

Social Innovation and Increased Action by Large Employers Needed to Solve Arab Unemployment Crisis, New Reports Say

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- The Middle East must embrace a new mindset to tackle the youth unemployment problem, according to new World Economic Forum reports
- Governments and large employers can play a central role in improving labour market flexibility and education to spur innovation and growth
- Addressing the Youth Challenge, Perspectives on Youth Employment in the Arab World in 2012 and The Role of Large Employers in Driving Job Creation in the Arab World are available at <http://www.weforum.org/addressingtheyouthchallenge> and <http://www.weforum.org/roleoflargeemployers>

Istanbul, Turkey, 6 June 2012 – Political and economic reform is needed in the Middle East to address the region’s chronic problem of youth unemployment, according to two reports released by the World Economic Forum today.

Addressing the Youth Challenge, Perspectives on Youth Employment in the Arab World in 2012, a compilation authored by Members of the World Economic Forum’s Global Agenda Council on the Arab World, is a direct response to helping solve the region’s unique problems in the wake of the Arab Spring as it bids to sustain early gains generated from transitions of power in some countries.

“ With youth unemployment in the Middle East higher than any other region worldwide, there is a massive political and economic imperative to getting Arab youths into work, ” said Miroslav Dusek, Director, Head of Middle East and North Africa, World Economic Forum. “ We hope that decision-makers are able to use this collection of novel thought leadership and global best practice to yield real results. ”

The essays in this publication focus on the following topics: social innovation and new approaches to the employment challenge; determinants and challenges of the current youth unemployment situation; female economic empowerment; building Arab civil society to promote economic growth; access to credit; the economic agendas of Arab Islamist parties; education for employment; and a paradigm shift in government – from creating jobs to enabling job creation.

The Role of Large Employers in Driving Job Creation in the Arab World, a collaboration between Booz & Company, Saudi Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC) and the World Economic Forum, is primarily focused on the role large employers can play in addressing regional unemployment through skills matching and skills development. The report considered large employers, including both state-owned national enterprises and privately owned conglomerates, and the critical role that they play in many Arab economies as the structural backbone in growth sectors such as energy, mining and telecom.

“ We need to act now, ” said Joe Saddi, Chairman of the Board at Booz & Company. “ Governments’ regulation led initiatives alone are insufficient - a new paradigm is needed along with new capabilities. The public sector needs to engage with the other main stakeholders, namely large employers and educators, to identify the attractive jobs, shape training programs and attract investments to create employment opportunities ” .

Commenting on the report’s findings, Abdullah Al Rabeeah, Executive Vice-President, Shared Services, Saudi Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC), added: “ Large employers are extremely well positioned to create jobs and

contribute to national workforce development through their market size, national prominence and global presence. ”

The report builds on a discussion held at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2012 in Davos, Switzerland, on 25-29 January 2012 and a Roundtable in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on 20 April 2012, as well as work undertaken by the B20 Task Force on Employment. Key findings include the identification of examples where large employers have spearheaded the development of a skilled workforce by leveraging their “ ecosystem ” of strategic partners, clients, suppliers, educational bodies and government institutions.

Notes to Editors

Download The Role of Large Employers in Driving Job Creation in the Arab World in full at <http://wef.ch/LargeEmployers>

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