Arab-Euro thematic Conference on Higher Education

The networked university:
Opportunities and challenges for higher education between the Arab world and Europe

Capacity building through collaborative research and joint MSc/PhD programmes

Dr. Kiran G R
Middle East College, Sultanate of Oman
Outline

- Context
- Constraints
- Wider Constraints
- MEC Approach
- Institutional Development
- Knowledge Alliances

Arab-Euro thematic Conference on Higher Education
The networked university: Opportunities and challenges for higher education between the Arab world and Europe
Context - macro

- **Sultanate of Oman**
  - Population of 4.14 million
  - Major development in the last 45 years
    - ever since HM Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said ascended the throne
  - Focus on health, education and welfare
  - Most improved nation in last 40 years
    (UN HDI, 20th edition)

- **Higher Education environment**
  - First public University (SQU) started in 1986
    - PhD programmes initiated in 2008
  - Ministry of Higher Education established in 1994
  - Around 60 institutions
    - Large diversity – ownership, affiliation, programmes
  - Ambitious and systematic programme aimed at Quality Assurance
Context - micro

• **Middle East College**
  - Vision
    Contributing to the development of a harmonious and sustainable world through the pursuit of knowledge
  - Mission
    We endeavour to fulfill creative human potential through education, inquiry, innovation, intercultural engagement and service

• **Private university college** founded in 2002

• **Academic partnerships**
  - University of Barcelona, Coventry University, University of Wolverhampton, Hanyang University, SKK University.

• Currently catering to over **5700 students**

• Located inside the **Knowledge Oasis Muscat**
Constraints

- **Structural issues**
  - Policies and regulations
  - Higher Education framework in Oman
- **Capacity issues**
  - Higher Education in Oman
  - National / regional
- **Quality assurance issues**
  - National quality assurance system (OAAA) - Institutional standards
Wider Constraints

- The gaps and divide
- **Research outputs**
  - Capacity (institutional/individual)
- **Regional issues/challenges**
  - Academic responsibility
- **Lack of meaningful regional collaboration**
Scientific publications in the G8 countries and China

Source: Thomson Reuters (Scientific) Inc. Web of Science (Science Citation Index Expanded), compiled for UNESCO by the Canadian Observatoire des sciences et des technologies, May 2010
Scientific articles published in the Arab World

Source: Thomson Reuters (Scientific) Inc. Web of Science, Science Citation Index Expanded, compiled for UNESCO by the Canadian Observatoire des sciences et des technologies.
USPTO patents granted to residents of Arab countries

Note: The country of origin is determined by the residence of the first-named inventor. No patents were granted to residents of Algeria, Bahrain, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Sudan and Yemen in 2003 and 2008.

Source: United States Patents and Trademark Office
MEC Approach - Institutional

- **Master Programmes**
  - Dissertation/Project

- **PhD Programmes**
  - Split Site PhD Programmes

- **Research Projects**
  - Smart City and Wellbeing
  - LINKING-MED-GULF

- **Staff and Student Mobility**
Approach - Institutional for individual

- **Quality Assurance**
  - ANECA, Spain

- **Postgraduate Certification**
  - Coventry University, UK

- **Roundtable on Employability**

- **The Research Council, Oman**
  - Faculty Mentored Undergraduate Research Award Program
Constraints to Institutional development

- National quality assurance systems (often multiple)
- Aligning all activities with one or two partners
  - Dependency; dilution of vision and mission – HEI role
- Limited national/regional options
  - Structural, range of expertise, research culture, workplace partnerships
- Multiple international partnerships
  - Research, consultancy, student exchange
- Challenges of managing multiple partnerships
  - Resources, lack of accreditation
- Need for embedding in Knowledge alliances networks beyond borders
  - HEIs, QA agencies, firms.....
Knowledge Alliances

- Universities and HEIs
  - National, regional, international
- Quality assurance agencies
- Firms
- University Associations
- Industry Associations
- The State
- Partners' partners
“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”

- Nelson Mandela

Source: nytimes.com
 Contributing to the development of a harmonious and sustainable world through the pursuit of knowledge
Thank You