



# TUNISIA

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT  
DEVELOPMENTS 2016



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## KEY EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENTS IN TUNISIA

The path of reform in Tunisia has been constrained by security problems and the limitations of the coalition government. The coalition government was in power between February 2015 and August 2016 to implement the reforms needed by the country to exit the post-revolution economic stagnation phase. In addition to security issues, the main challenges to be tackled in Tunisia are relaunching the economy to pre-revolution levels and ensuring social stability, especially in disadvantaged regions. To respond to these challenges, a new government *d'unité nationale* was appointed in August 2016.

A major achievement in 2016 was the completion of the National Development Plan 2016–2020. It aims to reposition Tunisia as one of the leading economies in the region. The plan was presented to the international donor community in Tunis at the end of November 2016 in a bid to attract international public and private funding to finance its implementation.

### 1. Key demographic and economic characteristics

Tunisia is a young nation. Out of a total of 11.3 million inhabitants in 2015 (UNDP), more than half the population was under the age of 29. Despite the low annual population growth (1.06% in 2010<sup>1</sup>, the lowest fertility rate in the Arab world), a youth dependency rate of 33.7% was recorded in 2015 (World Bank). This demographic structure, together with a high youth unemployment rate (35.5% in 2015), puts severe pressure on policy makers in terms of needing to provide adequate schooling and health services, and future jobs.

Regardless of the conducive institutional setting based on democratic mechanisms<sup>2</sup>, the path of reform under the first government appointed in February 2015 on the basis of the new constitution was much slower than expected. Apart from the (long) process of drafting the National Development Plan 2016–2020, very limited reforms were enacted by this first government. A new government *d'unité nationale* was thus appointed in August 2016. The political situation in the country remains volatile and this has repercussions for the economy and employment.

Tunisia is an upper middle-income country. Several dichotomies affect the country's potential for economic growth and employment generation, including the intergenerational divide and gender and regional disparities. Gross domestic product (GDP) grew at a rate of 0.8% in 2015, a step backward compared to 2014 when it was 2.7%. This deteriorating situation can be linked to the security issues that had serious consequences for foreign direct investment (FDI) and key sectors such as tourism. Tunisia ranked 74th out of the 189 countries listed in the Doing Business 2016 Index (very different from its ranking in 36th place in 2008), and ranked 92nd in the Global Competitive Index in 2016, much lower than its ranking in 40th place in 2011.

The structure of the national economy is characterised by a large informal sector, which accounts for 39.2% (World Bank, 2011), and a predominance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that are weak in terms of capacity to innovate, the quality of jobs generated and working conditions<sup>3</sup>. At 17%, the rate of (official) self-employment is also worth noting (UNESCO, 2013). Important enterprises remain state-owned and the public administration continues to be rather large. However, employment

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Development, Investment and International Cooperation, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> A new constitution is in force since February 2014. The Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 2015 for supporting the peaceful institutional transition from the former authoritarian regime to democracy.

<sup>3</sup> Half of Tunisian SMEs employ less than 20 people, as per <http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/01%20youth%20employment%20tunisia%20boughzala.pdf>

is expected to be generated by the private sector in the future. This should be achieved by strengthening existing enterprises and starting new businesses. The transversal skills needed to support this transition include a greater entrepreneurial spirit and increased digital knowledge, which will help the economy to make a technological leap forward.

The Tunisian economy is moderately diversified and services play an increasingly important role. In fact, the service sector was the biggest contributor to GDP (61.9%) in 2014. This was followed by industry (29.3%) and agriculture (8.8%) (World Bank). The latter still accounted for 14.8% of employment in 2015 (INS). The increasing importance of services (despite huge losses in the tourism industry) correlates closely with the low investment needed, the combined weight of informal and micro enterprises in the economy and the lack of a clear economic development vision for the country. The contribution made by the industrial sector to GDP declined slightly over the period between 2011 and 2015.

The National Development Plan 2016–2020 is the first multiannual strategic plan to be developed after the revolution. It provides for an ambitious growth rate of more than 5%, mainly through major infrastructural works and investment in innovation and technology. This goal is heavily dependent on the country's capacity to attract investment (EUR 50 billion) despite the damage caused to its image by the recent terrorist attacks<sup>4</sup>. The plan is expected to create 400 000 new jobs, especially for highly skilled graduates. The new National Development Plan, together with the trade agreement concluded with the European Union (EU)<sup>5</sup>, should help the country to strengthen its industrial sector with huge investments in infrastructure, an improved business environment and easier access to the EU's single market. There is a recognition that the provision of vocational education and training (VET) has an important role to play in the relaunch of Tunisian industry and should particularly target the key sectors identified in the plan.

Emigrants' remittances also contribute significantly to GDP, accounting for 4.8% of GDP in 2014 (World Bank). Tunisia is traditionally a country of emigration, with about 6% of its population living abroad, mainly in Europe (83%). In the last few years Tunisia has increasingly become a country of immigration (33 600 immigrants)<sup>6</sup>, particularly for Libyans following the change of regime. The Libyan population in Tunisia is estimated at between 600 000 and 1 000 000<sup>7</sup>. The country's strategy on migration was approved in 2015. It marks an important step towards a global approach to managing migration compared to the traditional approach, which was more focused on helping Tunisians to leave the country. The strategy is one of the outcomes of the new spirit introduced by the Mobility Partnership Agreement signed with the EU in March 2014 to comprehensively manage migration issues. Recognition of emigrants' and immigrants' qualifications is a major issue for the education and VET systems in facilitating access to the labour market. The European Training Foundation's (ETF) MISMES project has identified some good practices in this field, which could serve as inspiration for larger-scale support measures<sup>8</sup>.

In terms of human development, Tunisia ranked 96th out of 187 countries in the UNDP Human Development Index 2015, thus falling under the 'high human development' category. However, 3.8%

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<sup>4</sup> An international conference for foreign investors took place in Tunis in November 2016 and mobilised around EUR 16 million.

<sup>5</sup> The first negotiating round for a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) between the EU and Tunisia took place in April 2016. Discussions covered a wide range of issues including agriculture, services and sustainable development. The overall goal of the negotiations is to create new trade and investment opportunities and bring about the better integration of Tunisia's economy into the EU's single market.

<sup>6</sup> All data on migration comes from the World Bank Migration and Remittances Fact Book 2011.

<sup>7</sup> *Le Monde*, 14 May 2014.

<sup>8</sup> See [www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/MISMES\\_Tunisia](http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/MISMES_Tunisia)

of the Tunisian population are classified as extremely poor<sup>9</sup>. Major disparities exist, especially between interior and rural regions and those in the north of the country and along the coast. Tunisia is at the forefront of women's rights among Arab countries. This is clear in the new constitution. However, Tunisia still ranked only 96th out of 188 countries in the 2014 Gender Inequality Index. Tunisia also still faces the challenge of corruption and was ranked 76th out of 175 countries in the fight against corruption by Transparency International in 2015<sup>10</sup>.

## 2. Education and training

### 2.1 Trends and challenges

Human capital development and equality for men and women have traditionally been high on the agenda of both citizens and the Tunisian government. The country has made tremendous improvements in literacy and schooling rates over the years: the overall illiteracy rate fell to 19% in 2015 (compared to 31.7% in 1994<sup>11</sup>), while youth literacy rates among the 15 to 24 age group increased to 96.8%. Tunisia has almost achieved the goal of universal primary education, one of the Millennium Development Goals: in 2014 the gross enrolment rate was 113.07% and the survival rate to grade 5 was 96%<sup>12</sup>.

Public expenditure in education represented 6.2% of GDP in 2012. The Tunisian education and VET systems are predominantly public and non-fee paying, granting equal access at all levels and fostering a highly educated population.

Gross enrolment rates in secondary education declined from 92.1% in 2011 to 90.1% in 2013 whereas the enrolment rate in upper secondary improved from 76.9% to 78.3%. The share of VET students at secondary education level declined from 13.9% (2011) to 9.3% (2013) and at upper secondary level from 11.6% (2011) to 9.6% (2013) (UNESCO). This confirms the lack of attractiveness of VET, which is perceived by families and students as second chance education leading to jobs with a low social status. Moreover, given the lack of pathways between VET and higher education, VET is often disregarded, as it is in fact a 'dead end', offering very limited opportunities for potential academic development. Poorer security conditions after the revolution are also mentioned in policy debates as a reason to explain declining enrolment; this is especially the case for girls. Further research and more precise data on rural/urban and male/female attendance would help to provide a better understanding of the issues at stake and possible policy options. PISA results in 2015 were better than in 2011 in reading and mathematics but lower in science<sup>13</sup>.

According to the National Institute for Statistics (INS), 51.6% of the 18 to 24 age group left education and training in 2015. This is some improvement on the 58.6% recorded in 2012. Males (57% in 2015) tend to abandon school more than females (46.2%). School authorities do not provide any explanations for this phenomenon, which negatively affects the country's economic development, especially in innovative, technology-based sectors. A substantial number of young people are not in employment, education and training (NEETs): the overall percentage was 25.4% in 2015, with women more affected than men (29.9% compared to 21.2%) (ILOSTAT).

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<sup>9</sup> Ministry of Development, Investment and International Cooperation, 2016.

<sup>10</sup> See <http://cpi.transparency.org/cpi2015/results/>

<sup>11</sup> Ministry of Development, Investment and International Cooperation, 2016.

<sup>12</sup> World Bank, Education statistics, April 2014.

<sup>13</sup> PISA – Programme for International Student Assessment. Reading changed from 50.2% in 2011 to 49.3% in 2015, mathematics from 73.6% to 67.8% and science from 53.7% to 55.3%.

Poor quality education at primary and secondary levels is a key challenge in Tunisia and is at the heart of problems in the VET and higher education systems. The main challenges facing policy makers in finding remedial actions for the first education cycle are to improve teachers' selection mechanisms, continuing training, and poor school conditions, especially in disadvantaged regions. Relevance and quality are other major challenges for VET and higher education, resulting in the low employability rate among Tunisian graduates, especially those who have completed higher education.

The transition from school to work seems quite difficult in the country. Improved education levels have not always translated into good access to the labour market. On the one hand, this is due to the inability of the Tunisian labour market to create high value added jobs. On the other hand, the education system has not been responsive enough to the private sector's needs and to the changing labour market. This is partly due to the lack of involvement of the social partners in the governance of education and VET, which results in difficulties in analysing employers' needs. Whereas vocational training graduates were traditionally relatively less affected by unemployment, the trend seems to be less clear-cut over the last two years<sup>14</sup>.

Cultural resistance and weak collection mechanisms are two factors that negatively impact data gathering on education and training. The Torino Process is proving to be a good self-assessment tool for reinforcing awareness of the importance of data and indicators, especially when it comes to VET. The country has participated in all four rounds of the Torino Process since it was launched in 2010.

## 2.2 Education and training policy and institutional setting

Education and training issues are addressed separately by three ministries: Education; Higher Education; and Vocational Training and Employment. The area of initial education and training is by far the most high profile in terms of both strategic thinking and provision. Lifelong learning, on the other hand, is quite neglected: 1.3% of the population aged 25–64 were engaged in training and lifelong learning in 2015 (INS, 2015). The country lacks a comprehensive vision for human capital development and coordination between the three ministries mentioned above is weak. This lack of coordination and of pathways across the three subsystems result in limitations for Tunisian citizens to build upon achievements in one subsystem to move to another (such as from vocational training to higher education), and therefore a loss in qualifications scale-ups. The new National Development Plan identifies the definition of a national concerted vision for education, vocational training and higher education as a priority for action. It includes dedicated chapters for education, higher education and vocational training, thus showing that human capital development is top of the Tunisian government's agenda. A specific chapter is also dedicated to employment.

The main objectives identified for VET in the plan include augmenting data collection and analysis and enhancing the monitoring and evaluation function; increasing the attractiveness of VET; supporting the professional development of trainers and regional authorities so that they can play their part; and developing entrepreneurial mind-sets across the VET system. These priorities are fully compliant with the country's 2014–2018 strategy for VET development (now 'absorbed' by the plan).

The social partners' capacities to contribute to policy dialogue on VET are limited. To date, only donor-funded projects have supported the capacity building of the social partners in the area of education and training. This context is detrimental to the long-standing capacity of social partners to be a solid partner vis-à-vis the State.

The new constitution drafted in 2014 recognises the decentralisation process as the fundamental basis for the organisation and distribution of power in Tunisia in order to achieve an administration that is more efficient and closer to citizens. In line with this philosophy, the progressive decentralisation of

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<sup>14</sup> Torino Process 2014 Tunisia report.

VET functions is ongoing. This is an innovative approach to help youth employability by getting closer to labour market needs and job offers at the local level. The support provided by the ETF and other donors in this regard has proven quite effective so far. Regional players in pilot regions have responded very well and taken responsibility in the VET cycle by identifying skills needs for training provision and the transition to the labour market.

The new huge investments linked to the implementation of the National Development Plan should also guide VET and higher education policy makers on how to adapt provision to emerging needs in the economy and in doing so help young graduates to gain access to the labour market. The country could benefit from the adoption of a mechanism to involve various stakeholders that focus on employment, such as government agencies, social partners (in particular sectoral employers' associations), civil society and donors. Such a mechanism could ensure that guidance, coordination and self-reinforcing actions in education and training have a possible impact on employment.

### 3. Labour market and employment

#### 3.1 Trends and challenges

Despite a slight improvement since 2011, unemployment has remained a major challenge in Tunisia in recent years. An unemployment rate of 15.2% (22.2% for women) was recorded in 2015 (INS, 2016). Young people aged between 15 and 24 are particularly badly hit by unemployment; the unemployment rate for this cohort is 35.5% (INS, 2015). Geography also affects unemployment trends, and important differences exist between the regions: from 12.4% in the centre and east of the country to 26.1% in the southeast (Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment, 2012). Long-term unemployment is high (up to 44.6% in 2012).

Labour market participation remains very weak (47.7% in 2014 (INS)), with female participation scoring particularly low (26.3% in 2014, compared to 69.8% for men in the same year (INS)). Among Arab countries, Tunisia is traditionally recognised for women's rights and basic parity in access to education. However, this is not yet reflected in labour market outcomes. Women remain largely excluded, as confirmed by the participation rate (26% versus 68.8% for men in 2015) and the unemployment rate (22.2% versus 12.4% for men in 2015).

For young people, the transition from school to work remains a distinguishing feature in the country, with significant differences in the labour market performance of individuals according to geographical indicators (the region in which they live and whether they live in a rural or an urban area). According to recent research (2015) conducted by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the gender gap is reinforced by two variables. The differences between young women and young men are small in dynamic urban areas, but wider in the less dynamic regions and in rural areas. Young women living in the northern or central interior areas are more vulnerable to unemployment; those living in southern areas are more often classified as being out of the labour market.

A high level of unemployment (and in particular youth unemployment) is generated by both the skills mismatch and by the incapacity of the national economy to generate enough jobs to absorb the new entrants into the labour market. As already mentioned, improved education levels have not always translated into good access to the labour market. Graduate unemployment is a prominent feature of the Tunisian labour market, as the more educated young people are also those who are affected most by unemployment. The data confirms the mismatch, as the unemployment rate of highly educated people is almost double the rate of those with medium-level qualifications, 30.2% and 16.2% respectively in 2013 (INS). The main factor underlying this phenomenon is the low demand for (quality) skilled labour and employers' preference for low-wage and low-skilled labour in light of the low technological level of most SMEs. This is true for most sectors, including manufacturing.

The exceptions are mainly telecommunications, banking, insurance, health and education (UNESCO). The low quality of jobs created by the national economy, often within the informal sector, creates frustration among young graduates, who frequently prefer to remain unemployed while waiting for formal jobs. The new National Development Plan, with its ambition to help innovation and technology transfer in enterprises, may be a good opportunity for the country to take advantage of the changed structure of the labour force (more high-skilled workers).

In 2015, services accounted for the largest share of employment – slightly more than half of total employment. The services sector was followed by industry (33.1%, including construction) and agriculture (14.8% (INS)). The public sector's capacity to create employment is decreasing as the state is facing severe financial restrictions. However, it is still very attractive to young people as it provides safe and (relatively) well paid employment; it provided 22.2% of total employment in 2013 (Torino Process 2014 report).

Decent work is a key problem in Tunisia. Informal employment is widespread: according to the World Bank, 50% of the labour force was in informal employment in 2011. The sector accounts for 30% of GDP (IMF, 2012) and is characterised by precariousness, long working hours, low incomes (including unpaid family workers, most of whom are female), the lack of social protection and ultimately a devaluation of human capital. The self-employment rate declined from 24.7%<sup>15</sup> to 17% in 2015. This data can be interpreted as the 'formal' self-employment rate, meaning that 'informal' self-employment has in fact increased during a period of prolonged economic crisis.

Concerns about the skills of the workforce have been increasingly to the fore in recent years. According to 39% of employers interviewed in a survey conducted by the World Bank in 2012, the quality of skills is identified as a major obstacle to their operations (World Bank Enterprise Survey). The concern expressed by businesses appears to reflect the difficulty in finding skilled workers to meet the specific demands of the workplace. For instance, it takes an average of eight to nine weeks to find workers with specific technical or engineering qualifications. The problem is even more pronounced with professionals whose qualifications require 'soft skills' – businesses report needing upwards of 11 weeks to find suitably qualified candidates.

### 3.2 Employment policy and institutional setting

Employment issues are the responsibility of the Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment that is in charge of developing strategic political priorities and policy orientations. The National Agency for Employment and Independent Work (ANETI) is the main body that is responsible for the implementation of employment policies in Tunisia. It is a public, non-administrative body attached to the Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment. It currently has a network of 109 offices (39 of which are in Tunis). ANETI's mission is quite broad and includes the national labour market but also migrants and people with special needs. Specific areas of work include:

- stimulating the job market, at national, regional, local and sectoral levels through its network of employment and self-employment offices;
- developing information on employment and professional qualifications for businesses and jobseekers;
- implementing programmes that have been entrusted to them by the regulatory authority to promote employment and integrate young people;
- providing the necessary support to promote small firms and self-employment;

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<sup>15</sup> World Bank, 'Striving for better jobs: The challenge of informality in the Middle East and North Africa region', *MENA Knowledge and Learning Quick Notes Series*, No 49, World Bank, Washington, DC, 2011. The period covered is 2000–2007.

- ensuring that jobseekers have the information and vocational guidance they need to integrate into the economically active population;
- organising and conducting investment transactions for the Tunisian workforce abroad;
- facilitating the reintegration of emigrants into the national economy after their final return;
- taking care of workers who have lost their jobs due to economic and technical reasons and working with people with special needs.

ANETI counsellors support jobseekers using three ‘traditional’ methods: publishing job requests and job offers; supporting internships and access to the labour market; and promoting self-employment. In January 2016, ANETI launched the new Forsati (My chance) programme, which provides personalised support to jobseekers to identify and give shape to professional development projects. The objective of the programme is to provide training in languages, information technology, communications, life skills or other technical specialisations. The main idea behind Forsati is to improve competences and skills on the basis of the needs of the labour market, whether this is with a view to being employed or self-employed in Tunisia or abroad. A total of 85 000 potential beneficiaries have already applied to the programme. This compares to the 50 000 beneficiaries who were expected to apply in 2016; the aim is to reach 120 000 beneficiaries by the end of 2017. The personalised support provided to jobseekers and their active involvement in the design and implementation of their professional project is a very specific feature of this new programme. The programme is to be offered in all regions throughout Tunisia. Its aim is to involve regional authorities so that job opportunities are identified and created in accordance with the specific strategic development priorities of each region. The early stages of implementation of the programme are highlighting important capacity development needs for ANETI staff, which is currently not in a position to deliver the programme. The ILO has started some small-scale training actions in a couple of pilot regions.

The National Observatory for Employment and Qualifications (ONEQ) is a specialist institution that supports decision making in the area of employment and skills. Its principal mission is to collect labour market statistics, analyse employment and skills data using relevant indicators and issue regular reports on labour market trends.

In December 2012, the Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment adopted and ratified the National Employment Strategy 2013–2017. However, it has never been adopted by the Tunisian government and therefore never been implemented. Specific measures to support employment are envisaged in the National Development Plan 2016–2020.

Tunisia has a rather long tradition of employment policies, which focus almost exclusively on active rather than passive measures. Two kinds of programme exist: one devoted to training and integrating jobseekers in the labour market, which includes public work schemes targeting unskilled and poor people; and the other promoting and providing funds for self-employment and small business development. After the revolution, a number of initiatives were announced and are referred to in a decree<sup>16</sup>. They include:

- an employability improvement cheque to provide job search assistance;
- an employment support cheque to encourage private companies to hire people looking for their first job;
- a support programme for small enterprise creators;

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<sup>16</sup> Decree No 2012-2369 of 16 October 2012 ‘fixant les programmes du Fonds national de l’emploi, les conditions et les modalités de leur bénéfice’ [establishing the programmes of the national employment fund, the terms and conditions of their benefit].

- a partnership programme with the regions to promote employment and facilitate the insertion of various types of unemployed people into the labour market by supporting local and regional initiatives for job creation.

Financial measures are expected to complement the training support and increase its attractiveness to potential beneficiaries. However, complete data and information on the progress and impact of the implementation of the various initiatives is not publicly available.

Active labour market policies seem to have a very limited impact on the labour market, as reflected by low insertion rates. The limited capacity of ANETI to fulfil its role, especially as an intermediary in the labour market, constitutes one of the main challenges. Another such challenge is the lack of programmes targeting the most vulnerable groups in society, such as women and people with low education levels.

Efforts to develop anticipation and matching mechanisms and tools are quite limited. Ad hoc sector studies are prepared as part of donors' funded projects. However, no systematic analysis is in place. The country would benefit from sectoral or regional observatories that would help policy makers to direct VET and employment measures more effectively. Employers' associations should play an important role in the governance and management of the observatories.

Other key issues that policy makers could address to improve the impact and effectiveness of active labour market policies are:

1. reinforced (multi-level) governance and decentralisation, with greater powers at regional and local levels;
2. an increased focus on specific targets (such as women or early school leavers);
3. better communication to increase the participation of potential beneficiaries;
4. capacity building of the institutions in charge, namely with regard to results-oriented management, monitoring and evaluation and the resourcing of employment services; and
5. better coordination with other ongoing public policies, namely in education, higher education, vocational training and employment, to improve overall employability in the medium to long term.

# ANNEXES

## Statistical annex

This annex reports annual data from 2011 and 2015 or the last available year.

Indicator		2011	2015	
1	Total population (000)	10 758.9 <sup>e</sup>	11 253.6 <sup>e</sup>	
2	Relative size of youth population (age group 15–24) (%)	26.1 <sup>e</sup>	22.6 <sup>e</sup>	
3	Youth dependency ratio (%)	33.5	33.8	
4	Old-age dependency ratio (%)	10.8	11.0	
5	Global Competitive Index	Rank	40	87
		Score	4.5	4.0
6	GDP growth rate (%)	-2.4	0.8	
7	GDP per capita (PPP) (current international \$)	10 203.8	11 397.2	
8	GDP by sector (%)	Agriculture added value	9.1	8.8 (2014)
		Industry added value	31.6	29.3 (2014)
		Services added value	59.3	61.9 (2014)
9	Poverty headcount ratio at \$2 a day (PPP) (%)	M.D.	M.D.	
10	Gini index (%)	M.D.	M.D.	
11	Educational attainment of adult population (aged 25–64) (%)*	Low**	60.6 (2010)	M.D.
		Medium	26.8 (2010)	M.D.
		High	12.5 (2010)	M.D.
12	Gross enrolment rates in secondary education (%)	92.1	87.6 (2014)	
13	Share of VET students in secondary education (%)	13.9	6.1 (2014)	
14	Gross enrolment rates in upper secondary education (%)	76.9	78.2 (2014)	
15	Share of VET students in upper secondary education (%)	11.6	9.3 (2014)	
16	Low achievement in reading, mathematics and science – PISA (%)	Reading	50.2 (2009)	49.3 (2012)
		Mathematics	73.6 (2009)	67.8 (2012)
		Science	53.7 (2009)	55.3 (2012)
17	Participation in training/lifelong learning (age group 25–64) by sex (%)	Total	0.2 (2012)	1.3
		Male	0.2 (2012)	1.2
		Female	0.2 (2012)	1.5
18	Early leavers from education and training (age group 18–24) by sex (%)	Total	58.6 (2012)	51.6
		Male	62.3 (2012)	57.0
		Female	54.8 (2012)	46.2

Indicator		2011	2015	
19	Activity rates by sex (aged 15+) (%)	Total	47.2	47.1
		Male	70.1	68.8
		Female	24.9	26.0
20	Employment rates by sex (aged 15+) (%)	Total	38.5	39.8
		Male	59.6	M.D.
		Female	18.1	M.D.
21	Unemployment rates by sex (aged 15+) (%)	Total	18.3	15.2
		Male	15.0	12.4
		Female	27.4	22.2
22	Unemployment rates by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%)	Low**	12.4	9.9 (2013)
		Medium	20.6	16.2 (2013)
		High	29.2	30.2 (2013)
23	Youth unemployment rates by sex (aged 15–24) (%)	Total	42.3	35.5
		Male	40.8	34.0
		Female	45.5	33.5
24	Proportion of long-term unemployed out of the total unemployed (aged 15+) (%)	39.5	44.6 (2012)	
25	Long-term unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%)	M.D.	M.D.	
26	Incidence of self-employment (%)	18.6	17 (2013)	
27	Share of the employed in the public sector (%)	M.D.	M.D.	
28	Employment by sector (%)	Agriculture	16.4	14.8
		Industry	33.7	33.1
		Services	49.9	52.1
29	Employment in the informal sector	M.D.	M.D.	
30	Proportion of people aged 15–24 not in employment, education or training (NEETs) by sex (%)	Total	34.0 (2012)	25.4
		Male	28.0 (2012)	21.2
		Female	40.2 (2012)	29.9
31	Public expenditure on education (as % of GDP)	6.0 (2010)	6.2 (2012)	
32	Public expenditure on education (as % of total public expenditure)	26.1 (2010)	21.6 (2012)	
33	Skill gaps (%)	N.A.	9.5 (2013)	
34	Contribution of SMEs to GDP (%)	M.D.	M.D.	
35	Share of SMEs in employment (%)	59 (2012)	M.D.	

**Sources:** *Indicators 1, 2* – UNDP\_WPP15; *3, 4, 6, 7, 8* – World Bank, World Development Indicators; *5* – World Economic Forum; *11, 16, 33* – OECD; *12, 13, 14, 15, 31, 32* – UNESCO Institute for Statistics; *17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 28* – National Statistical Office of Tunisia (INS); *26* – Eurostat; *24, 30* – ILOSTAT; *35* – OECD/European Commission/ETF (2014), SME Policy Index: The Mediterranean Middle East and North Africa 2014: Implementation of the Small Business Act for Europe, OECD Publishing

**Legend:** N.A. = not applicable; M.D. = missing data

**Notes:** <sup>(e)</sup> Estimate. <sup>(i)</sup> Classification used for Indicator 11: Low = ISCED 0-2 (includes illiterate people); Medium = ISCED 3-4; High = ISCED 5-8 (5-6 for ISCED 97). <sup>(\*)</sup> ISCED 0-1 (does not include illiterate people).

## Definition of indicators

Description	Definition
1 Total population (000)	The total population is estimated as the number of persons having their usual residence in a country on 1 January of the respective year. When information on the usually resident population is not available, legal or registered residents can be considered.
2 Relative size of youth population (age group 15–24) (%)	The ratio of the youth population (aged 15–24) to the working-age population (usually aged 15–64 or 15–74).
3 Youth dependency ratio (%)	The ratio of younger dependents (people younger than 15) to the working-age population (those in the 15–64 age group).
4 Old-age dependency ratio (%)	The ratio of older dependents (people older than 64) to the working-age population (those in the 15–64 age group).
5 Global Competitiveness Index	The Global Competitiveness Index assesses the competitiveness landscape, providing insight into the drivers of countries' productivity and prosperity. It is expressed as a score on a 1 to 7 scale, with 7 being the most desirable outcome.
6 GDP growth rate (%)	The annual percentage growth rate of GDP at market prices based on constant local currency.
7 GDP per capita (PPP) (current international \$)	The market value of all final goods and services produced within a country in a given period of time (GDP), divided by the total population and converted into international dollars using purchasing power parity (PPP) rates.
8 GDP by sector (%)	The share of value added from agriculture, industry and services.
9 Poverty headcount ratio at \$2 a day (PPP) (%)	The percentage of the population living on less than \$2.00 a day at 2005 international prices.
10 Gini index (%)	A Gini index measures the extent to which the distribution of income (or, in some cases, consumption expenditure) among individuals or households within an economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution. A Gini index of 0 represents perfect equality, while an index of 100 implies perfect inequality.
11 Educational attainment of adult population (aged 25–64 or 15+) (%)	Educational attainment refers to the highest educational level achieved by individuals expressed as a percentage of all persons in that age group.
12 Gross enrolment rates in secondary education (%)	The number of students enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education.
13 Share of VET students in secondary education (%)	The proportion of VET students in secondary education out of the total number of pupils and students in secondary education (general + VET).
14 Gross enrolment rates in upper secondary education (%)	The number of students enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education.
15 Share of VET students in upper secondary education (%)	The proportion of VET students in upper secondary education out of the total number of pupils and students in upper secondary education (general education + VET).
16 Low achievement in reading, mathematics and science – PISA (%)	The share of 15-year-olds failing to reach level 2 in reading, mathematics and science.
17 Participation in training/lifelong learning (age group 25–64) by sex (%)	The share of persons aged 25–64 who stated that they had received education or training in the four weeks preceding the (LFS) survey.

	Description	Definition
18	Early leavers from education and training (age group 18–24) by sex (%)	The percentage of the population aged 18–24 with at most lower secondary education who were not in further education or training during the four weeks preceding the (LFS) survey. Lower secondary education refers to ISCED 1997 levels 0–3C short for data up to 2013 and to ISCED 2011 levels 0–2 for data from 2014 onwards.
19	Activity rates (aged 15+) by sex (%)	Activity rates represent the labour force as a percentage of the working-age population.
20	Employment rates (aged 15+) by sex (%)	Employment rates represent persons in employment as a percentage of the working-age population.
21	Unemployment rates (aged 15+) by sex (%)	Unemployment rates represent unemployed persons as a percentage of the labour force.
22	Unemployment rates (aged 15+) by educational attainment (%)	Educational levels refer to the highest educational level successfully completed. Three levels are considered: low (ISCED levels 0–2); medium (ISCED levels 3–4); and high (ISCED 1997 levels 5–6 and ISCED 2011 levels 5–8).
23	Youth unemployment rates (aged 15–24) by sex (%)	Youth unemployment rates represent young unemployed persons (aged 15–24) as a percentage of the labour force (15–24).
24	Proportion of long-term unemployed out of the total unemployed (aged 15+) (%)	The number of unemployed persons aged 15+ who are long-term unemployed (12 months or more) as a percentage of unemployed persons aged 15+.
25	Long-term unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%)	The number of unemployed persons aged 15+ who are long-term unemployed (12 months or more) as a percentage of the labour force aged 15+.
26	Incidence of self-employment (%)	The share of self-employed as a proportion of the total employed. Self-employment includes employers, own-account workers, members of producers' cooperatives and contributing family workers.
27	Share of the employed in the public sector (%)	The share of those employed in the public sector as a proportion of the total employed.
28	Employment by sector (%)	The share of those employed in agriculture, industry and services.
29	Employment in the informal sector	The share of persons employed in the informal sector in total non-agricultural employment.
30	Proportion of people aged 15–24 not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (%)	The percentage of the population of a given age group who are not employed and not involved in further education or training.
31	Public expenditure on education (as % of GDP)	Public expenditure on education expressed as a percentage of GDP. Generally, the public sector funds education either by directly bearing the current and capital expenses of educational institutions, or by supporting students and their families with scholarships and public loans, as well as by transferring public subsidies for educational activities to private firms or non-profit organisations. Both types of transactions together are reported as total public expenditure on education.
32	Public expenditure on education (as % of total public expenditure)	Public expenditure on education expressed as a percentage of total public expenditure. Generally, the public sector funds education either by directly bearing the current and capital expenses of educational institutions, or by supporting students and their families with scholarships and public loans as well as by transferring public subsidies for educational activities to private firms or non-profit organisations. Both types of transactions together are reported as total public expenditure on education.
33	Skill gaps (%)	The percentage of firms identifying an inadequately educated workforce as a major constraint.
34	Contribution of SMEs to GDP (%)	The share of value added from small and medium-sized businesses.
35	Share of SMEs in employment (%)	The share of persons employed in small and medium-sized businesses.



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