



International
Labour
Organization



وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION
AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH



UNIVERSITY CENTERS
FOR
CAREER DEVELOPMENT
PROJECT 

2018-2022

UICED

FACT SHEET
1

**INTRODUCING EGYPTIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES
TO LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION SYSTEMS
& TOOLS**



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



The American
University in Cairo

TOUCH POINTS IN A LARGER DISCUSSION



Choosing a career path, finding a job, and advancing in the marketplace is a tedious and mostly frustrating process for Egypt's young people.

This is especially true for young public university graduates and even more so for the young students among them suffering from physical and visual disabilities.



Career guidance and development services play a pivotal role in supporting young university students to explore their professional interests, map their career paths and take actions to fulfill their employment needs and objectives. It also supports and informs the universities' administrators on the quality of its graduates in the real world of work, the changing demand patterns for occupations and the skills they require.

This guidance was not available to Egypt's 2.3 million young students enrolled throughout its 27 public universities, and their 324 thousand fresh graduates, ready to transition to the world of work every year.

Research studies and labour surveys suggest that 47% of all the unemployed in Egypt are young university graduates. On average, it takes 3 years for a fresh graduate to find a job, and when they do it is mostly in the informal sector with low pay and limited career prospects. Among the young graduates who actually work, 48% are in occupations that do not match their educational background.

It is no surprise, that Egypt's labour productivity is comparatively low, which reflects negatively on its international Human Capital, Global Competitiveness and Ease of Doing Business rankings.

The long standing discussions on youth unemployment (in general) and among public university graduates (in specific), between the concerned actors and stakeholders, reveal the complex and deep rooted challenges on both the supply and demand sides of the employment equation.

Common points touched upon in those discussions is the mismatch between university education outcomes and what the dynamic market actually needs. In short, education is not responding fast enough to employers' needs, and part of that is blamed on the lack of open communication channels among the market actors and the absence of timely,

quantitative and qualitative knowledge that allows higher education institutions to quickly respond to those changing needs.

In 2016, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHE) prepared its forward looking 2030 strategy to overhaul and strengthen its tertiary education programs and systems. The ambitious strategy aims to strengthen the nation's human capital, support the overall objectives of Egypt's Sustainable Development Strategy 2030, expand its engagement with private sector enterprises and increase the competitiveness of public university graduates in the national, regional and international marketplace.

To inform the national strategy's projects and future initiatives, MoHE also established its central Labour Market Observatory (LMO) to generate and continuously update valid knowledge on the fast changing structure of the labour market, its dynamics and the characteristics of the human capital needed for the future of work.

In 2018, the International Labour Organization (ILO) partnered with the University Centers for Career Development (UCCD) project that aims to bridge the gap between the needs of the labor market and the academic education. The project is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the technical expertise of The American University in Cairo (AUC).

The main aim of the project is establishing 30 career centers at 22 Egyptian Public Universities across Egypt. The UCCDs offer career planning and skills development services to students while building strong networks and ties with the private sector. AUC partnered with ILO to implement the Labor Market and the Disability Equality Training component of the project.

WHAT IS A 'UCCD' AND WHAT DOES IT DO ?

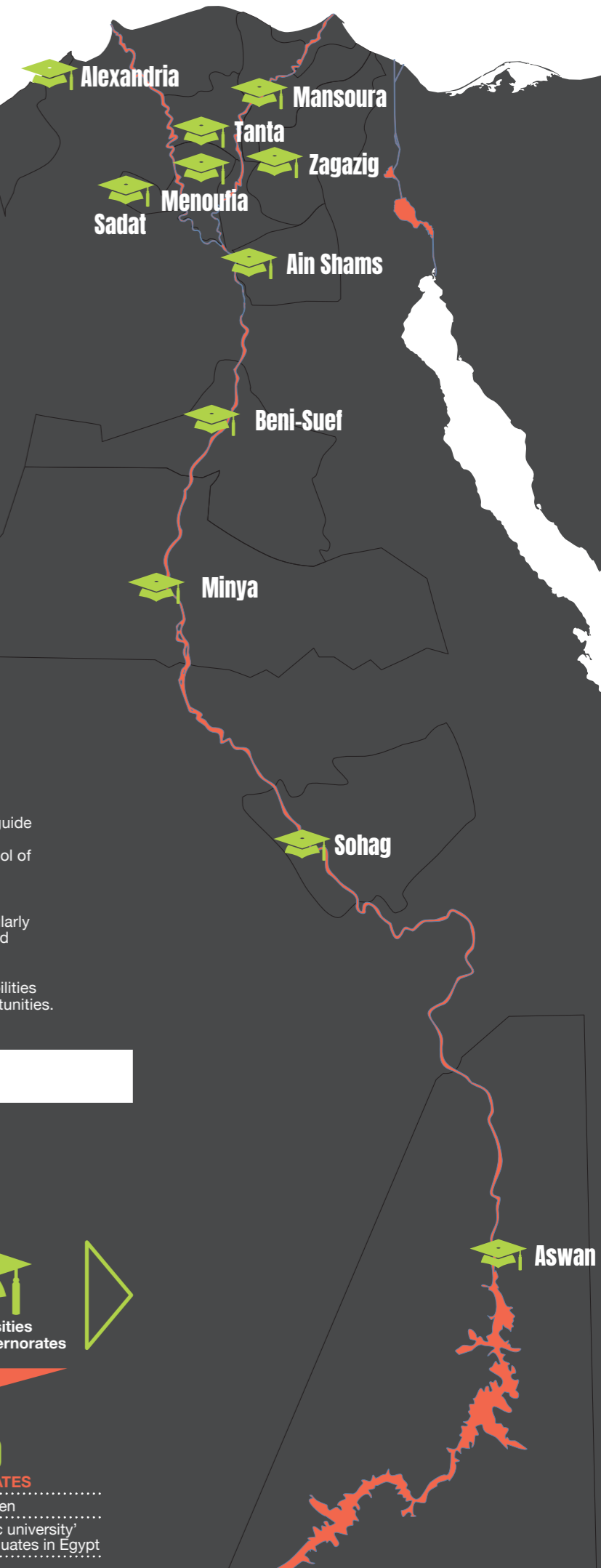
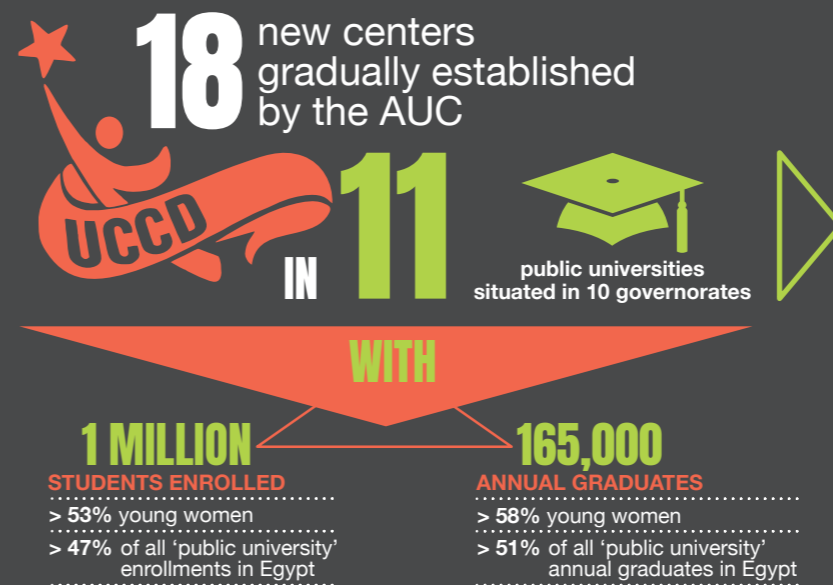
- > STRUCTURE** General and faculty-specific centers newly established within public universities, by a university president decision, and staffed (on average) by a team of 6 - competitively selected - young faculty and staff members.
- > MISSION** Raise public universities graduates' competitiveness by closing the skill gap between academic education outcome and the practical labour market requirements.
- > OBJECTIVE** Prepare and assist the students during their transition to the world of work and advise university management on labour market dynamics and enterprise requirements.
- > SERVICES**
 - Research and knowledge generation on labour market status, structure, evolving trends and gaps.
 - Career guidance and counseling services.
 - Employability and entrepreneurship skills training and development.
 - Facilitating job placement opportunities for students and graduates in the private sector.

ILO'S ACTIVITIES

With a view to help the nascent centers achieve their objectives, guide the students and advise their management, the ILO designed and implemented a package of toolkits in collaboration with a large pool of international and national experts, to build LMO staff and UCCDs counselors' capacity and skills to:

- > Acquire and generate Labour Market Information (LMI), particularly through engagement and networking with recent graduates and private sector enterprises in their respective governorates.
- > Improve inclusivity of and accessibility for Students with Disabilities (SWD) to both the counseling services and employment opportunities.

BETWEEN 2018 - 2022



1 MASTERING LABOUR MARKET DYNAMICS & INFORMATION

Shortly after the project's inception in 2018, a team of 4 LMI experts from ILO in Geneva, Turin and Cairo organized a kick-off conference, bringing together a wide group of 35 relevant national stakeholders and labour force knowledge providers to identify the specific information - building on international best practices - that the LMO & UCCDs (still under establishment) will need moving forward and where those could be sourced.

The consensus reached was that the raw labour force survey data available from various sources in Egypt would only partially answer some questions. As such, it was necessary to conduct additional analyses on the exiting data and more importantly to generate new original knowledge to effectively help the future UCCDs guide the students and inform their universities' upper management.

The range of development specific LMIs identified (national, governorate level, sector level and thematic) were dependent on the careful design and execution of both technical and complex surveys and studies.

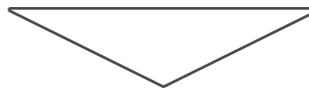
Over the course of 4 years, the ILO designed and delivered a progressive capacity building program in consultation with a working group encompassing ILO's Statistics Division experts, LMO staff, UCCD counselors, the AUC as well as relevant CAPMAS counterparts (among others). The program was focused on qualifying the LMO and UCCDs (with different professional backgrounds) to collect, analyze, report and disseminate the information needed, in parallel with the progression of other career advising and skill development services that was offered to the students.

A balanced mix of capacity building approaches employed a combination of introductory and advanced training workshops, job-shadowing the various international experts and consultants mobilized by the ILO to implement the first rounds of LMI toolkits, simulations, and finally gradual hand over of research and original knowledge generation duties to the LMO/UCCDs with coaching and mentoring provided by national experts.

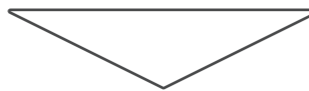
COUNSELORS IN ACTION



"Engage with employers in their governorates"



"Help students prepare for work...based on what they learned"



"Help upper management align education with skills needed by employers in various sectors"

In addition, because the UCCDs were established at different times and their staff were recruited and or replaced at various intervals, the capacity building activities - covering the full range of tools, were frequently repeated at various governorates. The ILO supported newer UCCDs to exchange visits with longer established ones across the governorates to benefit from their colleagues' experience on the methods and techniques to design and implement original LMI studies, surveys and community engagements.

To support future sustainability, the LMO staff (in specific) participated in ILO's global "Institutional Capacity Building for Effective Labour Market Information Systems" training program offered by the ITC in Turin in late 2020.

The ILO further supported the UCCDs by undertaking a complex yet comprehensive study on the "Dynamics of the Labour Market Facing University Graduates in the Private Sector". Between 2018-2021 the ILO's team from Cairo and Geneva worked with a team of national statisticians and economists to perform a deeper analysis of the Labour Force Survey data (covering the period 2009-2019) generated from a sample size of 90,000 households, in collaboration with CAPMAS and the Economic Research Forum.

The study provided in-depth national patterns and trends on Egypt's fastest growing jobs, occupations, economic activities and their accommodation of university graduates (by education specializations and entrepreneurship activities). To benefit the students from the study findings, a simplified user friendly brochure was produced, for the specific purpose of career guidance, counseling and development planning, which all UCCDs can use during their counseling and guidance sessions with the students.

Towards the end of the project, all LMO staff and UCCD counselors had taken the lead in coordinating, designing and implementing their various LMI campaigns with minimal review and guidance from the ILO (for refinements). More importantly the young counselors had mastered facilitating large scaled consultations and improved their communication skills with the students, graduates, enterprises, the LMO and their respective universities' upper management.

2 NATIONAL GRADUATES TRACER STUDY

Traditionally, Egyptian public universities do not trace their students after graduation to track their professional insertion rates and obtain information on the quality and market relevance of educational services they provide.

Over the course of three years, the ILO worked closely with a task force composed of 'The Egyptian Center for Public Opinion Research - Baseera', CAPMAS and leading national statisticians to plan, design and execute Egypt's first "National Graduates Tracer Study". The study aimed to help the participating universities' upper management, the LMO and the UCCDs gauge where their graduates work, how they performed in the world of work and if their education supported their livelihood and their careers (among many other information items).

The study sample was scientifically selected building on Baseera's database of 350,000 households. A representative sample of 50,000 households with public university graduates were identified, 6,800 of which were screened with young graduates from the 11 participating universities (after 105 thousand phone calls).

Overall, 40 Baseera researchers successfully interviewed a representative sample of more than 2,500 young graduates willing to participate, most of them were recent graduates from the 2016-2018

graduating cohort across the 17 major education disciplines offered by the 11 universities.

As a precedent, the graduates' voices were directly heard by central level policy makers and the universities' upper management through the responses compiled from 10 governorates (with 95% confidence level).

To further build national awareness on the findings of the tracer study, the ILO worked with Baseera and AUC's Public Policy Hub to produce 3 policy briefs targeting central level decision makers to recommend where pressing actions are warranted to improve young graduates' competitiveness in the world of work. The ILO has also worked with Baseera to regularly post key findings of the tracer study on social media, with a total outreach to 260,000 followers.



In 2022, the ILO organized a national conference to disseminate the findings of the tracer study. It was attended by the Deputy Minister for Digital Transformation and 34 representatives from the MoHE, Ministry of Manpower, CAPMAS, USAID, AUC, the World Bank Group, and other education for employment actors and service providers in Egypt.

3 ENTERPRISE SKILLS SURVEY (ESS)

The ILO introduced ESSs to the UCCDs in mid 2019, as an effective consultation tool with existing enterprises in their governorates (different sizes and sectors). It was designed and initially implemented in collaboration with GISR Institution for Survey Research. ESS helps UCCDs understand the local economy, hiring patterns for university graduates, the skills demanded, the shortages in particular specializations, and the employers' perception on how the university graduates they hired performed on the job.

This tool is intended as an annual survey to keep the counselors regularly informed on changing demand patterns and skill gaps in their local markets. Each survey round involves careful planning, drawing a representative survey sample, communicating with individual enterprises, performing statistical analyses, interpreting the results and reporting the findings.

The target enterprises were identified from the local chambers of commerce, investors' associations as well as from CAPMAS enterprise

database. Overall, more than 30,000 private enterprises (and their contact points) in the 10 governorates, were identified/verified, to facilitate future surveys and follow-up studies.

The ILO also recruited a nationally renown Informatics and Data Analytics consultant to custom design a secured, cloud-based Survey Management System and portal (SMS) to help the UCCDs log, analyze and report on the considerable volume of information collected from the surveys. The SMS portal is hosted at MoHE's central servers and enables remote access nationwide through a user-friendly interface.

Overall, in 2.5 year, the UCCDs conducted 41 surveys, through 300 volunteers that were competitively recruited from among the students. The ILO trained the volunteers on the content of the survey questionnaire and more importantly on how to communicate the survey objective to the 3,700 enterprises contacted, build rapport and conduct the telephone interviews to secure feedback in less than 20 minutes.

SURVEY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (SMS)



The customizable system enables the individual UCCDs and the LMO to observe and track national LMI patterns for 'public university' graduates based on the findings of annual surveys logged by all the current and future UCCDs.

4 ENTERPRISE ROUND-TABLE DISCUSSION (RT)

Private enterprises are facing different challenges and fast paced changes, that require new types of jobs, more diverse forms of employment and different sets of specializations and skills. For the universities to understand and rapidly adapt to those changes, a dialogue is necessary with the relevant market actors in the different governorates and sectors.

The ILO designed and implemented the initial rounds of RTs, in collaboration with GISR, as a bi-annual tool to regularly consolidate the findings of both the tracer study as well as the annual ESSs, enabling the UCCDs to identify specific themes of priority discussions, with a particular group of enterprises, in their governorates. Ultimately, these discussions aim to reach a common consensus on priority actions the universities could take to better prepare the students for (and respond to) the local market's specific needs.

Each RT discussion session is preceded by careful planning on what priority topics will be discussed, who will attend and how the session will be coordinated. Over the course of the project, 47 RT sessions were planned, organized and facilitated by the UCCDs themselves to discuss specific topics they chose.

Those sessions collectively attracted owners, human resources, financial and operations managers from more than 630 medium, large and mega enterprises in the 10 governorates, active in all economic sectors.

The sessions were also attended by the universities' presidents, their deputies, deans and in some cases MoHE upper management representatives to gain deeper and first-hand insights and feedback from the enterprises

themselves, which helped to inform the national higher education policy and strategy and also helped the universities to refresh their curricula, teaching systems and community services.

The discussions motivated most employers to further partner with the UCCDs by offering summer training, internship, employment and joint research opportunities. They also joined the counselors during (and sponsored) counseling sessions attended by the graduating students.



International Study Tour

In December 2021, the ILO organized a 5-days international study tour that was hosted in Hurghada city. The event brought together the 18 UCCDs with virtual participation of 9 top-ranked university career counseling centers in the USA, 2 prominent university centers from Morocco and Jordan, the USA National Association of Colleges and Employers and ILO/AUC experts.

During the event, the participants learned how successful careers centers, over the years, supported the effective transition of millions of young graduates to the labour force, how they build the profile of their universities and the competitiveness of its students in the marketplace through real life success stories and case studies. They also exchanged practical tips and tricks on how to collect and use LMIs to design effective guidance and skill development programs for their students and the role this plays in promoting and connecting their universities and its students with the government and the private sector to tackle real-world challenges and secure research grants, internship opportunities and post graduation employment.



The discussions helped the UCCDs consolidate and connect what they learned to real-world benefits.

They also learned new counseling tools and models, how counseling centers raise funds and how they institutionally organize their work and staff members.

It inspired the counselors to improve the quality of their work and the structure of their centers after realizing the importance of their duties and services for the students, their universities and the communities they serve.



127

Original diagnostic studies, surveys, assessments, action plans and policy briefs generated and disseminated to guide the design and implementation of the UCCDs' interventions and services and inform central level policy/decision makers and universities' upper management. Findings were regularly announced by the UCCDs through various outlets including counseling and information sessions, social-media posts, round-table discussions and job fairs.



66

National and international experts, consultants, think tanks, research institutions, NGOs and academic institutions contributing to the development and implementation of the various capacity building programs, original surveys and awareness building activities. This led to effective transfer of international best practices, know-how and expertise to the project beneficiaries and stakeholders at the central, governorate and university levels.



21

Gender and SWD responsive skill development programs, technical manuals, operational guides and instructional videos - spanning labour market information acquisition and generation, graduate tracers, enterprise surveys, round-table facilitation, disability equality and institutional benchmarks for counseling centers. The documentation material was thoroughly reviewed and refined to provide effective guidance for existing and future UCCDs and counselors. All knowledge products and resources were handed over to the LMO and universities management for sustainability.



42

Workshops and national events organized (face-to-face and online) across the 10 governorates to train, disseminate and transfer the knowledge generated, as well as exchange lessons learned on pressing trends directly relevant to labour market dynamics, statistics and information, supply and demand trends and gaps to be tackled (including for SWDs).



930

Participants attending the various capacity building workshops including MoHE leadership, UCCDs' staff, universities' faculty and staff, LMO staff, and other relevant national stakeholders to secure wide-ranging awareness building, skill development and enhanced ownership moving forward.



140

Career counselors trained, supported and coached to apply the newly acquired skills and knowledge, which in-turn reflects positively on their ability to provide informed career advice to students and organize market-responsive and inclusive career development services moving forward.



2.0

Million US\$, invested over the course of four years, across all ILO's activities, and funded by USAID/Egypt.



4,300

Private sector enterprises - in 11 governorates across 17 economic sectors - directly engaged by the UCCDs through surveys and round-table discussions to understand employment issues and means to respond to real-world skill needs in the future. These interventions effectively opened conducive and sustainable communication channels (and partnerships) between the universities and major employers in their respective governorates, which will facilitate future support to the students and fresh graduates.

RESULTING IN

YOUNG GRADUATING STUDENTS
SUPPORTED59%
YOUNG WOMEN

Across the 11 universities, throughout all UCCDs' programs, services and interventions.

37 HIGH RANKING POLICY/DECISION MAKERS
AND UNIVERSITIES' UPPER MANAGEMENT

Motivated to engage in ILO & UCCDs' activities, enhancing their buy-in and leading to:

- ▶ The LMO staffing level increased by 230%, and was formally designated as the UCCDs' national focal point at MoHE to coordinate and sustain the future implementation of LMI surveys and studies.
- ▶ In 2022, the LMO launched UCCDs' institutionalization cycle, as a permanent structure within all Egyptian public universities, to benefit all graduating students moving forward.