HBMSU Contribution to UNESCO IITE Foresight
In ICT in Higher Education

- **Main achievements, Ideas, and Topics for Discussion**

In order to provide a comprehensive overview, we have chosen to categorize HBMSU's main achievements and ideas related to ICT in Higher Education, within the typology introduced in the NMC Horizon Report: 2014 Higher Education Edition [page 4]:

1. Content & Curricula [Cross disciplinary/OER/meaningful activities]
2. Assessment [Engaging Assessment/ Formative Assessment/ Recognition of non-formal learning]
3. Learning practices [Learning by exploring/creating/playing/personalized/self-regulated/ collaborative]
4. Teaching practices [Soft skills/individual strength/ diverse learning styles & thinking modes]
5. Organization [Innovative services/timetables/ monitoring quality]
6. Leadership & Values [Innovation/ entrepreneurship/ social inclusion]
7. Connectedness [Networking/social networks/learning events]
8. Infrastructure [ICT infrastructure/physical space]

- **Content & Curricula**

   [Cross Disciplinary/OER/Meaningful Activities]

With regard to Content & Curricula, HBMSU as placed a lot of emphasis on the production, advocacy, and dissemination of Open Educational Resources (OER). At the moment, as a member of the OER University Consortium, HBMSU Division of Academic Affairs is looking into Institutional Action Plan and related policies regarding the production, integration, and usage of OERs. These current initiatives follow the hosting in 2012, of the ICDE SCOP 2012 conference, whose theme Open and Distance Education (ODE): Barriers, Opportunities and Strategies Forward was in line with its commitment to offer quality and excellent education in the 21st century, and with its continuing thrust and relentless efforts to stimulate the growth of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) worldwide. Since then, efforts were made across HBMSU schools to increase the usage of OERs in our courses.

- **Assessment**
   [Formative Assessment/ Recognition of Informal Learning]

The recognition of informal learning along with engaging formative assessment has been triggered by the 4Cs model as an intrinsic part of HBMSU's DNA.

HBMeU Life Long Learning (LLL) Model
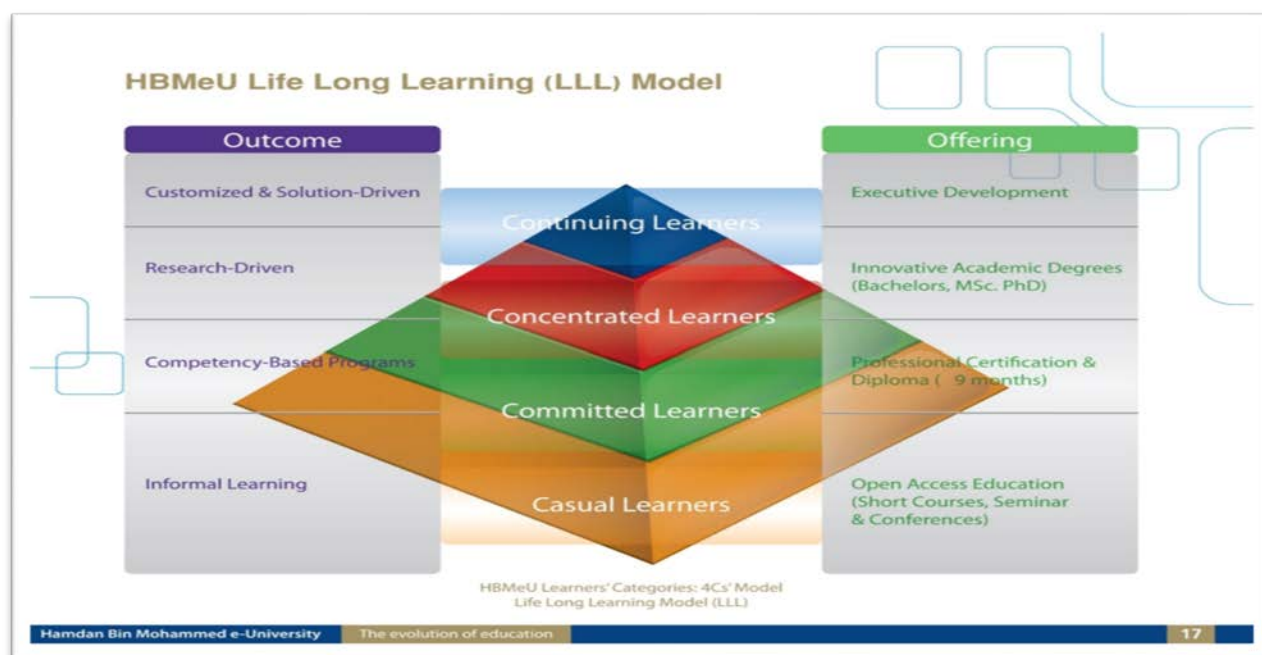
- **Learning & Teaching practices**

  [LEARNING BY EXPLORING/ CREATING/ PLAYING/COLLABORATING]

Beside ongoing innovative T&L practices triggered by HBMSU's schools on a continuous basis, a best practice forum has been established on a yearly basis, allowing to showcase, share, and disseminate best teaching and learning practices across the university.

In addition, the Certificate in Instruction and e-Learning (CIEL) that was launched in 2013, offers a job-embedded professional development program to an audience of instructors from different domains of expertise at different levels, engaged in shifting their teaching practices from traditional to online, supporting them in this transition process, showing by example how to excel in online teaching, and using best practices as case studies. CIEL uses a blend of job-embedded strategies closely connected to the participants' actual day-to-day online teaching and learning, management functions, and related tasks. Participants are required to build and maintain a reflective blog of their weekly online teaching experience, to share these reflections with their peers and an expert who will guide them and will support them to face the challenges and difficulties experienced in their online teaching. CIEL is endorsed by IFIP TC3 Education, and was shortlisted in the EFQUEL Holistic Technology Enhanced Learning (HOTEL) contest, as a most innovative project against several European Union ones.

- **Organizational Practices**

  [Innovative services/timetables/ monitoring quality]

In 2014, H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE, launched a new strategy to make the country one of the world's most innovative within seven years. The strategy works along four parallel tracks:

- The first track will anchor a stimulating environment for innovation in the form of supportive institutions and laws.
- The second track will develop government innovation by institutionalizing innovative practices with the support of an integrated system of modern tools.

- The third track will encourage private sector innovation by stimulating companies to establish innovation and scientific research centers, to adopt new technologies, and to develop innovative products and services.
- The fourth track will qualify individuals with highly innovative skills by concentrating on science, technology, engineering and mathematics, including the creation of educational material for schools and universities.

The aim is to establish a national culture that encourages innovation and entrepreneurship through partnerships between the public, private and media sectors. As a member of Dubai Smart Government, HBMSU changed its name from 'e' (for electronic) to 'Smart' in 2014, and is an implementing agency of the innovation strategy advocated by the government. This is truly reflected in all the services offered by the university, starting with its Smart Campus, a one-stop-shop for all the learners, staff, and faculty.

- **LEADERSHIP & VALUES**

  [Innovation/ Entrepreneurship/ Social Inclusion]

  HBMSU is offering three related Masters:

  - Master of Science in Innovation & Change Management
  - Master of Science in Organizational Excellence
  - Master of Management in Entrepreneurial Leadership

  HBMSU offers since 2014 a PhD program with a concentration in Educational Leadership among others.

  The Innovation Arabia 8 conference remains as a flagship event for innovation in the region. HBMSU has created in 2014 a Directorship of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, intended to be an actor in innovation, incubation, and entrepreneurship.
  In addition, HBMSU is currently working on the establishment an embedded business incubator that will offer young entrepreneurs and family businesses new opportunities to leverage the expertise and resources of a Smart University, to harness the potential of digital communication and social media; to (re)-design their business model, strategies, and processes; to accelerate product development; and to reduce risks in establishing, expanding, or diversifying their activities.

Connectedness

[Networking/social networks/learning events]

The Cloud Campus initiative, the first of its kind in the Arab region, offers learners from different nationalities and age groups a convenient learning environment and an innovative and interactive e-Learning experience while also providing support and guidance. The platform has proven to be an economical way to reach out to a large segment of learners worldwide through the use of social media such as Facebook, Google+ and twitter accounts giving direct access to online content.

Infrastructure

[ICT infrastructure/physical space]

Every year sees an improvement of HBMSU infrastructure that started with the complete integration of all services offered to learners into the one-stop-shop Smart Campus platform. Last but not least, HBMSU will launch in September 2015 a new admission and registration system based on the Banner platform, the world's leading higher education ERP and the solution of choice for almost 1,400 institutions in 40 countries. With the industry's most comprehensive set of features and future-proof technology, Banner strengthens every major workflow in higher education, from student recruiting and retention to talent attraction and management.

Main questions and challenges ahead

We will not try to reinvent the wheel, we would prefer to reinforce some of the recurrent recommendations found in the NMC Horizon reports, 2013,2014, and 2015, that are not only important ones, still on the table because no clear answers or solution have been provided so far. These questions are:

- How to bridge the gap between the informal cloud of learning and academic degrees leading to employment?
- How to cater for the evolution of online learning, and rethink the concepts of learning spaces
- How to increase the focus and institutional policies on Open Educational Resources
- How to make data-driven learning and assessment an integral part of H.E. recognized assessment strategies.