

# Career Guidance in Egypt...

...Releasing  
Potential,  
Opening up  
Opportunities

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## 1. Introduction

1.1. Countries the world over have increasingly come to realise that their future prosperity lies in their ability to develop the potential of their people. In the Arab states, this challenge is particularly important since the great majority of the population is young. This is a major advantage in a situation where the world's most advanced economies are ageing societies. However, this advantage can only be exploited if the knowledge and skills base of the youthful generation is developed, and if the latent talents of the new generation are identified, awakened, and released. And yet, in Egypt, as in most Arab societies, education and training systems often provide hostile environments for the blossoming of human potential. Despite significant reform efforts, young people quickly get caught in education and training tracks that are not compatible with their abilities, inclinations or aspirations. Destinations are determined not by choice, but by examination results and parental diktat. Educational and training institutions are chosen because of proximity to home, not because they fit in an overall career plan. Pathways through education and training remain inflexible, with students encountering great difficulties in shifting from one curricular diet to another, more suitable and digestible one. As a result, **many end up in courses that they have not chosen, and looking for jobs that they may not really want or be suitable for—or that even exist** in the prevailing structure of employment opportunities offered by the labour market. Thousands find little in education or training that inspires or motivates them to outdo themselves, and to aspire to achieve. Thousands more embark on higher education routes which lead nowhere in employment terms, creating frustrations for individuals and the economy alike. Supply fails to match demand, creating skills shortages in sunrise labour market sectors, and bottlenecks in sunset ones.

1.2. Such issues have troubled modern societies, including the most prosperous and advanced. Many have developed a range of policies in an effort to ensure that young people and adults are more aware of their own potential, of **how such potential can be released** through education and training, and of the opportunities—both actual and emergent—that the labour market offers them. Some of these policies involve broad, systemic reform. Many EU countries, for instance, have transformed their education and training systems, removing barriers between different routes, blurring the boundaries between general and vocational

courses, and embarking on wide-ranging curricular and pedagogical reform in order to make sure that as many citizens as possible find learning as appealing as possible, throughout the whole life course. Egypt's *National Strategic Plan for Pre-University Education Reform* reflects similar intentions and aspirations. The strong, underpinning assumption is that *everybody* can learn, and that everybody can remain motivated to *continue* learning, if education and training systems are designed to be flexible, and if they are responsive to the differentiated needs of learners.

- 1.3. Many countries have also adopted Career Guidance (CG) as one of the key tools to ensure safe and successful passage through education and training, and into the labour market. Career Guidance has indeed become, of late, one of the most important HRD policy areas in Europe and beyond, with the OECD, the EU and the World Bank organising a series of overlapping reviews that have involved 55 high-, medium- and low-income countries<sup>1</sup>—including 8 Arab states, one of which is Egypt.<sup>2</sup> Other international organisations and donor and development agencies, such as the ILO, UNESCO, UNDP, the British Council and Save the Children,<sup>3</sup> to mention just a few, have recognised the value of CG in unleashing the potential of individuals and in sustaining economic development, and have decided to support programmes in this area. In many ways, therefore, **CG seems to be an idea whose time has come.**

## 2. Why Career Guidance?

- 2.1. There are reasons as to why CG has attained such policy prominence internationally. First, career guidance—which also includes educational guidance—helps citizens of all ages, and throughout different periods in their life, to better understand themselves and their potential, to become more aware of the employment and self-employment opportunities that exist, and to see which study and training pathways lead them closer to attaining their ambitions and aspirations, promoting increased fulfilment. As education and training routes become more flexible and more differentiated in response to diverse needs of learners, it becomes even more important for citizens to have quick and easy access to reliable information, and to support in making good choices. This is one of the main goals of CG: **wise choices lead to increased motivation, higher achievement, decreased**

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<sup>1</sup> See OECD, *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap*, Paris: Author, 2004; R.G. Sultana, *Review of Career Guidance Policies in 11 Acceding and Candidate Countries*, Turin: ETF, 2003; R.G. Sultana, *Guidance Policies in the Knowledge Society: Trends, Challenges and Responses Across Europe*, Thessaloniki: CEDEFOP, 2004; A.G. Watts & D. Fretwell, *Public Policies for Career Development: Policy Strategies for Designing Career Information and Guidance Systems in Middle-Income and Transition Economies*, Washington: World Bank, 2004; R. Sweet, *Career Guidance in the West Balkans Region*, Turin: European Training Foundation.

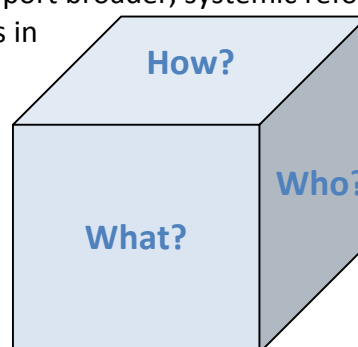
<sup>2</sup> The European Training Foundation commissioned a comparative study of CG in the MEDA region (see R.G. Sultana & A.G. Watts, *Career Guidance in the Mediterranean*. Turin: ETF, 2007). The report for Egypt was written by Aboubakr Abdeen Badawi, *Career Guidance—Policies and Practices in Egypt: Towards Strengthening and Articulating Career Information, Guidance and Counselling Services*, Turin: ETF, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> The ILO has produced a useful manual (see E. Hansen, *Career Guidance: A Resource Handbook for Low- and Middle-Income Countries*. Geneva: ILO, 2006). UNESCO has commissioned a study of career guidance in Palestine (see R. Sultana, *Career Guidance in the Occupied Palestinian Territories: Mapping the Field and Ways Forward*, Ramallah: UNESCO, 2008), while UNDP and the British Council are supporting the establishment of a Career Guidance Centre in Damascus. Save the Children, on its part, is supporting the development of career guidance services in a number of countries and territories in the region, including Jordan and Palestine.

**disengagement and drop-out, improved retention and efficiency rates, and consequently better returns to financial investment in education and training, for individual and society alike.**

2.2. Another main goal that CG contributes to is a **better match between what citizens bring with them to the labour market**—in terms of knowledge, skills, competences, attitudes and values—**and what the labour market needs**. CG is therefore not only about providing information, but also about educating for the workforce, orienting citizens to where their potential is more likely to be realised, and providing them with the skills that are required to find or to create jobs, and to manage their careers. In doing so, CG also fulfils a number of **social roles**, in that it renders citizens more employable, increasing the likelihood that they lead independent, productive and fulfilling lives. In the Egyptian context, CG can also support successful migration and integration in regional and international labour markets.

2.3. These are big claims for CG, and some societies have been more successful than others in developing CG systems and services that realise the potential that CG has in contributing to the private and public good. **Egypt has shown some interest in learning from these international experiences**. It has been one of the first in the region to establish a National Task Force in order to examine the contribution that CG can make in helping the country attain some of its HRD goals.<sup>4</sup> Egypt has also been keen to investigate the role that CG can play in supporting reforms in the education and training sectors, where more flexibility is being gradually introduced to increase the possibility of choice. **More options require improved information systems and increased support in making wise choices**. Policy developments in Egypt, therefore, are stimulating the need for CG, with various groups indicating that had CG services to be established, these would support broader, systemic reform. In this report, we will briefly set out some of the ways in which CG has been developed in a range of countries in order to respond to the needs of young students, as well as youths and adults. The focus will be on what can be learnt from best practice in education institutions (at primary, secondary, vocational and university levels) as well as in public employment services (i.e. labour offices). We will thus look at each sector in turn, identifying *what* type of CG service is usually present, and by *who* and *how* it is offered.



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<sup>4</sup> The National Voluntary Task Force, with representatives from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Manpower and Migration, the University sector, and the employers' and workers' associations, has met several times throughout 2007-2008, and has produced a concept paper titled "Strengthening Career Guidance in Egypt". With the support of the European Training Foundation, it has also organised two national workshops on CG in 2008 (May 28-29, and October 22-23), with the second one focusing on capacity building.

### 3. Career Guidance at the Compulsory Education level

3.1. At the **primary** or **elementary education level** (ages 6-11), many countries rely on broad socialisation that instils in children a range of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which will serve them in good stead in later life. The informal curriculum, together with the pedagogy used, helps young children learn important work habits, including how to work in teams, how to be creative and entrepreneurial, how to express themselves, how to handle conflict in a positive manner, how to set goals and develop the self-discipline needed to reach them, how to claim rights while living up to responsibilities. The formal curriculum teaches them about aspects of the world of work, inculcates knowledge about self and the surrounding environment, and develops literacy, numeracy and other skills that are central to many of today's occupations. Formative assessment practices set out to ensure that pupils know how to gauge their own progress, to plan for and implement remedial action, and to maintain positive attitudes towards the self and feelings of competence in the face of challenge and adversity. Most importantly, children learn how to make decisions when faced with a range of options, and to avoid premature closure of future options through gender or social class-related stereotypes they may have learnt at home or through the media, for instance.

3.2. **Regular class teachers** have a major role in delivering this early school-to-work curriculum and set of skills, which are planned and sequenced to respond to the changing developmental characteristics of primary-level children. Many countries include CG modules in the initial and in-service training programmes for elementary school teachers. Others, however, also employ **specialised staff** to coordinate and deliver aspects of this programme, supporting class teachers throughout the year, and particularly when there is a work-related thematic focus—which is often the case when a topic-approach is adopted. Class teachers and coordinators for career work often also involve **parents** and **community members** in a range of work-related activities. They may for instance be invited to the class to talk about their work, or they may accompany school children to their work places, helping them explore aspects of that environment. Parents have a major influence on their children's thinking about work, so many schools organise meetings with them so that they too understand the way they can support their children's career knowledge and development in positive ways. Even at this early age, CG programmes in schools can be based on 7 processes, i.e. classroom instruction, counselling, assessment, career information, placement, consultation,

#### Box 1

##### Typical Career Guidance activities organised at elementary school level:

- Reading stories and biographies and showing films that portray women in non-traditional work.
- Playing decision-making games.
- Helping pupils organise different jobs into family clusters.
- Asking students to interview a relative about their occupation.
- Organising work-shadowing.
- Asking children to imagine how their life will be in the future, and what obstacles they foresee.
- Using role-play to encourage pupils to move outside of socially-ascribed positions.
- Probing problem-solving protocols through real-life case studies.
- Reading newspaper job adverts.
- Considering job fantasies and confronting these with reality.
- Dressing up in working clothes to understand safety issues.
- Visiting a factory to understand the entire production process.
- Meeting entrepreneurs who have set up their own business.
- Visiting secondary schools to prepare for transition.
- Informing parents about the range of pathways available to their children.

and referral. **Box 1** provides some examples of how these processes are translated into activities at this level of schooling.

3.3. At the **secondary school level** (ages 11-15), students are more likely to be involved in exploring and planning their futures in a self-conscious, purposeful manner. Of course, such activity often depends on the socio-economic background and location of the youngsters involved, with important differences between those coming from well-off or poor backgrounds, and those living in an urban or rural environment. Gender too plays an important role, with girls—and boys—failing to consider some options because they do not consider them to be gender appropriate. In some cases, parents or relatives are so influential that they direct young people towards specific pathways, often linked to aspirations they may themselves have for the family, or linked to a family-owned enterprise that they expect the children to sustain.

#### Box 2

##### Typical objectives for a Career Guidance programme at the secondary school level:

- Understanding of the self (through use of assessment tools, experiential learning...).
- Exploring possibilities through 'tasting' courses or occupations.
- Awareness-raising of range of occupations (through Career Fairs...).
- Learning decision-making skills (through role play, games, case studies...).
- Becoming informed about education and training pathways (through use of printed or web-based directories...).
- Relating personal interests and abilities to occupational families (through CG interviews, on-line self-help tool...).
- Learning that sex-role and social class-based stereotyping limit choices, opportunity and achievement.
- Understanding the career planning process by preparing a personal action plan, with the support of the CG adviser.
- Learning to find information supporting decision-making, and how to use it.
- Understanding and development of the skills needed to set up a business (e.g. through Youth Enterprise schemes).
- Becoming aware of employment trends.
- Developing effective learning and study habits, and relating these to work habits.

3.4. At this level, schools in many countries strive to **make students aware of the processes involved in making wise choices in relation to emergent abilities, aptitudes and aspirations**. They also work hard to help students understand how a variety of social and environmental factors can support or hinder career exploration. **Box 2** shows some of the objectives typically found at the secondary school level. Of critical importance at this stage is the increasing awareness of the range of occupations that exist, how these can be clustered into families, how jobs within the same family make different demands in terms of the skills required and the education and training involved, and how salaries and lifestyles are often—though not necessarily—linked to the occupational ladder.

3.5. **Timely, relevant and accurate career information** is therefore a main concern at this age, as is the understanding of the range of educational and training routes available, their duration, the level of commitment that each requires, and how such pathways connect, if at all. Students therefore need to be made aware of the **consequences of curriculum and course choices** they make, including the subject clusters they opt for, since these might prematurely close up possibilities later on in life.

3.6. Informed, purposeful career planning often requires the support of more knowledgeable, more experienced adults. Many education systems in the world have introduced extensive career education and career guidance programmes at the

secondary education level, in order to make sure that students have access to such structured support. There is a range of models in use across Europe and beyond: many have **career education infused in the curriculum**, appearing as a topic in a range of subjects such as history (where students learn about the changing nature of work across time), languages (where students learn how to write their curriculum vitae, for instance), drama (where students role-play a job interview session), and religion (where students are encouraged to develop values related to work). In the best of cases, students are required to keep a work learning ‘diary’ or ‘log-book’, where they reflect on all the information and knowledge they put together from the inputs in different classes. Many education systems have also a **special, time-tabled curriculum subject** which deals directly with the world of work. Others organise thematic workshops as part of the extra-curricular programme.

- 3.7. Most schools in Europe, North America and Austral-Asia also have a **specially trained CG counsellor or adviser** who works with teachers in delivering the school-to-work curriculum, who leads thematic seminars, uses assessment tools to help students understand themselves in relation to their abilities and aspirations, and to clarify potential educational and occupational pathways. Such CG specialists also work closely with parents, organise work orientation and work shadowing placements, network with employers as well as with CG officers from the public employment offices. In some countries, it is the latter who do much of the CG work with students, as they are deemed to be closer to the world of work than teachers.

## 4. Career Guidance at Further and Higher Education levels

- 4.1. The **general higher secondary** (ages 16-18) and **university levels** (from 18 onwards) are important transition points for many students, and the number of those at these levels is constantly increasing as more and more young citizens aspire to improve their opportunities for improved employment options by staying on beyond the compulsory school-leaving age. While there are different developmental tasks involved between age 16 and later years, we will here consider the post-compulsory sector together, highlighting instead the differences that exist in the CG needs of students in general education tracks on the one hand, and TVET tracks on the other—even though there is substantial overlap between the two groups. Both general and vocational students, for instance, tend to be involved in more specific planning for next steps in education and work, and will be increasingly assuming individual responsibility for making decisions and for the subsequent consequences. In the case of both general and vocational students, the key tasks for CG staff are to stimulate career development, to provide a range of services that support such development, and to aid placement.



4.2. The **range of CG activities** that one finds at this level tends to be quite broad, and as at previous levels, can include time-tabled sessions, group and individual counselling, thematic workshops, assessment, mentoring, a range of work experience opportunities for reality-testing purposes, exploration and behaviour modification, and job placement. Given the relative maturity of these young adults, a whole range of CG needs can be addressed through a **self-help mode**, particularly given the amount of information and CG-related assessment tools that are available through the internet.<sup>5</sup> However, many higher education institutions also have **specialised CG advisers**, who are responsible for co-ordinating the school-to-work programmes, meeting students on line, through a telephone help service, or face-to-face. They also liaise closely with academic faculty members and with employers, networking graduates to vacancies, and involving business representatives through inviting them to address students, to offer internships, to mentor students during work experience placements, to share their experiences in setting up and/or running enterprises, and so on.

4.3. In some cases, CG advisers have developed special programmes for **target groups**, such as students with disability, or for gifted students,<sup>6</sup> or for those who come from poorer backgrounds and who might encounter special difficulties in foregoing earnings, and to resist the pressure to enter the labour market at the earliest possible opportunity. CG advisers also often have to develop programmes specifically for young women, given that in some cultures, and with some socio-economic groups, there are expectations to maintain gender traditionality at the cost of foregoing further investment in education, or settling for shorter course cycles that lead to lower levels in occupational ladders. **Box 3** provides details of the CG services offered by the Career Advising and Placement Services at the American

**Box 3**  
**Career Guidance services and activities at the American University in Cairo:**

- Career goal clarification and planning through the use of assessment tools.
- Supporting individuals and groups in carrying out self-assessment.
- Leading workshops teaching job-search skills, cv writing, mock job interviews.
- Running a Career Resources Library with information about occupational and graduate study opportunities.
- Organising a CareerMart promoting career awareness through meetings with top professionals and successful alumni.
- Running an Internship Programme that offers students practical experience in a professional setting.
- Providing job shadowing opportunities, helping students clarify career goals.
- Offering an E-Job Announcement service, communicating job vacancies and career-related announcements.
- Organising Employment Fairs, supporting networking between AUC students and employers, and facilitating recruitment.
- Convening a Career Conference for senior year students, opening up doors for employment in global organisations.

[See [www.caps.aucegypt.edu](http://www.caps.aucegypt.edu) for more detailed information about the activities organized by the AUC's Career Advising and Placement Services]

<sup>5</sup> In the best of cases, a user sits at a computer, accesses a CG platform, and can complete all or most of the CG process, i.e. he or she clarifies career aspirations through a self-assessment tool, links information about self to an occupation or group of occupations, and learns about these (what the job entails, what its qualifications are required, likely salary, employment trends in that area, promotion structures, and so on). Information about where one can obtain the qualification needed can be downloaded, with links to the training institutions made available. In some cases, graduate evaluations of the courses and institutions are also available, so that a user can make an informed choice about which of the competing institutions that offer the same course s/he should apply to. If necessary, the user can ask for a CG interview in order to supplement the self-help process. A good example of such a web-based system can be found at <http://www.myfuture.edu.au>

<sup>6</sup> A Centre for Highly Gifted Kids—offering a range of services in the identification and guidance of gifted children—was opened in Cairo in May 2008, with the support of DAAD.



University in Cairo, which are similar to programmes available at many universities world-wide. Here too there is an emphasis placed on four stages in Career Planning, i.e. [a] Self-Assessment [b] Career Exploration [c] Career Decision Making and [d] Action Planning.

4.4. CG services at the **vocational higher secondary** and **technical college** levels include most if not all of the activities that have been mentioned above in relation to general post-compulsory and university education. In addition, however, there are a range of CG services and CG-related activities that are particularly appropriate for students in the TVET further and higher education sector. At the macro level, CG can support a government's efforts to provide factual information about the vocational route to talented and motivated students and their parents, who often exclude this option even when it is more likely to lead to employment and, in many cases, higher earnings. Several countries have in fact made good use of CG programmes to **promote TVET as a legitimate and attractive pathway**, in many cases broadening the interrelationships within the different routes, and between them and other educational institutions, including universities.

4.5. At the TVET school and college level, the emphasis is on **supporting youths and young adults in their transitions through education, training and employment**. Here CG advisers develop programmes that are not only based at (a) the vocational school and college, but also (b) engage transition mechanisms (such as apprenticeship or '*alternance*'), and (c) draw on employer support in inducting students to the workplace. CG activities at school and college level include support in helping students choose an appropriate vocational pathway from among several that are offered during a foundation year, which often permits 'course-tasting' to prevent premature closure of options. Sometimes, CG counsellors administer skills tests to help students assess specific vocational-related skills, such as manual dexterity, eye-hand co-ordination, and so on. CG advisers also provide support in the integration of academic and vocational aspects of the course, organise cooperative learning, structure work-based problem-solving, follow up closely on—and assess and certify—student competency development, and work with company-based tutors in promoting student career development.

4.6. At higher levels especially, TVET career guidance advisers can help young adults in recognising and accrediting the competences they have developed informally through life and work experience, and to plan further education and training pathways that builds on these skills in order to improve opportunities for employment. As at other levels and in other sectors of the education system, **TVET career guidance advisers consolidate the foundations for career planning and lifelong learning**, which is particularly important given the rapidly changing nature of the skills profile required by industry. As with colleagues working at other levels, CG advisers in the TVET sector often work with vocational teachers in delivering a school-to-work curriculum through courses, seminars, interactive computer-aided instruction, role playing, gaming and entrepreneurship programmes, to mention just a few. They also assist students in developing a portfolio that provides potential

employers with information about their educational and experiential credentials, as well as an insight into their skills and talents.

4.7. CG advisers working in the TVET sector often offer a range of services **supporting CG development of students during their passage through such transition mechanisms** as work visits, work experience, work shadowing, and especially apprenticeship, whether school- or work-based. Such mechanisms help students and young adults understand and master not only the specific vocational skills they are being trained in, but also the broader work context in which they are applied. CG advisers can help TVET students understand work cultures, and how their own personal and vocational development can be planned and fulfilled within an organization. They also work closely with company-based tutors in order to ensure that the job placement is an educationally sound experience, and that the learning that is taking place promotes the students' career development as well as their employability.

#### Box 4

##### Initial steps in providing Career Guidance in the TVET sector in Egypt:

A system of 'alternance' is being piloted in Port Said for students completing their preparatory school. In a one-week workshop led by CG advisers, applicants learn about the different occupational routes available, the nature of the work involved, and whether they have the required qualities to perform the job well. Students are assessed through the use of a battery of tests (both psychometric and interest inventories), and sit for an individual interview with the CG adviser. The latter:

- Helps individuals draw up action plans.
- Coaches and supports students in implementing their action plans.
- Helps students analyse their experiences during training and work.
- Liaises with company representatives.
- Keeps up to date with labour market information.
- Advises employers about the educational process, recruitment and procedures.
- Leads meetings gathering employers, managers, tutors and trainers.

4.8. There are few examples of CG activities in the TVET sector in Egypt. Some new developments have however stimulated a demand for CG services. At the macro level, the government is keen to make TVET an attractive option for students and their parents. At the school level, the new policy is to have a **foundation year** where students 'taste' the different training pathways related to a cluster of occupations. They are then required to make a choice, and in many cases such decision-making needs to be supported. Furthermore, one initiative in the TVET reform effort involves the piloting of a French approach called 'alternance'. As **Box 4** shows, this integrates some CG services.

## 5. Career Guidance for Job-Seekers

5.1. In many countries, CG advisers also work with unemployed job-seekers—and more rarely with job-changers—in order to support them in fulfilling their employment aspirations, as well as in becoming more employable. Many such CG advisers work in Public Employment Services (PES) and, as a recent EU study has shown,<sup>7</sup> in the context of labour offices there are three types of activities that are directly or indirectly

related to CG. First, there are activities that fall within the area of '**personalized employment services**', and that have elements of career guidance embedded in them. Employment advisers register and interview clients, and in the process of

<sup>7</sup> See R.G. Sultana & A.G. Watts, *Career Guidance in Europe's Public Employment Services: Trends and Challenges*, Brussels: DG Employment, Social Affairs & Equal Opportunities, 2006.

doing so utilize several guidance-related skills, particularly where efforts are being made to personalize services through client segmentation. While the employment adviser's work at this level—in relation to the initial interview, personal action planning, and assistance in the job-search process through job-brokering and other means—cover processes and tasks that are largely administrative, they can also have strong guidance elements embedded in them. The second category of activities concerns **specialized career guidance services**. These are distinguished from the first category by their more intensive and more focused engagement with the client, on the basis of a deeper knowledge base and extended competence. A third category of activities considers **other career guidance provision** that the PES may be involved in, including the production and/or dissemination of labour market information, as well as occupational information, and the provision of career guidance services to students.

- 5.2. As is the case with practically all the Arab states, the services offered by labour offices in Egypt are still quite **rudimentary**, despite some improvements in pilot offices receiving support from CIDA. Where there is now a CG unit, much of the effort here goes in the administering of psychometric tests, and has not yet taken on board the developments that we have seen taking place in Public Employment Services internationally, though there is an increasing desire to do so.

## 6. Policy Options for Career Guidance in Egypt

- 6.1. Egypt then has a few emergent initiatives that suggest that—at least at the grass roots level—there is an **increasing demand for CG services**.<sup>8</sup> Given the range and complexity of demands being made on education and training systems in the country, the stress in the preceding sections was on showing what CG guidance can realistically offer to the overall reform effort in education and training, and in the labour market. As we have noted, CG has been able to perform this function in a number of ways in several countries. Egypt might therefore want to consider the manner in which it can develop CG services towards the same end.
- 6.2. There are several **policy options** that Egypt can consider, many of which have been signposted in the preceding sections, where a synthesis of the more relevant practices available internationally was presented in relation to the range of services that could be offered, by who, and how. Many of these practices were considered recently during a capacity building workshop organised by the ETF in collaboration with the National Career Guidance Task Force.<sup>9</sup> Clearly, as Boxes 5 [a] and [b] suggest, some of these practices are more immediately feasible than others in terms of the financial and human resource claims they make.

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<sup>8</sup> Interestingly enough, UNICEF is funding the setting up of 10 pilot Shura (consultation) Centres to assist young people aged 18-24 in skills training and finding employment through a life skills approach, while the Aga Khan Foundation's Al Darb Ahmar project is supporting the development of a career counselling package in technical commercial schools.

<sup>9</sup> The workshop, which was organised in Cairo between the 22 and 23 October 2008, involved over 30 high-ranking participants from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Manpower and Migration, and representatives from the TVET sector, from the Industrial Training Council, and from employer organisations.

Box 5 [a]

Initial steps introducing Career Guidance services in Egypt:

- Embed a CG curriculum across several subjects at the secondary school level.
- Require students to keep a 'learning work' log-book, reflecting on the insights they have gained about the world of work and their place in it.
- Introduce a CG module in all initial and in-service teacher training courses.
- Use the Activity Period to organise CG workshops.
- Invite employers and alumni to address students.
- Publish information about education and training pathways on the web.
- Introduce an entrepreneurship scheme in schools, by collaborating with regional initiatives in Youth Enterprise and Junior Achievement.
- Organize an annual Career Fair at the governorate level, helping students and young adults become more aware of the range of occupations available.

Box 5 [b]

Advanced steps developing Career Guidance services in Egypt:

- Commission higher education institutions to develop and offer a specialized CG course.
- Appoint a specialised CG adviser in schools.
- Allocate a room in each school for CG services, equipped with a Resource Library.
- Develop a Labour Market Information System that supports CG, with the input of different Ministries.
- Publish detailed occupational profiles that support career exploration.
- Adapt and develop culturally appropriate CG resources that help students deepen their self-understanding, in relation to the range of educational, training and occupational opportunities available.
- Establish a National Career Guidance Unit with the task of developing the CG field in terms of services, resources, research, and the monitoring of quality.

6.3. Our recommendation is that, if Egypt is convinced of the contribution that CG can make to its overall reform efforts in the education, training and labour market sectors, it could plan for **short-, medium- and long-term goals** in implementing some of the suggestions that have been made in this report, on the basis of the best practices available internationally. In doing so, however, the Egyptian government needs to develop local capacity in the field, in order to make sure that policy options pursued and decisions made are sound and appropriate given the country context. It would seem that important first steps include:

6.3.1. **Strengthening the National Career Guidance Task Force** by formally acknowledging its role, and giving it the responsibility of articulating a coherent **National Strategy** for the development of CG in Egypt.

6.3.2. **Organizing a Round Table session** involving the relevant line Ministries (e.g. Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Manpower and Migration, Ministry of Industry), the social partners (including Federations and Chambers of Industry), as well as interested international aid and development agencies and donors, so that the proposed Career Guidance National Strategy is discussed, and **commitments** made by each participating body.

6.3.3. Setting up an executive arm for the implementation of the CG Strategy. One suggestion is the establishment of a **National Career Guidance Centre**, whose Director would also become a member of the National CG Task Force, in order to ensure clear lines of communication with all relevant parties. One of the Centre's tasks would be to network with other similar Centres that are being established in the region (e.g. in Syria and UAE, and possibly Jordan and Palestine) and beyond. Support for technical and capacity-building purposes could be sought from international organizations. While initially the National CG Centre would be located in Cairo or other major city, eventually sub-branches could be established in each Governorate.

The CG Centre could be made up of units responsible for such key aspects as **career information** (e.g. setting up a call centre and email guidance service, facilitating and monitoring work-place visits, supporting career resource development, organising Job Fairs, promoting CG issues through the media, hosting a careers library, etc), **research** (e.g. carrying out tracer studies, transforming labour market data into user-friendly material that supports career decision-making, developing and maintaining a CG website, publishing online career information databases, develop career assessment instruments, produce a gender-sensitive CG manual, etc), and **quality auditing** (e.g. assisting in the monitoring of CG policies, developing national standards for CG material, ensuring that CG services are reaching specific target groups, and that regular review and planning arrangements are in place, etc).

6.3.4. None of this can take place unless there is a **cadre of professionals specialised in CG**. Initial investment has therefore to be made in training a core group of CG advisers, possibly drawing on the expertise and experience available at the Career Advising and Placement Services at the American University in Cairo. Some useful experiences and skills could have been generated through the USAID-funded Education Reform Programme, which included a school-to-work component. The European Training Foundation, together with the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network, are also useful resources that could be tapped into, both in developing a National Career Guidance Strategy, and in building up technical capacity.

