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Enhancing international recognition of qualifications: the role of quality assurance

Borhene Chakroun
**Cedefop workshop on the quality
assurance of certification in IVET**

Thessaloniki, 26-27 March 2015



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Presentation structure

1. TVET diversity matters
2. UNESCO's work in the area of Recognition of qualifications and quality assurance
3. Global Study on the use of level descriptors
4. Implications for Quality assurance of certifications across borders
5. Actors perspectives

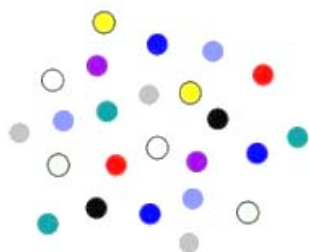


Variety

Volume

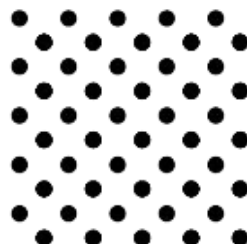
Velocity

Validity



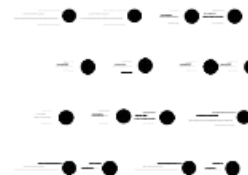
**TVET in many
forms**

At secondary
At tertiary
Skills development
Initial/continuing
School-based
Work-based
On-line



TVET for All

Economic demands
Social demands
Lifelong learning
imperatives



TVET in motion

Responsiveness
imperatives
Rapidly changing labour
markets
Policy pressures



TVET in Doubt

Uncertainty due to
quality/relevance/
Attractiveness
Weak Quality Assurance
data inconsistency
& ambiguities,
Past deception



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Main features of the global landscape

1. Enormous Spectrum of TVET: Lower-secondary, Upper Secondary, Post-secondary, Tertiary, non-formal TVET,
1. Enormous Spectrum of skills: Foundation/basic to high-end skills
2. Work/Occupations: From Survival/livelihoods to Professional Occupations
3. Different levels of Recognition
4. Different levels/forms of Quality Assurance



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UNESCO-UNEVOC E-Forum 2012-2014

- Quality Assurance: 41 thread
- Certification: 19 thread
- Assessment: 57 thread



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Main challenges

1. How to enhance mutual trust in qualifications across countries?
2. How to ensure that Knowledge, Skills and Competences are documented in a commonly accepted and understandable form?
3. How to convey pertinent information to employers, education and training providers, other actors across the borders?
4. How to facilitate the mobility of certified competent individuals?
And What a competent individual/worker actually mean in specific context?



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Third International Congress Recommendation to UNESCO Director-General

Facilitate the international comparison and
recognition of TVET qualifications

By

Developing international guidelines on quality
assurance for the recognition of qualifications,
based on learning outcomes,

And

Identifying a set of world reference levels of
learning outcomes



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Global Study

World Reference Levels of Learning Outcomes – the use of level descriptors in the 21st century



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Regional Qualifications Framework

SADC

15 member
states

Quality
Assurance
guidelines in
preparation

ASEAN

10 member
states

Quality
Assurance
Framework
in
preparation

EQF

27 member
states

ENQAVET

Caribbean

15 member
states

CANTA plays
a quality
assurance
role in the
process of
the creation
of the CVQs

TQF

29 member
states

Quality
Assurance
Guidelines



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Regional Qualifications Framework

Gulf QF

6 member
states

Draft
No
specification
for QA

Pacific QR

15 member
states

Quality
Assurance
Framework

ECOWAS QF

15 member
states

Draft
No
specification
for QA



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Other recognition technologies



Professional and occupational standards

- Learning outcomes are widely used
- Domains coupled with levels of proficiency
- Examples include the INSSO, Tuning, DISCO



Learning metrics

- Empirical notion of level is used
- Highly contextualised categories
- Examples include LMTE, STEP, PIAAC, LAMP, PISA, WorldSkills



Occupational classification systems

- Increasingly being used on qualifications frameworks
- Highly developed and differentiated levelling schemes
- Examples include ISCO-08, O*NET, ESCO



Educational classification systems

- General expectations and “graduateness”
- Level is linked to sets of education programmes
- Examples include ISCED, SBS



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On-line Certifications

- **Test-based credentials:** Market-based.



- **Online Badges:**



- **Online Certificates:**

ONLINE
DIGITAL MARKETING
CERTIFICATE



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Key findings



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Finding related to Assessment of learning outcomes

- Convergence on the recognition of the importance of assessment of learning outcomes,
- Convergence on promoting the equal value of learning outcomes of formal, non-formal and informal learning,
- Work-based learning is becoming more central to skills development and assessment of learning outcomes



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Finding related to Qualifications Frameworks

- Consensus exists around the world on the fact that the recognition of learning is increasingly being facilitated by the development and implementation of learning outcomes-based qualifications frameworks within a broader lifelong learning perspective.
- All types of qualifications frameworks use level descriptors based on learning outcomes, to define a set of hierarchical levels across a series of domains. All qualifications frameworks are supported by quality assurance frameworks.
- National and regional qualifications frameworks use variations of domains in their level descriptors: in a few instances (such as in the ASEAN RQF) the domains of knowledge and skills are collapsed into a single domain. In many cases (see for example CARICOM) the competence domain contains subdomains or specializations that overlap with the knowledge and skills domains.



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Findings related to level descriptors

- Three domains are found in the majority of level descriptors of qualifications frameworks, including sectoral, national and transnational examples:
- The first is *knowledge*: this is probably the best understood domain and is well articulated across the case studies. The domain is primarily about the *ability to use knowledge and understanding*, and not the application of knowledge.
- The second most widely used domain is that of *skills*. Similar to the knowledge domain, skills are about potential ability and not application: in this case, the *ability to apply knowledge in relation to a job or specific task*. This domain is also widely used and reasonably well understood, although some overlap with the knowledge domain is observed, and as a result, knowledge and skills are combined in some instances (as in the ASEAN RQF and PRQF).
- The third domain, *competence*, is about the *application of knowledge and skills*. Of the three domains, competence is the broadest in that several subdomains are used and the notion of competence is interpreted in diverse manners across different traditions and contexts.



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Finding related to global landscape: A matter of being proactive, or catching up?

**Government
and
international
agencies
response to
address QA and
“common good”
of education**

Qualifications

**Qualifications
Frameworks I, II
and III**

**Transnational
QFs**

Referencing

Representation

**New
developments
based on market
demands...
unregulated and
often lacking
transparency**

**International
qualifications**





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Actors perspective



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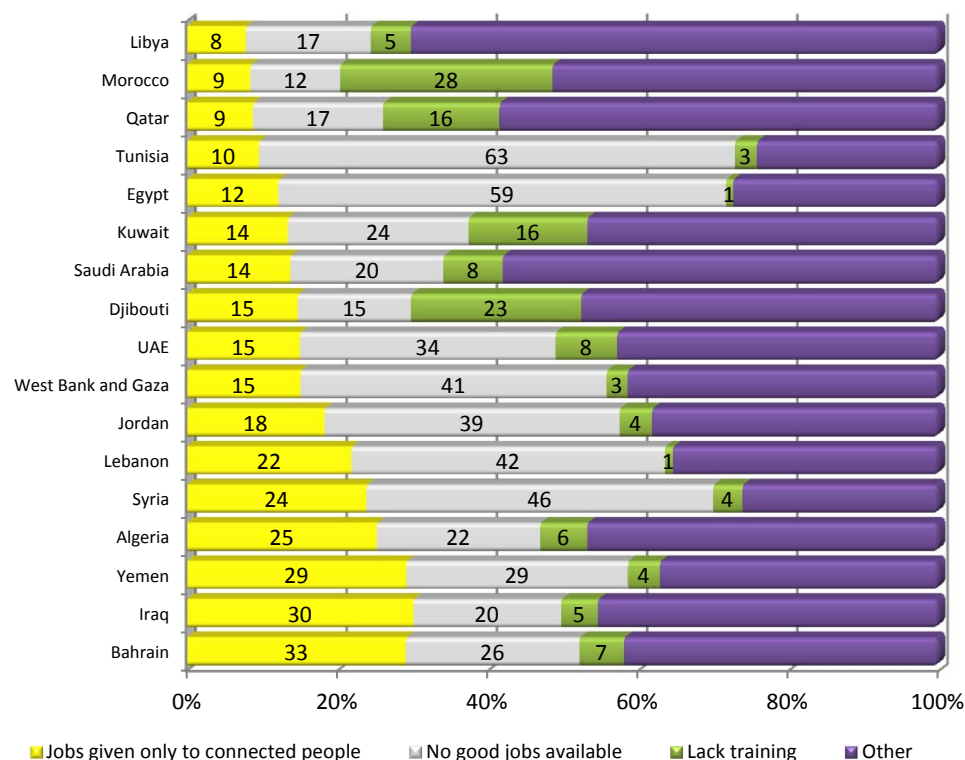
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Quality Assurance of certification or 'whom' you know matters most?

Perception of jobs given through connections

(Gallup opinion poll among youth, major constraint to getting a job)





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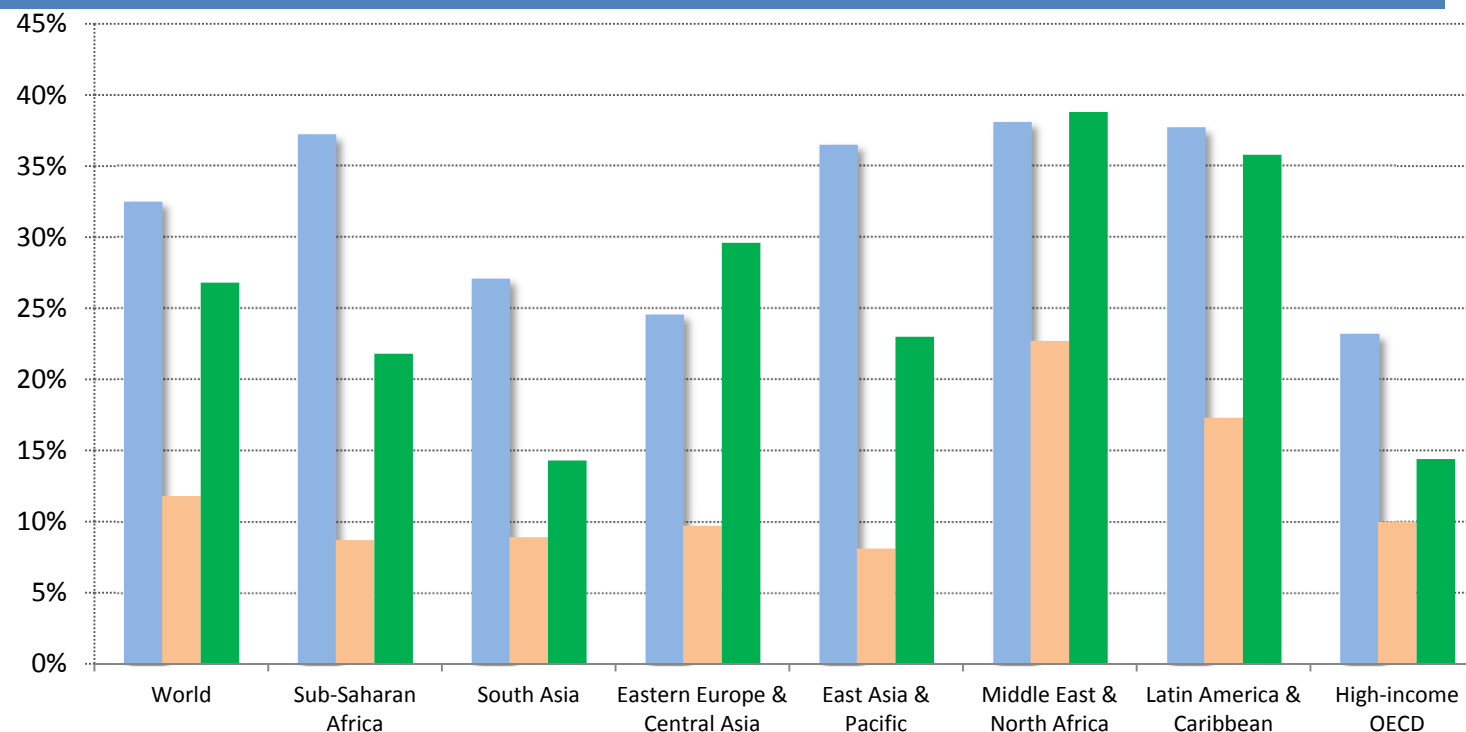
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... and the employers are complaining that graduates are not employable



■ % unskilled workers, out of all production workers

■ % firms identifying labor regulations as a major constraint

■ % firms identifying an inadequately educated workforce as a major constraint



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Thank you