



مركز قطر للتربية والعلوم والتنمية  
Member of Qatar Foundation



Asia Pacific Career Development Association

## ALIGNING THE ASPIRATIONS AND SKILLS OF QATAR'S YOUTH WITH THE NEEDS OF THE QATARI ECONOMY

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### CONTEXT

Qatar Career Development Center (QCDC), a member entity of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, and a spearhead in career guidance in the State of Qatar, initiated in 2015 a series of research activities:

- "Career Guidance: Bridging the gap between education and employment transition in Qatar", Bunglawala Z., Kardaman T., Parampota E.D., 2015, Qatar Career Fair Center Research Series
- "Career Aspirations, Guidance and Mobility: Achieving "Quality Qatarization", Bunglawala Z, February 2016, Qatar Career Fair Center Research Series
- "Careering Towards A Sustainable Qatari Economy", KPMG 2017, Qatar Career Development Center Research Series

This is an attempt to document current career guidance practices, identify opportunities and constraints and offer recommendations for future improvement purposes that will help align the aspirations and skills of Qatar's youth with the needs of the Qatari economy.

### METHODOLOGY

- A qualitative methodological perspective was used to fit the objective of reviewing and reconstructing the findings of the research papers produced by QCDC over the 2015-2017 period to provide evidence-based data on the topic.
- Reconstructed the findings of those papers in terms of developing and applying subsuming categories of research findings indicative of two critical issues:
  - i. adequate description of the current status of Qatar's career guidance system and
  - ii. key challenges that need to be addressed in order to align the aspirations and skills of Qatar's youth with the needs of the Qatari economy
- Qualitative techniques like surfacing, bridging and extending were applied through adoption of a two-phase methodological approach.

### "CAREER GUIDANCE: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION IN QATAR"

This paper was based on the activities of Qatar Career Forum 2015, organized by QCDC in collaboration with various stakeholders.

Through focus group discussion and validation meeting, forum participants expressed and shared views, perspectives and insights related to career guidance challenges in Qatar such as:

- **Lack of nation-wide career guidance provision** - Good practice examples by schools and employers in skills and career support are not enough – Qatar needs to make strategic structural changes to integrate career guidance into the education system to provide nation-wide education-to employment support and establish a central career guidance entity.
- **Limited career awareness by Qatari youth** - Career guidance needs to be accessible nationwide through career centers for all youth to raise career awareness, access education and employment advice, gain skills, internships, summer camps and career guidance.
- **Qatarisation policies and programs need to be refocused** – Shift from quantity to quality to meet Qatari youth an diverse employer education and skills needs.
- **Lack of career guidance platforms** – Open dialogue is needed for QCF, education, human resources and employer experts to address challenges, exchange knowledge, evaluate programs and share education and skills projections to meet economic and QNV 2030 goals.

### “CAREER ASPIRATIONS, GUIDANCE AND MOBILITY: ACHIEVING “QUALITY QATARIZATION”

Based on qualitative data collection and analysis, this paper assessed the perspectives of Qatari youth and diverse education and employment stakeholders of career guidance services and needs of the labour market in Qatar.

Despite high investment in education and youth empowerment, overarching messages from both Qatari youth as well as education, employment, business and policy stakeholders described below set of various career guidance challenges:

- **Absence of career advice and guidance culture** among students, their parents and employers, lack of youth motivation, skills and focus on prestige and 'job's rather than careers.
- **Lack of integration of career guidance into curricula**, no mandatory requirement for career centers to engage students,
- **Very limited graduate student awareness of, and access to career services** and limited awareness of 'soft', employability, skills and work preparedness among most of young Qataris. Employers want internships/placements to now be made mandatory in all universities for all Qatari students – to increase employability, skills, career guidance and work preparedness.
- **National policy should change to 'Quality Qatarisation'** – with career guidance focus and address structural and cultural needs to increase career awareness, skills, access to career guidance, understanding employer needs and manage expectations.
- **Educators and employers need 15 year labour market growth projections** to inform education, STEM scholarships, skills building and careers needed in the growing economy.
- **Address challenges in increasing and diversifying Qatari female employment** – focused initiatives, family-friendly working practices and cultural awareness needed.

### “CAREERING TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE QATARI ECONOMY”

This research was commissioned & conducted over a 12-month period, focusing exclusively on the Qatari population, adopting a 'career culture' approach, using both qualitative and quantitative survey methods, and encompassing a wider range of respondents from various segments of senior stakeholders across the government and private sectors. This research survey is the largest of its kind with survey sample of 1,001 Qatari students, graduates and parents.

The data were grouped into five main themes: career awareness, social influence, skills gap, career guidance and Qatarization.

- Generate greater career awareness in the Qatari Community of the variety of career opportunities beyond the traditional government and oil & gas sectors - promote private sector as a viable & alternative choice
- Meeting QNV2030 goals requires a clear matching of the graduates' skills with the industries needs – obtain deeper understanding of the labour market & future skills Qatar needs to be globally competitive.
- Access to professional, well coordinated and relevant career service that supports the development of skills, knowledge and experience to build high-quality Qatari workforce
- Encourage female graduate workforce participation to address female graduate unemployment and support the needs, aspirations and level of participation of female graduates in the national workforce.

### CONCLUSIONS

- Establish a National level entity vested with responsibility for regulating, monitoring and developing career guidance services across various sectors
- Foster collaboration to integrate career guidance, employability and skills framework into education institutions across Qatar
- Promote career guidance framework and design innovative career guidance, employability and skills programs, targeting a set of leading schools in Qatar on a pilot basis
- Promote career guidance, employability and skills among Qatari youth and parents
- Increase career aspirations of Qataris in general and Qatari females in particular towards diverse qualifications & careers, e.g. encourage entrepreneurship, workplace flexibility and establish childcare facilities to support women.
- Endeavor scientific research to evaluate and assess career guidance programs, impact and outcomes
- Seek effective interventions for better alignment of the aspirations and skills of Qatar's youth with the needs of the Qatari economy, in light of a bias-free career guidance orientation.

# THANK YOU