

WP6

Reinforce competencies on the internationalization of higher education and Quality Assurance aspects

Report on Transnational Education in Lebanon, Tunisia, Lebanon and Morocco



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Background

Under **WP6 Reinforce competencies on the internationalization of higher education and quality assurance aspects**, the project aimed to reinforce competences learned during prior workpackages of the project, by exemplifying the terminology used in workshops and ftf learning in the context of practical quality assurance and cases involving Transnational Education (TNE).

Initially planned for May 2017 to December 2018, the WP6 was delayed due to delays in completing country reports and discussions over funding issues.

The first activities of the work package started in November 2017 when SouthMed partner-universities visited European partner universities as part of WP3; as part of the comprehensive overview of the tools and terminology of the project, presentations and peer-discussions with specialized staff from the University of Oslo were conducted on the topics of Quality Assurance and Transnational Education in the context of recognition.

During the wrap-up of the October 2018 workshop on Refugee Qualifications in Beirut, Lebanon, a short presentation was given on the topic of TNE in the context of TNE-activities at the University of Oslo, and on a broader level, TNE as seen in Norway. The aim of the presentation was to introduce a broader section of project participants to TNE as a concept and to provide practical examples that would enable SouthMed partners to reply to the planned questionnaire on TNE.

Methodology

The content of two questionnaires, one for ministries and one for universities, were completed in January 2019, and on 1 February the questionnaires were distributed to European partners for comments and changes. Feedback from the European partners were implemented and the finished questionnaires were distributed on 11 February 2019 with a deadline for 22 March.

By the deadline, four out of 12 SouthMed partners had answered the form. Between April and July, five more partners answered the form. Three partners, one university and two ministries, have still not responded by September 2019. This leaves us with a 50 % response rate for ministries and 87,5 % for universities for a 75 % response rate over all.

Due to the ever expanding universe of TNE and non-traditional education a decision was made to focus primarily on the following setups in TNE:

A) Collaborative arrangements – part of study content provided by partner institution

- Franchising
- Validating
- Twinning
- Joint degree
- Double or dual degree

B) Non-collaborative – study content provided directly by awarding institution

- Branch campus
- Others

The questionnaires were based on the following definitions:

Joint degree - universities from two or more countries cooperate in delivering content to one-degree program, where students spend part of their degree at the partner institution.

Double or dual degree - students work on two degrees and diplomas at two universities simultaneously. The universities cooperate and deliver content relevant to both degrees that allow students to spend part of their degree at the partner institution.

Franchising – a higher education institution from a certain country grants another institution in another country the right to provide the franchiser's programmes/qualifications in the franchisee's host country.

Validating – studies from a non-accredited/not-recognized institution are validated and degree documentation is issued by an accredited/recognized institution.

Twinning – two or more institutions agree to jointly define a study programme, so that students pursuing their studies in one institution have their credits recognized by the degree awarding institution.

Branch campus - a campus established by a higher education institution from one country in another country (host country) to offer its own educational programmes/qualifications, irrespective of the students' provenance.

Distance Learning - where the learner is provided with course material via post or web-based solutions, and self-administers the learning process at home. Programmes and qualification may or may not belong to the higher education system of a specific country.

The questionnaires also allowed respondents to provide information on their knowledge of other TNE setups.

It is important to stress that this is in no way meant to be an exhaustive survey of TNE in the participating countries, but rather a tool by which to enable the participants to reflect on their prior learning in the project and apply it to a challenging and expanding new area of the educational system.

TNE in Lebanon

Quality Assurance: There is no national quality assurance system in Lebanon. However, a law for the creation of a national agency for Quality Assurance in HE has been approved by the government and is awaiting ratification by the Parliament since 2012ⁱ.

Efforts were mobilized to draft a law that would establish a national agency for quality assurance in higher education. The mandate of this agency would hold (private and public) institutions accountable for the services they provide to the public. The approval on this draft law that is still in progress was a lengthy one but strongly supported by a number of policy-makers, and many experts and practitioners in the sector.

A new law for private higher education (285/2014) requires each institution to start its own internal quality process and to prepare for external evaluation either by the future national QA agency under creation or by international QA agencies.ⁱⁱ

The evaluation process will be based on the internal self-assessment of the institution itself and will cover fields like the mission and vision of the institution, its governance and management, human resources, academic programs, teaching staff, learning resources, students, services, infrastructures, financial

resources, institutional integrity, scientific research, civic engagement and quality of its management system.

Some universities have their QA guidelines online: Eksampel (Holy Spirit University of Kaslik) <https://www.usek.edu.lb/en/about-usek/quality-assurance>

Educational accreditation: The ministry carries out audits and monitoring at the licensing-, starting up- and recognition stages. This is done by a technical academic committee, the programs' specialized committees and the higher education council.ⁱⁱⁱ All programs are validated by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

TNE: Recognition of foreign diplomas and credentials for the labour market is done by the ministry's Recognition committee at the Directorate General of Higher Education. Recognition and evaluation for further educational purposes is also done by the Recognition committee at the Directorate General of Higher Education, but with the participation of the universities.

Universities evaluate documents once they have been approved by the ministry.

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education is familiar with a number of transnational educational operations in Lebanon.

Institutions are encouraged to participate in- or host joint degrees, dual or double degrees, though there is no public funding available for the establishment of such degrees. International degrees need government approval and are evaluated according to the same rules and procedures as national degrees.

Lebanese universities cooperate internationally on joint degrees, dual or double degrees, especially at master/graduate level. Cooperation with French and French Canadian universities is most common.

Distance learning and E-learning platforms also enable increased international cooperation. Participants in this project evaluate all programs and activities, including TNE, as per the internal procedure for quality assurance.

Franchising, twinning and branch campus setups are governed by Lebanon's Higher Education Law, Article 41:

Conditions relating to non-Lebanese legal persons entitled to apply for authorization to establish a private Higher Education institution, should meet the following conditions: 1. They should be an active Higher Education institution officially recognized and authorized in a country officially recognized by the Lebanese State. 2. They shall award officially-recognized degrees in their country of affiliation. 3. The institution to be established in Lebanon shall be a branch of the parent institution which shall effectively supervise the branch object of the authorization. 4. They shall

commit to abide by the Lebanese laws and regulations applicable to Higher Education. 5. They shall have Lebanese representatives who meet the conditions relative to the appointment of a Higher Education institution president to legally represent them before Lebanese authorities and courts in all cases, to receive notification and correspondences addressed to the parent institution, and to reside in Lebanon at the moment of the commencement application.

TNE setups without ties to institutions or organizations established abroad, such as off-shore institutions, must adhere to the same national laws and quality assurance measures that are applied to Lebanese private higher education institutions. For example, the Lebanese American University and the American University of Beirut are evaluated according to Lebanese HE-laws, as are all private universities in Lebanon.

The same rules and procedures apply to the Arab Open University, a part physical, part online university branch of the Arab Open University which was founded in Kuwait in 2000.

Lebanese TNE abroad: Two institutions that have branches in the Arab Gulf region in Dubai (University Saint Joseph and University of Balamand).

Resources

List of private Higher Education Institutions in Lebanon -

http://www.higher-edu.gov.lb/arabic/privuniv/personal_univ.html (in Arabic language only)

TNE in Tunisia

Quality Assurance: the National Evaluation, Quality Assurance and Accreditation Authority (Instance Nationale de l'Évaluation, de l'Assurance Qualité et de l'Accréditation - INEAQA) is the body responsible for quality improvement in higher education. Link: <http://www.ieaqa.com>

Since 2008, law #2008-19, signed into law on 25 February 2008, govern the quality of higher education in Tunisia.^{iv}

The INEAQA is in charge of the external evaluation and focuses on the external quality assurance procedures on teaching, internal quality assurance and management systems, research, support services to students, library and IT resources, space and equipment, non-teaching staff, management and transparency, lifelong learning provisions and employability of graduates.

Some universities also undertake internal evaluation by a University quality committee or similar internal body, others are in the process of setting up an internal evaluation process.

Educational accreditation: The Tunisian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research is responsible for the accreditation of public and private higher education institutions and programs (Habilitation).

The accreditation at the institutional level includes a review of the programmes proposed, the educational and scientific methods which are applied and their compliance with the quality of the delivered diplomas, as well as the skills and the capacities expected from the graduates.

Accreditation is granted for a maximal period of four years, either for the institution, for the programmes or for the courses.

TNE: Evaluation of foreign diplomas for the labour market is done primarily by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. For regulated and protected titles and professions there are also Professional orders for regulated professions in Tunisia.

Evaluation for further educational purposes is done by Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and/or Universities.

Universities specify that a scientific committee in the faculties participate in the procedures of recognition and evaluation. One university specifies that they do so in order to transfer credits for joint degree cooperation at graduate level.

The ministry has experience with joint degrees, double or dual degrees and twinning in Tunisia. In order to establish such international degrees, universities need accreditation from the relevant authorities and degree-approval by the Ministry.

In the universities in this project focus is primarily on outgoing cooperation and the establishment of joint degrees, often with France, as well as the opportunities for international cooperation within the frames of distance education.

Recently, Tunisia is also venturing into new territory as far as TNE goes, with the establishment of a joint Franco-Tunisian University of Africa and the Mediterranean (UFTAM), granting French diplomas for 2019-2020. The status for these French diplomas in France are not specified.

To date there are no regulatory frameworks governing international educational providers that establish themselves in Tunisia. Evaluation of TNE-setups is done on a case-by-case basis.

Resources

List of the accredited public institutions in Tunisia: www.mes.tn/annuaire.php?code_menu=22 (in French language)

List of private accredited Institutions in Tunisia: www.mes.tn/page.php?code_menu=54 Information on accredited programs of bachelor degrees of Public Higher education institutions: www.parcours-lmd.salima.tn

TNE in Algeria

Quality assurance: Algeria has established a Committee (CIAQES) at the Ministry of Higher Education and scientific research. It is responsible for promoting any action to improve higher education in Algeria and support institutions in the implementation of their quality approach. The training of resource persons in the field of quality is a flagship activity of its missions.^y

Universities have established internal quality control and self-evaluation procedures based around QA systems at faculty- and departmental levels.

Educational accreditation: Only public Higher Education institutions operate in Algeria, and the Ministry of Education does not issue institutional accreditations, but primarily gives programme accreditation to the different programmes established by the universities.

TNE: All recognition of foreign diplomas and credentials are done at ministry level, though once a diploma is approved by the ministry, universities also evaluate paperwork for admission into its undergraduate and graduate degrees.

Algerian universities cooperate internationally on joint degrees, dual and double degrees, with government approval of the programme.

This section reflects the opinion of universities in Algeria, as the Ministry did not participate in this report.

TNE in Morocco

Quality assurance: In 2016, the Moroccan government (Ministry of National Education, Professional Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research) set up an Agency for Quality Assurance ANEAQ.^{vi} This agency is in charge of all aspects of evaluation concerning training programs, curricula and institutions.

The High Council of Education, Training and Scientific Research in Morocco also evaluate the Educational System.

Universities perform a self-evaluation of the programs every 4 years before receiving approval for new/next accreditation. This action is required by the Ministry of National Education, Professional Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research.

Educational accreditation: Morocco practices both institutional and programme accreditation. Private universities may be established and are recognized nationally.

TNE: All recognition of foreign diplomas and credentials are done at ministry level, though once a diploma is approved by the ministry, universities also evaluate paperwork for admission or credit transfer into its undergraduate and graduate degrees.

Moroccan universities look to French-speaking countries for cooperation on joint degrees and establish joint degrees with government approval.

New opportunities are also found within distance learning. In 2017, Cadi Ayyad University set-up the first hybrid learning for a Professional Licence accredited by Moroccan Ministry of National Education, Professional Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research (70% online and 30% f-2-f). More online/blended learning programs are in development.

This section reflects the opinion of universities in Morocco, as the Ministry did not participate in this report.

Annex 1: Questionnaire for the ministries: MERIC-net WP6: Transnational Education - TNE - Ministries

Annex 2: Questionnaires for the universities: MERIC-net WP6: Transnational Education - TNE - Universities

Annex 3: Completed questionnaires in full (2 ministries, 7 universities)

i

<http://www.higher-edu.gov.lb/projects/Laws&decrets.htm> (in Arabic) ii

http://www.higher-edu.gov.lb/projects/QA_law2011.pdf (in Arabic)

iii

http://www.higher-edu.gov.lb/projects/Decree%202176_2018.pdf (in Arabic)

iv

Annex 4: Law No- 2008-19 of 25 February 2008 on Higher Education (in French)

v

<http://www.ciaqes-mesrs.dz/> (in French)

vi

www.aneaq.ma

