

3rd International Human Resources Association (MENA Chapter): Focus on Saudisation

Main Conference Recommendations

The conference delegates discussed in the final session, the main themes and ideas which were dominant at the conference and deliberated on the best way to consolidate the findings of the conference. These were then put down in the form of the following 11 recommendations:

1. The delegates, felt that, given the current manpower policy making process in the kingdom, and its organizational structure and flow of operations and steps, and in order to build a logical pressure group on this decision making institutions and mechanism, the impact of this conference would have been more effective on the official policy of the public sector if the main key players in the labor market policy decision making process were represented at the conference. These were mainly, the Education and Training System (ETS), such as the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher education, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the Ministry of civil Service, the Manpower Council, the Ministry of Interior, and other ministries that had education or training programs, as well as the main private sector colleges and specialized training centers and institutes such as the Institute of Public

Management. To that effect, it is highly recommended that these institutions are to be personally invited by the organizers to share in the debate and contribute to it, even if it requires some persuasive measures such as high level courtesy calls or free admission.

2. The importance of media and new coverage to conferences are well known especially critical issue of vital importance to the future of the youth of the country such as Saudisation. Therefore, the delegates felt that the media should be informed about the event or future events well in advance of the conference as well as a reminder just before the event to ensure a massive public awareness of the event and a maximum information dissemination, which may include free invitation to the press.
3. A closely related yet extremely important issue is the unemployment of the local Saudi nationals, was not considered as a part of the conference theme. Although, these two issues are different yet highly related and may well be combined under one bifocal conference theme in future conferences on Saudisation by IIR.
4. Keeping in mind the national interests as well as the local economic interests of the private sector, there are three basic commitments by the labor market if it were to truly apply a successful saudisation program. These commitments are:
 - a) Commitment to Hire Saudis, b) Commitment to retain Saudis through good payment and reward incentives and benefits packages, and c) Commitment to

maintain Saudis through proper on going specialized training programs designed individually.

5. The labor market current statistics should be collected on annual basis and updated regularly. The public and private sector institutions should pass on these statistics to the specially designed National Data Base at the Manpower Council. Only contributing members of this arrangement should be allowed access to this data base, which will allow for better planning by both the public and private sector for the labor market future development. It also should help the Education and Training System (ETS) to properly design its admission policies to better produce required labor market input, therefore reducing the risk of unintended unemployment.
6. The female participation rate in the labor market is currently below what is considered an acceptable level. The conference delegates, are of the position that more female participation in the labor market is possible, and can be of meaningful nature; therefore we suggest that more jobs be made available to ladies to contribute in the national development and saudisation process. The traditional, fields of female work environments such as medical services, social services, and education should be expanded to include more challenging jobs such as engineering, management and scientific research, provided the Islamic rules and regulations, are maintained within the conservative traditions and social values of Saudi Arabia.

7. The misleading information about career tracks among young Saudi students (both boys and girls) should be corrected through proper media campaigns and information programs. The fact that the country does not need bachelor degree holders for the development should be more clearly emphasized to the general education system students. Not all students must get a bachelor degree through the higher education system to be an active member of the labor force. Therefore an effective large scale career guidance and counseling program should be initiated and incorporated with the current general education system curriculum, in which students are introduced to the various career options available that could better fit their skill profile. The best years to start the process are the last six years of the 12 years in the general education system certificate.
8. The need for a centralized planning effort is self evident, and that requires a strong, exhaustive, comprehensive and accurate National Data Base, which was outlined in recommendation 5 above, should have multiple level of inter correlation and that should be linked with the national development planning of the country. As suggested earlier the Manpower Council should maintain the labor force statistics section of it, but that also must be part of the National Data Base (NDB), which is the responsibility of the Ministry of Planning, General Statistics Department.
9. The ambiguities of labor market access and process procedure are a source of concern for the private and public sectors as well as the national workforce.

Therefore, the conference delegates recommend that a new clear and flexible labor law in the country be introduced. The new law should have clear steps needed to acquire new manpower and should specify the procedures for the importation of foreign labor if needed. It should also regulate the relationship between the employee and the employer for both Saudi and non-Saudi workers. These unified rules and regulations should be made public and available to all who are willing to enter the labor market and should be binding to all labor market players (both private and public sectors). In case of debates, the case should be taken to the Ministry of labor and Social Affairs, then to courts if not resolved.

10. Over a number of years the process of hiring Saudis and non Saudis were taken by several public and private sector establishment, including the recruitment process and fees and legalization and permits papers, however these processes were not recorded or documented. The associated costs with these processes are very important for planning purposes, yet they also were not recorded or documented. Therefore, the conference delegates, recommend that these costs associated with going over these processes be documented and made publicly available to all interested , especially researchers. The information can be added to the proposed labor market statistics National Data Base that is to be maintained and updated regularly.

11. The concept of Expert System was discussed, and the historical evidence suggests that there are many lessons to be learned for the Saudisation process,

which a special application of the general localization of labor force. A concept with huge international implication. It was also noted with some concern, that many experienced expatriate workers provide excellent service to the country, solid advice, and competent consulting, but fail to record their experience, therefore depriving the literature and the local labor market decision makers and planners from their own valuable and rich expert system. Therefore, it is the position of the conference delegates that the expert system of all expatriate workers who participate in the local labor market be documented through their institutions so that both local and international labor market decision makers, can have access to it and benefit from it.

12. Finally, the delegates felt that the conference theme, scientific material as well as lectures were very well selected and executed, and the urgency of the topic gave it more esteem. The delegates would like to thank the organizers of the event, for such a great selection of topics and thank the presenters for such excellent execution of the program. It is highly recommended that this event be kept active and to held every year with a possible rotation of location within Saudi Arabia for publicity purposes.