

ENHANCING SAUDI ARABIA'S EDUCATION AND TRAINING POLICIES

EXPORT CASE STUDY | NOVEMBER 2016

The Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) has enlisted Miles Morgan Australia to help implement a formal career development program to equip Saudi citizens with the skills and knowledge to make more informed career choices.

The KSA Government is implementing an ambitious labour market transformation program, which includes introducing formal career education services to help engage over 1.1 million unemployed Saudis.

The plan is to transform its labour market by reducing youth unemployment and encouraging stronger private-sector involvement.

Miles Morgan Australia, established in 1997, is a Perth-based consultancy specialising in delivering large- and small-scale public policy, evaluation and research services across Australia and in international markets.

Securing the contract

Barbara Macnish, CEO of Miles Morgan Australia, says the company was initially approached through LinkedIn, after an international search was conducted.

Following discussions, Miles Morgan was invited to tender to develop a career education and development (CED) policy framework.

'The fact we had previously done this work in Australia and were able to demonstrate our experience are probably significant factors in our selection for this project,' says Macnish.



Barbara Macnish working with a group of Saudi VET students to design the national career education framework.

'The support we received from Austrade, Efic and Australia's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia has been outstanding and a major factor in our success.'

Barbara Macnish, CEO, Miles Morgan Australia

'Our experience is particularly in education, which includes vocational education and training, career education and development, adult learning and school-to-work transitions, as well as workforce planning and development.

'For this project, our role was to create the competency framework and quality standards that underpin and shape the development of a career education industry, with qualified careers practitioners to better equip Saudi people – especially younger people – with the knowledge and skills to make effective career choices,' adds Macnish.



Australian Government

Australian Trade and Investment Commission



Working in Saudi Arabia

Macnish says everyone they met was very engaged, which was a major factor in designing a world-class system adapted to Saudi culture.

The KSA Government has issued two other major career education tenders, both of which are underpinned by the competency framework and quality standards designed by Miles Morgan Australia.

'We are excited that Saudi Arabia's largest employer is introducing the career development framework and the professional standards within their organisation,' says Macnish.

'This will enable their in-house career counsellors to work more effectively to better assist the company's new graduates, and help its professional workforce manage their careers.

'The support we received from Austrade, Efic and Australia's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia has been outstanding and a major factor in our success,' Macnish adds.

'As an SME, we found their knowledge and support to be a major factor in our success. They were all so supportive and continue to be so as we seek to capitalise on this experience.'

Growing export opportunities

Mark Morley, Austrade's Riyadh-based Senior Trade Commissioner for KSA, says the country is Australia's second-largest market in the Middle East and an important trading partner.

'Services exports, especially in higher education, vocational education and consulting is one of the significantly growing areas of Australian engagement in Saudi Arabia,' says Morley.

With 70 per cent of Saudis under 30 years of age, education and training are critical to the long-term future of Saudi Arabia's economy.

According to Saudi Arabia's Department of Statistics and Information, the current Saudi unemployment rate is 11.7 per cent, with 5.9 per cent male and 32.5 per cent female.

In total numbers this reflects 650,000 Saudis, including 258,000 men and 392,000 women.¹

Many of these people are located in regional and rural areas, and may not have more than a rudimentary secondary education.

This is why the Government of KSA has been making significant investments in vocational education and training.

'From the outside it may seem opaque and a seemingly difficult market, but when Australians are on the ground they realise that Saudi Arabia not only has the willingness to pay, importantly, it has the *ability* to pay for Australian goods and services.

'Given the majority of business is conducted through Saudi Government officials, or through businesses linked with large families, agencies such as Austrade are critical in assisting Australian business and can facilitate relationships,' says Morley.

About Austrade

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- › develop international markets;
- › win productive foreign direct investment;
- › promote international education;
- › strengthen Australia's tourism industry; and
- › seek consular and passport services.

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¹ Middle East North Africa Financial Network (MENAFN)