



## Reinforcing the Innovation-Employability Nexus in the Mediterranean

### A Handbook for Academia, Industry and Policymakers

#### High-level Roundtable and Presentation of the publication

#### Speakers

#### **Nasser Kamel, UfM Secretary General**



A career diplomat for the Egyptian government, Nasser Kamel held the position of Ambassador of Egypt to the United Kingdom from 2014 to 2018. He was also Ambassador to France in the period 2006-2012, during which he took part in the drafting of the Joint Declaration of the 2008 Paris Summit that marked the launch of the Union for the Mediterranean. Furthermore, between 2012 and 2014, he was Assistant Minister for Arab and Middle Eastern Affairs. From 2004 to 2006, he was the Director of Egypt's Public Information Service. Prior to this position he served in various embassies, including Washington (1984-1988), Lisbon (1990-1994), Tunis (1994-1998), Brussels (1999-2001) and Paris (2001-2004).

#### **Johannes Laepple, German Development Cooperation (GIZ)**



Johannes Laepple currently heads the GIZ Project "Support to the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) on Employment and Trade". He has 14 years of combined professional experience in development cooperation, academia and the EU. Prior to his work at GIZ, he worked, inter alia, as a political advisor in the European Parliament in Brussels and as the Head of Office to the Chairman of the European Parliament's Committee on International Trade. He holds degrees in Political Science and Governance and Development Policy, as well as an MPA from Harvard University.



## **Itaf Ben Abdallah, Senior Advisor for Higher Education and Research Division, UfM Secretariat**



Ms. Ben Abdallah is a Tunisian diplomat with a juridical formation. Before taking on his role at UfM, as responsible of the Higher Education and Research Division, she was in charge in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tunisia of multilateral files such as WTO, WIPO, FAO. She was also in charge of bilateral relations between Tunisia and several countries and was assigned to Tunisian Embassy in Cairo.

## **Angelo Riccaboni, Chair, PRIMA Foundation**



Angelo Riccaboni is Full Professor of Management Control Systems at the Richard Goodwin School of Economics and Management of the University of Siena. His research focuses on the role of businesses and universities to promote the implementation of United Nations' Agenda 2030 and on innovation in the agrifood sector.

Former Rector of the University of Siena from 2010 to 2016, he is a member of the Leadership Council of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Solutions Network and Chair of the Regional Centre of the SDSN

for the Mediterranean since 2012. Since 2017, he chairs PRIMA Foundation, located in Barcelona to implement a 10-year research and innovation programme on food systems and water resources, with a budget of 500 million euros funded by the European Commission and 19 Euro-Mediterranean Countries.

He chairs the Steering Committee of the Santa Chiara Lab at the University of Siena. He is Member of the Scientific Committee of the World Farmers Organisation (WFO), Member of



the International Academic Committee of the Institute for Sustainable Development Goals of Tsinghua University, Member of the Board of Directors of the University Bicocca in Milan. He is also a Member of the EC sub-group on Mission Area Soil Health and Food of the 'shadow' strategic configuration of the Horizon Europe Programme Committee, Member of the Board of the International Association of Universities (IAU), Head of the IAU Working Group on sustainability, and former Chair of the CRUI Foundation, the operating body of the Association of Italian Rectors.

### **Giuseppe Provenzano, Advisor for Research and Innovation, UfM Secretariat**



Giuseppe Provenzano is an Advisor for Research and Innovation at the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean, where he focuses on topics connected to research, innovation and employability. He has previously published on Blue Economy, the EU external policies towards Southern and Eastern Mediterranean, and on sustainability issues of the Iranian energy policies. He

holds a second-level MA in International Public Affairs at LUISS School of Government and a Master in Relations and Institutions of Asia and Africa at L'Orientale University.

### **Nina Volles, UfM Consultant**



Dr. Nina Volles is senior higher education advisor at the NGO Paeradigms. Having worked in academia, development cooperation and the corporate world in different countries, she has long-standing experience in building bridges between different cultures and sectors. Her key areas of expertise are stakeholder engagement, programme implementation, capacity development, institutional development, curriculum reform, and

academia-industry partnerships. In her career, she has been involved in the design, implementation, monitoring and review of higher education projects in Europe, Africa, Asia and North America. Dr. Nina Volles is German/Iranian-born and was educated in Germany,





France, the UK and Switzerland. She has a doctorate in Higher Education Management and two master's degrees in International Relations and Communications Management.

### **Riam Kanso, Conception X**



Dr Riam Kanso is the CEO of Conception X, after heading up student entrepreneurship at University College London Engineering since 2017. Riam has a DPhil in Neuroscience from Oxford University and has worked at the interface of academia and industry for the best part of 10 years.

She has launched two companies, worked in med-tech and computational science, and taught entrepreneurship both at UCL and Cambridge.

Conception X is now her full time mission. It has been set up as a not for profit with the aim of helping bright students solve global challenges.

### **Marcello Scalisi, UNIMED**



Marcello Scalisi is the Director of UNIMED – Mediterranean Universities Union – since 2008. He holds a degree in Historical Sciences and in International Cooperation at the Faculty of Literature, Philosophy and Languages of University of Roma Tre, Rome. He gained extensive experience in Sicily in the sustainable tourism sector, managing and monitoring EU projects for local tourism development. He started working at UNIMED in 1998 as project manager and moved gradually to the coordination of UNIMED's European, International and National funded initiatives and projects. Since Marcello Scalisi became director of UNIMED, there has been a significant increase of the number of associated universities to the network, funded projects and employees and collaborators. Moreover, UNIMED is nowadays a permanent stakeholder of the European Commission.



### **Boutheina Lassadi, BUSINESSMED UMCE**



Dr. Boutheina Lassadi has over 15 years of business, workforce, youth, gender, and curriculum development experience in the MENA region. Under USAID's MEG and BRCP projects, she has led expert teams in the implementation of multiple country strategic action plans in post-conflict designed to enhance SME competitiveness and generate employment.

She has also worked alongside multiple chambers of commerce, ministries of vocational education and training, community colleges, and tertiary vocational education institutions to systematically improve the quality and the market relevance of curricula in key skill areas demanded by the private sector. Dr. Lassadi has overseen the YESS Program's highly successful workforce development and fisheries sector competitiveness enhancement programs. She also led targeted research efforts on policy/institutional constraints and priorities in the vocational education and fisheries spheres. She is the expert of the Employers Thematic Committee on Vocational Training and skills development under the program "Enhancing Business Support Organizations and Business Networks in the Southern Neighborhood EBSOMED" in coordination with Businessmed. She holds a Ph.D. degree in Linguistics from Ottawa University.