Schooling and Women's Employability in the Arab Region

Mansour Omeira

Challenges in the School-to-work Transition*

Global Challenges

The school-to-work transition is a process that young people typically go through as they complete their education and join the workforce to secure a full-time stable job that satisfies their aspirations (ILO, 2006). The ideal transition to decent work, however, was far from being the norm prior to the 2008 global economic crisis, even in developed countries, particularly for disadvantaged youth (Ryan, 2001). The transition can be long, as young people remain unemployed or employed in temporary or unsatisfactory jobs. They may not start the transition because they are still in school, or remain outside the labor force for other reasons (ILO, 2006).

Regional Challenges

The transition challenges are particularly daunting in the Arab region (Assaad & Roudi-Fahimi, 2007). A school-to-work transition presupposes schooling, yet the absolute number of adult illiterates in the region is on the rise, and reached about 58 million in 2006, two-thirds of which were women (UNESCO, 2008a). Work may start at an early age in the form of child labor, which is linked to dropping out of school. A conservative estimate of child laborers in the region is 13 million, or about 15 percent of the child population (ILO, 2008a). Girls are more likely to drop out because of household work, and boys because of market work (Assaad, Levison, & Zibani, 2005). Moreover, regular full-time jobs with benefits are scarce. In 2004, informal employment as a share of total employment ranged across Arab States from 23 percent in Tunisia to 64 percent in Yemen (Charmes, 2010).

Emerging evidence from school-to-work transition surveys conducted by the International Labor Office in Egypt, Syria, and Morocco sheds light on the gender dimension of obstacles to securing decent work (Alissa, 2007; El Zanaty & Associates, 2007; El Aoufi & Bensaïd, 2005). Women are less likely than men to achieve the transition. One in ten persons completing the transition in Egypt is a woman. The majority of women do not start the transition. Four in five young women in Syria had not started it, compared with one in three young men. Women are particularly vulnerable to restrictions on access to education and to employment because they typically bear a disproportionate share of unpaid household services. Unpaid housework and care work are essential and require considerable physical and emotional energy. Moreover, their costs and benefits are often invisible. Despite its importance, such

work is not considered an economic activity for purposes of measuring employment (Himmelweit, 2007).

Beyond income generation, women's economic activity empowers them and strengthens their status and independence, laying the ground for wider social change (Sen, 1999). In the greater context of the management of social transformations, the current overview of women's employability in the Arab region focuses on schooling as a key determinant of employability.

Employability as Capability for Employment
Understanding Employability
Women in the Arab region are the least economically active in the world (ILO, 2008b). Moreover, they face the highest rates of unemployment, particularly if they are young. As a response, initiatives to promote women's employability have spread across the region. Yet the concept of employability lacks clarity because of its multiple definitions (Leggatt-Cook, 2007). In simple terms, employability is the ability to be employed. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, ability can mean "the power or capacity to do something" as well as "skill or talent". The difference between the two meanings carries important policy implications.

Employability is often understood as relating to portable competencies and qualifications that enable individuals to make use of available education and training opportunities for success in the world of work (UNESCO & ILO, 2002). Whereas the portability of qualifications varies across the international, national, and sectoral levels, it is useful to distinguish between enterprise-specific, occupation- or sector-specific, and general competencies (Estévez-Abe, 2006).

The relative advantage of each type of competency depends largely on the expected mobility of workers. The expectations of parents and the attitudes of workers and employers are shaped to a large extent by the environment they face. The education system and labor governance institutions such as employment protection and trade unions are part of that environment. For women expecting to have breaks in their employment for childbearing and childrearing purposes or for employers who expect such breaks, general competencies would appear to be more advantageous than more specific competencies. Similarly, public sector jobs would also appear to be more accommodating than private sector jobs.

The relative portability of competencies for women and men workers is inseparable from the broader social, economic, and political contexts. Accordingly, a comprehensive understanding of employability cannot be restricted to a focus on the labor 'supply side' (workers) only. Instead, the concept must include issues related to the 'demand side' (employers, including the public sector) and labor governance institutions (including labor and social security legislation and implementation by Ministries of Labor and Parliaments as well as workers' and employers' organizations). In the Arab region, jobs are scarce and unemployment among the educated is widespread, particularly among women (ILO, 2008b). With the changing nature of work and the decrease of long-term stable jobs particularly in the public sector, an understanding of employability beyond the supply side is therefore all the more important.

08

The focus on the supply side alone can have dangerous consequences. It can lead to misidentifying priorities and thus misallocating resources, while suggesting that unemployment is the fault of the unemployed. Such an individualistic understanding relieves the State from the responsibility of employment generation. It also encourages the dismantling of workers' protection as a 'motivation' for them to accept low pay and poor working conditions (Peck & Theodore, 2000). In contrast, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights emphasizes that "[e]veryone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment".

Constraints to Employability in the Arab Region

The obstacles facing women and men in finding employment are manifold. From the perspective of employers in the region, the inadequate education of the workforce is the third most important obstacle to doing business (ranking first in Egypt and Saudi Arabia). It follows the inefficiency of the bureaucratic system (ranking first in Kuwait, Libya, and Syria) and the restrictiveness of labor regulations (ranking first in Bahrain, Oman, and Qatar) (World Bank, 2008). Major concerns include the workers' limited ability to apply knowledge learned at school and weak practical training (El Zanaty & Associates, 2007; Alissa, 2007). The large majority of employers in the region are men (World Bank, 2008) who may exercise strong male bias in hiring (El Zanaty & Associates, 2007) and thus perpetuate gender segregation in employment, with women and men clustered in different industries and occupations.

In addition to inadequate education and hiring practices, women have specific constraints, including those related to access to and control over economic and financial resources, as well as physical mobility, care responsibilities, and restrictive gender norms. Women in the region own only a small share of land and other property and have more difficulty than men in accessing credit. Gender inequality in access to and control over resources is related to discriminatory legislation and practices with regards to property and inheritance rights.

For young women workers in the region, marriage and the presence of children are typically detrimental to employability in the private sector. The major obstacle related to young women's poor employment outcomes is their lack of previous work experience, which points to the need for better training and labor market integration mechanisms (Omeira, 2007). A less recognized obstacle is that young women's joblessness is more related to their preference for interesting jobs than to their support of the male breadwinner model. One possible explanation is that economic necessity pushes women to seek employment even if they prefer not to engage in it. Moreover, women who value job security and jobs that match their abilities are more likely not to have a job. This is closely linked to availability of child care options and better enforcement of maternity protection in the relatively shrinking public sector, and the mismatch between the education women receive and the jobs available (Omeira, 2007).

Human Capital Versus Capabilities

It is telling that a recent review on employability in the Mediterranean region has concluded with the following question for discussion: "Which is more relevant for the region, too few employable (skilled) workers or too few good jobs?" (European

Training Foundation, 2007). Since the promotion of education and training – often problematically labeled as 'investment in human capital' (Rose, 2006) – cannot be taken to translate directly into better job opportunities, a more appropriate definition of employability is 'capability for employment'.

Such a definition can be understood in the framework of the capability approach developed by Amartya Sen (2003). Employability as capability for employment implies the capability for non-employment (a viable exit option) and the capability to participate effectively in the definition of employment (a viable voice option) (Bonvin & Farvaque, 2005). Capability for non-employment protects the free choice of employment, as workers who are not satisfied with the working conditions available to them can opt to not join a job or to exit it later. It implies that a decent standard of living is available for all, including the non-employed. With the advent of globalization, advocates for social justice have argued for a 'global social floor' of basic income and social security benefits for all. The capability to participate effectively in the formulation of employment policies and strategies affirms that persons affected by different choices have the opportunity to be active agents in determining those choices, rather than passive recipients. Such participation can be channeled through various institutions, including open and democratic political processes and trade union activity.

Gender-Responsive Schooling
The Education System
Gender perspective to education
Education can make women more productive, strengthen their status, and open broader horizons for them. Crucially, however, the effect of education can also be negative, by limiting the teaching of girls/women to skills that are not marketable, by confining them to a role of subordination to men, or by negatively portraying economic activity for women, particularly mothers. The way the gender content and experience of education are determined has thus to be uncovered in different contexts to be able to reshape it. The gender dimension of education also shapes the views of men, who may become workers, employers, or parents. Education can make them more or less open to women's economic activity and women's empowerment more generally. Successful programs targeting girls incorporate these various factors from the onset (Brady et al., 2006).

Schooling that is responsive to gender concerns can greatly benefit women's employability in the Arab region, understood as their capability for employment. The recognition of its importance for employability, however, should not undermine its intrinsic value, nor suggest that inadequate education is always the main obstacle to women's employability. Indeed, it would be "nonsense to underscore the centrality of education when it is assigned the impossible task of shoring up the economy. This utilitarian view runs counter to the dignity of young and teenage girls and women" (Muñoz Villalobos, 2006).

Historical Context
The historical evolution of economic and political interests and the related power structures, relations, and processes are central to shaping a country's educational

system. In the Arab region, the nature of foreign hegemony has differed across countries and time, and has included European and North American origins (Akkari, 2004; Neal & Finlay, 2008). In Maghreb countries, for instance, technical and vocational education and training (TEVT) systems contain a large amount of general education content, following the French example (UNESCO, 2006). Furthermore, authoritarian political systems in the region stifle freedom of inquiry, critical thinking, creativity, and the spirit of initiative (UNDP, 2006).

The provision of education to promote employability requires the allocation of an appropriate level of financial resources. The Arab region is often cited for having some of the largest spending on education as a share of GDP, averaging around 5 percent in the past three decades (Kabbani & Omeira, 2007). This figure, however, hides considerable discrepancy across countries in the region (UNESCO, 2008b). The prioritization of expenditures between capital and current expenditure (with current expenditure typically at around 90 percent of total), and across levels of education, has often lacked consistency or has contributed to widening inequality. Donors targeting the education sector, such as the European Union and World Bank, play an important role in determining the level and distribution of investment on education in the region (Bardak, 2006).

Schooling Access
Public Versus Private
Differences in financing may reflect the public versus private provision of schooling. The region has a tradition of publicly provided education, with the notable exception of Lebanon; yet recent years have witnessed a rising share of the private sector. Common across the region is the prevalence of the private sector in the provision of pre-primary education (UNESCO, 2008b). Affordability and accessibility of pre-primary education is a key concern for women's employability in terms of time allocations. The charging of fees in some Arab States is a major obstacle that goes against the universal provision of primary education (Global Campaign for Education, 2008). When going to school involves higher direct costs, families often have to prioritize the schooling opportunities among their children. Boys are typically seen as the priority because they stand better chances in gaining remunerated work, while girls contribute to work in the family either in home chores or in the family business.

The promotion of gender parity in access to schooling is an important policy goal with potential positive effects on women's employability. The school itself is a site of gender socialization, and schooling experience as well as schooling content have crucial implications on shaping the self-perception of boys and girls, their aspirations, and the opportunities available to them (Stromquist, 2008). Gender parity has been reached in some countries of the region across levels of education, whereas in others the progress is slow. At the tertiary level of education, for instance, Arab States are far from achieving gender parity in enrollment in science and technology (UNESCO, 2008b).

Illiteracy is a major form of human insecurity (Sen, 2003), yet the Arab region counts more than 58 million illiterate adults (UNESCO, 2008a). With the exception of some Gulf countries, the majority of the illiterate population in Arab States, often more than two-thirds of it, consists of women. Inadequate access to education remains a main

area of concern for youth as well, and substantial gender differences persist in many countries of the region (UNESCO, 2008b). Although indicators at the national level are important, they may hide inequality across regions and social groups and fail to reveal which groups lack participation in the formal education system.

In every country, disadvantaged groups may include refugees, internally displaced persons, people with disabilities, the poor, rural youth, marginalized minorities, illiterates, school dropouts, graduates of TEVT training ill-equipped for available employment, and girls excluded from education and training (Brewer, 2004; Freedman, 2008). In this light, greater enrollment of girls in higher levels of formal education may be directly related to the lack of employment opportunities for women, and may not necessarily translate into better prospects.

Schooling Experience
Gender Segregation
An exclusive focus on access to education is an inappropriate basis for promoting gender equality at school (Stromquist, 2008). With regards to schooling experience, an important question is whether schools are segregated according to gender. Segregation may involve physical segregation such as different facilities for boys and girls or having teachers of the same sex as their students, but also segregation of schooling content whereby boys and girls are taught different subjects, a matter we return to later.

Another question is how physically accessible schools are for girls and women. This may involve school buses, or for adult women access to a car and the possibility to drive it, or access to a car with a driver. If schools are far from home, on-campus student housing may become a necessity, but parents may be reluctant to have their girls living outside home. Baki (2004) discusses these and other issues, such as the use of video conferencing technology to maintain gender segregation between students and teachers, in the context of Saudi Arabia.

Proponents of gender segregation often point out how girls and women are particularly vulnerable to violence and sexual harassment in the school and on the road. Making such a case is an avoidance strategy; appropriate strategies should target the elimination of the sources and causes of gender-based violence.

Teachers' Role
Children in primary education need considerable follow-up; pupil/teacher ratios in primary education have decreased across the region (UNESCO, 2008b). Teachers are role models for students, and women teachers can provide a more welcoming environment for girls (Stromquist, 2007); in recent years, the share of women teachers in primary education has generally increased in the region (UNESCO, 2008b). The vertical gender segregation between women as the majority of teachers concentrated at lower levels of schooling and men at higher levels and in the administration negatively shapes gender norms for students (Stromquist, 2008). The behavior of teachers, such as gender-based favoritism or increased attention and encouragement, or even differences in assigning certain tasks (physical tasks for boys, for instance), can also leave a strong mark. Strengthening teacher training is an important component of improving the quality of education (UNESCO, 2008a), yet gender-responsiveness in teacher training has received scarce attention (UNESCO, 2007).

Schooling Content
Preparing Youth for the World of Work
Schooling should aim to facilitate the "effective preparation of people for the world of work and responsible citizenship" (UNESCO & ILO, 2002). Life skills should be central to schooling content, including critical thinking, problem solving, leadership, negotiation, and communication skills.

Graduates of technical and vocational education and training (TEVT) institutions have a higher likelihood of getting employed than regular school graduates. Yet across the region, TEVT has a "low prestige", and students often undertake it as the last option after dropping out from the general education system (Billeh, 2002). TEVT systems in the region are typically outdated and lack adequate resources; traditional gender roles dominate, the private sector is not sufficiently involved, and bureaucratic rigidities impede reform (Bardak, Huitfeldt, & Wahba, 2006). Although workers may receive formal training in the firms that employ them, such practice is limited in the region, with the exception of Lebanon (World Bank, 2008).

In the Arab region, TEVT programs are considered male territory, and girls and women are not encouraged to participate, and go for literary and social tracks. Nevertheless, girls in the region generally score better than boys in mathematics and science, which are prerequisites for TEVT programs (Martin et al., 2008; Mullis et al., 2008.), knowing that both girls and boys score below the international average.

Guidance and Counseling
Guidance and counseling in education and training that take into account current and future labor market needs are essential elements for the promotion of women and men's employability (Kabbani & Omeira, 2007), yet policy frameworks for career guidance in the Arab region remain weak. Career guidance in the region is typically given by school counselors who provide general guidance to students, with limited attention to long-term career prospects. Practitioners may encounter difficulties because parents' preferences may limit the choices available to their children, particularly girls (Sultana & Watts, 2008).

Promoting Responsible Citizenship
The availability of lifelong opportunities for young women and men in the region is contingent on the prevalence of enabling conditions. The intrinsic value of curricula promoting peace and social justice is a sufficient basis for their adoption; they also have instrumental value for promoting the employability of women, by increasing their safety across the lifecycle and fostering an environment supportive of them (Muñoz Villalobos, 2006).

Regional reports have highlighted the importance of fostering diversity for the socioeconomic and political empowerment of women, and the need for education systems in the region to challenge the dominant social model (UNDP, 2006). Restrictions on academic freedom by political and religious authorities are widespread. An illustrative example is Saudi Arabia, where it is reported that teaching the works of the likes of Darwin, Freud, and Marx is prohibited, with teachers who express dissenting views liable to legal and physical retribution (Education International, 2007).

Towards Gender-Responsive Curricula
The curriculum and textbooks structure the social norms of young people at an early age; their evolution towards greater gender-responsiveness is important for intrinsic and instrumental reasons, including the promotion of women's employability. Conversely, changes in the actual experiences of women's lives can affect the gender content of the curriculum and textbooks. Yet the process, if existent, may be slow, and "the gap between the progress [of women in the Arab region] and the stereotypical images of women in school curricula is enormous" (UNDP, 2006). Indeed, education policies promoting gender equality and curricula that are gender-responsive do not confer the full content of what students learn; textbooks may include substantial gender bias despite the aims of the above-mentioned policies and curricula (Blumberg, 2007).

Studies assessing the extent of gender bias in textbooks and curricula across the Arab region have emphasized that the depiction of traditional gender roles has generally remained static, with some improvements noted in Tunisia (Bouchoucha and Locoh, 2008). A study of gender bias in textbooks across Arab countries that is a quarter-century old (Abu Nasr, Lorfing, & Mikati, 1983), despite its limitations, may bear striking resemblance to studies conducted nowadays, although such a recent exercise has yet to be undertaken at the regional level. Gender bias is manifested in the portrayal of boys and men as the leading characters in lessons, biographies, and images, in the use of gender-biased language, the depiction of men as masters, in addition to the derogation of women and the promotion of their victimization and submission (UNDP, 2006; Alrabaa, 1985).

Whereas men are mainly referred to by their profession, women's typical representation is as family members, mainly as mothers, with employment restricted to non-mothers (Bouchoucha and Locoh, 2008). Also of direct relevance to women's employability are gender differences in favorable images that confine work-related attributes to men and the identification of a wide range of occupations as masculine, with homemakers, teachers, and nurses forming the bulk of feminine occupations (Alrabaa, 1985). Even in Tunisia which has made important changes to its curricula (UNDP, 2006), large gaps remain between the reality of women's increased economic activity and their depiction in textbooks (Bouchoucha & Locoh, 2008).

Evaluators and developers of textbooks and curricula have generally been overwhelmingly male specialists. UNDP (2006) has noted that women's participation was "less than 8 percent in a random sampling of Arab curricula", and called for its increase. The importance of women's participation in curricular development should not conceal the fact that women as well as men may contribute to reproducing gender norms that are detrimental to gender equality. A more important factor is knowledge of gender issues, and knowledge of reproductive health for purposes of sex education. Curriculum reform that does not openly take into account the possible forces of resistance to change may quickly become counterproductive, particularly if it is perceived to result from external pressure, such as the conditions for education loans. In particular, "targeting curricula that include 'Islamic' values can backfire by aggravating extremism and internal resistance to change" (UNDP, 2006).

Conclusions

The negative effects of externally-imposed changes in the realm of education mirror the failure of externally-prescribed socioeconomic policies in the region. In the world of work, a viable alternative model is introducing effective tripartism between States, workers' and employers' organizations, and the voices of civil society organizations in the deliberative process. Inclusion would help expand the policy space and guarantee the collection and dissemination of relevant data and greater transparency in decision-making (Omeira, Esim, & Alissa, 2008). Such a perspective is in line with the broader argument from the capability approach, which stresses that a capability-friendly conceptualization of employability incorporates capability for voice, which involves the active participation of all stakeholders in the policy process, as opposed to the imposition of a top-down approach driven by experts and policy makers (Bonvin & Farvaque, 2005).

Ultimately, the promotion of gender responsiveness in education and labor markets rests on the availability of political will at all levels. Such political will can be translated into revisiting existing institutional frameworks, including those related to gender mainstreaming, with an emphasis on the linkages between the education system and the world of work. It may also entail reconsidering policy objectives. When public policy aims to expand the capabilities of women and men, including their employability, fiscal and monetary policies become subordinated to employment and social policy. Such rethinking can provide a basis for furthering the "new development paradigm", which the governments, employers' and workers' organizations in the Arab region have called for as a response to the 2008 global economic crisis (ILO & ALO, 2009).

Mansour Omeira, M.A., is Research and Knowledge Sharing Officer at the International Labor Organization Regional Office for Arab States.
Email: mansour.omeira@gmail.com

REFERENCES

Abu Nasr, J., Lorfing, I., & Mikati, J. (1983). *Identification and elimination of sex stereotypes in and from school textbooks: Some suggestions for action in the Arab world*. Paris: UNESCO.

Akkari, A. (2004). Education in the Middle East and North Africa: The current situation and future challenges. *International Education Journal, 5*(2), 144-153.

Alissa, S. (2007). The school-to-work transition of young people in Syria. ILO Employment Policy Paper. Retrieved August 10, 2009, from http://www.ilo.org/emppolicy/what/pubs/lang--en/docName--WCMS_113894/index.htm.

Alrabaa, S. (1985). Sex division of labor in Syrian school textbooks. *International Review of Education, 31*(3), 335-348.

Assaad, R., Levison, D., & Zibani, N. (2005). The effect of child work on schooling: Evidence from Egypt Retrieved August 1, 2009, from http://www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=6774

Assaad, R., Roudi-Fahimi, F. (2007). *Youth in the Middle East and North Africa: Demographic opportunity or challenge?* Washington, DC: Population Reference Bureau.

Baki, R. (2004). Gender-segregated education in Saudi Arabia: Its impact on social norms and the Saudi labor market. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 12*(28).

Bardak, U. (2006). An overview of educational systems and labour markets in the Mediterranean region. *Mediterranean Journal of Educational Studies 11*(1), 103-125.

Bardak, U., Huitfeldt, H., & Wahba, J. (2006). Employment policy reforms in the Middle East and North Africa. Luxembourg: European Training Foundation.

Billeh, V. (2002). Matching education to demand for labor in the MENA region. In H. Handoussa & Z. Tzannatos (Eds.), *Employment creation and social protection in the Middle East and North Africa* (1-19). Cairo:Economic Research Forum.

Blumberg, R.L. (2007). *Gender bias in textbooks: A hidden obstacle on the road to gender equality in education*. Background paper prepared at the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2008, Education for All by 2015: will we make it? Paris: UNESCO.

Bouchoucha, I., & Locoh, T. (2008). *Les manuels scolaires en Tunisie reflètent-ils la réalité tunisienne?* in Analyser les représentations sexuées dans les manuels scolaires: Application d'une méthode commune dans six pays : Cameroun, Madagascar, Mexique, Sénégal, Togo et Tunisie (CEPED).

Bonvin, J.-M., & Farvaque, N. (2005). Promoting capability for work: The role of local actors. In S. Deneulin, M. Nebel & N. Sagovsky (Eds.), *Capability and justice: Towards structural transformation*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press.

Brady, M., Assaad, R., Ibrahim, B., Salem, A., Salem, R., Zibani, N., & Abdalla, A. (2006). *Providing new opportunities to adolescent girls in socially conservative settings: The Ishraq program in rural upper Egypt*. New York: Population Council.

Brewer, L. (2004). Youth at risk: The role of skills development in facilitating the transition to work. Retrieved August 18, 2009, from http://www.ilo.org/skills/what/pubs/lang--en/docName--WCMS_103428/index.htm

Charmes, J. (2010). Statistics on informal employment in the Arab region. In ILO (Ed.), Gender, employment, and the informal economy in Arab States: A regional overview. Beirut: ILO & CAWTAR.

Education International. (2007). Barometer of human and trade union rights in Education. Retrieved August 3, 2009, from http://www.ei-ie.org/barometer/

El Aoufi, N., & Bensaïd, M. (2005). *Chômage et employabilité des jeunes au Maroc*. Cahier de la stratégie de l'emploi 2005/06, Organisation Internationale du Travail.

El Zanaty & Associates. (2007). *School-to-work transition: Evidence from Egypt*. ILO Employment Policy Paper. Retrieved August 3, 2009, from http://www.ilo.org/emppolicy/what/pubs/lang--en/docName--WCMS_113893/index.htm

Estévez-Abe, M. (2006). *Labor markets, public policies and gender equality: The varieties of capitalism perspective and beyond*. Mimeo: Government Department, Harvard University.

European Training Foundation. (2007, December). Employability in the mediterranean region: Improving education, training, and job-matching for the labour market. A contribution to the EuroMed Employment Workshop, Brussels.

Freedman, D. (2008). *Improving skills and productivity of disadvantaged youth*. ILO Employment Working Paper 7. Retrieved August 18, 2009, from http://www.ilo.org/skills/what/pubs/lang--en/docName--WCMS_103982/index.htm

Global Campaign for Education. (2008). *Global school report 2008: No excuses!*: A global report card ranking governments' efforts to achieve Education for All. Retrieved August 18, 2009, from http://www.ungei.org/resources/index_1737.html

Himmelweit, S. (2007). The prospects for caring: Economic theory and policy. *Cambridge Journal of Economics 31*, 581–599.

International Labor Office (ILO). (2008a). *International programme on the elimination of child labour*. Retrieved August 18, 2009, from http://www.ilo.org/ipec/Regionsandcountries/Arabstates/lang--en/index.htm

International Labor Office (ILO). (2008b). *Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM)*. Retrieved August 18, 2009, from http://www.ilo.org/empelm/what/lang--en/WCMS_114240

International Labor Office (ILO). (2006). *Global employment trends for youth*. Geneva: ILO.

International Labor Office (ILO) and Arab Labor Organization (ALO). (2009, October). Arab Action Agenda for Employment. Launched at the Arab Employment Forum, Beirut.

Kabbani, N., & Omeira, M. (2007). Employment among youth in West Asia and North Africa countries. Chapter prepared for World Youth Report 2007.

Leggatt-Cook, C. (2007). *Health, wealth and happiness? Employers, employability and the knowledge economy*. Massey University Labor Market Dynamics Research Programme Working Paper 21. Retrieved August 18, 2009, from lmd.massey.ac.nz/publications/working_paper_no_21.pdf

Martin, M. et al. (2008). *TIMSS 2007 International science report*. Boston: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center.

Mullis, I. et al. (2008). *TIMSS 2007 International mathematics report*. Boston: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center.

Muñoz Villalobos, V. (2006). *Girls' right to education*. Report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the right to education. United Nations Economic and Social Council.

Neal, M., & Finlay, J.L. (2008). American hegemony and business education in the Arab world. *Journal of Management Education, 32*(1), 38-83.

Omeira, M. (2007). *Young women's employment in the Middle East and North Africa*. Unpublished master's thesis, American University of Beirut, Lebanon.

Omeira, M., Esim, S., & Alissa, S. (2008). *Labor governance and economic reform in the Middle East and North Africa: Lessons from Nordic countries*. Working Paper No. 436. Cairo: Economic Research Forum.

Peck, J., & Theodore, N. (2000). Beyond employability. *Cambridge Journal of Economics, 24*, 729-749.

Rose, P. (2006). From Washington to post-Washington consensus: The triumph of human capital. In K.S Jomo & B. Fine (Eds.), *The new development economics: After the Washington consensus,* (pp.   ) London & New York: Zed Books.

Ryan, P. (2001, March). The school-to-work transition: A cross-national perspective. *Journal of Economic Literature, 39*, 34-92.

Sen, A. (2003, October). *Closing the gap: Access, inclusion and achievement.* Keynote speech to the 15th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers, Edinburgh.

Stromquist, N. P. (2008). The intersection of public policy and gender: Understanding State action in education. In M.A. Maslak (Ed.), *The structure and agency of women's education*. Albany, NY: State University of Albany Press.

Stromquist, N. P. (2007). The gender socialization process in schools: A cross-national comparison. Paper commissioned for the Education for all global monitoring report 2008. Education for all by 2015: Will we make it? Retrieved August 18, 2009, from, unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001555/155587e.pdf

Sultana, R., & Watts, A.G. (2008). Career guidance in the Middle East and North Africa. In *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance, 8*, 19-34.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2006). *Arab Human Development Report 2005: Towards the rise of women in the Arab world*. New York: UNDP, Regional Bureau for Arab States.

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2008a). *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2009: Overcoming inequality: Why governance matters*. Paris: UNESCO publishing.

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2008b). UIS Database. Retrieved August 18, 2009, from, http://www.uis.unesco.org

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2007). *Education for all global monitoring report 2008. Education for all by 2015: Will we make it?* Paris: UNESCO publishing.

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2006). *Participation in formal TEVT programmes worldwide: An initial statistical study*. Paris: UNESCO.

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) & International Labor Office (ILO). (2002). *Technical and vocational education and training for the twenty-first century: UNESCO and ILO recommendations*. Retrieved August 18, 2009, from, unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001260/126050e.pdf

World Bank. (2008). *Enterprise surveys.* Retrieved August 18, 2009, from http://www.enterprisesurveys.org/.