

UNFPA/ASRO-OECD Conference
on Mobilizing Migrants' Skills for Development in the Arab
Region: Making the most out of young migrants' skills
(Tunis, May 13-14, 2013)

Research Paper:
Migration of international students and mobilizing
skills in the MENA Region
(Tunis, May 13, 2013)

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Outline

- **Aims of the research.**
- **Stylised facts on the Arab and MENA Regions.**
- **Relevance and contribution of the research.**
- **Research methodology.**
- **Main findings.**
- **Conclusions and Policy Recommendations.**



Aims of the Research

Provide overview of migration of international students from the Arab and Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regions.

In particular, examine three hypotheses:

- (1) International students from the Arab and MENA regions increased substantially over the past years.
- (2) International students from the Arab region are concentrated in few countries,
- (3) Skills of international students can be better mobilized in their countries of origin by addressing the push-pull factors related to mobility of students, migration of skill and brain drain in the Arab and MENA regions.



Stylised facts on the Arab and MENA Regions

- Wide disparities in:
 - demographic composition,
 - standards of economic development (GDP per capita income),
 - endowments of natural (oil and gas) resources → disparities in standards of economic development (GDP per capita income),
- High investment in education but low productivity of education
- Rapid growth of youth population,
- High rates of youth unemployment,
- Substantial labour migration movement within the Arab region,
- Migration of population and students due to push-pull factors,
- Brain drain and flight of human capital from the Arab region.



Relevance and Contribution of the Research

- ◆ Mobilising young migrant's skill is a necessary condition for development in the Arab and MENA countries.
- ◆ Fill the gap in the Arab and MENA literature by examining recent development of size, quantity, trend and distribution of international students from the Arab and MENA regions.
- ◆ Support the efforts for mobilization of skills of international students in their countries of origin in the Arab and MENA regions.



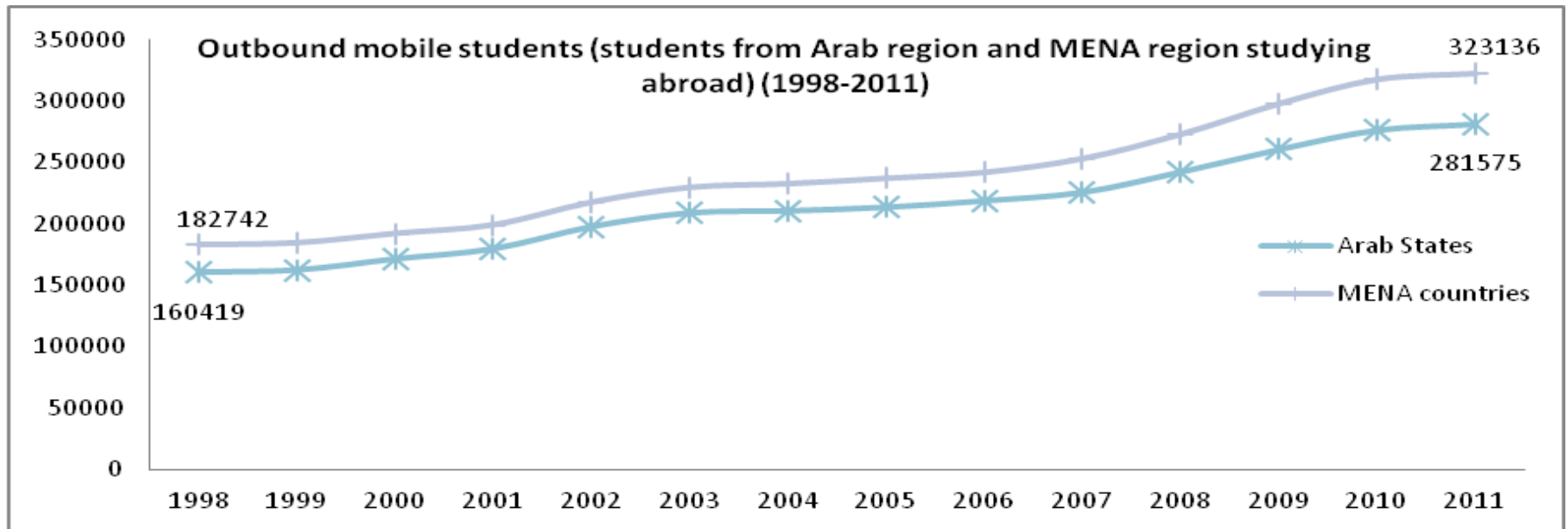
Research Methodology

- Descriptive and comparative methods of analysis.
- Secondary data: UIS-UNESCO Education Digest (2011-2012): international/mobile students.
- Examine the size, quantity, trend and distribution of international mobile students from the Arab and MENA regions compared to other world region; and
- Provide insights for mobilizing young migrant skills for development in the Arab and MENA regions.

Main Results

- Support the first hypothesis that the international students from the Arab and MENA regions increased substantially over the past years.

Figure 1- Total outbound international mobile students from the Arab region and MENA region over the period (1998-2011)



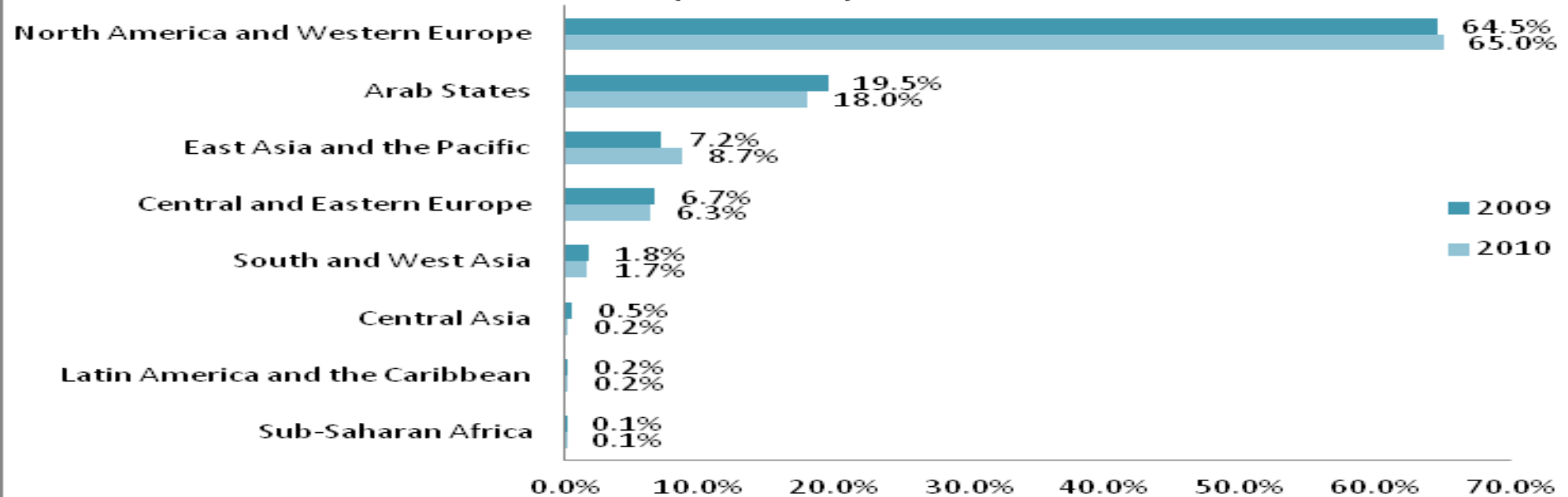
Source: Adapted from UIS-UNESCO (2012)



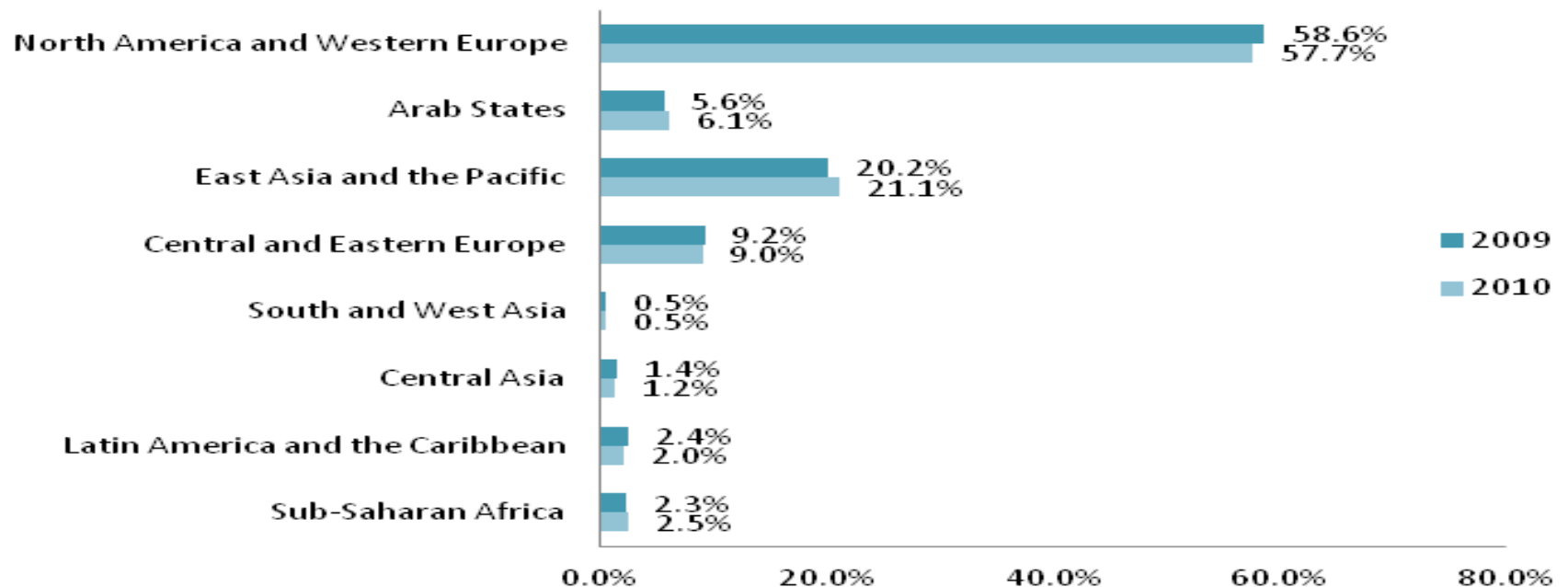
Main Results

- Corroborate the second hypothesis that international students from the MENA region are concentrated in few countries.
- Top five destinations: UK, US, France, Germany, and Australia receive around:
 - 74% - 57% (1999-2004)-(2010) of all international Arab students,
 - 54%-59% (1999-2004)-(2010) of Gulf Arab students,
 - 82%-64% (1999-2004)-(2010) of Mediterranean Arab students,
 - 77% (2010) of Maghreb Arab students, and
 - 50%-23% (1999-2004)-(2010) of other Arab students.
- Support the third hypothesis that skills of international students can be better mobilized in their countries of origin by addressing the push-pull factors that determine migration of skills from the MENA region.

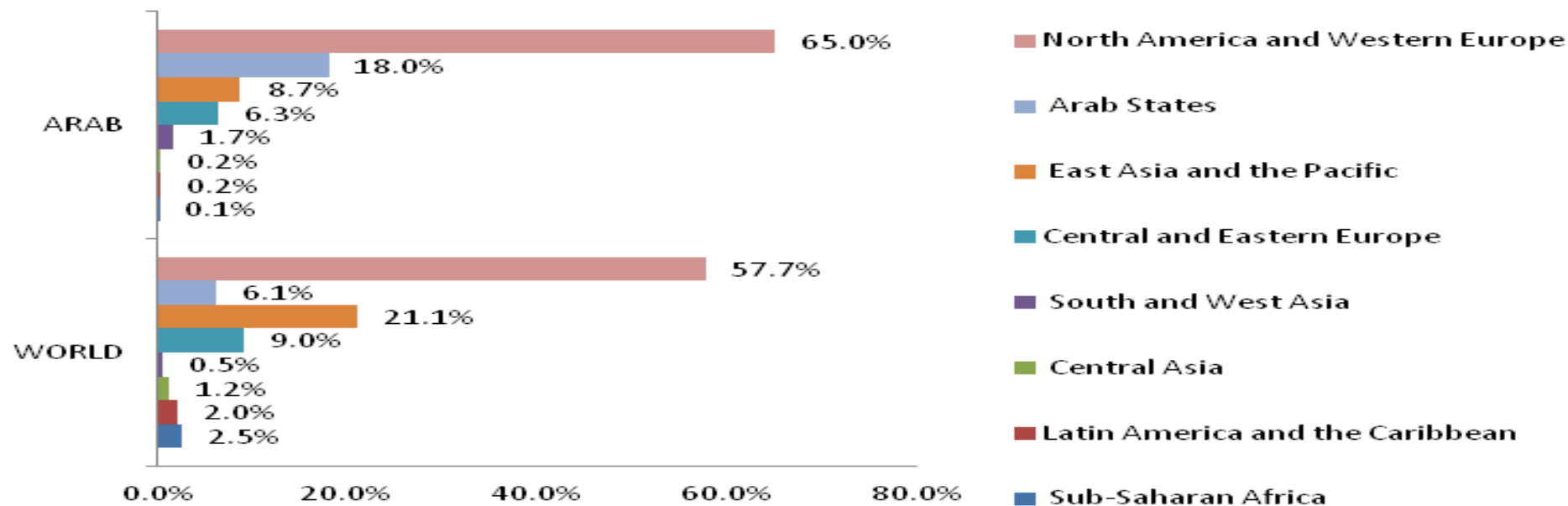
Students from Arab region studied and hosted by the other World region (2009-2010)



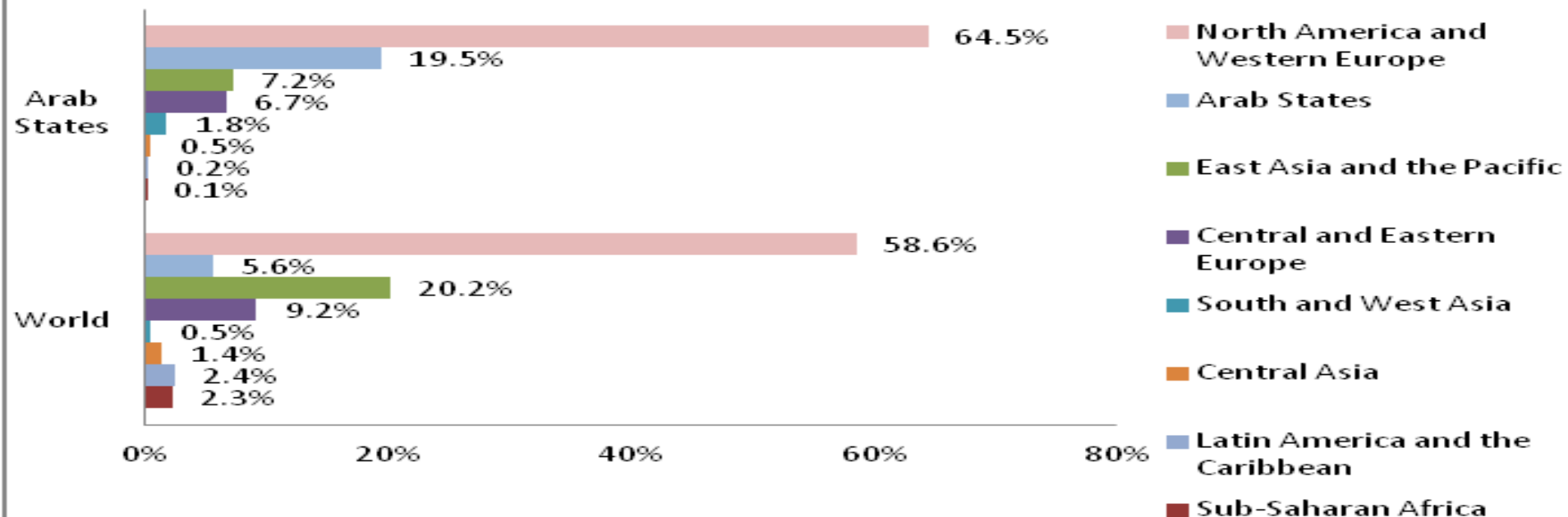
The share of Arab and other regions in total outbound mobile students in the World (2009-2010)



Students from Arab region studied and hosted by the other region 2010



Students from Arab region studied and hosted by the other region 2009





Main Results

- Distribution of the international students from the Arab region studied and hosted by other World region (2009-2010) implies:
 - Heavy concentration of Arab students studied in North America and Western Europe (64.5%; 65.0%) in (2009, 2010),
 - Followed by Arab States (19.5%; 18.0%) in (2009, 2010);
 - Few in East Asia and the Pacific (7.2%; 8.7%) in (2009, 2010); and
 - Central and Eastern Europe (6.7%; 6.3%) in (2009, 2010).



Main Results

- Slight increase in the share of Arab students studied in:
 - North America and Western Europe (64.5%; 65.0%); and
 - East Asia and the Pacific (7.2%; 8.7%).
- Slight decrease in the share of Arab students studied in:
 - Arab States (19.5%; 18.0%); and
 - Central and Eastern Europe (6.7%; 6.3%).
- Slight increase in the share of Arab in total outbound mobile students in the World (5.6% - 6.1%) (2009-2010).

Table 3- Intra-regional and International Mobility of Students from Arab Countries and sub-regions, 2010 (%)

Total (all countries)	Intra Regional Mobility (within the Arab region)				International (or internationally mobile) students. Total: Students from a given country studying abroad						
	Gulf/ total (%)	Med/ total (%)	Other/ total (%)	All Arab/ total (%)	U.K. / Total (%)	U.S.A. / Total (%)	France/ Total (%)	Germany/ Total (%)	Australia/ Total (%)	Studying in USA, UK, France, Germany and Australia / Total Students from a given country studying abroad	Total Other/ Total (%)
Gulf Arab											
Bahrain	0.065		0.193	0.258	0.272	0.107				0.379	0.114
Kuwait	0.393		0.135	0.527	0.133	0.196			0.022	0.351	
Oman	0.134		0.363	0.497					0.062	0.062	0.138
Qatar	0.059		0.088	0.147	0.379	0.235				0.613	0.083
Saudi Arabia	0.040		0.105	0.144	0.194	0.377			0.130	0.701	
United Arab Emirates					0.351	0.193	0.031		0.169	0.744	0.131
Gulf Arab	0.102	-	0.119	0.221	0.200	0.281	0.004	-	0.100	0.585	0.033
Mediterranean Arab											
Palestine			0.093	0.093	0.108	0.025			0.046	0.179	0.038
Egypt	0.077			0.077	0.120	0.194	0.108	0.110		0.531	
Lebanon						0.132	0.424	0.060		0.616	0.106
Syria			0.143	0.143			0.171	0.160		0.331	0.193
Libya					0.403	0.151	0.040			0.593	0.242
Morocco							0.642	0.077		0.719	0.152
Algeria					0.011	0.008	0.893			0.912	
Tunisia							0.598	0.136		0.734	0.143
Mediterranean Arab	0.006	-	0.021	0.027	0.041	0.038	0.488	0.072	0.004	0.642	0.109
Maghreb	-	-	-	-	0.003	0.002	0.698	0.070	-	0.773	0.110
Other Arab											
Mauritania	0.031	0.474		0.505			0.385	0.031		0.416	
Iraq			0.349	0.349	0.081	0.044		0.038		0.162	0.150
Jordan	0.069			0.069	0.124	0.181				0.305	0.263
Djibouti		0.189		0.189			0.605			0.605	0.135
Sudan	0.163			0.163	0.082			0.050		0.132	0.338
Yemen	0.062		0.163	0.224				0.072		0.072	0.448
Other Arab	0.051	0.009	0.120	0.180	0.069	0.067	0.065	0.031	0.000	0.232	0.241
All Arab	0.041	0.001	0.064	0.106	0.092	0.115	0.283	0.045	0.032	0.566	0.105

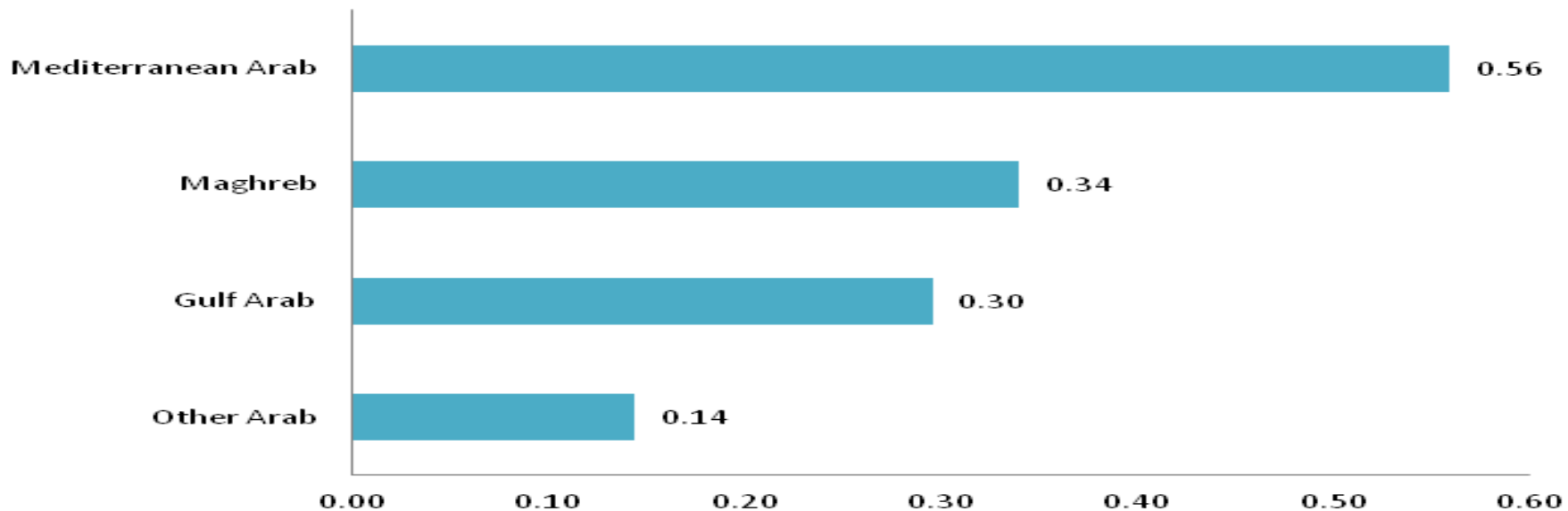
Source: Own calculation adapted from Table (2) based on data from the UIS-UNESCO Global Education Digest (2012) statistics on International (internationally mobile) students: UIS- UNESCO web site.



Main Results

- Majority of Arab students in top five destinations (2010) are from:
 - Mediterranean (56%) (mainly Maghreb (34%)),
 - Gulf (30%), and
 - Other non-Gulf-non-Mediterranean Arab countries (14%).

Distribution of outbound mobile students from the main Arab sub-regions (%) 2010





Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

- Mobilizing skills through:

- Utilization of human capital mobility in the MENA region,

- Promotion of recognition of foreign qualifications,

- Strengthen skill of local labor by provision of regular training,

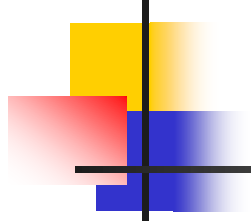
- Enhancing quality of education and national science policies,

- Increasing financial resources toward education, S&T and R&D

- Increasing incentives (financial and personal incentives),

- Addressing the push-pull factors of migration of skills from the Arab and MENA regions,

- Encouraging transfer of knowledge via migrants, through the TOKTEN programme to turn “brain drain” into “brain gain.”



**Comments are welcome,
thanks for Your Kind Attention**