

**TRANSFORMING EDUCATION SUMMIT (TES) 2022**  
**NATIONAL CONSULTATION REPORT OF THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF**  
**EGYPT**

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## **PART I: TES National Consultation Process**

**Convenor's Name:** Counsellor/Wael ABDEL WAHAB, Director of UNESCO Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was appointed National Focal Point for the Summit in June 2022.

**Number of Consultations:** Four consultations.

### **Basic Information on the Consultations Convened:**

The month of July 2022 was devoted to preparing the consultations by drafting a preliminary paper that includes the Egyptian State's vision of the future of education based on the ambitious program launched in 2014. This program was the subject of extensive and lengthy discussions at the national level, in which all concerned stakeholders actively participated. As such, it was decided that the consultation starting point captures the vision of the future of Education in light of these national deliberations.

This paper was circulated to an expanded group of national authorities and partners involved in the educational process to receive their feedback and contributions.

Following this dispatch, four consultations were conducted as follows:

- A written consultation in which stakeholders were asked to convey their comments and contributions to the Egyptian inputs to the TES summit.
- A consultation was held at the committee level in charge of following up on SDG4, which is affiliated with the Egyptian National Commission for Education, Science, and Culture.
- A consultation was held at the education commission affiliated with the Egyptian National Commission for Education, Science and Culture.
- A consultation hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022, with the participation of various national authorities, stakeholders, and partners involved in education issues.

Participants in the consultations were chosen to include as many sectors and stakeholders involved with the Education Sector as possible. It had, amongst others: Educators and professors, government and national authorities, local non-governmental organizations, international and financial institutions, the scientific community, and representatives from education sectors; health, labor; finance, nutrition, communication, and information technology.

## **PART II: PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT**

**A Whole-of-Government Approach:** Various government agencies involved in education participated in the national consultations leading up to the Global Education Transformation Summit, where the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Education and Technical Education convened a plenary session to discuss this topic following a series of written consultations.

**Inclusion and equality approach:** The consultations coincided with the Egyptian government's determination to look after students' rights without discrimination, including the right to education, and ensuring the continuity of the educational process in light of the challenges the world is facing related to the COVID 19 pandemic, as the availability of educational services (including the availability of online or distance education if schools are closed or using television channels), and accessibility (including physical accessibility, affordability, and non-discriminatory access).

**Focusing on youth as "agents of change":** the Egyptian state pays great attention to youth. It has established the National Training Academy, which aims to qualify youth leaders to assume work tasks in all sectors of the state, including the education sector. The country holds a national youth conference every year and an international youth conference which serves as platforms for exchanging experiences, hearing views of young people, and generating new innovative ideas to develop all sectors in the country, including education, in addition to the efforts of the Ministry of Youth and Sports in preparing young people and learning leadership skills through careful selection of distinguished youth who represent all Youth sectors and from all public or private universities.

### **PART III: CONSULTATION FOCUS AND OUTCOMES**

This section highlights the key outcomes of the consultations for the TES Summit. Further details could be found in the three following Annexes:

- Annex 1: contains the background paper prepared by the Ministry of Education for the consultations and was disseminated to the different stakeholders before the talks. It had the societal vision before the 2022 consultations for the TES summit. This vision resulted from an extensive and rich societal debate held in Egypt on Transforming Education.
- Annex 2 highlights the main points raised in the feedback received during the written consultations and the two meetings held within the SDG 4 and Education Commissions mentioned above.
- Annex 3 presents the main points arising from the primary consultation workshop hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The presentation of consultation outcomes is presented in five sections corresponding to the five action tracks of the TES: (1) Inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy schools, (2) Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development, and (3). Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession, (4). Digital learning and transformation, and (5). Financing of education.

#### **Action Track 1: Inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy schools**

Egypt (the most extensive Educational system in the Middle East and North Africa) embarked in 2014 on an ambitious program to reform its educational system. This program aims to increase the inclusive nature of the educational system and its safety. The country has made significant progress towards expanding access to education and reaching gender parity in the enrolment of boys and girls. This is reflected in the net enrolment ratio for children of 100 percent for primary education and 85 percent for preparatory education in 2019/2020.

**COVID 19 pandemic** affected the efforts of Egypt to reform its educational system. The early implementation of the new Education system initiative helped Egypt confront immediately the impact of COVID-19 on education. In particular, Egypt managed to quickly pivot to remote learning on a nationwide scale in response to localized school closures. However, learners are still struggling to recover from significant pandemic-related learning losses. In this context, Egypt will bring to bear its resources to avert a lost generation and mitigate COVID-19's lingering impact on learners' education and well-being.

It was noted that the disruptions caused by the pandemic have highly affected basic literacy and numeracy skills and disengagement rates. Before COVID attendance was higher in the second stage; however, post-COVID, irregular attendance in the preparatory phase has become common. Learners and teachers well-being have highly impacted all levels, particularly disadvantaged populations.

One of the most noticeable effects of COVID-19 on the well-being of children is more violent discipline and psychological aggression. Evidence from a survey conducted in October 2020 found that since the start of the pandemic, children reported increases in parents shouting, yelling, or screaming (35%); their parents using a warning with a threat to punish (26%); and hitting,

spanking, or throwing objects (15%). Initiatives such as the use of digital messages, public service announcements, and the Ministry of Education TV channels were mobilized to combat negative coping behaviors, promote positive parenting, and provide psychological support to parents who resorted to violent discipline and psychological aggression against their children during the pandemic, often as a result of parents themselves struggling to cope with the impact of the crisis.

Regarding the pandemic's effects on inclusivity, national assessment results confirm that poverty is a strong indicator of students lagging behind educational levels. Data comparison of geographical regions in Egypt shows that students from the poorest governorates perform worse than their peers in Delta, for example.

The initiatives launched by the Egyptian State in this regard were highlighted, including the “Haya Karima” Initiative and the Educational services it provides; such as building and increasing the efficiency of schools and nurseries, equipping educational institutions for the targeted groups of the initiative (including families most in need in rural areas and people with special needs), providing staff to these institutions and establishing literacy classes. The country achieved universal access to primary education; however, more effort is needed to reach marginalized and dropout children, expand pre-school education and accelerate inclusive interventions.

Additionally, the following measures were identified during the consultations as tools to achieve inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy schools:

- Expand the successful nutrition for children program (supplying them with food or snacks during the school days).
- Monitor the progress periodically in crisis response activities in the groups most affected by the pandemic.
- Provide laptops for those who do not own them and work individually with students from poor environments, and maintain distancing along with precautionary measures
- Set a time frame for the various participatory activities to ensure that education reaches all segments of society, avoiding an increase in the dropout rate and that some students do not get back to school.
- Create a system to link families affected by the closure of schools and those who do not benefit from virtual education so that civil society organizations can communicate with them and determine the appropriate method to complete students' education.

## **Action Track 2: Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development**

There was a consensus during the consultations on the fact that the country's 2030 vision related to Education<sup>1</sup> is up to date and should be actively pursued. The new Education System implemented in Egypt in 2014 serves this vision and calls for life, work, and sustainable development skills. At the heart of this system are core life skills such as critical thinking, analysis, and digital skills to engage with technology. It promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all and unlocks the benefits of formal and informal education.

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<sup>1</sup> *“A high-quality education and training system available to all, without discrimination within an efficient, just, sustainable and flexible institutional framework. Providing the necessary skills to students and trainees to think creatively, and empower them technically and technologically.*

Regarding Technical Education, consultations acknowledged the significant effort deployed by the Egyptian State during recent years to transform various aspects at the secondary level.

Some stakeholders raised the issue that skills learned at schools and universities are often misaligned with skills needed to find decent jobs or engage positively in the country's development. Companies might find themselves in some situations faced with a predicament wherein they need to train the employees on skills that could have been acquired through the educational system. In this regard, the recent initiative launched by the Egyptian State to enhance the quality of technical education and training was praised and identified as one of the initiatives that could contribute to transforming education in Egypt.

Egypt needs to continue to develop a high-quality education and training system that provides the necessary skills to students and trainees to think creatively and empowers them technically and technologically to contribute to a society that learns, thinks, innovates, and progresses in achieving Sustainable Development Goals. In this regard, Egypt is committed to continuing the Education reform that started in recent years with a completely new curriculum from KG1 to G5. The new education (EGY Education 2.0) system focuses on life skills and tackles critical issues such as preventing discrimination against women, globalization, citizenship, and climate change. The Educational System will foster a new generation adapting to future challenges. Egypt is committed to changing the methods of examination and assessments. For higher education, Egypt is committed to operationalizing its higher education and scientific research strategy 2030 and the National Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy 2030

In addition, the following measures were raised during the consultations:

- Revisit pupil assessment policy at all levels, adopt foundational education policy bearing in mind learning poverty in Egypt is 70%
- Quality assurance and accreditation framework in KG should be implemented and must be updated for the rest of the education level
- Upgrading of curricula with the close engagement of the private sector to reflect the job market needs; cope with green transition/climate changes, pandemics, and digitalization; in addition to reviewing it to diminish repetitions and sharpen its focus on essential knowledge in the formation of the student's mentality. Steps have already been taken in this regard with the construction of specialized committees and the participation of those interested in the field.
- Enhance cooperation with the private sector and different ministries, including the Ministries of Manpower and Industry and Trade, to guarantee a better match to the job market. Operationalize the National Authority of quality assurance and accreditation in TVET.

### **Action Track 3: Teachers, teaching, and the teaching profession**

An Education system is only as good as its teachers. In this context, there is a broad national consensus that teacher development should remain an utmost national priority. This includes addressing the insufficient number of teachers workforce as well as providing them with continuous professional development.

One of the most significant obstacles to quality education is teacher-per-student ratios, as highlighted in the education report of CAPMAS 202, which shows that with classes that exceed 40 students per teacher, CAPMASS (2020a). In general, the worst ratio of teachers per student in this specific level of education is found in South Sinai with 42%.

The consultations identified several measures that could be implemented related to the teaching profession to support the successful transformation of education in Egypt. These included:

- Revise teacher job description, recruitment, retention, and motivation policies.
- Adopt a continuous plan of training for teachers.
- Raise awareness for teachers and all school staff about the pandemic, its dimensions, and their role in it. Focus on communities of professional practice networks, which increase teachers' capabilities and skills by communicating with colleagues and enhance cooperation between them to solve various problems they may encounter in their work and other matters related to teaching.
- Particular attention needs to be given to attracting gifted and experienced teachers to hard-to-staff schools.

#### **Action Track 4: Digital Learning and Transformation**

Egypt embarked in 2014 on an ambitious plan to transform its education system through digital learning. The country is committed to promoting the uptake of digital technologies through its critical strategies in pre-university and university education. Egypt will continue to harness its nationally-developed suite of online learning tools, platforms, and resources. This digital learning transformation increases access to high-quality, contextually relevant, curriculum-aligned content for all learners, including marginalized ones.

It was noted that the three principles identified in this action track were already the focus of the Government's efforts since 2014, namely: Ensure connectivity and digital learning opportunities for all; build and maintain robust, free, public digital learning content and platforms; and focus on how technology can accelerate learning by enabling evidence-based instructional practice at scale.

One of the critical challenges in implementing this transformation of Education in Egypt relates to a dominant culture in which the students are inclined more toward memorizing than learning.

It was also noted that a successful transformation requires competent instructional leadership at the school levels. There is a need to transform the school leadership model in terms of identifying, capacitating, and empowering them to play the critical role of leading the teaching and learning in a similar, practical way that supports, rather than hinders, the Ministry of Education's efforts.

The Egyptian youth's role in supporting and implementing the transformation of Education was acknowledged. Numerous ideas have been raised during the consultations, notably: Encouraging systemized volunteering models, encouraging alumni students to volunteer in their schools, assisting teachers, or replacing them in emergencies. It was also noted that youth's engagement in education starts in school. The school, guided by the new curriculum, should enhance the student lead initiatives at both the school and the community levels. As mentioned above, this

can be achieved more effectively with the support of effective instructional leadership. Some raised the possibility of enabling youth to actively monitor their school's budget and administration as an incentive to encourage their involvement in transforming education.

### **Action Track (5): Financing of Education**

Financing of Education is closely related to the ability of the Government to build and sustain partnerships with a broad cross-section of national stakeholders, including education and training providers, government agencies, civil society organizations, development partners, UN agencies, the private sector, teachers, learners, and young people.

Government spending on education constituted 10.7 percent of overall government spending and about 3.2 percent of GDP on average from 2010/2011 to 2019/2020. During the consultations from some stakeholders, there were calls to increase the spending on Education in the entire Middle East region. Innovative ideas to improve education financing were raised in light of the costs of its operational activities and its reform. Some of them included the importance of raising awareness on the Return On Investment in education in the society, offering school books for fees, offering summer programs and activities for a price, and adopting a new scheme of using school buildings by decreasing the direct time spent at school and relying more on the usage of alternative learning methods.

The issue of financing education was also tackled during the consultations to ensure an equitable allocation of education funds. Some of the ideas raised in this respect included: Ensuring the opening of free schools (public schools & community schools) in underprivileged areas while limiting the more advantaged areas to experimental schools and private schools; Allocate more public investment in the rural underserved areas where the private sector is not highly active. Ultimately, a decentralized planning and budgeting process at the district/governorate level is the best mechanism to ensure equity and address priorities identified at the local level.

Some innovative financing models raised to ensure sustainable education financing in Egypt included: Partnering with the private sector to open public/private schools with shared -revenues; Utilizing the school's outer walls & building as advertising billboards. In addition, some raised the importance of ensuring local accountability and transparency regarding existing finances and expenditures at the school level as a tool to encourage mobilizing resources.

Additionally, the following measures were identified as possible tools to increase the finance of Education:

- Conduct public expenditures tracking study to detect inefficiencies and optimize the use of available resources,
- Outsourcing transportation, printing and publishing of textbooks and teaching/ learning material, and management of training centers
- Re-activate the public-private partnership and advocate for social responsibility of the private sector concerning education
- Sharing the available assets of the ministry of youth and sport (courts, fields, pools, ...)
- Use computerized planning and budgeting software to calculate better and monitor the sector budget and try different scenarios, and explore possible fiscal space



- Adhere to; and refine program-based budgeting. Realizing equitable distribution of the educational service according to the needs of beneficiaries based on different funding formulas and prioritizing less-advantaged areas.

It was finally noted in this regard that robust international cooperation is needed to find innovative financing systems for education.

## **PART IV: National Statement of Commitment to Transform Education**

The Egyptian government will continue implementing the “2030 Vision” and commits itself in this regard to the following:

**Ensuring Access to high-quality Education For All** without discrimination and addressing dropouts at different educational phases; while maintaining universal enrollment in education and narrowing the interregional gaps through initiatives such as Hayah Karima (Decent Life), where 14,000 new classes will be built in 4500 different villages and rehabilitation of thousands of schools for families most in need in rural communities and people with special needs. Major initiatives for disseminating knowledge and learning throughout Egypt, notably the free Educational Television channels, will be pursued and strengthened.

**Developing a high-quality education and training system** that provides necessary skills to students and trainees to think creatively and empower them technically and technologically to contribute to a society that learns, thinks, and innovates. Egypt is committed to continuing the Education reform started in recent years with a completely new curriculum from KG1 to G5. The new education (EGY Education 2.0) system focuses on life skills and tackles critical issues such as preventing discrimination against women, globalization, citizenship, and climate change. It aims at fostering a new generation adapting to future challenges. Egypt is committed to changing the methods of examination and assessments. For higher education, Egypt is committed to operationalizing its higher education and scientific research strategy 2030 and the National Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy 2030.

**Modernize technical and vocational education** and strengthen its links with the 21st-century workforce needs. The government will work on capitalizing on the outcomes of the Egyptian National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation (ETQAAN), recently established as well as all technical and vocational education and training institutions and programs, paving the way for a unified approach to assuring the quality of technical education and vocational training across various providers in Egypt.

**Develop a more robust early childhood education** by increasing the percentage of kindergarten classes (KG) reaching higher quality standards according to the Quality Assurance (QA) system, especially in disadvantaged areas, to improve school readiness and socio-emotional skills. In close cooperation with private sectors and development partners, ongoing interventions of refurbishing and equipping existing spaces in public KG classrooms, increasing KG spaces, and providing specialized in-service training opportunities, enhancing KG teachers’ ability to structure learning around age-appropriate and play-based activities that stimulate brain development and early socio-emotional skills. Efficient KG quality assurance system to monitor progress and incentivizes continuous quality improvements.

**Ensuring Foundational Learning for All** contributes to sustainable development, inclusive growth, gender equality, national cohesion, peace, and prosperity and bolsters progress on all other Sustainable Development Goals. Consequently, having the potential to change children’s

lives and roll back *Learning Poverty*. The country is committed to monitoring learning, establishing national targets, strengthening accountability for results, and implementing interventions to move the learning needle in the short run.

**Increasing the resilience of the Education System in light of disruptions caused by COVID-19** through ensuring that educational institutions are open, healthy, and safe; as well as **mitigating the learning loss** during the pandemic through the implementation of initiatives aimed at reaching education to all students, including the creation of digital platforms accessible to all students operating free of charge, free educational TV channels. Expansion of the successful nutrition program initiated by the Egyptian government in schools targets around 12.000.000 students in Egypt will also be explored in this regard.

**Increasing the Supply of adequate and professionally high-quality educators** through appointing a targeted number of 150,000 new teachers in the coming five years and promoting continuous professional development during pre and in-service to equip them with modern and unique teaching skills and techniques; while supporting communities of practice to foster exchanges of experiences and good practice.

**Pursuing the Digital Transformation of Education**, in line with the several established digital platforms that are accessible to all students and free of charge in pre-university and university education by, among other things, continuing to harness its nationally-developed suite of online learning tools, platforms, resources and the Egyptian Knowledge Bank (EKB) providing Egyptians of all ages free access to a vast digital repository of academic, cultural, and scientific resources. The Government will pursue the implementation of the national initiative that aims to provide long-term, free-of-charge programming and coding education to thousands of Egyptian kids in a time frame that lasts for five years of continuous learning. It is also committed to developing the schools' digital infrastructure to introduce substantial use of technology in the classrooms.

**Securing financial resources to finance the reform of the Education Sector**, including improving the efficiency of the expenditures, revising the public-private partnership policy, and adhering to program-based budgeting. Exploring new modalities of financing the education sector will be discussed in the coming period to ensure the financial support needed to achieve our educational goals.

**Building and sustaining partnerships** with a broad cross-section of national stakeholders – including education and training providers, government agencies, civil society organizations, development partners, UN agencies, the private sector, teachers, learners, and young people – to cooperate with the government to collectively address barriers to achieving SDG4, bring the benefits of education to the most vulnerable and leave no one behind.

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