

## International Education Market Insight: Middle East, Africa and Turkey

September 2021

### Summary

The Middle East, Africa, and Turkey markets are dynamic and complex, with many diverse opportunities for the Victorian education sector. Countries in focus include: the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Kenya, and Turkey.

Education ideas focusing on high tech and innovation supporting the future of jobs and skills in the UAE and Saudi Arabia receive substantial government support and funding through accelerator programs. In partnership with DFAT and Austrade, and as a major sponsor, the Victorian Government sees Expo 2020 Dubai as the key platform for promoting international trade, investment, and education in 2021-22. The event will run from 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022.

In Africa, the expansion of the Victorian Government's Global Education Network to Kenya presents an opportunity to promote Victoria's capabilities and showcase how Victorian education providers and EdTech firms can support learners across Africa. Egypt is also an emerging market of interest for transnational education (TNE).

### Recent successes for Victoria

There is a renewed focus on research commercialisation in the Gulf region to increase academic and commercial research output and shape an R&D ecosystem. VGTI Dubai organized the inaugural 'UAE Victoria Research and Innovation Forum' in June 2021. This explored digital health and medical technology opportunities, including potential partnerships to position Victorian expertise at the centre of this research commercialisation drive. The forum was received exceptionally well and there are several outcomes in the pipeline.

### Current Market Status

#### Coronavirus response

UAE and Saudi Arabia lead GCC's post-COVID economic recovery and both economies are poised for a solid economic rebound. In the UAE, 92 per cent of the population have received one dose and 82 per cent of the population are now fully vaccinated. COVID-19 infections have significantly declined, with less than 400 new infections reported on average each day.

In Turkey, a full economic recovery from the pandemic is expected to take time, considering high levels of corporate and international debt, tighter monetary conditions, high inflation and rolled back government support <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> OECD Economic Surveys: Turkey 2021

## Education sector

The UAE is one of the more established markets in the region and remains an attractive option for investors, education providers and students searching for international education. Saudi Arabia is going through a rapid transformation of its higher education sector, and the Ministry of Education is working on a plan to attract prestigious foreign universities to open branch campuses in the country.

There is a concerted effort among regional higher education institutions (particularly in Saudi Arabia, UAE, Turkey, Qatar, and Egypt) to improve their standings in international rankings. Increased research activity and corporate sector partnerships helped establish several well-funded innovation and technology accelerators and funding programs in recent years.

Turkey was the second-largest student source country to Australia from the Middle East, behind Saudi Arabia in 2019. There is an opportunity to position Victoria as Turkish students' destination of choice in Australia when international borders reopen. Growing and well-funded private school education ecosystem in the Turkish market also brings significant opportunities for Victorian EdTech companies.

## **Regional Spotlight:**

### Kenya

Private investors have been venturing into the education sector to capitalise on the growing demand for quality education to respond to additional needs of the labour market for talent. As a result, the number of private schools in Kenya steadily increased more than two-fold in the last six years, showing a willingness to pay in the market for quality education.

Kenya will hold a general election in August 2022, which will bring changes for all elected positions within the Government, including members of parliament and the presidency.

The Victorian Government is liaising with various government agencies, developing industry linkages, and opening up communication channels to explore TVET opportunities in re-skilling the workforce and demand-driven skills training.

## **Opportunities**

- **Expo2020:** The Victorian Government is the Platinum Sponsor for the Australian pavilion at Expo2020. Through conferences, theme weeks, and Australian Pavilion business programming, Expo2020 offers opportunities for Victorian education providers to connect with key regional stakeholders and government agencies to explore and build collaborative partnership opportunities. Expo2020 also provides a channel for engagement with business delegations, international education and business participants from other corners of the world such as Southeast Asia, South Asia, Europe and Africa. On the topics, themes, discussions, and participation at Expo 2020 and for more information, please refer to [Expo Events Calendar](#) and the official website for [the Australian Pavilion at Expo 2020](#).

- Egypt is a growing market for technical training and transnational partnerships. In the new administrative capital outside of Cairo, several universities from Canada, UK and USA have been approved to establish international branch campuses.

**Contact and further information**

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