

## Silatech, the Wolfensohn Center for Development at Brookings, the Dubai School of Government & the Issam Fares Institute at the American University in Beirut jointly announce *Taqeem* – Linking effective policy, sound knowledge, and smart investment

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**June 8, 2009 (DOHA)** – Silatech, the Wolfensohn Center for Development at Brookings, the Dubai School of Government, and the Issam Fares Institute at American University of Beirut announce *Taqeem* – a new program that will undertake and promote impact evaluation across the Middle East in the critical areas of employment and entrepreneurship.

In light of the global economic downturn, the Middle East's long-term prosperity hinges on creating a skilled workforce which is productively employed. Many efforts are underway by governments, civil society organizations, and private sector companies to tackle the economic challenges facing this generation. Yet to maximize the benefits of on-going reforms and policies, three major needs must be addressed:

- **Investment coupled with impact evaluation:** Billions of dollars are invested in youth programs and projects throughout the region. Yet investors, government policymakers, ministers, and the private sector continue to question the impact of such projects, and young men and women across the region face recurring problems. There is a critical need to establish reliable evidence on what is working, what is not, and the reasons behind each.
- **Scaling-up successes:** With 100 million youth between the ages of 15 and 29, requiring more and better services, the region needs scaling up of successful programs. However, despite a proliferation of interventions few reach regional or even national scale. Measuring the impact of such interventions is needed to influence the next generation of policies and programs targeting youth.
- **Learning across borders:** The best ideas for solutions can be found within the region, however this remains a largely untapped source of strength for youth development in the Middle East. Many countries in the region face common challenges with regard to improving the quality of education, expanding employment and promoting entrepreneurship. Current reform efforts in several countries can therefore serve as best practices and provide lessons for the entire region.

To meet the urgency of these needs, Silatech, the Wolfensohn Center for Development at Brookings, the Dubai School of Government, and the Issam Fares Institute at American University of Beirut launch *Taqeem* at the 2009 Doha Summit on Young People, Enterprise and Employment on June 8th. *Taqeem*, housed within the Middle East Youth Initiative\*, will focus on impact evaluation to generate new solutions to youth challenges by linking effective policy, sound knowledge and smart investment. The program will employ a holistic and integrated approach working with public and private stakeholders on regional, national, and local levels to achieve the following goals:

- **Measure** the impact of interventions to influence the next generation of policies and programs targeting youth. *Taqeem* will undertake impact evaluations of local programs and policies. By doing so, the new program will assist policymakers and civil society in establishing standards for effective policymaking.

Through streamlining benchmarking efforts, *Taqeem* will also generate best practices for policymakers, civil society, and private sector stakeholders.

- **Drive** smarter investments, shape more effective policies and scale up successful projects through new knowledge generated from impact evaluations. *Taqeem* will form a network of evaluators to boost local capacity in the region and promote the integration of impact evaluation in pilot projects.
- **Discover** and document flourishing innovations on the ground with the goal of integrating them into national policy and aligning investments for their scale up. *Taqeem* will be at the forefront at discovering, studying, promoting and advocating for these local yet “hidden” innovations with potential for scale.
- **Promote** learning across borders by sharing best practices on a local, regional and global level. *Taqeem* will provide a platform for greater learning from within the region as well as globally through more effective South-to-South knowledge exchange.

\* The Middle East Youth Initiative – a joint project of the Wolfensohn Center for Development at Brookings and the Dubai School of Government – is devoted to promoting the economic and social inclusion of young people in the Middle East.