

The HRDF eTraining Program

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I. Background Information

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia ("KSA") has seen growing unemployment of the national workforce over the past several years. In response, the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Labor ("MoL") has developed a large portfolio of projects aiming to train and support the local workforce and increase employment rates, many of which are already underway or fully implemented. After the launch of the highly successful Hafiz unemployment support program, the further need to educate and train the unemployed workforce was exposed. In order to meet that need in a technologically advanced way, the national eTraining Program was developed. Its development was assigned to the Human Resource Development Fund ("HRDF"), the MoL arm that focuses on upskilling of workers and job creation.

The eTraining Program provides a library of training modules that utilize user-friendly and reliable web technologies to train job seekers in need. The current program offers 46 training modules focused on 4 developmental areas: Career Path, Self Recognition, Job Search, and Employment Success Content. Career Path and Self Recognition modules are focused on exposing candidates to different industries and helping him or her determine where they may be best suited. On the other hand, Job Search and Employment Success Content teach more direct hard and soft skills necessary for specific jobs or in general. The courses are also integrated by quiz, feedback and tracking of participants activities. In order to provide maximum flexibility to candidates seeking training, lessons can be started on demand, and paused and resumed at will. This flexibility, facilitated by the use of Moodle open source software, allows users to easily fit training into their schedule, thereby increasing participation.

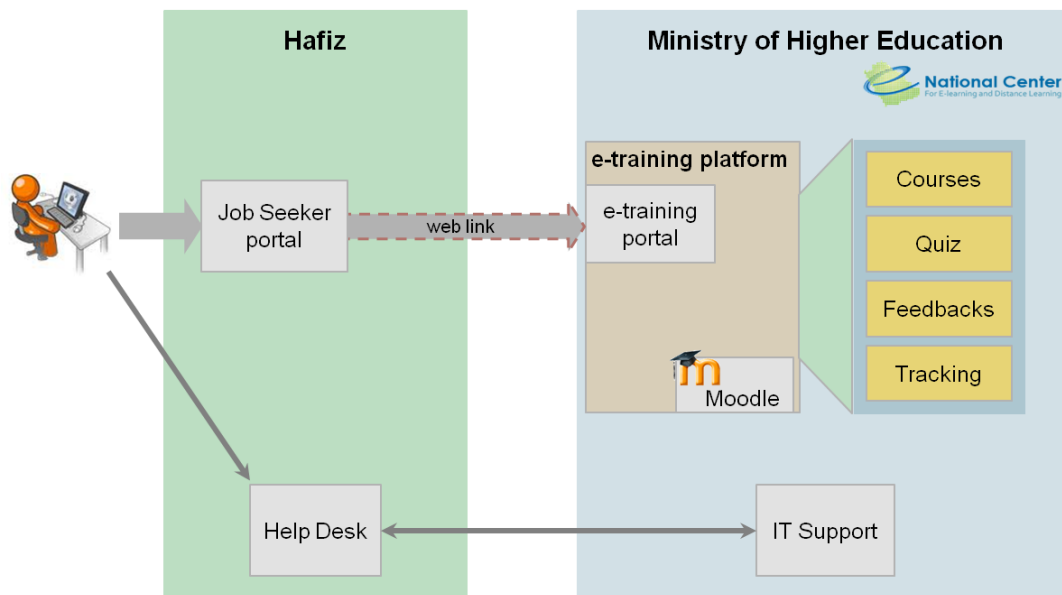




Figure 1. Key elements of eTraining platform and process flows

eTraining units schedule (I)

Module	Week	Deliverables (training units)
 Career path and self recognition	1	Introductory course to training sequence to prepare Jobseekers for private sector employment
	2	Private Sector Work Environment
	3	Job Search in the Private Sector
	4	Work Ethics and Employment Behavior
	5	CV Preparation
	6	CV Preparation Guidelines
	7	Hotel Receptionist Career
	8	Procurement Officer Career
	9	Career Planning: Getto Know Yourself
	10	Career Planning: Getto Know Suitable Job Opportunities
	11	Secretary Career
	12	Operator/Dispatch Officer Career
	13	Career Planning: Decision Making
	14	Networks Technician Career
	15	Bank Teller Career
	16	Successful Career Planning
	 Job search	17
18		Time Management
19		Marketing Specialist
20		On-Line Job Search Skills
21		Customer Service Manager Career
22		Salesperson Career
23		Verbal and Written Communication Skills



Source: HRDF

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Attachment 3 - eTrainingFinal.pdf



eTraining units schedule (II)

Module	Week	Deliverables (training units)
 Job search (con'd)	24	Self Confidence Skills
	25	Telecommunication Skills
	26	Interviews and Employability Tests
	27	Mathematical Tests
	28	Linguistic Tests
	29	Logical Tests
	30	Virtual Interview: How to deal with embarrassing questions during an interview
	31	Negotiation Skills
	32	Employability Success
	 Employment	33
34		Saudi Labor Law
35		Employee Responsibilities
36		Communication Elements, Components and Challenges
37		Communication Methods
38		Communication Categories
39		How to interact with your superiors, clients and colleagues
40		Team Work Skills
41		Personal Hygiene and Presentation Skills
42		Problem Solving Skills
43		Professional Safety and Policies
44		Personal Development Skills
45		Customer Service Skills
46		Coping with Work Pressure

Source: HRDF

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Attachment 3 - eTrainingFinal.pdf



The eTraining Program uses state-of-the-art web technologies to provide the best experience and meet flexible demand. By integrating the eTraining Program platform with unemployment platforms such as Hafiz, job seeker databases can offer seamless redirection from one system to the other. The built-in enrollment scheduling functionality allows users to schedule their own training modules. The entire platform is hosted using cloud technology, allowing the scalability necessary to accommodate the schedules of the 2 Millions current users and to anticipate future volume growth. This program has purposefully sought out these technologies and functionalities to maximize the delivery of trainings and skills improvements to those who need them.

Candidates are referred to the eTraining Program through a number of unemployment programs. These unemployment programs, such as the award-winning Hafiz unemployment support scheme, identify skills gaps or career interests in participants and automatically refer them to specific training modules that meet those needs.

II. Goals & Timeframe

The goal of this project is to educate the unemployed workforce, allowing easy access to skill improvement opportunities to all eligible candidates nation-wide. The success of the program will therefore be assessed by measuring several KPIs of the quantity and quality of trainings delivered:

- Number of Hafiz beneficiaries referred to eTraining
- Number of selected that have accessed training sessions
- Number of selected that have accessed training sessions
- Quality of average scores in final tests

While the initial launch of the program has already occurred, there is a number of milestones to be met in the upcoming months:

- Expand the total courses offering from 46 to 52
- Increase the enrolled candidates referred from Hafiz from ~90% to 100%
- Implement real-time analytical system to monitor training activities and gain more detailed insight of training needs. This will allow to package courses that fit even better with job seekers' needs

III. Project's Added Value and Importance

The eTraining Program was developed in order to directly meet the need for further upskill Saudi job seekers before entering the job market. There are ~650,000 unemployed nationals in Saudi; before the eTraining Program, these job seekers did not have easy access to actionable resources to improve their job market attractiveness and make them more viable candidates for selection. However, with eTraining, courses to assist them in finding the right career and being prepared to get and keep that career (i.e. basic working and ethics skills) are readily accessible through the program website.

The program has seen immediate success. Within the first 10 weeks, Saudi job seekers had attended 1.8M sessions on the eTraining website. Of those 1.8M trainings, ~90% were completed. Since then, adoption has continued to grow with over 100k additional trainings completed every week, reaching 4.4M, as illustrated in Figure 2.

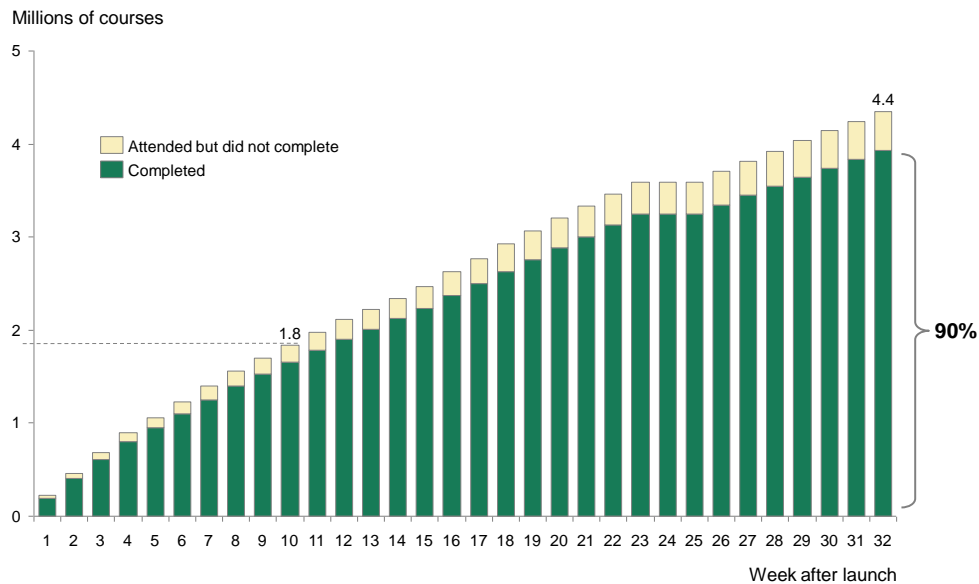


Figure 2. Total number of training courses attended and completed

In order to achieve these results, HRDF has been collaborating with prestigious consulting companies (e.g. BCG, PWC) as well as other major stakeholders (e.g. Ministry of Higher Education). All of them have contributed to develop such a successful project, and recognize the project's added value and importance.

For instance, Dr. Abdullah Al-Megren, Project Director of National Center for eLearning and Distance Learning (NCEL) from the Ministry of Higher Education claimed:

The National Center for e-Learning and Distance Learning is honored to congratulate you for all the continued success resulted from eTraining project. This project was extremely large and challenging, but was confronted with high emption and great vision from HRDF senior management and surrounded by well selected partners.

NCEL is very proud to be the working and executing arm for the largest eTraining project worldwide. Supported by formal reports, NCEL has delivered all projects components as promised, and since day one in operation (Feb 2012) till today the eTraining platform is spreading the knowledge day and night smoothly without any downtime.

At the end of August 2013, the first implementation phase (phase on) was been successfully completed. It was up and running for 8 months, managed to assign 16,807,532 training seats for an average of 480,000 candidates per month. Training attendance record was ~4,400,000 individuals with average course completion rate of 90%. The online site has received an extensive amount of traffic, reaching 70 Million page visits during the whole period.

The current eTraining platform can manage the whole training activities for up-to 2 Million registered users with unlimited number of courses and training sessions throughout the year. There are clear growths potential. For example, adding more content and more training activities. Also, the platform is a great source of information where HRDF can conduct skills assessment or any other researches and to generate analytical reports to support HRDF and the MOL decision making process.

IV. Challenges

Typically, one of the biggest challenges when setting up such an extensive online platform, is the technological barrier. However, HRDF has been investing in state of the art information and communication technologies, and has been investing large resources in order to overcome this barrier.

On the contrary, the key challenge going forward will be represented by content availability. In fact, in order to continuously improve the level of service provided to citizens, our vision is to increase the course offering, adding to the current modules, that are focused on basic job seekers skills, more advanced ones, focused e.g. on advanced business skills.

The other major area for development is to increase the user base. Currently, employment channels account for about 55% of total Saudi job seekers. In fact, these channels primarily target younger age groups (20-35 year olds); incorporating older age groups could increase the targeted base volume to all ~650K unemployed Saudis. This will bring along a new challenge, since the additionally targeted citizens will not be tracked on Hafiz beneficiaries database, and therefore integrating them all into the same system will be complex. However, HRDF has already started working with its partners in order to overcome this challenge by the end of the year.

V. Relevance of the Project to the Respective Action Line (E-learning)

The purpose of the eTraining Program is to deliver opportunities for learning and skills improvement nationwide through easily accessible web technology and innovative integration with preexisting unemployment databases. By providing this service online, eTraining seeks to remove the geographical obstacle that job seekers have had to overcome in the past in order to seek training courses on site at local unemployment centers. The program seeks to further increase ease of access through the training scheduling system the website uses, offering timing flexibility to job seekers.

In addition to these standalone benefits, the integration of the eTraining platform with unemployment databases increases outreach and matches services to job seekers more appropriately. This integration helps eTraining satisfy one of its primary goals, to create a seamless experience for the unemployed user. Without leveraging these technologies, the program would not be able to reach as large of a user base as it has.

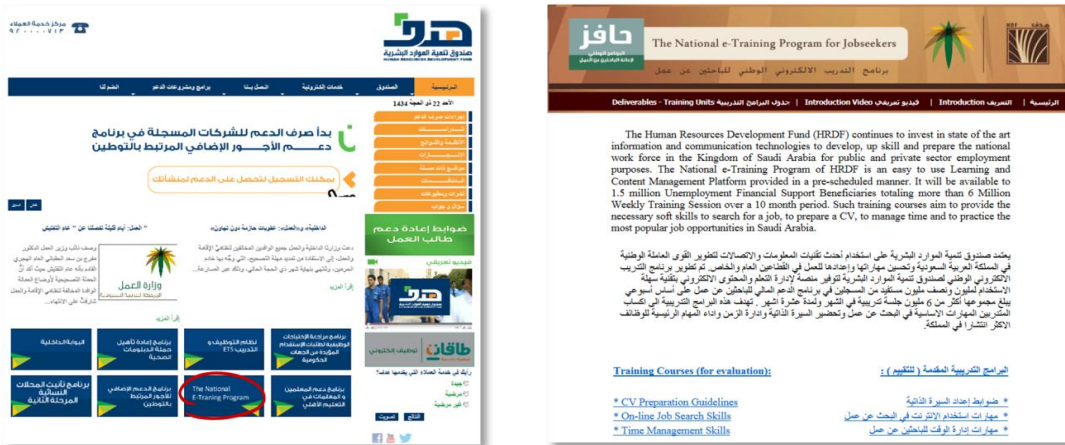


Figure 3. eTraining link on HRDF website (left) and eTraining homepage (right)

VI. Conclusion

The eTraining Program is offering educational opportunities to Saudis in need, many of whom would not be able to access these services if not for the program's innovative online delivery model. The variety of training modules offer end-to-end job education, from the types of careers out there, to the skills one needs to earn a job, to the capabilities one needs to find continued success at that job. The applicable course content combined with the seamless referencing model and accessible online interface have driven the HRDF eTraining Program to rapidly grow into one of the largest global e-training offerings in the world.

Nevertheless, HRDF is fully committed to and will continue striving for a continuous improvement of quality and effectiveness of the project. This will be done through a rigorous analysis of users data as well as an extension to a larger range of beneficiaries with a broader modules offer. In fact, the ultimate goal is to offer a high-quality integrative education to job seekers that could notably improve their attractiveness in the labor market.