

TORINO PROCESS

JORDAN

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List of abbreviations

CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
ETF	European Training Foundation
ERfKE	Education Reform for Knowledge Economy
E-TVET	Employment - Technical and Vocational Education and Training
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HRD	Human Resource Development
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PPP	Public-private partnership
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VTC	Vocational Training Corporation

Foreword

The Torino Process is a review of vocational education and training (VET) policies and systems, launched by the European Training Foundation (ETF) in all its partner countries in 2010. The exercise aims at analysing the internal efficiency of VET systems and the contributions of VET policies and systems to broader policy objectives of sustainable economic and social development. The process includes the preparation of country reports, regional reports and an overall report covering all ETF partner countries. The Torino Process is inspired by the same principles as the Bruges Process in the European Union. The methodological approach is the same for all countries involved – it is based upon evidence gathering and developed according to a common analytical framework.

The objective of the Torino Process is to provide a concise, documented analysis of vocational education and training reform in each country. This includes identifying key policy trends, challenges, constraints, as well as good practice and opportunities, in order to:

- support the countries in their VET policy-making decisions
- give an input to the ETF's (country-based) work programme
- provide an input for the European Union's programming cycle and processes

In principle, the exercise will be repeated every two years. After 2010, if the countries consider it to be a good tool, the plan is to use it as a guided self-assessment exercise in the following years.

As part of the 2010 Torino Process, and following a request by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture, the ETF has also launched a study on the co-operation between education and business in all its partner countries.

In Jordan, the ETF country team has worked closely with the secretariat of the E-TVET Council to gather and analyse evidence of policies, trends, bottlenecks and challenges. In April, ETF organised two focus group meetings at which the main stakeholders were represented. In early July, the draft reports of both the VET review and the education and business study were discussed with the same stakeholders.

Executive summary

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is a constitutional monarchy whose constitution was adopted in 1952. With a population of 5.6 million, Jordan has one of the highest fertility rates in the world – about 3.7% (4.2% in rural areas). There is a high demographic pressure: the under-15s account for some 37.3% of the population and the average age is 20.3 years. It is estimated that 60,000 new entrants join the labour market every year, posing a major challenge for the government and society at large. Participation of women in the labour force is one of the lowest worldwide (14.9%) despite very visible increases in educational attainment. Migration has two significant features: (a) emigration of highly educated people and (b) immigration of people looking for low-skilled jobs.

In the last decade, economic reforms focused mainly on privatisation, deregulation, improving the business climate and developing large public-private projects in the energy and transport sectors. The government has done its best to encourage foreign direct investment and free trade agreements with strategic commercial partners in an effort to further open up the economy.

As a young nation with a rapidly growing population and a lack of natural resources, Jordan considers well-educated human resources as one of its major priorities. Jordan's vision on Employment and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (E-TVET) is that it should facilitate the employment of the Jordanian workforce and contribute to the development of Jordan's human capital based on lifelong learning principles. With this vision, the Jordanian government intends to respond to the many challenges of the TVET sector. Its main goal is to increase employment and reduce the country's dependence on expatriate labour. It also aims to enhance TVET's social image and to upgrade the quality and relevance of its training to labour market requirements.

In order to reach this goal, E-TVET reform is focused on rationalising the TVET system and its training and education programmes, on private sector involvement and on improving the image of TVET careers and education and training programmes.

Since the introduction of the National Agenda reform process, the TVET system is part of a wider E-TVET system which is managed by the E-TVET Council, under the patronage of the Ministry of Labour. However, different bodies and institutions are responsible for different components of the system. The Ministry of Education provides vocational education in grades 11 and 12 in its comprehensive secondary schools; the Ministry of Labour provides vocational training through the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC); the Ministry of Higher Education provides post-secondary, non-tertiary educational programmes and tertiary, professionally oriented programmes through the community colleges.

The ambitious reform programme sets targets for the period 2006 to 2015 and is made up of three phases. Its major objectives for the period 2007 to 2012 are:

- i. to promote labour-intensive and export-oriented industries and to enable enterprises (particularly small and medium-sized enterprises) to adapt to developments in technology and to produce the quality products required by the global market
- ii. to eradicate structural unemployment, absorb the annual inflow of new job seekers (projected to grow at 4% per annum) and increase women's participation in the labour market
- iii. to significantly expand support for vocational training and employment (treated as a single sector, namely E-TVET)

The National Agenda addresses the restructuring of the institutional framework, including the establishment of an umbrella council, the Human Resources Development Higher Council. This is chaired by the Prime Minister whose role is to coordinate policy frameworks established by the Board of Education (chaired by the Minister of Education), the Council of Higher Education (chaired by the Minister of Higher Education) and the newly established E-TVET Council (chaired by the Minister of Labour).

The last five years have brought many changes. Attempts have been made to reach agreement on a common and coordinated reform process that will result in more demand-driven, qualified and attractive technical and vocational education and training. However, TVET faces major difficulties related to governance, quality and relevance. Furthermore, stagnation in the reform process is noticeable and changes in policy and vision mean that there seems to be less support at policy level for the vision and strategy set out in 2006.

Several economic and social challenges are facing human resources development (HRD) in the country. The need to diversify the economy and create employment by promoting highly productive, strategic and high-skill sectors is challenged by the low labour market participation rate, the immigration of low-skilled workers and the emigration of highly skilled Jordanians. This calls for a strong HRD policy, including continuing education, in which the roles and tasks of the different stakeholders are coordinated, sufficient investment is made in education quality and the social partners can play a major role in the governance and implementation of TVET.

The main suggestions and recommendations based on the analysis in this report include:

Economic issues

The fragmentation of labour market and human resource information sources prevents education and training from becoming more demand-driven. More efforts are needed to develop a coherent system that is used in a structured and efficient way.

This system could be combined with a career information system. The newly established national sector teams could be an important source of information for both systems.

All sector issues related to skill requirements and national qualifications need to be concentrated within the national sector teams. Stakeholders should avoid duplication of similar initiatives and therefore it is important that the position of the Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance, as the central coordinator of the national sector teams, is strengthened.

Sector-based associations and SME representatives should be involved in shaping a demand-driven training and education system and this should be embedded in a legal structure.

Social issues

The expectations mismatch can be resolved by a proper career guidance mechanism that focuses on professional orientation. This should include the introduction of employability and career management skills in the vocational and general secondary school curriculum and at higher education level.

The challenge of increasing female labour market participation can be addressed by strengthening the institutional capacity of TVET stakeholders and by creating a link between current gender initiatives and linking them to the E-TVET reform agenda.

The concept of lifelong learning as stated in the E-TVET vision has not yet led to the development of a coherent system of continuing education that could respond to the training and upskilling needs of the labour force and the private sector. Such a system could also help to reinforce the position of social partners and sectors in the governance and implementation of TVET.

Governance and internal efficiency

As expectations are high for TVET in Jordan, the E-TVET Council and its related bodies should be adequately resourced to achieve their goals.

We recommend exploring the most efficient ways for employers to contribute to and benefit from the E-TVET Fund in order to satisfy the need for an upskilled, more highly qualified Jordanian workforce and comply with the high-level objectives of the Jordanian government.

The Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance has become an independent authority under the direct responsibility of the E-TVET Council.

We recommend establishing this higher council or a high-level ministerial committee for HRD, to be chaired by the Prime Minister with the involvement of the Minister of Labour, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Higher Education.

Future actions for addressing the efficiency and quality challenges facing the TVET system should focus on creating the political will to develop a common vision among the various public stakeholders and coordinating progress in the reform process. It might therefore be necessary to revise and strengthen the 2008 E-TVET reform strategy and to combine this with a clear implementation plan that includes the division of roles, a budget and a timeframe. An agreement regarding ownership and leadership of the reform is also needed.

Innovation

A strategy for lifelong entrepreneurial learning could be embedded in an E-TVET policy or strategy. This would ensure that entrepreneurial skills are introduced in the curriculum of secondary and tertiary levels of education. According to the National Agenda strategy, this is to be initiated by the higher council for HRD, a body that has not yet been established. Given these circumstances, the E-TVET Council should take the lead in developing a strategy for entrepreneurial learning.

1. Vision and state-of-the-art in vocational education and training

The National Agenda set out a clear vision to link employment and technical and vocational education and training.

Jordan's vision for the TVET sector is to increase its efficiency in order to develop Jordan as a competitive knowledge economy, 'to secure the employment of the Jordanian workforce and to contribute to the development of Jordan's human capital in line with lifelong learning principles'¹. The main entity in charge of TVET, the E-TVET Council,² formulated the vision for Jordan according to the National Agenda recommendations for the period 2006 to 2015. The reference document is the E-TVET sector reform document (2008).

¹ E-TVET sector reform document, May 2008, p.7.

² Consisting of 15 members, of which six come from the private sector, one from the trade unions and eight from the public sector (ministries, public agencies and education providers).

Both progress and stagnation have been the hallmarks of recent years.

The National Agenda initiated the reform of the TVET sector and assigned a leadership role to the Ministry of Labour. Together with the public stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Education (vocational education), the VTC (vocational training) and the Ministry of Higher Education (technical education), it is responsible for coordinating the reform. The private sector³, employee representatives and other ministries are now also engaged in the governance of the sector.

The government has adopted a broader view on TVET, addressing all HRD issues in a coherent E-TVET strategy. Based on this strategy, it initiated the design and partial implementation of a new structure for coordinating the E-TVET sector – the E-TVET Council.

However, the reform process is stagnating and political changes mean that there seems to be less support at policy level for the strategy outlined in the E-TVET sector reform document. This is particularly visible in the main TVET providers' lack of coordination of policies and activities. It is also apparent in the continuing low impact of the private sector, which so far has not completed its strategy regarding involvement in TVET. Cooperation with the private sector has increased in various ways over the last few years but this is still fragmented.

The main policy measures planned as part of E-TVET reform involve the following:

- revision of laws and legislation governing the work of the educational bodies and councils in order to rationalise the TVET sector
- design and implementation of a new structure for the coordination of the TVET sector
- increase of private sector and social partner involvement in the governance of the TVET sector and in supporting the reform of programmes and curricula to better align with market needs (from supply-driven to demand-driven)
- decentralisation of decision-making authority and improvements in the monitoring and evaluation of the sector

This is reinforced by the recent Government Implementation Plan (early 2010) in which one of the strategic initiatives is to 'empower Jordanian citizens with the skills to succeed and enter the labor market'. Ministries and government institutions identified projects that will accelerate progress towards achieving the strategic initiative. This progress will be evaluated by a human resources committee.

Lack of progress in the reforms is caused by difficulties related to governance and relevance.

Governance

The main difficulty relates to the TVET sector in Jordan is structured. Three different bodies are each responsible for a part of the TVET structure (Board of Education, Council of Higher Education and E-TVET Council). In the absence of an HRD higher council as planned in the National Agenda, no common strategy has been elaborated, different visions compete with one another and fragmentation still occurs.

A second difficulty is caused by the role assigned to the private sector and employee representatives (social partners), who act as governors on the E-TVET Council (seven members out of 15). In spite of efforts to full engage them in governance there is still a lack of structural capacity and commitment. This is hampered by the centralised and supply-driven nature of the TVET system.

The third problem is understaffing and the limited budget available to the E-TVET Council for its mission, even though this is a high priority for the country.

Relevance

The fragmentation of labour market and human resource information sources is one of the main problems identified by stakeholders and prevents education and training from becoming more demand-driven and meeting labour market needs.

³ The official representatives of the private sector are the Jordan Chamber of Industry and the Jordan Chamber of Commerce.

The nature of the Jordanian labour market does not facilitate the identification of training needs. There is a large informal sector that is not accounted for due to a lack of statistics. The economy is composed mainly of SMEs (94%), which are not well organised or represented at decision-making level.

The concept of lifelong learning as stated in the E-TVET vision has not yet led to the development of a coherent system of continuing education that could respond to the training and upskilling needs of the labour force and the private sector.

A final issue is the academic and supply-driven orientation of the TVET providers. While all TVET providers have made efforts to align programmes to labour market needs⁴, the overall orientation of providers is not yet demand-driven. Two main issues are the capacity and administrative autonomy that trainers have to strengthen their links with the labour market and the absence of a structured guidance and counselling system.

2. External efficiency: addressing economic and labour market needs

King Abdullah II's vision for the country is based on using the demographic opportunity of a very young population to transform Jordan from a small, vulnerable lower-middle income country into a modern knowledge-based economy. His long-term vision implies a bold modernisation of the country's economic, institutional and political infrastructure, based on the enhancement of its human capital and the elimination of poverty. Education, improvements in the business environment and the tackling of entrenched poverty are at the core of this vision.

In this context, the main economic challenges shaping the demand for skills are a:

- stimulation of growth in highly productive, strategic and high-skill sectors
- diversification of the economy and strengthening of competitiveness
- strengthening of the private sector and its skilled job opportunities

In the years prior to the economic crisis, Jordan experienced strong growth as a result of increased foreign direct investment and foreign trade, privatisation and deregulation. In 2008, GDP growth reached 7.9%⁵, but despite the government's aim to focus on key knowledge sectors (ICT, pharmaceuticals, consulting and engineering services, tourism) and on building an adequate infrastructure (water, energy and transportation), this growth was broadly based in labour-intensive and low-technology sectors including manufacturing, construction, real estate and services. In fact, this growth and the rise in employment has not resulted in a stable, competitive and future-oriented private sector with a strong interest in HRD and competitive wage levels. Nor has economic growth led to an increase in employment for skilled workers or professionals.

While the growing sectors which offer more low-skilled employment opportunities such as manufacturing and construction attracted mainly foreign workers, the education, health and wholesale and retail trade sectors created a significant number of jobs for Jordanians.

Jordan's economy depends heavily on exports. Despite a good overall performance, Jordan's exports remain concentrated in three sectors - chemicals (fertilisers and pharmaceuticals), clothing and food products - and still need to diversify. The focus on clothing has led to only moderate increases in employment for Jordanians and offers limited scope in the future for more highly educated job seekers. Of all three sectors, the chemical industry is economically the most sustainable and has the most potential to provide higher skilled jobs for Jordanians.

Even though the present government is striving to rationalise public administration, the public sector still accounts for one-third of the total labour force. Despite the fact that growth has been faster in the

⁴ A recent study showed that less than 50% of employers are satisfied with students graduating from Ministry of Education vocational schools.

⁵ Source: IMF.

private sector than in the public sector, wage levels and other benefits in the public sector are still higher. This is one of the reasons why young people often choose to live at home with their parents until they get a stable, prestigious government job.

Women are under-represented in private sector jobs. Young women in particular are affected by the decline in private sector employment. One of the reasons for this may be the disparity in wages. Women are paid almost 29% less than men in the private sector and around 5% less in the public sector⁶.

A key priority is increased competitiveness and fair wages in the private sector through higher productivity and more highly qualified workers. This would lead to the creation of more and better jobs and improved employment opportunities for graduates.

One of the sectors that can bring added value to Jordan in terms of development and employment is the green economy. This includes the renewable energy, desalination and water management, waste management and recycling and environmentally friendly construction sectors, which all depend on the development of modern technology that is compatible with traditional knowledge.

Another promising high-skill sector in Jordan is the pharmaceutical industry. This export-driven industry sells its products to more than 60 countries and 81% of production is exported to foreign markets. The pharmaceutical industry is part of the manufacturing sector, which makes a major contribution to the country's GDP (17.1%), only the finance, insurance, real estate and business services sector ranks higher (17.6%)⁷.

Various efforts have been made to address these challenges but there is a lack of coherence and sustainability.

E-TVET reform envisages the private sector playing an active role in defining the skills for a growing sector that places a greater emphasis on high-skilled and value-added industries and services.

In order to focus efforts on gearing education and training to the needs of the main economic sectors⁸, the E-TVET Council has recently identified a number of priority sectors in which national sector teams have been set up. They consist of education and training institutions and employer and employee representatives from the sector and are coordinated by the Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance. Several teams have begun to develop occupational profiles, based on skill requirements in the sector.

Different initiatives exist for analysing skill requirements in the main economic sectors, but no specific system has been set up yet to organise the labour market analysis in a more structured way. The National Centre for Human Resources Development has been running an important project (Al Manar) focusing on the development of a human resources information system. The capacities and instruments available at the centre could offer the right structure for a sustainable labour market information system. Over the past two years, the Ministry of Education's Vocational Education and Production Directorate increased its capacity for analysing labour market information generated by the Al Manar vocational information system and other sources and labour market data. In 2009, the Second Education Reform for Knowledge Economy project (ERfKE II), which is coordinated by the World Bank, conducted a study on satisfaction levels among vocational employers. However, the E-TVET Council, as the central coordinating body of the TVET sector, does not coordinate the collection of labour market and human resources information.

As proposed in the National Agenda, the different TVET providers have set up public-private partnership (PPP) agreements and centres of excellence in various prominent economic sectors such as hospitality, pharmaceuticals, printing, water and health and safety. The centres are at different stages of development and the most advanced can be found in the hospitality sector. However, the institutions do not coordinate their activities, leading to overlap and inefficiency. With the support of the Japan International Cooperation Agency, the VTC established three model centres of excellence

⁶ The Al Manar project is run by the National Centre for Human Resources Development in cooperation with international consultants to the Department of Statistics and the World Bank. *Labor market conditions in Jordan*, (2007).

⁷ Department of Statistics.

⁸ The priority sectors include: government services producers; finance, insurance and real estate services; wholesale and retail sales; hotels and restaurants; industrial sector; transportation; storage and communications; construction; community, social and personal services; mining and quarrying; power, gas and water distribution; agriculture. A review of the sectors may be conducted using a planned labour market analysis.

for skills development. As part of the ERfKE project, the Ministry of Education established the Jordan Education Initiative centre for ICT with various public and private stakeholders.

Jordan will invest up to 20 billion dollars in megaprojects in the fields of energy, infrastructure and railway networks over the next two decades. These projects are expected to create hundreds of thousands of employment opportunities and significantly increase demand for skilled blue-collar workers. The megaprojects are to be financed by public-private partnerships or PPPs. One of these is a nuclear power plant project, the first such scheme to be built on a PPP basis. The Ministry of Labour is leading an initiative to ensure that there is a highly skilled workforce to meet the needs of the megaprojects in both the construction and operation phases. To this end, the Ministry of Labour has set up a megaprojects unit in the ministry to act as a focal point between the relevant government ministries, the private sector implementing the megaprojects and training providers. The ministry's role will be to coordinate the initiative, assist in conducting needs assessments and support the megaproject industries in identifying the most appropriate training responses.

Thirteen Qualified Industrial Zones focusing on the US market were created over the past decade to boost employment opportunities for Jordanians. These zones are home to over 50 factories and more than 46,000 employees, almost 30% of the country's manufacturing workforce. While the initiative is considered to be a success, about two-thirds of the workforce are foreigners, as firms there are not able to attract Jordanian workers, despite the many incentives on offer. The Qualified Industrial Zones offer mainly unskilled work and therefore do not attract the relatively highly educated Jordanians.

The government has launched Jordan's National Tourism Strategy 2004-2010 to serve this fast growing sector. One of its objectives is to develop high standards of training and education for the sector, resulting in the establishment of a major USAID-supported project (Siyaha). The project is based on a strong partnership between education and business and has made significant progress. It has conducted an in-depth analysis of the sector's needs, established strong and permanent links with most advanced sector enterprises and offers good incentives to teachers and learners.

Attempts to address economic challenges as part of E-TVET reform have been accompanied by several additional initiatives. One example is the INJAZ project for the Creation of Economic Opportunities for Jordanian Youth, which funds partnerships between the private sector and educators throughout Jordan to help empower young people, introduce them to entrepreneurship and provide them with new employment options beyond the traditional public sector. With over 1,200 volunteers from 100 private sector organisations, INJAZ provides the employment skills needed in a modern economy.

The E-TVET sector reform process represents an opportunity to involve official social partners both at governance and sector level to play an active role in the policy discussion.

The social partners are expected to participate officially in an increasing number of boards and councils at the national/policy level (E-TVET Council, E-TVET Fund, VTC). The private sector is also to be involved at sector and operational level via the boards of VTC centres. This includes participation in curriculum development, workshop organisation, exams and internships. The centres of excellence established in various sectors are good examples of such initiatives.

As already mentioned, and according to the priorities set by the E-TVET Council, the recently established Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance has set up national sector teams, in which representatives from the private sector and trade unions are involved in developing occupational profiles and qualifications.

However, it is important that all sector-related skill requirements and national qualifications should be concentrated within these sector teams so as to avoid duplication of similar initiatives as is now happening with the creation of a sector council for the tourism sector. It is important, therefore, that the capacity of the Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance is strengthened and national sector teams are supported by the Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance's sector coordinators.

Despite various attempts by policy makers and providers to involve social partners, their representation at different levels is not governed by a clear legal structure and they lack a common vision on E-TVET policies. Furthermore, limited institutional capacity exists for identifying and defending the needs and interests of the labour market in terms of human capital development. This is also due to the fact that employer and employee representatives are often invited to participate in boards and councils on a personal, rather than an institutional, basis.

There is too much emphasis on supply in the delivery of education in Jordan.

Apart from the lack of structure for social partnership and of a common vision for HRD, a major problem in developing the right skills for the challenges facing the economy is the absence of a coherent system and structure for analysing data and needs. Although the National Centre for Human Resources Development has developed a human resources information system, it is not being used effectively and different stakeholders and TVET providers are working on separate skill requirements simultaneously. Together with the lack of structured information on sectors, which career opportunities they offer and which skills they require, this affects the relevance of technical and vocational education and makes the transition from education to work more difficult.

The E-TVET Council should develop a clear strategy for the effective use and further development of a needs analysis and labour market information system in order to tailor education and training policy and implementation more effectively to the needs of the economy. There is a need for a coherent system that is used in a structured and efficient way. An adequately structured, updated and efficiently used labour market information system could be combined with a career information system. The newly established national sector teams could be an important source of information for both systems.

Linked to this is the absence of a system for continuing vocational and technical training, where social partners can cooperate in the retraining or upskilling of employees. At the moment, most state initiatives for training unemployed people focus on young people who have no work experience. They concentrate too much on the training providers' needs or on a very specific target group or sector. Moreover, they often offer attractive incentives that dissuade people from entering the labour market. The upskilling of employees is left to private initiatives.

In line with the principles of lifelong learning as stated in the National Agenda and E-TVET vision, a coherent system of continuing education could respond to training and upskilling requirements in the labour force and the private sector. It would allow companies to invest continuously in their human resources and enable all citizens to improve their skills and career opportunities. Such a system could also help to reinforce the position of social partners and sectors in the governance and implementation of TVET.

A final issue, which has already been mentioned, is the lack of structure and regulation when it comes to the involvement of the private sector. SMEs, which account for 94% of the Jordanian private sector, are not represented in TVET governance.

Growing interest from social partners in E-TVET

The private sector has started to advocate more strongly its needs for skills and competences. Jordan's chambers of commerce and industry have both assigned staff to deal with HRD. However, only limited HRD planning, if any, takes place at sector level. Only in the cases of construction, pharmaceuticals, water and printing are sector representatives involved in projects undertaken by individual providers, such as the centres of excellence.

Sector-based associations and SME representatives should be involved in shaping a demand-driven training and education system and this should be given a legal structure. As proposed in the E-TVET reform document (p.30) the role of social partners should be enhanced at all levels and they should be supported within a legal framework to build their capacities to deal with E-TVET issues. The priority for the E-TVET Council will now be to look at sector councils/sector teams and streamline initiatives in each sector.

3. External efficiency: promoting equity and addressing social demands for education and training

The main social challenges shaping the demand for skills include:

- strong population growth
- large numbers of low-skilled immigrant workers and a high number of high-skilled Jordanians working abroad
- a labour mismatch causing unemployment and high inactivity rates

Jordan has a very young population with over 37% aged 15 or less and a large number of young job seekers who will enter the labour market in the coming years. There is strong pressure on the labour market to create employment for this group. With growth rates falling from 7.9% in 2008 to 3% in 2009⁹, the need for job creation has become even more urgent.

Over the last 10 years, more than half of the new jobs created annually in Jordan have been filled by foreign workers. The informal economy is growing faster than the formal one. There is a high participation of foreign labour and the employment of non-Jordanians is increasing at about 10% each year. The Jordanian government is looking for ways in which it can substitute foreign workers with its own citizens. However, it is common knowledge that Jordanian employers appreciate their foreign employees' skills, flexibility and their willingness to work hard and put in long hours. At the same time, they complain about the high expectations of young Jordanians whose increasing levels of education lead them to expect well-paying desk jobs close to home.

Jordan also has a long tradition of migration among its highly skilled population. There are estimated to be around 600,000¹⁰ Jordanians working and living abroad, mainly in the Gulf States. Remittances from Jordanians employed worldwide account for 22.8% of GDP¹¹. The main reasons for migration are to increase household income, improve professional status and employment prospects. Young professionals often say that widespread liberalisation and deregulation have led to poor working conditions and low wages in the private sector. This brain drain is often facilitated by bilateral agreements between Jordan and the Gulf states and support measures from the public sector, even though it does not further the country's aim to become a knowledge-based and highly competitive economy and one that is attractive for foreign direct investment.

The average annual GDP growth rate of 7.2% seen in recent years has been accompanied by a persistently high unemployment rate of around 14%¹². As already mentioned, the jobs created over the past five years have not been attractive to a large segment of the Jordanian labour force. Unemployment affects educated young people in particular, as Jordanians under the age of 30 represent 75% of the country's unemployed and over one-third of all unemployed people are highly educated.

The high unemployment rate is combined with a low activity rate. In 2009, the overall labour force participation rate was 40.1%. The lowest rate was reported for women (14.9%)¹³. The low official rate for women is partially due to their strong presence in the informal sector, such as in the garment industry.

The combination of strong economic growth with high unemployment and inactivity rates indicates a paradox in the Jordanian economy and is evidence of a strong mismatch between the needs of the labour market and the availability of skills.

A geographical mismatch has emerged over the last decade as 85% of jobs were created in urban areas whereas 60% of unemployed Jordanians live in rural areas¹⁴. Various projects supported by the E-TVET Fund, NGOs and donors have created some employment in rural areas but many of these jobs have attracted foreign workers due to the low level of skill required by the positions.

There is also a mismatch between labour conditions and wages and the expectations of young and unemployed Jordanians. Young people still seek higher education although it is often incompatible with the less sophisticated jobs on offer and prefer to be idle for some time while waiting for a job in public administration or to migrate to the West or the Gulf states. The jobs created in the last 10 years were mostly low-skilled positions, while most Jordanians aspire to medium- and high-skill occupations, often in sectors where there is a low level of job creation such as the public sector.

⁹ Source: IMF.

¹⁰ Source: Hazaimah, Hani in *The Jordan Times*, 10 March 2009.

¹¹ Source: *World Bank migration and remittances factbook*, 2008.

¹² Source: Al Manar, *Human resource indicators in Jordan*, 2009.

¹³ Source: Al Manar, *Human resource indicators in Jordan*, 2009.

¹⁴ Source: World Bank, Report No. 39201-JO, *Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan – Resolving Jordan's labor market paradox of concurrent economic growth and high unemployment*, 23 December 2008.

A TVET career is not considered attractive for social or economic reasons and therefore many students opt for a general, academic education rather than entering vocational or technical streams. In 2009, over 167,000 students chose an academic secondary education and only 24,000 (12.7%) chose vocational schools. This number has declined in recent years. In higher education the differences are even more obvious: in 2009, 30,100 (11.2%) Tawjihi students enrolled in community colleges, but 236,800 opted for academic universities¹⁵.

A proper career guidance mechanism with a strong focus on professional orientation could be an answer to this mismatch between reality and expectation. This should include the introduction of employability and career management skills in the curricula of both vocational and general secondary schools and at tertiary level. A career guidance policy should identify the different stakeholders involved (social partners, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour, National Centre for Human Resources Development, educational institutions) and their roles within a national mechanism for career guidance.

In order to improve the image of TVET, the E-TVET Council has started a campaign aiming at:

- establishing a mechanism to gauge the public perception of TVET job opportunities
- developing a shared vision and strategy among TVET stakeholders, including donors, on how to improve the image of technical and vocational careers
- creating a multimedia campaign to raise awareness of and reflect the shared vision of TVET stakeholders and evaluating the effectiveness of such a campaign

TVET providers must also gear their programmes more to the needs of the labour market, explore partnerships with the private sector and introduce more soft skills and competences to make vocational and technical education more attractive to young people.

The tourism sector has been particularly successful in promoting the sector and attracting students to the tourism and hospitality programmes offered by the VTC and community colleges.

Active labour market measures focus mainly on employment opportunities for young people and women.

Recent initiatives include the establishment of the National Employment and Training project for vocational training in the construction sector, the National Training and Employment Project programme, the retraining of unemployed young people and the promotion of tourism as an interesting career opportunity. Several satellite training and employment projects have been launched for women in rural areas who are unable to travel to and live in the cities. Most of these programmes are supported by the E-TVET Fund or by donor projects and use financial incentives to attract young people. However, these incentives often have a negative side-effect as they often attract employed people who prefer the high incentives offered by the training courses to the low wages that they might earn in the private sector.

NGOs implement many other youth- and gender-based projects, such as Save the Children's Najah and Naseej programmes. Another example is Questscope's non-formal education programme which is aimed at marginalised young people and is based on participation and mutual respect between students and teachers. The officially recognised certificate that the young people receive allows them to pursue specialised vocational training and entrepreneurial opportunities. Questscope works closely with the Ministry of Education, which has approved non-formal education as an official option.

Equal opportunities in the TVET system are often related to non-formal education.

The E-TVET reform strategy links the issue of equal opportunities to non-formal E-TVET and aims at 'utilising non-formal E-TVET programmes to promote labour and social mobility as well as gender equity, and reduce the gap among the cultural and educational levels of the various social groups' (reform document).

The E-TVET Council secretariat has developed an action plan related to gender issues, but this has not been translated into a clear implementation plan with indicators and a timeframe. The Ministry of Labour has established a unit aimed at working women but it operates in a rather isolated way and is

¹⁵ Source: Al Manar, *Human resource indicators in Jordan*, 2009.

not linked to the E-TVET Council. The VTC has set up a three-year gender committee with a limited mandate on capacity building and training. The committee aims to:

- i) increase the number of female participants in VTC programmes
- ii) improve women's representation in the VTC
- iii) develop training programmes for women in the VTC

However, the committee has no clear activity plan and once again there is no link with the E-TVET reform strategy and the Working Women Unit in the Ministry of Labour.

At the moment, the main challenges to be addressed with regard to the low participation of women in the labour market are the institutional capacity within the various TVET stakeholders for the implementation of plans, the ownership of gender issues, the link between current gender initiatives to the reform agenda and the coordination of efforts.

Adult education and training is often neglected both by policy makers and by TVET providers. Reforms and restructuring focus mainly on initial training and institutions like the E-TVET Fund, VTC, National Employment and Training and the National Training and Employment Project limit their scope to training for young people. In addition, issues such as the assessment and certification of adult workers are not taken into account when implementing new training policies and strategies.

The E-TVET Council has taken the initiative to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework for the TVET system. This will help the council to see to what extent the system provides learning opportunities to all citizens.

4. Internal efficiency, quality, governance and financing

Internal efficiency and effectiveness of the TVET system are held back by the fragmentation of TVET providers.

The main TVET providers are vocational schools, which operate under the auspices of the Ministry of Education; the community colleges, which are governed by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research; and the VTC, which is part of the Ministry of Labour. Other providers include the armed forces' National Employment and Training project, the private education sector, private enterprises and NGOs. There is little coordination between the providers, resulting in a lack of transparency, overlap and a waste of resources. Moreover, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research considers that community colleges belong to the higher education system and have no connection with the E-TVET sector.

The three different bodies that make up the E-TVET structure (Board of Education, Council of Higher Education and the E-TVET Council) are different in nature. The mandates of the boards of the education and higher education ministries reflect only the administration and policies of the two ministries. The Minister of Labour chairs and nominates the members of the E-TVET Council, but unlike the two other boards, this body is not responsible for the Ministry of Labour's strategy. The E-TVET Council has an explicit role in coordinating the various TVET sub-sectors. Moreover, unlike the other two ministries, the Ministry of Labour is not only an education and training provider. Confusion about the roles of the Ministry of Labour and the E-TVET Council is another cause of limited coordination when it comes to governance of the sector.

Despite the National Agenda's clear vision for E-TVET and the policy linked to the vision that was set out in the E-TVET Council reform document, no common strategy for implementing reform has been elaborated by the governing bodies and different visions prevail.

Another problem is the lack of institutional capacity within the Ministry of Labour. This ministry's role is to lead reform in the TVET sector, coordinate activities and cooperate with the different stakeholders and social partners. However, it lacks the resources to exercise this important role. Moreover, the newly established E-TVET Council, the Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance and the E-TVET Fund have all been put under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and suffer from the same lack of resources. As a result, they are not able to operate as strong and independent institutions. Another risk of this subordination to the ministry is that E-TVET reform focuses too much on the training provided by the institutions that fall under the responsibility of this ministry.

As expectations are high for TVET in Jordan, the council and its related bodies must be adequately resourced to be able to achieve their goals. The council should be supported by a strong and independent executive secretariat outside the Ministry of Labour, which can act as a single entry point for all issues related to E-TVET reform. The secretariat should provide analytical, administrative and policy advice and support to the council.

The E-TVET Council is responsible for the overall performance and assessment of the TVET system.

One of the E-TVET Council's key mandates is to propose a general policy for employment and technical and vocational education and training and to draft the necessary plans and schemes needed to implement this on a national scale. To this end, the council has approved the Ministry of Education's vocational education strategy, the VTC's vocational training strategy and the Ministry of Labour's employment policy.

The E-TVET Council has also proposed a monitoring and evaluation framework for the TVET system and this is now under development. Its objectives are to:

- develop an TVET sector performance assessment system
- establish performance indicators for the TVET system based on national performance objectives
- design data-gathering tools and reporting mechanisms
- undertake performance analysis and recommended remedial action
- ensure feedback into the policy assessment cycle

According to the E-TVET sector reform document, the Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance will be responsible for a quality assurance system in the sector. The centre will soon start work on defining and ensuring the quality of E-TVET provisions to meet labour market demands.

Quality is currently defined and ensured at training provider level, according to providers' different criteria and standards.

The National Agenda proposed several governance and financing mechanisms to improve efficiency and quality. It recommended the establishment of four bodies:

- an employment and TVET council
- an employment and training fund
- an independent quality assurance agency
- an umbrella higher council on HRD

The E-TVET Council was established in 2008 to coordinate E-TVET reform and to upgrade the sector. The E-TVET Council represents key stakeholders in the TVET sector, including employer and employee representatives, TVET providers and the Ministries of Education and Higher Education. The Minister of Labour chairs the council and nominates its members. E-TVET reform is a national effort, directly relevant to the Ministries of Education, Higher Education and Labour, as well as to the private sector. The council's role, therefore, is to ensure the education and training policies of the Board of Education and the Council of Higher Education really serve the needs of the Jordanian economy as reflected by the labour market stakeholders. The current situation shows, however, that the E-TVET Council has focused mainly on Ministry of Labour and VTC issues and the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research have had little involvement.

The E-TVET Council Law (No. 46, 2008) stipulates two by-laws – the New E-TVET Fund By-law and the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Centre By-law.

The E-TVET Fund was established to improve the efficiency and quality of demand-driven, technical skills training in collaboration with the private sector. This training is intended to increase employment opportunities for all, including women and people with special needs.

With its present and medium-term financial situation (currently heading towards huge deficits), the E-TVET Fund is unlikely to be able to reach its goals and attain financial viability. The fund has used its resources by concentrating on a limited number of projects that were mostly related to Ministry of Labour activities (mainly National Employment and Training, the National Training and Employment Project, VTC) and were often chosen with an apparent lack of clarity.

Until recently, the E-TVET Fund collected 1% of the distributable net profit of companies in Jordan. Its reorganisation was intended to provide the private sector with a majority on the board and a comprehensive role in management. Government decisions in December 2009 and early 2010 halted this process. The 1% tax was abolished and replaced by a fee to be paid by employers hiring foreign workers. Changes in the governance of the fund resulted in a stronger position for the Ministry of Labour and the VTC and no decision-making role for the private sector. The idea of financing the E-TVET Fund from the contributions of foreign workers seems to conflict directly with the aim of the National Agenda and all other policies designed to reduce the number of foreign workers and promote the employment of Jordanians.

On the basis of existing international experience, we recommend exploring the most efficient ways in which employers can contribute to and benefit from the fund in order to upskill and upgrade the Jordanian workforce and comply with the high-level objectives of the Jordanian government.

The **Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance** was created to perform the following duties:

- setting up and developing standards for technical and vocational education and training to control the resulting quality
- licensing and accrediting technical and vocational education and training institutions
- conducting occupational tests for those involved in technical and vocational work and granting occupational licenses

According to the E-TVET Council Law (article 11), this centre is to operate under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour. However, the National Agenda recommended separating accreditation and quality assurance from the provision of training. It suggested reforming the VTC and creating a licensing and accreditation council, which reports to the E-TVET Council.

It would have been more logical to have an independent authority under the direct responsibility of the E-TVET Council. This would mean that it could operate in coordination with the Higher Education Accreditation Commission on issues like certification, a national qualification framework and quality assurance. As the by-law for the Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance is not yet approved, it is still possible to improve the centre's position and link it more directly to the whole TVET sector.

The **Higher Education Accreditation Commission** is a strong and independent authority that has not been directly linked to the E-TVET sector, even though it is responsible for the accreditation of higher technical education institutions (community colleges). Further to a recent change in the law, the commission reports to the Prime Minister and no longer to the Minister of Higher Education. The Higher Education Accreditation Commission develops accreditation and quality control criteria, accredits institutions and their programmes and ensures that institutions conduct self assessment. Both public and private institutions fall within the mandate of the Higher Education Accreditation Commission.

To date, the higher council on HRD has not been established and the lack of a strong coordinating and leading body is one of the main causes for the current stagnation in E-TVET reform.

We recommend establishing either this higher council or a high-level ministerial committee for HRD to be chaired by the Prime Minister. As members of the council or committee, the Minister of Labour, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Higher Education would be required to frequently review the achievements of the E-TVET Council, the Council for Education and the Council for Higher Education and to coordinate their policies.

E-TVET reform has begun to involve the main stakeholders in the design and management of VET policies.

In Jordan, specific laws and by-laws govern the role of the main employer and employee organisations. Labour law and the E-TVET Council Law clarify the role of social partners regarding

their participation on various boards and in governing bodies active in the field of TVET such as the Social Security Board of Directors, the VTC Board of Directors, the E-TVET Council Board, the National and Training Employment Project and the E-TVET Fund. The recent establishment of the Economic and Social Council provides a platform for discussion on labour and TVET by social partners and civil society representatives. This council is divided into four permanent committees, one of which deals with education. Despite this high degree of involvement, the social partners' lack of resources and organisation minimise the impact of their intervention. Unlike the E-TVET Council, none of these has established a clear strategy on HRD with a clear view on participation in governance bodies.

A more sector-based approach and better coordination between TVET providers is boosting efficiency and quality.

As already mentioned, the E-TVET Council has identified key sectors. The social partners and the Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance are currently evaluating the 10 sectors to identify the occupations requiring a complete review. This initiative is at an early stage of implementation and is expected to reach an agreement regarding the mechanisms that must be in place to build a sector-based approach. The plan is to use this more bottom-up approach, with the Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance acting as a coordinating and controlling body, for the further development of a national qualification framework in Jordan.

As part of the restructuring and modernisation projects (Employer Driven Skills Development Project and ERfKE II) in secondary TVET, both VTC centres and TVET schools have started to introduce general skills and occupational competences and are making some efforts to cut down on and align the TVET programmes offered by their training centres and schools. However, the National Employment and Training Company, which is the main provider of VET programmes in the construction sector and is fully financed by the E-TVET Fund, has ambitions to extend its training services. This calls for strong coordination by the E-TVET Council. A very recent development is the inclusion of the National Training and Employment Project in the VTC as part of the government's attempt to combine independent public entities with similar missions in an effort to cut expenses and ensure better performance. The VTC director stated that the decision aims to address any ambiguities arising from overlapping jurisdictions dealing with the training and recruitment of unemployed Jordanians and that the government is keen to reform and develop the VTC to be the sole official institution overseeing the vocational training sector.

Several changes are planned to enhance the technical orientation of the community colleges. Some colleges will be separated from Al Balqa University, which has been responsible for the educational programming and administration of all colleges. These colleges will be renamed as technical community colleges and will be headed up by the Jordanian Academy for Technical Education, a body that has not yet been established. This academy is expected to coordinate the content and labour market orientation of the technical colleges' programmes with the other TVET providers, using the E-TVET Council as a platform.

Future actions for addressing the efficiency and quality challenges of the TVET system should focus on creating the political will to generate a common vision for the various public stakeholders and to coordinate progress in the reform process. It may be necessary, therefore, to revise and strengthen the E-TVET reform strategy that was developed in 2008 and combine it with a clear implementation plan, including the division of roles, budget and a timeframe. Agreement regarding ownership and leadership of reform is also needed.

5. Innovation, partnership and entrepreneurship

Innovation has taken place mainly in the field of public-private partnership in recent years.

Nearly all TVET providers have developed some sort of PPP ranging from career development centres involving local companies to centres of excellence. The development of centres of excellence is part of the overall TVET sector reform. The centres are designed to provide sector-wide vocational training programmes that address a range of competences within the sector. The centres use state-of-the-art equipment and are based on international training standards that meet industry demands. Despite strong interest from the private sector, financial support from companies for the centres is still very limited.

In 2003, the Jordanian government, established the Jordan Education Initiative as a pilot model for accelerating education reform in partnership with the World Economic Forum. It uses a PPP model to drive innovation and capability. To date, it includes more than 17 global corporations, 17 Jordanian entities and 11 governmental and non-governmental organisations as stakeholders. The initiative combines modern ICT tools with new teaching methods. According to its website¹⁶, it has reached over 80,000 students and has retrained teachers from 102 public schools.

In higher education, private sector representatives have had an input into the new community colleges programme, which includes a compulsory business internship. New guidelines enable college teaching staff to operate as temporary consultants in companies. A private sector centre within Al Balqa University coordinates all of these activities, but clear policies and strategies for PPP have not yet been developed.

Jordan has made limited progress in introducing entrepreneurial learning.

Jordan adopted the Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Enterprise in 2006. Although the charter focuses strongly on human capital, no comprehensive strategy for lifelong entrepreneurial learning has been developed. Most initiatives for entrepreneurial learning take place in the informal sector and are often supported by donor projects. One example is the Queen Rania Al-Abdullah Award for Outstanding Teachers, which aims to enhance innovation and entrepreneurship by spreading awareness about excellent performance concepts and providing incentives for outstanding teachers. Several activities take place in the Queen Rania Centre for Entrepreneurship, for example, and the Jordan Forum for Business and Professional Women supports businesswomen. These activities are deemed to be very effective, but they are driven by highly committed individuals who have to fight hard for financial support. As already mentioned, INJAZ organises capacity-building courses in cooperation with various TVET providers. The courses focus on promoting leadership, business, financial, entrepreneurial, communication and soft skills.

UNESCO's Entrepreneurship Education focuses on the dissemination of innovative and successful entrepreneurship education experiences from different countries within the Arab region and on providing technical support for the development of strategic plans to facilitate the incorporation of entrepreneurship education in the educational systems (2010 to 2012).

A strategy for lifelong entrepreneurial learning could be embedded in an E-TVET policy or strategy, guaranteeing the necessary introduction of entrepreneurial skills in the curricula of secondary and tertiary levels of education. According to the National Agenda strategy, this is to be initiated by the higher council for HRD, a body that has not yet been established. Given the current circumstances, the E-TVET Council should take the lead in developing a strategy for entrepreneurial learning.

The Educational Innovation Fund, established by the Ministry of Education in 2004, aims to develop schools' institutional resources to design and implement innovative projects in the area of school governance, curriculum development, the use of e-learning and ICT tools, and the professional and personal development of school staff. Each year, up to 50 projects receive funding and the most successful ones include initiatives focusing on soft skills, ICT and e-learning, teaching methodologies, guidance and counselling and student clubs. All of these innovative activities tend to be developed by institutions in isolation in the absence of a clear common innovation strategy for the TVET sector. The E-TVET Council could play a coordinating role in aligning the different initiatives and developing a common vision and strategy for further innovation.

¹⁶ <http://www.jei.org.jo/#/1>

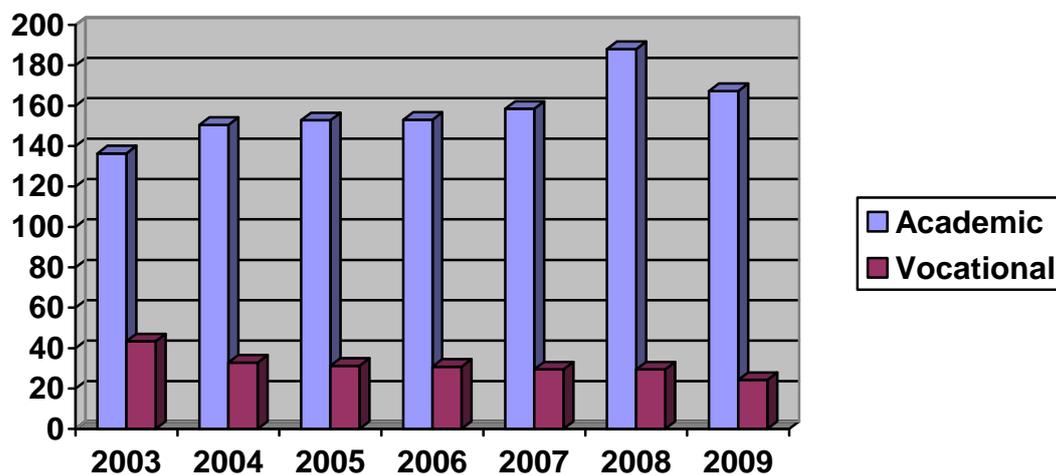
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Annex 1: Statistical data

Figure 1

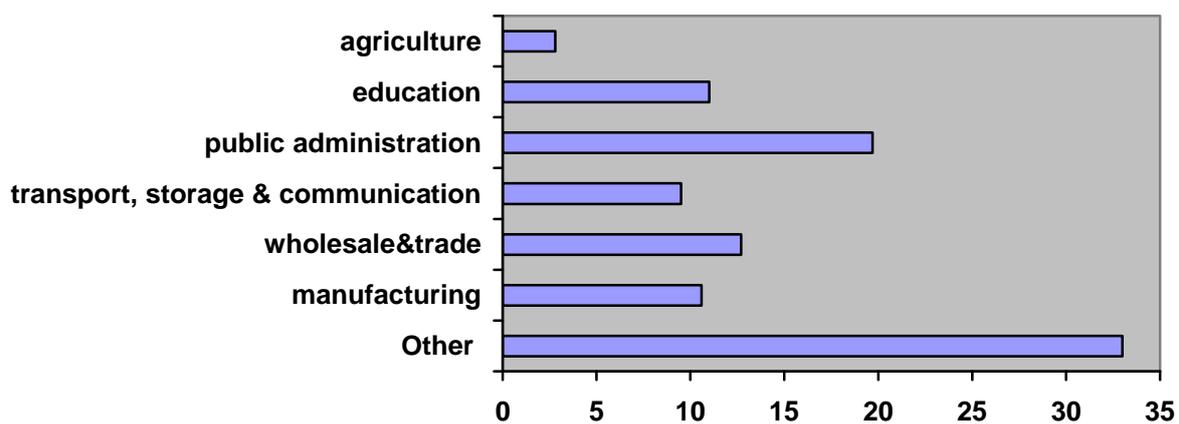
Total numbers of students enrolled in secondary education (in thousands)



Source: Al Manar, *Human resources indicators in Jordan, 2009*

Figure 2

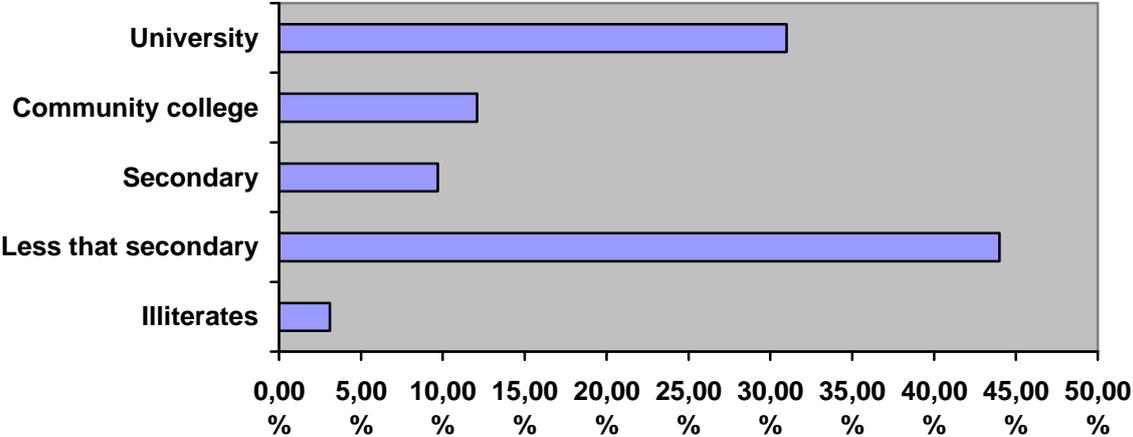
Employment per economic activity in 2009 (in %)



Source: Al Manar, *Human resources indicators in Jordan, 2009*

Figure 3

Unemployment by educational level



Source: Al Manar, *Human resources indicators in Jordan*, 2009

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