

A study on the profile of Lebanese trainers and the anticipation of future skills

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Methodological note: What is the PROMENIA methodology?

Enhancing the cooperation between potential employers and the educational institutions is a necessary step in order to improve the educational policies and to succeed in the implementation of ongoing reforms in the educational system. Thus, the observatory PACOME will serve the interests of various potential partners: employers who will benefit from better competencies and highly qualified trained staff; the Higher Education Institutions seeking to incorporate in their programs more practical teaching and soft skills rather than only theoretical knowledge; students in transition to the labor market and seeking to be more prepared to professional insertion.

The prospective methodology PROMENIA was first established and implemented by researchers from the University of Strasbourg and adapted to the Lebanese context between 2012 and 2014. This methodology has been incorporated to the newly inaugurated observatory PACOME, funded by the EU and dedicated to study the labor market trends and workforce needs in Lebanon. The methodological model was updated and modified slightly to produce prospective analysis for the period 2014-2019, to investigate key skills shortages and the fast-tracking of skills development.

Our prospective methodology PROMENIA aims to identify and anticipate future skill needs for the next generation of trainers.

The starting point of our methodology is a prospective analysis of employer's needs. Information was gathered on current and expected employment, skills shortages, and possible changes in future skills needs, through interviews and focus groups with key-informants and stakeholders from the leading teaching and training centers in the in the country.

A. Training job in Lebanon

1. Current conjuncture

Training has existed for a long period of time. It is not an emerging profession. The average age of training firms in Lebanon indicates that the offer of training has been in place for two decades (20 years). The definition of training confirms the seniority of this practice. In fact, training is defined as such:

*“A planned process to modify **attitude, knowledge and skill behavior**, through learning experience to achieve effective performance in an activity or range of activities. Its purpose in the work situation is to develop the abilities of the individual and to satisfy the current and future needs of the organizations¹”.*

However, the recent evolution of the trainer’s job is essentially due to the evolution of the demand for training. The global demand for training in Lebanon is increasing due to the new role that training plays in the evolution of the person in a job. In other words, training is becoming a must for professional evolution and development. The increase of the demand for training is the result of the escalating awareness of the importance of training in career development.

There is actually a multitude of firms specialized in training. The five main categories of firms that deliver training, identified on the Lebanese territory are as following:

1. Private sector;
2. Public sector;
3. Training departments in enterprises;
4. Non-governmental organizations;
5. Educational sector.

The trainings delivered cover a wide variety of subjects going from technical formations such as computer usage to more general formations such as leadership.

Hence the importance of having a closer look on the trainer’s job and skills in order for him to meet the needs of the labor market.

¹ REID Margaret; BARRINGTON Harry (1994), *Training Interventions : Managing employee development*, Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development.

2. The profile of a Lebanese trainer

The survey showed that the majority of the Lebanese training firms rely on part time trainers. In fact, 55% of our sample has no full time trainers. The average age of a Lebanese trainer varies between 35 and 49 years old. 70% of these trainers have an academic diploma not specifically related to training, while 20 % have diplomas related to training. The aforementioned numbers shows that training in Lebanon is not considered as a “real job” but it is practiced aside with another main profession. Moreover, the minimum years of experience required from a Lebanese trainer are 5 years. That number shows that the training diploma has to be considered in an optic of continuous formation and not as a formation from fresh school graduates.

In fact, Lebanese trainers should have an academic diploma accompanied with certificates related to training such as “train the trainer”, “international coaching leadership” or “project management professional certification”. Moreover, trainers are asked to stay in line with the recent evolution of their job given the rapid changes affecting it.

B. Impact of recent mutations on the job of a trainer

Trainers are currently operating in an unstable environment. This environment has witnessed many changes in past few years: changes that are intrinsically related to the job itself as well as changes that are affecting the labor market in general such as technological revolution.

In fact, the most important factor influencing the job of a trainer in Lebanon is the increase in the demand for training essentially due to the awareness of its importance in the professional development plan. 50% of the surveyed firms reported that the increase demand for training is essentially causing the evolution of their job. In fact, many Lebanese firms have established new departments specialized in training or a training policy in direct relations with their employees. In other words, credibility on the labor market is nowadays directly linked to a professional development plan, i.e. the life time formation.

The direct consequence of the increase of the demand for training was the chaotic development of its supply. 38.77% of the mapped firms on the Lebanese territory have initiated their work in the last 10 years. The concerns mentioned by the trainers at this level, is the oversupply of identical formations and trainings. Thus, due to this increase in the number of training firms; the need for specialization is nowadays a must. Moreover, the trainers' job will rely on coaching much more than training given the fact that the supply of training is increasing. Whereas training is principally directive, coaching requires exploring what is already known but in a different way that necessitates guidance.

Further afield, the regulation of the training job is an important mutation to mention. In fact, 25% of our sample considers that the regulation of the job have a significant impact on the trainers. Even though the recognition of training as a real profession takes time due to the encouragement of the traditional way of learning in Lebanon, some changes at this level are noticeable. The development of academic diploma in training is an example of these changes. Moreover, the national policies such as accreditation of training courses or ISO shows the actual and recent importance accorded to training.

Along with the aforementioned internal mutations affecting the job of trainers, some external mutations have a significant impact on the job of a trainer in Lebanon.

First of all, globalization plays a role on different levels. The trainers need to be highly qualified in the field of training and need to meet the international standards required for training. Otherwise, local trainings are substitutable with international trainings since the latter are available on international scene. Furthermore, globalization facilitated the access to data and information. Training can be substituted once again by online learning. This explains why; trainers have to master communication skills as well as the content of the training delivered. Trainers are now asked to customize the training to their audience and to deliver it in the most creative way. In this respect, new training techniques need to be developed in order for this job to meet the market needs from one side, and not to be easily substituted by other educational means on the other.

Second, according to 35% of the sample surveyed, technological evolution is an important mutation in the job of a Lebanese trainer. Virtual or e-training arises from this specific mutation. Trainers must thus invest more and more in continuous formation. Moreover, trainers must be familiar with blended learning techniques and hybrid trainings.

All of the internal and external mutations mentioned in this section, led and will lead to the evolution of the job of a Lebanese trainer. The next section will discuss the principal evolutions of trainers' job in the medium term, in the coming 5 years.

C. Evolution of the job of a trainer on the medium term

This section will focus on the evolution of the training job in Lebanon on different levels: the skills required from a trainer, the needs of recruitment on the short and medium term, the turnover in Lebanese training firms and the general trends that might be observed in the next coming years.

Three sets of skills and qualifications are nowadays required from a Lebanese trainer: personal interpersonal and technical skills and qualifications. The personal skills and qualifications are essentially related to the trainer himself and include the following: self-management, confidence, goal setting, self-assessment, coping, managing feelings, positive thinking, accuracy, etc. The interpersonal skills and qualifications are related to the relation between the trainer and the trainees, we mention: public speaking, communication, active listening, giving feedback, assertiveness, negotiation, empathy, cooperation, networking, motivation, etc. As for the technical skills and qualifications, they are related to the topic of training and to the techniques of training delivery. They include: understanding and mastering the topic of training and presentation skills for example.

When it comes to the recruitment in the short and medium terms, the surveyed firms are not very optimistic. The essential reason behind their skepticism is the unstable political and economic situation in Lebanon. It enables them to draw a clear plan for the future of their firms. This prevents us to have quantitative analysis for the evolution of the demand for trainers in the medium term. The restrained number of firms that answered this question reported needing between 1 or 2 qualified trainers in the middle term. Furthermore, the majority of actual trainers are aged between 35 and 49 years old. Moreover, the trainers spend on average 7.13 years in the same firm. That is to say, the staff turnover in Lebanese training firms is low. These different observations allows us to say that despite the different mutations in the job of a training and despite the increase in the demand for training, the new demand for training will not be satisfied by an increase in the number of trainers or training centers but in the amelioration of the quality of the training delivered.

Regarding the general trends of trainers' job, 25% of our sample considers that the future of training will follow the online revolution and shift into e-training. 20% considers that the future of training is the development of training mobile applications. In both cases, the training costs and price will decrease leading once again to the increase in its demand.

The promising future of training will therefore requires the formation of qualified trainers equipped by the essential skills needed to meet the market needs. For that reason, the whole field work conducted for this research aimed at proposing a competency framework that accompanies the evolution of the trainers' job in Lebanon.

D. Competency framework

The following table represents the competency framework for the job of a trainer. It's a general skill referential that can be declined according to the specific characteristics of each of the aforementioned type of firms that provide trainings.

The objectives of this formation were determined on the basis of the most lacking skills that today's trainers present. This diploma will enable trainers to:

1. Bridge the gap between theory and practice;
2. Prepare his training tool-kit;
3. Master communication skills
4. Be flexible and capable to adapt to changes

<u>M a c r o - competencies</u>	<u>Missions</u>	<u>Skills</u>	<u>Knowledge</u>	<u>Abilities</u>
1. Training need analysis	- Identify the profile and characteristics of participants and their enterprise	- Determine the professional environment of the enterprise, the job evolution and characteristics - Define the institutional needs for competencies -Elaborate a statement of work	- Economic culture of the enterprise - Competency framework of the job - Characteristics of each competency	-Scientific curiosity -Critical thinking - Relational comfort - Ease in interaction

2. Design the training	- Identify learning outcomes	- Frame answers that training should bring to the needs of employees	- Procedure of drafting objectives - Limits of the training	- Editorial ability - Critical thinking - Ability to set priorities
	- Build the lesson plan	- Elaborate an instructional strategy - Sequence the various stages of progression to define a lesson plan - Choose the pedagogical approaches for each sequence (timing, modalities, etc.) - Choose the modality of evaluation of the progression	- Analysis of objectives - Different pedagogical approaches - Animation techniques - Individual and collective learning methods - Digital tools	- Creativity - Analysis ability - Critical thinking

3. Delivery and animation of the training	- Create the adequate environment for learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Animate a group - Accompany the progression - Evaluate the progression - Adapt the communication techniques to the group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group dynamics - Motivation sources - Causes of conflict in a group - Difficult personalities - Behavioral techniques - Animation tools - Distance learning tools - Communication basics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time management - Attentive - Reactivity - Humility - Adaptability - Creativity - Empathy - Clarity - Humor - Capacity to illustrate - Motivational - Encourager
4. Evaluation of the training	- Design evaluation mechanisms in order to measure and improve the efficiency and quality of training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choose evaluation procedures - Establish evaluation mechanisms - Analyze the feedback of participants - Set amelioration objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Different evaluation levels - Evaluation methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active listening - Analysis ability