

Internationalization of
Higher Education: focus on
cooperation initiatives and
research.



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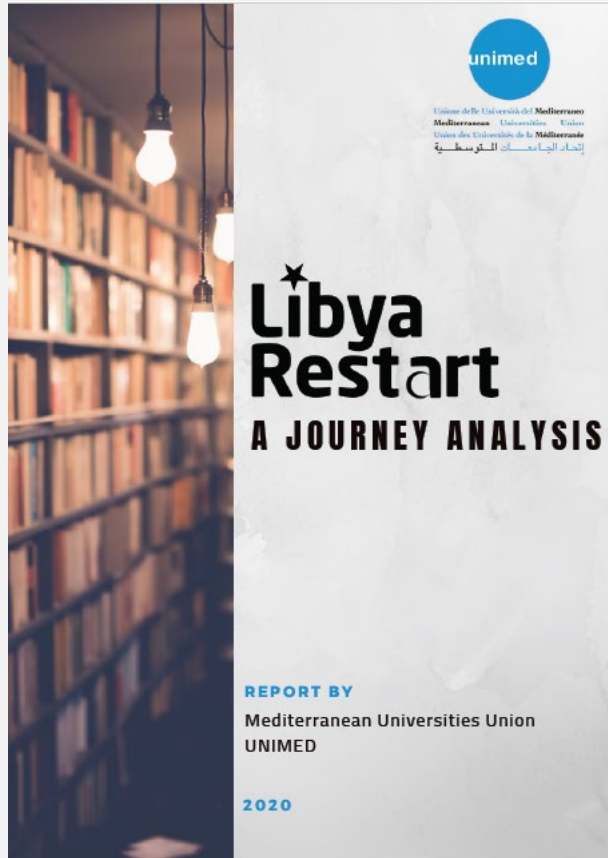


UNIMED cooperation with Libya

- ✓ Cooperation projects allowed UNIMED to engage with Libyan universities
- ✓ Libya Restart
- ✓ Internationalisation of Higher Education in the Mediterranean region - UfM Report
- ✓ IBTIKAR project



Libya Restart (2020)



- Self-financed initiative
- Study and online conference with the support of the EU delegation in Libya
- 16 Libyan universities involved on 18 contacted
- Quantitative and qualitative analysis
- A research on the Libyan Higher Education system with focus on
 - *Governance and autonomy*
 - *Quality assurance*
 - *International cooperation*
 - *Universities in the society at large*
- 13 recommendations for the future

Libya Restart recommendations

Universities in the society at large

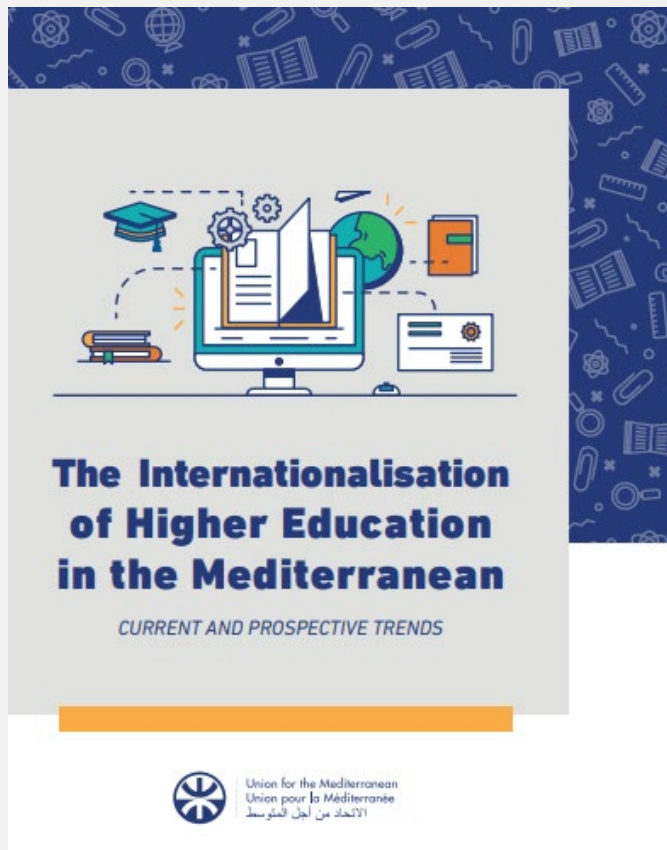
Prioritization of the National Research Agenda. Libya needs to move forward towards a more mature research and innovation environment in the country, where Universities are able to engage in high-quality scientific research activities and support the definition of successful actions tackling the challenges of society. Higher Education Institutions have the potential of providing expertise, scientists and scholars, so that research outcomes really contribute to country's developments. However, Universities will be able to do so only relying upon trained and skilled human resources, and well equipped and functioning infrastructures; by an efficient framework for R&I management; benefitting from specialization strategies within universities. In the short term, improving the capacity of universities to produce and manage research activities, allowing students to engage in high-quality scientific research, is the minimum requirement for Libya. In the long run, a National Research Agenda (in cooperation with the Ministry of Education) will frame research activities in a more comprehensive vision for the country, improving the overall capacity of generating valuable research and sustainable advancement. Moreover, a reliable, accountable and efficient national research system will be more attractive for foreign researchers and companies, and will reduce the gaps generated by a severe brain-drain effect.

12

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Enhancing the social relevance of Universities in cooperation with local actors. During our research work, it clearly emerged that Universities (both in the east and west part of the country) are considered by citizens as one of the most (if not the most) reliable institutions in the country. HEIs are expected to generate stability, to drive economic growth (both in terms of offering job places and in terms of graduates employability), to fill political divisions, to serve the community. However, Libyan HEIs do not yet have dedicated offices (or funds) dealing with their social dimension, neither do they rely on a formal strategy by the Ministry of Education for the university's third mission. Curricula and programmes should be designed to strengthen graduates employability, to serve the needs of the society, so that the University becomes the starting point for reconstructing the country. Universities should establish durable and stable relations with the actors of the civil society, reinforce the transfer capacity with industries, create and promote synergies with local actors and organizations for a fruitful use of resources and to avoid duplication of efforts, engage in the co-creation of policies with decision-makers for sustainable development. This would only be possible starting by defining a cooperation scheme between national authorities, HEIs and socio-economic stakeholders to foster mutual dialogue, employability, sustainable development. In the long run, this win-win approach and the continuous communication flow between decision-makers, universities and stakeholders will generate, on the one side, a vision for the country in which all main players are involved, on the other hand, a strategic alliance supporting growth and social cohesion.

Internationalisation of Higher Education in the Mediterranean region - UfM Report



Recommendations & roadmap

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1** Supporting a structural reform process in the country for a clear definition of a strategic vision concerning the higher education system, with specific attention to research, governance (with a focus on institutional autonomy) and quality of teaching.
- R2** Strengthening universities' exposure and performance in particular by addressing language and cultural barriers, which are currently limiting the access to internationalisation opportunities for both academic and administrative staff and consequently limiting their capacities.
- R3** Widening the outreach of Libyan universities by involving the less involved HEIs in order to allow a coherent growth of the Libyan HE system and benefiting from the possibility of connection with Sub-Saharan Africa.
- R4** International stakeholders should support the development of infrastructure and the country digitalisation in order to allow the local higher education institutions to increase attractiveness and technological readiness.
- Theme-based roadmap

Recommendations & roadmap

THEME-BASED ROADMAP

- International stakeholders should support local institutions, in cooperation with the universities, in the finalisation of a structural reform process for higher education. The creation of a multi-stakeholder committee (under the supervision of the EU delegation for Libya) for supporting this reform process is highly recommended as the first concrete step.
- The Libyan University Presidents Council should be supported in playing a decisive role in assisting the Ministry of Education towards strategic advancements of the HE sector.
- Universities should take capacity-building actions aimed at raising the quality of their research and engaging in high-quality scientific research activities, complemented by the definition of successful actions tackling the challenges of the Libyan society.
- The EU should find concrete and tangible synergies among ongoing programmes and projects by upscaling already ongoing initiatives and by efficiently using different budget lines.

Recommendations & roadmap

- European universities should abandon a stereotyped vision of the country and recognise that, despite all the difficulties, it is possible and feasible to cooperate with the Libyan higher education system.
- Universities should guarantee an ongoing update of university's staff skills, in particular on the following issues: quality assurance, institutional management, pedagogical innovation, teaching and research methodology.
- Universities should upscale and upgrade the existing quality and performance evaluation offices, in a way that they become a reference point to disseminate quality and assurance practices at the institutions.
- Supporting scientific collaboration under the form of "science diplomacy action" with the aim of easing political tensions, guaranteeing stability, mitigating the economic crisis, supporting long-term stabilisation and, ultimately, reducing the country's isolation.

IBTIKAR

promoting research and innovation environment in the Libyan higher Education System

- Result of years of cooperation
- A follow-up action of the recommendations
- Prioritization of research
- Creation of institutional research agendas
- Reflection on a National Agenda for research over the long-term
- Networking and capacity building

The key is to improve the capacity and visibility of Libyan universities, giving relevance to their own areas of excellence, sharing ideas that can attract other partners to collaborate with Libya.

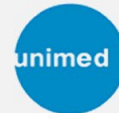
Research agenda – Outcomes of the working group



- ❖ Request for clarification between research agenda and national research priorities
- ❖ Involvement of external stakeholders – steering committee
- ❖ Equipment and research
- ❖ Collaboration
- ❖ Lack of Funding and needs for self-funding



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Inspiring practices – Outcomes of the working group



- ❖ Collaboration with the private sector
- ❖ Financial capacities
- ❖ Relevance of strategic decisions and investment of resources
- ❖ Lack of Funding and needs for self-funding
- ❖ Relevance of contamination and supporting the learning process within the university
- ❖ Policy dialogue



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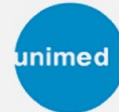


Some of our proposals

- ❖ Mapping at institutional level of the existing socio-economic environment
- ❖ Mapping of IBTIKAR Universities experiences and competencies in tasks aimed at strengthening relationships with companies (open days, agreement, professional training, consultancy...)
- ❖ Network of research centers
- ❖ Brokerage events in the institutions
- ❖ National dissemination event with external stakeholders



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