Vocational education and training in the context of labour mobility – country report “Egypt”

Edda Grunwald
Guido Lotz
Karla Nitschke
Niveen Sakr

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Table of content

Abbreviations ........................................................................................................................................ iii
Introduction ........................................................................................................................................ v

1 Socio-demographic, cultural and educational characteristics that impact on the labour market in Egypt
   ...................................................................................................................................................... 1
   1.1 Demographic data relevant to the issues .................................................................................. 1
   1.2 Culture as a determinant of attitudes to the labour market and labour market opportunities ...... 2
   1.3 Egypt's education and training system .................................................................................... 3
   1.4 What does this mean for the labour market? ........................................................................... 5

2 Labour market background ............................................................................................................. 7
   2.1 Labour force structure ............................................................................................................. 8
   2.2 Employment in economic sectors ........................................................................................... 8
   2.3 Employment in the public sector ............................................................................................. 9
   2.4 The issue of informality in the Egyptian labour market .......................................................... 10
   2.5 Egyptian youth and unemployment ....................................................................................... 12
   2.6 Unemployment by educational attainment ............................................................................ 14
   2.7 Labour market information and knowledge of skill needs in Egypt ........................................ 14

3 Labour migration and mobility ................................................................................................. 17
   3.1 Poverty impact ....................................................................................................................... 18
   3.2 Push and pull factors of migration and labour mobility ......................................................... 19
   3.3 Educational attainment/skills level of migrants ....................................................................... 21
   3.4 Destinations for international migration ............................................................................... 22
   3.5 Internal migration .................................................................................................................. 22
   3.6 Skills required in Europe and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region .................. 23

4 Labour mobility in GTZ-Projects/Programmes in the field of “vocational education and training and the labour market” ......................................................................................................................... 26
   4.1 Labour mobility within the “vocational education, training and employment programme” (MKI-vetEP) in Egypt .............................................................................................................. 26
   4.2 The potential role of “Occupational Classifications” with regard to labour mobility in Egypt .... 28
   4.3 Potential and challenges with regard to “Qualification Frameworks” (NQF, EQF) as an instrument to enhance labour mobility in Egypt ................................................................. 33
   4.4 The way ahead: conclusions and issues to be addressed further .......................................... 39

Annex .................................................................................................................................................. 41

List of Tables ....................................................................................................................................... 41

Resources ........................................................................................................................................... 51
**Abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALO</td>
<td>Arab Labour Organisation</td>
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<td>AOC</td>
<td>Arab Occupational Classification</td>
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<td>BMZ</td>
<td>Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit (Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation)</td>
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<td>CAPMAS</td>
<td>Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics</td>
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<td>ETF</td>
<td>European Training Foundation</td>
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<td>EQF</td>
<td>Egyptian Qualification Framework – or European Qualification Framework</td>
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<td>GCC</td>
<td>Gulf Co-operation Council</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GTZ</td>
<td>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit</td>
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<td>IDSC</td>
<td>Information and Decision Support Centre</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organisation</td>
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<td>IMIS</td>
<td>Integrated Migration Information System</td>
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<td>ISCO</td>
<td>International Standard Classification of Occupations</td>
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<td>ISIC</td>
<td>International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities</td>
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<td>ITC</td>
<td>Industrial Training Council</td>
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<td>LF</td>
<td>Learning Facilitator</td>
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<td>LM</td>
<td>Labour market</td>
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<td>MENA</td>
<td>Middle East and North Africa</td>
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<td>MKI-DS</td>
<td>Mubarak-Kohl-Initiative-Dual System</td>
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<td>MKI-vetEP</td>
<td>Mubarak-Kohl-Initiative for vocational education, training and Employment Promotion</td>
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<td>MoAD</td>
<td>Ministry of Administrative Development</td>
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<td>MoE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<td>MoHE</td>
<td>Ministry of Higher Education</td>
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<td>MOMM</td>
<td>Ministry of Manpower and Migration</td>
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<td>NQF</td>
<td>National Qualification Framework</td>
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<td>NSSP</td>
<td>National Skills Standards Project</td>
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<td>NYEP</td>
<td>National Youth Employment Programme</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>SFD</td>
<td>Social Fund for Development</td>
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<td>TSS</td>
<td>Technical Secondary School</td>
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<td>TVET</td>
<td>Technical and Vocational Education and Training</td>
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<td>VET</td>
<td>Vocational Education and Training</td>
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Introduction

This is a desk-top study intended to provide grounds for comparison with other countries as well as to test the perceptions acquired through on-the-ground engagement against facts and figures relating to the labour market and labour mobility in Egypt.

Labour mobility is the degree to which labour is willing to move in order to obtain gainful & acceptable employment. Moving from one part of a country to another or from one country to another to obtain employment is known as geographical mobility. Moving from one occupation to another is occupational mobility. In both instances, the underlying factor is the labour market context. The labour market is where workers find paid work, employers find willing workers and where wage rates are negotiated. Labour mobility is, therefore, impacted upon by the situation in the labour market, in particular the potential to match workers with suitable capabilities and qualifications to gainful & acceptable employment opportunities at rates of payment and conditions of employment that are gainful & acceptable to workers and employers at the same time. Capabilities and qualifications are central to the bargaining power of workers in this context, as is the availability of jobs. The labour market situation in the country or area of origin impacts directly on labour mobility. In the context of Egypt, there are also complex cultural determinants which impact differently on different sectors of the population as defined by factors such as class, gender, age and education.

The first Chapter of this paper provides a socio-demographic and educational background to the workings of the labour market and vocational education and training (VET) within it. It also touches on some of the cultural complexities that impact on the labour market. Chapter 2 focuses on the labour market (LM) itself and its particular characteristics in the Egyptian context. Chapter 3 addresses the issues and facts of internal and international labour migration in Egypt, as they arise out of the complexities dealt with in Chapters 1 and 2. Chapter 4 then moves to conceptual thinking and reflection of GTZ-projects/programmes in VET and the labour market, focusing on the issue of labour mobility and the influencing framework mechanisms. Special focus is given to the Mubarak-Kohl Initiative for vocational education, training and Employment Promotion (MKI-vetEP) in Egypt. The primary aim of MKI-vetEP is youth employment. MKI-vetEP’s overall programme goal is to improve the interactive employability of youths and (potential) employers, thus contributing to gainful & acceptable employment.
1 Socio-demographic, cultural and educational characteristics that impact on the labour market in Egypt

- There is rapid growth of the working age population in Egypt, most notably in the rural areas (where a majority of Egyptians still live) and among youth.
- Unemployment is a major issue that impacts particularly on youth. There are more job entrants to the labour market than there are jobs.
- Cultural attitudes impact on how job seekers, particularly among the youth, perceive the labour market and opportunities within it.
- Technical secondary school (TSS) graduates (the majority of school graduates in Egypt) have very high levels of unemployment and, with the exception of some programmes such as the Mubarak Kohl Initiative for Dual System (MKI-DS) - a public private partnership; the quality and relevance of TSS education is low.
- There is a challenge for the Egyptian government to address the issue of post-primary education and training to cater for the mass of young people who either do not progress to secondary education or drop-out before graduating, as well as to improve the quality and relevance of education and training at the TSS level.
- While the number of TSS graduates, as a proportion of those entering the labour market is increasing, these graduates enjoy low social prestige which impacts significantly in a society where educational attainment and opportunities for marriage and reasonable earnings are closely linked culturally.

1.1 Demographic data relevant to the issues

The total Arab population in the predominantly Arab region of the Middle East is estimated to be around 320 million\(^1\). The Egyptian population of around 75 million equates to about one fifth of this total\(^2\). Key demographic information in considering labour mobility is as follows:

- 32% of the Egyptian population is between 15 and 29 years of age\(^3\) (Annex: Table 1);
- 57% of Egyptian people live in rural areas\(^4\);
- Overall population growth is rapid at 2.1%;
- Growth in the working age population (15 to 64 years) is 2.4% with a faster increase in rural areas.
- It is expected that, during the period 2005-2010, 790 000 individuals will enter the labour force annually\(^5\);
- Adult illiteracy is high at 30.5% overall (2006) and 42.7% for women\(^6\).

The working age population and the youth population are growing faster than overall population growth; this is particularly true of rural working age and youth populations.\(^7\)

\(^1\) ALO, p.51  
\(^2\) CAPMAS 2008  
\(^3\) Amer, p.29, 31  
\(^4\) CAPMAS Population Census 2006  
\(^5\) Labour market 2007, p.19, 39  
\(^6\) HDR UNDP, p.35  
\(^7\) Labour market 2006
number of recent studies have given evidence that unemployment in Egypt has increased by more than 50% over the past decade and that this impacts most severely on youth. Around 80% of those who are unemployed in Egypt are said to be in the 15 to 24 year old cluster and estimates are that about 32% of young men and 59% of young women in the cluster have no jobs. Among graduates of secondary school, unemployment rates reach 70% and 22% of graduates from higher educational backgrounds are officially recorded as unemployed. Approximately 600 000 entrants from the school and university systems are looking for a maximum of 200 000 jobs every year. Meanwhile, it is assumed that the numbers of job entrants increased to 790 000 per year. A further complicating factor is that, where job vacancies exist, job-seekers are often not well-matched to the vacancies, and, in any case, labour market information is difficult to come by.

1.2 Culture as a determinant of attitudes to the labour market and labour market opportunities

Contributing factors which cut across demographics but impact particularly on young people include:

- Difficulties in vertical mobility in a society which is segregated along class lines (small upper and middle class with corresponding social status and a large lower and lower middle class which perceives breaching the class barrier as nearly impossible and fears downward movement).

- A desire for employment that provides a chance for social advancement, even if it does not have long-term potential.

- A focus on family and a conservative approach to gender issues.

- The centrality of culture as “a strong pillar of identity, on which perceptions and work ethics are based”.

- A belief, based on fact, that education and certificates improve social status, irrespective of their relevance. Improved social status means having the ability to marry and establish a family.

These cultural perceptions impact directly on how work is seen. Thus, while both “white collar” and “blue collar” jobs (the former infinitely more prestigious) can be found across sectors (so, for example, both types of jobs are available in work clusters such as industry and construction and in the public sector, depending on whether one is in management or not), some sectors are associated with one or the other. So, for example, agriculture is seen as “blue collar” work. It would seem fair to assume then that those working in agriculture would be attracted to other options that are perceived to carry with them more social status.

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8 These figures come from documentation (undated) in support of an additional component for MKI: Employment promotion for Youth and Integration into the Labour Market”.
9 Al-Amry 2008, p. 3. This section of the paper is based on Amry’s work on “Culture and the Perception of Work and Work Ethics in Urban Egypt/Cairo”.
10 Al-Amry 2008, p.12
11 Al-Amry 2008, p.14
Nevertheless, agriculture in Egypt carries a particular value because Egyptian society originates from an agricultural society. In addition, at the lower and lower middle class levels, safe-guarding or advancing status is combined with a need for economic survival and security. The small sliver of society that fits an “upper class” definition (about 3%) places value on factors such as study abroad and messages, often influenced by western cultural trends, conveyed by the media.

Gender is an important determinant of labour market orientation in Egypt. Women and men have different attitudes towards work. Women centre their attention towards becoming wives and mothers. Tertiary education is seen as a way to prepare for a good marriage; this increases social status. This does not mean that there is an intention to remain in the labour market once the goal of a good marriage is achieved. Men, on the other hand, have the dual pressure of getting a well-paid job with high social status, but, at the same time, ensuring ongoing economic stability and security. Except for the small upper class referred to above, most Egyptians do not regard the media as a credible source of information; so the message of a double income family as a norm is not generally accepted. It is men who are more likely to go further to seek gainful & acceptable employment, while women’s mobility is often limited to that which goes with following a husband. Culturally, Egyptians seem to value a sense of belonging and predictability and this is particularly the case for women. Nevertheless, increasingly women are finding that they need to work but, even when they do work after marriage, this role tends to be seen as subsidiary to the home role. For both men and women, family is a primary factor and the expectations of parents and family influence choices related to work.12

One final factor that has cultural determinants and which influences factors such as loyalty to employer and, therefore, the push-pull factors in labour mobility are the prevalent attitudes of employers. The workplace in Egypt – at least in Cairo - tends to be characterised by “a pharaoh mentality or order of the mufti, which means absolute power and total control”.13 This leads to a low level of self-management and motivation to strive for excellence, a lack of trust on both sides and a lack of long-term orientation to a particular job.

Cultural factors can, therefore, be seen to impact significantly on labour and on labour mobility and the pattern of labour mobility. Intrinsic to this is the way in which education and training shape the lives of workers and the options available to them or perceived as available to them.

1.3 Egypt’s education and training system

In Egypt, free schooling is guaranteed by the constitution and higher education, universities are highly subsidised. More than 90% of students are enrolled in public schools at all levels of education14. Since 1960 there has been a huge increase in the number of children enrolled in primary or secondary education (from 42% in 1960 to 95% in 2005/6). The

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12 Al-Amry 2008, p.20, 21
13 Al-Amry 2008, p.21
14 Amer, p.3
number of university students has increased from 1.6 million in 2001 to two million in 2006\textsuperscript{15}. An overview of the Egyptian education and training system can be found in Table 2.

The increase in the number of university students coincided with the phasing out of the “employment guarantee” policy which had meant that, from the sixties, the Government had guaranteed job opportunities to every secondary school and university graduate in government offices, public sector companies, or economic authorities (collectively, the public sector). This phasing out greatly reduced the absorptive ability of the public sector and added to youth unemployment rates. This impacted most on young female graduates for whom the public sector had been the major job provider\textsuperscript{16}.

About two-thirds of students in secondary education attend technical secondary schools (TSS) which provide either three or five years of schooling. The five-year technical schools were introduced only recently; graduates from these schools acquire the grade of technicians. TSS students can choose between three specialities: industry, agriculture and commerce, with a distribution as follows (in 2005/2006): 49% in the industrial track; 40% in the commercial track; and, 12% in the agricultural track.

The Mubarak-Kohl-Initiative for Dual System (MKI-DS) is the result of Egyptian-German technical cooperation project. Introduced in 1994 it has established an effective public-private partnership in the field of technical education. To date, it is offered in 22 out of 29 governorates. 68 technical secondary schools – the so-called MKI-schools - participate in the scheme. Thirty-one occupational profiles have been developed; 1 900 companies accommodate and train students, allowing them to combine classroom education with practical hands-on training. By 2008 there had been 20.000 graduates of the scheme (18% female), and a further 24.000 students were enrolled. The MKI-DS has improved technical education and training in Egypt. In the schools that participate, direct relevance for work has improved. It is demand-driven by the needs of the labour market and most important: bringing Government and Private Sector together in a collaborative binding relationship.\textsuperscript{17} While this programme’s sustainability is assured through legalisation and institutionalisation, it is still a drop in the ocean compared with the numbers of students in TSS.

The composition of secondary school enrolment between general and technical streams and within the different technical tracks has changed several times during the last decades. During the seventies, the technical schools and, in particular, the commercial track, were favoured and grew rapidly. In the eighties, enrolment in the industrial track increased very rapidly. After a decline in the second half of the nineties, this trend has reversed again and technical secondary schools grew in popularity, in particular of the industrial specialisation. Unlike those who follow the general track and are likely to continue education at a tertiary level, the vast majority of TSS students has to enter directly into the labour market.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{15} OECD, p.13
\textsuperscript{16} El Mahdi 2000, p.1
\textsuperscript{17} Taken from the MKI-vetEP website www.MKI-vetEP.com
\textsuperscript{18} Amer, p.8
However, only 50% of enrolled TSS students graduate at all and a large proportion of them leave school to go into unemployment (around 35%), mainly as a result of the low quality of the courses and their lack of relevance to labour market needs. Therefore, graduates are ill equipped for the labour market and usually need retraining. In the context of these numbers, until now, the MKI-DS remains an important but totally insufficient intervention. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that 85% of MKI-DS students are offered employment immediately after graduation and approximately 70% of the total number of MKI-DS graduates is currently working while most of the rest are pursuing higher education. The majority of those MKI-DS graduates who are working (90%) hold full-time jobs. In all these factors, MKI-DS graduates go against the trend for most TSS graduates. The overall figures suggest that there is a major challenge to the Egyptian government to address the issue of post-primary education in an innovative way that includes the majority of young people. Even for those who manage to get into the TSS level, the opportunities are very limited.

2.4 million students are currently enrolled in TSS, but the entire state budget allocated to these students does not exceed 55.7 million pounds or about 23 pounds per students (academic year 2006/7). In the end there is almost no budget at all for teacher training. Income of teachers is low and may be one reason that two-thirds of students take private lessons to keep up. Private lessons constitute the only substantial source of income for teachers, something which may contribute to the low quality of regular teaching.

What holds true for the TSS system holds true for the overall TVET system which is more or less Government-led with only some exceptions. Inadequacies can be summarised as follows:

- Inability to raise sufficient resources for the operation of institutions and to keep up with new developments in the different fields
- Inadequate performance in the past which has led to a lack of trust from the private sector in the Government-led TVET system
- Inadequate training for TVET teachers and instructors
- Teaching of curricula that do not meet private sector workforce needs

1.4 What does this mean for the labour market?

A large and increasing number of young people is enrolled in education. In the 2005/6 academic year, the number reached 19.6 million, representing almost 30% of the total Egyptian population. As shown in Table 3 (see Annex), only 13% were in tertiary education. The bulk is concentrated in basic education at the primary level. The educational composition of the working age population has changed significantly and constitutes one of the most important developments of the past decade. Table 4 (see Annex) shows a dramatic shift as the proportion of secondary school and university graduates has sharply increased.

19 MKI-vetEP website [www.MKI-vetEP.com](http://www.MKI-vetEP.com)
20 GTZ 2007, p. 13/14
The male labour market has become increasingly dominated by TSS graduates who now make up over 30% of the male working age population in both urban and rural areas. An increasing number of women are also TSS graduates, up from 4% in 1988 to 24% in rural areas in 2006 (see Table 5).

However, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) graduates, including TSS, are seen as “second class” within Egyptian society. This affects everything in their lives, including the ability to get married, find reasonable jobs and the way people view them.\textsuperscript{21} Blue collar jobs, as noted above, are perceived as having low social prestige. For male graduates (two-thirds of the total), in particular, this impacts on the decision to go into higher education after graduating, as not having a higher qualification affects options with regard to marriage and having a family.\textsuperscript{22} For women, higher qualifications are seen as social capital, likely to enhance marriage ability because an educated woman will bring up educated children. Cultural factors, as already discussed, have an important influence on the labour market and how it is seen by both entrants and those seeking some kind of advancement.

\textsuperscript{21} Al-Amry 2008, p.14
\textsuperscript{22} GTZ 2007, p.5
2 Labour market background

- Egypt has a generally low labour force participation rate and this is particularly true among women.
- Female participation rates for educated women are declining.
- While employment in the agricultural sector has grown, this is not necessarily correlated with poverty reduction.
- Sectors such as mining, manufacturing and utilities showed disappointing growth although the garments and textiles industry grew and showed increased female participation.
- Construction and the services sectors grew although much of this was a consequence of increased employment in the tourism sector, the country’s number one foreign currency earner, but an area which is highly vulnerable to global economic conditions and civil violence.
- The one area where there is slightly more female participation than male is the public sector which offers women better working conditions and more egalitarian pay. This sector has, however, shrunk and, while the private sector is increasingly important, it cannot address the decrease in public sector employment sufficiently.
- With the phasing out of guaranteed employment in government for those with higher education, the informal economy has become increasingly important.
- The number of informal wage workers had doubled between 1998 and 2006 from 2.3 million to 4.4 million.
- The increase in numbers of informal wage workers is most evident among the youth where unemployment is also high.
- Young women have the highest rate of unemployment and informal economy employment generally does not meet their needs for security, earnings and working conditions.
- Young men are most likely to make something of the opportunities offered by the informal economy and have the best return of reward to informal education and training.
- Young men can build up skill and experience in the informal economy that increases their labour mobility.
- Formal educational attainment in itself is not the answer to unemployment.
- A change is needed in attitudes to different types of work and in the education and training system to a focus on a demand-driven process of imparting real skills and developing capabilities to be productive in an increasingly globalised economy.
- The increase in poverty rates could be a push factor in terms of labour mobility but, without the necessary competences, job seekers face a decreasing demand for semi-skilled and unskilled labour both internally and internationally.
- The Egyptian labour market information system is weak but recent initiatives should lead to an improvement in this regard which will facilitate planning, forecasting, continuous local/regional labour market monitoring and labour mobility based on information about opportunities.
2.1 Labour force structure

The key issues of the labour force structure in Egypt include:

• A generally low labour force participation rate (47.6%);
• A total estimated labour force of 24.8 million (2008), growing at an annual rate of 5.5%;
• A particularly low female labour force participation rate (21.3%) although there has been a modest decrease in the gender gap over the past two decades, particularly as a result of rural female participation increasing from a very low base;\(^\text{23}\)
• While participation is rising among both males and females in both urban and rural settings, female participation rates for educated women are declining (Annex Table 6). This is linked to a shift from public sector to private sector employment.\(^\text{24}\)

The decrease in the number of public sector jobs has had an impact on female participation. Researchers also face difficulties in measuring the participation of women because the majority of them work in the informal economy or in family businesses.\(^\text{25}\) Women appear to be constrained in terms of employment by three factors: domestic responsibilities and fertility, lack of labour market mobility and social expectations about women’s work, all of which relate closely to issues of gender discrimination which are culturally acceptable. These factors also impact on the absolute level of wages and impact on returns to qualifications.\(^\text{26}\)

2.2 Employment in economic sectors

Different economic sectors have fared differently over the past decade. As Table 7 (Annex) shows, employment in the agricultural sector has grown but these figures need to be viewed with care in terms of poverty reduction.

• From 1998 to 2006, the share of agriculture in total employment increased significantly from 20% to 25%;
• This increase reflected to a large extent greater female participation in the agricultural sector (20.3% growth p.a.) but also an increase for male employment (4.3% growth p.a. in agriculture)\(^\text{27}\);
• The bulk of this growth is among non-wage family workers on family farms rather than among hired, wage earning agricultural workers where the increase was only 0.2% per annum.

It is worth noting that studies across 104 middle income countries found that employment-intensive growth in agriculture is strongly correlated with poverty increases, while employment intensive growth in the secondary sector is correlated with reduction in

\(^{23}\) The figures in the first three bullets are taken from CAPMAS 2008 and ETF 2007, p.14.
\(^{24}\) Labour market 2008
\(^{25}\) ALO Report, p.52 ff
\(^{26}\) From a summary of Frost’s Master Thesis by MKI-vetEP 2008
\(^{27}\) Asaad 2007, p.46
poverty. The increase in non-wage agricultural participation in Egypt is not likely to have a positive impact on poverty reduction.

As Table 7 (Annex) also shows, other sectors have grown less robustly, although, in some instances, growth of female participation has been disproportionately high:

- Sectors with the most disappointing growth in employment are mining, manufacturing and utilities;
- The share of manufacturing in total employment shrank from 17% to 15% and it grew at a rate of only 2.4% p.a.;
- However, female employment in the mining, manufacturing and utilities group grew much more rapidly at 5.1% p.a. compared with male employment at 2% p.a.;
- The bulk of this female employment growth was in the garments and textiles sector where the female share more than doubled from 15% to 30% in the period 1998 to 2006.

Public and community services, which are dominated by government employment, grew more slowly than average (see earlier point about the phasing out of the guaranteed employment programme). This sector’s share of overall employment fell from 27% in 1998 to 22% in 2006, with an average annual growth of only 1.8% per annum.

On the other hand, construction and the services sector (including trade, restaurant, hotels, transport, communications, finance and insurance) have contributed more to employment. The effect of the tourism boom in recent years can be directly seen in the trade, restaurants and hotels sector which also grew rapidly at 6.4% p.a. and increased its share from 15% to 17% of employment. This clearly reflects the importance of the tourism industry as a major driver of market-driven private sector employment in Egypt. It is the country’s number one foreign currency earner, producing around USD 4 billion a year and accounting for more than 11% of gross domestic product (GDP). It is, however, a very vulnerable sector, subject to fluctuations in the world economy like those currently being experienced and to the impact of civil violence.

2.3 Employment in the public sector

While the public sector had grown rapidly by 3% annually between 1988 and 1998, the trend reversed from 1998 to 2006. Table 8 (Annex) shows that the public sector in both its components (public enterprises and government) contracted significantly from 39% in 1998 to 30% in 2006. The share of employment in the formal and informal private regular wage work increased by 6% over the same period, but still showed too little job growth to make up for the decline of public sector employment. The large increase in the share for household enterprise workers from 19% to 25% (Annex Table 8) can be interpreted as a major increase

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28 Gutierrez et al (2007)  
29 Labour market 2007, p.15  
30 ETF 2005, p.5  
31 Labour market 2007, p. 14
in non-wage family workers, correlated to the increase of employment in agriculture, but not to a decrease in poverty. Together with the growth of self-employment, this may constitute a substantial rise of hidden underemployment.\(^{32}\)

There is a fairly even ratio of men to women in employment in government, with women having a slightly larger percentage (51%). This “feminisation” of the civil service over the past few decades is attributed to the accessibility of such jobs (owing to the job guarantee for graduates of higher education until the late eighties) and a more egalitarian pay structure than in other sectors. It was found that public employment is more likely to be continued after marriage, partly because of the ‘relatively’ higher wages, better working conditions and more equitable employment opportunities for educated women.\(^{33}\) Therefore positions in the public administration are a very attractive option, because they are perceived as some sort of social insurance\(^{34}\), regarded as light and easy to handle with clear working hours and more freedom for women to combine work and family duties. Returns to education, particularly for women, are generally higher in the public sector than in the private sector.\(^{35}\) While there are slightly higher returns to education for men in formal employment as opposed to informal employment, for women the returns are much higher in the formal sector and this is more apparent in the public service than elsewhere, making it unsurprising that this is the one sector where women account for more participation than men.\(^{36}\) Government jobs are considered very desirable. They are perceived as providing social security which is highly valued at all levels of the social hierarchy and this is especially true of women.\(^{37}\)

2.4 The issue of informality in the Egyptian labour market

One cannot look at employment in different sectors of the labour market in Egypt without addressing the issue of the informal economy.

As government jobs have become scarcer, with the phasing out of the job-guarantee programme for graduates, the informal economy has become, increasingly, an absorption mechanism for the unemployed.

Official statistics are unlikely to capture the real problem of un- and underemployment in Egypt realistically. With insufficient unemployment benefits people cannot afford to stay unemployed. They must work to survive and try to find any kind of job to secure some income. This is where the informal economy assumes significant proportions.

The jobs that new entrants with increasingly higher qualifications receive are becoming more and more informal as the size of the public sector declines. Only 27% of new entrants now obtain formal employment in their first job, compared to 40% in 1980. Youth entering the labour force are much more likely to begin their working career in informal employment.

\(^{32}\) De Gobbi 2005, p.18


\(^{34}\) De Gobbi, p.13

\(^{35}\) Said/El Hamidi 2008, p.3


\(^{37}\) Al-Amry 2008, p.17
relationships, in contrast to earlier generations who often found their way directly into
government or public enterprise employment. Informal employment is characterised by a
lack of a work contract and/or no social insurance coverage. Included in informal
employment are characteristics such as family employment, much of it unpaid, huge
variations in salaries/wages when they are paid, lack of formal benefits such as vacation,
maternity benefits or pensions, and a dependence on fluctuating business for ongoing
employment. 38

Although reliable data on the informal economy is difficult to obtain, available studies reveal
that its size has increased in the past decades. The decline in the share of public sector
employment and the increase in the share of non-wage employment mean that informality is
still increasing in the Egyptian labour market. In fact, informal employment had grown from
57% in 1998 to 61% in 2006.39 The number of informal wage workers had almost doubled
from 2.3 million in 1988 to 4.4 million in 2006.40 Wages of informal workers are extremely
low, especially among women. For example, the average wage for female formal public
sector employees is LE 400 (LE 890 per month for men) and for formal private sector female
workers it is LE 459 (LE 793 for men). For informal women employees, however, it is only LE
253 (LE 411 for men). What this points to, clearly, is that young women in urban Egypt are at
a disadvantage in terms of return to qualifications through earnings and workplace benefits,
especially, but not exclusively, in the informal economy.41

Youth seems to be particularly affected by a trend towards informal employment. In 1990,
52% of non-agricultural workers aged between 18 and 29 had no working contract. In 1998,
this percentage rose to 64%; 62% of them were not covered by social security.42 The
probability of further proceeding from informal employment to semiformal and formal jobs is
highly segmented along the lines of education and gender. Overall, it seems that informal
employment is a stepping stone for highly educated male workers, but is a dead end for the
uneducated and for female workers.43 However, other studies have shown that informal
qualifications (such as traditional apprenticeship and on-the-job training and even social
networking skills) and experience can make a difference to employment options in the
informal economy and to the potential to move from the informal to the formal economy.
There is also the relatively unexplored area of self-employment where there is anecdotal
evidence that workers who get to the employer level earn well. For youth who place less
emphasis on security in a job, a choice between formal and informal employment may be
quite pragmatic. By choosing informal employment, they lose out on benefits such as sick
leave, vacation or maternity leave, but they weigh this up against what will be taken off their
gross wages. It may also be that the lack of standardisation in wages works for a young
person (particularly a young man) who is able to show an informal employer that he is very
productive and even indispensable. There is evidence that women are under-represented

38 From a summary of Frost’s Master Thesis by MKI-vetEP 2008
39 Labour market 2007, p. 16
40 cited in Amer, p.28
42 De Gobbi 2005, p. 14
43 Wahba 2009
among employers and the self-employed in the informal sector and over-represented among unpaid family workers. The majority of female workers (64%) are formally employed and there is evidence to indicate that women leave employment at an early age, in all probability for marriage.44

While this picture of trends in informal employment suggests that there may be push and pull factors specific to this kind of employment that encourage or discourage labour mobility, these need to be weighed up against the cultural factors already discussed. What seems clear is that there will be a difference between the impact on men and women. Women escape what is usually a fairly unrewarding position in the informal economy for marriage and home-life. Men may, however, look for greener and more rewarding pastures and, in some instances, have built up skill and experience in the informal environment that may be exportable, whether in rural/urban labour mobility or international labour mobility.

2.5 Egyptian youth and unemployment

Overall official unemployment in Egypt declined from 11.7% 1998 to 8.6% in 2008. The decline was greatest in rural areas (from 12.2% to 6.3%) (Annex Tables 9/10). Data indicates that unemployment rates among females in 2006 were four times higher than males in Egypt, one of the highest ratios in the world. Eighty-two percent of the unemployed are under the age of 30; 82% are first time entrants to the labour force; 92% have a secondary education or above; 58% are female and 53% are from urban areas45. There are remarkably high unemployment rates in the urban governorates such as Aswan (18.4%), Luxor (16.8%), Qena (13.4%), Ismailia (13%) and Helwan (11.5%)46. But data on national unemployment vary according to the source and are at times conflicting. Independent sources made much higher estimates of unemployment rates.47 Some estimate the real unemployment rate as high as 20% overall48. These figures confirm that:

- Unemployment is high among youth;
- Unemployment among young women is particularly high;
- Educational attainment in itself is not the answer to unemployment;
- The decline in unemployment in rural areas may be linked to an increase in unpaid labour and, therefore, does not correlate with a decrease in poverty.

But as seen in Tables 11/12 (Annex), high unemployment rates have not shifted to older age groups with the advancement of the youth bulge (which is a consequence of incongruence between a drop in mortality rates and a lag in the drop in fertility rates that is a normal part of the demographic development of most countries). The youth bulge leads to more young

45 Assaad 2008
46 Population Census 2006, CAPMAS
47 De Gobbi 2005, p. 17
48 Zohry 2005, p. 6
people entering the labour market. The Tables suggest that this absence of shift is true for men, while the situation for women is more differentiated.

For urban females under the age of 27 unemployment rates declined, with most significant declines for 15-19 year-old females. In rural areas, the declines were even larger and extended all the way to age 35. But there is evidence of an increase in urban unemployment rates for women between the ages of 27 and 34, so it appears that the aging of the youth bulge is negatively affecting young adult women in this age range. The significantly increased share of agriculture in total employment is also related to a larger involvement of women in agriculture, but the bulk of this growth is among unpaid family workers on family farms rather than among hired agricultural workers. In fact, the rate of growth of agricultural wage workers was, as noted above, a mere 0.2% p.a., while female non-wage work increased by 16.2% in rural areas.49

There are also cultural and social phenomena that could be complicating labour market entry. A widespread favouritism in recruitment for relatives of the extended family and friends, as well as a lack of geographical and social mobility may lead to mismatches in the recruitment of employees. Additionally, as already mentioned, status does have an impact on labour market entry among educated people.50 Personal and family status is strictly dependent on type of work. Therefore, it may seem preferable to be unemployed rather than have a low-prestige job. Urban work is deemed to be better than rural employment; white-collar jobs are preferable to blue-collar ones.51 Education, however, while it has increased in quantity, does not necessarily take cognisance of the skills needed to make these aspirations realisable, nor are those aspirations necessarily reasonable as blue collar work can be both skilled and lucrative.

A general change in attitude to types of work, accompanied by the kind of training that makes work previously seen as “low prestige” more productive and lucrative, could impact on the labour market and on youth unemployment. A change is also needed in the education system, away from producing credentials that might qualify young people for jobs that no longer exist in the public service, to imparting real skills to be productive in an increasingly globalised economy.52 What is required, both internally and internationally, is a more demand-driven form of education and training. In terms of labour mobility, this would create some congruence between the changing face of global demands in terms of skills and the skill pool of young Egyptian job seekers. At the same time, the youth bulge means that there is a surplus of young job seekers in Egypt, while the so-called developed countries in the North are already at the stage of demographic progression. That means that they have an aging population and need young workers from elsewhere. Increasingly, during the current global economic crisis, however, this need has been reduced and many young job-seekers from countries like Egypt, especially those who do not have skills that are in high demand, no longer have international options.

49 Labour market 2007, p.12; 45
50 De Gobbi 2005, p.19
51 Al Amry 2008, p. 14
52 Labour market 2008 (interview)
2.6 Unemployment by educational attainment

The educational pattern shown in Tables 9 and 10 (Annex) reflect that unemployment rates in 1998 were low at low levels of education, increased sharply for TSS graduates and then fell off again for post-secondary institute and university graduates. Tables 11 and 12 (Annex) show that, by 2006, however, unemployment rates remained very low for people with lower levels of education, were higher for technical secondary graduates but highest for post-secondary and university graduates; the latter (urban) are the only educational group to have experienced an increase in unemployment rates since 1998.53

The sharp rise in the proportion of TSS graduates in the working age population, by an average of 20% between 1988 and 2006, did not result in equally rising unemployment rates for them compared with 1998. However, participation rates among females with these educational credentials declined, indicating that some of them may have just given up on the prospect of getting employment and remained out of the labour force.54 As already noted, women who invest in education often do so to make themselves more marriageable rather than because they have any intention of entering the labour market.

As noted earlier, the decrease in unemployment rates does not necessarily correlate with a decrease in poverty rates. There are also other factors such as unpaid rural labour or family business labour that impact on the reported figures. The increase in poverty rates could be a push factor in terms of labour mobility. It is also a matter of concern that unemployment rates for more educated jobseekers, on the whole, are higher than those for less educated. It raises questions about the quality and relevance of the education in a global environment where there is an increasing demand for skilled workers and a decreasing demand for those without relevant skills.

2.7 Labour market information and knowledge of skill needs in Egypt

The official Egyptian labour market information system is weak. In recent times, the Egyptian government and donors have launched several initiatives to establish tools for measuring the labour market needs.

Certain labour market institutions are responsible for planning and coordinating activities aimed at promoting employment. Their main objective is to facilitate the match between labour supply and demand. The principal institutions are:

1. The Ministry of Manpower and Migration (MOMM), which is officially responsible for facilitating the match between labour supply and demand, helping to increase the employability of the labour force, and monitoring labour market demand. The latest project of the Ministry is IMIS (Integrated Migration Information System), in collaboration with the Italian Government. IMIS is a technical tool and a capacity building mechanism. It supports MOMM in the management of regular migration flows from Egypt, and offers a matching system. It is intended to improve the social status of Egyptian migrants in

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53 ETF 2007, p.8
54 Labour market 2007, p.13
receiving countries and to channel human and financial resources resulting from the phenomenon of migration. (For further information view [http://www.emigration.gov.eg](http://www.emigration.gov.eg))

2. The *Supreme Council for Human Resources Development* is the main body responsible for coordinating the training policies of all ministries. It is headed by the MOMM.

3. The *Information and Decision Support Centre* (IDSC) is attached to the Prime Minister’s Office. It has formulated the National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP). In addition, the IDSC is undertaking a labour demand analysis based on newspaper advertisements. The IDSC is also about to implement a labour market forecasting mechanism and, in 2007, established an “Observatory for Education, Training and Employment” with the support of the European Training Foundation (ETF).

4. *Employment offices* are part of MOMM and have a territorial structure.

5. The *Social Fund for Development* (SFD), under the supervision of the Prime Minister, was created in 1991 with the task of mitigating the negative effects of economic reform on the most vulnerable groups of people. It promotes economic development in backward regions and is very active in the field of job creation.55

Recent initiatives are moving towards a focus on labour-market demand. According to the targeted employment sectors, the focus lies primarily on tourism, construction and manufacturing. So, in 2008 the IDSC published a survey which looked at the lack of labour in the garment sector. In this sector, 134 000 vacant jobs were being forecasted for the year 2008. The survey highlighted, for example, a current lack of skilled labourers in the Gharbia governorate. The main vacancies identified were for operators of spinning and weaving machines, as well as for textile workers. Apparent reasons for the reluctance of candidates to apply for these types of jobs included difficult working conditions, occupational hazards, low wages and the absence of social security.56 Interventions in the governmental sector have included the NYEP creating jobs in social services such as the health and the education sector.57

Initiatives, such as these, help to facilitate labour mobility – both internationally and internally – by identifying gaps between supply and demand. The sorts of information that a strong system would provide, would include up-to-date expansion demand per economic sector, per occupational segment and per type of education; the location of job opportunities; and the type of education and training likely to be required; the supply of newcomers per type of education. But, to have this type of information available due in time and according to expected quality is unlikely – not to call it unrealistic. The development of this area should lead to planning and forecasting that make for optimal investments in education, training and human resources. It should also create a more transparent labour market that facilitates recruitment and job matching and placement that result in satisfied workers and more productive enterprises, whether locally or internationally.58 A better information system

55 De Gobbi 2005, p. 23
57 De Gobbi 2005, p.16
58 Heijke, 2008
should also inform and facilitate labour mobility, both for individuals and for those institutions and enterprises seeking to optimise labour mobility.
3 Labour migration and mobility

- The combination of surplus labour finding unpaid employment, economic uncertainty, poverty increase and unstable food prices puts pressure on families that increase the possibility of migration and labour mobility.
- The primary push factor that leads to labour mobility is economic, exacerbated by demographic pressures, the lack of job creation capacity in Egypt, the reduced contribution from remittances as semi-skilled and unskilled migrants struggle to find work.
- A pull factor is the family and social networks that develop in receiving countries and encourage migration.
- The intention, in most cases of Egyptian migrants, is to enhance their wealth and social status and return to Egypt, better off than when they left.
- Political circumstances such as war in the receiving countries retards the push and pull to migration, as do tighter labour regulations which make it difficult for people, particularly those without skills that are in demand, to migrate.
- Egypt is, in fact, a net immigration country, as refugees from war-torn and economically ravaged sub-Saharan countries enter Egypt, either legally or illegally.
- Migrants leaving Egypt tend to have higher education levels than non-migrants, with secondary or tertiary education. The 7.5% of graduates that migrate to western countries are less likely to return than those who migrate to neighbouring countries, contributing to the brain drain.
- A study in 2007 found that working migrants in EU countries were predominantly those with lower and medium skills, corresponding with the job opportunities available. This trend now seems to be reversing, with a greater demand for skilled migrant workers. The competition from Southeast Asians (in the GCC countries) and the global economic crisis contribute to this trend. There is also an increasing demand for skilled labour in communication and information technology, skills scarce in Egypt.
- Internal migration is a phenomenon that is reflected almost exclusively in the young male population. While those who migrate from rural to urban areas are slightly more skilled than those migrating in the opposite direction, they are less skilled than their urban counterparts and their dreams of a better life in a place like Cairo are seldom fulfilled. Nevertheless, the decline in arable land available, the low rural wages and the lack of rural infrastructure continues to push them to the cities. - Internal migration is on the increase.
- European demand for skills is now focused on in the services and knowledge intensive economy where skills are required. While pre mid-2007 estimates of the skilled labour demand from European countries are likely to be an over-estimate (given the global economic crisis), the upward trend in demand for skilled workers and the downward turn in the demand for unskilled and semi-skilled workers is likely to continue.
- While labour mobility is likely to continue, both internationally and internally, there is an argument to be made for reducing erratic, desperation–driven migration and the brain drain by improving the education and training system to equip, in particular, young Egyptians to take advantage of opportunities in the Egyptian economy. At the same time young people need to be encouraged to recognise the changing environment and to develop a mindset that enables them to find and keep reasonable jobs. Employers also have a role to play in the interactive employment approach by working towards creating a partnership between workers and employers that improves productivity while providing improved working conditions and opportunities for human resource development.
- Labour market information should also help in the regulation of labour mobility so that, internationally, this mitigates against abuse of workers and enriches both Egypt and the countries of destination.
Chapters 1 and 2 have already established certain factors and conditions which are pertinent to labour mobility. They include:

- A rapid growth of the working age population in Egypt, particularly the youth.
- More job entrants to the Egyptian labour market than there are vacancies.
- Education and training often do not prepare young people for the types of vacancies that exist and the quality and relevance of TSS is often poor and enjoys low prestige, an important factor where work status and marriage potential are seen as closely related.
- Cultural attitudes impact differently on men and women and this has implications for labour mobility.
- Egypt has a low labour force participation rate, particularly among women, and especially educated women.
- Where employment has grown (e.g. the agricultural sector) this is not necessarily positively correlated to a reduction in poverty and is sometimes (e.g. tourism) linked to vulnerable industries.
- With the phasing out of guaranteed employment for those with higher education in the public sector, the public sector, generally favoured by women, has become a less important employer and the private sector more important.
- The private sector cannot absorb all of those who are no longer eligible for automatic government employment and it has fallen to the informal sector to absorb many of these, particularly among the youth where unemployment is high.
- Young men are most likely to make something of the opportunities offered by the informal sector and have the best return of reward to informal education methods.
- There is a need for demand-driven skills training to make workers productive in an increasingly globalised economy.
- The increase in poverty could be a push factor in labour mobility but, without the necessary skills, job seekers face a decreasing demand for semi-skilled and unskilled labour both internally and internationally.
- Recent improvements in the Egyptian labour market information system may facilitate labour mobility based on information about opportunities.

In this Chapter, we unpack some of these points in more detail.

### 3.1 Poverty impact

The lack of correlation between overall improvements in employment rates and poverty reduction rates in the past decade is indicating some instability in the Egyptian labour market. (Poverty rates increased from 16.7% in 2000 to 19.6% in 2005) The incongruence can be explained by a number of factors. First of all, the improvement in real wages,
observed between 1998 and 2006, mainly took place before the economic slowdown between 2000 and 2005. Any improvements in earnings and employment rates seem to have been limited to wage and salary workers. It appears that household enterprises, and in particular family farms, have served in recent years as a sort of sponge that absorbs surplus labour in Egypt’s labour market, with as many as one third of new entrants finding work as unpaid family workers. Secondly, this labour absorption role appears to have come at the cost of a higher incidence of marginal employment, lower productivity and therefore lower earnings. Thirdly, it is necessary to understand the disproportionate effect of the inflationary episode of 2003-2004 on the poor. Food prices tend to be more affected than other prices in exchange-rate induced price shocks and since food constitutes a larger share of the budget of the poor, they tend to be disproportionately affected by such price shocks. Poor households are also less able to adapt than the non-poor because they tend to have lower labour force participation rates among adults and higher child dependency ratios. 

The latest period of increased food prices in 2008 and the worldwide financial and economic crisis that erupted in the second half of 2008 have increased these pressures and are a large risk factor in terms of poverty aggravation for Egypt. Latest estimate sees a compression in real GDP growth for 2009 down to 4.9% from 7.2% in 2008. On the other hand, and more positively, consumer price inflation is forecast to come down significantly, from 18.3% to 8.1%. 

Overall, however, this combination of surplus labour finding unpaid employment, economic uncertainty, poverty increase and unstable food prices puts pressure on families that increase the possibility of labour mobility.

3.2 Push and pull factors of migration and labour mobility

The main reasons why people migrate to work elsewhere are employment opportunities, improvement of living standards and the possibility of obtaining higher pay. Many Egyptian migrants, especially those going to Arab/Gulf countries, have identified specific job opportunities before leaving. This is linked to employment agreements with the Gulf States for the recruitment of skilled professionals. In the survey from which this data comes, migrants were found to be 82% male and the women who were migrating were mainly those with high educational levels. This is consistent with factors such as young men being more likely to pursue higher status or earning potential jobs and the low rate of educated female participation in the Egyptian labour market.

The primary push factor for migration is economic. Egyptians leave in search of better income and employment opportunities (Annex Table 14). The country’s job creation capacity seems insufficient, demographic pressure is high, as are poverty rates. In addition, the rising

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60 UNDP, p. 55
61 EIU 1/2009, p.10
62 ETF Survey on Out-Bound Migration in Egypt 2007 conducted with 1 800 both potential and returning migrants.
63 ETF 2007, p. 9, 27
64 Nassar 2006, p. 19
rates of educational enrolment are likely to increase unemployment in the future as young people look for more appropriate return for their educational investment. Decreased remittances (as semi-skilled jobs and unskilled jobs in receiving countries become scarcer, costs higher and the amount and value of remittances is reduced) add to the pressure for other family members to try to find work that can address the gap. For many families, remittances remain an important income generator.65

Social factors also play a role. Where networks of families and friends are already working in other areas or countries, this is a pull factor, encouraging migration. The major pull factor is the belief that other areas or countries offer greater opportunities for employment that will enhance the circumstances of families, either by providing appropriate job opportunities when none seem to exist in Egypt, or by enhancing the status of the worker through increased wealth or increased prestige (or both). The majority of Egyptian migrants who work in Arab countries are expected to return home eventually and the intention, presumably, when they leave is that they will come back with their social position enhanced (for example, in terms of being marriageable) and the economic situation of their families improved.66

Political conditions in both the countries of origin and destination countries also play a role in migration. Iraq has, in the past, been the Arab country most likely to accept skilled Egyptians as permanent residents. It has sought agricultural professionals trained in irrigation techniques, and encouraged Egyptian farmers to move to the sparsely populated but fertile lands in the south. Following the Iran-Iraq war, however, the number of Egyptian migrants decreased. The 1990 Gulf War forced around two million Egyptian migrants to return. The current political climate and the violence in Iraq is a significant deterrent to migrate there. Labour regulations in receiving countries may also play a role. Where regulations favour inclusion of foreign workers this acts as a pull factor. Tighter regulations, however, may discourage migration. In 2005 Jordan introduced new labour market regulations that require a work contract before entry into the country. Most Egyptian migrants to Jordan are unskilled labourers who work in agriculture or in the informal economy. The same happened in Libya which had been the cheapest border crossing option. New regulations, similar to the Jordanian ones, were introduced by the Libyan authorities in September 2007, and these will have a negative effect on the migration of semi-skilled and unskilled workers from Egypt.

Looking at the push and pull factors, one should also note that there is an inflow of migrant workers to Egypt. Significant immigration to Egypt has also taken place since 1983 from Sudan and other countries in sub-Saharan Africa as a result of conflict and political instability.67 The main refugee communities in Egypt are Sudanese, Palestinian, Somali, Ethiopian and Eritrean.68 There are an estimated three million unrecognised Sudanese refugees plus numerous other nationalities in Egypt, all predominantly located in Cairo. The

65 Ibid, p.106f
66 While those migrating to countries in the region intend to return, this is often not so when migrants go to OECD countries with the intention of settling abroad permanently. This is discussed further below.
67 Zohry 2005, p. 30f
68 ETF 2007, p. 11f
total number of refugees could be as high as five million. This is an under-researched area, but, as the estimated number of Egyptians abroad is around 3.9 million, this clearly makes Egypt a country of net immigration. Despite the factors pushing Egyptians to seek employment abroad, there are sufficient pull factors, or possibly push factors in their own countries, most of which are plagued by on-going wars, to encourage migration of people to Egypt. This puts further pressure on the labour market.

3.3 Educational attainment/skills level of migrants

Migrants leaving Egypt tend to have a higher educational level than non-migrants. Table 13 (Annex) shows that the percentage of migrants with secondary or tertiary education is larger than the percentage among non-migrants. In fact, around 7.5% of all graduates of higher/tertiary education have emigrated to the United States or another Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) country between 1990 and 2002. These migrants are likely to have less intention of returning to Egypt than do those who go to neighbouring countries and, therefore, constitute a brain drain.

A study found that working migrants in European Union (EU) countries were predominantly those with low and medium skills. Half of the returning migrants who went to the EU had medium levels of skill. This seems to correspond to the job opportunities found by these migrants. Tendencies in newer partnership agreements with the EU indicate a move towards a greater importance being placed on higher skilled migrant workers. Another study found the percentage of high-skilled workers going to non-EU countries was much higher than those going to EU. This is mainly a result of the attractiveness of the posts offered in the Gulf countries where high-skilled Egyptians are able to obtain jobs as professionals or managers.

Temporary migration to neighbouring countries consists of an almost equal mix of skilled professionals and unskilled or semi-skilled workers. In 2002, scientists and technicians constituted between 41% (in Saudi Arabia) and 54% (in Kuwait) of migrants to Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries, and 57% and 69% respectively in Libya and Yemen. Egyptian unskilled migrants predominated in Lebanon (75%), Iraq and Jordan (63%). In previous decades, unskilled migration had dominated, especially for construction work. Currently, however, the major opportunities are for skilled workers.

Unskilled workers face decreasing demand in their traditional markets abroad due to inflows of cheap labourers from Southeast Asia heading to the GCC countries and, more recently, the global economic crisis. Between 1990 and 2002 the share of scientists and technicians almost doubled, while the number of production workers and employees in the service sector

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69 CAPMAS 2006
70 Anon, 2003: 46, cited in: ETF 2007, p. 11f
71 Fargues 2005, p.103, 107, 117f
72 ETF 2007, p. 39
73 The members of the Gulf Cooperation Council are: Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Saudi-Arabia and United Arab Emirates
74 GCIM, p. 8, 9
fell.\textsuperscript{75} Owing to an orientation towards new economic areas such as communication and information technology, GCC countries demand for unskilled labour declined. These new types of skills which are in demand are difficult to find in the Arab region and in Egypt.\textsuperscript{76}

### 3.4 Destinations for international migration

Over the past three decades, two distinct destinations have emerged for Egyptian migration. Migrants have moved to the countries of the Arab Gulf, mainly on the basis of temporary work contracts, with no prospect of staying permanently and no right to citizenship privileges. Official secondment through government authorities on the basis of bilateral contracts has been one of the main forms of temporary migration. As a result of competition from new streams of cheap labour from Southeast Asia, the share of Egyptian labourers in this labour market declined from 43\% in 1985 to 26\% in 2005. While most workers were employed in construction during the earlier phases of massive labour migration in the mid 1970s, the proportion of those employed as scientists and technicians has increased since the mid 1980s.\textsuperscript{77}

In April 2006, the official Egyptian Statistics Office (CAPMAS) announced the total number of Egyptians abroad at 3.9 million. Migration to neighbouring Arab countries has well exceeded migration to Europe, North America and Australia. According to CAPMAS, the total number of Egyptian migrant workers in the Arab countries at that time was around 1.9 million, of whom 48.0\% were in Saudi Arabia, 17.4\% in Libya, 12.0\% in Jordan and 10.0\% in Kuwait. In terms of other migration destinations, the majority of migrants are concentrated in five countries: the United States of America, Canada, Italy, Australia and Greece. The rest are mainly in the Netherlands, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Spain.\textsuperscript{78} Tables 15 and 16 (Annex) show the main destination countries for Egyptian migration.

### 3.5 Internal migration

Internal migration is almost completely a phenomenon of young men rather than women or older men. These migrants have a relatively higher education compared to the non-migrants from their environment, but lower than the population at the destination towards which they are heading.\textsuperscript{79} It seems that 35\% of rural-urban migrants are illiterate compared to 21\% of urban-rural migrants. In particular, Greater Cairo seems to be attracting a bigger proportion (43\%) of its rural migrants from those with no education.

Long-distance rural-urban migration to Cairo from Upper Egypt is a long-standing phenomenon that has existed for at least one hundred years. During the last decade, however, censuses show only a slight increase in rural-urban migration and at a very low

\textsuperscript{75} Fargues 2005, p.105
\textsuperscript{76} Nassar 2008, p.8f.
\textsuperscript{77} ETF 2007, p.13
\textsuperscript{78} ETF 2007, p. 11f
\textsuperscript{79} Zohry 2005, p. 15
level of 1.5% between 1998 and 2006. In contrast, return migration, i.e. urban-rural, has increased steadily and accounted for nearly a quarter of all movements in 1996 (Annex Table 17). However, almost 79% of those moves (up from around only 32%) are within the same governorate. This suggests a new pattern of internal migration in Egypt that may be the result of tightness in the housing supply in urban areas and the poorly functioning housing markets. This pushes people to live in rural areas. Urban-urban migration represented the bulk of movements (60.4% in 1996) between the large governorates of Cairo, Giza, Qalyubia and Alexandria.\(^{80}\)

Newer migration phenomena can be interpreted as “survival migration” from rural agricultural areas. These are circular or pendulum-like movements that can be independent of agricultural seasons. In this instance, migrants are attracted by wages that can be three times higher, the prospect of a more regular work to support family members back home, and the possibility of a more exciting lifestyle in Cairo or Alexandria. These migrants do not change their place of legal residence and usually end up in informality of the urban economy. They tend to live a miserable life in Cairo, comparable to that of refugees. The decline in the amount of arable land available, caused by demographic pressure and constant fragmentation, and low rural wages, as well as a scarce rural infrastructure in terms of health or education services, can be push factors for migrating internally.\(^{81}\)

Overall internal migration rates have increased in the last eight years and the new pattern of migration is short distance, within the same governorate.\(^{82}\) Higher official migration rates for women (moving from birth location) than men reflect the tradition of wives leaving their birth location/family to join husbands. It is also possible that the increase in female education may have contributed to a recent increase in female migration. In addition, the less educated have higher urban-rural migration rates than the educated. Overall, however, for all other types of migration, it is the highly educated who have the highest migration rates. In general, findings suggest that internal migration has increased in the last few years after a period of stagnation in the early 90s.\(^{83}\)

3.6 Skills required in Europe and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region

Europe has experienced continuing shifts away from the primary sector (especially agriculture) and traditional manufacturing industries towards services and the knowledge intensive economy in general. These trends are likely to continue to be a key feature over the coming decade. This applies both within individual countries and in the way in which things are changing between European countries.

The medium-term forecast is that labour will adjust to the changing political and economic situation. Substantial change is likely, with over 13 million additional jobs being created

\(^{80}\) Wahba 2007, p. 6
\(^{81}\) Zohry 2005, p.25
\(^{82}\) ETF Country Plan 2009, p. 2
\(^{83}\) Wahba 2007, p. 6
between 2006 and 2015 in EU-25+. (It needs to be noted, however, that the global economic crisis that has erupted since the middle of 2008 may change these predictions somewhat.) There is likely to be a loss of well over two million jobs in the primary sector and almost half a million in manufacturing. Distribution, transport, hotels and catering together are projected to see employment grow by 3.5 million over the next decade, while non-marketed services are expected to increase by only slightly less. (This and the following need to be considered with the same caveat that the predictions preceded the global economic crisis.) Business and miscellaneous services have the best prospects, with almost nine million additional jobs expected to be created between 2006 and 2015. In total, the projected net employment increase in Europe of over 13 million jobs between 2006 and 2015 comprises increases of almost 12.5 million jobs at the highest qualification level (ISCED levels 5 and 6) and almost 9.5 million jobs at medium level (ISCED level 3 and 4), offset by a sharp decline of 8.5 million jobs for those with no or few formal qualifications (ISCED levels 0 to 2). In part these changes reflect the expected continued growth in supply of people who have acquired formal qualifications.84 (While the global economic crisis is likely to lead to numbers being fewer than expected, the trends are likely to be the same.)

In non-European countries a shift in demand has taken place especially in the GCC states recently. As noted above, owing to an orientation towards new economic areas such as communication and information technology, GCC countries demand for unskilled labour has declined. Skills that are in demand are scarce in Egypt.

In summary

Both international and internal labour mobility are factors in the current labour market situation in Egypt. While this is a long-term issue, trends are changing and the demand for unskilled and semi-skilled labour internationally is dropping while, despite the global economic crisis, there is still a growing demand for skilled workers. Internal migration is less clear-cut but it seems that those with even slightly higher skill levels are more likely to migrate from rural to urban areas. While the push factor here may be poverty and the pull factor expectations of bettering one’s situation, this transformation does not seem likely to occur for workers with low skill levels and poverty may well be perpetuated. In all cases, female participation in migration is lower than that of male participation, but better educated women are more likely to migrate internationally.

What is not addressed is whether labour mobility, local or international, is, in itself a good thing. There is a case to be made for Egyptian workers remaining in Egypt and seizing opportunities there. This would require an improvement in the education and training system to equip, in particular, young Egyptians to take advantage of such opportunities.85 That there are vacant positions, despite high levels of unemployment, suggests that this is a gap that needs to be addressed. At the same time, young people need to be encouraged to recognise the changing environment and develop a more work-oriented mindset that

84 http://www.cedefop.europa.eu
85 This challenge also needs to be extended to finding solutions for refugees in Egypt who can, potentially, make a contribution to the country.
enables them to find and keep jobs and use them to improve their situation. While culture is important, it is not set in stone and young women, in particular, need to be able to extend their horizons. The concept of interactive employment requires, however, that workplaces also become better environments where workers and employers are able to work towards a partnership in increasing productivity while developing human resources. The creation of gainful & acceptable employment opportunities, at all levels, is a key factor in combating erratic migration, brain drain and general dislocation caused by unnecessary migration. Both the formal and informal economy will have a role to play in this. With the significant drop in the demand for unskilled and semi-skilled labour internationally, the need to ensure that young Egyptians can compete at a global level has increased. The potential for labour mobility across country borders is less likely to be abused, and more likely to be enriching for both Egypt and countries of destination, if labour export and import are regulated. This is most likely to be achieved where labour is more capable and labour market information is more readily available.
4 Labour mobility in GTZ-Projects/Programmes in the field of “vocational education and training and the labour market”

The chapter headings and contents:

4.1 Labour Mobility within the “Vocational Education, Training and Employment Programme (MKI-vetEP) in Egypt
- MKI-vetEP programme’s goal
- Interactive employability as the core conceptual principle of MKI-vetEP
- Gainful and acceptable employment
- Labour mobility as an integral element of MKI-vetEP’s conceptual approach towards gainful and acceptable employment

4.2 The potential role of “Occupational Classifications” with regard to labour mobility in Egypt
- What are occupational classifications?
- What is the purpose of occupational classifications?
- How could occupation classifications contribute to labour mobility in Egypt?
- What is the status quo and what are the challenges with regard to Occupational Classification in Egypt?
- How does MKI-vetEP deal with the issue of Occupational Classifications?

4.3 Potential and challenges with regard to Qualifications Frameworks (NQF, EQF) as an instrument to enhance labour mobility in Egypt
- What are Qualifications Frameworks?
- What is the purpose of Qualifications frameworks?
- How could Qualifications Frameworks contribute to labour mobility in Egypt?
- What are the status quo and challenges with regard to Qualifications Frameworks in Egypt?
- How does MKI-vet-EP deal with the issue of Qualifications Frameworks?

4.4 The way ahead: Conclusions and issues to be further addressed

4.1 Labour mobility within the “vocational education, training and employment programme” (MKI-vetEP) in Egypt

MKI-vetEP – the programme’s goal
The primary aim of MKI-vetEP is youth employment. MKI-vetEP’s overall programme goal is to improve the interactive employability of youths and a corresponding approach in (potential) employers, thus contributing to gainful and acceptable employment.

Interactive employability – the core conceptual principle of MKI-vetEP
MKI-vetEP focuses on both employers as well as job seekers – strengthening their capacities, initiative and interaction. The programme works with and through partners from government ministries and organizations, civil society and the private sector.

86 For information on the programme see MKI-vetEP Website http://www.mki-vetep.com
Interactive employability, the basis for achieving a major impact with regard to gainful and acceptable employment

Pre-requisites for gainful and acceptable employment for the following stakeholders include:

- the individuals/job seekers: should become and stay employable;
- potential employers (including staff in charge of Human Resource Management): should be able to employ: appropriate interaction mechanisms between employers and job seekers: to exchange information, to articulate as well as to consider expectations, and to enter into dialogue with one another to reach a balance of interest with regard to gainful and acceptable employment.

Thus, MKI-vetEP’s concept of interactive employability goes far beyond educating and training young people with the aim of equipping them with labour market-oriented qualifications - skills, knowledge and attitude - required to perform a job in the world of work. Qualifications and Education and Training are not enough to tackle the challenge of youth unemployment in Egypt and to achieve a major impact with regard to gainful and acceptable employment. High quality interactive employment services, for example, play a central role, too.

Gainful and acceptable employment: potential inside and outside Egypt is covered by MKI-vetEP

Employment is gainful and acceptable if both job seeker and employer- or someone who is self-employed - perceive it as such, reflecting the set of particular needs, interests and expectations related to employment up to an agreed upon extent.

MKI-vetEP takes into account all potential for gainful and acceptable employment: formal and informal employment in formal and/or informal economies locally (focusing on three pilot locations), regionally and nationally within Egypt. Potential for gainful and acceptable employment for Egyptian youth in foreign countries e.g. in the MENA region or Europe - is also covered.

Labour mobility - an integral element of MKI-vetEP’s conceptual approach towards gainful and acceptable employment

Since potential for gainful and acceptable employment inside and outside Egypt is covered, labour mobility – especially the dimensions of internal labour mobility and (formal) external labour migration - plays a role for MKI-vetEP.

Labour mobility, as with all other major factors influencing gainful and acceptable employment, is an integral element of MKI-vetEP’s conceptual approach.

As indicated in Chart 1, there are several dimensions and determinants that need to be considered with regard to labour mobility. This calls for an integrated approach to labour mobility which also takes into consideration MKI-vetEP’s conceptual principles – especially that of interactive employability.

87 and the level of representation, too: youth organizations, trade unions, corporate sector, government institutions
88 Manpower and Migration, Trade and Industry, Education
There are several dimensions and determinants with regard to labour mobility which needs to be taken into account.

**Chart 1:** Dimensions and determinants with regard to labour mobility

Labour mobility is embedded in a context of socio-economic frame conditions and (national) policies and strategies with regard to labour migration. As the experience of MKI-vetEP shows, sociological and cultural aspects - such as social reputation, security, respect, career advancement, personal interests and expectations - play a major role with regard to gainful and acceptable employment and labour mobility in Egypt. MKI-vetEP has also discovered that there are significant cultural differences between its pilot locations in Qena and Mansoura, which are reflected in different perceptions of work, work ethics, and also about migration.

This paper focuses on the interrelation between labour mobility and vocational education and training geared at qualifications required by the labour market. Accordingly, the other dimensions and determinants shown in Chart 1, as well as related aspects, are not further reflected here in detail.

**4.2 The potential role of “Occupational Classifications” with regard to labour mobility in Egypt**

**What are Occupational Classifications?**

An “Occupational Classification” is an instrument to structure and organize various “jobs” found in labour markets. It has different levels of aggregation and - besides the classification structure - contains descriptive elements.

Typically, a job comprises duties and tasks carried out by one person. Jobs whose main tasks and duties have a high degree of similarity form an occupation. Occupations are
classified into occupational groups based on the criteria of skills level and skills specialization required to perform the duties and tasks belonging to an occupation.\textsuperscript{89}

There are several occupational classification systems with a different geographic focus. A renowned and widely used international occupational classification is the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) under the responsibility of the International Labour Organization (ILO). A regional occupational classification system which is relevant for projects/programmes in the MENA-region is the Arab Occupational Classification (AOC)\textsuperscript{90} under the umbrella of the Arab Labour Organization (ALO). In addition to that, there are national occupational classifications reflecting national occupational specifics.

**What is the purpose of Occupational Classifications?**

Occupational classifications aim at facilitating communication and comparison related to occupational information. They are intended to be helpful for different categories of users, e.g. with regard to:

- statistical purposes regarding occupational information;
- labour market analysis;
- recruitment, matching and placement of workers;
- migration of workers between countries;
- development of labour market-oriented vocational education and training programmes, and
- vocational guidance

**How could Occupational Classifications contribute to labour mobility in Egypt?**

Occupational classifications - based on categories of occupations and description criteria commonly used by the stakeholders within Egypt as well as other Arab and European countries\textsuperscript{91} - could contribute to labour mobility mainly as a means for (comparable) occupational information on different levels. This information can be used for various purposes to facilitate labour mobility.

Potential contributions of compatible Egyptian, regional and international occupational classification systems (AOC and ISCO), and related detailed occupational information, to internal and (formal) external labour mobility cover e.g.:

- having a common reference system for:
  - communication between stakeholders (government, civil society, private sector) on occupational information related to labour mobility;
  - generation of useful and comparable statistics categorized by occupations - especially (continuous) labour market monitoring and forecasting, using occupational categories

\textsuperscript{89} see e.g. ILO-Website on International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO): http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/index.htm

\textsuperscript{90} which was revised and updated with the support of GTZ in co-operation with 5 Arab countries

\textsuperscript{91} main countries / target labour markets with regard to external labour migration
of the occupational classification system to provide statistical information on current labour market demand and future trends per occupation. Linked with national geographical categories, labour market information on regional, or further disaggregated, on local demand and supply in Egypt would give an indication where substantial employment potential exist – an important pre-requisite to deal with the issue of internal labour mobility and its various dimensions;

- facilitating comparison of occupational information between Egypt and target countries with regard to external labour mobility/labour migration, e.g. on employment potential based on labour market supply and demand data per occupation;
- informed decision-making with regard to policies, strategies and steering of initiatives with a focus on labour mobility;

- having detailed occupational descriptions\(^2\) which can serve as a reference e.g. for:
  - developing a better understanding based on occupational information (e.g. job seekers);
  - interactive employment services geared at gainful and acceptable employment inside and outside Egypt;
  - developing and implementing formal and non-formal vocational education and training programmes which:
    - reflect the qualification needs of the labour market; and
    - contribute to labour mobility of individuals through increasing portability of qualifications;
      they do this by focusing on common occupational qualifications typical for an occupational group or occupation, regardless of the particular labour market, employer or working place.
  - licensing of workers who are seeking gainful and acceptable employment outside Egypt.

However, even though occupational classification systems can be helpful references, they are just a starting point or basic platform and not sufficient as a “stand alone” approach. To be more effective, they should be integrated into other concepts facilitating the various dimensions of labour mobility e.g. into a wider concept of standardization, accreditation and certification of Education and Training (see also Chapter 4.3) to foster quality, acceptance and portability with regard to (occupational) qualifications.

**What is the status quo and what are the challenges with regard to Occupational Classifications in Egypt?**

**Status Quo:**

Some examples of major issues in the status quo regarding occupational classifications in Egypt are:

\(^2\) e.g. about the tasks, duties and working conditions of jobs
• Occupational classifications are used by various players involved in labour market issues, e.g. by the Ministry of Manpower and Migration (MoMM), the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) and the Information Decision and Support Center (IDSC) affiliated to the Egyptian cabinet. They are mainly used for statistical purposes, particularly with regard to labour market monitoring and labour market information.

• For licensing of workers. In Egypt one pre-requisite for formal labour migration is what MoMM refers to the “National Skills Standards”. These skills standards have been developed within the National Skills Standards Project (NSSP) with international support under the co-ordination of the Social Fund for Development (SFD). The development of the National Skills Standards was based on the Functional Analysis approach, and not on occupational classifications and related detailed occupational information.

• So far, the various public and non-public providers of different formal and non-formal vocational education and training programmes in Egypt do not seem to have used occupational classifications and related detailed occupational information as a basis for the development of their programmes, at least to any significant extent.

• Egypt is one of five Arab countries which participated in the revision of the Arab Occupational Classification (AOC) within the framework of a regional project supported by BMZ through GTZ. One of the objectives is to cover changes which have taken place in Arab labour markets since 1998 which was the year of the first version of the classification. The updated version of the AOC was completed in 2007. It includes approximately 3 000 job descriptions.

Challenges:

Major challenges with regard to occupational classifications in Egypt and their contributions to facilitating labour mobility include e.g.:

• A general challenge in developing an occupational classification with the participation of stakeholders is that different user groups of occupational classifications have different requirements with “respect not only to the appropriate level of aggregation but also to the most appropriate similarity criteria”. Those different requirements needs to be balanced in the process of reaching a balance of interest.

• Informal economies play a major role with regard to employment potential in Egypt. Accordingly, occupational classifications should also cover informal economies.

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93 The IDSC e.g. follows an approach to national labor demand forecasting in Egypt which is based on combining economic activities (first digit of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities) and occupations (three digits of ISCO-88 / AOC-2008). Source: Presentation of Dr. Yasser Gadallah “Labor Demand Forecasting in Egypt: Methodology and Application” given at the conference “Labor Market In Egypt And Some Arab Countries” on 25 November 2008 in Cairo.


adequately if they are supposed to contribute to facilitation of labour mobility. Questions in this regard include:

○ how to involve representatives of informal economies in the development process;
○ how to deal with heterogeneity of jobs and their characteristics;
○ whether the aggregation of jobs within occupational classifications like ISCO and AOC are applicable to informal economies in Egypt.

• Experiences of the regional project on revision and updating of the AOC show that there are significant differences between the labour markets of the participating Arab countries. In order to facilitate international use and comparison of occupational information, the ILO recommends, with regard to ISCO-08, that “each country should try to compile data that can be converted to the ISCO-08 system”96 (this recommendation would analogously also apply for compatibility of national data with AOC). The question is how to balance local specifics adequately with the overarching goal of comparability and compatibility.

• General challenges with regard to information in Egypt which also impact on the development of occupational classifications and related detailed occupational information are often stated as:
  ○ accessibility of information;
  ○ quality and reliability of available information.

• With regard to the revised AOC, the challenge is now successful implementation.
• Mechanisms to keep classification up to date with changes in labour markets need to be established.

How does MKI-vetEP deal with the issue of Occupational Classifications?

Overall guiding questions for MKI-vetEP are: What are the potential benefits and positive effects with regard to the programme goal? What are the potential benefits and positive effects on MKI-vetEP’s strategy and conceptual approach to promote interactive employability towards gainful and acceptable employment? If there are significant potential benefits another important aspect for decision-making is the level of resources and efforts required and whether allocation of resources into a certain activity is possible and justified.

With regard to occupational classifications as a means to facilitate labour mobility, the following major aspects and questions are of concern for MKI-vetEP:

• Occupational classifications are not an end in themselves but potentially helpful tools with regard to certain dimensions and determinants for labour mobility.
• With regard to reference systems/standards MKI-vetEP’s philosophy is:

to focus on “standards” as joint agreements\textsuperscript{97} between stakeholders based on an interest-driven approach; and

- to take connectivity to appropriate and applicable national, regional (e.g. MENA region) and international standards into account as an important aspect – in this case connectivity to AOC and ISCO.

- Results of a comparison between AOC and ISCO based on a limited number of samples are that AOC and ISCO are identical with regard to the first three digits. Specific aspects of the labour markets in the five Arab countries covered are dealt with on more disaggregated levels.

- Detailed occupational information on jobs is important for MKI-vetEP especially with regard to its employment services. Occupational information like the AOC job descriptions could be very helpful. Major questions are whether, and to which extent, they reflect the reality of jobs in Egypt, and whether, if trust and acceptance by the stakeholders are given, how this could be developed.

- With the update of the AOC, the issue of outdated occupational classifications used in Egypt has been addressed. MKI-vetEP will closely observe the further developments with regard to implementation of the updated AOC in Egypt. A question of particular interest is whether, and to which extent, the AOC will be accepted and used by the various players involved in labour market and vocational education and training as the common reference, and be adopted in their strategies and concepts.

### 4.3 Potential and challenges with regard to “Qualification Frameworks” (NQF, EQF) as an instrument to enhance labour mobility in Egypt

What are Qualification Frameworks?

**National Qualification Frameworks (NQF):**

National Qualification Frameworks (NQF) are national initiatives focusing on how to design qualifications and on what the related expected achievement or outcome should be. They establish - as a joint effort of stakeholders from government, private sector and civil society - “commonality across different qualifications and (they specify) qualifications in terms of standards, levels and outcomes”\textsuperscript{98}.

NQFs are designed independently of any education and training provision – instead of “input based” they are “outcome-based”. Due to this nature, a qualification framework is basically an assessment framework, and not a framework for provision of education and training.


A core element of NQFs is a classification system for qualifications (achieved learning outcomes) based on agreed upon level descriptors\textsuperscript{99}, documented in a qualification grid or matrix\textsuperscript{100}.

**European Qualification Framework (EQF):**

The European Qualification Framework also describes levels of qualifications in terms of learning outcomes and related level descriptors. It is a result of a European initiative with a focus on establishing a reference framework for relating national qualifications systems and frameworks of different (European) countries with one another. In this sense it is kind of a "mapping" or "translation" mechanism. The EQF is a voluntary and not a mandatory framework. It was adopted by the European Parliament and Council in April 2008.

**What is the purpose of Qualification Frameworks?**

Qualification Frameworks aim at facilitating:

- relevance of qualifications;
- transparency regarding qualifications and their relationship to one another;
- portability of qualification;
- life-long learning;
- social justice through equality of opportunity (e.g. by opening up access to qualifications and by recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning);
- quality;
- acceptance of qualifications by the private sector, civil society and government.
- The EQF aims in particular at:\textsuperscript{101}
  - providing a common reference to promote links, interchangeability and portability between national systems of qualifications;
  - making national qualifications better understandable and comparable across Europe;
  - promoting workers' and learners' mobility between countries; and
  - facilitating their lifelong learning.

**How could Qualification Frameworks contribute to labour mobility in Egypt?**

A National Qualification Framework could contribute to facilitating internal and external labour mobility of Egyptians in several regards: if it succeeds in improving the relevance of qualifications (for employers and individuals), as well creating transparency about and trust in qualifications.

\textsuperscript{99} level descriptors e.g. distinguish the levels of difficulty involved in progressing from routine to more advanced capabilities in different occupational fields

\textsuperscript{100} which is often referred to as “the” NQF - even though it is only one element

\textsuperscript{101} http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc44_en.htm
With more clarity and transparency in Egyptian qualifications, as well as accepted and reliable quality of qualifications:

- Gaining international recognition of such qualifications would be supported;
- It would be much easier for job seekers to market their qualifications to (potential) employers inside and outside Egypt. Qualifications represent passive employability on the side of the job seekers. They are one important factor with regard to gainful and acceptable employment;
- Employers would be in the position to take an informed and reliable decision regarding the qualification of job seekers - regardless of the part of Egypt from which they come;
- Referencing such Egyptian qualifications to the EQF and emerging NQFs of other Arab countries would be facilitated – which would help employers in EU\textsuperscript{102} and Arab countries to understand and interpret qualifications\textsuperscript{103} of Egyptian job seekers more easily, as well as to compare them with those of other applicants.

However, limitations of the NQF with regard to contributing to labour mobility should be taken into account:

- NQF only focus on one of the dimensions and determining factors with regard to labour mobility, namely qualifications (passive employability of job seekers).
- Labour market oriented and transparent qualifications can do very little to increase the actual demand for those qualifications or even employment\textsuperscript{104}. Concrete employment opportunities are an important pre-requisite for labour mobility.

**What is the status quo and what are the challenges with regard to Qualification Frameworks in Egypt?**

**Status Quo:**

The development of human resources, the improvement of qualifications and the system of provision are issues of high priority in Egypt. Standardization, accreditation and certification, as well as qualification frameworks, are acknowledged as aspects and approaches that are worthwhile and important to be dealt with in this regard. Owing to the Euro-Mediterranean partnership agreement and resulting increased potential for labour migration to European countries, the European Qualification Framework and its potential role with regard to facilitating external labour mobility has become a topic of increasing relevance for Egypt, too.

Main aspects reflecting the status quo regarding the establishment of a National Qualification Framework in Egypt include\textsuperscript{105}:

\textsuperscript{102} however, it should be taken into account that the process of referencing national qualifications of European countries to the EQF is still ongoing and will take time
\textsuperscript{103} and the level of learning outcomes (achievement of learning)
\textsuperscript{105} A Peer Review on the development of a NQF in Egypt was conducted in May 2008. Tom Leney / Mohamed el-Fateh: Peer Review Report – National Qualification Framework (NQF) Development in Egypt. October 2008
• After having participated in preparatory work on National Qualification Frameworks (NQF), Egypt requested support from the European Training Foundation (ETF) with regard to a feasibility and implementation phase for NQF development. Egypt was selected by the ETF as one of four countries in the MEDA-region for this support\textsuperscript{106}. The duration of the co-operation is three years (2007-2009).

• It is envisaged that all relevant stakeholders from government, economic sectors and civil society will be involved adequately right from the beginning. In 2007, a task force/working group on NQF was established. The 11 members are representatives from five key ministries\textsuperscript{107}, the Social Fund for Development (SFD), the Labour Union, three Federations and one Investors Association.

• The task force/working group, i.a., took stock on the status quo of qualifications and the qualification systems in Egypt, conducted an analysis on the key weaknesses and developed a vision statement for an Egyptian NQF as well as a concept paper as a proposal regarding the development of an NQF in Egypt.

• There are many initiatives\textsuperscript{108} of various players addressing issues which could be important building blocks towards the development and implementation of an NQF, e.g.
  
  ○ efforts of the Ministries of Education (MoE) and Higher Education (MoHE) to improve the relevance and quality of Education in the formal education system - which also includes the Mubarak-Kohl Initiative supported by BMZ/GTZ on establishing the MKI-Dual System (MKI-DS) on the level of Technical Secondary Education within the responsibility of the Ministry of Education (MoE):
    
    ○ the development of National Skills Standards and their application in different economic sectors:
  
  • efforts of the Industrial Training Council (ITC) and the EU-supported TVET-Reform Programme in the field of standardization, accreditation and certification in the field of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

• However, so far there has been a lack of co-ordination and coherence of the disparate initiatives. There is a tendency for the different ministries and stakeholders to focus on approaches and the development of solutions restricted to and within their own domain.

• The authors of the report on the peer review on the development of a NQF held in Cairo in May 2008 see positive indications and potential to achieve coherence between the different government agencies and stakeholders.

• As a result of the discussion on the Peer Review report, a draft Prime Ministerial decree for the creation of a Centre for NQF - a body to steer the NQF project and to provide technical support - has been outlined and is currently under discussion.

\textsuperscript{106} the other countries are Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia
\textsuperscript{107} Ministries of Manpower and Migration (MoMM), Education (MoE), Higher Education (MoHE), Trade and Industry (Motif) and Administrative Development (Mead)
\textsuperscript{108} some of which started already prior to the NQF project
Challenges:

Major challenges for the development and implementation of a National Qualification Framework are not only specific to Egypt but, to a large extent, are generally associated with the introduction of an NQF, e.g.:

- “Trust” is a crucial success factor. Qualifications and, consequently, qualification frameworks depend on trust and not criteria or definitions alone. An important question and challenge is: How can trust be established in outcome-based systems?109

- The development and implementation of a National Qualification Framework is a complex and far-reaching reform process which requires long-term commitment and investment. A challenge in this regard is that stakeholders – especially government – often face pressure to find quick solutions for pressing problems and need to present short-term results.

- Not surprisingly, all countries implementing an NQF have faced various problems and challenges. Most of them somehow relate to the fact “that governments invariably fail to recognize the radical implications of the changes that they seek to introduce”110.

- On the political level, difficulties typically arise from the fact that the responsibility for an NQF is never easily located within one government department, and that the involved Ministries are all likely to have different agendas and interests concerning an NQF and its development. Therefore, the lack of co-operation and coherence of the various initiatives in Egypt is not surprising. In Egypt, there are already five ministries involved in the task force on NQF, but there are even more dealing with initiatives that are, in one way or another, related to an NQF (e.g. in the tourism sector). Despite the positive indications for an increase in coherence, it most probably will remain a major challenge to balance the different interests as well as to link and align different players and initiatives towards a common goal, conceptual understanding and a coherent framework.

- In addition to the numerous political stakeholders, there are also a large number of stakeholders from the different economic sectors – including formal and informal economies - and civil society who need to be involved in an adequate way. Thus, the challenge of understanding and balancing interests as a basis for acceptance and trust becomes even more complex and demanding. Other issues are that of representation and adequate participation. Related questions are: Who is accepted as having the mandate to represent which of the stakeholders? How to involve the stakeholders and their representatives in a way that secures participation without hindering effective and efficient working?

- Because of the far reaching implications, implementing an NQF is likely to face considerable resistance from those whose interests are negatively affected.

110 Michael Young, page 17
Even though an NQF is fundamentally an outcome-based assessment framework, an important question remains around how to relate it to the provision of Education and Training in Egypt.

Most of the stakeholders and representatives involved in the development and implementation of a NQF - which in the case of Egypt means a complete change with regard to qualifications and qualification systems - normally do not have in-depth knowledge, let alone (first hand) experience, in such an approach and the design and implementation of related strategies and change processes. As a result, a major challenge is to capacitate stakeholders\textsuperscript{111} and to keep the reform manageable and implementable. The latter could, for example, be achieved by avoiding over-ambitious goals, focusing on simplicity, and by designing an incremental approach of establishing the different building blocks of an overarching NQF, covering all different types of qualifications in several phases.

How does MKI-vetEP deal with the issue of Qualification Frameworks?

Owing to its potential with regard to (passive) employability of job seekers, its actual relevance for Egypt and involved stakeholders, with most of whom MKI-vetEP is also working, a qualification framework and the core elements and building blocks of the framework play, in principle, an important role for MKI-vetEP. In line with its goals, strategies and conceptual principles, MKI-vetEP concentrates on occupational qualifications and related core aspects. In this regard MKI-vetEP could benefit from, and facilitate, the development of an NQF – at least with regard to selected elements or building blocks. Issues, which are of particular interest and importance for MKI-vetEP with regard to occupational qualifications include:

- “trust” in occupational qualifications\textsuperscript{112} \textsuperscript{113},
- relevance of occupational qualifications;
- lifelong learning as a means to stay employable and to facilitate career progression in the world of work as an alternative to educational careers;
- standardization, accreditation and certification as a means to contribute to quality of occupational qualifications;
- inclusion of formal, non-formal and informal occupational learning;
- accessibility to occupational qualifications for underprivileged youth;

\textsuperscript{111} to create a platform of common understanding and to develop required capacities

\textsuperscript{112} to establish trust, a developmental, bottom-up approach based on consensus and agreement is considered to have much greater chances of success than a regulatory approach merely setting and monitoring standards top down

\textsuperscript{113} In the case of MKI-DS acceptance and trust in the quality of the qualification acquired in the 3-years vocational education programme on technical secondary level has been established inter alias because non-governmental stakeholders, especially the private sector, do not only play a major role in implementation but also in the governance of the system
• occupational training as an integral element of employment services towards gainful and acceptable employment;
• staying informed about further developments towards an Egyptian NQF;
• avoiding duplication and competition with other donors and initiatives; instead focusing on close communication and co-operation;
• looking further into the idea of a referencing rather than a regulatory role for occupational or TVET qualifications frameworks (and also NQF);
• observing how European countries reference or map their national occupational qualifications and related qualification systems to the EQF;
• learning from other countries’ experiences with regard to developing and implementing NQF, especially about major problems and challenges and ways of tackling them.

4.4 The way ahead: conclusions and issues to be addressed further

Internal and especially external labour mobility plays an important role in Egypt and other countries in the MENA region where GTZ supports projects/programmes in the field of Vocational Education and Training and Labour Market. Labour mobility has multiple dimensions and determinants. (Occupational) qualifications are part of those dimension and determinants.

Approaches geared at facilitating labour mobility need to take into account this multidimensionality and to cover the different dimensions and determinants in an integrated way.

The specific context, frame conditions as well as policies and strategies related to labour migration in the different countries vary, just as the specific focus and goals of the BMZ/GTZ-supported projects/programme differ. As a consequence, approaches to labour mobility will normally also differ. That makes it difficult to generalize experiences made in one country. However, most probably there will be guiding principles, certain issues and elements in the approaches that are common.

Therefore, one of the goals related to networking of projects/programmes in the field of Vocational Education and Training and Labour Market with the aim of benefiting from one another should be to identify what is common and where there are fields and issues of common interest. Occupational Classifications and NQFs are obviously such fields. Regardless of the particular issue or approach, important guiding questions to be asked before going into detail should be:

• What is the specific objective? (What for?)
• What are the potential benefits with regard to the specific objective but also what are the costs and the potential risks?
• What are alternatives to be considered?

114 MKI-vetEP was e.g. invited to participate in the Peer Review on the development of a NQF as observer
Aspects worth further consideration could be, for example:

- How to establish trust and acceptance?
- Linking technical aspects with cultural and sociological aspects in an integrated approach.
- How to facilitate various stakeholders with potentially conflicting interests being able to reach consensus and accepted agreements?
- Linking/mapping agreements achieved through interest-driven developmental approaches with regional and international standards and reference systems.
- The concept of interactive employability.

With regard to qualification frameworks:

- Learning from other countries’ experiences in developing and implementing an NQF, especially about major problems and challenges and ways of tackling them (interesting in this regard would be GTZ’s experience in Arab countries but also e.g. in South Africa and Ethiopia).
- Keeping in view the ILO’s envisaged comparative study on the process of implementing NQFs in selected countries.
Annex

List of Tables

Table 1  Table 1: Age Distribution of the Youth Population
Table 2  Table 2: Educational and vocational training systems in Egypt
Table 3  Table 3: Distribution of pupils by educational level in the academic year 2005/2006
Table 4  The Educational Composition of New Entrants to the Labour Market by Year of Entry
Table 5  Table 5: Distribution of the Male/Female Population by Educational Attainment and Urban/Rural Location
Table 6  Table 6: Female Labour Force Participation Rates by Educational Attainment
Table 7  Table 7: Distribution of employment by sector of economic activity
Table 8  Table 8: Distribution of Employment by Institutional Sector
Table 9  Table 9: Male Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment and urban/Rural Location
Table 10  Table 10: Female Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment and Urban/Rural Location
Table 11  Table 11: Female Unemployment Rates by Age and Urban/Rural Location
Table 12  Table 12: Male Unemployment Rates by Age and Urban/Rural Location
Table 13  Table 13: Educational Level of Migrants and Non-Migrants at last Emigration or Five Years Ago
Table 14  Table 14: Main reasons for migrating
Table 15  Table 15: Distribution of migrants by country of residence and work
Table 16  Table 16: The highly skilled Egyptian migrants to OECD countries according to country of residence
Table 17  Table 17: Internal Migration Rates between 1990-98 and 1998-2006
### Table 1

**Age Distribution of the Youth Population, 1988, 1998 & 2006**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Amer 2007
Table 3

Distribution of pupils by educational level in the academic year 2005/2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Primary</td>
<td>2,7</td>
<td></td>
<td>6,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>45,3</td>
<td>5,3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory</td>
<td>14,4</td>
<td></td>
<td>-10,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Education</td>
<td>16,4</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Secondary</td>
<td></td>
<td>38,7</td>
<td>1,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Secondary</td>
<td></td>
<td>58,6</td>
<td>-2,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Pre-University</td>
<td>8,2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher and University Education</td>
<td>12,6</td>
<td></td>
<td>5,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total enrolled</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Amer 2007

Table 4

The Educational Composition of New Entrants to the Labor Market by Year of Entry, 1975-2005

Source: Assaad 2007
Table 5

Distribution of the Male Population by Educational Attainment and Urban/Rural Location, Ages 15-64, 1988-2006

Table 6


Source: Assaad 2007
Table 7

Distribution of employment by sector of economic activity, 1998-2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Agriculture &amp; Fishing</th>
<th>Mining, Manuf. &amp; Utilities</th>
<th>Construction</th>
<th>Trade, Hotels &amp; Restaurants</th>
<th>Financial &amp; Business Services</th>
<th>Transp., Storage &amp; Comm.</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Assaad 2007

Table 8

Distribution of Employment by Institutional Sector, 1998-2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Self Employed</th>
<th>HH Enterprise Worker</th>
<th>Irregular Wage</th>
<th>Informal Private Regular Wage</th>
<th>Formal Private Regular Wage</th>
<th>Public Enterprises</th>
<th>Government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Assaad 2007
Table 9

Male Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment and Urban/Rural Location
Age 15-54. Standard Unemployment Definition and Market Labor Force Definition

Source: Assaad 2008

Table 10

Female Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment and Urban/Rural Location
Age 15-54. Standard Unemployment Definition and Market Labor Force Definition

Source: Assaad 2008
Table 11

Female Unemployment Rates by Age and Urban/Rural Location, Standard Unemployment Definition and Market Labor Force Definition

Source: Assaad 2007

Table 12


Source: Assaad 2007
Table 13

Educational Level of Migrants and Non-Migrants at Last Emigration (Migrants) or Five Years Ago (Non-Migrants)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Migrants</th>
<th>Non-Migrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non Formal Education</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete Primary</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University or Higher</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (%)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>1.121</td>
<td>3.672</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Nassar 2008

Table 14

Main reasons for migrating (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have no job / cannot find job</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To improve standard of living</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No future here</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To get married</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher salary</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ETF 2007
### Table 15

Distribution of migrants by country of residence and work, Egypt, 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of destination</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>855</td>
<td>13.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>2,461</td>
<td>38.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>856</td>
<td>13.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>929</td>
<td>14.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emirates</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>12.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qatar</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa/Sudan</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6741</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Nassar 2008

### Table 16

The highly skilled Egyptian migrants to OECD countries according to country of residence, 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Residence</th>
<th>Number (in Thousands)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>38.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>824</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Nassar 2008

### Table 17

Internal Migration Rates (%) between 1990-98 and 1998-2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural-urban migration</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban-Rural migration</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>4.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban-Urban migration</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-governorate migration</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>1.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Wahba 2007
Resources


Baraulina, Tatjana u.a.: Ägyptische, afghanische und serbische Diasporagemeinden in Deutschland und ihre Beiträge zur Entwicklung ihrer Herkunftsländer. GTZ Eschborn, 2006.


ETF: Country Analysis Egypt 2005, European Training Foundation, Turin 2005
ETF: Country PlanEgypt 2009, European Training Foundation, Turin 2009


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Staff responsible for publication:
Edda Grunwald
Programme Manager
Mubarak-Kohl Initiative for Vocational Education, Training and Employment Programme (MKI-vetEP)
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www.MKI-vetEP.com

In cooperation with
Niveen Sakr
Director of PMU/MKI-vetEP
Programme Management Unit
Mubarak-Kohl Initiative for Vocational Education, Training and Employment Programme

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