KEY POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT – LEBANON 2022

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the last 4 years, Lebanon has experienced acute crises that have added to its long-lasting political instability, refugee crisis and economic depression, depriving the country of stable development for more than a decade. The country's deep economic and financial crisis has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 situation and the devastating explosions in the Beirut port in August 2020, leading to a fast deterioration of the socio-economic situation among both Lebanese people and refugees. If the situation remains stagnant and reforms are not implemented, with the gradual lifting of subsidies and deepening of the crisis, the potential for further deterioration and social tensions will continue to rocket. Such a trend will ultimately further increase the number of people in need of urgent and intensive humanitarian assistance. Moreover, in 2022, the Ukraine situation is contributing to a significant increase in food and fuel prices, with additional risks including food shortages on the horizon.

On 23 June 2022, a **new government** was formed, with a prime minister appointed for a new term. This came as result of the elections held on 15 May 2022 for a new parliament in the country. The current government has been faced with mitigating the economic impact of the Ukraine crisis in terms of wheat shortages and global increases in commodity prices, on top of the current economic and financial crises. As a matter of fact, Lebanon is facing the most devastating socio-economic crisis in its recent history. Since October 2019, when the crisis began, the Lebanese pound has lost more than 90% of its value, leading to a year-on-year increase in inflation of 210% between June 2021 and June 2022 (Fitch, 2022). The first half of 2022 witnessed the worst increase in food prices, at 332%, making it the highest food inflation rate in the world this year. The revised food survival and minimum expenditure basket (SMEB) recorded a 14% increase between April and May 2022, and a shocking increase of 1 388% since October 2019 (WFP, 2022). The overall cost of the survival minimum expenditure basket is more than 14 times higher than at the start of the crisis. At the end of 2021, a further increase of 9.1% of the Lebanese population living under the national poverty line was observed (World Bank, 2022). The national minimum wage, which was USD 450 in 2018, is now worth USD 18 according to the black market's exchange rate (World Bank, 2022). The figures are likely to become more severe as the government will likely remove most, if not all, import subsidies in the coming months. Moreover, the unemployment rate reached 29.6% in 2022, compared to 11.4% in 2018-2019, with unemployment among the displaced population standing even higher: 42% among Syrian women and 27% among Syrian men (ILO, CAS 2022).

Unemployment and high levels of informal labour were already serious problems before the crisis, with the World Bank suggesting that the Lebanese economy would need to create six times as many jobs just to absorb regular market entrants. Unemployment is particularly high in some of the country's poorest areas – nearly double the national average in some areas – which puts considerable strain on host communities.

Consequently, real **GDP** contracted by 10.5% in 2021, following a drop of 21.4% in 2020 (World Bank, 2022). An acute human tragedy is unfolding, with poverty expected to affect more than half of the population and unemployment expected to exceed 40% by the end of 2021 (UN, 2020). Given the socio-economic developments occurring since 2020, it will be difficult for the economy to improve in the short term. Subject to extraordinarily high uncertainty, real GDP is projected to contract by a further 6.5% in 2022 (World Bank, 2022). Without any reforms, or if priority is not given to covering people's essential needs, including food, electricity, health and education, there is a strong likelihood that vulnerable Lebanese, migrant workers, and refugees will be pushed further into poverty and extreme poverty.

Over the last 3 years, obstacles preventing children from accessing high quality education have been compounded, and many more have emerged. With insufficient access to inclusive distance learning tools, students have been out of meaningful learning for almost 2 academic years. More precisely, over 1.2 million school-age children had their education disrupted in 2020 alone, with 400 000 children being left out of school as a result of poverty and other factors (ERP 2021).

The academic year for public schools began on 3 October 2022, with the economic situation heavily affecting teachers' basic working conditions, whose salaries have dropped tremendously due to the devaluation of the Lebanese pound, and who are required to perform whilst unable to cover their own basic expenses. Additionally, a study conducted by the Lebanese American University in 2022 (LAU, 2022) revealed that the monthly income of teachers stood at USD 131, with transportation costs reaching USD 128, leaving them with USD 3 to spend for the entire month on their basic needs. The same study stated that there was no clear plan for mitigating or compensating the economic burden on teachers, thus more strikes have occurred and continue to occur in the absence of any solution, putting more risk on the education of students in public schools.

1. KEY POLITICAL, DEMOGRAPHIC, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Political developments

On top of the refugee crisis and economic depression, depriving the country of harmonious and stable development for more than a decade, Lebanon has experienced acute crises during the last 4 years, that have added to its long-lasting political instability.

Based on the results of the parliamentary elections held on 15 May 2022, on 23 June a **new government** was formed, with the prime minister being appointed for a new term. The government has been faced with the economic impact of the Ukraine crisis in terms of wheat shortages and global increases in commodity prices on top of the current economic and financial crises. Additionally, it must continue negotiations with the IMF, which were halted in 2021, and implement a set of reforms in the banking and energy sectors, for which no measures have been taken so far. This has been a main impediment that has continued to fuel tension in the country. In addition, the current President's term ended on 31 October 2022, and no candidates have been found so far. The current government has taken on a caretaker role, with limited responsibilities.

The failing governance model is discouraging local and international business from investing in the country, mainly due to a lack of trust in the judiciary system or a fear of a social implosion (World Bank, 2021). The combination of these factors is slowly destroying the country's social and institutional infrastructure, without which Lebanon has no hope that the much needed structural changes will be implemented.

Demographics

Primary data on recent demographic and systematic vulnerability for the Lebanese and migrant population remains limited despite efforts to increase data collection and collective analysis.

Lebanon's total population increased from 4.953 million in 2010 to 6.769 million in 2021. The country is undergoing a demographic transition, characterised by a sharp reduction in fertility rates and a significant increase in life expectancy. The relative size of the youth population (age group 15-24) has decreased from 28.8% in 2010 to 24.7% in 2021. Lebanon's age-distribution profile is somewhere between the regional average and that of the more developed regions of the world. There are proportionally fewer children and more elderly people than in nearby countries.

Population growth has significantly exceeded natural population growth, owing to a net inflow of migrants to the country. In November 2019, the Government of Lebanon estimated that the country was hosting 1.5 million people (Government of Lebanon, 2020) who had fled the conflict in Syria (including 918 874 people registered as refugees with the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), as well as 27 700 Palestinian refugees from Syria and a pre-existing population of an estimated 180 000 Palestinian refugees (UNRWA, 2021) from Lebanon living in 12 camps and 156 gatherings.

Key economic developments

Lebanon is facing the most devastating socio-economic crisis in its recent history. Since October 2019, when the crisis began, the Lebanese pound has lost more than 90%of its value, leading to year-on-year increase inflation of 210% between June 2021 and June 2022 (Fitch, 2022). The first half of 2022 witnessed the worst increase in food prices, a 332% increase making it the worst food inflation rate in the world this year. The revised food survival and minimum expenditure basket (SMEB) recorded a 14% increase between April and May 2022. The overall cost is more than fourteen times higher than at the start of the crisis. The national minimum wage, which was USD 450 in 2018, is now worth USD 18 according to the black market's exchange rate (World Bank, 2022). The figures are likely to become more severe as the Government will likely remove most, if not all, import subsidies in the coming months. The percentage of the Lebanese population living under the national poverty line was estimated to have further increased, standing at 9.1% at the end of 2021 (World Bank, 2022).

Moreover, the unemployment rate reached 29.6% in 2022, compared to 11.4% in 2018-2019, with unemployment among the displaced population standing even higher: 42% for Syrian women and 27% for Syrian men (ILO, CAS 2022).

Lebanon used to be a middle-income country with an open and largely service-oriented economy. It has a strong commercial tradition of domestic free trade and investment policies. In 2020, the service sector accounted for 86.4% of GDP, which is a significant increase from 2019 when it accounted for 78.8% of GDP, followed by industry (7.2%, a decrease from 2019 when it was 12.8%) and agriculture (2.5%, a slight decrease from 2019 when it was 3.1%). Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) remain the main form of business organisation, particularly micro- and small enterprises. There is also a large and growing informal sector in the country, especially in agriculture, which represents a serious risk to the national economy.

The multiple economic, social and financial crises have weighed heavily on the country. The real **GDP** contracted further by 10.5% in 2021, on top of the 21.4% contraction in 2020 (World Bank, 2022). Given the socioeconomic developments of the last 3 years, it will be difficult for the economy to improve in the short term. Subject to extraordinarily high uncertainty, real GDP is projected to contract by a further 6.5% in 2022 (World Bank, 2022). The United Nations recently estimated that at least 1 million Lebanese need support to cover their basic needs. Without any reforms or long-term strategies to enhance the situation, there is a strong likelihood that vulnerable Lebanese, migrant workers and refugees will be pushed further into poverty and extreme poverty (CSIS, 2021, VASYR, 2021).

The private sector is heavily constrained by the current situation and unable to move forward. Increased costs of inputs, and rising costs of basic requirements for energy, fuel, and human resources have a big impact. This has led to a firm decrease in productivity and revenue generation, which in turn caused bankruptcies and layoffs in the private sector (World Bank, 2021), be it in the real-estate, industry, service or tourism sectors. The housing sector is another challenge that requires a societal change vis-à-vis the land and property arrangements, and its translation into a genuine right to adequate housing.

The previous government had issued a **financial recovery plan** in response to the current economic situation. However, it was faced with major pushbacks and has not been properly implemented yet. Government negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), based on a macro-economic stabilisation programme and a critical liquidity injection, have resumed in January 2022 after being stalled in 2021. The main points and conditions requested for the deal focus on the need to restructure the financial sector, reform the energy sector, develop sustainable budgets, provide better services without draining public resources, and effectively implement transparent anti-corruption financial plans (IMF, 2022). A 'staff-level' agreement was reached between the IMF and the Lebanese authorities on 7 April 2022, which could unlock a further 4-year USD 3 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) (IMF, 2022). However, an IMF staff mission to Lebanon conducted in September 2022 stated that very slow progress has been made despite the increased intensity of the economic and social crisis (IMF, 2022). Most of the required actions have not been implemented, such as the adoption of capital control laws, reforms in the banking sector and other sectors, as well as a delayed approval of the 2022 budget. Such delays add further costs to the country and population while prolonging the period for economic recovery.

Key social issues

The economic and financial crisis in Lebanon continues to weigh heavily on the population, with the **depreciation of the local currency** against the dollar reaching even lower levels as compared to previous months, LBP 38 000/USD in September 2022 (UN Inter-agency, 2022). This not only had a significant impact on the cost of living and purchasing power, but also created further challenges on the social side, mainly in terms of increased school dropouts, increased rates of child labour, increased early marriage among girls, and increased social tension and deteriorating security conditions among refugee and host communities.

The increased cost of living and the inability to meet basic needs, such as rent, food or health, have led households to resort to negative coping strategies, the most common being child labour and early marriage. For child labour, UNICEF reported that around 9% of Lebanese families engaged at least one of their children in labour in 2021 (UNICEF, 2022). The figure increased to 10% in the first half of 2022 for all households including Syrian refugees. However, some organisations reported that child labour among Syrian refugees decreased from 5% in 2021 to 4.3% in 2022, but this decrease might be attributed to under-reporting in national statistics (Inter-agency, 2022). More boys are involved in child labour (6.8%) as compared to girls (1.9%). In terms of regional distribution, the Northern regions and Akkar witnessed the highest child labour rate compared to other regions, reaching 6.1% and 6% respectively (UNICEF, 2022). Child marriage is mostly prevalent among Syrian refugee girls, increasing from 20.4% in 2021 to 21.9% in 2022. In terms of regional distribution, Baalbeck-Hermel and Beirut witnessed the highest increase, from 11% to 22% in Hermel and from 27% to 35% in Beirut (ACAPS, 2022). Mostly those who get married move to urban areas where there are better job opportunities, which explains the lower rates in other areas. The increase was also triggered by increased rates of school dropouts mainly for girls.

The increased intensity of the economic crisis has further widened the gap between the Lebanese population and Syrian refugees, creating more social tensions, fuelled by the widespread perceptions that refugees get support in fresh dollars. Such reported tensions triggered at least 7% of the incidents being linked to schools, rendering them an unsafe environment for children (ACAPS, 2022).

The current crisis in Lebanon, coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic, has also impacted the health system. A lack of reliable electricity, fuel and water supply threatens the daily operations of hospitals and health facilities. Currency exchange rates and cash flow restrictions on US dollars have limited international purchasing power for essential medicines, supplies and various reagents, while local suppliers – including pharmacies – suffer similarly depleted stocks. These combined factors threaten the continued operation of health facilities and pharmacies. On top of this, as per WHO's estimates (2021), 40% of the doctors and 30% of the nurses in Lebanon have left since 2019, and more are in the process of finalising their papers to leave permanently. This 'exodus' is further jeopardising the health sector and the health of populations living in the country.

Moreover, decreased rates of routine immunisation in both the public and the private sector leave Lebanon at a higher risk of an outbreak of vaccine-preventable diseases. The threats on the performance of the health sector have further increased with the recent outbreak of cholera disease in the country. Up until 19 October 2022, the Ministry of Health recorded 169 cases of cholera and 5 deaths, in the country's first cholera outbreak in 30 years (MOH, 2022).

2. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

2.1 Trends and challenges

Education and training have been heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the devastating explosions that shook Beirut in August 2020, the high numbers of refugees, the political deadlock and the economic crisis, in particular in terms of educational strategy, education expenditure, access, participation and NEETs.

Education strategy and legal framework for education

In 2021, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) developed a 5-year General Education Plan 2021-2025 to address the critical needs of education for children in crisis contexts. The plan focuses on vulnerable children, ensuring their access to inclusive and high-quality learning, whilst also further building the skills they need for the future. It also provides a commitment to keep all schools open for children, including the most vulnerable.

The plan comprises three pillars:

- Increasing equitable access, participation, and completion of education for all learners in Lebanon, with a focus on the most vulnerable.
- Improving the quality of education and learning outcomes for all students and strengthening citizenship.
- Building more effective and resilient education system with policies, plans and resource allocations informed by evidence, in collaboration with stakeholders.

One of the deficiencies for programming policy interventions remains the lack of reliable national education data. A lack of timely information and insufficiently detailed disaggregated enrolment figures hamper evidence-based programming. Since 2018, the Ministry started the process of digitalising data collection, both at central and at school level. This process has not been completed yet.

In response to the dramatic situation in the country, the Emergency Response Plan 2021-22 (ERP) was announced for Lebanon during the International Conference in Support of the Lebanese People on 4 August 2021. The ERP attracted funding commitments from key donors totalling approximately USD 370 million (with France to provide EUR 100 million). Under the ERP, the education sector has a total budget of USD 33.25 million, targeting 220 000 children, youths, parents/caregivers, and teachers. The funds received by the education sector in 2021 constitute around 6% of all funds received for the ERP (all sectors included) (World Bank, 2021). Moreover, cash and voucher assistance (CVA) for education has become increasingly common in education programming and is integral to the ERP.

This means that the influx of money into the country to support educational developments, if confirmed by donors, will be massive. Yet, unless the new Education Action Plan is properly operationalised, no real changes will happen and the risk of fragmentation amongst interventions remains high.

With the 631 209 Syrian children (aged 3-18) living in Lebanon (UNHCR, 2018), the MEHE has adopted different strategies to ensure that Syrian children receive formal certification and recognition for their educational achievements, but, as of yet, no real results have been achieved at national level.

Education expenditure

Public expenditure on the general education sector in 2019 (see statistical annex) was around 2.6% of GDP. A recent World Bank report published in 2021 stated that education expenditure accounted for less than 2% of the country's GDP in 2020. This lower percentage could be the result of the school closures. In 2021, schools were closed for more than 75% of the academic year (World Bank, 2022).

Lebanon has both a private and a public education system. The former charges for admission, while the latter is essentially free of charge. The private school sector receives approximately a 25% share of public financing (World Bank, 2020). The sector witnessed an internal migration of students from private to public schools, as many families could no longer afford to pay the higher tuition for their children. More than 45 000 students have moved to public schools since 2019. Before the crisis, only 30% of Lebanese students were enrolled in public schools; this figure went up to 36.5% during the 2020-2021 academic year. With the ongoing crisis, this percentage is expected to increase for the 2022-2023 academic year. On top of internal migration, the public education system also needs to accommodate 600 000 Syrian children in the near future and already increased its capacity by 77% over the last six years (Lebanon's Education Sector Plan 2021-2025, March 2022). This huge increase in the student population is creating enormous pressure on the public education system, which is based on insufficient budgetary resources and needs major restructuring. In September 2022, the Minister of Education and Higher Education convened a meeting of the entire donor community to seek dedicated funding for all levels of education in view of the new academic year and of the reform process currently undertaken by the Ministry.

Access, participation and early school leaving

Data obtained from the Lebanon Education Sector on Children in Lebanon (Save the Children, 2022) revealed that, for the academic year 2020-2021, the total school-age population was around 2 018 927, of which only 1 281 881 students were enrolled in education. Of those in education, 55% of total number of primary and secondary students, aged 3-18 years, were enrolled in private schools. Of those students who did not return to school in that academic year, 33 915 were Lebanese and 7 987 were non-Lebanese.

Over the last two years, obstacles preventing children from accessing high-quality education have compounded. With insufficient access to inclusive distance learning tools, students have been out of meaningful learning for almost two academic years. More precisely, over 1.2 million school-aged children had their education disrupted in 2020 alone, with 400 000 children being left out of school because of poverty and other factors (ERP, 2021). CAS data already showed a decline in school completion rates for primary (78%) and lower secondary (59%) (CAS 2020). Dropout rates were higher among girls (3.2%) than boys (2.6%), mostly within the age of 6 to 17 years (UN Inter-agency, 2022). In terms of regional distribution, the dropout rates were higher in vulnerable areas such as Bekaa, Akkar and the Southern regions. In addition, school completion is highly unequal among economic groups, with only half of 18-year-olds from the lowest economic quantiles completing school. Limited career guidance for students is one of the primary reasons for high drop-out rates. The expectation is that this decline will continue given the current context.

Since 2012, Lebanon has experienced one of the largest influxes of Syrian refugees. According to the latest surveys, 40% of primary-age and 90% of secondary-age Syrian refugee children are not in school (CAS 2020). In addition to access, quality is an increasing concern in Lebanon. Results from the VASYR study published in 2022 revealed that around 30% of school-aged refugee children between ages of 6 and 17 years old have never been to school (VASYR, 2021).

Additionally, a study conducted by Lebanese American University in 2022 (LAU, 2022), revealed that the monthly income of teachers stood at USD 131, with transportation costs reaching USD 128, leaving them with USD 3 to spend for the entire month on their basic needs. Therefore, the country is struggling to retain teachers, putting an additional strain on the public education sector, which is already facing severe constraints in terms of available school infrastructure, education quality and service delivery.

Considering that around 70% of Lebanon's students have historically relied on the private sector, the situation is further exacerbated by the increase of 100 000 to 120 000 students transferring from private to public schools between 2019/20 and 2021/22 (ERP, 2021).

As regards TVET education, 21 440 students were enrolled in public TVET schools for academic year 2020-2021, and 15 023 in private TVET schools. According to the most recent data, the share of VET students in upper secondary education was 27.6% in 2021, compared to 28% in 2020 (see statistical annex).

PISA results

The results published for the last Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (OECD 2019), undertaken in Lebanon, indicate that schools' performance is declining, and that Lebanon is one of the lowest ranked countries, with more than two-thirds of the students not reaching basic literacy. 67.8% of the students performed poorly in reading, 59.8% performed poorly in mathematics, and 62.2% of the students performed poorly in science. Socio-economic conditions compound poor performance in PISA tests and influence the overall performance of students in schools.

The multiple crises occurring in the country have not only increased school dropouts and low enrolment, but also impacted students' learning performance. There is an urgent need to evaluate the teaching methods and propose new learning approaches, updated curricula and more rigorous monitoring of teacher performance.

Young people not in employment, education or training (NEET)

According to the Labour Force and Household Living Conditions Survey Update carried out in 2022, the youth unemployment rate increased to 47.8%, compared to 23.3% in 2018-2019. According to the available data, 29.6% of unemployed youth had been seeking employment for two years or more and 19.2% for one to two years (ILO, CAS 2022). Moreover, the percentage of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) was 29.1% in 2022. This percentage was higher for young women (32.1%) than for young men (26.1%) (see statistical annex).

Furthermore, a youth-focused rapid assessment conducted by UNICEF in 2021 targeting Syrian and Palestinian youth living in Lebanon indicated that 50% of the Syrian youth and 32% of the Palestinian youth are not in education, employment, or training. The same report mentions that 60% of the entire youth population aged 15-24 are unemployed, whereby seven in ten were considered unemployed, without income or any opportunity to generate money for living in the week prior to survey. The opportunities for youth to find employment have become scarce. The intensified competition over low-paid jobs or in informal sectors further increases their vulnerability.

2.2 Initial VET and adult learning

Strategic and legal framework for initial VET and adult learning

The Lebanese government launched and adopted in 2018 the National Strategic Framework (NSF) for TVET 2018-2022. The NSF for TVET 2018-2022 has been the main policy document for TVET in the last years. Although the framework represented an important step towards better collaboration between government institutions and stronger partnerships with the private sector, its operationalisation has not been fully completed for several reasons, including the overall difficult situation of the country.

A new NSF in being prepared under the lead of the Directorate General for VET in cooperation with UNICEF, ILO, GIZ and IECD, which is expected to be launched in early 2023. The ETF is also involved in this process. An extensive consultation process is taking place to ensure that this new framework addresses the real needs and identifies the key priorities. The primary focus will be on providing adequate education and TVET learning to the whole society, in order to contribute to a skilled labour force and entrepreneurs who can give a boost to the economy. Overall, the new NSF will provide guidelines for the immediate issues at hand and forecasts for the next five years. The framework starts from the short-term needs, such as the need of solar panels in all the TVET schools to ensure electricity on a permanent basis, as a pre-condition to allow schools to open.

VET governance and financing arrangements

The education system, including VET, is governed by the MEHE. A number of bodies work under the auspices of the Ministry: The Directorate General of Education, the Directorate General of Higher Education and the Directorate General of Vocational and Technical Education (DGVTE). The public VET training providers do not have any autonomy and depend fully on DGVTE management decisions. At the same time, large numbers of private training providers (covering around 60% of the training offer) have management and funding independence, providing they use the state examination system and comply with DGVTE quality-control measures.

In addition, the Ministries of Social Affairs, Agriculture and Labour and other government agencies are responsible for vocational training provision for unemployed people and other specific target groups, especially Syrian refugees. The main institution offering adult education and continuing training courses is the National Employment Office (NEO), which was still not functional in 2022 due to the limited resources available. The Chambers of Commerce also offer training courses through their own centres. As a result of all the recent crises, including the ongoing Syrian situation, there has been a proliferation of service providers offering private accelerated training.

The main challenge for Lebanon remains the lack of clear governance in the country, which has an impact on the governance of VET and financing arrangements. The decision-making system is closely linked to the established balance of powers between religious groups at all levels of the system. Therefore, while society and the business community could move more swiftly and respond to the changing socioeconomic environment, government structures remain slow and, in some cases, paralysed. These circumstances, as well as the past and current crises and challenges faced by the country, also influence education reforms and the education system.

Qualifications, validation and recognition

At national level, there are no new developments with respect to qualifications and recognition of prior learning (RPL) systems, as there has not been any progress in developing the national qualifications framework. Lebanon plans a comprehensive eight-level national qualifications framework (NQF), covering all types of education and training. The latest developments to report were in 2019, when the Minister of Education and Higher Education adopted Decision 374/M/2019 on the VET component of the framework, applying to levels 1 to 6 of the planned full LNQF (ETF, 2021). Nevertheless, this legislation does not apply to the general qualifications framework.

Quality and quality assurance

Currently, quality assurance in VET is primarily oriented to conducting accreditation of providers against criteria largely relating to school infrastructure and the like, rather than being aimed at improving provision and qualifications. The new National Strategic Framework for TVET (NSF) currently under preparation does, though, call for a more holistic QA system.

Competency-based approaches to assessment are not systemically used and final assessments are mainly theoretical in content.

Additionally, quality assurance systems are not developed for online learning or certifications for distance learning, digital or e-learning modalities (EDPU, 2022). There are neither an official accreditation system nor accredited centres to deliver distance learning, all of which hinders the further integration of quality assurance mechanisms for TVET programmes, especially for the existing blended TVET programmes and courses.

A recent report published by ILO in 2021 on 'Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Lebanon' analysed the different quality mechanisms pursued by the DGVTE, Ministry of Agriculture and non-formal TVET providers. While Lebanon is still lacking a functional quality assurance system, the report proposes two scenarios for developing such system:

1. a top-down approach led by MEHE and DGVTE, which focuses on establishing a Quality Assurance Working group, engaging main stakeholders such as the Ministries of Agriculture, Labour, and Social Affairs, to develop the Quality Assurance framework along with relevant standards.
2. a bottom-up approach led by TVET schools and institutes who have an interest in Quality Assurance mechanisms that could establish a QA network and set internal quality standards in line with international best practices.

Work-based learning arrangements

Work-based learning (WBL) in Lebanon falls under the TVET sector and combines classroom-based learning with work-based learning. Unfortunately, Lebanon (excluding the Vocational Secondary Certificate (LP) – dual system) lacks structured WBL schemes that can be applied at national level.

Like for Lebanon's broader VET system, there are numerous challenges associated with apprenticeship. It is difficult to keep teachers updated on new technological developments in their fields. Companies lack qualified trainers who can create links between theoretical education offered in VET schools and practical training provided by firms. These two key components of the apprenticeship system create serious gaps in the training provided. Another important challenge is the relatively low cost of employing foreign workers in Lebanese companies, which leads employers to prefer and hire foreigners over Lebanese workers, thereby diminishing the offer for WBL placements. Furthermore, the growing intensity of the current economic crisis is putting pressure on students to look for better opportunities outside Lebanon. Students entering the labour market are not motivated by the low wages available and the reduced job opportunities, thus emigration is perceived as the best option for a decent life.

Digital education and skills

The shift to distance learning triggered by the Covid crisis brought about many challenges impacting learners, caregivers, and teachers, and strongly relied on the digital skills of end users. Distance learning was not widespread in Lebanon prior to Covid, and the sudden transition was difficult for many, especially as the country grappled with the economic crisis. Most children consulted (71%) reported that the transition to distance learning was difficult (Lebanon Education Sector, 2021).

In Lebanon, digital education depends mostly on i) access to remote tools and technology, ii) connectivity and electricity, and iii) availability of online content that enables online remote learning. Additionally, capacity and skills gaps in using available online platforms and devices make access to and use of online tools even more complex, requiring careful strategic planning. Therefore, improving access to online remote learning has become a critical factor for acquiring digital skills and, at the same time, reducing learning losses.

The Distance Learning Plan 2021 recognises the importance of enhancing the digital literacy skills of both students and teachers to find, evaluate, create and communicate information, and aims at encouraging digital citizenship among both students and teachers. However, some challenges hinder the effective implementation of this plan, mainly due to the current evolving socio-economic situation.

According to a study conducted by the Economic Development Policy Unit in 2022 (EDPU, Blended TVET & Distance Learning Lebanon Assessment, 2022), the lack of ICT infrastructure for blended physical and digital learning was made worse by the lack of electricity and internet shortages, increasing the exclusion of learners from low-income and refugee families. The sometimes-difficult access to modern technologies and internet connectivity affected not only students, but also teachers. For teachers, the study further observed that the commitment and motivation to adopt innovative digital learning methods has significantly dropped, firstly due to limited personal resources, and secondly due to the increased work obligations, alongside with the growing expectation to leave the country all together for better opportunities abroad.

Statistics on education and training

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) has its own information system that collects data from schools for the purpose of publishing the official exams and to have more up-to-date information on the number of students in school. The Centre for Educational Research and Development (CERD) also has its own education management information system and publishes annual statistics on students, schools and teachers. Such statistics include information on enrolment in different initial and continuing education programmes (by gender) in both public and private schools, accounting for regional distribution, number of teachers across the same factors, and their qualifications. Each entity had its own information system, before the information management system was unified in 2021. This will be put in practice for the academic year 2022-2023. It will help in improving the quality of data collected and produced and should allow for further analysis within the sector.

For TVET, CERD collects information as part of the same education management information system. The data collected refers to the number of schools and their geographic spread, number of students by region, school, and gender, and the number of teachers by age, school, gender, and qualifications. There are no statistics or systems put in place for graduate tracking in education and training. There are no systematic school-to-work transition surveys being conducted. This makes it difficult to assess whether programmes are effective in improving the employability of graduates. The main challenges in developing and implementing these surveys lie in the limited resources of the ministry, be it financial or human resources. The economic crisis added to the burden, making it even more difficult to employ additional human resources to carry out such surveys.

Recently ILO conducted a study on the tracking of graduates (ILO AICS-Supported Skills Training Programme, 2022), which was based on a previously implemented skills training programme over the course of one year to improve accessibility to labour markets for Lebanese and refugee graduates. A total of 1 436 students were enrolled in the programme, and a tracer study was conducted two years later to evaluate it, assessing the degree of relevance between the skills learnt and jobs obtained, the employment and income trajectory and any rising challenges. The study published in 2022 indicated that more than half of the interviewed respondents did not find work since they graduated at the end of 2020, citing the economic crisis as the main challenge (fewer job opportunities, low wages, etc.). This number is even higher among female graduates due to personal reasons such as marriage or pregnancy.

Based on the need to have more data for evidence-based policy-making and programme planning, the ILO has joined forces with UNICEF to support the Directorate General of Technical and Vocational Education (DGVTE) to develop its own Education Management Information System (EMIS) to collect consistent information on TVET schools, students, teachers, administration, and for the purposes of tracking the provision of lessons and students' attendance, providing certificates and publishing educational statistics and reports. According to news released in May 2022, the system has been piloted in the first phase with 35 public technical schools, while the second phase will focus on scaling up and expansion to implement it nationwide.

3. LABOUR MARKET AND EMPLOYMENT

3.1 Trends and challenges

Labour market characteristics

Weak job creation and low-quality jobs remain the main factors driving persistent poverty and the lack of inclusive economic growth. The labour market in 2022 is characterised by increased skills gaps, lack of interest in the jobs on offer due to low wages and poor working conditions, limited capacity for investment, which in turn translates into lower capacity for growth (UNICEF, ILO, 2022).

Prior to the crisis, agriculture, industry, and construction were considered the main catalysts for job creation (Government of Lebanon, 2017). SMEs in these sectors represent more than 90% of registered firms and employ 50% of the working population yet contribute to approximately 27% of total revenues.

However, the current crisis has led to reduced growth in these sectors, construction being the most affected as it represents the highest share of vulnerable employment (ILO, CAS 2022), followed by the trade sector. SMEs are faced with considerable obstacles arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, the collapse of the banking sector, the LBP/USD exchange rate and soaring energy costs. An increasing number of businesses are having difficulties in paying their clients due to the complicated economic situation; as banks are levying high interest rates on deposits, clients aim to deposit their money by using it in their businesses or starting a new business (ETF, 2021).Yet the crisis and government measures during COVID-19 pandemic catalysed the growth of Information Communication & Technology (ICT) and e-commerce, with a positive spill over effect into digital businesses and the green economy (ILO, UNICEF 2022).

In 2021, the Government launched a **modest economic package** to try to offset the impact of the new shock on the population, which included: (i) an emergency Social Safety Net targeted at 200 000 poor households approved by the Cabinet in late February 2021; (ii) a request from the Ministry of Public Health to increase its budget by about 10% in order to pay for the estimated USD 40-60 million in additional health costs for the treatment of affected patients; (iii) the request from the Government to the banks to reschedule loans to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) at low interest rates (ETF, 2021).

Labour market and employment challenges in general

The Lebanese labour market is primarily characterised by low labour-market participation, underutilisation of labour, high rates of informality and low employment rates, particularly among women; it also suffers from the pressure of refugees and the lack of integration into the labour market of people with a migrant background.

The emigration and immigration of workers has also had a significant impact on the labour market, especially in terms of brain drain. Large numbers of young and well-educated people have left the country, resulting in a relative scarcity of skills and in a need to hire foreign workers to fill the gap. Many refugee workers accept lower wages (even below the Lebanese minimum wage) and less favourable working conditions in order to gain employment. While this practice may provide a short-term solution for meeting the demand for labour, it may also potentially lead to longer-term problems related to the future supply of qualified Lebanese workers and encourage the expansion of low-productivity economic activities in the country.

A report published by the American University of Beirut (AUB) Crisis Observatory in 2020 concluded that Lebanon was entering a third mass exodus wave of emigration. There are three internal indicators in this regard: the high chances of emigration among Lebanese youth, as 77% of them indicated that they think about emigrating and seek it; the massive emigration of specialists and professionals working in the health and educational sectors; and the anticipation that the crisis in the country is going to be a prolonged one. It seems that the number of Lebanese leaving the country increased from 17 721 in 2020 to 79 134 in 2021 (Information International, 2022), representing a 446% increase between 2020 and 2021 alone, and indicating the high likelihood of more Lebanese youth leaving for better perceived opportunities abroad and running away from the pressure of the economic crises.

Employment

According to the Labour Force and Household Living Conditions Survey (LFHLCS) from 2018/19, 63.4% of men and only 25.1% of women were in employment. Employment was concentrated mainly in the service sector (76%), followed by industry (20.0%) and agriculture (4%). However, the follow-up to the labour force survey conducted in 2022 revealed that the labour force participation rate was 66.2% among men and 22.2% among women. Trade (both wholesale and retail) still accounts for the largest share of employment (20% of total employment), with public administration and defence in second place (around 10%-12%), followed by manufacturing (around 10%-12%) (ILO, CAS, 2022). The share of employment in the informal sector increased by 13.1 percentage points to reach 48.3% in 2022 (ILO, CAS, 2022). The construction sector had the highest rate of informality (84%), followed by hospitality (69.2%) and real-estate, business and administration (66.1%) (ILO, UNICEF, 2022).

In terms of geographical distribution of employment opportunities, although investments by donors and international organisations have helped in creating jobs in rural and other regions, and in developing a start-up ecosystem in Beirut, the number of jobs created is still not sufficient. As the Lebanese economy does not generate enough high-skilled jobs to absorb university graduates, higher education has not led to better labour-market outcomes.

As mentioned above, the crisis and government measures during the COVID-19 pandemic have catalysed growth in Information Communication & Technology (ICT) and e-commerce, with a positive spill over effect into digital businesses and the green economy (ILO, UNICEF 2022). Still, the overall digital readiness of the business sector and society remains low and strongly jeopardised by basic problems such as electricity and internet connection.

Unemployment

According to the 2022 Labour Force and Household Living Conditions Survey (LFHLCS), the overall unemployment rate rose from 11.4% in 2018 to 29.6% in 2022, indicating that almost one third of the population is unemployed. The youth unemployment rate increased from 23.3% in 2018 to 47.8% in 2022, while the female unemployment rate stood at 32.7% (CAS, ILO 2022). Considering time-related underemployment and the size of the potential labour force, including discouragement from searching for jobs, the survey revealed that 29.4% of the extended youth labour force were in various forms of labour underutilisation. In 2022, the highest rates of labour underutilisation were experienced among the youth population (15-24 years) (64.2%) and women (57.1%) (CAS, ILO 2022).

Unemployment and high levels of informal labour were serious problems even before the crisis. Already in 2012, the World Bank was suggesting that the Lebanese economy would need to create six times as many jobs just to absorb the regular market entrants. Unemployment is particularly high in some of the country's poorest localities – nearly double the national average in some, which puts considerable strain on host communities. According to public opinion, the biggest threat is not the COVID-19 pandemic, but the hunger, poverty and desperation caused by the country's economic collapse. Considering this, properly implementing the Lebanese Crisis Response Plan 2021-22 has become a high priority. Further statistics from the LFHLCS revealed that informal sector employment increased by 13.1 percentage points, from 35.2% in 2018-2019 to 48.3% in January 2022.

Statistics on and labour market and employment

The Labour Force and Household Living Conditions Survey (LFHLCS) was implemented between 2018 and 2019 as a one-off exercise, but a follow-up survey was conducted in January 2022. However, there are no indications currently that this will become a regular exercise.

There is still no labour-market information system in Lebanon, nor is there a clear plan to develop one. The country also does not regularly collect administrative data on registered unemployed people and does not implement active labour market programmes on a regular basis. All of this hinders systematic data collection and the analysis of labour-market trends. Most of the existing surveys and analyses are performed with the financial support of donors and are not repeated over time. The Ministry of Labour and the National Employment Office – in cooperation with the ETF and a dedicated Task Force – worked for more than 3 years on designing and implementing a national employers' survey aimed at better understanding the demand for workers. This survey has ended its third pilot phase and is now in the process of integration within the job platform of the Ministry of Labour. If endorsed as a regular and national exercise, it could become a key national tool instrumental in identifying and analysing vacancies and skills needs within companies.

Overall, the system lacks the instruments needed to gain an understanding of the problems associated with the transition from education to work. Guidance Employment Offices (GEOs) have been established within selected VET schools since 2014 and submit monitoring reports to the DGVTE every 6 months, including data on the number of jobs acquired by VET graduates and links to the private sector, as well as recommendations for improving the workflow process of the offices. Over the years, the network has expanded from 8 to 23 GEO offices and in October 2022, 33 new GEOs have been nominated by the Minister of Education and Higher Education thanks to the noteworthy efforts of the DGVTE and its staff. With such support from DGVTE, there is a potential for scaling up nationally. However, in view of the current situation, some of the previously trained GEO officers have left and a process has been launched to appoint replacements and train both existing and newly appointed GEO officers to build their skills. Great hope is placed in the growing focus on Career Guidance both at national level and by the international community, which is for the first time joining efforts with the ETF and the national authorities to come up with a common orientation package starting from the primary schools onwards.

Poverty

According to more recent estimates by the World Bank that include the impact of the COVID-19 shock, poverty was expected to rise from 30% in 2019 to 45% or more of the population by the end of 2020, while extreme poverty was forecast to more than double to 22%. The economic implications for the 1.5 million Syrian refugees have not been estimated. Another study conducted by ESCWA in 2021 stated that multidimensional poverty increased from 41% in 2019 to 82% in 2021 (ESCWA, 2022). This has further led to a rising number of people deprived of access to healthcare, medicine, employment, education and housing. To date, no effective government-led plans have been put in action to alleviate poverty; only donor-funded projects providing multi-purpose cash assistance to the refugee and host population have been implemented (ESCWA, 2022).

While the economic crisis had mainly affected the tradable sectors, the COVID-19 crisis extended the shock to non-tradable sectors as well, due to the collapse in tourism, catering and transport. While there was partial recovery of such sectors in the following year, the Ukrainian war has further exacerbated the situation in depleting wheat reserves of the country, sporadically increasing the price of fuel and threatening food security (UN News, 2022). According to a recent statement by the UN Resident Coordinator in June 2022, around 2.2 million Lebanese require support in accessing food and other basic needs, a 46% increase from 2021, while around 1.95 million require support in accessing healthcare services, a 43% increase from August 2021 (UN News, 2022). The Labour Force survey (ILO, 2022) also indicates a high increase in unemployment (29.6%), with youth unemployment standing at 47.8% (ILO, 2022). The situation is so dire that it will likely lead to a new social explosion, especially in the poorest areas, such as Tripoli and Bekaa.

3.2 Employment policy and institutional settings

Strategy and legal framework in the employment policy field

Despite a clear need, Lebanon still has no specific employment strategy or action plan. The last three Ministers for Labour had started a process of reforms aimed at bringing Lebanon's labour-related regulations and institutions into the 21st century, e.g., by updating the labour code, which dates to 1946, reforming the Kafala sponsorship system for migrant workers, regulating foreign workers in Lebanon, especially Syrians, and reforming the National Social Security Fund. However, the many recent changes in government were not conducive to a concrete follow-up of the reforms initiated in 2019 by the Ministry of Labour.

Lebanon's employment institutional framework is fragmented. Various institutions are in charge, but they have limited coordination mechanisms and limited resources to fulfil their mandates. The Ministry of Labour is responsible for labour-related legislation and policies, including employment conditions, labour relations and labour inspection. The Ministry has been planning since early 2017 to upgrade its capacities by engaging new staff. This process is still on hold because of the continuous changes in government over the last 3 years and the overall critical situation.

Passive labour-market and social-protection policies are still underdeveloped. The current national social-security system provided by the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) covers only around half of the Lebanese labour force. However, due to the current economic crises, the NSSF received a significant blow as its savings lost most of their value due to the currency devaluation and can no longer cover medical bills for more than 10% of their original value (Lebanon News, 2022). Prior to the crisis, the NSSF's savings accounted for USD 8 billion and currently stand below USD 450 million, representing a decrease in value of more than 95%, which also impacted employee pension plans and savings.

Initiatives to increase the capacity of the public employment services

Following years of cooperation of the National Employment Office (NEO) with the Ministry of Labour and the dedicated Task Force for the preparation of the national employers' survey, in 2021, NEO actively contributed to revising and piloting the employers' survey in cooperation with the ETF, showing a great level of dedication to improving the situation. This great effort was slowed down in 2022, as the NEO office lacks basic infrastructure (e.g. no generator is available during scheduled power cuts) to enable its staff to work properly.

Other types of ALMPs, such as employment mediation, career counselling and guidance, employment stimulation and entrepreneurship incentives, are still fragmented and often linked to individual projects. Another government institution involved in the provision of training related to ALMPs is the National Vocational Training Centre (NVTC), which operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Social Affairs. In 2019, the NVTC began to provide continuous vocational training courses (under the form of 'accelerated vocational training') in a more systematic way. However, all such initiatives have been put on hold given the multiple economic crises and the inability of the public sector to function in the context of reduced wages, high transportation costs and political instability. Thus, little effort has been placed on relaunching NVTC activities that would require additional resources from the government.

In addition, private employment agencies are increasingly gaining ground in Lebanon, mainly offering services to migrant workers coming to work in Lebanon. Some attempts have been made to regulate these agencies, especially those dealing with domestic workers, but Lebanon has not yet ratified ILO Convention 181 on Private Employment Agencies (dated 1997) or Convention 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers (dated 2011).

One recent initiative of the Ministry of Labour relates to launching a website for job matching in Lebanon. The website, launched in February 2022, targets job seekers in Lebanon by allowing them to register their profiles and upload their CVs on the website, whilst also searching through the vacancies posted by companies on the website. Two months after the launch, more than 1000

Lebanese job seekers and 100 companies were registered on platform (MOL, 2022). However, no statistics or follow-up reports have been published since. Nevertheless, on 10 October 2022, the Minister of Labour launched another digital platform for jobs open to Lebanese citizens abroad. It was launched in view of the World Cup in Qatar and allows Qatari companies to post temporary and permanent jobs for Lebanese in the country.

Donor support to the employment policy field

Given the current situation in the country, the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2021 is still the overarching programme in all sectors in need. The plan underwent an update in 2022 to include further actions on labour market and employment, falling under the Livelihood sector. It is a joint, multi-year plan between the Government of Lebanon and international and national partners. It aims to respond to challenges in a holistic manner with a medium-term, multi-year planning through the delivery of integrated and mutually reinforcing humanitarian and stabilisation interventions. It includes both short-term and long-term actions to stimulate local economic development and market systems to create income-generating opportunities and employment. It operates on two levels: supporting businesses in key economic sectors by creating short-term income opportunities for the most vulnerable and working with private sector and governmental institutions to have a more favourable environment for job creation. Creating short-term opportunities will be achieved through technical and soft skills training based on new labour market needs, and by providing work-based learning and career guidance for women and men seeking jobs. In the longer term, cooperation with be strengthened with the Ministry of Labour to strengthen labour inspection capacity and provide decent working conditions within Lebanese-owned enterprises. In 2022, the beneficiaries included 242 755 vulnerable Lebanese, Syrians and Palestinians, with donor support amounting to USD 333 million, with 64 partners involved in different projects and initiatives. Amongst the key activities planned, the target is to create 40 000 short-term employment opportunities, 50% of which would be for displaced Syrians and Palestinians, with 15 000 individuals to be supported with training to increase their employability. The plan will also target 26 000 individuals with career guidance, job matching and work-based learning opportunities. The focus will be on new entrants to the market, in particular women and girls. In 2021, out of the 2 000 individuals planned to benefit from internship, on-the-job training or apprenticeship programmes, 3 572 eventually took advantage of this opportunity, as well as 1 207 of the 2 000 jobseekers intending to start their own business.

Initiatives to boost employment

In addition to the Updated Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2022, the Government has been working on a rescue plan to reduce the impact of the crisis, within the overall reform plan proposed in the context of the IMF deal.

KEY DONOR PROJECTS IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

European Union funded and implemented by GIZ, VTE4all, EUR 4 350 000, 3 years. This new project will build on the ProVTE experience in designing and delivering competence-based training by aiming to enhance the capacities of vulnerable individuals in Lebanon to pursue pathways to a decent livelihood through improved access to quality TVET. Its main objective is to increase the employability prospects of vulnerable Lebanese, as well as Syrian and Palestinian refugees.

Multi-donors with 56 partners, Lebanese Crisis Response Plan, appeal of USD 182 million, 5 years. This is the overarching programme in all sectors in need, including education. It is a joint, multi-year plan between the Government of Lebanon and international and national partners. It aims at responding to challenges in a holistic manner, with medium-term, multi-year planning, through the delivery of integrated and mutually reinforcing humanitarian and stabilisation interventions. In 2022, the plan was updated to target 740 908 people of which 399 711 are vulnerable Lebanese, 301 211 displaced Syrians, 4 845 Palestinian refugees from Syria, and 35 141 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The focus is on increasing equitable access and participation in education for all learners, improving the learning outcomes for children and youth in terms of improving quality of education services, as well as the governance of the education system to manage resources more effectively.

Global Fund for Education in Emergencies, ECW- Multi-Year Resilience Programme (MYRP) Lebanon, USD 12 million, 3 years starting 2022. Viewed as a bridge between the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan and the Sector Plan, the MYRP tackles the different vulnerabilities of children and adolescents that impact their learning. The focus is on stabilising the sector and strengthening it to ensure that all girls, boys and adolescents have access to and participate in the education and learning processes. The programme aims at being gender responsive and protective, whilst ensuring that crisis-affected girls and boys have better learning outcomes. On a macro-level, the programme will work on mobilising resources efficiently to scale implementation and ensure effectiveness.

EU Regional Trust Fund (Madad Fund), HOPES-LEB (Higher and Further Education Opportunities and Perspectives for Syrians and vulnerable youth in Lebanon), EUR 8.4 million, 3.5 years starting 2020. The project, implemented by DAAD, focuses on improving livelihoods of vulnerable youth (Lebanese and refugees) through scholarships for university students, as well as providing training and capacity-building funds for local organisations to equip youth for a better labour market integration, alongside access to regional alumni networks to improve their job prospects.

Embassy of Kingdom of The Netherlands, Enhancing Youth Employment in the 21st Century Digital Economy, 2022. Implemented jointly with UNICEF, the World Bank and Forward Mena, the project focuses on building the capacities of youth in the digital economy. The project will train 5 000 youths on digital marketing and literacy, supported by guidance to link them to jobs after completion of the courses.

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STATISTICAL ANNEX – LEBANON

The Annex includes annual data from 2010, 2015, 2019, 2020 and 2021 or the last available year.

	Indicator		2010	2015	2019	2020	2021
1	Total Population (in millions) (1)		4 953.1	6 532.7	6 855.7	6 825.4	6 769.2
2	Relative size of youth population (age group 15-24 and denominator age 15-64, %) (1) C		28.8	27.7	25.9	25.4	24.7
3	GDP growth rate (%)		8.0	0.5	-6.9	-25.9	-10.5
4	Gross value added by sector (%)	Agriculture	3.9	3.3	3.2	M.D.	M.D.
		Industry	13.8	15.7	12.5	M.D.	M.D.
		Services	71.9	73.8	79.3	M.D.	M.D.
5	Public expenditure on education (as % of GDP)		1.6	2.1	2.6	M.D.	M.D.
6	Public expenditure on education (as % of total public expenditure)		5.5	6.3	8.1	9.9	M.D.
7	Adult Literacy (%) C		M.D.	M.D.	95.1(3)	M.D.	M.D.
8	Educational attainment of total population (aged 15+) (%) (2)	Low	M.D.	M.D.	52.8(6)	M.D.	M.D.
		Medium	M.D.	M.D.	19.9(6)	M.D.	M.D.
		High	M.D.	M.D.	26.8(6)	M.D.	M.D.
9	Early leavers from education and training (aged 18-24) (%)	Total	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
10	NET enrolment rates in secondary education (ISCED level 2-3) (%)		M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
11	Share of VET students in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)		27.4	26.2	26.2	28.0	27.6
12	Low achievement in reading, mathematics and science – PISA (%)	Reading	N.A.	70.4	67.8(3)	N.A.	N.A.
		Mathematics	N.A.	60.2	59.8(3)	N.A.	N.A.
		Science	N.A.	62.6	62.3(3)	N.A.	N.A.
13	Activity rate (aged 15+) (%)	Total	M.D.	M.D.	48.8(6)	M.D.	43.4(4)
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	70.4(6)	M.D.	66.2(4)
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	29.3(6)	M.D.	22.2(4)
14	Inactivity rate (aged 15+) (%) c	Total	M.D.	M.D.	51.2(6)	M.D.	56.6(4)
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	29.6(6)	M.D.	33.8(4)

	Indicator		2010	2015	2019	2020	2021
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	70.7(6)	M.D.	77.8(4)
15	Employment rate (aged 15+) (%)	Total	M.D.	M.D.	43.3(6)	42.3(1)	30.6(4)
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	63.4(6)	M.D.	47.4(4)
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	25.1(6)	M.D.	15.0(4)
16	Employment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%) (2) c	Low	M.D.	M.D.	41.5(6)	M.D.	M.D.
		Medium	M.D.	M.D.	36.5(6)	M.D.	M.D.
		High	M.D.	M.D.	52.0(6)	M.D.	M.D.
17	Employment by sector (%) c	Agriculture	M.D.	M.D.	3.6(6)	M.D.	4.1(4)
		Industry	M.D.	M.D.	20.5(6)	M.D.	21.9(4)
		Services	M.D.	M.D.	75.8(6)	M.D.	73.8(4)
18	Incidence of self-employment (%) c	M.D.	M.D.	29.1(6)	M.D.	25.5(4)	
19	Incidence of vulnerable employment (%) c	M.D.	M.D.	20.1(6)	M.D.	19.2(4)	
20	Unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%)	Total	M.D.	M.D.	11.4(6)	6.6(1)	29.6(4)
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	10.0(6)	M.D.	28.4(4)
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	14.0(6)	M.D.	32.7(4)
21	Unemployment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%) (5)	Low (ISCED 0-1)	M.D.	M.D.	5.0(6)	M.D.	M.D.
		Low (ISCED 2)	M.D.	M.D.	9.6(6)	M.D.	M.D.
		Medium	M.D.	M.D.	12.4(6)	M.D.	M.D.
		High	M.D.	M.D.	14.5(6)	M.D.	M.D.
22	Unemployment rate (aged 15-24) (%)	Total	M.D.	M.D.	23.3(6)	M.D.	47.8(4)
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	24.5(6)	M.D.	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	21.4(6)	M.D.	M.D.
23	Proportion of people aged 15–24 not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (%)	Total	M.D.	M.D.	22.0(6)	M.D.	29.1(4)
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	16.7(6)	M.D.	26.1(4)
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	26.8(6)	M.D.	32.1(4)
24	Participation in training/lifelong learning (% aged 25-64)	Total	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.

	Indicator		2010	2015	2019	2020	2021
25	Human Development Index	0.766	0.744	0.744	M.D.	M.D.	

Last update: 5/10/2022

Sources:
Indicators 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11: The World Bank, World Development Indicators database
Indicators 7, 10, 11: UNESCO, Institute for Statistics
Indicators 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23: in 2018 CAS in cooperation with ILO (LFSLCS), 2022: CAS/ILO LFS 2022
Indicators 8, 16, 21: ILOSTAT
Indicator 12 - OECD PISA 2018 Results (Volume I) Annex B1
Indicators 15 (2020), 20 (2020), 22 (2020): ILO modelled estimates
Indicator 25 – UNDP

Notes:
(1) Estimation.
(2) Low = Basic (ILOSTAT) + Less than basic (ILOSTAT), Medium (ILOSTAT), High (ILOSTAT).
(3) Applies to 2018.
(4) Applies to 2022.
(5) Low (ISCED 0-1): Less than basic (ILOSTAT), Low (ISCED 2): Basic (ILOSTAT), Medium (ILOSTAT), Advanced (ILOSTAT).
(6) Data refers to the period April 2018-March 2019.

Legend:
C= ETF calculations
N.A. = Not Applicable
M.D. = Missing Data

ANNEX: DEFINITIONS OF INDICATORS

	Description	Definition
1	Total population ('000)	The total population is estimated as the number of people having their usual residence in a country on 1 January of the respective year. When information on the usually resident population is not available, countries may report legal or registered residents.
2	Relative size of youth population (age group 15–24) (%)	This is the ratio of the youth population (aged 15–24) to the working-age population, usually aged 15–64 (or 15–74 or 15+).
3	GDP growth rate (%)	Annual percentage growth rate of GDP at market prices based on constant local currency. Aggregates are based on constant 2010 U.S. dollars. GDP is the sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or for depletion and degradation of natural resources.
4	Gross value added by sector (%)	The share of value added from Agriculture, Industry and Services.
		Agriculture corresponds to ISIC divisions 1–5 and includes forestry, hunting, and fishing, as well as cultivation of crops and livestock production. Value added is the net output of a sector after adding up all outputs and subtracting intermediate inputs. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or depletion and degradation of natural resources. The origin of value added is determined by the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC), revision 3 or 4.
		Industry corresponds to the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) tabulation categories C-F (revision 3) or tabulation categories B-F (revision 4) and includes mining and quarrying (including oil production), manufacturing, construction, and public utilities (electricity, gas, and water).
		Services correspond to ISIC divisions 50-99 and they include value added in wholesale and retail trade (including hotels and restaurants), transport, and government, financial, professional, and personal services such as education, health care, and real estate services. Also included are imputed bank service charges, import duties, and any statistical discrepancies noted by national compilers as well as discrepancies arising from rescaling.
5	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 (transfer to private households and enterprises). Both types of transactions together are reported as total public expenditure on education.
6	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 (transfer to private households and enterprises). Both types of transactions together are reported as total public expenditure on education.

	Description	Definition
7	Adult literacy (%)	Adult literacy is the percentage of the population aged 15 years and over who can both read and write a short simple statement on his/her everyday life, and understand it. Generally, 'literacy' also encompasses 'numeracy' – the ability to make simple arithmetic calculations.
8	Educational attainment of total population (aged 15+) (%)	Educational attainment refers to the highest educational level achieved by individuals expressed as a percentage of all persons in that age group.
		This is usually measured in terms of the highest educational programme successfully completed, which is typically certified by a recognised qualification. Recognised intermediate qualifications are classified at a lower level than the programme itself.
9	Early leavers from education and training (aged 18-24) (%)	Early leavers from education and training are defined as 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 survey. Lower secondary education refers to ISCED 1997 levels 0–2 and 3C short (i.e. programmes lasting under two years) for data up to 2013 and to ISCED 2011 levels 0–2 for data from 2014 onwards.
10	NET enrolment rates in secondary education (ISCED level 2-3) (%)	This indicator covers the enrolments in a in a given level of education of children/youths belonging to the official age group corresponding to the given level of education.
11	Share of VET students in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)	Total number of students enrolled in vocational programmes at a given level of education (in this case, upper secondary), expressed as a percentage of the total number of students enrolled in all programmes (vocational and general) at that level.
12	Low achievement in reading, maths and science – PISA (%)	Low achievers are the 15-year-olds who are failing to reach level 2 on the PISA scale for reading, mathematics and science.
13	Activity rate (aged 15+) (%)	The activity rate is calculated by dividing the active population by the population of the same age group. The active population (also called 'labour force') is defined as the sum of employed and unemployed people. The inactive population consists of all people who are classified as neither employed nor unemployed.
14	Inactivity rate (aged 15+) (%) c	The inactivity/out of the labour force rate is calculated by dividing the inactive population by the population of the same age group. The inactive population consists of all people who are classified as neither employed nor unemployed.
15	Employment rate (aged 15+) (%)	The employment rate is calculated by dividing the number of employed people by the population of the same age group. Employed people are all people who worked at least one hour for pay or profit during the reference period or were temporarily absent from such work. If a different age group is used, this should be indicated.
16	Employment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%)	The employment rate is calculated by dividing the number of employed persons by the population of the same age group. Employed persons are all persons who worked at least one hour for pay or profit during the reference period or were temporarily absent from such work. If a different age group is used, this should be indicated.
		Educational levels refer to the highest educational level successfully completed. Three levels are considered: Low (ISCED level 0–2), Medium (ISCED level 3–4) and High (ISCED 1997 level 5–6, and ISCED 2011 level 5–8).
17	Employment by sector (%)	This indicator provides information on the relative importance of different economic activities with regard to employment. Data are presented by broad branches of economic activity (i.e. Agriculture/Industry/Services) based on the

	Description	Definition
		International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC). In Europe, the NACE classification is consistent with ISIC.
18	Incidence of self-employment (%)	The incidence of self-employment is expressed by the self-employed (i.e. employers + own-account workers + contributing family workers) as a proportion of the total employed.
19	Incidence of vulnerable employment (%)	The incidence of vulnerable employment is expressed by the own-account workers and contributing family workers as a proportion of the total employed.
20	Unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%)	The unemployment rate represents unemployed people as a percentage of the labour force. The labour force is the total number of people who are employed or unemployed. Unemployed people comprise those aged 15–64 or 15+ who were without work during the reference week; are currently available for work (were available for paid employment or self-employment before the end of the two weeks following the reference week); are actively seeking work, i.e. had taken specific steps in the four-week period ending with the reference week to seek paid employment or self-employment, or had found a job to start later (within a period of, at most, three months).
21	Unemployment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%)	The unemployment rate represents unemployed people as a percentage of the labour force. The labour force is the total number of people who are employed or unemployed. Unemployed people comprise those aged 15–64 or 15+ who were without work during the reference week; are currently available for work (were available for paid employment or self-employment before the end of the two weeks following the reference week); are actively seeking work (had taken specific steps in the four-week period ending with the reference week to seek paid employment or self-employment, or had found a job to start later (within a period of, at most, three months)). Educational levels refer to the highest educational level successfully completed. Three levels are considered: low (ISCED level 0–2), medium (ISCED level 3–4) and high (ISCED 1997 level 5–6, and ISCED 2011 level 5–8).
22	Unemployment rate (aged 15-24) (%)	The unemployment rate represents unemployed people as a percentage of the labour force. The labour force is the total number of people who are employed or unemployed. Unemployed people comprise those aged 15–24 who were without work during the reference week; are currently available for work (were available for paid employment or self-employment before the end of the two weeks following the reference week); are actively seeking work, i.e. had taken specific steps in the four-week period ending with the reference week to seek paid employment or self-employment, or had found a job to start later (within a period of, at most, three months).
23	Proportion of people aged 15–24 not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (%)	The indicator provides information on young people aged 15–24 who meet the following two conditions: first, they are not employed (i.e. unemployed or inactive according to the ILO definition); and second, they have not received any education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey. Data are expressed as a percentage of the total population of the same age group and gender, excluding the respondents who have not answered the question on participation in education and training.
24	Participation in training/lifelong learning (% aged 25-64)	Participants in lifelong learning refers to persons aged 25–64 who stated that they received education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey (numerator). The denominator is the total population of the same age group, excluding those who did not answer the question on participation in education and training. The information collected relates to all education or training, whether or not it is relevant to the respondent's current or possible future job. If a different reference period is used, this should be indicated.
25	Human Development Index	The index is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and have a decent standard of living.

ABBREVIATIONS

ALMP	Active Labour Market Policies
AUB	American University of Beirut
CAS	Central Administration of Statistics
CERD	Center for Education Research and Development
CVA	Cash and Voucher Assistance
DGTVET	Directorate General of Technical and Vocational Education
ERP	Emergency Response Plan
ETF	European Training Foundation.
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
GEO	Guidance and Employment Office
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LCRP	Lebanon Crisis Response Plan
LFHLCS	Labour Force and Household Living Conditions Survey
LNQF	Lebanese National Qualifications Framework
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
NEO	National Employment Office
NSSF	National Social Security Fund
NSF	National Strategic Framework

NVTC	National Vocational Training Center
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
QA	Quality Assurance
SAB	School Advisory Board
SMEB	Survival and Minimum Expenditure Basket
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

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