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KEY POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

LEBANON

THE EU AGENCY SUPPORTING COUNTRIES TO DEVELOP THROUGH LEARNING

2024

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the last 5 years, Lebanon has endured acute crises including the recent conflict between Hezbollah and Israel, the refugee crisis and the economic depression, which have exacerbated the country's long-lasting political instability and have hampered its development. In addition, to the economic impact of the Ukraine crisis – wheat shortages and global increases in commodity prices – the government had to face the ongoing economic and financial crises. Secondly, it had to continue negotiations with the IMF on the implementation of a set of reforms in the banking and energy sectors, for which little measures have been taken so far. This has been a major impediment that has continued to fuel tension in the country. The real issue is that the current President's term ended on 31 October 2022, and despite all efforts over the years, no candidates have been found so far. However, towards the end of 2024, Lebanon's parliament appears to be on the verge of voting for the country's next president after a two-year void.

Lebanon's political instability has deepened amid the ongoing conflict between Hezbollah and Israel, which began the 8th of October 2023 following Hezbollah's alignment with Hamas in Gaza. The situation escalated dramatically in late September 2024 with Israel's ground invasion of southern Lebanon, exacerbating Lebanon's political paralysis. The violence displaced tens of thousands and further weakened the country's already fragile socioeconomic framework. Although a ceasefire was declared on November 27, 2024, tensions persist, with continued Israeli aggressions, particularly in the southern regions, highlighting the precariousness of the current situation.

Moreover, Lebanon is facing its most devastating socio-economic crisis in recent history. Since October 2019, when the crisis began, the Lebanese pound has lost over 98% of its value, leading to inflation of 209% in September 2023, thought it eased to 33% by September 2024. 23% of the population (1.26 million people) faced acute food insecurity between April and September 2024, with malnutrition among Lebanese children that has doubled to 14%, reaching 19% among Syrian children (LRP Update, December 2024).

Micronutrient deficiencies are a significant issue in Lebanon, affecting half of the children under five years old and three-quarters of adolescent girls and women. The situation is dire, with one in three children living in severe child food poverty, a figure that has increased by 30% since 2021. Food insecurity is widespread, impacting 85% of Syrians, 54% of Lebanese, and 41% of Palestinians. Additionally, 35% of children aged 0-23 months suffer from developmental deficiencies, with severe child food poverty and stunting being the primary drivers (LRP, Update December 2024).

Refugee populations, particularly those from Syria and Palestine, are facing significant challenges too. The increased demand on public services, coupled with perceptions of unequal access to financial aid, has strained relations with Lebanese host communities. Refugee children are at high risk of exploitation and abuse, exacerbated by their limited access to education and essential services. These social tensions have, at times, escalated into localized conflicts, further destabilizing the affected communities, with Lebanese that are increasingly concerned about competition for services.

Lebanon's economy comprises 90% Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) (Central Bank, 2023). The escalation of hostilities impacted MSMEs in loss of assets, disruption of markets and supply chains, although in "displacement destination areas" businesses, especially consumption related, were thriving. The conflict has caused significant economic damage, estimated at USD 5.1 billion over a year, mostly impacting the sectors of commerce (for the closure of the Lebanese Syrian border), tourism, hospitality, and agriculture. The damage estimated in 2024 on the basic sectors are the following: Tourism and Hospitality: USD20M, Health: USD75M, Agriculture: USD125M, Commerce: USD180M, Environment: USD221M, and Housing: USD2.8Bi. (LRP Update, December 2024).

The conflict has severely disrupted economic activity, cutting projected GDP growth for 2024 by at least 6.6%. Real GDP is now expected to contract by 5.7% compared to an anticipated 0.9% growth without the conflict.

Overall, agriculture and livestock are expected to see a 6.25% reduction, while the energy and water sector faces the largest decline at 24.5%, severely affecting utility supply. Industries may contract by 3.87%, and construction output could shrink by 1.2%. The transport and communications sector anticipates a 12.04% drop, highlighting major disruptions, while merchant services are projected to decline by 8.06%. Trade is expected to suffer a sharp 21.18% decrease due to logistical challenges and border closures. Lastly, public administration may experience a minor reduction of 0.95%. Moreover, exports are expected to decrease by 9.84%, mainly due to physical infrastructure damage and trade restrictions. Imports could decline by 10.87%, reflecting weakened domestic demand and challenges in accessing global markets (UNDP, Economic and Social Consequences of the Escalating Hostilities in Lebanon, October 2024).

Unemployment is around 30%, with youth unemployment almost 50%. There's a significant skills mismatch, and the formal sector has contracted, while the informal sector has grown, lacking job security and benefits.

The Lebanese health sector has been severely impacted by the ongoing crisis. Hospitals and primary health care centers face a range of challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, systemic issues, power shortages, insufficient medical supplies, and the exodus of healthcare workers. Many facilities are functioning at limited capacity, leaving a significant portion of the population unable to access even basic healthcare services. In addition, mental health services are particularly underdeveloped, with a growing number of children and adults facing untreated conditions such as anxiety, PTSD, and depression.

The ongoing conflict with Israel has also aggravated Lebanon's educational crisis, particularly in regions affected by Israeli aggression (southern and northeast). The conflict disrupted the 2024/2025 academic year, forcing public schools to delay their start from mid-September to November 4. Private schools were given the flexibility to decide whether to begin on schedule or delay, as well as to choose between in-person or online classes (ERICC, 2024a). For Lebanese children, the second shift will start later on January 7th. Approximately 46,000 children remained out of school due to the government's decision not to allow children without proper registration papers to access school.

The 2024-2025 school year in public schools restarted on 4 November 2024 for morning shifts serving mainly Lebanese children, with 276,940 students registered as of 11 December 2024. More than 805 public schools that were not damaged during the conflict and are in demilitarised areas have re-opened for in person learning. The registration in afternoon shifts for non-Lebanese students was launched on 25 November 2024 with around 60,000 children registered as of 11 December 2024. Afternoon shift classes are planned to start on 16 December 2024.

From January to September 2024, the Education Sector Appeal amounted to USD 283.8 M, while up to September the amount received is only of USD 56.1 M, with a carryover from 2023 of USD 84.2 M. The 2024 ERP and LCRP Education sector response strategies are developed under the umbrella of the MEHE’s plan, which aims to assist all children to complete basic education and have equitable access to secondary education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and higher education.

Following the International Conference in Support of Lebanon’s People and Sovereignty held on 24 October 2024 in Paris, the French Government announced an estimated USD 800 million in humanitarian aid pledges for Lebanon. The mechanisms and channels for implementing these pledges are currently under review, as the humanitarian community works closely with the Lebanese government to streamline bilateral contributions and ensure transparency and accountability in the humanitarian response.

Also, IOM has launched an appeal for USD 32.4 million to cover the most urgent needs between now and December 2024, including essential relief, winterization support, healthcare, shelter, protection, psychosocial support, and displacement tracking. It is part of a larger USD 426 million UN appeal, launched on the 1 October 2024 to respond to the needs by the end of the year.

1. KEY POLITICAL, DEMOGRAPHIC, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Political developments

Over the last 5 years, Lebanon has endured acute crises including the refugee crisis and the economic depression, which have exacerbated the country's long-lasting political instability and have hampered its development. In addition, to the economic impact of the Ukraine crisis – wheat shortages and global increases in commodity prices – the government had to face the ongoing economic and financial crises. Secondly, it had to continue negotiations with the IMF on the implementation of a set of reforms in the banking and energy sectors, for which little measures have been taken so far. This has been a major impediment that has continued to fuel tension in the country. The real issue is that the current President's term ended on 31 October 2022, and despite all efforts over the years, no candidates have been found so far. However, towards the end of 2024, Lebanon's parliament appears to be on the verge of voting for the country's next president after a two-year void.

The current government has taken on a caretaker role, with limited responsibilities, which shows once more that the crisis is widening and spreading its impact through all levels of Lebanese society and its economy. The failing governance model is also discouraging local and international businesses from investing in the country. The combination of these factors is slowly destroying the country's social and institutional infrastructure. The impact is clearly visible in public institutions, where civil servants work only 3 days a week, or completely abstain from going to work, or even leave public service altogether. This can be observed by simply visiting a public institution. However, despite these difficulties, the private sector is growing, especially in services and the hospitality industry.

Lebanon's political instability has deepened amid the ongoing conflict between Hezbollah and Israel, which began the 8th of October 2023 following Hezbollah's alignment with Hamas in Gaza. The situation escalated dramatically in late September 2024 with Israel's ground invasion of southern Lebanon, exacerbating Lebanon's political paralysis. The violence displaced tens of thousands and further weakened the country's already fragile socioeconomic framework. Although a ceasefire was declared on 27 November 2024, tensions persist, with continued Israeli aggressions, particularly in the southern regions, highlighting the precariousness of the current situation.

Demographics

Primary data on the demographic and systemic vulnerabilities among the Lebanese and migrant population remains limited, despite efforts to enhance data collection and analysis. Lebanon's total estimated population increased from 4.953 million in 2010 to 5.592 million in 2021, before declining slightly to 5.489 million in 2022, and further declining to 5.353,9 million in 2023.

The ongoing conflict between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon has had profound demographic impacts. According to UNHCR, as of end November 2024, 3,961 people in Lebanon have been reported dead, 16,520 injured, and over 1.3 million people displaced of which 899,725 Lebanese and Syrian people have been internally displaced in Lebanon (Source: IOM/DTM round 65). Since October 2023 and up until 29 November 2024 UNHCR had identified over 105,000 refugees who are secondarily displaced, including over 90,000 since 23 September 2024 only, 99% being Syrian. Over 562,000 people are estimated to have crossed from Lebanon to Syria since the escalation of hostilities, with around 63% Syrians and 37% Lebanese nationals. (Given the current situation, the above figures are subject to change).

Lebanon continues to undergo a demographic transition, characterised by a sharp reduction in fertility rates and a significant increase in life expectancy. The relative size of the 15–24-year-olds age group

decreased from 28.8% in 2010 to 24.7% in 2021 but increased to 26.6% in 2022 and remained somehow stable to 26.5% in 2023. Lebanon's age-distribution profile lays between regional averages and those of more developed regions, with fewer children and a larger elderly population compared to nearby countries.

Population growth driven by net migration has significantly exceeded natural growth, as Lebanon hosts the largest number of refugees per capita globally (1 out of every 8 person is a refugee). Among these, there are 1.5 million Syrian refugees in the country, with 950,000 registered with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR 2023). As of March 2023, the total number of UNRWA-registered Palestinian refugees in Lebanon was 489,292, living in 12 camps and 156 gatherings. However, it is important to highlight that discrepancies exist between data retrieved from UN agencies and private NGOs and data from local government. Limited resources to track internal refugee movements, together with the large number of unregistered refugees among the population, which are not accounted for in any studies, contribute to these data discrepancies.

The conflict poses further strains to an already complex situation both in terms of implications for the country's demographic and systemic vulnerabilities and in terms of data collection, management and analysis to inform interventions and policy decisions.

Key economic developments

Lebanon is facing its most devastating socio-economic crisis in recent history. Since October 2019, when the crisis began, the Lebanese pound has lost over 98% of its value, leading to inflation of 209% in September 2023, thought it eased to 33% by September 2024. The Monetary Poverty is more than tripled in ten years, from 12% in 2012 to 44% of the total population in 2022. These figures became more severe as the Government removed all subsidies in 2023. To this end, 23% of the population (1.26 million people) faced acute food insecurity between April and September 2024, with malnutrition among children that has doubled to 14% nationally, reaching 19% among Syrian children (LRP Update, December 2024).

Moreover, the unemployment rate reached 29.6% in 2022 (last available data), 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 July 2022, the country was downgraded to a lower-middle-income country for the first time in 25 years. The crisis has been characterised by a near collapse of the banking sector and a brutal contraction of GDP. The conflict's escalation is expected to deepen GDP contraction, disrupt consumption and investment, and challenge recovery prospects.

Lebanon's economy comprises 90% MSMEs (Central Bank). The escalation of hostilities impacted MSMEs in loss of assets, disruption of markets and supply chains, although in "displacement destination areas" businesses, especially consumption related, were thriving. The damage estimated in 2024 on the basic sectors are Tourism and Hospitality: USD20M, Health: USD75M, Agriculture: USD125M, Commerce: USD180M, Environment: USD221M, and Housing: USD2.8Bi. (LRP Update, December 2024).

A Rapid assessment conducted in October 2024 by the World Bank states that out of the 713 displaced MSMEs displaced, almost half declared that they temporarily closed, and they have plans to resume operations after the war, while 22% said they had their businesses completely shut down. Around 45% of businesses are in services and 29% in commercial activities, 21% in food processing and 4% in agriculture.

The private sector is heavily constrained by the current situation and unable to move forward. The rising costs of basic requirements for energy, fuel and human resources have a big impact.

The previous government had issued a financial recovery plan in response to the economic situation. However, the plan faced major pushbacks throughout these years, so it has not been properly implemented yet. Government negotiations with the IMF resumed in January 2022, but no real achievements can be reported so far (IMF, 2022). The caretaker government is still unable to implement tangible reforms, thus leaving the Lebanese economy in a situation of massive and unprecedented uncertainty.

The total damage caused by the conflict since October 2023 is estimated by the World Bank at USD 3.4 billion, 82 % of which is in the housing sector. Losses between October 2023 and October 2024 are estimated at USD 5.1 billion, 77 % of which is in commerce, agriculture, and tourism and hospitality. Other estimates of total damage ranged from USD 2 billion (UNDP) to USD 13 billion (Independent Task Force for Lebanon).

The conflict has caused significant economic damage, estimated at USD 5.1 billion over a year, mostly impacting the sectors of commerce (for the closure of the Lebanese Syrian border), tourism, hospitality, and agriculture. The conflict has severely disrupted economic activity, cutting projected GDP growth for 2024 by at least 6.6%. Real GDP is now expected to contract by 5.7% compared to an anticipated 0.9% growth without the conflict. Private consumption, which accounted for 134% of GDP in 2023, has sharply declined due to widespread displacement and destruction. These economic shocks exacerbate Lebanon's ongoing financial crisis, which began in 2019 and has already caused a 34% contraction in GDP, equivalent to 15 years of lost growth (WB, 2024).

In the current scenario, even if the ceasefire is respected, the economic consequences of this conflict will persist for years to come, prolonging the economic downturn. According to the latest UNDP's report (2024), compared to a no-war scenario, the GDP is likely to contract by 2.28% in 2025 and 2.43% in 2026. Private consumption is projected to decrease by 3.6% in 2025 and 2.8% in 2026, reflecting reduced incomes and uncertainty. Exports are anticipated to decline by 1.25% in 2025 and 1.39% in 2026, while imports are likely to fall by 3.07% and 2.74%, respectively. Private consumption is projected to decrease by 3.6% in 2025 and 2.8% in 2026, because of reduced incomes and uncertainty.

Key social issues

Lebanon's ongoing economic and financial crisis continues to put a significant burden on the population. The depreciation of the Lebanese pound has diminished the purchasing power, pushing households to adopt negative coping mechanisms such as child labour and early marriage. About a third of the displaced population are children, with 400,000 children that have been out of school and therefore at risk of school drop-out. The economic crisis has also exacerbated school dropouts, particularly among girls, further increasing their vulnerabilities. Limited access to education undermines long-term prospects for children, trapping them in cycles of poverty and exploitation.

Child exploitation, including its worst forms, was already an issue in 20222, with boys (6.8%) more affected than girls (1.9). In terms of regional distribution, the Northern regions and Akkar witnessed the highest child labour rate of all the regions, reaching 6.1% and 6% respectively (UNICEF, 2022). Early marriage rates have also risen significantly particularly among Syrian refugee girls, with an increase from 20.4% in 2021 to 21.9% in 2022, with girls as young as 12-13 years of age (Child Protection Working Group 2023).

Refugee populations, particularly those from Syria and Palestine, are facing significant challenges. The increased demand on public services, coupled with perceptions of unequal access to financial aid, has strained relations with Lebanese host communities. Refugee children, in particular, are at high risk of exploitation and abuse, exacerbated by their limited access to education and essential services. These social tensions have, at times, escalated into localized conflicts, further destabilizing the affected communities, with Lebanese that are increasingly concerned about competition for services.

The Lebanese health sector has been severely impacted by the ongoing crisis. Hospitals face a range of challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, systemic issues, power shortages, insufficient medical supplies, and the exodus of healthcare workers. These problems, compounded by instances of violence against healthcare staff, have greatly compromised hospital operations. Many facilities are functioning at limited capacity, leaving a significant portion of the population unable to access even basic healthcare services. Essential medicines and vaccines are prohibitively expensive for most Lebanese families, deepening health inequities. Basically, the health system's heavy reliance on the private sector makes Lebanon's healthcare one of the most expensive globally. In addition, mental health services are particularly underdeveloped, with a growing number of children and adults facing untreated conditions such as anxiety, PTSD, and depression.

The recent escalation of the conflict with Israel has only intensified all these challenges. The displacement and destruction caused by the conflict have further strained Lebanon's already overstretched resources. Public buildings, including schools, have been repurposed as shelters for internally displaced persons, disrupting education and increasing pressure on limited services.

This combination of economic hardship, social tensions, and systemic collapse paints a dire picture of Lebanon's social landscape

2. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

2.1 Trends and challenges

Education and training in Lebanon – encompassing strategy, expenditure, access, attendance, and NEETs rates – have been severely impacted by multiple crises including COVID-19 pandemic, the devastating Beirut explosions of August 2020, the high numbers of refugees from Syria, the political deadlock, and the ongoing economic crisis combined with the recent conflict. These challenges have significantly affected the wellbeing of school-aged children in Lebanon, with many of the most vulnerable deprived of their right to education and are at a higher risk of exploitation and abuse.

Before the conflict with Israel, more than 10% of the 1.2 million Lebanese children did not have access to education, mainly due to households' economic vulnerabilities, the situation is even worse for Syrian children (no data available). Moreover, teachers' strikes, caused by low salaries and the high costs of fuel and transportation, had largely contributed to the disruption of learning for a third consecutive academic year. A 2023 study from the Centre for Lebanese Studies reported that since 2016, students attending public schools has lost 765 school days.

Even when schools were functioning, the lack of transport and safety issues were often reported as barriers to attending school, especially for girls, further hindering the attendance, exacerbating the learning crisis, and deepening the educational disparities between advantaged or elite students and vulnerable students (ERICC, 2024a).

The ongoing conflict with Israel has further exacerbated Lebanon's educational crisis, particularly in regions affected by Israeli aggression (southern and northeast). The 2024-2025 school year in public schools restarted on 4 November 2024 for morning shifts serving only Lebanese children and only for those children with registration papers, with 276,940 students registered as of 11 December 2024. The registration in afternoon shifts for non-Lebanese students was launched on 25 November 2024 with around 60,000 children registered as of 11 December 2024. Afternoon shift classes are planned to start on 16 December 2024. For Lebanese children, the second shift will start later on 7 January 2025. Approximately 46,000 children remained out of school due to the government's decision not to allow children without proper registration papers to access school.

The new academic year for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) public schools started on 4 November 2024 for all nationalities.

Overall, issues such as violence, displacement, and insufficient infrastructure hindered the 2024-2025 start of the school year process. In addition to that, the refusal of the government to grant Syrian children without papers access to school further impacted the already fragile schooling system.

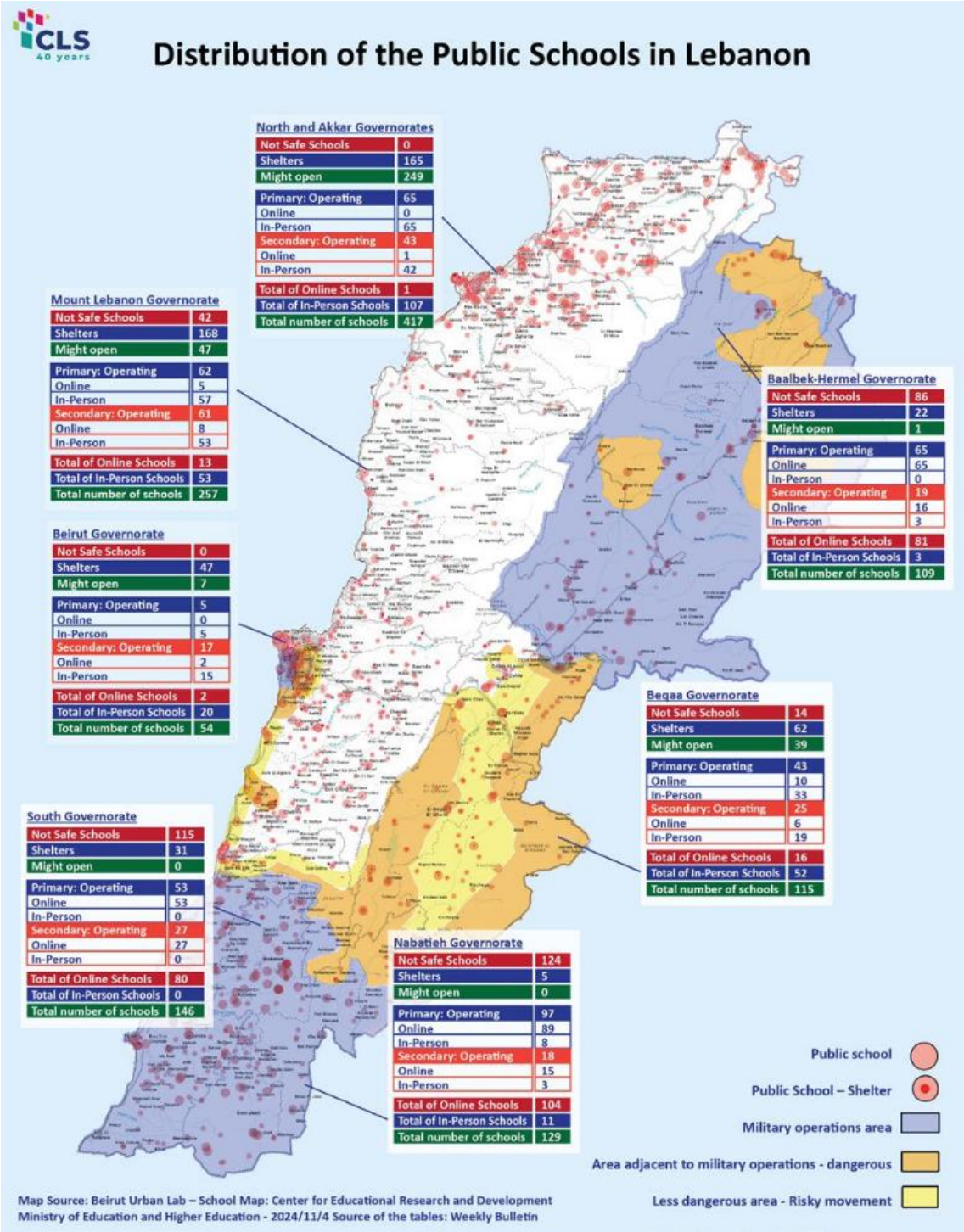
By July 2024, the violence had already closed approximately 72 schools, including 34 first-shift public schools, 8 second-shift public schools serving Syrian refugees, 8 Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutes, and 22 private schools, affecting around 20,000 children (Save the Children, 2024). The ground invasion in southern Lebanon in late September 2024 worsened this already dire situation. As of September 25, 2024, about 600 educational facilities across the country were repurposed as shelters, accommodating a growing number of displaced individuals (ERICC, 2024a). According to public school data published in MEHE's weekly bulletin on 28/10-4/11/2024, in Lebanon 1.118 shelters were identified, 505 were public schools (about 40%), 70 public TVET institutions, and 19 public higher education institutions. Furthermore, 30% of public schools were in war zones, severely impacting spaces for schooling (Shuayb, M. et all, 2024).

On a positive note, between November and December 2024, more than 886 public schools have resumed learning activities through two main modalities: 352 schools with entirely online learning and 534 schools open for in-person classes, including 139 schools operating in shelters with designated

floors allocated for classrooms. However, in heavily affected areas like Baalbek-Hermel, the South, and Nabatiyeh, very few schools managed to open their doors for physical attendance (Shuayb, M. et al, 2024). According to media news, in December 2024, more than 805 public schools that were not damaged during the conflict and are in demilitarised areas have re-opened for in person learning.

Private schools were given the flexibility to decide whether to begin on schedule or delay, as well as to choose between in-person or online classes (ERICC, 2024a).

The map below shows the distribution and the situations of public schools in Lebanon as of November 2024.



Source: https://content.educ.cam.ac.uk/news/2412-Lebanon

The key needs in education remain the ones identified at the beginning of the year:

- Continue to identify and prepare schools, teachers and students to ensure re-opening of public schools for all.
- Support for alternative, blended learning models to implement in-person and remote learning where needed.
- Safe, child-friendly spaces and routine psychosocial support to address increased stress and anxiety affecting their learning and development.

Education strategy and legal framework for education

The Education sector in Lebanon is working towards: i) Increased equitable and inclusive access to, participation in, and completion of safe and protective education for all learners in Lebanon, with a focus on the most vulnerable children and their caregivers; ii) Improved learning outcomes for children and youth through enhanced quality of formal and non-formal education services that are safe, protective, adapted, and inclusive for multi-crisis situations; and iii) Enhanced governance, managerial and knowledge management capacities of the education system and all education stakeholders to deliver high-level results relying on evidence-based decision-making.

In 2021, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) developed a 5-year General Education Plan 2021-2025 to address critical education needs for children in crisis contexts. The plan focuses on vulnerable children, independently from their nationality, ensuring they have access to inclusive and high-quality learning, whilst also further building the skills they need for the future (ERICC, 2024b). It also provides a commitment to keep schools open for all children, including the most vulnerable. The five-year plan also aims to strengthen resilience, so that crisis situations can be managed effectively. It is difficult to assess the implementation of the plan, as one of the deficiencies in 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.

The 2024 ERP and LCRP Education sector response strategies are developed under the umbrella of the MEHE's plan, which aims to assist all children to complete basic education and have equitable access to secondary education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and higher education.

For the schools' registration processes, the Minister of Education and Higher Education has announced in October new regulations regarding the registration process for students, effective from 17 October 2024, in preparation for the academic year that has started on 4 November 2024. Regarding the registration for Displaced Students, the decision covers the registration of public-school students displaced to shelters, as well as students from safe areas and private school students affected by closures due to the ongoing situation. For Vocational and Technical Education, the Directorate General of Vocational and Technical Education has announced an electronic registration mechanism.

Education expenditure

Public expenditure on the general education sector has witnessed a notable decline, with the percentage of GDP allocated to general education sector falling from 2.6% in 2019 to 1.7% in 2020 (last available data). This decrease is largely attributed to the impact of the school closures.

From January to September 2024, the Education Sector Appeal amounts to USD 283.8 million, while up to September the amount received is only of USD 56.1 million, with a carryover from 2023 of USD 84.2 million.

The anticipated influx of money from donors into the country to support educational developments, if commitments are confirmed, could be substantial. However, the effective implementation of the Education Action Plan is essential to ensure meaningful progresses. Without proper implementation, the risk of fragmented and uncoordinated interventions remains high. Lebanon's education system relies heavily on international aid with limited accountability for spending. Failure to implement the plan could lead to another cycle of teachers' strikes and bring the already fragile education system to a halt again.

Lebanon's education system consists of both private and state schools, with private schools charging tuition and state schools offering free education. In recent years, there has been a substantial shift from private to state education, with over 45,000 students transferring due to financial constraints faced by families unable to afford private tuition, raising concerns about equitable access. Before the crisis, only 30% of Lebanese students were enrolled in state schools; this figure went up to 36.5% during the 2020-2021 academic year. As of 2021, the distribution of educational resources remained inequitable. High-income groups benefitted disproportionately from state contributions to private education, receiving 64% of aid, while low-income families received only 16%, exacerbating disparities in access to quality education (CLS, 2023).

The conflict has further worsened the financial strains of both parents and teachers, with 77% of parents and 66% of teachers reporting loss of income due to the aggression, and 95% of parents and 89% of teachers reporting an increase in households' expenditures due to displacement (Shuayb, M. et al, 2024). A parent survey conducted in August 2024 indicated that the average costs for private education was USD 3,964 per child for this academic year (2024-2025), compared to USD 3,620 and USD 2,355 for the past two academic years, respectively (Hammoud & Brun, 2024). This situation will further exacerbate the ability to support children's education, access, participation and early school leaving.

In addition to internal migration, the state education system in 2024 had also to accommodate: 674,976 Syrian refugee children out of which 261,171 were reached; 50,754 Palestine Refugees in Lebanon, out of which 37,582 were reached; 6,303 Palestinian refugees from Siria, which seems all have been reached; plus 10.551 migrants, out of which 4,074 were reached (Lebanon Education Sector: At a Glance, October 2024). Over the last 6 years, the system has had to expand significantly its capacity to address all these challenges. This significant increment in students' numbers has placed immense pressure on already strained state schools, which operate with insufficient budgets and require significant restructuring.

MEHE has launched the Education in Emergency Costed Response Plan response, with the goal to ensure learning continuity for all children, youth and students, affected by the conflict. The 2024-2025 school year in public schools restarted on 4th November 2024 for morning shifts serving mainly Lebanese children, with 253,000 students already registered.

More than 886 public schools have resumed learning activities through two main modalities: 352 schools with entirely online learning and 534 schools open for in-person classes, including 139 schools operating in shelters with designated floors allocated for classrooms. The registration in shifts for non-Lebanese students was launched on 25 November 2024. As IDPs return to their communities following the ceasefire, schools used as shelters are planned to gradually become operational for in-person classes.

Out-of-School Rates amount to 27% of children out of school in 2023/24, with a likely increase in 2024/25. This is also because many learning centres need to relocate to safe spaces to continue learning and 40% of all shelters were public schools. This latter implies the crucial need for flexible and alternative learning options for displaced children in formal and non-formal education.

A study from 2023 shows that despite Lebanon's historical reputation for producing a highly educated, multilingual workforce, educational outcomes have sharply declined. While early primary enrolment

remains high at over 95%, more than 40% of Lebanese children drop out before completing Grade 9, and only one-third complete 12 years of general education. Socio-economic inequality further amplifies these issues: 80% of secondary school graduates come from high-income families. Among Syrian refugee children, enrolment rates are below 30%, and fewer than 4% progress beyond Grade 9 (Shuayb, 2024).

Another critical challenge concerns teachers' retention due to very low salaries compare the cost of life. This situation has exacerbated the public education sector's challenges, including poor infrastructure, declining education quality, and limited-service delivery. As mentioned above, strikes, driven by the vicious cycle of stagnant wages and rising living costs, have continued to disrupt the sector which has been further and severely disrupted by the conflict with Israel.

As regards TVET, figures provided directly by the DGVTE show that in the 2022-2023 academic year (latest available data), 68,599 students were enrolled in the public sector (63,260 Lebanese, 4,219 Syrians and 1,120 other nationalities), while 41,101 students were enrolled in the private sector (37,551 Lebanese, 1,453 Syrians and 2 097 other nationalities). The enrolment in TVET had increased in the last couple of years in both the private and public sectors, and there are currently 160 public TVET schools around the country, managed by the Directorate General for Vocational Education and Training (DGVTE). Still, up to November 2024 only 30,000 students were registered in the public TVET schools.

PISA results

Lebanon's latest participation in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) was in 2022. The overall finding from PISA 2022 were published in December 2023. However, for Lebanon results have not been released in any official OECD reports yet.

The official results published from PISA 2018 (OECD 2019) undertaken in Lebanon, indicated that schools perform poorly, and that Lebanon was one of the lowest ranked countries, with more than two-thirds of the students not reaching basic literacy. 67.8% of students performed poorly in reading, 59.8% performed poorly in mathematics, and 62.2% of students performed poorly in science. Challenging socio-economic circumstances exacerbate underachievement in PISA tests, impacting students' overall performance at school.

The multiple crises facing the country have led to a significant increase in student dropout rates and low enrolment figures, adversely affecting students' academic performance. There is an urgent need to evaluate teaching methods and propose new ways of learning, update curricula and introduce more rigorous monitoring of teacher performance. CERD, the national monitoring body responsible for the continuous training of teachers, will need to play a crucial role in this regard.

A clear divide persists between students from high-income families and their less-privileged peers, with the former consistently outperforming the latter. These disparities are compounded by resource constraints in public schools, inadequate teacher training, and reliance on outdated curricula.

Furthermore, the gender gap in reading favours girls, consistent with global trends, but differences in mathematics and science scores are minor. However, PISA confirms that broader social and economic pressures disproportionately affect girls, contributing to higher dropout rates and reduced opportunities for further education.

Despite this learning loss that Lebanon registers, before the conflict, Lebanon had also made marginal progress compared to previous assessments. For instance, in reading, scores improved by 22 points while in science scores improved by 12 points since 2018, potentially reflecting targeted interventions or resilience in the face of systemic disruptions.

It is important to highlight that while this report uses data from the PISA assessment, the analysis and conclusions drawn may be influenced by local educational policies and frameworks. The report

includes contextual factors relevant to Lebanon but may not adhere strictly to the same analytical frameworks used in the OECD report.

It is highly probable that ongoing and prolonged disruptions resulting from the conflict - namely school closures, access issues, teacher shortages, training gaps, psychosocial impacts of the conflict on teachers and students, curriculum interruptions - will adversely affect the upcoming PISA results.

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

Youth unemployment and NEET (Not in Employment, Education, or Training) rates in Lebanon highlight the severe challenges young people face in accessing education and securing employment, a situation further worsened by the ongoing conflict.

The youth unemployment rate increased to 47.8% from 23.3% in 2019. According to the available data, 29.6% of unemployed young people had been seeking employment for over 2 years while 19.2% had been searching for one for 1 to 2 years (ILO, CAS 2022). Moreover, the percentage of young people (15-29) categorised as NEET was 15.1% in 2019 increasing to 36.0% in 2022 (last available data), with young women disproportionately affected (43.3% compared to 28.9% for young men).

The opportunities for young people to find employment have become increasingly scarce. Intense competition over low-paid or informal sector jobs has further raised vulnerability for Lebanese youth, who often face limited access to these opportunities due to socio-economic constraints and systemic barriers. In contrast, foreign-background youth, including refugees, frequently opt out of education early to support their families financially, reflecting a lack of confidence in the Lebanese education system's value. This is exacerbated by the general tendency (supported in some cases by the legal rules on jobs for refugees) of low-skilled jobs being offered only to foreigners and not to Lebanese people.

The ongoing conflict has further destabilised an already fragile labour market. Displacement and destruction have disrupted livelihoods, while diminished access to education due to school closures or repurposed facilities has pushed more young people into the NEET category. The protracted crisis has also reduced job creation, particularly in formal sectors, perpetuating reliance on precarious, low-paid, or informal work.

Challenges and step forwards in resuming education after the conflict

According to report on *A Rapid Study of Parents' and Teachers' Readiness for School Amidst Israeli Attacks on Lebanon (*Shuayb et al., 2024), in the wake of the ongoing conflict in Lebanon, the challenges of resuming education have become increasingly complex. Teachers in affected areas lean towards online learning due to safety concerns, while parents advocate for in-person education, emphasising its social and developmental benefits. However, many families lack essential resources for online learning, such as reliable internet, electricity, and digital devices, which hampers their ability to adapt. Children with disabilities face additional hurdles, with only a quarter of parents believing their children are ready to return to school. Moreover, Syrian and Palestinian refugee children experience further exclusion and under prioritisation in educational planning, compounding the difficulties faced by these vulnerable groups. The situation highlights the urgent need for comprehensive support to facilitate educational continuity amidst the turmoil.

As of the 25 November 2024, the Directorate General of Education together with the Centre of Research & Development (CERD), provided the first session of digital learning webinars for public school teachers, with 12,000 teachers attending the session.

Following the ceasefire declared on 27 November 2024, schools previously used as shelters are set to reopen on 2 December 2024 pending infrastructure assessments. Online learning will continue in affected areas for the 2024/2025 academic year. Public school, high school, and vocational school enrolment will remain open until 23 December 2024. Syrian students are required to present a valid

Lebanese residency card or a UNHCR-issued ID to register. Despite the ceasefire, hostilities persist, particularly in the Bint Jbeil district (The Human Cost of the Israeli Aggression on Lebanon after the Cease-Fire – CLS, accessed on 12/12/2024).

As of November 30, 2024

Educational Institutions Number of Registered Students	Number of Registered Students
Public Schools	275,691
Public technical and Vocational Schools	30,000
Lebanese University	60,402
39,177 Public school teachers and staff registered for AY 2024-25	

Status of Schools Used as Collective Shelters across Regions

Region	Collective Shelters	Closed Collective Shelters	Remaining Collective Shelters
Beirut	46	13	33
Mount Lebanon	165	80	85
North	153	16	137
Baalbek/Hermel	21	18	3
Beqaa	62	45	17
South	34	29	5
Nabatiyeh	5	1	4
Total	486	202	284

Source: The Human Cost of the Israeli Aggression on Lebanon after the Cease-Fire – CLS

2.2 Initial VET and adult learning

Strategic and legal framework for initial VET and adult learning

In 2018, the Lebanese government launched and adopted the National Strategic Framework (NSF) for TVET 2018-2022, which has been the main policy document for TVET in recent years. While the framework represented an important step towards fostering better collaboration between government institutions and stronger partnerships with the private sector, its operationalisation encountered many challenges in these last years. Based on this first framework for TVET, a new NSF covering the timeframe 2024-2029, is being prepared led by the Directorate General for VET in cooperation with UNICEF, the ILO, GIZ and IECD. The framework was initially scheduled for launch in early 2023, but its operationalization is facing again difficulties due to the situation exacerbated by the conflict with Israel.

The ETF is also involved in the development process. An extensive consultation process took place to ensure that this new framework addresses real needs and identifies key priorities. The primary focus is on providing adequate education and TVET opportunities to the whole of society, contributing to the development of a skilled labour force and business community who can support the economic recovery. Overall, the new NSF should provide guidelines for any immediate issues and forecasts for

the next 4-5 years. The framework starts from short-term needs, such as the installation of solar panels in all TVET schools to secure a reliable electricity supply ensure that schools can be functional.

VET governance and financing arrangements

Lebanon's education system, including VET, is governed by the MEHE. A few bodies work under the auspices of MEHE's oversight: the Directorate General for Education, the Directorate General for Higher Education, and the Directorate General for Vocational and Technical Education (DGVTE). Public VET training providers lack some autonomy and depend entirely on DGVTE management decisions. In contrast, private training providers, covering around 60% of training on offer, have management and funding independence. However, they must adhere to the state examination system and comply with DGVTE quality control measures.

Other ministries and agencies also contribute to VET provision. The Ministries of Social Affairs, Agriculture and Labour and other government agencies are responsible for vocational training provisions for unemployed people and other specific target groups, especially Syrian refugees. The National Employment Office (NEO) is nominally the main institution offering adult education and continuing training courses, although its operations are severely limited due to the limited resources available. The Chambers of Commerce also offer training courses through their own centres. In response to all the recent crises, including the ongoing Syrian situation, there has been a proliferation of service providers offering private accelerated trainings.

The main challenge for Lebanon remains the lack of a clear and cohesive governance, which has an impact on VET jurisdiction and financing arrangements. The decision-making system is influenced by the complex power sharing arrangements among religious groups, which slow down or, at times, paralyse government structures. This contrasts with the society, private sector, and the business community which can move more swiftly and respond more promptly to the changing socioeconomic environment. These circumstances, as well as the past and current crises and challenges faced by the country, also have an influence on education reforms and the education system.

Qualifications, validation and recognition

In 2024, there have been no national developments regarding qualifications and recognition of prior learning (RPL) systems, since there has been little progress in developing the national qualifications framework, mostly referring to 2022 and 2023 activities. In 2022, UNICEF developed four industrial BT curricula based on the Competency-Based Training (CBT) approach, which were endorsed by the Director General. In 2023, a Training of Trainers was conducted on these four BT curricula. The focus of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) has been to encourage Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to adopt the CBT approach across various curricula development programs through different development agencies. Currently, the different agencies working with TVET on curricula development continue to adopt the CBT approach.

From a legal perspective, in 2019, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) adopted Decision 374/M/2019 on the VET component of the framework, which applies to levels 1 to 6 of the planned full Lebanese National Qualifications Framework (LNQF) (ETF, 2021). However, this legislation does not apply to the general qualifications' framework. From a policy perspective, the Lebanon Five-Year General Education Plan (2021-2025) aims to include a comprehensive eight-level NQF that covers all types of education and training.

Regarding the Syrian children (aged 3-18) living in Lebanon, MEHE has adopted various strategies to ensure that Syrian children receive formal certification and recognition for their educational achievements. Nevertheless, there are still significant opposition voices against recognizing educational achievements for Syrians, making this process challenging to achieve.

Quality and quality assurance

Currently, quality assurance in VET focuses primarily on accrediting providers against criteria largely relating to school infrastructure and the like, rather than on improving provision and qualifications. The new National Strategic Framework for TVET does, however, 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 the online learning and certification is not available for distance learning, digital or e-learning modalities (EDPU, 2022). There is neither an official accreditation system nor any 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.

The DGVTE took a significant step ahead in relation to the quality and accreditation department, appointing a new head of department in 2023 in the hope that it would establish a more functioning department and a new wave of quality and quality assurance activities in TVET.

The report published by the ILO in 2021 entitled 'Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Lebanon' analysed the different quality mechanisms pursued by the DGVTE, the Ministry of Agriculture and non-formal TVET providers. The ILO study confirmed the lack of a functional quality assurance system in Lebanon but proposed scenarios to fill this gap in QA.

To establish a robust Quality Assurance (QA) framework, it is imperative for key government organizations, including DGVTE, MOA, MOSA, NCVT, and NEO, to thoroughly review and enhance their current QA practices and licensing requirements. These organizations must set clear standards for the accreditation of both public and private providers of formal and non-formal TVET.

The accreditation criteria should, at a minimum, ensure the presence of internal quality assurance mechanisms, the implementation of competency-based learning and assessment, the provision of adequate physical resources (such as equipment and facilities), and the availability of qualified human resources (including teaching and administrative staff). Additionally, student services and the alignment of training programs with labour market needs must be prioritized.

Work-based learning arrangements

The 2022 'Livelihoods Sector' strategy emphasized the need to strengthen links between market-based skills training and work-based learning (WBL) and between WBL and business support. Consequently, a WBL guidance note was created to ensure consistency among similar initiatives (Livelihoods Sector, December 2022).

Despite international efforts, Lebanon lacks structured national WBL schemes, except for the Vocational Secondary Certificate (LP) – dual system. Challenges in Lebanon's VET system include outdated teacher knowledge and a shortage of qualified trainers to bridge theory and practice. Additionally, the low cost of foreign labour reduces WBL opportunities for Lebanese workers. The economic crisis and the conflict further pressures students to emigrate for better job prospects and wages.

An improvement in WBL is the MoU between DGVTE/MEHE and the Ministry of Industry, which provides internship opportunities and job creation potential. This MoU also supports TVET system monitoring and involves technical schools in initiatives like the food industry project in Kab Elias (NNA 2023). No update is available on the MoU implementation.

Digital education and skills

The Covid-19 crisis necessitated a sudden shift to distance learning in Lebanon, revealing significant challenges in digital access and skills for students, caregivers, and teachers. Prior to the pandemic, online learning was not common in Lebanon, and the abrupt transition was difficult, particularly amid

the economic crisis. A 2021 Lebanon Education Sector report found that 71% of children struggled with the shift to online learning, and the situation has not improved significantly since then.

Lebanon's digital education landscape is further strained by ongoing conflict, affecting access and infrastructure. Key challenges include access to technology, reliable connectivity and electricity, and availability of online content. Despite these hurdles, e-learning became essential during the pandemic, and even after due to the different strikes of teachers and the safety measures needed during the conflict, even though it is not yet accredited in Lebanon. There is a push for collaboration between educational institutions and the government to provide accreditation for online degrees, which would be beneficial for universities.

The 2021 Distance Learning Plan aimed to improve digital literacy among students and teachers, promoting skills necessary for digital citizenship. However, implementation is still hindered by socio-economic turmoil and conflict. Similarly, the 2020-2050 National Artificial Intelligence Strategy, which emphasized developing software for interactive education, has yet to be fully realized. The 2018-2030 economic vision for Lebanon to ‘become a knowledge-driven digital nation, at the forefront of innovation, acting as a talent hub for technology, outsourcing, creative industries and education’ and aimed to revamp the secondary and tertiary curriculum to incorporate technology. The vision also indicates five sectors, supported by government action in infrastructure, legislation, fiscal policy and public administration, which could make a significant contribution to Lebanon’s economic aspirations: agriculture, industry, tourism, financial services and the knowledge economy. Another aspiration of the vision was to set up an effective institutionalisation mechanism to ensure successful implementation.

A 2022 study by the Economic Development Policy Unit confirmed that inadequate ICT infrastructure, compounded by electricity supply issues and internet outages, has excluded many learners, especially those from low-income and refugee families. Both students and teachers faced difficulties accessing modern technologies and internet connectivity. The high cost of software and hardware also remains a significant barrier to online learning.

Conflict has exacerbated issues like electricity shortages, unreliable connectivity, and resource disparities, making participation in digital learning challenging, particularly for low-income and refugee students and those in conflict-affected areas.

In a positive development, a new national online learning platform, 'Forastech,' was launched in September 2023 with support from the World Bank and UNICEF. The platform aims to provide affordable digital skills training endorsed by major tech companies like Microsoft and LinkedIn.

Nevertheless, many families are still prioritizing basic survival needs over education, making comprehensive support—financial assistance, access to devices, reliable internet, and psychosocial support—crucial for addressing the educational needs of all students and teachers in Lebanon during this crisis.

Statistics on education and training

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) uses its information system to collect data from schools for publishing official exam results and maintaining current information on student numbers. The Centre for Educational Research and Development (CERD) has its own system and publishes annual statistics on students, schools, and teachers, including enrolment and teacher qualifications by gender and region. The Central Administration of Statistics (CAS) also gathers education data. These entities had separate systems until 2021, when a unified information management system was introduced, though its implementation for the 2022 and 2023 academic years was delayed due to the country's situation. No updates are available for the 2024-2025 academic year.

There are no systems to track education and training graduates. Tracer studies, though attempted by international organizations, have been ineffective since lacking the national dimension. No systematic

school-to-work transition surveys are conducted, hindering the assessment of programs aimed at improving employability due to limited Ministry resources and the economic crisis.

The ILO's 2022 study on graduate tracking from a skills training program for 1,436 Lebanese and refugee graduates revealed that over half remained unemployed, citing the economic crisis. Female graduates faced higher unemployment due to marriage or pregnancy.

To support data-driven policymaking, the ILO and UNICEF helped the Directorate General for Technical and Vocational Education (DGVTE) develop an Education Management Information System (EMIS), piloted in 35 public technical schools as of May 2022, with plans for nationwide expansion. Despite these efforts, national-level data on graduate transitions into the workforce remains unavailable.

Impact of the conflict on TVET

The ongoing conflict in Lebanon has profoundly impacted the TVET sector, compounding pre-existing challenges within the educational framework. With over 1.3 million civilians displaced and significant destruction of infrastructure, many TVET institutions have been repurposed for emergency shelter, limiting access to vocational training facilities. Formal, public TVET institutes were suspended until 4th November 2024, affecting 63,067 students (100%) who attend these institutions (Shuyab et al., 2024).

Initiatives by the ILO and UNICEF, in partnership with organizations like UNHCR, have sought to address these challenges by offering targeted training and apprenticeships to vulnerable populations, including displaced individuals and refugees. Programs emphasise skills development in sectors like agriculture, construction, and digital services to bridge the gap between local needs and labour market demands. However, systemic issues, including resource shortages and infrastructure damage, continue to hinder broader TVET accessibility and effectiveness (Strengthening Lebanon's communities amid conflict: A holistic approach to education, training, and employment | International Labour Organization, accessed 10/12/2024).

Overall, the conflict has created a precarious environment for TVET in Lebanon, threatening the future employability of a generation of youth who are unable to gain essential skills during this critical period.

3. LABOUR MARKET AND EMPLOYMENT

3.1 Trends and challenges

The labour market in Lebanon has been heavily influenced by economic crises, political instability, and social challenges, all of this exacerbated by the conflict with Israel. Lebanon's labour market in 2024, in fact, faces prolonged economic hardship, marked by high inflation, currency devaluation, and reduced purchasing power, curtailing job creation and increasing unemployment. Persistent poverty and the lack of inclusive economic growth in Lebanon are mainly driven by weak job creation and the prevalence of low-quality jobs.

The conflict is affecting all the economic sectors. Agriculture and livestock are expected to see a 6.25% reduction, while the energy and water sector faces the largest decline at 24.5%, severely affecting utility supply. Industries may contract by 3.87%, and construction output could shrink by 1.2%. The transport and communications sector anticipates a 12.04% drop, highlighting major disruptions, while merchant services are projected to decline by 8.06%. Trade is expected to suffer a sharp 21.18% decrease due to logistical challenges and border closures. Lastly, public administration may experience a minor reduction of 0.95%. Moreover, exports are expected to decrease by 9.84%, mainly due to physical infrastructure damage and trade restrictions. Imports could decline by 10.87%, reflecting weakened domestic demand and challenges in accessing global markets (UNDP, Economic and Social Consequences of the Escalating Hostilities in Lebanon, October 2024).

The Central Bank estimates that MSMEs make up about 90% of the Lebanese economy, with two-thirds based in Beirut and Mount Lebanon. Many MSMEs have had to close or suspend operations due to shelling, economic uncertainty, displacement, security risks, and supply chain disruptions, alongside decreased demand. Damage to infrastructure, such as electricity, communications, water, roads, and drainage, further hampers business operations, reducing production capacity. Burdened by the ongoing economic and financial crisis, these MSMEs face indebtedness, inability to pay salaries, low production, downsizing, and financial failures. Consequently, rising unemployment among full-time, part-time, and daily workers is expected to impact around 1.2 million employees.

Unemployment is around 30%, with youth unemployment almost 50%. The services sector employs over 70% of the workforce, while agriculture and industry face challenges like outdated techniques and high production costs, limiting their growth and employment potential. Real incomes have declined due to wages not keeping up with inflation. Many workers face job insecurity, long hours, and inadequate safety measures, especially in the informal sector. Many Lebanese professionals have emigrated, causing a brain drain. Lebanon hosts numerous migrant workers, often in poor conditions. The influx of Syrian refugees has increased competition for jobs and strained public services.

While the government has tried to address labour market challenges, political instability and limited resources hinder effective implementation. Labour laws exist but enforcement is weak, needing stronger social dialogue.

At a practical level, some initiatives were taken in 2023 in the agriculture sector, such as one led by a group of NGOs under the ‘Basatin programme’. This is a four-year Consortium programme contributing to the recovery of small farms in difficulty and maintaining employment opportunities for vulnerable populations by providing support to farm owners (Berytech, 2023). This example, however, shows that economic growth often depends on initiatives and programmes led by INGOs and NGOs, with little or no support from the Lebanese government amid ongoing political paralysis. Until a stable government is formed, launching impactful, government-led economic initiatives remains a significant challenge.

Labour market and employment challenges in general

The Lebanese labour market is primarily characterised by low labour-market participation, underutilisation of labour, high levels of informal employment, limited opportunities for women, and pressure from a large refugee workforce.

Two assessments conducted by the Near East Foundation and Al Majmoua at the end of October 2024 confirmed that the most impacted sectors by the multiple crises and the recent conflict, were service, trade, manufacturing, agriculture, and construction. Approximately half of the businesses surveyed temporarily closed while the remaining half were equally divided among businesses still open, and others completely shut down. Many MSMEs are expected to suffer indebtedness, inability to pay salaries, low to no production, downsizing, and failure to meet financial obligations/reimburse loans.

Migration trends have also had a significant impact on the labour market, especially in terms of brain drain caused by the emigration of young and well-educated Lebanese workers, leaving gaps in skilled labour and an increasing reliance on foreign workers. Furthermore, the increasing number of Syrian refugees accepting poor working conditions has intensified the competition with the local labour force (Al Tahrir Institute, 2023).

In 2023, the Ministry of Labour increased the minimum wage to LBP 9,000.000 (USD 92) per month, a minor adjustment aimed at helping workers cope with skyrocketing living costs. The increase in dollar-denominated salaries has been significant, with nearly 75 % of wages being paid in USD by August 2024, up from just 4 percent in November 2022, according to WFP (LRP, update December 2024). This shift has played a crucial role in stabilizing prices and boosting the confidence of earners. Additionally, the government has started paying adjusted salaries in USD, further supporting this trend. However, systemic issues remained and the number of Lebanese citizens leaving the country is constantly increasing especially in this last year, due to the conflict. Many young people have continued to leave, seeking better opportunities abroad.

Employment

In Lebanon, employment opportunities are unevenly distributed geographically. Despite efforts by donors and international organisations to create jobs in rural areas and support a start-up ecosystem in Beirut, the number of jobs generated remains insufficient.

Labour force, total in Lebanon was reported at 1,924.708 in 2023, according to the World Bank collection of development indicators, compiled from officially recognized sources Lebanon Unemployment Rate.

According to the 2022 Labour Force and Household Living Conditions Survey (LFHLCS), the labour force participation rate was 66.2% among men and 22.2% among women. Trade (both wholesale and retail) still accounted 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 informal work (84%), followed by hospitality (69.2%), and real estate, business and administration (66.1%) (ILO, UNICEF, 2022).

A 2023 study by Statista in projected Lebanon's rate of employment to reach 49.59%, contingent on security and economic stability. However, the ILO-modelled estimates for the same year indicated the employment rate to be lower, respectively 41.4% (age 15+), 27.9% (age 15-24) and 45.4% (age 25+). No data are available to monitor the current situation.

To be noted is also the increase in informal employment: from 23% in 2018/2019 to 34 % in 2022/2023 (LRP, update December 2024).

Unemployment

According to UNDP, unemployment is expected to rise by 2.3 basis points (to reach 32.6 basis points at the end of 2024), reflecting significant job losses and economic displacement. This decline is mainly due to the loss of labour demand in the following sectors:

- Tourism and hospitality: The war caused widespread cancellations of hotel reservations and the collapse of tourism related businesses, leading to significant job losses in this sector (5.1%).
- Agriculture: Farmers and rural labourers lost jobs as agricultural production in war-affected areas plummeted. Many lost their livelihoods as the war destroyed farms and agricultural infrastructure (around 7%).
- Construction: Although this sector eventually saw a boom during the reconstruction phase, in the immediate aftermath of the war, many labourers and workers in construction found themselves without work as new projects were halted and ongoing ones were destroyed (3%).

The last available data from the Labour Force and Household Living Conditions Survey (LFHLCS, 2022), reported that the overall unemployment rate had increased from 11.4% in 2018 to 29.6%, indicating that almost one third of the population was unemployed (data confirmed by CAS in 2023).

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). In 2022, the highest rates of labour underutilisation were experienced youth population (15-24 years) (64.2%) and by women (57.1%). These figures underscore the severe challenges in Lebanon's labour market, particularly for young people and women, who bear the brunt of limited opportunities and systemic constraints further exacerbated by the multiple crisis and the conflict with Isreal.

Unemployment rates and high levels of informal labour were high even before the crisis, it is expected that rising unemployment among full-time, part-time, and daily workers will affect approximately 1.2 million employees in the country (UNDP, Economic and Social Consequences of the Escalating Hostilities in Lebanon, October 2024). Unemployment is particularly high in some of the country's poorest localities or in the areas affected by the war – nearly double the national average in some – which puts considerable strain on host communities. According to public opinion, the biggest threat is now the hunger, poverty and desperation caused by the country's economic collapse.

Statistics on labour market and employment

The Labour Force and Household Living Conditions Survey (LFHLCS) was conducted between 2018 and 2019, with a follow-up in January 2022, but there are no plans to make it a regular exercise.

Lebanon continues to lack a labour market information system and does not collect administrative data on registered unemployed people or implement regular active labour market programmes. This hinders systematic data collection and analysis of labour market trends, with most surveys and analyses funded by donors and 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 over three years on a national employers' survey to understand workers' demand. This survey completed its third pilot phase and was being integrated into the Ministry of Labour job platform when the crisis worsened, putting it on hold.

The system lacks tools to understand the transition from education to work. Since 2014, Guidance Employment Offices (GEOs) have been established in selected VET schools, submitting monitoring reports to the DGVTE every six months. The network expanded from 8 to 23 GEO offices, and in October 2023, 33 GEOs were nominated by the Minister of Education and Higher Education. However, scaling up has been put on hold due to schools' closure for safety measures.

Career Guidance has gained importance in general education. Thanks to a strong government demand for career guidance policy advice, the ETF started with the DG a methodological development for the introduction of career guidance in schools. There is hope that the national and international community, in collaboration with the ETF, will develop a common orientation package for career guidance starting from primary school onwards.

When it comes to migrants, a 2023 study conducted by Macrotrends revealed that the number of Lebanese people migrating from Lebanon was 24,568 per 1,000 population, making a 19.53% rise from 2022 (MacroTrends 2023). These figures might have increased in 2024, but no recent data are available.

IOM estimates that 180,000 migrants from nearly 100 countries were living in Lebanon prior to the crisis, mostly female domestic workers. Almost one in ten of them have been displaced by the conflict and most of them have been affected, including those who have not been displaced.

Since the beginning of October, IOM has received over 1,500 new requests from individuals seeking support to return to their countries of origin, bringing the total number requests to over 3,000 since late September. Additionally, several embassies have sought IOM's assistance to evacuate over 18,000 of their citizens.

Poverty

Lebanon was already reeling from a protracted political and socio-economic crisis before the ongoing escalation, with more than 3.7 million people in need of humanitarian assistance.

Micronutrient deficiencies are a significant issue in Lebanon, affecting half of the children under five years old and three-quarters of adolescent girls and women. The situation is dire, with one in three children living in severe child food poverty, a figure that has increased by 30% since 2021. Food insecurity is widespread, impacting 85% of Syrians, 54% of Lebanese, and 41% of Palestinians. Additionally, 35% of children aged 0-23 months suffer from developmental deficiencies, with severe child food poverty and stunting being the primary drivers (LRP, Update December 2024).

The ongoing conflict and displacement have exacerbated these issues, disrupting breastfeeding practices, limiting access to cooking facilities in shelters and for those on the move, and creating poor hygiene conditions. By January 2023, it was already estimated that 3.9 million people in Lebanon required some form of humanitarian assistance, and the situation is worsening hoping for some forms of recovery with the end of the conflict.

The most affected groups include children under five, pregnant and breastfeeding women, adolescents, school-aged children, internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, and migrants. To address these challenges, the Flash Appeal in October 2024 requested USD 425.7 million to aid one million people over three months, with USD 131 million allocated specifically for food security response.

A rise in inter-communal tensions is expected with increasing insecurity and negative rhetoric around refugees placing strains on scarce resources and weakened infrastructure. Recent developments in Syria could add another layer of complexity to the regional landscape.

There is a growing sense of concern among the population regarding access to essential services, as the pressure on resources continues to mount. People are increasingly worried about their ability to afford basic necessities such as food, fuel, and safe drinking water. In Beirut, anxiety about food security has reached an all-time high, and similar concerns are sharply rising in Mount Lebanon, particularly in areas hosting internally displaced persons (IDPs).

The competition for shelter and housing is particularly intense in regions hosting IDPs. In Mount Lebanon, 36% of the population is affected, with the situation being especially dire in Chouf, where

92% of the population is struggling with housing issues. In the South, 33% of the population faces similar challenges, with Saida experiencing a significant impact at 53%.

The scale of need highlighted the urgent requirement for coordinated interventions and sustainable solutions to stabilise Lebanon's deteriorating social and economic conditions. The critical situation in Lebanon led to a growing number of people being deprived of access to healthcare, medicine, employment, education and housing.

The second Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) for Lebanon, conducted in May 2023, revealed that 25% of the population analysed (1,411.000 individuals), were experiencing acute food insecurity, while 45% of the total population was struggling to maintain adequate food consumption and afford some essential non-food expenses.

The World Food Programme (WFP) reported that prior to the escalation of violence, Lebanon had been facing record-high currency depreciation, with food inflation soaring compared to pre-COVID levels. According to a World Bank report in May 2024, poverty had more than tripled over the past decade, reaching unprecedented levels.

The human impact is dire: food insecurity is rapidly deepening across Lebanon, with almost a quarter of the population – 1.26 million people – facing acute hunger. Half of Lebanese families and almost all refugees are struggling to put food on the table (WFP 2024).

The WFP continues continue assisting almost 2.5 million people in Lebanon and to support the Lebanese Government in building cohesive and sustainable social safety nets and strong food systems and in engaging with the global School Meals Coalition to ensure nutritious meal for every child by 2030.

3.2 Employment policy and institutional settings

Strategy and legal framework in the employment policy field

Lebanon lacks a dedicated employment strategy or action plan, despite the urgent need for it. The last three Ministers for Labour (MoL) had started a process of reforms aimed at bringing Lebanon's labour-related regulations and institutions into the 21st century. This included updating the 1946 labour code, the Kafala system, and the National Social Security Fund (NSSF). However, due to government instability over the past few years these efforts have stalled.

The MoL is responsible for labour-related legislation and policies, including employment conditions, labour relations, and labour inspection. The Ministry has been planning to enhance its capacities since many years by hiring new staff. This process is still on hold because of the continuous changes in government over the last years and the overall crisis.

The MoL has focused on short-term measures like raising the minimum wage, adjusting employees' daily travel allowance', (PWC, 2023), and launching 'Hokooki', a website funded mainly by the EU, ILO, and AICS explaining workers' rights and duties (MoL. 2023). However, these actions are insufficient against the backdrop of underdeveloped social protections.

Labour-market and social-protection policies are still underdeveloped. The national social security system provided by the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) covers only half of the Lebanese labour force. Before the crisis, the NSSF had savings of USD 8 billion. However, due to the economic downturn and currency devaluation, its reserves plummeted to under USD 450 million, a loss exceeding 95% in value. This sharp decline has severely impacted employee pension plans and savings, compromising the fund's ability to meet its obligations and provide adequate support to the workforce (Lebanon News, 2022). No other data are available at the moment.

The reform of the public service employment contracts remains critical. The freezing of public employment contracts, the aging public servants, and the increasing number of qualified workers leaving public service for private sector jobs or emigrating, exacerbate the crisis in public administration. Working for a public institution in Lebanon is no longer an attractive prospect, as it was before crisis. Comprehensive and sustained reforms are necessary to modernise Lebanon's public sector and protect its workforce.

Initiatives to increase the capacity of the public employment services

After years of cooperation between the National Employment Office (NEO), the MoL, and the task force appointed to prepare the national employers' survey, progress in strengthening public employment services slowed in 2022. The NEO office, for instance, still lacks basic infrastructure, such as a reliable power supply, with no generator available to ensure operations during power cuts. This limits the ability of its staff to work effectively.

Other types of Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs), such as employment mediation, career counselling and guidance, employment stimulation, and entrepreneurship incentives, remain fragmented and often linked to individual projects. The National Vocational Training Centre (NVTC), operating under the MoL and the Ministry of Social Affairs, is another key governmental institution involved in the provision of training related to ALMPs. In 2019, the NVTC began to provide continuous vocational training courses (under the form of 'accelerated vocational training') in a more systematic way. However, these initiatives have been suspended given the multiple economic crises and the conflict, the reduced public sector's capacity to function, declining wages, rising transportation costs, and political instability. Thus, little effort has been placed on relaunching NVTC activities, which would require significant government investment, especially given the current situation.

Before the recent conflict, private employment agencies were expanding in Lebanon, mainly offering services to migrant workers coming to the country and Lebanese workers seeking employment abroad. Some attempts have been made to regulate these agencies, especially those dealing with domestic workers. However, Lebanon has not yet ratified ILO Convention 181 on Private Employment Agencies (from 1997) or Convention 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers (from 2011).

The MoL launched a website in February 2022 aimed at connecting jobseekers in Lebanon with potential employers. The platform allowed individuals to upload their CVs on the website and search for job vacancies posted by companies However, the platform appears to be inactive at present, as no follow-up reports or statistics have been published since its launch. Still, on 10 October 2022, the MoL launched another digital platform focused on facilitating job opportunities for Lebanese citizens abroad prior to the World Cup in Qatar. Companies based in Qatar were able to post temporary and permanent job vacancies for Lebanese citizens.

Donor support to the employment policy field

Following the International Conference in Support of Lebanon's People and Sovereignty held on 24 October 2024 in Paris, the French Government announced an estimated USD 800 million in humanitarian aid pledges for Lebanon. The mechanisms and channels for implementing these pledges are currently under review, as the humanitarian community works closely with the Lebanese government to streamline bilateral contributions and ensure transparency and accountability in the humanitarian response.

Also, IOM has launched an appeal for USD 32.4 million to cover the most urgent needs between now and December 2024, including essential relief, winterization support, healthcare, shelter, protection, psychosocial support, and displacement tracking. It is part of a larger USD 426 million UN appeal, launched on the 1 October 2024 to respond to the needs by the end of the year.

Given the current situation in the country, the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2021 is still the overarching programme for all sectors in need. The plan was updated in 2024, and plans are currently

under finalisation for 2025 to include further actions concerning the labour market and employment, falling under the Livelihood sector. It is a joint plan between the Government of Lebanon and international and national partners, aiming to respond to challenges holistically, with medium-term, multi-year planning to deliver 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. The Plan 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 bring about 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, the plan envisages a stronger cooperation with the Ministry of Labour to strengthen labour inspection capacity and provide decent working conditions within Lebanese-owned enterprises. All the above was significantly impacted by the conflict in terms of implementation.

Initiatives to boost employment

In addition to the updated Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2024, the Government has been working on a rescue plan to reduce the impact of the crisis as part of the overall reform plan proposed in the context of the IMF deal.

It should be noted that the private sector has been trying to recover from the economic crisis and financial collapse by paying salaries in USD instead of the local LBP currency and pricing their goods and services in foreign currency as well (also in USD). This is the current trend among most businesses, although it is not spread equally across the whole country. The trend has not been mirrored in the public sector, which represents nearly half of Lebanon's workforce, thereby creating a massive gap in income between private and public sector workers. This situation is leading public servants to either leave their jobs or to find a second job in the private sector alongside their public sector role.

The increase in dollar-denominated salaries (almost 75% of wages in USD in August 2024, up from 4% in November 2022, according to WFP) has helped stabilize prices and boosted the confidence of earners. The Government is also paying adjusted salaries in USD.

Impact of the conflict on the labour market and employment

The conflict has severely disrupted Lebanon's economy and labour market, compounding challenges from the ongoing financial crisis since 2019 (REACH, 2024; UNDP, 2024). Over 1.3 million people have been displaced, and widespread infrastructure destruction has drastically reduced job opportunities, particularly in South Lebanon and Nabatiyeh (WB and GFDRR, 2024). Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), which account for 90% of Lebanon's economy, have been forced to close or suspend operations, significantly contributing to rising unemployment (UNDP, 2024).

An estimated 166,000 individuals have lost their jobs due to business closures and displacement, leading to an annual earnings reduction of USD 168 million (WB and GFDRR, 2024). Approximately 1.2 million workers are expected to be impacted by the conflict. The scale of destruction, exacerbated by advanced military technologies and ongoing crises, is predicted to have a greater economic toll in 2024 than the 2006 war, which caused USD 2.8 billion in damages to infrastructure and residential buildings (REACH, 2024).

Key economic sectors, including agriculture, tourism, transport, communication, hospitality, and commerce, have suffered significant losses. Agricultural lands in the southern regions have been damaged or contaminated, leaving crops untended and livestock abandoned. Losses in the agriculture

and livestock sector are projected to reach 20% by the end of 2024 (UNDP, 2024). The tourism sector has effectively collapsed, with operations at a near standstill (WB and GFDRR, 2024).

The displacement crisis has intensified competition for low-paying jobs, straining relations between Lebanese citizens and refugees. Informal employment, which typically absorbs displaced workers, has been unable to meet demand. This situation has driven a rise in NEET (Not in Employment, Education, or Training) rates, particularly among women, who face additional barriers to workforce participation (WB and GFDRR, 2024).

This dire situation underscores the need for urgent measures to stabilize Lebanon's labour market, rebuild economic resilience, and support displaced and unemployed workers.

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STATISTICAL ANNEX – LEBANON

The Annex includes annual data from 2015, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 or the last available year.

	Indicator		2015	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
1	Total population (in thousands)[1]		6398.9	5781.9	5662.9	5592.6	5489.7	5353.9
2	Relative size of youth population (age group 15-24 and denominator age 15-64, %)[1] c		24.9	26.2	26.7	26.6	26.6	26.5
3	GDP growth rate (%)		0.5	-6.9	-21.4	-7.0	-0.6	-0.2
4	Gross value added by sector (%)	Agriculture	3.3	3.2	3.1	1.4	1.2	1.1
		Industry	15.7	12.5	6.6	2.8	2.4	2.4
		Services	73.8	79.3	87.4	94.1	88.6	47.7
5	Public expenditure on education (as % of GDP)		M.D.	2.6	1.7	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
6	Public expenditure on education (as % of total public expenditure)		M.D.	8.1	9.9	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
7	Adult literacy (%)		M.D.	87.3 [5]	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
8	Educational attainment of total population (aged 15+) (%) [6]	Low[2]	M.D.	52.7 [5]	M.D.	M.D.	64.8	M.D.
		Medium[3]	M.D.	19.7 [5]	M.D.	M.D.	19.5	M.D.
		High[4]	M.D.	27.6 [5]	M.D.	M.D.	15.7	M.D.
9	Early leavers from education and training (aged 18-24) (%)	Total	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	33.8	M.D.
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	38.8	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	28.5	M.D.
10	Total NET enrolment rate (%)	Lower secondary	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	68.4
		Upper secondary	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	47.3
11	Share of VET students in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)		26.2	26.2	28.0	27.6	26.7	25.4
12	Low achievement in reading, mathematics and science – PISA (%)	Reading	70.4	67.8 [5]	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
		Mathematics	60.2	59.8 [5]	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
		Science	62.6	62.3 [5]	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
13		Total	M.D.	48.8 [5]	M.D.	M.D.	43.4	M.D.

	Indicator		2015	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	Activity rate (aged 15+) (%)	Male	M.D.	70.4 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	66.2	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	29.3 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	22.2	M.D.
14	Inactivity rate (aged 15+) (%) (6)	Total	M.D.	51.2 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	56.6	M.D.
		Male	M.D.	29.6 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	33.8	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	70.7 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	77.8	M.D.
15	Employment rate (aged 15+) (%)	Total	M.D.	43.3 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	30.5	M.D.
		Male	M.D.	63.4 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	47.4	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	25.1 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	14.9	M.D.
16	Employment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%) (6)	Low(2)	M.D.	41.3 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	26.2	M.D.
		Medium(3)	M.D.	36.5 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	29.8	M.D.
		High(4)	M.D.	52.0 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	47.7	M.D.
17	Employment by sector (%)	Agriculture	M.D.	3.6 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	4.1	M.D.
		Industry	M.D.	20.5 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	21.9	M.D.
		Services	M.D.	75.9 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	73.8	M.D.
18	Incidence of self-employment (%)		M.D.	29.1 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	25.5	M.D.
19	Incidence of vulnerable employment (%)		M.D.	20.1 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	19.2	M.D.
20	Unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%)	Total	M.D.	11.4 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	29.6	M.D.
		Male	M.D.	10.0 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	28.4	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	14.3 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	32.7	M.D.
21	Unemployment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%) (6)	Low(2)	M.D.	9.1 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	30.1	M.D.
		Medium(3)	M.D.	11.9 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	29.5	M.D.
		High(4)	M.D.	14.5 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	29.4	M.D.
22	Unemployment rate (aged 15-24) (%)	Total	M.D.	23.3 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	47.8	M.D.
		Male	M.D.	24.5 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	46.1	M.D.
23	Proportion of people aged 15-24 not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (%)	Total	M.D.	21.8 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	29.1	M.D.
		Male	M.D.	16.7 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	26.NSF1	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	26.8 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	32.1	M.D.
		Total	M.D.	15.1 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	36.0	M.D.

	Indicator		2015	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	Proportion of people aged 15-29 not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (%)	Male	M.D.	11.7 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	28.9	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	18.3 (5)	M.D.	M.D.	43.3	M.D.
24	Participation in training/lifelong learning (% aged 25-64)	Total	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
25	Human Development Index		0.756	0.760	0.742	0.725	0.723	M.D.

Last update: 07/10/2024

Sources:
Indicators 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7: The World Bank, World Development Indicators database
Indicators 10, 11: UNESCO, Institute for Statistics
Indicators 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24: CAS/ILO Lebanon Follow-up Labour Force AND Household living conditions survey 2018/19, CAS/ILO Lebanon Follow-up Labour Force Survey 2022
Indicator 12: OECD PISA 2022 Results (Volume I)
Indicator 25: UNDP

Notes:
(1) Estimation.
(2) Low – ISCED 0-2
(3) Medium – ISCED 3-4
(4) High – ISCED 5-8
(5) applies to 2018
(6) In 2018, education level refers to the highest level attained (not necessarily completed), while in 2022, it refers to the highest completed education level, and in Lebanon ISCED 4 doesn't exist

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

ANNEX: DEFINITIONS OF INDICATORS

	Description	Definition
1	Total population (in thousands)	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.
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.

	Description	Definition
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	Total NET enrolment rate	Total number of students of the official age group for a given level of education who are enrolled in any level of education, expressed as a percentage of the corresponding population.
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+) (%)	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 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.

	Description	Definition
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 15–24/15-29 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 12 months 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.

KEY DONOR PROJECTS IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

EU-funded technical assistance to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, budget 3,664.420 Euro, duration 01/01/2023 - 30/04/2027, implemented by GIZ. This action contributes to the overall objective to build a better equipped education system able to deliver quality basic education. The aim is to help ensure learning continuity under a multiple crisis context through a more resilient education system that can provide quality, inclusive and safe education for all children as per the objectives of the MEHE's 5-year general education plan 2021-2025. The specific objectives of this contract are set out below.

- **Outcome 1**: enhance the governance capacities of the MEHE in the field of strategic and operational planning, monitoring and reporting, budgeting and public finance management.
- **Outcome 2**: enhance the capacities of the MEHE to deliver quality teaching and learning through management and educational staff empowered with 21st century skills development.
- **Outcome 3**: enhance the performance of the public education system (MEHE) through improved management and business operating procedures.

The **Transition and Resilience Education Fund** (TREF) launched in May 2022 (Memorandum of Understanding between UNICEF and the MEHE) as a new aid modality to the education sector provides responses to the financial, governance, trust, and education crises, which are all mutually interlinked and serves as the umbrella aid modality for all UNICEF programs. International assistance is invested in priority programs of the 5-Year Plan for General Education using TREF as the implementing aid modality. The core purpose of TREF is to align, harmonize, and optimize procedures and governance between MEHE and international and national education stakeholders, to deliver improved quality education results and offer education opportunities to all children. TREF acts as a development catalyst for MEHE to manage the deep economic crisis through good governance, improve on data quality and reporting, institute quarterly payments to teachers and schools with strong risk assurances, and strengthen joint planning and programmatic decision making. TREF enables MEHE to provide higher levels of accountability and transparency toward international donors, while providing CPs with the option to softly earmark their assistance.

TREF is made up of 2 windows:

- a first window (related to formal education) and
- a second window (related to Multiple Flexible Pathways to education).

The support to TREF goes beyond traditional education programme support. Contributing Partners are also investing and actively involved in reviewing and advising on tangible data, finance and governance reforms benefitting MEHE management as well as all other international partners. A frank strategic dialogue and discourse have evolved between UNICEF, MEHE and CPs through the practice of the new partnership governance structure of TREF. This strategic dialogue has strongly influenced the mindset that to build a resilient education system, the basics of good governance and accountable management are to be established to create a strong holding environment for adaptive work to challenge the status quo with all internal and external stakeholders involved. Tangible progress has been made on data supply management with new Standard Operating Procedures and checklists developed as well as school-level financial management through a deep reform on how plans and budgets are designed, and funds spent and reported. On both reform tracks, strengthening the role of the Regional Education Offices (REO) was accompanied with the change management efforts.

The **2024 Lebanon Response Plan (LRP)** was endorsed in the inaugural meeting of the LRP Steering Committee on 16 October 2024. The LRP is an integrated humanitarian and stabilization

response plan co-led by the Government of Lebanon and the United Nations, supported by international and national partners. The plan sets out to respond to challenges arising from multiple crises facing Lebanon in a holistic manner and presents a prioritized and evidence-based appeal of USD 2.72 billion in 2024 to fund partners' coordinated interventions across ten sectors. It was noted in the meeting that the LRP Appeal has subsequently been complemented by the Lebanon Flash Appeal launched on 1st October.

Global Fund for Education in Emergencies, ECW Multi-Year Resilience Programme (MYRP) Lebanon, USD 12 million, 3 years starting in 2022. Viewed as a bridge between the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan and the Sector Plan, the MYRP was set up to mitigate the various factors that make children and teenagers vulnerable and have an impact on their learning opportunities. The focus is on stabilising and strengthening the sector to ensure that all girls, boys and teenagers have access to and can take part in education and learning processes. The programme aims to be 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.

PROSPECT – With funding from the Netherlands, the Lebanon 'Partnership for improving prospects for forcibly displaced persons and host communities' (PROSPECTS) focuses on enhancing the resilience of the country's crisis-distressed labour market and creating better livelihoods for both Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees. It does so by promoting the development of market-relevant skills, enhancing employment placement services and labour market governance, strengthening social protection schemes and promoting micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs) as well as certain sectors, including the agriculture and agri-food industry, with potential for decent job creation.

SOLIFEM (Social Dialogue for Formalization and Employability in the Southern Neighbourhood Region) – co-funded by the EU and the ILO, the project supports the transition from the informal to the formal economy through tripartite social dialogue in Lebanon, Algeria, Egypt and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). It will pursue this objective by strengthening the capacity of the ILO tripartite constituents to act through social dialogue. Developing the capacity of young women and men in the formal and informal labour markets will help them overcome challenges in accessing formal jobs. Home - Solifem (ilo.org) – (03/2021-08-2024)

ENABLE (Empowering Networks and Activation for Building Long-term Employment) - With funding from the European Union, the International Labour Organization (ILO) is implementing the ENABLE programme, aimed at fostering self-reliance beyond social assistance and promoting economic inclusion for vulnerable and marginalised communities in targeted areas. ENABEL focuses on improving skills for employment for both non-Lebanese individuals and host communities. Equipping individuals with the necessary skills and opportunities, the programme fosters economic inclusion and social cohesion in the Beirut, Mount Lebanon, North/Akkar and South/Nabatieh governorates, and potentially the Bekaa governorate, based on the needs identified. (01/03/2023-01/03/2026)

Promoting Sustainable Livelihoods (PSL), USAID, an initiative under the Economic Growth portfolio, which has addressed end September 2024, more than 1,150 people from increased economic opportunities including full-time and part-time or short-term employment in various sectors. In addition, PSL trained more than 1,100 people on topics covering technical assistance, market linkages, motivation, and investment, while also supporting more 780 Micro, Small, or Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to enable them to sustain or increase employment opportunities.

Trade and investment Facilitation activity (TIF), USAID, since its inception in 2020 has provided technical assistance services to over 2,000 individuals from over 500 MSMEs in various subjects on productivity improvement, access to markets, cost efficiency, as well as other specific technical subjects. USAID is also working with the American University of Beirut on a workforce development activity specifically for youth in the ICT sector, with the purpose of building the sector and introducing

international standards of certification for the ICT sector. In the agrifood sector, the USAID-funded **Agriculture and Rural Empowerment (ARE)** program created a total of 520 full time equivalent jobs and succeeded in sustaining the jobs of more than 2,200 individuals by providing them with on-the-job skills and capacity building to improve their performance in quality management, marketing and other business-related topics. ARE also provided technical assistance in the form of new technologies and management practices to more than 12,500 MSMEs including farmers to improve their business performance and increase their revenues and incomes.

UNRWA's emergency response and interventions including youth placements and partnerships with the EU and UNICEF.

- **Emergency Response Activation**: UNRWA activated its Emergency Response in Lebanon on 24th September 2024 due to escalating cross-border attacks, opening Designated Emergency Shelters for displaced individuals.
- **Suspension and Resumption of Activities**: Due to deteriorating security, UNRWA suspended all activities in Tyre on 1st October 2024, but resumed operations following a ceasefire on 27th November 2024.
- **EU Funded Youth Placement**: The EU funded youth placement program placed 560 individuals (ages 16-30) in various roles, including TVET trainees and placements at UNRWA and NGOs, with a focus on established employer networks.
- **UNICEF Partnership: UNICEF** supported initiatives at the Siblin Training Center, including the establishment of a waste-management hanger and the launch of a nursing course and a photovoltaic/solar energy course.

Employment Promotion – co-funded by the EU and implemented by GIZ. The project aims to improve the employment situation of young Lebanese adults (aged 17 to 35), women and people with disabilities, in selected pilot regions of Beirut and Mount Lebanon. The project will identify employment opportunities and design activities providing relevant labour market skills and qualifications to make people more employable. The project will also support MSMEs in selected job-creating sectors to improve their competitive position, leading to better working conditions, safeguard existing jobs and/or create new ones. (02/2-09/24). The project is now in a second phase (01.10.24 – 31.08.27) with 3.000.000 Euros budget for the moment, with the potentially increase of another 3 Mio. by the end of 2025.

Improving the Quality and Attractiveness of TVET in Lebanon for poor and vulnerable social groups (QuA-VET), commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and co-funded by EU. The project seeks to support the General Directorate for Vocational and Technical Education (DGVTE) in enhancing the quality of Lebanese Technical and Vocational Education and Training in sectors with long-term employability potential to meet the country's economic needs while fostering increased employment capabilities for marginalized and economically vulnerable social groups residing in Lebanon. To that aim, the project focuses on the following areas of intervention: Increasing the cooperation between state vocational training institutions and the private sector through establishing school advisory boards, strengthening the human resources of the ministry of education, integrating digital learning units, implementing new practice oriented TVET programmes in industrial mechanics and health inspection and food safety and other sectors with employment potential in cooperation with the private sector and enhancing the quality of in-company training for employees and work-based learning for vulnerable individuals in selected occupations. (2021-2027)

Governance in the Education Sector in Lebanon, funded by German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by GIZ. With the volume of 4 million of Euro, the project has three key areas of action:

1. It advises the Ministry of Education and Higher Education on implementing the 'Reform Road Map 2025'. It thereby improves the political and legal framework for four selected regional education offices so that they can make the education system more effective and resilient.
2. By developing skills and providing training on gender inequalities to the relevant actors in the education system, the project helps to change gender roles.
3. The project also fosters the necessary organisational and institutional conditions to enhance communication and reporting between the Ministry, regional education offices and schools.

Duration: 09/2024 - 08/2027.

SkillUp – With funding from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), the project is a component of the ILO Global Programme on Skills and Lifelong Learning (GPSL3), which supports the establishment of effective skills and a lifelong learning skills system. The Lebanon SkillUp component helps constituents and stakeholders to improve the skills development system in Lebanon, facilitating vulnerable groups with access to the labour market and help in making the transition. The project focuses on providing market-responsive skills training and work-based learning, enhancing skills utilisation and productivity, and improving skills governance and the quality of the TVET system. (01/01/2021 – 31/12/2024)

ARETHNA project, is funded by ADF and DANIDA, and is being implemented by a consortium that includes the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), COSV, RDFL, and TRC. The initiative aims to improve living conditions and foster socio-economic recovery in three vulnerable urban neighbourhoods: Tripoli, Beirut, and Sidon. The project focuses on enhancing access to essential urban services, improving infrastructure, fostering social cohesion, and promoting job creation and income-generating opportunities. COSV, focuses in particular on promoting social cohesion and driving economic development within local communities. by implementing sustainable recovery plans with active resident participation, establishing community-based enterprises, and supporting income-generating initiatives. (2021-2025)

UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Education & Higher Education (MEHE) to resume learning for all children and implement the Ministry's Learning Continuity Response Plan, including through decommissioning schools previously used as shelters and preparing their reopening for in-person classes. The Madristi ('My School' in Arabic) digital platform, powered by the Learning Passport technology, has been deployed to allow children to continue their studies through blended and remote learning. UNICEF provided MEHE with over 450,000 user accounts for students and teachers to access the platform. The national Call & Learn Tutoring hotline is being expanded with UNICEF support to provide free, individualized learning support over the phone. More than 16,582 children (56 per cent girls) were supported through the hotline since early October 2024.

Since hostilities escalated in September 2024, **UNICEF** distributed learning and recreational materials to 117,660 displaced children fostering both learning and play. Following the ceasefire and the gradual closure of shelters, UNICEF's Multiple Flexible Pathways programmes (Makani and Dirasa) have been supporting children and families by providing essential services, including retention support to help in-school children recover from learning interruptions and psychosocial distress while ensuring they remain enrolled. UNICEF continues to keep displaced youth engaged in learning, skilling, and positive behaviours. As of 11 December 2024, over 4,000 displaced youth are being equipped with industry-certified digital training via the Nammiskills platform, enhancing their employability prospects in the gig economy. UNICEF has also conducted life skills and mental health awareness sessions for more than 6,000 adolescents and youth in shelters, communities, and Palestinian camps.

EDU TOP, implemented by the COMI consortium and other organisations, and funded by the Italian Cooperation, is a programme that promote the professional and technical training system of quality, fair and inclusiveness, responding to the needs of the labour market in favour of the most vulnerable. The project foresees the refurbishment of training laboratories in the fields of IT, Nursing and

Jewellery in accordance with the updated training curricula and the Training of Trainers (ToT). In addition, the work with the Guidance and Employment Offices (GEOs) located in Lebanese Public Technical Schools offers orientation for the students of the TVET. The creation of a technology platform facilitates job opportunities and the development of an e-learning platform and teaching materials on Human Rights, Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Education aims to enlarge the vision of the TVET students. (2022 – 2025)

ABBREVIATIONS

ALMP	Active labour market policies
AUB	American University of Beirut
CAS	Central Administration of Statistics
CERD	Center for Education Research and Development
CLS	Centre for Lebanese Studies
CVA	Cash and voucher assistance
DGTVET	Directorate General for Technical and Vocational Education
ERICC	Education Response in Crisis and Conflict
ERP	Emergency Response Plan
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
ETF	European Training Foundation.
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEO	Guidance and Employment Office
Hamas	Hamas is a Palestinian Sunni-Islamic fundamentalist militant organization
Hezbollah	Hezbollah is a Shiite Islamist political party and militant group based in Lebanon
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LCRP	Lebanon Crisis Response Plan
LFHLCS	Labour Force and Household Living Conditions Survey
LNQF	Lebanese National Qualifications Framework
LRP	Lebanon Response Plan

MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MSMEs	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NEO	National Employment Office
NSF	National Strategic Framework
NSSF	National Social Security Fund
NVTC	National Vocational Training Centre
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PPE	Personal protective equipment
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
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
USD	United States Dollar
WB	World Bank

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