REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION

NATIONAL REPORT

2004-2008

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INTRODUCTION

The current report tries to give a comprehensive view about the most significant advances made by the education system over the last four years (2004-2008).It also traces past investments and assesses their impact on the development and goals of the education system.

The methodology adopted in this report revolves around two targets:

The first target is to give a clear, precise and global idea about the nature of the development recorded while highlighting the specific features, needs and priorities of every sector.

The second target is to focus on the comprehensive aspect of the reforms of the various sectors to ensure a thorough development of the education system.

This report addresses with clarity and exhaustiveness the recorded aspects of the development of education, the ultimate goal being to improve all the components of the education system and thus provide inclusive, quality education for all.

A national committee composed of representatives from the various sectors and structures involved in education has been responsible for writing this report while the coordination has been ensured by the Ministry of Education and Training.

The report has tried to mirror the specific features and orientations of the information provided to the committee. It explores the different aspects of the reform, the various challenges and stakes in this field and reflects the endeavours made to upgrade this vital sector, which is an absolute national priority.

PART I
EDUCATION AND TRAINING : CHALLENGES OF THE 21st CENTURY

I-Education and learning : Development and achievements

1. Education, a national priority and a strategic choice.

Sound steps achieved in quantitative projects have led to a significant qualitative change in the Tunisian education system. The most notable achievements are universal compulsory schooling for the 6 year olds (99%) as well as schooling provided to children aged 6 to 16(92%), boys and girls equally, in rural and urban areas .

Moreover, an improved structure of the various components of the education system has been guaranteed, to raise quality indicators towards international standards.

This orientation appears clearly in the legal framework of the Education Act (N° 80 -23 july2002), in the decree about school life (October 2004) and in the School for Tomorrow's presidential programme (2002-2007).

These documents have enabled to conceive a framework likely to attain qualitative goals, primarily to improve quality education and learning for all without any exception.

This improvement aims at reinforcing the capacity of the education system to become an "integrative system" able to provide an" educational service" to all the social classes in conjunction with the demands of the new education reforms and the specific needs of the target audience.

The Tunisian education system has upgraded education to an absolute national priority and has given the right for education and learning to all citizens.

Article 1 of the Education Act states that: ***« education is an absolute national priority and schooling is compulsory for all children from the age of six to sixteen. Education is a fundamental right guaranteed to all Tunisians regardless of gender, social origin, skin colour or religion .Education is incumbent upon the citizens and the community ».***

Moreover, « compulsory education » and free tuition go hand in hand as mentioned in article 4 **« *The State provides free education to all those who are of school age, and gives all students an equal chance of enjoying this right, provided that schooling is normally pursued according to current regulations and procedures. It is incumbent on the State to provide the conditions that will enable pupils with special needs to exercise their right to education* ».**

The State guarantees favourable conditions to children with specific needs and helps those from economically disadvantaged homes to ensure education for all children.

1.1. Compulsory education until age16

To ensure universal schooling for all children below 16 and to avoid early school dropout, many drastic measures, commitments and mechanism have been implemented .This has enabled to:

- ☐ Provide a minimum set of essential life skills for all students.
- ☐ Prevent falling back in illiteracy.
- ☐ Improve the education system outcome and efficiency by combating boys and girls' early school dropout.

1.2. The pre-primary year : a component of basic education

As pre-education is considered to play a crucial role in children's cognitive and social development and their preparation to school life, the Education Act makes it clear in article 18 that : ***« the preparatory year is a constituent element of basic education»*** and in article 17 ***« the State provides a preparatory year education to all children aged five and six with a view to complementarity between State instruction and local groups, associations and private sector initiatives* ».** In conformity with the principle of equity between the regions and in collaboration with the private sector, the Ministry is striving to enable all children aged 5 to attend a preparatory year by 2009.The public sector has focused mainly on rural and disadvantaged areas where it is generally difficult and sometimes impossible for the private sector to intervene.

The table below indicates the improvement recorded in the public sector to achieve the target goal of a full generalised preparatory year for the 5 year olds in 2009:

	2004 / 2005	2007 / 2008
Schools	1 080	1 750
Groups	1 136	1 859
Children	20 036	31 869
Teachers	1 136	1 859
Average children per group	18,0	17,1
Ratio of students enrolled in primary schools who have attended a preparatory year	62,3 %	67,7 %

The Ministry of Education and Training has provided classrooms in urban and non urban schools to encourage the private sector and associations to create preparatory classes.

This orientation has enabled to:

- ☐ Ensure a comprehensive education system in Tunisia as well as a capacity to attain inclusive education.
- ☐ Achieve efficiency in education thanks to a generalised preparatory year which entails the improvement of school results in the future.
- ☐ Achieve equity and promote the principle of equal opportunities to all children so that they benefit from generalised pre-schooling
- ☐ Keep to international commitments in Education For All (Dakar 2000), especially early childhood support through broader preschool education and better services.

Coranic schools « Kouttabs »used to play a significant role in the reinforcement of preschool education. Reforms have enabled to increase the number of these schools from 378 in 1987 to 961 currently with a coverage rate of 63,5 %. These « Koutabs » host 25 194 children, 11 138 of whom are girls. They are run by 971 « mouaddibs » (teachers) among whom 121 hold degrees in islamic sciences, and 60 hold university degrees.

In order to implement the presidential project«Tomorrow Tunisia » which targets a full generalised preparatory by 2009, a programme has been launched to further support « Kouttabs » so that they fulfil their educational mission which is to consolidate the noble values of religion. This programme also aims at reaching about 1000 coranic schools by the end of2009, ,thus increasing the coverage rate of pre-school children from 7,5 % in 2006 to 9,5 % in 2011.

To give a greater importance to this sector, a national mapping of « Kouttabs » has become necessary. This map will be set up in collaboration with the governors in order to determine the needs of this sector and continue the training of « mouaddibs » (teachers) among the graduates in religious science and Islamic philosophy.

A programme which sticks to the specific features of teaching Coran in Kottabs has been elaborated by the Ministry of Education and Training and targets the 5 year old children who attend « Kouttabs .

1.3. Inclusive education: a strategic orientation

The national programme for the integration of disabled children represents another aspect of equal schooling opportunities offered to all children. This resolution has been reinforced by many decisions made by the highest authority in the State, who has prioritised among his political and social choices, the necessity to provide care and watch the development of all citizens, without exclusion or marginalisation.

As a result, a national programme for the integration of disabled children was launched .

At the beginning of 2003 / 2004 school year, many «integrative schools » were launched in most areas. Besides, a map of these schools is developed in collaboration with the various sectors (public / civil society / specialised structures …). Gradually, integration will concern the preparatory year classes which are open to disabled 5-year olds in integrative schools.

The table below shows the evolution of data concerning the integration of children with specific needs in regular primary schools:

	2004 / 2005	2007 / 2008
Schools including children with disabilities	1 294	1 040
Number of students	3 112	2 616
Integrative schools	162	265
Children with disabilities in integrative schools	806	1 134

For this programme to be successful, efforts have been made to :

- Train trainers (25 inspectors) in the field of pedagogic coaching of teachers teaching in inclusive classes ,
- Provide favourable learning conditions for children with specific needs so that they enjoy the same rights to education as other children :construction of multi-purpose classes, appropriate spaces and sanitation facilities.
- Increase teachers' supervision in integrative schools, upgrade their professional competencies and provide teaching guides: 4 guides about the various disabilities have been produced for teachers and another for parents, within the Programme of Quality Improvement in the Education System (PAQSET II).Two others guides were produced in February 2008: a reference guide and a user guide.
- Provide appropriate conditions for children with specific needs. As the map of integrative schools is being extended, 48 regular schools have been prepared to host this category of children in addition to the 56 integrative schools that already host the preparatory year .

1.4. Educational priority schools: a reinforcement of the principles of equity and equal opportunities.

The concept of« priority educational schools » comes from a global strategic orientation which aims at improving the internal outcome of the education system and at ensuring **« quality education »** for all**.** One of the most important features of this orientation is the implementation of the principle of positive discrimination in all schools by giving additional support to the various schools that need it.

Hence, priority education schools represent the « front lines » that reinforce the principles advocated by the Tunisian education system and which are clearly expressed by the capacity to provide quality education for all and to secure the best conditions to enjoy this right, in conformity with the principle of equity and equality.

To boost this orientation, it has been decided to:

☐ Update the map of integrative schools: the Ministry has launched an evaluation based on indicators to make a list of 100 priority education middle schools and a new list of 553 priority education primary schools.

☐ Reinforce students' coaching and support: in order to have more efficient coaching tools, a guide has been elaborated for the primary school teachers with ways to support students facing learning difficulties.

☐ Reinforce training in ways to deal with students facing learning difficulties: in the Programme of Improvement of Quality in the Education System (PAQSET II), a special allowance was given to 100 priority education schools to fund projects targeting the internal outcome of these schools. Moreover, training sessions were organised for heads of schools to help them make the best of the allowances.

Investments allocated to this programme reached about10 billions between 2004 and 2007. This sum enabled to increase the intake capacity in priority education primary and middle schools, to improve working conditions in schools thanks to the construction of new buildings, school canteens and dormitories, as well as the purchase of educational and pedagogic equipment.

A national diagnosis of the current situation in those schools was made and was followed by a national action plan for 2011.The table below shows its most significant aspects:

Field	Theme	Goals
SCHOOL LIFE	Cultural activities	- Reinforce students' learning skills. - Reinforce the structure of cultural activities .
	School canteens	- Enable students from priority areas to access school canteens.
	Social actions	- Reinforce health care, social and pedagogic support of students.
	Counselling services	- Help students overcome their difficulties.
	School projects	- Implement goals assigned for school outcome and quality of learning .
Pedagogic measures	Additional support	- Give an efficient support and ensure a qualitative monitoring. - Conceive activities that help overcome difficulties faced.
	Mentoring	- Establish communication between teachers in the two cycles of basic education. - help students in the 6th grade adapt to the school level in the 7th grade
	School project	- Be able to conceive a school project (representation, achievement and assessment).
Pedagogic measures	Intake capacity	- Build ordinary classes, multi-purpose classes, study rooms , dormitories.
	Maintenance	- Ensure maintenance in primary and middle schools.
	Equipment	- Supply computer science equipment - Supply ICT equipment .

2. Achieving quality education goals

The Tunisian education system has achieved quantitative objectives, especially at the level of Basic Education. This is a clear sign that the Tunisian Education system has gone beyond school generalisation.

Over time, there has been an abundance of educational and pedagogic projects aiming at improving the general outcome of the education system. The years 2004-2008- which coincided with the end of the Xth plan of education and the beginning of the XIth plan represent a benchmark in education.

Indeed, important measures were taken to complement the new education reform which focuses on the bridges between education and vocational

training. Other measures were taken to foster computer science, school life so that the outcome of the education system improves and is in conformity with international pedagogic and managerial standards.

Thanks to these innovations and measures, education has achieved important steps towards inclusive education that takes into consideration cultural, social, healthcare and economic features of children and regions.

As a result, a qualitative change at the level of goals, curricula, working tools, challenges and stakes appears clearly in the Education Act, which, in comparison with the previous legal texts , targets for the first time, one unique principle : leading the Tunisian education system to " quality".

This qualitative change is noticeable through:

2.1. Sustained child care:

Childhood is given sustained care as this sector represents one of the future priorities. Structural and legal reforms, as well as measures are a proof of the increased care provided to childhood. Children rights are also reinforced, and widespread on a larger scale in a strategic vision that supports the principle of best child care.

The second 2002 / 2011 decennial plan for childcare highlights the efforts made to boost this orientation.

Major principles adopted for child care in the 2nd decennial plan (2002 / 2011):

- Giving children the opportunity to further participate in decision making by showing respect to their ideas, taking into consideration their age and cognitive development and tailoring programmes according to their needs
- Working towards the implementation of non-discrimination between children to reduce gaps between regions, mainly rural, urban and semi urban and securing equal opportunities in terms of care, assistance, development and protection.
- Ensuring a good start to every child in education, health and care.
- Considering the noble principles about children's rights as stated in international conventions especially the UN press release issued on May 10th 2002 about "A WORLD FIT FOR CHILDREN".
- Enhancing the role of families and more specifically mothers for the important role they play in the development of children .

Childhood care has been enhanced thanks to the development of health care services in schools and at university. Thus, healthcare has become a pillar that offers the best conditions for improved efficiency in education and learning.

School health care

Objectives

In Secondary education and Higher education, health care is exclusively preventive and free. It aims at looking after students' health so that health problems don't hamper schooling and that learning doesn't disrupt students' health.

Services

School health services cover all state and private schools, ranging from pre-school to university as well as vocational training schools and institutions dealing with disabled children and children with specific needs.

School health services comprise :

1. Constant components
   - Hygiene and security supervision in schools
   - Epidemiologic supervision of absenteeism, school eviction and epidemiologic surveys
   - Periodical medical examinations of newly enrolled children in schools, students in the 3rd grade basic education and 3rd grade secondary education, repeaters at all grades and students with chronic diseases.
   - immunization: (d.T. Polio – BCG – measles for girls in the 6th grade basic education)or anti -VHB vaccine of students in medical and paramedical streams).
   - Health education integrated in school curricula, health education sessions, the celebration of national ,maghrebi ,international health days, or through a network of schools affiliated to health education .

2. Seasonal components
   - Medical examinations of students asking for exemption from sport sessions
   - Health coverage in camps
   - Health coverage on national exam days
   - Health coverage for the new school year
3. Support programmes target continuous training, supervision, monitoring and research.
4. Specific national educational programmes :

- The national screening programme for refraction and hearing problems
- The national programme of oral hygiene
- The national health programme for teenagers
- The national mental health programme
- The national reproduction health in secondary schools and Higher education
- The social action programme
- The monitoring programme of transfer to specialised hospitals
- The national programme of integrating children with disabilities in education

2.2. Combating school dropout.

2.2.1. In the First cycle of basic education,.

▪ Providing school mentoring to students facing school failure:

In line with the orientations aiming at ensuring quality education to students and giving them more opportunities to succeed, the Ministry has allocated two weekly hours for students' mentoring. These sessions have been integrated in the primary school teachers' timetable to ensure efficiency.

These coaching measures represent:

- Two additional weekly hours to all classes in all priority school classes in order to help them improve their internal outcome and thus reduce the number of students facing failure.
- Four additional weekly hours for all repeaters in the 4th grade primary education. These sessions are devoted to additional support in subjects taken at the regional exam (Arabic, French and Science)
- Two additional weekly hours for individual coaching of disabled children who are enrolled in regular integrative schools.

▪ Special attention to school equipment

In order to improve the internal outcome of primary schools and enable them to fulfil their missions efficiently, especially to boost school activities, more consideration has been given to available spaces in schools, their equipment, maintenance and extension.

This attention aims at answering schools' various needs due to continuously renewed challenges and the necessity to equip schools with multi-purpose classrooms, either new ones, or rooms made available as a result of the decreasing number of students in many primary schools.

▪ Deploying teachers in areas where the failure rate exceeds the national rate

Faithful to the principle of equal opportunities for all and striving to eradicate school dropout, many measures have been taken in regions where the school dropout rate exceeds the national rate:

- Rewards to teachers in priority area schools: when they move to other areas, this criterion is taken into consideration. This measure is a supplementary incentive for teachers so that they spend more years in these schools.
- Housing provided for staff
- Improved working conditions , teachers' pedagogic supervision and regular inspection of teachers,
  - An expanded network of school catering

  The Ministry is pursuing incentives in this sector so that students from disadvantaged backgrounds, mainly those in priority educational schools are served meals in schools. Indeed, the number of school canteens in all regions of the country has reached 2 214 out of 4 507 schools, a coverage rate of 49,1 % for 230 000 students.

2.2.2. In the 2nd cycle of basic education.

The Ministry has taken a number of measures to reduce school dropout rates in the second cycle of basic education:

The most important measures are the following:

-Reinforcement of social cells in schools to prevent early school dropout

This requires to consider cases that hamper students' success, mainly in priority area schools and those where the programme of civic education is reinforced. Besides, mobile cells have been created.

- Increase counselling services and boost them through:
  - Students' educational, social and psychological support, the improvement of relationships in schools , and a better communication between students, their social environment and their families.
  - Immediate support provided to any student who seeks help, information or orientation.
  - Care provided to students who face personal, social or school difficulties in order to help them construct their personality and recognize their capacities to succeed at school and in life
  - Space availability so that students can express their personal concerns.

Counselling Services

- Counselling services were about 252 at the beginning of the 2007-2008 school year.
- 5 214 sessions were organised during the 2006-2007 school year by partners involved in this action (career advisers, public health physicians and social workers).
- The highest rate are students in the 7th grade basic education (51,11 %) and 1st grade secondary education. (31,57 %).
- In collaboration with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Solidarity with Tunisians abroad, the Ministry of Education and Training intends to increase the number of counselling services in schools in order to reach 369 at the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year.

- An open day is organised in the first week of every school year for students in the 7th grade basic education and 1st grade secondary education in order to help them integrate easily in their new school environment. This day is characterised by its entertaining aspect and varied cultural activities. Students and their parents familiarise with the school and teachers and establish real communication.

- Schools with excellent results sponsor those with results below national average rate . Sponsors can:
  -Organise open sessions for students from various schools.
  -Organise training sessions supervised by pedagogic inspectors and run by teachers from various schools. The training offers real examples of support, remediation and ways to build training grids.
- Increase the number of school dormitories and their basic furbishing to improve students' housing conditions
- Reinforce school transportation by granting it particular attention thanks to the help of specialised structures, mainly in rural areas.

Career advisers

They fulfil many missions not only inside but also outside schools:

Information :

- Inform students in the 7th grade basic education about basic technical education and preparatory technical schools.
- Inform and sensitize students in the 1st and 2nd grades secondary education to school paths and streams
- Hold meetings with parents and students in the 7th grade basic education.
- Hold meetings with parents and students in the 1st, 2nd and 4th grade secondary education with a focus on the first two levels.
- Take part in the national and regional Higher Education orientation days.
- Produce digital tools, such as leaflets and posters for students in the 7th grade basic education- 1st and 2nd year secondary education.126 tools were made during the 2006-2007 school year.

- **Workshops :**
  - The impact of violence on school dropout,
  - Appropriate behaviour with teenagers in schools,
  - Experiences in priority education middle schools.
- **Training sessions :**

Career advisers conduct training sessions about the following themes:

- Teenagers' behaviour at school
- Pedagogic communication and group animation
- Educational mentoring and support to students facing school difficulties.
- Extra-curricular school activities.

Together with career advisers, 1 029 teachers have been given the mission to inform students on paths and streams offered in schools.

2.3. Improving quality indicators:

- In Primary education
  - As the student/teacher ratio is still decreasing, teachers' pedagogic outcome is improving
  - The ratio of students per class is improving significantly at all levels

-In Middle schools and secondary schools

To improve quality indicators, the Ministry has decided to:

- Reduce the size of classes/students and improve the quality of supervision.
- Choose 60 schools (24 middle schools + 24 secondary schools + 12 pilot secondary schools) to establish the network of excellence schools in order to upgrade the level of schools to international standards in terms of quality and profitability.

Reinforcing the culture of excellence

At the beginning of the 2007 / 2008 school year, 9 pilot middle schools were launched to offer gifted students early care that will allow them to pursue their studies in pilot schools in scientific, literary and art fields ,with competent and experienced teachers.. Thus, language teaching hours have been increased to encourage best students to join the Art section in pilot schools. Moreover, students can take one art subject (music, art or drama). The timing of art subjects has been increased to encourage students with recognized gifts to integrate art pilot schools

- Provide libraries, multi-purpose rooms as resource centres
- Acquire audio-visual facilities and provide students with a number of library books, reference documents as well as CDs .By 2011, an average of 5 books per students will be available in school libraries.
- Use comparative evaluations (PISA and TIMSS)as well as data they provide on curricula, teaching methods and types of evaluation to improve indicators as well as quantitative and qualitative outcome and ultimately match international norms in this field.

2.4. Improving teachers' initial training.

The improvement of teachers' initial training is tied to the improvement of their level of knowledge and also their professional competencies, to be tuned with top-performing countries in education and learning.

At the end of 2007, The Ministry of Education and Training organised an exam for university graduates who wished to become teachers. In March 2008, Teacher Training Institutes (IMEF) were launched and trained the first group of primary school teachers.
Programmes have been elaborated for these institutes in order to guarantee not only an academic training to candidates but also a pedagogic training in line with precise avant-garde requirements and criteria. This training will help to get closer to indicators in performing countries and will improve teaching-learning process as well as teaching and evaluation methods. These institutes will continue to enrol other categories working in education.

In line with the idea of reinforcing continuous training, the Ministry of Education and Training aims at improving teachers' pedagogic supervision through a better training of inspectors and a higher rate of supervision .The Ministry also encourages inspectors to carry out action research and make use of innovative methods and ideas.

2.5. Enhancing the quality of pedagogic supervision
This can be achieved by:
-Improving the rate of teachers' pedagogic supervision

- In primary education.

The rate of teachers' pedagogic supervision has increased gradually thanks to the new inspectors' training methods. Indeed, this ratio, in accordance with the targeted objectives, reached 120 teachers per inspector in 2007 / 2008

- In middle and secondary schools

In 2007 / 2008, the number of inspectors in middle and secondary schools reached 260 inspectors in all subjects, thus allowing a supervision rate of 198 teachers per inspector .This was made possible thanks to the first group of inspectors (134 inspectors)who got their degrees at the National Centre for training trainers in education(CENAFFE)

- Intensifying teachers' monitoring, supervision and pedagogic training
- Improving inspection methods and evaluation in order to adjust to pedagogic innovations
-Another group of primary education inspectors has been trained in the Area of teachers' supervision in integrative schools in order to improve their professional competences.
Together with regular inspections, a new form of inspection

"supervision visits", has been adopted for formative reasons .

- Support more expertise of inspectors by :
  - ✓ Starting « the project of the governorate » which will enable inspectors to diagnose the reality of the areas where they work
  - ✓ Publishing Action Research conducted by inspectors. Once published, these surveys will be distributed to inspectors and published on the inspectorate website.
  - ✓ Ensuring the word processing of assistance and inspection visits.

In 2007, the Ministry pursued the programme of initial and professional training of new groups of teachers trained to become inspectors in primary schools , in middle and secondary schools.

2.6. Adjusting and reinforcing curricula and instruction time :

The Ministry has taken a number of measures to adjust and reinforce programmes and instruction time so that time allocated to languages corresponds to that adopted in top-performing education systems:

-Introduction of Arabic in all sections of the baccalaureate.

-Reinforcement of English teaching hours for 7th, 8th and 9th grades of basic education, with an additional weekly group session. Students in these classes will thus be taught 3 hours per week.

-Timing in technological education will increase from one to one hour and a half in basic education

-Students are taught 3 hours of Science in the 2nd year of the science section.

-One hour of Philosophy is taught in all sections in the 3rd grade ,except for the Art section which is allocated 2 teaching hours.

-One additional session is devoted to economy and another to management in the 3rd grade Economy and Management section.

-A new timing has been introduced in the 4th grade Economy and Management section where 5 hours of Economy and 6 hours of management are taught.

3. Supporting quality education and improving its methods

3.1. Adjusting instruction time :

Instruction time is considered to be the most important component of quality education and learning. Thus, a broad national survey has been undertaken in the 1st cycle of basic education. This survey has enabled to consider a new weekly timing according to standards that aim at:

- Adjusting weekly timing to international standards, as follows :

School level	Current weekly instruction time	Former weekly instruction time
1st grade	20 hours	22 hours and a half
2nd grade	+ 02 hours for coaching	
3rd grade	25 hours	30 hours
4th grade		
5th grade	30 hours	30 hours
6th grade		

This orientation allows to :

- Find a balance between school life and social life, especially in the light of the evolution of families.
- Give more spare time for the students to practise sports, cultural and recreational activities.
- Consider the possibility of the one shift system to avoid to students - especially those who live in rural areas- the constraints of going to schools many times a day,

All these innovations have increased students' capacity to succeed in their studies, and thus to improve school results at both the qualitative and quantitative levels.

3.2. Evaluation as a teaching tool

With the introduction of competency -based instruction, a new evaluation system more tuned to the requirements of this approach has been adopted. Marks and subjects coefficients have given way to a new form of evaluation which is no longer based on discrimination between subjects but rather on:

-Better success rates through students' school career and a balanced, global education system.

-The conviction that evaluation supports teaching and learning and allows to prospect the difficulties faced by every learner ,thus enabling the elaboration of remedial tools (formative evaluation…).

-The evaluation of students' work and the forecast of their results based on a comparison made on the progression of their school outcome at successive periods. This form of evaluation is more efficient than the comparative judgment made between students' results .

To implement the above mentioned orientations, schooling has been divided in 3 teaching levels in the primary cycle. A homogeneous evaluation system has been added to enable learners to move from one cycle to another .This system is based on formative evaluation in the 1st grade of each cycle and an exam at the end of the same year. To avoid failure and non justified repetition, the condition of "success only if monitored" has been adopted. This approach, which refers to objective indicators, has contributed to the improvement of the global success rate in the various grades of primary education.

This decision has also been completed by a unified regional exam at the end of the 4th grade basic education (end of the second cycle).

In order to examine objectively the degree of learners' acquisition of competencies and skills necessary to successfully continue their studies, this exam is based on the essential subjects taught (Arabic, French, Maths, introduction to Science).

Additional measures have been taken to support repeaters and prepare them for this exam with 4 weekly sessions added to their timetables, meant to reinforce their chances of success. The implementation of this decision started at the beginning of the 2006 / 2007 school year (June 2007 session).

The new evaluation system has enabled a steady improvement of the global success rate through the whole school career.

3.3. Mentoring as a tool to improve school results :

This additional support reflects the principle of positive discrimination as a tool to improve both students and school results. It is, in fact, one of the aspects of the achievement of instructional quality. This decision concerns:

- All priority education schools (600 schools out of 4508) which will benefit two additional weekly hours for all their classes. These sessions will be devoted to the consolidation of students' acquisitions after diagnosing their difficulties.
- Inclusive classes in integrative schools for disabled children will be allocated two additional weekly hours to satisfy their specific learning needs according to individualised instruction.
- 1st and 2nd grades will be allocated two additional weekly hours each to reinforce reading, writing and maths This assistance aims at helping students acquire basic competencies required to pursue further successful studies .

- Repeaters in grade 4 basic education will be allocated 4 additional weekly hours in languages and science.

3.4. Matching reform of curricula and teaching approaches with innovations :

- Once the three degrees of primary education covered, efforts have been made to start a new structure in secondary education :

The first period is a one year common core and aims at reinforcing the prerequisites of students in middle schools. During this period, students' skills are improved so that every learner can have a clear knowledge of his/her own profile and choose the appropriate path.
The second period also lasts one year and concerns the sections proposed to learners :Art, Science, Economy and Services, and Communication technologies section.
The 3rd period which lasts two years pertains to one of the sections proposed to learners: Art, Maths, Science, Technical science, Computer science and Economy and Management section. A wide choice of specialties in Higher Education and vocational training are available after baccalaureate.
General education preparatory cycle provides students with knowledge and competencies as this cycle represents the main thread between primary and secondary education. Indeed, learners move from the level of acquiring learning tools to the construction of their own knowledge. Besides, this cycle ties the education system to vocational training as school is considered a natural bridge towards training .Indeed, learners' innate gifts are activated, their practical competencies are improved and they can reach the highest levels of specialties thanks to job opportunities offered.

❖ The implementation of the principle of equity and the integration of all categories of learners:

Numerous measures have been taken to implement the principle of equity between students. Some of these measures take into consideration the specific needs of learners who face school difficulties caused by physical, mental or psychological disabilities ,so that these learners can easily be integrated and succeed in their studies.
Some of these measures are based mainly on:
-An adjustment of school conditions and timing
-The use of new educational tools
-A theoretical and practical teacher training to help teachers face all

kinds of teaching situations and elaborate adequate learning and efficient strategies .

Other measures are based on learners' personal profiles and specific qualities and can be classified in many categories. Among these learners, some master abstract concepts perfectly well whereas others have a practical intelligence, others appreciate Arts, and others have high physical skills .

In addition to the increasing number of sport activities, these measures concern the establishment of two additional types of schools in the middle cycle:

- Pioneer middle schools whose mission is to enable gifted learners to be well supervised so that they can pursue their studies in pilot schools in scientific, literary and art fields .The curriculum of these schools is the same as in regular schools but learners have a reinforced instruction time in languages and they also have the possibility to choose an artistic subject while benefiting of increased teaching hours. In 2007/2008, 9 schools were launched and this trend will be progressively generalised to the whole country.
- Preparatory technical schools whose mission is to allow gifted children with practical capacities to have a general and technical education in order to join vocational training sections with the possibility to be reoriented towards general education.

These schools are characterised by the specific organisation of studies as well as by appropriate content and teaching tools.

Preparatory technical schools

Education is of great importance in society which now claims quality education for all, efficiency and equity between learners so that the learning pace is respected and that compulsory education is rooted in reality. Since 2007/2008, to implement the new structure in education and training, the Ministry of Education and Training has decided to launch 32 technical schools. 5 116 students are enrolled in these schools, and deployed as follows: 1 686 students in mechanics, 1 424 in construction and 1 506 in services.

The number of these schools will increase to 56 and will reach 88 schools at the beginning of 2008 – 2009.

Students enrol in these schools for two years after completion of grade 7 basic education and are required to have scientific and technical skills.

Technical basic education aims at giving students full training that links general education (languages and social science) with a technical training. This type of learning ensures the preparation of students to social and economic life.

❖ The reform of curricula and teaching tools:

In order to implement the orientations defined at the end of the century, the Ministry has designed new curricula for all levels. They have been implemented gradually, every year, as follows:

School year	Middle cycle programme	Secondary education programme
2005 -2006		2nd grade
2006 - 2007	7th grade	3rd grade
2007 - 2008	8th grade	4th grade

The programme of the 9th grade basic education will start at the beginning of the (2008 – 2009) school year .

We can mention the specific features of these new programmes.

- Commitment to put the learner at the core of the learning process as defined by the national education reference handbook.
- Conformity with the national strategic orientations in education which are based on the reinforcement of language teaching, science and the reform of the current pedagogic approaches.
- Harnessing information and communication technologies for the quality of the learning content and the teaching tools and also because they are a source of information and knowledge.

Computer science has become a compulsory subject taught from the 3rd grade of basic education until secondary classes.

Digital tools correspond to the spirit, content and approach of new programmes and are of great help to the learning process. However, hard copies are still being used,

- The development of evaluation tools

The main innovations are:

- A regional exam in the 4th grade basic education. This exam comprises subjects taught in basic education and allows to assess the basic level of students in languages and science.
- Alternative assessment such as individual projects and portfolios. Many teachers use this method as a personal initiative to evaluate learners in addition to oral or written tests. However, the new programmes in basic technical schools are officially using this type of evaluation in all subjects.

3.5. Improving the quality of school activities and services:

One of the goals of quality education is thorough eradication of school dropout. This can happen only if a variety of activities, improved services, a broader opening onto the surrounding environment and more innovations are offered in schools.

Thus, efforts have been made to improve school life so that schools become an appropriate space for students' social development, the improvement of their personality and gifts and an environment where learners can practise life in the community.

Among the numerous measures that have been taken to boost quality education :

-The elaboration of a legal framework in conformity with the development of the various aspects (decree that organises school life).

- Structures that facilitate communication and dialogue in schools, such as teachers' pedagogic council and the school board.

-The election of class representatives (5^{th} and 6^{th} grade) who will help to reinforce the participation of students in school life .

-Expansion of the network of cultural clubs to offer activities that boost the teaching/learning process.

-The reinforcement of schools' openness on their environment in order to improve communication

-The development of leisure activities to enhance the mission of schools and enable them to go beyond their educational limits.

-Boosting dialogue and communication in schools to discuss all education-related issues

-Enabling heads of schools to take initiative, be creative and collaborate with education service providers in order to elaborate a "school project" in line with the effective requirements of schools and the specific features of their social and geographic environment.

-Spreading clubs dedicated to culture, sports, health care, road safety and the environment in all schools and in partnership with organisations and associations.

-The reinforcement of cultural activities in schools and a revision of their programmes to meet the interests of students.

-Broadening the network of environmental schools, supporting the national programme of « school environmental gardens » and collaborating with environmental associations.

School councils

School life is being given special care as it represents a framework for students' personality, growth and gifts blossoming as well as a space for the construction of their personality. In order to grant a greater importance to school life and its educational, cultural and entertaining dimensions, it has been decided to create school councils in all middle and secondary schools.

These councils participate in:

- Fostering a wider participation of partners in the educational field : administration, students and parents as well as creating new traditions of a culture of dialogue and support between the various partners .
- Boosting dialogue through forums in order to reinforce communication between the various partners inside schools.
- Organising regional conferences for the representatives of students in school councils. These conferences tackle the importance of dialogue

Besides, The Ministry has elaborated a monitoring grid in order to evaluate:

- The level of attainment of objectives targeted by the decree that organises school life
- The difficulties faced and ways to quickly find solutions to reduce them.
- The development of a coordination tool between the central administration and the regions and ways to facilitate the immediate transfer of information in order to intervene when necessary. This action requires a digital application (underway) to ensure the monitoring of school activities.

4.Implementing a knowledge -based society:

4.1. School facilities :

One computer per class is now a reality in all teaching cycles. In 2007, this increase reached 15 236 computers, a rate of 0,70 computers for 25 students as shown in the table below:

LEVEL	NB OF COMPUTERS PER CLASS
Primary	0,81
General, technical and vocational middle schools	0,39
Secondary	0,85
TOTAL	**0,70**

The computer equipment coverage rate has reached 100%in middle and secondary schools. In primary schools, this rate is about 70%.

4.1.1 Planning to renew computers in schools periodically

4.1.2Maintenance of computers: availability of spare parts necessary for the maintenance of computers and networks in schools

4.1.3.Increasing the number of INBMI regional centres(Institut National de bureautique et de microinformatique)

4.1.4.Continuing the connection of schools to Internet and improving the quality of this connection.

4.2 Integrating ICT in education by:

- Developing the services related to the network by continuing the generalised digital space in 30schools. This system was developed and generalised in all middle and secondary schools through a terms of reference .
- Enhancing the services of the administration: the educational portal (BAWABA) has been conceived, updated and is now in use. Its main role is to inform users (publishing ministerial orders). It has also published a thesaurus of schools and enabled new links to statistical data of the education system.
- Giving Internet equipped vehicles to remote areas .In order to use this equipment appropriately, (computer and Internet mobile laboratories) ,an action plan has been set up with general objectives, a strategy and human resources.

4. 3.Finalising all the foundations of the virtual school :

- Broadening the network thanks to interactive lessons and improved Arabic sessions directed at the children of Tunisians abroad.
- Reinforcing the network of tutors : 4 teachers were recruited in 2007/2008 to consolidate the team of tutors .
- Providing mentoring lessons for students who are taking national exams. The « virtual school » has organised forums on the website “let’s prepare the baccalaureate together”, where discussions and remedial sessions are organised about most school subjects.
- The content of school subjects is available on Internet .It is regularly updated and supplementary resources are added.

5. Empowering regions :

5.1. An increasing role of regions in school life

Decentralisation is reinforced with more autonomy given to Regional Directions (DREF) in managing and monitoring pedagogic projects. Provision is made by the Ministry of Education and Training to enable regions to elaborate their own educational projects in line with their own reality and indicators As they monitor and assess their own projects, regions will become active educational poles .

In his perspective, decree N°463-2007, dated March 6 ,2007 was published, concerning the organisation and prerogatives of the Regional Directorates of the Ministry of Education and Training . Among the novelties ,we can mention:

- The Regional Director is promoted to « Director General of Central Administration ».
- Broader prerogatives for the Regional Director who is responsible for the supervision of school results, the outcome of teachers as well as that of teaching and training .
- The implementation of the « pedagogic council » of the regional direction in order to follow up on educational programmes ,mainly regional projects, teacher training programmes and trainer training programmes.
- Monitoring educational projects as well as the outcome of school and staff .

Decree N° 1218-2006 dated 24 April 2006 allows the creation of consultative councils in education and vocational training at the level of the district. These councils examine and coordinate the orientations of the district regional projects.

In 2007, the training was pursued for heads of central administration and regional directors and tackled decentralisation, strategic planning, project management, piloting changes and innovations, group animation and communication. This training is based on modules conceived for this purpose.

5.2. Towards a more efficient partnership between schools and the community :

In line with the orientations of the decree that organises school life (October 2004), school councils were established to develop working methodology, and improve approaches according to national educational goals. Moreover, their main mission is to elaborate school projects, assess and adapt them accordingly. These councils can involve cultural, scientific, social or sport associations that are active in schools.

At the end of each term, the Ministry monitors activities, assesses the impact of the interaction and cooperation of schools with organisations and associations and takes the necessary steps

In 2007, the Ministry started a training course for school heads in council piloting (school councils, education and pedagogic councils). Newly appointed heads took part in this training course. In 2007 and 2008, regional training conferences were organised in collaboration with UNICEF in Tunisia for the supervision staff (inspectors, career advisers, primary school heads). These conferences aimed at preparing this staff to better take part in school life and to develop services.

To stimulate the participation of organisations and associations in schools, the Ministry of Education and Training is enhancing partnership with civil society through the activation of collaboration and partnership agreements with UNFT (the National Union of Tunisian Women) , OTEF(Tunisian Organisation for Education and the Family),ONJS (National Organisation of Tunisian Scouts),ANPR (National Association for road accidents), ATJS (Tunisian Association of Youth and Science), AEASU (Association of mutual support against school accidents)…..

6. Promoting private education

Private schools investment are fostered in the two cycles of basic education thanks to the reform of the decree pertaining to the creation, organisation and management of private schools (decree N°486 , 2008),

- Primary schools are encouraged to start a 2nd cycle in basic education (12 schools have already adopted this orientation),
- Private investors are encouraged to launch primary schools in governorates with no primary institutions

-More inspection visits, assistance and training of teachers in private schools are recommended.

-Incentives provided by the Ministry to private investors in this field by simplifying procedures have increased the number of private primary schools. Indeed, in 2007 / 2008, the number of these schools reached 74, an increase of 16 schools in comparison with 2004 / 2005. As a result, 17 024 students enrolled in private institutions against 15406 in 2006 / 2007 and 13 282 in 2004 / 2005. The increasing number of students was accompanied by an increased number of teachers.

As for the 2nd cycle of basic education and secondary education, the number of schools shifted from 268 in 2004 / 2005 to 295 in 2006 / 2007 and to 302 in 2007 / 2008. This increase goes together with a slight increase of the number of students, notably for the decreasing number of school dropouts from public schools who have joined vocational schools.

II-Education and learning ; results, lessons learnt and perspectives

1. Results and lessons learnt

Over the past years, education has been confronted with formidable challenges and stakes in new programmes and innovative orientations aiming at attaining quality in education and teaching. The results and lessons help assess the reforms, reinforce positive results and also overcome the difficulties.

1.1. Strengthening the links between the various components of the education system :

The education system should allow for more flexibility through a better use of bridges between its various structures and a better deployment of responsibilities and missions to favour good management, a spirit of initiative and responsibility, away from any form of centralised power .The new structure of Regional Directorates in Education and Training is the tangible proof of the implementation of this orientation. Besides, a closer connection between education and training will certainly enable a better cooperation.

1.2. Reinforcing the role of schools :

As schools represent the basic unit in education, they are given more freedom in management to reinforce their capacity to become autonomous and assume their share of responsibility. Indeed, their scope has been broadened and they can thus conceive their “own project”, in line with their own specific conditions and with the nature of their communities.

1.3. Fostering « inclusive action »:

Aware of the necessity of involving all social classes in the education system ,without any exception or exclusion, learning services and methods have improved and integrate students with specific needs.

1.4. Adopting “positive discrimination” to enhance equity as, currently, the education system doesn’t respond to the required features of an inclusive system .

1.5. Expanding schooling on a wider scale

In order to enhance equal opportunities for all through « the right to success », spreading pre-school education and improving its services has become necessary .The challenge, now, is the integration of the 5-year olds in basic education and the commitment to generalise it before 2009.

1.6. Ensuring that all actors in the education system are professionals :

Quality can be reached only if the various actors in education (teachers, supervisors, administrators, and others) become real professionals. So, the education system has considered among its priorities to require better skills at recruitment, upgrade programmes to match quality standards and enhance continuous training.

1.7. Developing school life and improving its services:

If the role of schools is only to teach knowledge and scientific content, then its main mission is not achieved. Thus, due attention is given to school life, as the decree organising school life (October 2004) proves it. On the one hand, this legal text aims at creating a space to reinforce cultural activities that support learning and on the other hand, it aims at implementing forums for dialogue and communication in schools.

1.8. Harnessing ICT in education:

In order to give schools opportunities to update their curricula and to take advantage of ICT as a stimulus for the real construction of a knowledge society , many programmes and teaching tools have been elaborated that reinforce this orientation.

1.9. Ensuring that education is a responsibility shared by all partners

It is hard to attain quality and achieve the improvement of education in an inclusive vision which benefits all as long as education remains the exclusive property of education experts .That's why the Tunisian education system has extended collaboration to the various partners and bodies ,such as NGOs and civil society. This partnership has enabled to improve the various educational services in line with the criteria of quality.

1.10. Enhancing pedagogic innovation and scientific research in education.

No inclusive education system can pretend to improve its overall outcome without pedagogic innovation and scientific research, as they represent the assets of education .For this reason, the National Centre for Pedagogic Innovation and Research in Education(CNIPRE) was created. Besides, incentives are offered to all those who conduct Action Research and practical surveys in education and teaching, thus enabling better and significant results

All these results represent an additional asset for the development of the education system, with all its components. Thanks to the evaluation of previous experiences and the positive as well as the negative elements recorded, the reform is implemented in conformity with the reality, and

benefits from the means available and the requirements of a sound planning based on scientific foundations.

2. Perspectives of development for a better future

The future orientations aiming at prospecting the best ways for the reform of the education system are based on a number of principles that can be summarized as follows :

2.1. Being convinced of the renewed role of education, the necessity to update it and open it onto innovation, so that education meets the societal needs and aspirations.

2.2. Relying on the various international standards, norms and orientations and adopting experiences of top-performing education systems

2.3. Continuously and periodically assessing the outcome of the education system in order to reinforce and improve its positive aspects and suggest solutions to remedy shortcomings. Besides, it is useful to take advantage of the experiences and lessons in order to rationalise the orientations that reinforce the prospected changes.

In this perspective, the Tunisian educational policy has made a strategic, unchangeable choice for its future aspirations, plans and preparation to get along with innovations and to meet the challenges.

It has also made of this exploration of the future and its innovations a feature of “current quality” as it is convinced that efficiency in education can only become true if it relates not only to the present but has broader future perspectives, visions and readiness to meet all the challenges and difficulties .

As regard to this aspect, the Tunisian education system has been a precursor concerning education in the 21st century .Looking ahead at priorities in education, the specific cultural, historical, economic, developmental features of The Tunisian society as well as the challenges due to fierce competition in a globalised world.

Thus, the Tunisian education system has worked towards the future to secure the capacity to develop and be updated. This orientation is clear through the following indicators:

2.3.1. Working towards the future to enable educational development and renewal :

The education system has a capacity to develop thanks to tools planned by the Education Act in the achievements of the following aspects: school life, reinforcement of school autonomy, a broader variety of channels, the development of research, openness of schools onto the community, a broader educational frame, and the reinforcement of school powers. This

orientation has enabled education to renovate, update and adapt to innovations.

2.3.2 Being updated about scientific and technological innovations:

As scientific innovations are of paramount importance in education, this aspect has been emphasized as it is considered as a top challenge to be met so that schools respond to the opportunities offered by New Information and Communication Technologies to help develop education and learning. Likewise, ICT streams and tools will be reinforced to familiarise learners with a digital culture and help them use these technologies efficiently. ICT has an excellent position among the strategies aiming at improving education. It is noteworthy than many projects have been achieved to meet these challenges and set up a knowledge society that matches the current requirements.

2.3.3. Considering education as a pillar of development :

As education is strongly linked to development, the Tunisian education system is striving to support the development of the country .A good example is the development of human resources and the increased employment capacity of university graduates thanks to competencies and skills acquired at school to adapt to the rapid changes in all fields. This is a clear sign that all current and future educational plans in Tunisia are « integrative »,able to consider education as a pillar of development.

2.3.4. Opening onto other education systems and cultures:

- Integrating in the curriculum values that consolidate learners' positive attitude and respect for other cultures, a capacity for dialogue, life in the community and reinforce values of tolerance, solidarity and peace.
- Teaching a second foreign language(English) starting in the primary cycle to enhance learners' communication skills and openness on other cultures.
- Enhanced international cooperation. Between 2002 and 2005, twinning and exchange programmes took place with the following countries: France, Italy, Belgium, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands and Egypt. More simplified procedures will help develop these programmes .

2.3.5. Promoting education to facilitate integration :

Quality education can be attained only if all learners' needs and specific features are taken into consideration: children with disabilities, the gifted, students who need coaching, adult learners…. This stake represents the most urgent ambition to be achieved by the education system .Plans and programmes aiming at the improvement of

educational practices have been achieved so that education acquires a greater capacity to integrate students with specific needs and integrative educational practices.

2.3.6. Reinforcing civic behaviour and citizenship education:

Measures aiming at reinforcing civic behaviour at school and at teaching civic education are of paramount importance. Indeed, education looses its meaning if it just aims at reinforcing academic knowledge and does not cater for the civic education of learners. In Tunisia, the social education of learners is a clear feature of the various educational plans and orientations as school seems to be the best space to achieve this education. .

2.3.7. Reinforcing equity and equal opportunities for all to achieve « inclusive education »:

The Tunisian education system has tried to implement “a school for all children, an opportunity for each” and possesses now all the tools that ensure the implementation and achievements of this slogan in all schools. This is of course, a constant feature of current and future plans as our education system considers that man is the main wealth. Besides, the education system has improved its capacity to provide education for all while taking into consideration the specific features of the target audience (children with disabilities, gifted children…).

2.3.8. Promoting Education For All:

The Tunisian education system considers that universal schooling would be meaningless if a minimum schooling level is not ensured (compulsory schooling until 16 at least) and if quality education is not provided for all children. As a result, quality education was launched to challenge an efficient and accountable education system. Different educational plans have reinforced this goal and EFA is the best example, as its components converge towards the attainment of goals defined at the World Education Forum in Dakar (2000).

2.3.9. Education, a national priority and a shared responsibility:

The Education Act recognizes education as « an absolute priority »shared by everybody. This law has extended the responsibility to civil society with its structures and organisations. This has contributed to open schools onto their environment, to have a global understanding of education and to improve its foundations and implementation. Education has spread beyond its traditional limits, and allows for new projects and programmes to be conceived and implemented with partners who share responsibilities to ultimately reinforce quality in education..

2.3.10. Fostering pedagogic innovation and research in education :

The reinforcement of pedagogic innovation and the improvement of research tools represent the specific features of the new educational orientations in Tunisia .

Innovation and research enable to refine quality education, improve and update its tools to meet the requirements and fast pace of our era .

The National Centre for Pedagogic Innovation and Research in Education (CNIPRE) ensures pedagogic innovation, diversifies research, and ultimately improves educational outcome. Moreover, this centre which ensures continued research in education represents one of the assets of educational action at all levels (conception, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and canvassing).

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III-Adjusting the links between education and vocational training

Vocational training is one of the most important components of the national mechanism for the development of human resources. It has attained considerable assets thanks to a strong commitment and significant investments made by the State. A broad reform has been undertaken, which has strengthened the links with the labour market, implemented innovative programmes and methodologies, developed its capacity and improved its services.

More recent reforms have enabled to consolidate the complementary nature of education, vocational training and Higher Education, through establishing bridges between the different career paths at all levels. This mechanism answers the needs of a constantly developing society and economy and also offers the young generations from all categories new opportunities for success and excellence.

1- Overview of vocational training mechanisms

1.1 Major reforms

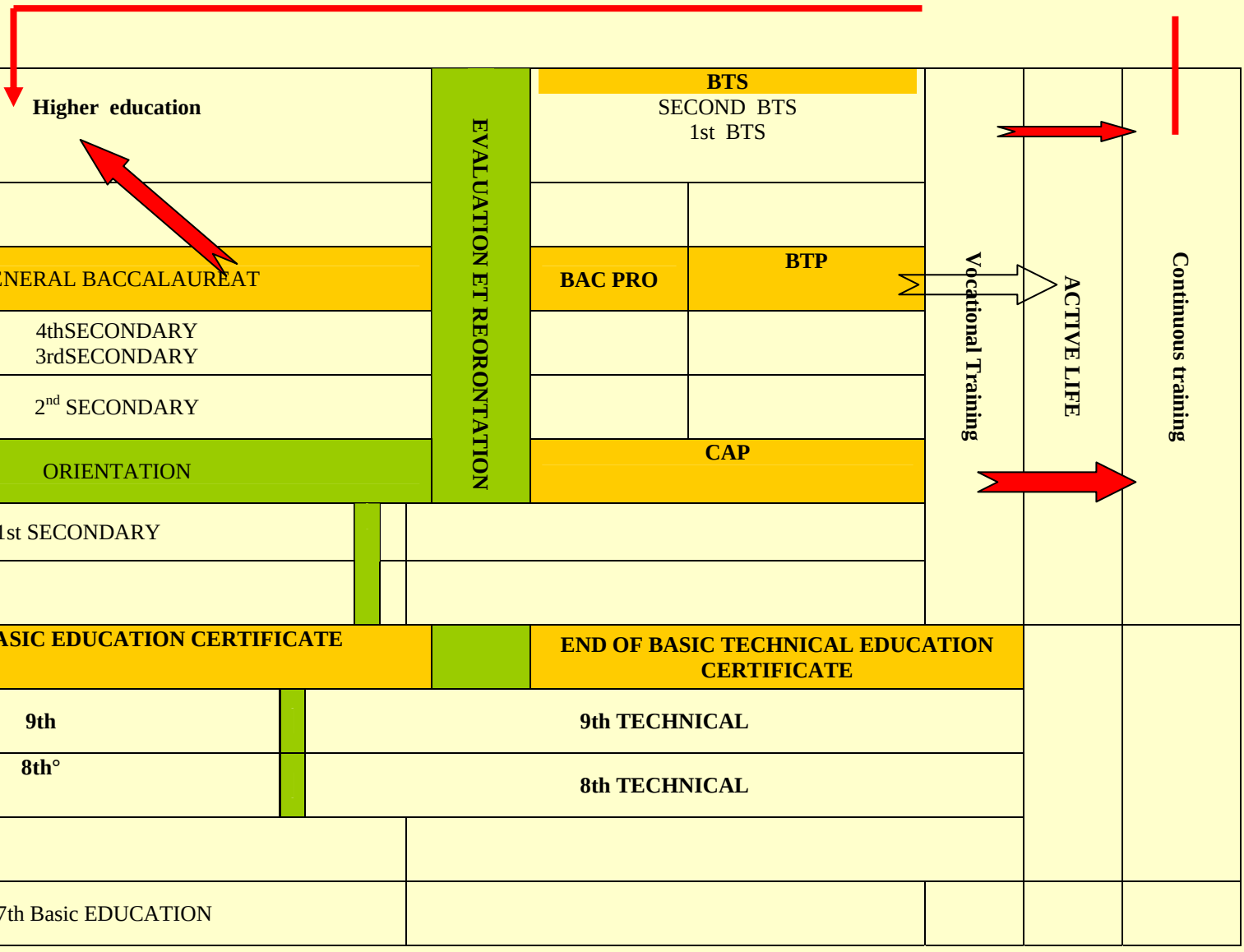
In 2008 , Education and vocational training benefited from a broad reform to reach the objectives of the 2007-2016 decade and the 2005-2009 presidential programme which aim at ***« meeting the challenges of quality and going along with the developments of vocational training …..and ensuring complementarity with the sector of education and Higher education……the most adequate preparation to the future jobs and new forms of occupations. »***

Thus, 2 new laws were issued in February 2008, aiming at boosting these new orientations, which are being implemented progressively:

- law 2008-9 dated 11 February2008, modifying and completing law 2002-80, concerning education and teaching,
- law 2008-10 dated 11 February 2008, pertaining to vocational training.

The main innovative element of these 2 laws is the new structure of the education-training system which has been unanimously approved of when introduced by the national consultation on vocational training. This consultation was ordered by his Excellency the President of the Republic and its results were proclaimed in a national conference in February 2007. The new structure started in September 2007 with the establishment of technical middle schools.

This diagram shows the new structure :



New and better links between the two sectors are targeted by the new structure, to give opportunities for success and advancement to everyone and achieve equity and equal opportunities. This scheme revolves around 2 main targets:

- Institutional mechanisms enabling students to be oriented towards vocational training streams, through the establishment of technical middle schools that prepare young people to continue vocational training thanks to an appropriate teaching,
- The establishment of internal block-release between schools and vocational training, enabling students to combine attendance of workshops in vocational training centres and lessons in schools,
- The establishment of bridges between schools and vocational training enabling learners to attend the two sectors,
- The introduction of « professional Baccalaureate », a degree that enables young people to join the labour market while giving them access to BTS and branches leading to Higher Education .

The new law has also brought new dispositions aiming at:

- Updating the aims and goals of vocational training, to confirm the structural connection between training and employment while highlighting labour as a value, the development of a culture of enterprise, initiative and creativity an also « enhancing the pride to belong to Tunisia and being faithful to it ».
- Promoting and consolidating quality in vocational training in :
  - **Curricula :** :
    - monitoring new jobs and elaborating adapted curricula
    - promoting in-house training, by reinforcing school courses combined with work experience and the establishment of a new specific training mode through contracts with firms to satisfy the needs of priority economic sectors
    - reinforcing internal block-release

- **Steering and management** :

The new law specifies that vocational training structures, institutions and staff guarantee pedagogic and administrative supervision accountability and efficiency as well as a better coordination between the various actors. The law emphasizes the role of the Ministry of Education and Training in the pedagogic joint supervision of state vocational training schools that pertain to other departments.

- **Supervision and evaluation :** the law stipulates that vocational training institutions(state and private) must be assessed periodically. It has also created another assessment scheme: "the national evaluation and quality assurance commission in vocational training".

A general framework will also be established and will define the profile of outgoing students, as well as the specific conditions of initial training. This will be done on the basis of scales corresponding to the national rating of staff.

Finally, training criteria will be established for every specialty and will represent the reference for the accreditation of training centres. The accreditation procedure will replace the current homologation procedure.

- **Promoting continuous training and lifelong learning**: the objectives of continuous training have been updated for economic enterprises, individuals or for professional advancement.

The new law has also considered a vocational training certificate that will validate experiences .

1.2 Main achievements and orientations

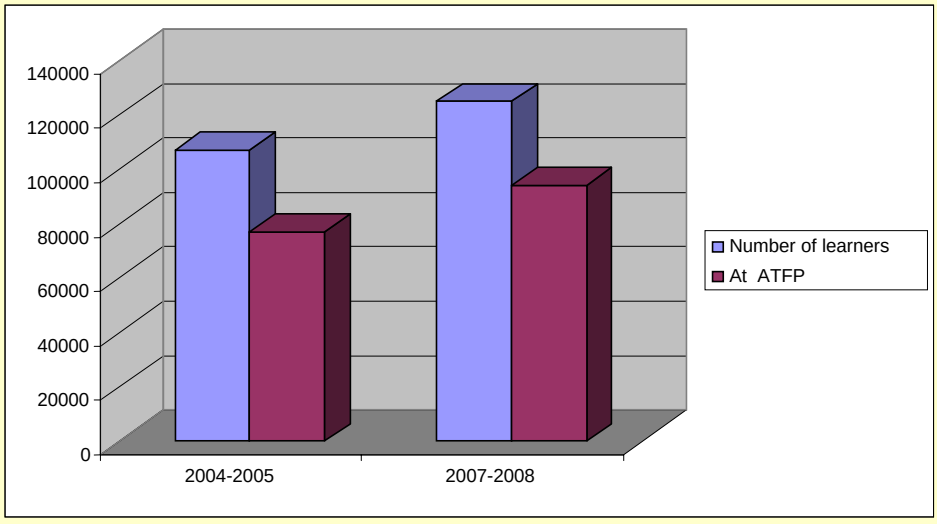
1.2.1 Initial training

Evolution of the number of learners and graduates

Thanks to the efforts made by the various bodies to upgrade the vocational training programme (MANFORME), the number of graduates from national vocational training centres was about 40.000 graduates in 2007, deployed as shown in the table below :

Operator	Number of graduates
Public sector	**37 400**
Ministry of Education and Training	34 740
Ministry of Agriculture and hydraulic Resources	584
Ministry of Tourism	878
Ministry of Health	793
Ministry of National Defense	400
Private Vocational training Sector	**1 600**
Total	**39 000**

Besides, the number of learners in the current year (2007/2008) has reached about 125 thousand learners, 70 thousand of whom are enrolled in training courses leading to approved diplomas. The graph below shows the evolution of the number of learners at the national level and at of The Tunisian Agency for Vocational Training (ATFP):



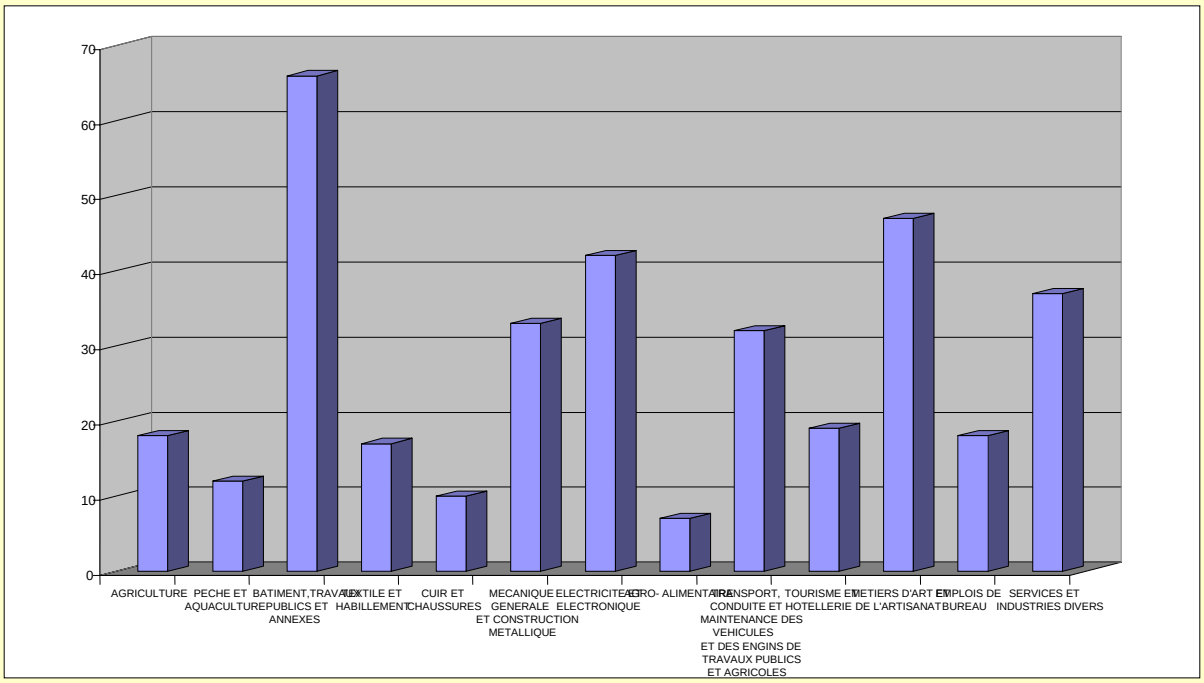
Efforts will be made to reach the objective of the XIth development plan, that is 65 thousand graduates from the national vocational training system annually.

Evolution of the number of specialties

The number of specialties offered by the national vocational training scheme, both public and private, has increased from 250 specialties in 2004/2005 to more than 350 specialties in 2007/2008, along with the increasing need for competent staff in the economic

sector ,mainly to answer the needs of large projects in priority sectors (construction and annexes).These specialties are distributed according to the training sector as shown in the diagram below:

N Number of specialties per training sector



Training the trainers

Over the last period, recruitment at the Tunisian Agency for Vocational Training , has enabled to improve the training rates as well as the rate of recruited engineers. In this regard, a project is underway at the Ministry for the creation of a body of new trainers who will be responsible for the Higher technician stream. This new body of trainers will be trained at the Higher Institutes of Education and Training (IMEF). Pedagogic and technical training as well as practical sessions will be conducted in vocational training centres and in economic firms. Continuous training of the training staff is secured by the National Training Centre for trainer training and training engineering (CENAFFIF),which provides periodic training and improvement sessions :

- pedagogic and technical to upgrade in-service training staff,
- functional, for heads of centres and other pedagogic supervisors.

1.2.2 Continuous training

. The various indicators of continuous training-whatever tools used - clearly improved in 2007. 186.823 participants working in 4.891 enterprises were involved in training sessions.

Improved quality in vocational training :

The improvement of the quality of training has contributed to limit dropout rates. Thus, efforts have been made over the past years to ensure the quality of training services, through quality training offered at all levels and components of this sector:

- Quality of curricula and generalisation of competency-based instruction:

The generalisation of CBI has reached a fairly advanced level, once 260 CBI programmes have been elaborated and implemented in the vocational training centres. Moreover, the number of specialties in priority sectors ,construction and building ,welding and steel construction, have developed widely as mentioned above, to answer the needs of wide projects and foreign investments .Training the trainers is also developing rapidly to implement competency-based programmes in the centres.

- The establishment of entrepreneurship and spaces for jobs in vocational training centres :

Beside the integration and generalisation of entrepreneurship competences underway in initial programmes, four vocational training centres have developed job spaces : the sectional centre of ceramics in Nabeul as well as the vocational training centres in Hammam Sousse, Kasserine and Tozeur. A plan has been established to generalise these spaces in most ATFP vocational training centres during the XIth plan period.

- **Management:**

To contribute to the influence of vocational training abroad, the Ministry of Education and Training works towards developing the pattern of management of the training centres according to international ISO 9001norms. Thus, 4 centres were approved the certification in 2007 and 3 others were certified at the beginning of 2008. Moreover, in order to reach the objective of meeting international norms and national choices of the MANFORME

programme, efforts are being made to reach the conformity of public vocational training institutions with the Vocational Training National Quality Reference Document (RNQFP). Indeed, by the end of 2007, 23 ATFP centres reached a rate of conformity to the RNQFP standards exceeding 70%, 25 centres a rate of conformity between 50 and70% and 22 others nearing 50%.

- **Evaluation :**

Evaluation has also been given due attention .Indeed, a new staff of pedagogic inspectors in vocational training has been created by decree n°2007-3170, and will contribute to ensure the implementation of the qualitative components of the reform, the audit of training conformity in state and private institutions and the evaluation of the training staff.. The MEF has currently recruited a first group of inspectors.

A National Commission For Evaluation And Quality Assurance will be appointed as soon as the texts are published.

Vocational training private sector

The operating private centres reached 2183 in December 20007.The table below shows the distribution of these centres according to the sectors (initial or continuous training) and the important evolution since 2004 :

Year	Number of active centres	Specialised in continuous training	Mainly operating in initial training	Number being trained
December 2004	1629	995	634	23000
December 2007	2183	1488	695	25000

Centres dealing mainly with initial training are divided in two groups, whether they have adhered to the approved process of their diplomas or not. Those who have been approved some of their diplomas are only about 130 out of 700 operating centres in initial training .The exploitation rate of the training capacities offered in the specialties whose diplomas are approved is rather weak.

1.2.5 New incentives to access training

Beside the existing incentives to join vocational training, such as school transportation and insurance, new measures have been decided to particularly promote training in construction and auxiliary specialties and also to prepare the necessary qualifications for the great projects. Vocational training centres offer the following facilities :

-Free accommodation and catering

- Training uniforms
- Scholarships (when parents' income is low)
  This scholarship is regulated by a decree n°2007-3071
  However, texts have not been issued yet.
  The accommodation capacity in state institutions will be increased to more than 10.000 beds during the XIth plan.

As for the private sector ,and in order to help it support the effort of the State and to invest in specialties that answer the real needs of firms in priority sectors ,a new mechanism, the « **training cheque** » has been created. It targets initial training in the private sector (decree n°2007-4174) and enables to fund partially training expenses in priority specialties required by the economy but do not exist in state institutions or where in-take capacity is insufficient.

2- Inclusive vocational training

2.1 Mechanisms and orientations :

The new law n°2008-10 dated 11 February 2008, pertaining to vocational training ,secures many measures aiming at integrating all categories and professional groups in active life This law targets the young people who are likely to face failure or exclusion .

Measures have been taken to reduce failure and dropout rates:

- The creation of a preparatory cycle that will give access to vocational training for young people below 15
- The establishment of training sessions leading to a new certificate , the Certificate of Competences(CC) for young people who are not given access to CAP,
- A system that validates experience in order to open tracks on the qualification scale ,for all citizens and at any time of their professional careers

To further emphasize the quality approach and lifelong learning, the Ministry of Education and Training intends to have a national qualification scale (CNQ), in partnership with all related ministries and social partners. CNQ is a framework that defines the qualification levels required by the labour market, based on learning outcomes and linking these levels with the certificates provided by the human resources department. CNQ aims at increasing quality, accountability, and clarity of the national qualification system, ensuring coherence between the national system and the international frameworks, mainly the European qualification framework, and sets the foundations of mutual recognition of qualifications in a context of globalisation.

2.2 Promoting continuous training and lifelong learning :

In conformity with the presidential decision taken in July 2007 on Knowledge Day, the National Centre for Education and Open and Distance Training (**CNEFOD)** which is underway will replace the Open School for workers and the virtual school, as well as any other initiative for distance training.

The MET has finalised the conception of CNEFOD, which is expected to start by the end of 2009.

On another level, the new law about economic initiative (law 2007-69) has defined vocational training financing modes , such as the « credit tax » which are incentives for firms to train their employees. These measures meet the objectives of the presidential programme in continuous training (300000 participants in 8000 economic enterprises by 2009).

2.3 Training people with specific needs :

In addition to services offered by the specialised centres in various departments or associations in terms of supervision and training people with specific needs, ATFP training institutions work at integrating disabled people . The number of people with specific needs who are being trained reached 169 in 2007/2008, deployed as follows :

Level	Number
Training / learning Certificate	**76**
CAP	**55**
BTP	**33**
BTS	**5**
Total	**169**

PART II
HIGHER EDUCATION
POSITIVE PERSPECTIVES FOR THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Introduction

With the world fast economic and technological changes , the sound choices made by Tunisia in training human resources have been confirmed as well as the priority granted to them in the national strategy for development. In its dynamic current phase, Higher education is faced with many challenges pertaining to the implementation of knowledge society and the requirements of professional life as well as future jobs in a globalised economy .

Higher education must achieve strategic objectives, which are mainly to take up the challenges of a better pedagogic outcome of universities. This requires significant funding. Solutions, reforms and innovative projects result from recorded progress at the level of Higher education and the specific features of Tunisian universities in correlation with their socio-economic environment , inspired by successful experiences in developed countries.

This report tries to give an exhaustive idea about Higher education and the challenges of the 21st century

1. Major reforms and aspects of innovation

1.1Higher education legal framework

Over the last years, endeavours to undertake a sound reform in Higher education have led to the promulgation of Higher education Act n°2008-19 dated 25 February 2008. The aim of this law is to boost the confidence of students and parents, answer societal expectations, employers' needs and confirm the credibility of national degrees.

The Higher education Act puts students at the core of the system. They have the right to continue their studies regularly, to benefit from teachers' supervision, to construct their career paths, to be informed about training tracks and possible professional horizons .

Quality is the main objective in all Higher education reforms. The need to support quality was confirmed as an impressive number of students enrolled in universities.

The new Higher education law considers quality as a major component of the system, in the training, pedagogic, administrative and financial management. This law also emphasizes the necessity to develop the missions of universities and Higher education institutions so that they

enhance the employability of graduates and contribute to technological development.

The new law also enables the universities to open onto their socio-economic environment and to enhance their partnering role in development. It confirms and reinforces the decentralisation of Higher education as universities are continuously spreading across the country.

Practical and block- release training as well as on the ground learning are the best examples of innovative methods as students better acquire scientific competences and technological skills of the training programmes through contacts with professionals and the reality of the economic enterprise.

The legislation has confirmed the principle of setting 4 year contracts between universities and the State as an advanced method to consolidate the autonomy of universities, guarantee their effective participation in the implementation of national development plans and to reach the objectives of quality education. These contracts define the objectives and commitments of both parts in funding and mobilising their own resources.

To secure the scientific value of Tunisian degrees, the legislation insists on the necessity to adopt the LMD system. However, this condition is not sufficient as training must also answer the criteria of quality education .This can be achieved through the accreditation technique from an independent institution for credibility reasons.

The accreditation of a Higher education institution can happen only if the institution answers the minimum level of quality criteria and if this has been proved and confirmed by periodical internal assessment.

The text stipulates a compulsory evaluation of Higher Education institutions, training programmes as well as the scientific and pedagogic outcome of teachers and training contracts.

The law also states that Higher Education in state universities is free and allows universities to provide contract-based services for the production sector. On the other hand, the legislation can change according to certain criteria, either administrative, scientific or technological directed by the trade legislation.

Thus, we can say that the Higher Education Act confirms the dynamic aspect of Higher education and establishes new innovative concepts and methods that can only be found in developed countries.

1.2. Objectives and features of current and future reforms :

1.2.1. LMD reform

The adoption of the LMD(Bachelor-Master-PHD) system is a choice made by the State to develop Higher education and raise it to the standards of most developed countries as well as to achieve the strategic objectives of the country. The adoption of the LMD system is a deep structural and pedagogic reform which aims at developing Higher education and taking up the internal challenges. They consist in offering each Baccalaureate graduate a place at university, despite the unprecedented growing number of students, the reinforcement of quality training and the development of human resources.

The LMD system represents a qualitative change in the reconstruction of Higher Education. It is based on 3 distinct though linked levels : the Bachelor degree that crowns a 3- year learning after the Baccalaureate , the Masters degree , obtained 5 years after the baccalaureate and PHD, 8 years after the baccalaureate.

This new architecture enables to diversify training courses, improve their quality and introduce new careers. The reform has adopted credit systems that can be capitalised and transferred, the system of semester, teaching modules and an annex to the degree providing information on knowledge and skills acquired by students during training.

LMD is characterised by its flexibility and international comparability. It facilitates the recognition of national degrees, and a better mobility of students in Tunisia and abroad.

Students can restructure their careers by choosing teaching courses in various fields and specialties.

The LMD guideline note is a reference document that defines the general principles and objectives of this reform. This note is the result of a wide consultation to which various teachers and bodies from the socioeconomic environment took part: a dialogue based on a deep knowledge of foreign experiences that help to enrich national choices.

The Higher Education reform is based on a realistic approach that takes into consideration the specificities of Higher Education institutions and its implementation is being achieved progressively .It lasts 3 years for the Bachelor degrees , in order to enable institutions to freely adhere in 3 successive waves. The higher education structures participate in a bottom-up way : from the department to the scientific

board of the institution and the university towards specialised sectional national commissions ,then from the national commissions of applied or fundamental sciences towards the piloting national commission and finally the university council.

This reform has progressed a lot at the level of the bachelor degree. We can mention for example:

- The first wave (2006-2007): 164 bachelor degree projects were presented, their evaluation was secured by 22 sectional national commissions. 130 projects (99 applied and 31 fundamental) were accepted. 59 institutions in all universities have totally or partially adhered to the reform.
- The second LMD bachelor degree wave was marked by an updated composition of sectional national commissions, that have been joined by new competent professionals. The number of these commissions has reached 25. Out of the 727accreditation requests, 535 projects have been accepted, a rate of 73,6%. The number of the two waves of degrees in public Higher education has reached 450; they pertain to all sectors: 277 applied degrees, and 173fundamental degrees. 109 institutions have integrated LMD in the two waves and they represent 2/3 of the institutions concerned by the integration, to which we must add 10 private universities, a total of 119 institutions .

To ensure that the quality approach of the reform has been implemented, the content was monitored .

-As for the third wave, necessary for the generalisation of the reform, sectional national commissions were updated, joined by competent professionals and complemented by new commissions. There are now 27 commissions. The composition of the applied science national commission has been reviewed .It is now composed of university teachers and professionals equally. The prerogatives have been broadened to the examination of co-built bachelor projects .

The last wave of bachelor degrees was characterised by the quality and diversity of the projects submitted: out of the 651 projects examined by commissions 432 bachelor degrees, distributed in 306 applied degrees and 126 fundamental degrees, 432 have been accepted.

With this third wave, all Higher Education institutions concerned by the reform have integrated the LMD system.

1.2.2. Programme to support quality in Higher Education

The programme to support quality in Higher Education aims at reinforcing the efficiency of academic training programmes and improving their quality at various levels. It also aims at reinforcing the financial means of the sector through innovative measures at the level of credit transfer for Higher education (universities and institutions).So, two grant patterns have been adopted :

(1) Grants are allocated on a competition basis between Higher education institutions. Teachers submit projects that support quality education. These projects must correspond to the national objective of social and economic development and have to suggest innovative careers with high employability in addition to a multi-specialty partnership.

The credits allocated to this programme are 16.9 million dinars.

(2) Grants allocated to universities to improve their administrative, pedagogic and financial management.

The credits allocated to this programme have reached 2.7 million dinars.

The first part of the programme started on 27 June 2006 through a call to tender. Teachers and heads of departments in Higher education institutes were invited to submit proposals of projects for the improvement of quality training. Commissions analysed the feasibility of the proposals and their adequacy with the programmes decided by the institutions and to select the preliminary projects that can be used as projects that can compete in tenders .

53 proposals from 44 institutions were allowed to compete. 33 experts evaluated the projects and 14 projects were selected. 7 billion dinars were allocated .Agreements were signed between the concerned bodies and the credits were transferred on December 5,2007.

The second part of the programme started on May 9, 2007 with the first call to tender concerning support to quality management .It concerns 13 universities in addition to the direction of technological studies. These universities were invited to compete with projects about quality in the pedagogic, administrative and financial management, and had to match the terms of reference and the schedule. 18 experts took part in the evaluation session on July 26, 2007.Six projects were accepted and 2.1 billion dinars credits were allocated.

1.2.3. Development at the level of exploration, planning and management :

1.2.3.1 The objective-based management and the mid-term expenditure framework (CDMT**).**

The Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Technology has been chosen as a pilot ministry where the objective-based management will be experimented. CDMT was adopted as it represents a tool for good management, planning, exploration as well as financial management. It is a decision-making tool. It allows the comparison between planning expenses and the mobilisation of resources over a period of 3 to 5 years. CDMT enables to consolidate the links between the resources and the objectives of the sectional policy adopted. CDMT represents a necessary tool to evaluate the efficiency level of the recorded expenses for the strategy adopted and the resources that can be mobilized at mid-term.

Practically, CDMT is a document that comprises tables about results recorded effectively during a given budgetary year, a current year and a year ahead. The financial estimates of resources and expenses during 2 successive years are achieved through hypotheses of improvement and according to strategic objectives adopted in a given department.

CDMT has been achieved at the national level, in universities in long and short specialties and ultimately at the level of co-supervised institutions .

1.2.3.2.Higher Education research institutes:

Higher education research institutes deal with studies , statistics and monitoring of graduates. They provide quantitative and qualitative data about the link between training and the labour market at the regional and national levels. Institutes play a linking role between the university and its socioeconomic environment .One institute per university has been created to implement the order of the Minister of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Technology, dated April 3, 2008.

1.2.3.3. Computer systems:

The strategy of the Higher education reform is to focus on the development of computerised systems and the use of information and communication technologies. A number of services are available for students on Internet .

Some examples are noteworthy:

- the application relative to the on-line enrolment (administrative at www.inscription.tn).
- The interactive application pertaining to the orientation of graduates (www.orientation.tn).
- The application concerning the pedagogic enrolment and the management of the previous system degrees (INESS).
- The application (SALIMA) for the management of LMD .

The application SALIMA will be in use in 2008-2009. A first version of the application has been achieved .It comprises the core of the application, modules about timetables, management, students' portal, marks and exams .The application has been installed on Higher Education servers and users have attended a specific training The Ministry hopes to complete the remaining modules in 2008, those concerning administrative enrolment, the delivery of degrees, and annexes, monitoring students' careers, teachers' portal, the management of services and career simulation .

- The management of Higher education libraries in the project BIRUNI aims at certifying libraries by using digital tools for the management and the exploitation of books either in libraries or on-line. It facilitates access to documentary resources in Tunisia and abroad, the creation of a network of national higher education libraries to create a virtual library.

All the above mentioned services are to be integrated on the students' electronic card in order to modernize Higher education thanks to the higher education national computerized system (SINUS). Once ready, this system will help integrate other services concerning students in the fields of health care, transportation and entertainment.

1.3. Training objectives and goals:

The Ministry is striving to shape the strategic priorities of the sector, by emphasising employability, a culture of enterprise, support to quality and by contributing to the construction of knowledge economy, building universities and higher education poles in the regions.

1.3.1. Employability: a major priority in Higher education strategy :

The main strategic priority of Higher education is to boost graduates' employability, so The Ministry of Higher Education,

Scientific Research and Technology is emphasising the growth areas and the short and vocational specialties. The Ministry has provided important means to increase the chances of graduates to quickly find a job or create their own enterprises. The current structural and pedagogic reform is expected to reinforce the policy of the Ministry , especially with the measures taken, among which :

-the establishment of three levels of professional integration of graduates : bachelor degree, master degree and PHD.

-The reinforcement of cross-curricular subjects such as foreign languages, computer science and a culture of enterprise which represent 25% of the credits allocated to compulsory courses in each bachelor degree.

- The reinforcement of practical training courses and opportunities for practical skill acquisition within work experience schemes that represent 30 credits in each degree.
- The supplement to the degree : a document that provides information on knowledge and skills acquired by students
- The participation of experts from the various economic sectors to the commissions, mainly sectional commissions and applied bachelor degrees.
- The co-construction of applied degrees by university teachers and professionals, which will be followed by the construction of the Master degree.

However, the decision to integrate 2/3 of the students in the applied degrees and one third in fundamental sciences remains the most courageous and ambitious decision in the strategy of reinforcement of Higher education graduates employability.

1.3.2. Boosting partnership with the socioeconomic environment :

Internal partnership with the socioeconomic environment represents an innovative measure taken to achieve the strategic priorities of the sector.

Indeed, agreements have been signed with unions, economic chambers and professional organisations, such as the partnership agreement concluded with The Tunisian Union for Industry, Commerce and Crafts(UTICA)on April 6,2005.

The Ministry encourages partnership agreements and their generalisation to sectors that are not affiliated to UTICA. It encourages agreements at the local and regional level between universities and particularly between Higher education institutions and productive enterprises and organisations such as the chambers of commerce.

Partnership, as well as pedagogic innovation, scientific production, employability outcome are considered as evaluation criteria of Higher education institutions.

1.3.3. Spreading a corporate culture: a major focus in Higher education strategy :

Spreading corporate culture and boosting initiative represent a major focus in Higher education strategy. It aims at reinforcing the contribution of Higher education to the creation of enterprises in general and in growth areas in particular. Higher education is an enabler in the promising orientations of the economy and the preparation of future generations to innovative and highly competitive sectors where they will be offered more job opportunities that the traditional economy is unable to offer.

The effort of the Ministry to spread corporate culture among young people has taken various forms :

- A yearly programme that has been generalised to all universities and that comprises intensive and varied activities, information meetings, training sessions and meetings with managers .
- Teaching tools and the certification of teachers, with the contribution of the Virtual University of Tunis (UVT).
- Generalised training modules dealing with the creation of enterprises in all Higher Education institutions.
- Students enrolled in the LMD Bachelor degree must attend the module about corporate culture. A national commission is responsible for designing a detailed programme of this module.
- The development of work experience schemes, end of studies projects and their use to start companies.

1.3.4. The development of measures for the co-construction of applied Bachelor degrees:

The co-construction of applied Bachelor degrees targets a better adequacy between higher education tracks and the effective needs of the labour market. The co-construction of applied Bachelor degrees is secured in partnership with professionals at all stages, starting from conception to execution and monitoring, to increase employment opportunities for the greatest number of students, thanks to the commitment of professional partners.

The co-construction is based on the following principles :

- A permanent partnership represented by a commission for each applied bachelor degree and co-presided by a teacher and a professional. The commission is composed of university teachers, UTICA members, technical centres, economic institutions and experts.
- A reference document
- A guide for work experience schemes, and end of studies projects
- A training course reference document
- Ensuring harmony of training at the local, regional and national levels.
- Ensuring that training is provided by a team composed of university teachers and professionals
-Assess training and monitor the professional integration of graduates .

At the end of the training and information courses about the techniques of constructing applied Bachelor degrees, a call to tender was launched for the year 2008-2009 to enforce decree n°56 of 2007.

The national commission is currently examining 42 Bachelor degree projects that meet the co-construction criteria. .

1.3.5. The reinforcement of distance training and the adoption of distance learning:

Since its creation in 2002, the Virtual University of Tunis (UVT) has worked towards increasing the number of distance learning affiliates, whether students, university teachers, office workers or professionals, while granting priority to cross-curricular training. Coordination is made with many universities to provide virtual learning that supplements face to face learning .

UVT has continued to provide digital pedagogic content .Indeed, the number of modules produced in digital laboratories has reached 402.

Digital lessons are available on the university website where regularly enrolled students can register. These students have access to distance learning to help them in their training and to enhance a digital culture.

The number of students enrolled in integrated distance education increased in2006-2007, while 4360 students attended face to face lessons.

354 students enrolled in the Higher Technician section to obtain the Higher Education Technology Certificate (DUT) and 18 students in the professional Masters degree. The university also organises seminars and conferences to sensitize 1772 teachers to its activities .It

organizes training sessions for 2081 teachers, technicians, administrative leaders and Computer and Internet Certificate coordinators (C2I).

The Tunisian Virtual University (UVT) possesses a very developed technological infrastructure and enables communication and interaction between students and trainers through ADSL.

The UVT consists of: 132 distance training centres , 14 distance communication centres ,13 digital production laboratories , a photomontage studio, a training room and a room for servers .

For a better mastery of ICT, the university is responsible for the virtual training of trainers:

- 307 university teachers are enrolled in distance training sessions
- 83 university teachers attend training in distance pedagogic coaching
- 367 teachers attend training about the production of pedagogic content using multimedia techniques .
- 241 teachers are trained in using distance learning systems
- Upgrading trainers (70 teachers).

1.3.6. The deployment of universities and Higher Education poles :

The deployment of universities and Higher education poles boosts development as institutions that belong to the same university are closer to students and provide more specialties. Middle sized universities are also created to help large universities and ensure better management through decentralised administration and management .

Thanks to this policy, the number of universities has reached 13 in addition to ISET network (Institut Supérieur des Etudes Technologiques) distributed in all regions across the country .

The Ministry of Higher education provides students with best working spaces and conditions . 12 new institutions and university poles were created in 2004-2005. The number of Higher education institutions reached 190 against 162 in 2004-2005.

1.3.7. Training the trainers : a pillar for knowledge society

Another objective of the Ministry is to reinforce human resources ,especially training the trainers ,as teachers represent one of the pillars of knowledge society .The number of teachers in all Higher education institutions, including those teaching in hospitals was 16671 in 2004-2005.The number of trainers reached18608 at the beginning of the 2007-2008 university year.

The Ministry tries to reinforce human resources ,especially teachers by diversifying Master degrees and PHDs and by providing them with the most appropriate material.

2. **Policies and their implementations**

2.1. Higher education quantitative evolution :

2.1.1. Evolution of the number of students :

The rate of students who reached Higher education was 34,6% for the 19-24 olds in 2006-2007 and the total number of students rose to 335649 in 2007-2008 while it was only 311569 in 2004-2005 (Table n°2).

The Higher education map broadened with the creation in 2004of new universities in Monastir, Kairouan and Gafsa. In 2006-2007, 15 new institutions were created. The number of higher education institutions is now 190 (table n°1)

2.1.2. The evolution of the number of Higher Education graduates :

Table n°4 shows the evolution of the number of Higher education graduates which was about 60.000 in 2007.
This evolution has consequences on the labour market, in regard to the number of job seekers and the specialties introduced in the labour market thanks to the short courses. Anticipating this new situation, the Ministry tries to bring training close to the real needs of the labour market, for a better integration of graduates .

2.1.3. The evolution of the number of teachers:

Table n°5 shows the evolution of the number of teachers in the various grades . In 2007, this number reached 18608. The number of students enrolled in post-graduate studies was 25141 distributed as follows : 19763 students in Masters degrees and 5378 in PHD. In 2007, higher education institutions were accredited to provide 10 Master degrees and 11 PHD. Universities in the regions were accredited 10 Master degrees and 4 PHD.

For the recruitment of teachers in the regions, 1210 teachers were recruited or promoted , 25% of the newly recruited teachers were enrolled in new universities . To support new universities, incentives have been given thanks to advantages fixed by decree 2007-2318 dated 11 September 2007concerning the daily

rate and the transportation allowance for university teachers who are called upon to teach in remote universities.

2.1.4. Pedagogic training

Universities are supported by the Ministry to provide teachers pedagogic training sessions in relation with innovating sectors. 2 national conferences have been organised for 1400 new teachers, newly promoted senior lecturers and lecturers. Training sessions have been organised at the level of each university or group of universities. These training sessions lasted two years and were about cross-curricular training methods and the use of ICT in lesson planning and students' evaluation.

A specific training session according to subjects or groups of subjects has been organised for permanent or under contract senior lecturers and lecturers. This training session was provided by competent Tunisian teachers or visiting professors.

2.1.5. Co-directed degrees and block-release training

The number of co-directed dissertations rose from 530 in 2400 to 1574 in 2007.The number of national grants for studies abroad has reached 418 national grants, 18 international cooperation grants and 406 loans. 924 block-release grants were given for post-graduate studies

2.2. Pedagogic renewal and qualitative progress

2.2.1. qualitative and quantitative support to short courses giving access to jobs :

In 2006-2007 ,the rate of short courses reached 61,21% out of the whole number of specialties in Higher education. The applied vocational tracks, were diversified ,with the creation of applied and fundamental bachelor degrees in the LMD system, together with the previous system. The rate of students enrolled in short courses reached 37% of the total number of newly enrolled students in 2005-2006.

2.2.2. The evolution of careers in growth areas :

The Ministry has made tremendous efforts to increase the number of tracks in growth areas, such as ICT, electronics, health, applied humanities, art and design. The number of newly enrolled students in these courses reached 25% in 2005-2006.out of the overall number of students .

2.2.3. Reinforced and varied training for engineers :

Tracks preparing for the training of engineers has been reinforced by the creation of ISSAT (Higher institutes for applied Science and Technology). The focus was put on diversifying specialties in the growth sectors such as computer science, communication, statistics and software engineering .

The rate of students enrolled in the engineer training courses reached 10,8% in 2005-2006, while it only represented 9% in 2002-2003.The number of graduates reached 1943 in 2005-2006, that's 3,9% of all graduates .

3. Strategies to combat poverty, exclusion and discrimination

3.1. Improvement of the internal outcome of Higher Education:

The evolution of the number of students is a proof of the improvement of Higher education internal outcome, as the number of students who have been excluded , either voluntarily , for social reasons or for used up tolerated enrolments in the first cycle of Higher education students has decreased significantly**.**

The overall success rate reached 70,5% in June 2007 against 69,2% in June 2004.

Students who have used up their right to registration but are returning to university have increased the number of students enrolled. Indeed, the permission given to these students to register at exams, has enabled a fairly important success rate and has also enabled them to reintegrate university as regular students.

The number of students who have benefited from exceptional registration reached 14207 students in 2006-2007 against 13955 in 2005-2006.

3.2. Attainments of the virtual university (UVT) in the programmes targeting students with specific needs, continuous training and distance learning :

A technique was developed to enable the blind to access an Internet and computer training :C2i Access. In some universities, distance training modules are provided to physically disabled students.

Higher Education grants a great importance to continuous training and distance learning and has thus started certificate courses in growth areas for students allowed to continue distance training, professional graduates, and job seekers ,in addition to periodic training sessions in Computer Science, English, corporate culture and Human Rights.

Data show the endeavours to establish a comprehensive distance learning system for all Tunisians able to pursue Higher Education

studies, without marginalisation or exclusion , even those with specific needs.

3.3. Achievements in services

Data about Higher education services in the 11th plan show a progression in the objectives both at the qualitative and quantitative levels.

3.3.1. Housing

The State continues the construction and equipment of newly created dorms and encourages the private sector to invest in this field to support State efforts and reach targeted housing rates.

3.3.2. Catering

Provisions in Higher education catering has enabled to decrease the students' waiting time .Together with the increased number of seats in the various restaurants and the number of meals served daily, the symbolic price of the meal has been maintained . Students still pay 200 millimes whereas the real cost of the meal is about 1.850 millimes. The quality and the nutritional value of meals haven't been affected thanks to :

- The establishment of a system of analysis and mastery of sensitive points.
- Continuous training in the area of hygiene and food cleanliness of the staff responsible for the management of restaurants .
- The accreditation of restaurants by the purchase of modern equipment and material in order to ensure a better quality of meals and to control their cost.

3.3.3. Grants and loans

Grants and loans are subject to criteria related to family income and particularly to parents' minimum wage. However, with the rise of incomes and the standard of living, only needy students are the beneficiaries.

3.3.4. The reinforcement of students' health coverage and psychological care

With the help of the Ministry of Health the health coverage and students' psychological care are extended .The number of medical visits has increased .All first and second year students, in addition to post-graduate students and students abroad have access to these examinations. .All cases facing problems are examined regularly. All means to combat illnesses are used in order to facilitate the integration of students who are affected in their environment .

Besides, the State continues its policy of free health care in all public health institutions for all students, until they are 28.

Psychological orientation and care have been reinforced with progressively generalised counselling services in all Higher education institutions .

3.3.5. Cultural and sport activities in Higher education

Culture represents an essential element for the construction of a people anchored in its civilisation and history and open onto its era.

For these reasons, important changes have been brought in Higher education , mainly :

- A regular increase of allowances allocated to institutions to support clubs and enrol the greatest number of students in their activities
- The purchase of additional cultural equipment and the best use made.
- Spreading digital culture through programmes that encourage institutions to purchase the necessary material and the help granted to staff in order to organise training sessions for students .Currently, all institutions are equipped with an internal digital network.
- The reinforcement of human resources in all cultural sectors, by recruiting cultural coordinators and staff.
- The activation of the role of Higher education cultural centres, to keep students in their national cultural environment and increase the number of participants.

The Ministry tries to create new cultural centres on large campuses .It also encourages partnership between cultural institutions and their environment.

Thanks to these measures, many assets have been recorded in Higher education cultural and sports activities. A clear evolution can be seen on both the qualitative and the quantitative levels: 2187 cultural clubs with 81126 registered students, 992 sports clubs with 22402 registered students and 1700 coordinators and animators.

4. Higher education and vocational training in agriculture and fishery

4.1.Agricultural Higher Education: institutions, specialties and certificates:

The system of agricultural Higher Education is composed of 11 institutions (table 1) , co-supervised by the Ministry of Agriculture and Hydraulic resources and the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Technology. The coordination between the institutes and the 2 ministries is

ensured by a research institution , agricultural Higher Education and universities (7 November, Jendouba, La Manouba and Sousse).

Table 1 :Agricultural Higher Education Institutions

INSTITUTION	DATE OF CREATION	UNIVERSITY
National Institute of Agricultural studies in Tunis	1898	University 7 November in Carthage
Higher College of food-processing industries in Tunis	1976	
Higher College of Agriculture in Mograne	1981	
Higher College of Agriculture in Mateur	1976	
Higher Institute of fisheries and Aquaculture inBizerte	2004	
Higher Institute of preparatory studies in Biology and Geology in Soukra	2007	
Higher College of Engineers in Rural Equipment in Medjez El Bab	1972	University of Jendouba
Higher College of Agriculture in Kef	1976	
Forestry-Pastoral Institute in Tabarka	1970	
Veterinary National School in Sidi Thabet	1974	University of La Manouba
Higher Institute of Agronomy in Chott Meriem	1975	University of Sousse

4.2. Training sessions

4.2.1. Institutions :

Training is based on various training cycles in the Agriculture Higher Education Institutions (table 2)

CYCLES	LEVEL / DURATION
Preparatory cycle in Biology-Geology	2 years
Training cycle for higher technicians	3 years
Training cycle for engineers	3 years after success at the national exam that crowns preparatory studies
Master and PHD cycle et de Doctorat	After completion of engineering studies
Training cycle for veterinaries. Studies last 5 years and are crowned by a Doctor veterinary certificate	After succeeding at a national exam open for students having passed the 1st preparatory year in Biology-Geology

4.2.2. Specialties : Training in agricultural Higher education covers many fields :

- Plant production
- Animal production
- rural engineering , waters and forests
- Fisheries and aquaculture
- Food-processing industries
- Rural economy
- Veterinary medicine

These specialties are themselves divided in many options that cover all fields of agriculture, fishery, food-processing and veterinary medicine. Most institutions are based in rural areas and have a farm to enable teachers and students to attend activities on the farm. Field work, training sessions and end of studies projects complement the theoretical training necessary for technicians who will be operational and efficient in their professional life.

4.2.3. Applied Bachelor Degree (LMD system) :

Agricultural Higher Education institutions which train higher technicians will join LMD in 2008-2009, in its third wave .Applied Bachelor degrees will then replace the training cycle of higher technicians.8 institutions are ready for this change and have submitted accreditation files. This degree is distributed in 12 career paths to answer the needs of the labour market.

4.2.4. Students :

Agricultural Higher Education institutions currently host about 6900 students. The number of students enrolled in these institutions has increased over the past year in parallel with the number of baccalaureate holders. It increased from 4 617 students in 2002-2003 to 6 421 last year. Every year, about 1 200 newly enrolled students are oriented towards Agricultural Higher Education institutions , 500 students of whom are enrolled in engineering studies preparatory years whereas 700 students are enrolled in higher technicians training cycles. As far as the engineering training cycle is concerned, about 700 students who pass the national exam to access engineering colleges are oriented to biology, geology, mathematics, physics and technology .

Girls represent an important ratio of the overall number of students in Agricultural Higher Education institutions (53%). This ratio varies according to specialties and institutions .It is 36,45% for the forestry-pastoral institute in Tabarka and 74,14% for the Higher College of food-processing industries in Tunis.

Table 5 : Number and ratio of girls in Agricultural Higher Education institutions

INSTITUTIONS	NBR OF STUDENTS ENROLLED	% GIRLS
National Veterinary School in Sidi Thabet - ENMV	432	53,47
National Institute of Agricultural studies in Tunis - INAT	1869	54,84
Higher College of Agriculture in Mograne - ESA	586	58,87
Higher College of Agronomy in Chott-Mariem	09	52,85
Higher College of food-processing industries in Tunis	495	74,14
Higher College of Engineers in Rural Equipment-ESIER	847	37,78
Higher College of Agriculture in Kef - ESAK	622	48,23
Higher College of Agriculture in Mateur - ESA	308	52,27
Higher Institute of Preparatory studies in Biology-Geology in la Soukra - SEP BG	187	62,57
Forestry-Pastoral Institute in Tabarka - ISP	203	36,45
Higher Institute of fishery and Aquaculture in Bizerte - ISPA	130	45,38
Total	6888	52,8

4. 3. Degrees :

Over the past ten years, the number of degree holders from Higher Education in Agriculture has increased from 384 in 1997 to 1183 in 2007 (table 6). The success rate is high (about 97 .10%) thanks to a good supervision of students and also to the importance granted to technical and practical studies.

Table 6 : Evolution of the number of graduates in Higher Education Agricultural institutions from 1997 to 2007

YEAR	VETERINARY MEDECINE	TECHNICIAN	ENGINEER	MASTERS	PHD	TOTAL
1999-00	61	259	257			577
2000-01	52	325	311	11	3	702
2001-02	52	419	273	11	3	758
2002-03	43	497	336	95	5	976
2003-04	39	389	407	261	8	1 104
2004-05	65	393	389	126	9	992
2005-06	65	474	490	130	8	1 167
2006-07	65	434	553	117	14	1 183

4.4. Continuous training :

Continuous training sessions are organised for employees at the Ministry of Agriculture and Hydraulic Resources and for candidates applying for competitions organised under the supervision of the same Ministry. These sessions concern other ministries such as the Ministry of Trade and the Ministry of Crafts as well as for the private sector, such as limited companies. This training allows the promotion to the rank of higher technician, chief technician or chief engineer. It is organised in many institutions and various specialties, such as fishery , horticulture, food-processing industries, water resources, water and soil conservation, forests, farming industry and breeding. This training can be either face-to-face or on-line. Continuous training enables technicians in remote areas to attend sessions without going to the training institutions.

4.5. Teachers:

Higher education agricultural system comprises about 350 regular teachers under the status of Higher Education in agriculture and 70 technicians (engineers and veterinaries) under contract enrolled according to needs.

5. Vocational training in agriculture and fishery

5.1. The role of vocational training in agriculture and fishery:

It plays a role of paramount importance thanks to the availability of skilled workers and the improvement of the competences and skills of professionals in this field.

Besides, this system has been cared for by his Excellency, the Head of State who announced in his12May 1998 speech that a number of measures were taken to upgrade agricultural and fishery vocational training institutes and also to prioritise the training of farmers, fishermen and their children and also young promoters.

In this context, the Agricultural Training and Information Agency has elaborated a global plan of reforms that aims mainly at reforming training programmes and pedagogic methods so that they answer the ambitions of professionals and upgrade learning to a certification level and quality recognised worldwide.

5.1.1.Vocational training services in agriculture and fishery

Vocational training institutions offer :

Initial training enabling the trainee to find a job requiring one of the following certificates and skills :

-Vocational skill certificate (Diplôme d'Aptitude Professionnelle)

-Vocational certificate of technical skill (Certificat d'aptitude technique professionnelle)

Continuous training for « active » people in agriculture : this training course results from a national plan decided by his Excellency the Head of State on Agriculture day celebrated on May 12,1998 .It aims at reinforcing general and professional knowledge in agriculture and fishery. Moreover, this training course which concerns many categories ,mainly farmers, fishermen and their children, rural women, young promoters and adult literacy learners is crowned by a continuous training attendance certificate in one specialty.

The improvement of technical specialties of managerial and administrative staff in the various services of training and information. This improvement concerns many categories : trainers, counsellors, managerial and administrative staff in training centres, as well as Arab and foreign managerial staff.

5.1.2. Vocational training system main assets in agriculture and fishery.

Vocational training in agriculture and fishery has benefited from a huge reform that has resulted in many achievements in addition to the challenges of the coming stage. Indeed, vocational training answers the current and future needs of institutions in terms of professional capacities, both at the quantitative and qualitative levels. Besides, these assets are based on new approaches, and on tools that can target efficiently the needs, developed pedagogic methods and management of modern centres.

With these reforms ,training has acquired a greater capacity and the necessary flexibility to integrate economic changes.

Among these assets, we can mention :

New partnership relationships

The development of engineering training and trainer training in conformity with a practical plan elaborated in partnership with various collaborators. Training programmes have also been updated and others have been elaborated.

Improvement of enrolment capacity in the training and employment upgrading programme (MANFORME) which comprises the Pedagogic National Institute in Sidi Thabet, The Vocational Training Sectional School of agriculture in cattle breeding

Thibar, The Vocational Training Sectional School in citrus fruit and vine culture in Bouchrik, centres in Chatt Meriem, Degache, Bouchrik, El Fahs, Barrouta in agriculture and Kélibia and Tabarka in fishery.

The pedagogic space management and the construction of new buildings for a number of institutions (state funded).

The implementation of a new pattern of organisation and management of training institutions.

The elaboration of a file on the reinforcement of quality in the improved centres.

The implementation of a permanent mechanism to diagnose the training and supervision needs.

The development of continuous training for which his Excellency the Head of State granted particular attention on agriculture day ,May 12,1998. This has enabled an impressive quantitative progress .Indeed, the achievements have exceeded forecasts of the XIth plan.

5.2. Goals of the XIth plan :

5.2.1. Qualitative goals:

Reinforce vocational training so that it becomes a track for success.

Continue to upgrade the vocational training system .

Increase the outcome of the system so that agricultural vocational training answers the present and future needs of the sector, both at a quantitative and qualitative level. Thanks to accurate measuring tools of needs and to advanced pedagogic methods ,the needs for a skilled workers and technicians will be satisfied.

5.2.2. Quantitative goals :

The training capacity has reached 3 000 training participants, thus enabling the agricultural vocational training to ensure that :

2000 will succeed and 15000 will attend this training by 2009,

The capacitation of 16 institutions,

The elaboration of 26 competency-based programmes,

The implementation of quality mechanisms in 8 institutions,

The improvement of the supervision rate thanks to 283 additional trainers.

5.2.3. Measures and achievements :

2 centres have been renovated and restructured (Thibar and Chatt Meriem),

6 centres are being renovated and restructured (Degache, Barrouta, El Fahs, Bouchrik, Tabarka and Kélibia),

4 centres are being renovateds with a state budget (2007-2008),

2 centres (Thibar and Chatt Meriem) have benefited from the implementation of a quality scheme,

the programme has been elaborated and implemented according to the competency-based approach.

5.2.4. Progress in achievements :

The two centres in Thibar and Chatt Meriem have obtained the national quality training 2008 certification.

The national institute of pedagogy and continuous training in Sidi Thabet has obtained certification ISO 9001 before 2009 ,

The implementation of a quality scheme in 6 institutions,

The affiliation of all institutions to quality scheme before 2011.

PART III
ADULT EDUCATION
Implementing lifelong learning

1. INTRODUCTION :

The Tunisian policy in adult education, the National programme for adult literacy (PNEA) started in April 2000. During the Xth and XIth economic and social development plans, with incentives of his Excellency the Head of State, a significant qualitative progress has been made at the level of lifelong learning. Learners with limited literacy competencies can acquire the necessary mechanisms for their socio-educational and economic integration and also improve the quality of their lives.

As regard to this global perspective inspired by the orientations adopted at the national, regional and international level ,adult education is no longer for Tunisia just a combat against illiteracy but it is rather considered as an efficient mechanism for integration and inclusion for all social categories, whether youth or adults, illiterate or higher education degree holders. It secures lifelong learning, knowledge and competencies required for a better contribution to implement knowledge society.

2. The National Programme for Adult Literacy (PNEA): orientations, objectives and priorities:

Referring to the global vision characterising the evolution of Adult literacy at the local (1), regional (2) and international level (3),its orientations and priorities, the National Programme for Adult Literacy has been assigned 3 major orientations around which revolve the general policy for Adult literacy and its future perspectives in Tunisia These orientations lie within lifelong learning that aims at:

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(1)The XI th social and economic development plan 2007-2011.
(2) The Arab Organisation for education, culture and science, (2001), strategy for adult education in the Arab world
(3)International conferences and forums

2.2. Ensuring the coordination between the various institutions operating in the field in order to increase the level of competences of beneficiaries by emphasising the development of their skills

2.3. Ensuring equal opportunities for all social categories and facilitating their access to daily activities to implement " lifelong education".

PNEA has also defined priority objectives for the XIth plan to implement the orientations mentioned above .

2.3.1. Quantitative objectives

For the 1st period (2005-2006/2009-2010):

- Reduction of illiteracy rate to less than 10% in 2009-2010 and youth under 30, to less than 1 % for the same period by educating 40000 youth out of 70000 yearly.
- Priority to women, rural as well as priority areas.

For the second period (2010-2011/2011-2012):

80 % of the citizens will pursue studies in the post-literacy phase to eradicate illiteracy and reinforce autonomous learning skills.

2.3.2. Qualitative objectives :

Help learners in Adult literacy centres to reinvest acquired basic competencies to:

- manage daily activities ,whether economic, social or personal
- participate in a fast-changing society
- develop self-learning mechanisms in the framework of opportunities offered by adult education centres and other institutions
- reinvest basic competencies in mechanisms intended to integrate youth.

3. Administrative and organisational structures :

In order to reach its quantitative and qualitative objectives, PNEA, which is supervised by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Solidarity, is structured as follows :

3.1. A central national structure, led by a general coordinator who is responsible for mobilising concerned bodies. It is also composed of specialised units whose main roles are to ensure :

3.1.1 The planning and elaboration of literacy programmes,

3.1.2The elaboration of curricula and pedagogic tools for teachers as well as learners,

3.1.3.The management,implementation,monitoring and evaluation of literacy programmes,
3.1.4The training of staff and teachers.

3.2. A regional adult teaching department in every governorate (24) supervised by the regional direction of Social Affairs and Solidarity, and headed by a regional coordinator, responsible for coordinating adult education regional programmes between the various parties at the local and regional level .

3.3. A territorial department whose main attributions are to sensitise, inform and mobilise concerned parties and mainly potential and priority learners targeted by PNEA.

However, PNEA refers to the National Commission for Adult Literacy ,as a consulting body, created by decree n° 1237, in 1996,and reinforced by the creation of local and regional commissions to approve of and ensure implementation and monitoring .

4. Curricular policy and inclusion mechanisms in Adult literacy

PNEA has developed, "the new integrated literacy approach " , based on the principles of integration of teaching activities as well as training and partnership. This enables networking with civil society and various partners.

The implementation of this integrated approach enabled the elaboration of a mechanism based on a clear sighted approach, learning methods and techniques that can meet the specific features of adult learners and the fundamental learning requirements. 5 main themes have been chosen to cover the general, operational objectives and to convey the principles of equal opportunities ,parity and equity ,as expressed in curricula and translated in terms of attitudes, behaviour, competences and values. These themes are:

- ♠ citizenship,
- ♠ Family life,
- ♠ Health care,
- ♠ social and economic life,
- ♠ Environnemental issues.

By dealing with issues related to equal opportunities, gender parity and equity, while insisting on their effects on learning and their contribution to a climate of trust that facilitates the progressive socioeconomic integration of the targeted population, PNEA has emphasized the role of adult literacy as a vector of development.. If we consider citizenship, its foundations and the laws regulating social relationships in our society, for example, it appears that it is a

step towards the achievement of equal opportunities, equity and parity, as mentioned in the Adult literacy programme.
Likewise, other themes related to family life and social and economic life have been treated as well as the right for All Tunisians to a decent life, regardless of their gender, age, literacy level, or those with specific needs. The Human Rights declaration (1948) ,the 1956,Tunisian constitution ,the code of personal status and the international conventions of fight against all forms of segregation against women in particular, guarantee to Tunisians the right to health care, education, employment and prevent them from any kind of segregation or exclusion. The theme about economic life underlines the importance of enhancing competitive sectors and those facilitating employment such as industrial sectors and services that require a better preparation of human resources in the use of high tech.

The theme related to social life has focused on the importance of employment, as it is both a source and a means that enables the development and the socioeconomic integration of individuals while preventing them from being exploited or and excluded .

5. The support network : a mechanism for integration and inclusion

The contribution of civil society to the implementation of Adult education and training was of great help. State institutions as well as NGO's are networking to ensure life skills acquisition and prepare learners to vocational training. Teachers are hired and provide courses with precise programmes, content and schedule.

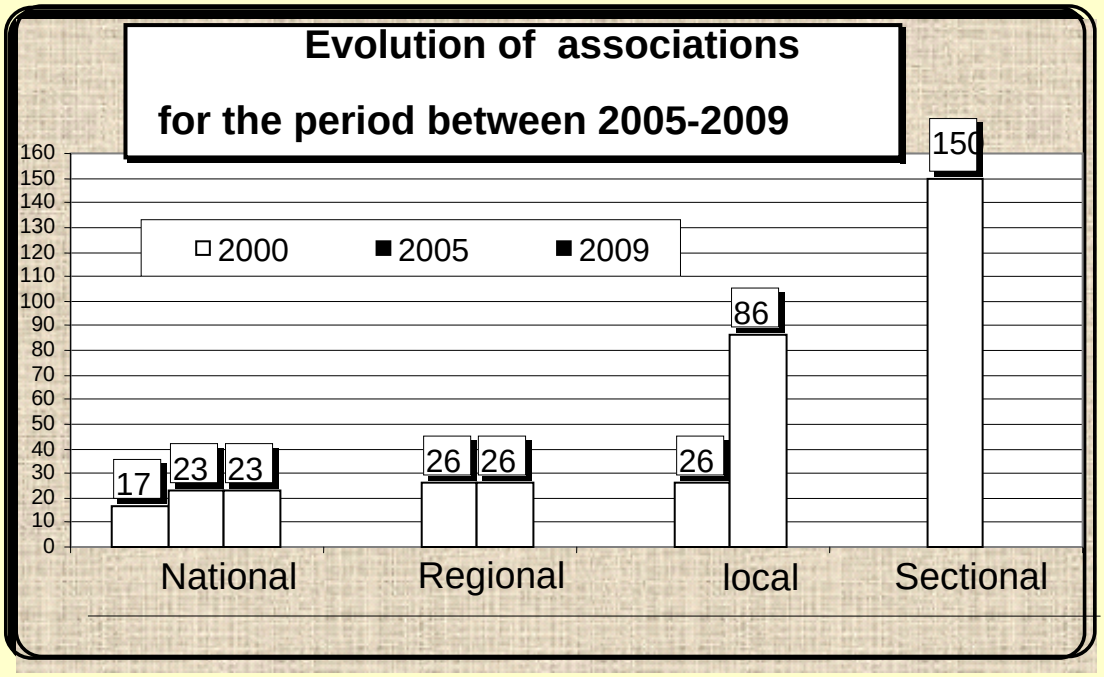
In 2006-2007, for example, 5000 young people aged below 30 -4000 of whom women - took part in introductory courses to vocational training. Workshops are run by professionals at the Ministry of National Defence , the National Office for Crafts ,the National Union of Tunisian Women and other associations to best answer employability and the requirements of the labour market.

To consolidate the competencies acquired by new literate people, PNEA aims at implementing new multidimensional pilot centres targeting teaching, training and creativity in the remaining period part of the XIth plan.

The choice of introductory activities will be made by identifying the needs of the targeted population, the specific features of the region and the needs of the labour market.

The phase of identification of needs for the year 2008-2009 has already started and the procedures to purchase required equipment have been launched. At the beginning of the school year 2008-2009, 50 multidimensional centres will be ready.

The graph below shows the growing interest shown to associations over the past years to consolidate the efforts of the State to attain national policy objectives in education and adult literacy ,which is considered as a medium for social, economic and educational integration.



6. PNEA quantitative and qualitative achievements (2005-2008):

To achieve its objectives for the years 2005 -2008 , the National Programme for Adult Literacy (PNEA) ,in close collaboration with various partners, worked at developing actions that enabled :

6.1. On the quantitative level:

- ♣ The reduction of illiteracy rate to 31.7 %, in 1999, 20.6 % in 2007 by providing literacy courses to more than 371.000 people, with an average exceeding 53000 yearly. In 2007-2008, the number is expected to be about 90 000 ,which will increase the number of literate learners to 461000.

The graph below reflects the evolution of literacy according to PNEA priorities.

- ♣ Data collected about adult learners show the following indicators :

33 % are young people below 30
38 % are adults between 30 and 49
79 % are women
58.1 % learners come from rural areas
1% are disabled youth

6.2 On the qualitative level : efforts made by PNEA in 2005-2008 resulted in :

- Assets in « lifelong learning culture » with a broader participation of civil society composed of a broad network of about 14000 activists, adult teachers and other passionate activists..
- Learners' political and social participation
- New projects based on competency-based curricula and pedagogic tools produced to meet criteria required by UNESCO.
- 15 social TV programmes broadcast to implement adult teaching through TV and to extend it to more people.
- Quality assurance and cost effectiveness that meet international criteria.
- The publication of two bi-weekly supplements ,one in « El AKD » newspaper and the second in "Al Horria". The two supplements aim at preserving the knowledge acquired by learners and facilitate their evolution towards autonomous learning in order to prevent them from returning to illiteracy
- Helping reduce young graduates' unemployment rates by providing 6300 contract-based teaching jobs, distributed in 5100 adult-literacy centres.

7. PNEA Future perspectives:

In the light of goals achieved between 2005 à 2008 and measures taken in a restricted ministerial meeting, the National Programme for Adult Literacy has defined the following goals for the coming years of the XIth plan :

- ✓ Reducing the illiteracy years to less than 1 % among young people aged below 30 and by educating the remaining 162000
- ✓ Reducing the national illiteracy rate among the active population to less than 10 %.
- ✓ Further reinforcing the role of associations in the achievements of PNEA goals.
- ✓ Consolidating and improving communication and incentives, in the light of the results of the survey about « motivation and demotivation of youth under 30 ». 3 new multidimensional pilot centres will be created and will deal with teaching, training, communication, culture , creativity……
- ✓ Continuing the creation of pilot centres for adult education in other governorates of the country to promote a multidimensional adult

education that integrates the components defined by the curricula ,mainly manual skills and ICT

✓ Further consolidating the post-literacy assets by facilitating more particularly autonomous learning and the eradication of illiteracy. New books entitled « easy reading » will be published for learners with limited reading skills.

✓ Post-literacy clubs and centres that introduce professional skills and contribute to better employment and social management.

✓ TV programmes that integrate all basic activities of the programme and cover all themes defined by PNEA curricula.

Thus, we can conclude that this survey represents, in the short run, a lever for the qualitative development of PNEA. It is accompanied by mechanisms implemented to achieve PNEA goals, which are in tune with UN goals for the 2003/2012 decade, Dakar goals on "Education For All " for 2015 and the millennium goals. Indeed, great efforts have been made to reduce the illiteracy rate in Tunisia, which is expected to drop to less than 10 % before 2009-2010, as this date is the end of the five-year presidential programme " Tomorrow Tunisia " **.**

APPENDIX : Higher education statistics

Appendix : statistic tables

Table n°1 : Development of the number of Higher education public institutions

Table n°2 : Development of the number of regular students in Higher education public institutions

Table n°3 : Development of the number of regular students per training sector

Table n°4 : Development of the number of outgoing students according to degrees Table n°5 : Development of the number of permanent teachers in Higher education public institutions

Table n°6 : Development of Higher education budget (in billion dinars)

Table n° 1 : Evolution of the number of Higher education public institutions

University Year	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007- 2008
Public institutions	139	155	161	161
Co-supervised institutions	23	23	29	29
Total	162	178	190	190

Table n° 2 : Evolution of the number of regular students in public Higher education

University Year	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007- 2008
Regular students	311569	321838	326185	335649
Girls	178312	187137	192574	198502
% of girls	57,2 %	58,1 %	59 %	59,1 %
Number of students per 100.000inhabitants	3262	3349	3360	3427
Grant holders	90913	88034	101690	102713
% of grant holders	29,2 %	27,4 %	31,2 %	30,6 %

Table n° 3 : Evolution of the number of regular students per training sector

University year	2004-2005		2005-2006		2006-2007		2007- 2008	
Science	34266	11 %	42130	13,1 %	43746	13,4 %	44020	13,1 %
Art, Arts et Humanities	85713	27,5 %	77312	24 %	78466	24,1 %	96549	28,8 %
Medical Science	18003	5,8 %	17418	5,4 %	18139	5,6 %	19497	5,8 %
Law, economy and management	95987	30,8 %	114722	35,6 %	112882	34,6 %	91505	27,3 %
Technical Sciences	68029	21,8 %	61661	19,2 %	65105	20 %	77929	23,2 %
Agriculture	8051	2,6 %	7024	2,2 %	7062	2,2 %	6149	1,8 %

Table n° 4 : Evolution of the number of outgoing students according to degrees

University Year	2004-2005		2005-2006		2006-2007		2007- 2008	
Short courses	14389	35,7 %	18524	37,2 %	21525	38,1 %	23066	39,4 %
Master	22332	55,4 %	23978	48,1 %	25995	46 %	25566	43,6 %
Medical occupations	1150	2,9 %	1197	2,4 %	1287	2,3 %	1370	2,3 %
Engineering	2038	5,1 %	2389	4,8 %	2762	4,9 %	3135	5,4 %
Specialised degrees	412	1 %	538	1,1 %	763	1,3 %	841	1,4 %
Total	40321		49811		56559		58598	

Table n° 5 : Evolution of the number of permanent teachers in Higher education state institutions:

University year	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007- 2008
Total number of teachers	16671	16919	18117	18608
Female teachers	6705	6877	7498	7823
% of female teachers	40,2 %	40,6 %	41,4 %	42,0 %
Supervision rate	18,7	19,0	18,0	18,0

Table n° 6 : Development of Higher education budget (in billion dinars)

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Title I	526,0	582,9	648,0	747,1	
Total budget	610,9	652,1	714,8	792,7	974,1
G NP rate	1,7	1,7	1,8	1,8	2,1