification with modern systems of education, social protection, skills development, innovation, and knowledge, while contributing to SDGs 4, 5, 8, 9 & 16 and KNDP Policies 3.3, 3.5, 3.6 & 3.8.

In so doing, its main outcomes from the panel discussion are: agreed action areas and implementation plans for cooperation projects between the national authorities and the UN agencies in these development areas; exploration of joint workplans and agreed timeline; and framing an outline and scope of Kuwait International Forum for Financing Innovation in education and training during and post COVID-19

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3. Draft Program for Panel Discussion

(2 hours 40 mins)

10:00-10:05 10:05:10:10 10:10-10:20 Opening remarks by UN Resident Coordinator

Opening statement by Government of Kuwait Representative Introduction by UNRCO Kuwait Economist (moderator)

Theme One. **Building Human Capital through Strengthening the TVET Sector** 10:20-10:50 Presentation by UNESCO and ILO

UNESCO and ILO will outline their TVET Strategic priority areas and their connection to the SDGs. This will show how they align with the Government of Kuwait's overarching development goals for education and training and to their Vision 2030. Taking Kuwait's unique demographic and economic conditions into account, UNESCO and ILO will present policy options to strengthen the demand driven TVET Sector in the light of lifelong learning and future of work. The presentation will particularly focus on the need to shift to a demand-driven environment by engaging private sector entities at all levels of skills anticipation, sector skills council, qualification framework, competency and curriculum development, assessment, teachers training, certification and accreditation. School to work transition and transition within work through up-skilling and reskilling will also focus on career counselling and job placement, on the job training, skills recognition and skills mobility.

10:50-11:20 Panel discussions (with national partners) and Q&A

Theme Two. Improving Human Capital by Enhancing Education Quality through Teacher Professional Development

11:20-11:50 Presentation by UNICEF and UNESCO

UNICEF will offer a rich discussion on quality education aligned with global education reform including SDG4. These perspectives support Kuwait's Vision 2035 which fully commits the Kuwait to providing every individual with the opportunity for attaining the highest education possible. This vision is incorporated in the Kuwait Constitution article 13 and is inspired by Kuwait's firm belief in the critical significance of education as a pillar for human development and as a basic human right. Nevertheless, current educational outcomes, i.e., learning outcomes for Kuwait children remain challenging. According to the September 2020 World Bank Human Capital Project, Kuwaiti children are expected to complete 12.0 years of schooling, but when adjust for actual learning outcomes, children acquire 7.4 years of schooling. Research indicates that teachers are the single most influential factor for student learning outcomes. Teaching methods have been noted as didactic and rote memorization is a common strategy. Diving deep into investing in teachers, this presentation will offer insight into systematically and institutionally building continuous teacher professional development, including pre-service and in-service teacher training programs in Kuwait.

11:50-12:20 Panel discussions (with national partners) and Q&A

12:20-12:35 Summary and action points by UNRCO Kuwait Economist 12:35-12:40 Closing remarks by UN Resident Coordinator

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1. Background & Objective of The Webinar

In Kuwait, as one of the high-income countries in the Arab region, strengthening of human capital becomes a major driver, not only for accelerating sustainable economic transformation and diversification but for reducing inequalities and aspiring to strengthen partnerships to achieve development priorities in the Kuwait National Development Plan (KNDP) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in an integrated manner.

In this respect, under the overall direction and guidance of the UN Resident Coordinator Office in Kuwait (UNRCO Kuwait), the five UN agencies, including the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and the World Bank collaborated to produce a policy brief, namely "Unlocking Human Capital Potential in Kuwait as Global Actor in the Knowledge Economy" where strategic investment in education is identified as one of the most critical development areas to accelerate the process of the knowledge economy in Kuwait.

The main objective of this Policy Consultation Series - Redirecting Education and Training in Kuwait was thus to discuss, based on the analytical findings and viewpoints from the policy brief, priority areas of cooperation between the UN and the government of Kuwait to support KNDP policies and programmes into result-based projects to enhance quality of education (incl. early childhood) and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Kuwait.

2. Agenda & Participants of The Webinar

10:00-10:05

Opening remarks by UN Resident Coordinator

10:05:10:20

Introduction by UNRCO Kuwait Economist (moderator)

10:20-11:20

Theme One. Building Human Capital through Strengthening the TVET Sector

11:20-12:20

Theme Two. Improving Human Capital by Enhancing Education Quality through Teacher Professional Development

12:20-12:40

Summary and action points by UNRCO Kuwait Economist

- Dr. Tarek Elsheikh UN Resident Coordinator, Kuwait
- Dr. Seung Jin Baek Economist, UN Resident Coordinator Office, Kuwait
- HE Sara Sultan Under Secretary, Ministry of Education, Kuwait
- Ms. Mona Al Ansary General Supervisor for Mathematic, Ministry of Education, Kuwait
- Ms. Sheikha Al Mudhaf General Supervisor for Science, Ministry of Education, Kuwait
- Ms. Mariam Al Samary Office of Deputy Ministry of Youth Affairs, Kuwait
- Dr. Fatima Kuwait's Achievers for Future Opportunities (KAFO)
- Ms. Amal Al Sayer Head of Kuwait Association of Learning Difference (KALD)
- Mr. Kishore Kumar Cindy Senior Specialist, ILO
- Ms. Aferdita Spahio Education Specialist, UNICEF
- Mr. Danilo Padilla Education Program Specialist, UNESCO

3. Summary of Panel Discussion

"THEME ONE. BUILDING HUMAN CAPITAL THROUGH STRENGTHENING THE TVET SECTOR"

UNESCO and ILO started their interventions by outlining their TVET Strategic priority areas and their connection to the SDGs (with their emphasis on linkage with SDGs 4 and 8), which showed how they align with the Government of Kuwait's overarching development goals for education and training and to their Vision 2030. Taking Kuwait's unique demographic and economic conditions into account, they highlighted a number of selected key barriers that have been associated with current labor market situation in Kuwait, including:

- (1) on education front, employment disconnect and skills mismatch;
- (2) inadequate entrepreneurial training and business support services to boost employment;
- (3) lack of sectoral diversification in production to promote labor intensive sectors); and
- (4) employment dynamics among youth with Kuwait being ranked 98 out of 138 countries in 2020 TVET Global Rank.

In addition to the above UN assessment, KALD further emphasized the importance of empowering people working in the field in order to improve quality of education in Kuwait. Such improvement efforts would not be realized without training and preparing teachers, departments, tops of ministry of education, leaders of school, parent, societies and students. Particularly, this consideration becomes critical for student with disability but currently, there is no plan in Ministry of Education for development private education for persons with disability.

Then, Ministry of Education wanted to share experiences and challenges facing Kuwait's education system in a boarder manner since COVID-19 crisis hit the society: at the time of COVID-19 crisis

- (1) discontinuity of education system as result of closure of all education bodies:
- (2) less effective awareness of the pandemic period;
- (3) lack of IT infrastructure for online learning;
- (4) noncompliance of the syllabus with the pandemic circumstances and online methods;
- (5) difficulties in providing practical programs such as lab and engineering training;

- (6) ineffective interaction between general policies founders and electronic platform undertakers; and
- (7) lack of education related data. In terms of challenges facing the family and society in general include:
- (8) lack of society awareness on the pandemic and online education;
- (9) increased in financial burden over the parents as well as increased family responsibility towards the student;
- (10) lack of time for working mother; and
- (11) lack of the device supports the new education system.

In order to response to such challenges outlined, Kuwait made a significant effort, including

- (a) closure of the education institutions;
- (b) coordination between the governmental bodies;
- (c) put in place precaution measures;
- (d) increased society awareness; and
- (e) Kuwaiti youth volunteering in different areas, while Ministry of Education in particular did their action:
 - (f) design of detailed plan for resuming learning;
 - (g) seeking of support from academic experts;
 - (h) decreased the school tuition;
 - (i) resuming of return of students in Grade 12 on August 2020;
 - (j) starting new year on 4 October 2020 online and integrating syllabus;
 - (k) cancellation of physical exams;
 - (I) forming voluntary teams;
 - (m) preparing of 12 studios to record the session;
 - (n) coordination with ministry of information to establish TV channel for education purposes;
 - (o) establishing of remote platform;
 - (p) training course for teachers;
 - (q) preparing and broadcasting of program through Teams; and
 - (r) constant communication with the parents.

Apart from the education and labour market consideration, there was an issue discussed regarding closing of the camera in an online education setting in public school, which may affect negatively the interaction between students and teachers, in fact. It should however be recognized that unfortunately some cultures within the society oppose the idea of opening the camera. Ministry of Education agreed that they will take into account this issue in their policy consideration as it would require legislative for distance learning to enhance the quality of the distance learning.

"THEME TWO. IMPROVING HUMAN CAPITAL BY ENHANCING EDUCATION QUALITY THROUGH TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT"

UNICEF elaborated a number of important figures that at the peak of the pandemic, it disrupted education for over 1.5 billion learners, and to date, over 317 million in 20 countries have not returned to their classrooms. Moreover, based on World Bank study, there is a loss of between 0.3 and 0.9 years of schooling and bringing down the effective years of basic schooling. Nevertheless, there would still be opportunities to address such learning crisis by reimagining education, ensuring all children and young people develop the skills they need to succeed, transforming in harnessing the power of innovation and technology to reach all children, support teacher workforce development to enhanced education quality.

In this context to be more specific, the importance of teaching workforce development in Kuwait was stressed, with focus on the following principle, including

- (1) ensuring of equitable and quality education for all;
- (2) quality early childhood development;
- (3) affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education;
- (4) relevant skill sets by either teachers and students matched with need of labour market;
- (5) eliminating of gender disparities; and
- (6) literacy and numeracy.

In order to realize such principle, key challenges associated with teaching workforce remains to be tackled, that are

- (a) insufficient number of qualified educators;
- (b) inappropriate expectation for teacher qualifications;
- (c) inequitable development of teaching personnel;

- (d) limited workforce development expertise;
- (e) ineffective programs for workforce development;
- (f) lack of effective supervision, monitoring and oversight; and
- (g) significant gender inequality.

From the interactive discussion between UNICEF and Ministry of Education and other national partners, there were some level of consensus reached regarding diagnoses:

- (1) all teachers should be provided opportunity to continue to pr-planned professional development;
- (2) the professional development shall include remote delivery so not everything is put in remote but consider remoted blended and face to face approaches for delivering teacher professional development program;
- (3) teachers need guidance on professional development on remote paragoges.

4. Way Forward

UNESCO and ILO and Ministry of Education and other national partners agreed to collaborate the development of TVET framework, that is the demand driven TVET Sector in the light of lifelong learning and future of work with particular focus on the need to shift to a demand-driven environment by engaging private sector entities at all levels of skills anticipation, sector skills council, qualification framework, competency and curriculum development, assessment, teachers training, certification and accreditation.

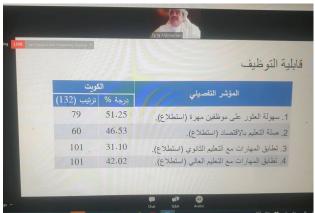
UNICEF and Ministry of Education and other national partners agreed to collaborate the development of online/remote teacher professional training curriculum, with options of coaching and peer support networks, taking into account short to longer term aspect – UNICEF Teacher preparation training package. This can guide teacher on how to ensure safe school operation within their area of responsibilities, how to ensure that the wellbeing of teacher and student is addressed, how learning some basic tips how to identify learning loss, how to catch up student who missed learning during this period and some suggestion on how to work on example of lesson learns.

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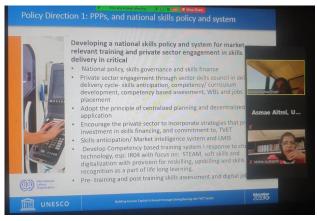
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