



REVIEW OF NATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT SYSTEMS IN SEMED COUNTRIES

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PREFACE

The European Training Foundation (ETF) is the EU's agency supporting countries surrounding the European Union to reform their education, training and labour market systems, in the context of European Union (EU) external relations policies. Currently, the ETF cooperates at country and regional level with 28 partner countries, mostly in the context of the EU's enlargement and neighbourhood policies, thereby contributing to social well-being, stability and prosperity in the countries surrounding the European Union.

Review of the state of Career Development Support Systems in countries of Southern and Eastern Mediterranean (SEMED)

Education, training and labour market systems are increasingly challenged by global developments, such as new and rapidly changing technologies, demographic changes and climate change. All these have a profound impact on the lives of individuals and on society. The development of technology, especially information and communication technology (ICT), has boosted economic globalisation by providing new opportunities, but also new risks, as does the green transition. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated and amplified existing trends and challenges.

Despite these uncertain developments, there is little doubt that a fast-evolving world and a changing labour market will require individuals to become lifelong learners, to acquire new competences to cope with change and to adapt and further develop existing competences. There is also a growing demand for valid information on changing labour markets and future prospects. This goes along with a growing need to support people in managing more frequent and complex transitions within and between education and work.

In this context, there is a greater need than ever for career development support. At the same time, career development support – that is lifelong career guidance, and in particular career education, and career development support for workers – itself faces challenges in adapting to the new circumstances. Changes in delivery and in developing the innovation capacity of career development support services are required to achieve deeper impact and empower individuals to manage their own career paths. Technology already has an impact on traditional services, and the concept of career-management skills is increasingly gaining ground, not only in Europe but also on other continents.

In order to help countries respond to the challenges of the green and digital transition, of economic recovery and of dealing with regional specificities such as brain drain or high youth unemployment and high rates of young persons not in employment, education or training (NEETs), but also to inform national policies, practices and future and ongoing EU and ETF activities, like the regional Y-NEET program funded by the EU, the ETF in close cooperation with UNIMED (Mediterranean Universities Union) has reviewed the national career development support systems of Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon and Tunisia. For these countries, the ETF and UNIMED member universities have developed country review reports and a regional synthesis report. The national reports were used as a source for the development of the regional synthesis report, which aims to provide of a clear and concise outline of the state of the national career development support systems in the four countries to allow for peer learning and an overview of key recommendations for further system development.

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Special gratitude also goes to the national stakeholders from the public, private and civil society sectors as well as the donor community, since the national review reports are the foundation of this synthesis report. The national reports were developed based on desk research and through a participatory process involving relevant stakeholders. The ETF therefore would like to express its sincere appreciation for the strong commitment of all country stakeholders in co-developing the national reports.

As authors of the national reports, ETF would like to thank in particular the UNIMED member universities and researchers from Bejaia Université in Algeria, Princess Sumaya University for Technology (PSUT) in Jordan, Lebanese University in Lebanon, and La Manouba University of Tunis, Tunisia. Last but not least, our thanks go to Silvia Marchionne from UNIMED for the great cooperation.

The national reports are already used to inform the development of the EU funded regional Y-NEET activities (Youth NEETs in the Southern Neighbourhood), as well as other EU and ETF activities. They constitute building blocks for closer cooperation between ETF and partner countries in this area.

The ETF extends its gratitude to colleagues involved as peer reviewers: Sabina Nari, Floriana Folisi, Donatella Di Vozzo, Simona Rinaldi, Cristina Mereuta, Mariavittoria Garlappi. The report was coordinated, supervised, and finalised by Florian Kadletz (ETF).

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This synthesis draws on the national reviews submitted to the European Training Foundation (ETF) by researchers from member universities of the Mediterranean Universities Union (UNIMED) of Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Tunisia. The reviews were developed in a participatory process through desk research, interviews as well as consultation and validation meetings with relevant national stakeholders, from ministries to civil society, practitioners, social partners and donors. Due to the security situation this was limited in Lebanon. The synthesis report is informed by the outcomes of this process and aims to support policy developments in the field of lifelong career guidance policies, systems and services at regional, country, and sector level. Its findings and recommendations will also inform the development of European Union (EU) initiatives, such as the EU-funded regional Y-NEET activities, and ETF activities in the region.

In the light of such global developments as the rapid pace in changing technologies, demographic changes and climate change, career guidance as an area for policy, system, and service development has been gaining an increasing importance. Furthermore, aligning to these transformative changes that have profound implications for society and the skills that the labour market needs, the role of career guidance has also been shifting towards a lifelong learning approach. With individual career and life-paths now increasingly expected to include multiple transitions, career guidance services would also need to evolve and adapt into an all-age, lifelong and life-wide service to be able to offer tailored advice for individuals as they navigate career changes throughout their lives.

With implications for education, labour market, and social policy, lifelong guidance is a cross-cutting area that impacts a range of policy goals and outcomes (ETF, 2020, Sultana 2017). Against this backdrop, career guidance, especially as a lifelong and life-wide support service, requires cross-sectoral collaboration between public, private, and civil society stakeholders and actors. Another key paradigm shift in career guidance is the focus on personalised services that support personal development and the learning of career management skills instead of focusing on standardised information sessions focused on knowledge transmission about occupations and matching education offers. Obviously, this requires moving from one-off information sessions towards learning offers that start from early education.

Building on national reviews, the present synthesis report provides an overview of career guidance services across four Southern and Eastern Mediterranean (SEMED) countries, focusing on such areas as policy frameworks and supporting collaborative mechanisms, along with various services and provision aspects such as access to services, funding mechanisms, quality assurance, and the use of technology for career development support. This helps identify the fitness for purpose of existing policies and services in a changing world to inform national policy dialogues.

Key findings

Policy frameworks

The review of career guidance systems highlights advancements in policy frameworks, with all four countries introducing strategies that emphasise career guidance, vocational training, and lifelong learning. These efforts often include legal frameworks and strategic plans to integrate career guidance into education, employment, and entrepreneurship schemes. However, challenges persist due to insufficient coordination among stakeholders and fragmented approaches across sectors. Establishing a unified, cross-sector career guidance strategy is essential for streamlining efforts across ministries, state agencies, public institutions, the private sector, and civil society. To be effective, such strategies would emphasise collaboration, coordination, and sustainability to ensure career guidance services can efficiently respond to the evolving needs of individuals, society, and the labour market.

Collaboration and coordination mechanisms

Effective career guidance requires robust coordination and collaboration mechanisms across national and local levels. At the national level, strategic partnerships and formalised structures, such as cross-ministerial working groups or lifelong guidance fora, play a vital role in ensuring cooperation among education, employment, youth and social sectors. Public-private partnerships and collaboration with NGOs also enhance service provision, particularly in addressing employability, innovation, and entrepreneurial skills. Donor involvement in such coordination efforts would be key given their strong role in this policy area. However, challenges persist due to fragmented systems and inconsistent alignment between stakeholders.

At the regional level, local collaborations, often supported by donor funding and technical assistance, effectively address community-specific career needs. NGOs, educational institutions, and local government agencies frequently work together to provide tailored support to underserved groups, leveraging grassroots resources and expertise. These efforts include job readiness training, counselling, and entrepreneurial support, often filling gaps left by national-level coordination challenges –creating meaningful impact at the community level.

Service delivery

In the SEMED countries studied, much of the career guidance and career education takes place within the context of secondary (general and vocational) and higher education, with notable, ongoing efforts to bolster career readiness and entrepreneurship among learners. Embedding career and entrepreneurship education early in the educational system lays the foundation for empowering individuals through learning of career management skills and through fostering the development of an entrepreneurial mindset that enables individuals to identify opportunities, take initiative, and adapt to changing environments.

The four countries show promising initiatives regarding guidance for job seekers and unemployed, with public employment services often playing a crucial role. Nevertheless, enhanced collaboration among public and private sectors, better resource allocation, and tailored policies that address gender and regional disparities could improve outcomes in these countries.

Funding

Funding for career development support systems combines state and non-state contributions. State funding, essential for school-based programmes, public employment services, and outreach, often faces challenges due to limited resources, restricted service expansion, and staffing shortages. Coordination among ministries is key to maximising funding impact and to achieve more by pooling resources. Non-state funding, primarily from international organisations and donors, supports employability, structural reforms, and entrepreneurship but raises sustainability concerns post-project completion. Private sector involvement, though modest, shows potential through microfinance for entrepreneurship, co-payment models, and support for career events and internships, offering a pathway to diversify funding sources. Establishing sustainable and reliable funding models is crucial for ensuring the long-term effectiveness and resilience of career guidance systems.

Access

Access to career development support services is crucial for enhancing employability and socio-economic wellbeing, with inclusive service provision ensuring accessibility through digital tools, face-to-face, and other tailored delivery methods. While centralised systems provide structured services, decentralised approaches enable flexibility and better outreach, including through mobile career units and community networks. Providing good practice examples, the national reports showcase how prioritising tailored, needs-based support for NEETs, women, and other vulnerable populations are key to ensuring that career guidance services are inclusive and accessible. Progressing these further by focusing on providing equal access to career guidance, regardless of background or location, the

four countries can work towards addressing disparities and ensuring that all individuals have the opportunity to develop career management skills and pursue meaningful careers over a lifetime.

Use of technology

With the digital transformation continuing apace across various areas of our lives, the country review reports showcase a strong interest across the countries in the design and use of ICT for career development support services. While the strategic focus of such activities varies from country to country, they share a commitment to exploring and integrating ICT in career services. The integration of ICT tools into career guidance services is crucial for enhancing accessibility, particularly for rural and disadvantaged groups. These platforms can provide such valuable services as virtual counselling, career management tools, and up to date labour market information. Additionally, combining online and offline services in innovative ways will support a customised delivery, tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of different population groups. As next steps, SEMED countries could work towards developing comprehensive national digital strategies to integrate fragmented platforms into unified entry points, providing digital skills training for practitioners and clients to ensure effective use of online resources and services, along with reviewing online tools and e-guidance systems to maximise a user-friendly experience and enhance accessibility.

Professionalisation and quality assurance

The national reviews indicate that, with the exception of Jordan, career guidance is yet to emerge as a formal profession with identified national standards. To develop and enhance the professionalisation of career guidance services, such approaches as developing practitioner training programmes (initial and continuous), establishing quality standards, certifications, and accreditation mechanisms can yield crucial benefits.

Career development support services depend on quality data and information to fulfil their function. The national reviews underline that the majority of the countries focus on collecting data on employment outcomes, skills alignment, and job market trends. Tunisia's national data collection provides an opportunity for analyses and forecasting of labour market changes, while universities also collect valuable data on graduates' careers. However, as activities in the informal sector are not sufficiently incorporated into formal databases, including the skills and experiences of workers in this sector, the opportunities for informal sector workers to transition into formal employment remains limited. In contrast, ANETI's database in Tunisia covers 84% of higher education graduates, holding already significant potential for analysis that can be further enhanced through closing this data gap. Going beyond labour market intelligence (LMI), both Algerian and Jordan collect data on candidates' profiles (skills, educational or professional backgrounds, demographics) and job search metrics (number of interviews obtained, success/failure rate in interviews). However, in Algeria gaps still persist across various areas in the official statistics while the accessibility of data also limits the potential for an in-depth analysis of the career guidance and development system. In Jordan, in addition to LMI and job search metrics, data is also available on occupational information (job security, salaries, trends) while universities and VET centres, similar to Tunisia, also collect information on career outcomes of graduates. The country's challenges include the fragmentation of data across different agencies and stakeholders which impedes effective data collection efforts and also the development of a full, detailed picture on Jordan's job market, employment trends, and skills demands. Additionally, similar to Tunisia and Algeria, capacity constraints among practitioners also limit their ability to collect, analyse, and utilise data effectively.

Addressing such challenges as the varying degrees of data fragmentation, capacity gaps, and the underutilisation of technology identified in the national contexts, these SEMED countries have the capacity to enhance the quality and the accessibility of their data and information provisions. As a way forward, SEMED countries could provide training for practitioners on data collection, analysis, and application of labour market data to enhance career guidance support services. Including the use of technology within the training provision and utilising data analytics and digital platforms for service

provision would be particularly beneficial for enhancing effectiveness on a system-level. Additionally, addressing the resource constraints of educational institutions could support these institutions perform data analysis regularly, providing an evidence-basis for any subsequent adjustments for relevant programmes. Overall, LMI should be enhanced to allow for evidence-based guidance.

Regular monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation of processes and procedures are a cornerstone of quality assurance for activities in any area. While this is also true for career development support services, the view emerging from the national review reports indicates that currently none of the four countries have institutionalised, national standards or established mechanisms for the monitoring and evaluation of career development support services. In countries where there are activities, these are often informal in nature, lacking the cross-sectoral or whole country perspective. Introducing robust monitoring and evaluation systems to track outcomes is central to improving the effectiveness of services over time, and for justifying investment in services. As lifelong guidance is an inherently cross-cutting policy area requiring collaboration across multiple sectors, establishing an approach for the monitoring and evaluation would require a similarly collaborative effort.

1. INTRODUCTION

The increased importance of career guidance in the context of, inter alia, new and rapidly changing technologies, demographic changes, and climate change, in order to support people in lifelong learning and managing transitions, has been recognised at policy and practice level globally. EU and UN agencies and institutions have published joint statements such as the “Investing in Career Guidance”¹ leaflet, making the case for quality lifelong guidance policies and services.

In this context, this synthesis report provides an overview of the current state of lifelong (career) guidance policies and services in four SEMED countries: Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Tunisia. Its primary objective is to offer a comprehensive analysis of the career guidance systems in these countries, as basis for fostering context-sensitive and context-responsive knowledge about each country’s achievements and reform needs. This can serve as a foundation for national discussions among key stakeholders: public authorities, social partners, educational institutions, civil society organizations, donors, and development partners.

Regarding data sources, the report draws upon the four national reviews (country reports) and international research in the field of career guidance. Data collection for the country reports involved desk research and the organisation of focus groups (one per country) with key stakeholders, including government institutions, academic organisations, research institutes, local businesses, NGOs, and international partners such as ETF, UNIMED, and UNESCO. Additionally, consultations with national authorities were carried out to validate the country reports, which were subsequently revised based on the feedback received. However, in Lebanon only desk research was conducted due to the current security situation in the country.

In developing this report, the research team faced several methodological challenges:

- The country reports often placed greater emphasis on the higher education sector compared to other sectors; a lesson learned for future partnerships, that should ensure partners’ capacity to bring in the voices of all to have a balanced representation of information about policies and services in place.
- In some countries, only a limited number of stakeholders was consulted and there was a low response rate from state institutions during the validation of the country reports; a lesson learned for future reviews, that should ensure a better buy-in of especially public authorities to the review process to mobilise wider stakeholder groups and ensure their involvement.

¹ Cedefop, European Commission, ETF, ILO, OECD, UNESCO (2001): <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/investing-career-guidance>

2. RETHINKING CAREER DEVELOPMENT²

Demographic change, new ways of working, internationalisation and the reconfiguration of work have profound implications for society and the skills that the labour market needs. These changes have also impacted on the concept of 'career.' Instead of a 'job for life,' a career can be defined as an individual life path with multiple transitions in learning, work and in other settings where individual capacities and competences are learned and/or used. This implies that education and learning are no longer simply about the transition to adulthood but increasingly involve lifelong learning within and across countries.

In parallel, to adapt to such changes and to remain effective, the concept of career guidance also needs to evolve and embrace innovative approaches (ETF, 2020). As individuals seek support and guidance to construct their careers over the course of their lifetimes, and seek empowerment to do so, career guidance needs to shift towards a lifelong learning approach and needs to shift away from a focus on information provision about existing occupations and related learning opportunities based on results of aptitude, interest and personality testing towards supporting the learning of career management skills.

In line with the need for sustainable activation, the support to learning of career management skills (CMS) follows a holistic approach, focused on integrated life skills learning and career learning: a first learning area is (1) learning about oneself: not just about interests, but learning "who am I", making this a learning process of social and emotional skills incl. learning to learn skills development in support of positive human development, identity development to develop durable human or life skills that help in managing lifelong transitions. This is especially relevant for vulnerable groups like NEETs because such an approach sends the message that skills can be learned, and one can manage one's life and career. This also shows the preventive potential of career guidance if such skills are being learned over the whole time of schooling from primary schooling onwards, as this will impact behaviour and go beyond knowledge.

A second area of learning is (2) learning about the world of work: not just about occupations, but focus lies on learning the labour market and its trends, it's about developing a critical understanding of the economy, and its impacts on environment, on society and oneself, understanding critically the context oneself is living in as basis for agency. For example, understanding the effect of working in the informal economy on myself, my family, the community and society changes the nature of career guidance to a service that focuses on information about vacancies only, as does learning about labour rights.

A third area of CMS development is about (3) supporting the creation of an understanding of the world of learning and education, i.e. creating an awareness of the need to engage in lifelong learning (LLL), and the positive effects for oneself and others. Finally, also (4) practical skills learning, like CV writing should feature in learning activities, but traditionally this was the main focus which needs to be changed as this will not help someone deal with difficult transitions.

Consequently, career development as a lifelong process cannot be supported by just one provider. CMS development must be a joint effort of many stakeholders requiring cross-sectorial cooperation and collaboration between public, private and civil society actors. The EU PES network acknowledges the need for sustainable activation, and it acknowledges the need for cooperation with diverse partners to deliver on this.

Another key shift is the one from a service-oriented focus about career guidance (one size fits all services) to a person-centred approach. In this context, the term 'career development support' puts the individual at the centre of career guidance while taking the different needs individuals may have into account (even within the same target group), implying that different forms of support and

² This chapter draws from the ILO synthesis report based on the joint ETF-ILO approach to system reviews: https://www.ilo.org/skills/areas/skills-policies-and-systems/WCMS_834868/lang--en/index.htm and from Sultana 2017

approaches may be used. In further development, ‘career development support’ draws on the characteristic features of lifelong learning and the benefits of using a holistic approach in career guidance provision that links various policy areas and services.

Considering ‘career guidance’ from the perspective of upper and lower middle-income countries³, the term itself poses a number of problems that are difficult to resolve (see for e.g. Chbani & Jaouane; Mejri & McCarthy; Elhawati). ‘Career’ as a concept is less applicable for the kind of modest occupations available for the vast majority in the global South, with the literature suggesting ‘livelihood planning’ as a more appropriate term (see for example: Arulmani, 2009; Kalyanram, Gopalan, & Kartik, 2014; Sultana, 2014c; Kattaa). Furthermore, the word ‘guidance’ implies that people are involved in exercising personal agency in making choices out of a range of available options. For the vast majority – particularly so in the global South – a number of forces come into play which, at best, constrain choice whittling it down to a few options, and, at worst, determine the life pathway in irrevocable ways. These factors may include strict gender-typified expectations, beliefs that life pathways are subject to ‘fate’ or ‘divine will’ rather than one’s own, and the reproduction of social class locations due to the lack of meritocracy, family expectations, and the nature of the labour market (Sultana 2017).

Independent from place of living, the increasing complexity of the world of work has implications for how the individual experiences transitions (Cedefop, 2016) and for the level of support they need in entering and re-entering in the labour market (ILO/ETF, 2021). In that respect, a rethinking of lifelong guidance policies and services is needed, as outlined above, to meet the needs of individuals, organisations, companies and societies. In July 2021, the Inter-Agency Working Group on Career Guidance (WGCG), with members from six international organisations, published a joint statement on the importance of investing in career development. It stated that career development plays an essential part in helping people of all ages and backgrounds to navigate future working life. Investments in career development can be expected to provide positive economic, educational and social returns for individuals and for society (Cedefop et al., 2021).

The ETF was given a direct mandate by the European Council Resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies (2008) to “Foster the development of lifelong guidance in third countries in accordance with the four priority areas outlined in this Resolution [...]”, being

- Encourage the lifelong acquisition of career management skills;
- Facilitate access by all citizens to guidance services;
- Develop the quality assurance of guidance provision;
- Encourage coordination and cooperation among the various national, regional and local.

The present report is an important driver for such support.

³ For the World Bank’s definition and classification of Middle-Income Countries (MIC), see <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/mic/overview>

3. APPLYING A THEORY OF CHANGE FOR SYSTEMS AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT⁴

International evidence shows that career guidance services vary from country to country based on such unique contexts as the country's political and administrative structure, the level of economic development, and socio-cultural factors (e.g. OECD, 2004a; Sultana & Watts, 2006; Watts 2014).

Many countries are facing challenges in establishing a coherent and a holistic career development support system for all age groups. Systems face high and diverse expectations from users and service providers while also adapting new and innovative career guidance practice and tools in response to labour market changes poses problems. Furthermore, many countries struggle with a fragmentation of services as delivery happens separately through a range of education and training institutions, public and private employment services, and specialist providers. In low-and-middle income countries additional challenges arise from the vulnerability of publicly funded career services to political changes and the lack of availability of funding mechanisms. Furthermore, socio-cultural factors may also influence the accessibility of services for individuals and communities.

Understanding the specific challenges that career development support services face enables policy makers and career practitioners to construct policies and design interventions that are relevant to their country's context and meaningful for the final beneficiaries. Building on the experience of past international and European efforts to construct career development support systems and on evidence about impact and effectiveness of career services, ILO and ETF have compiled a model (ETF-ILO 2021) for a national review which consists of:

- An approach to the enhancement of national career development support systems in the form of a theory of change, and
- A roadmap for system development.

In combination, these two components constitute a framework that highlights five key elements that must be customised to individual country contexts and translated into relevant country-specific mission, vision, activities, outcomes, and indicators for the development of career development support systems:

- **Coordination:** Includes all aspects related to formal coordination, strategic leadership, governance, cooperation between stakeholders.
- **Access:** Includes all aspects related to enabling access to career development support by all individuals and groups, especially the most vulnerable. It includes accessibility, cultural sensitivity and user-friendly delivery, establishment of services, service entitlements, outreach initiatives and embeddedness of career learning in other activities.
- **Funding:** Includes all aspects related to public funding, private participation (including clients), donor funding, establishment of incentives, and pooling of financial resources. It also includes aspects closely related to coordination such as accountability, effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of fund management.
- **Quality:** Includes a wide range of aspects which contribute to raise and maintain the quality of provision, including the definition of standards of service and ethical treatment of personal information, professionalisation and training of practitioners and other staff, quality of tools, methodologies and information, and continuous monitoring and evaluation processes.

⁴ This chapter draws from two sources: (1) the [ETF-ILO paper \(2021\)](#) and (2) the [ILO synthesis paper \(2022\)](#)

- **Technology:** Includes all aspects related to the appropriate use of technology in the delivery of services, including design and implementation of digital and distance services, use of technology in learning environments and careers centres, use of communication platform, implementation of individual digital portfolios, or the use of innovative solutions such as AI.

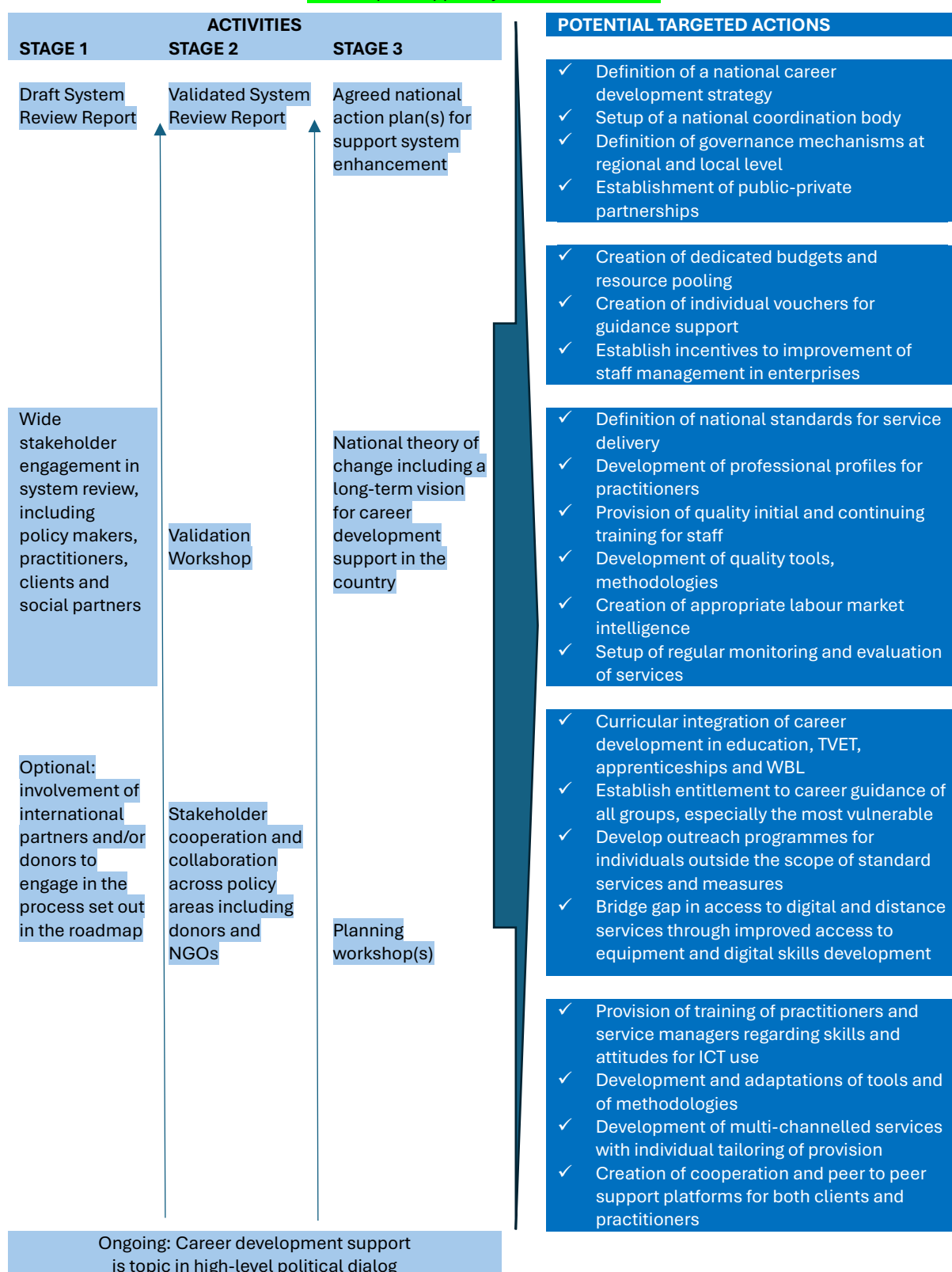
In addition to its adaptability to individual country contexts and needs, the methodology can also be adapted to focus specific themes or strategic interests such as NEETs.

As suggested by the ETF and the ILO (ETF-ILO, 2021 and ILO 2022), the review process ideally leads to the collaborative articulation of a theory of change and related action plan for system development. These would take place at three levels, namely (i) the system level, (ii) the provider level and (iii) the practitioner level (see **Error! Reference source not found.**).

Achieving success at system level is a process that requires the early engagement of key stakeholders across the various stages, and also a good understanding of national needs and untapped potentials. This methodology supports these aspects by bringing various stakeholders together from fragmented systems, facilitating increased exchanges, collaboration, and cooperation. From the initial steps, the framework helps laying the groundwork for dialogue across the system, supporting such activities as an initial national system review, the validation of review and policy priorities, and the development of a national theory of change and action plans.

Figure 1. Roadmap to enhance the career development support system

Roadmap to Support System Enhancement



Source: [ILO/ETF 2021](#)

4. CONTEXT FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AND LINKS WITH LIFELONG LEARNING

This section provides a comparative overview of institutional, political, socioeconomic, demographic, cultural, geographic and environmental issues which may bear relevance to the role career development support may play in the countries explored. Main data sources relate to the contextual chapters of the country reports, complemented by findings from international research (e.g. Sultana 2017) and international statistics.

4.1 Demography and migration

Career guidance services vary based on a country's population size and age demographics, with smaller states offering distinct approaches compared to larger states with more complex labour markets (Bergmo-Prvulovic, 2017).

Table 1. Population indicators (2023)

Indicators	Algeria	Jordan	Lebanon	Tunisia
Total population	45 263 000	11 316 000	5 426 000	12 404 000
Population growth (annual%)	1.6	0.5	- 2.5	0.8
Population aged 0-14 (% of total population)	31	32	27	25
Population aged 15-24 (% total population)	14	18	26.6*	13

Source: UNESCO 2023, *ETF (2024c); CAS/ILO (2022).

In terms of population size, Algeria, Jordan and Tunisia are notably larger than Lebanon (see table 1). While the three countries showed a moderate population growth in 2023 - highest for Algeria (1.6%), Lebanon was with a negative growth (-0.6%) expressed in declining fertility rates and increasing life expectancy. Looking at the age pyramid, all four countries are characterised by a relatively **high share of young people**: in 2023, people aged 24 or younger accounted for 50% of the total population of Jordan, and 38% of Tunisia, with Algeria and Lebanon staying in between. This trend could be considered in a positive light, but only if it is accompanied by adequate economic growth, access to education and job creation. Without these, it will place additional pressure to national economies obliging them to secure sufficient employment opportunities for new labour market entrants and potentially prevent the brain drain of young people seeking job opportunities abroad.

Migratory flows are another important demographic factor since some of the countries analysed serve as a destination for economic migrants. Jordan is a case in point where local nationals are predominantly employed in the more attractive public sector, with the private sector being compelled to hire foreign workers (Sultana 2017). Additionally, Jordan and Lebanon host high numbers of refugees since 1948 from Palestine and more recently from Syria. As highlighted in the country report, Lebanon – a country with 5.4 million people, hosts around 1.5 million Syrian and around 500 thousand registered Palestinian refugees. In recent years, Algeria has become a key destination or transit point for many sub-Saharan migrants. A significant number of migrants, primarily from West Africa, enter the country. Most cross into Algerian territory via the 1,500 km border with Mali and Niger, situated in the heart of the Sahara Desert (IOM, [Algeria | International Organization for Migration](#)).

Additionally, the SEMED countries examined have long been exporters of people, for example, the surge in migration (regular and irregular) of young people can be related to their aspiration to seek for a better future (Fejes et al., 2021; ETF, 2021). As highlighted in the Lebanese country report, due to limited local opportunities, many youths are encouraged to seek careers abroad, creating a pressing need for international career guidance and mobility services. In Tunisia, migration rates have increased over the past 20 years, from 5% in 2000 to 7.6% in 2022 (UsN DESA, 2020) including low and medium skilled people but also highly skilled professionals (doctors, engineers, and teachers). The country also shows a sustained upward trend in female emigration since 1990 (up to 44.3% of total migrants), which is particularly the case for women with a higher level of education looking for better career perspectives.

4.2 Economic inequalities

Economic inequalities in Arab Mediterranean countries (including the countries analysed) have deepened due to the adoption of market-oriented reforms, the consequent reduction of public sector employment and spending on public sector services, and the impact of conflict and war (Sultana 2017). These more general trends influence the four countries analysed to a different extent as shown in the paragraphs below.

Table 2. Economic indicators

Indicators	Algeria	Jordan	Lebanon	Tunisia
Economic growth (GDP growth), 2023	4.1	2.6	-0.6	0.4
Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines (% of population)	5.5 (2011)	15.7 (2018)	27.4 (2012)	21 (2021)
Rural population (% total population), 2023	25	8	11	29

Source: World Bank, UNESCO 2023, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (2021), ETF (2023d). Most recent available data on poverty rates vary by year.

In relation to **economic growth** and share of the population living below the national **poverty** line, Algeria and Lebanon represent opposite ends of the spectrum. For example, Algeria exhibited positive developments achieving a GDP growth of 4.1% in 2023 as compared to -5% in 2020, which can be attributed to increased exports of both hydrocarbons and non-hydrocarbons, which has led to higher national foreign exchange reserves. The economic recovery of the country may have had a positive influence on reducing its poverty rate, which stood at 5.5% in 2011 (latest data available).

In Lebanon, 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. 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.

Regional and rural-urban disparities substantially contribute to overall economic inequalities since rural areas tend to experience higher poverty rates. As the Jordan country report notes and also ETF, 2024b, poverty in the country varies across governorates from 11% in Amman to 27% in Ma'an with rural and remote regions experiencing social vulnerability and geographic isolation. Individuals in these areas may have limited access to career guidance services and fewer opportunities for employment (Jordan Youth Innovation Forum, 2023). The report also highlights that the social status

of certain population groups can add on economic inequalities, for instance, marginalised Jordanian minorities and a significant number of registered Syrian refugees (around 86%) live below the poverty line whereby refugee children often rely on international assistance for basic needs.

Economic inequalities in Arab Mediterranean countries have deepened due to market-oriented reforms, reductions in public sector employment and services, and the impact of conflict and war. Addressing these disparities requires a balanced approach that promotes inclusive economic growth, strengthens social safety nets, and fosters stability and regional cooperation. By implementing comprehensive policies that address the root causes of inequality, Arab Mediterranean countries can create more equitable and prosperous societies for all.

4.3 Labour Market

Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Tunisia share some common labour market characteristics such as high youth unemployment and NEETs rate, a divide between formal and informal labour market, persisting gender disparities in employment opportunities, etc. The increased segmentation of labour markets implies that career guidance has to be attuned to the needs of various population groups.

Table 3. Labour market indicators

Indicators	Algeria	Jordan	Lebanon	Tunisia
Unemployment, total (% of total labour force) (modelled ILO estimate), 2023	11.8	17.9	29.6 (2022)	15.1
Unemployment, female (% of female labour force) (modelled ILO estimate), 2023	20.7	26.6	32.7 (2022)	20.5
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labour force ages 15-24) (modelled ILO estimate), 2023	30.8	40.8	47.8 (2022)	37.2 (2022)
Unemployment, youth female total (% of female labour force ages 15-24) (modelled ILO estimate), 2023	46	47.1	N/A	35.6
Share of NEETs as % of youth population 2022	21.1.9* (estimated)	31.5	29.1	22.6 (2023)
Share of NEETs as % of female youth population. 2022	31.1 (estimated)	36.1	32.1	20.8 (2023)
Unemployment with tertiary education (% of total labour force with tertiary education)	17.4 (2019)	27 (2022)	14 (2019)	22 (2023)
Unemployment with tertiary education, female (% of female labour force with tertiary education)	N/A	36 (2022)	17 (2019)	30 (2023)
Informal Employment (% of total employment; ILO), 2020	26.1 (2021)	53.4	55.3	44.8 (2022)

Source: World Bank, ETF (2024a, b, c, d); CAS/ILO (2022), ETF (2022)

From the four countries examined, Algeria showed the lowest unemployment rate - 11.8% for 2023 (down from 12.7% in 2021) and Lebanon - the highest 29.6% (2022) – which can be partly explained with the current economic and political situation in the countries. Overall, women face lower economic participation rates and higher unemployment rates compared to men, mostly due to traditional gender

roles and social constraints. For instance, the female unemployment rate ranged from 20.5% in Tunisia (2023) to 32.7% in Lebanon (2022).

Among all population groups, **young people are the most impacted by unemployment**: in 2023, roughly one in three young people were unemployed in Algeria (30.8%), while nearly half of Lebanon's youth were jobless in 2022 (47.8%), with Jordan and Tunisia falling in between. Unemployment rates are even higher among young women, ranging from 35.6% in Tunisia to 47.1% in Jordan in 2023. Additionally, high youth unemployment seems to positively correlate with the large proportion of young NEETs. According to estimations, 21.1.9% of youth fell into this category in 2022 in Algeria (ETF, 2023a)), compared to 31.5% in Jordan (2022), 29.1% in Lebanon (2022), and 22.6% in Tunisia (2023). Women and those with lower levels of education are overrepresented in these figures.

Unemployment among individuals with tertiary education is also a significant concern. Unemployment rates for this group were 17.4% in Algeria in 2019 (ETF 2023a), 27.6% in Jordan (2022), 29.4% in Lebanon (2022), and 22% in Tunisia (2023). As noted in the Algerian report, university graduates face the same employability difficulties as those from vocational training and NEETs due to the large flow of graduates linked, on the one hand, to the inclusiveness of the Algerian training and higher education system and, on the other hand, to the demographic explosion in the country, and the imbalance between supply and demand for employment. In Jordan, there is a notable disparity between the skills demanded by the labour market and those provided by the current higher academic education and the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system, which contributes to high unemployment rates among graduates.

Gender disparities are also found in the case of tertiary education graduates. For instance, in Tunisia, the unemployment rate for female graduates was nearly 2.5 times higher than that for males. One potential reason for this gap is the shift towards market-oriented reforms, which has reduced public sector job availability. It is worth noting that **public sector employment** remains relatively high accounting for an average of 26% of paid employment in Jordan, Lebanon, and Tunisia (2023)⁵. Many families, parents and potential spouses consider public sector jobs as more suitable and respectable for women compared to private sector roles, particularly due to how gender interactions are managed in these environments (Barnett, 2015). Furthermore, as public sector employment is viewed as highly desirable, young people tend to pursue degrees that lead to those positions instead of choosing education and training pathways aligned with the jobs currently available and in demand within the industry (ETF, 2015).

The presence of a parallel **informal sector** in the labour market is yet another characteristic of the SEMED countries analysed. According to most recent data available, informal unemployment accounted for 26.1% of total employment in Algeria in 2021 (ETF 2023a), for 53.4% of total employment in Jordan (2020), 55.3% in Lebanon (2020), and for 44.8% in Tunisia in 2022 (ETF 2023d). In Lebanon, 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, p.11). Another aspect of informality, as Sultana (2017) notes, is the way recruitment is often conducted i.e. it is widely acknowledged that across the Mediterranean, personal connections—'*who you know*'—play a significant role in career opportunities and might matter more than '*what you know*'.

4.4 Educational factors

Country reports and literature review highlight the following key characteristics of the schooling systems in the four countries: a) the selection, b) the low status of Vocational Education and Training (VET) and c) the disconnect between vocational and academic programmes and the skills demanded by the labour market.

⁵ Data for Algeria was not publicly available

Regarding selection, factors such as class, gender, and geographical location significantly influence the quality of schooling individuals can access, the learning outcomes they achieve, and the life paths and projects available to them (Sultana 2017). For instance, *'career destinations in Lebanon are largely determined by social class (the poor attend public sector institutions and populate the technical-vocational education system, while the affluent attend private sector institutions and patronise the elite universities) and the tracks students are channelled into by the highly structured education system'* (Vlaardingerbroek et al. 2017, p. 263).

Regarding vocational education and training, despite various efforts and initiatives to promote VET, it continues to be perceived as suitable for 'low achievers' only (see box below). Additionally, VET and higher education institutions often face challenges in aligning their programmes with the dynamic needs of the local and global labour markets.

Educational aspects can also correlate with political and economic factors as highlighted in the Lebanese report where the ongoing economic crisis, COVID-19, and the 2020 Beirut explosions have severely impacted the education sector with over 10% of the 1.2 million Lebanese children lacking access to education.

Status of VET in the countries explored

In **Algeria**, VET enrolment has doubled since the beginning of the 2000s, however VET still suffers from a poor image within society and is considered a second choice for dropouts from the education system. No pathways exist between general education and VET or between VET and higher education (ETF 2020).

In **Jordan**, the share of TVET students in upper-secondary education (ISCED level 3) has been stable over recent years, at around 10.5%, suggesting that the VET stream remains unattractive (ETF 2024b). Nevertheless, government policies continue to focus on promoting VET (Jordan Ministry of Labour, 2023).

In **Lebanon**, initial VET is more accessible but struggles with attractiveness due to societal perceptions that it is less valuable than academic education. Programs are available in both rural and urban areas, yet they often attract low-performing or at-risk students. Continuing VET is underdeveloped, with limited funding and support. Despite comparable progression and graduation rates, the lack of remedial and drop-out prevention programs in public VET schools necessitates improved support mechanisms. (Torino Process Report, ETF, 2023).

In **Tunisia**, as noted in the country report, young people have limited exposure to the workforce during their education, often prioritising diplomas for secure jobs. The expansion of higher education, particularly in certain branches, reflects the undervaluation of vocational training and education and a post-colonial cultural mindset favouring administrative roles (National Review Report Tunisia, 2024).

Sources: Various

4.5 Other factors

Political factors. Many Arab Mediterranean countries have experienced intense political destabilisation, leading to widespread insecurity that has affected the business environment and hindered job creation (Sultana, 2017). This is evident in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, as well as ongoing conflicts such as the civil war in Syria and the Gaza conflict. As indicated in the Lebanese report, the country's political and economic instability creates an uncertain environment for students and especially for university graduates and severely limit job prospects, leading to high unemployment rates among young people. As a result, career guidance often emphasises resilience and flexibility, with students being encouraged to pursue opportunities abroad or in sectors less affected by the country's economic crisis or via entrepreneurship. This makes career guidance even more essential but more demanding to implement effectively.

Socio-cultural factors have received less attention in the country reports, yet they are important to highlight due to their influence on individual career choices. For instance, the patriarchal family model, though increasingly contested, remains prevalent across Arabic Mediterranean countries. This is reflected in the perception of career guidance as a family matter (Sultana 2017). As highlighted in the Tunisian report, by offering support, advice, and guidance, parents and family elders have an impact on their children's career decisions. Based on their personal experiences, goals, and assessments of the demand in the labour market, they advise their kids to pursue specific academic programmes or vocational training. The absence of an organised approach to disseminating labour market and careers information can underscore the role of family and friends in passing on such information. As a result, many graduates arrive on a labour market that is already saturated with past graduates with the same speciality (Mejri et al. 2017, p.142).

Religion is another key factor to consider, for instance, the Jordan report highlights that ethnic and religious diversity in the country can affect career choices, as certain groups may experience different barriers to employment and career development support, such as Palestinian Jordanians, Circassians, Chechens, and various religious minorities (Jordan Ministry of Social Development, 2023). Religion offers an important epistemic lens through which work and career are often viewed as a 'calling' i.e. those who believe that engagement in work is a response to a calling from God, experience career differently from non-believers (Sultana 2017).

Environmental factors have been considered in the Jordan report highlighting that the country is confronted with ecological challenges, including water scarcity and environmental degradation. These issues will impact career development, as there is a growing emphasis on green jobs and sustainable practices.

4.6 System overviews

Country reports and international research point to a number of issues and aspects of the national career guidance systems studied:

In terms of **key policies**, Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Tunisia have implemented various strategies and frameworks to enhance career guidance and employment services. Algeria's approach to career guidance integrates two main components: a) an employment focus and b) entrepreneurship focus. The country adopted public policies and programmes addressing unemployment challenges, particularly among youth, by providing structured pathways to employment (e.g. through Graduate Integration Contracts, Professional Integration Contracts etc.) and by fostering entrepreneurial ventures (e.g. Entrepreneurship Development Centres, university incubators). Jordan has developed the National Career Guidance and Employment Strategy (2018-2023) which emphasises the importance of career guidance and counselling services and encourages coordination and collaboration among public and private stakeholders. The new "The National Strategy for Vocational and Career Guidance and Counselling" (2024 – 2033) has just been adopted. Lebanon has taken several steps to enhance career development support services through creating different legal frameworks and regulations primarily with the area of education. A National Strategic Framework for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) 2018-2022 was adopted to provide youth and workers with improved career opportunities (ETF, 2023c). Tunisia has implemented various programmes and strategies to improve workers' careers and skills including the 2023-2025 Development Plan aimed at enhancing career development. Of note is also the increasing role of the National Agency for Employment and Self-Employment (ANETI) in providing career guidance for unemployed and employed adults.

Career guidance and education in the four SEMED countries are primarily offered at the secondary and higher education levels. Regarding secondary education, Algeria organises national-level events to guide students in choosing future career paths. In order to support VET students, the country employs Guidance Counsellors for Assessment and Professional Integration (COEIP). Jordan

integrates individual career planning, skill development programs, internships, and job shadowing opportunities into school curricula. Lebanon has also integrated career education in formal education i.e. the country has been working on implementing career guidance activities and strengthening the role of career counsellors in public schools, both in general education and TVET⁶. Additionally, Tunisia utilises youth support officers in vocational training establishments of the Tunisian Agency for Vocational Training (ATFP).

In higher education, there is a growing focus on enhancing career readiness and entrepreneurship, with universities playing a central role in fostering these initiatives. For instance, Algeria has strengthened Entrepreneurship Development Centres within universities to encourage business creation. Jordan's National Career Guidance and Employment Strategy has facilitated the integration of entrepreneurship programmes into (higher) education institutions. Lebanese universities are establishing career centers to assist students in job searches and improve employability through counselling, informational events, job fairs, enterprise visits, and internships. Similarly, Tunisian universities offer entrepreneurial education programmes, create student entrepreneur centers (Pôles Étudiants Entrepreneurs, PEE), and host entrepreneurial competitions and events among others.

In all four countries, **NGOs and civil society organisations** play an important role in the provision of career guidance. Lebanon is a case in point - *'on the whole, where career guidance occurs in Lebanon, it is provided by non-government agencies and focuses mainly on the transition to university study'* (Vlaardingerbroek et al. 2017, p. 261). Organisations such as the Lebanese Red Cross and various NGOs provide career guidance and training programmes tailored to youth, focusing on job readiness and skill development. While recent policies integrate guidance into formal education. Much of the development in career guidance services is driven by **international partners** – such as the German Cooperation agency (GIZ), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), EU, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), UNICEF, etc. - through the provision of technical assistance, funding, capacity-building. For instance, the EU-funded Youth NEET program (2024-2026) for the Southern Mediterranean region was launched in 2024 by the ILO. Building on existing policies and inspired by the European Youth Guarantee, the program aims to design and pilot innovative interventions to support young NEETs' transition to decent work and living conditions. The downside of this is exemplified in the case of Jordan: *'Very often, and for too long a period of time, Jordan has been the recipient of sporadic investment with projects launched by NGOs or international organisations. These have, generally speaking, contributed towards the improvement of career guidance services, but it has proven difficult for the country to maintain the momentum once the project cycle and its financial support came to an end'* (Turcotte et al. 2017, p. 234). Thanks to new policies/strategies, this cycle shall be overcome now.

⁶ For example, Lebanon in cooperation with the ETF has piloted career guidance programs in 20 public schools, using European standards to shape curricula and equip students with digital and green skills, <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/news-and-events/news/30-years-30-stories-lebanon-building-resilience-through-career-guidance>

5. POLICY FRAMEWORKS – THE BACKBONE OF NATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT SYSTEMS

All countries explored have established policy and regulatory frameworks for career guidance. This chapter explores why, despite an obvious progress, career guidance still requires a clearly defined framework and coordination between multiple actors.

In **Jordan**, career development policies are formally integrated into various policy areas: education, TVET, adult learning, employment, and youth. At the national level, several laws, policies, and strategies shape the landscape of career development. The *National Career Guidance and Employment Strategy (2018-2023)*, developed by the Ministry of Labour, is a key strategic document emphasising the importance of career guidance and counselling services, vocational training, and lifelong learning opportunities, and encouraging coordination and collaboration among public and private stakeholders. The strategy has introduced an official definition of career guidance: ‘*a process that helps individuals make informed decisions about their education, training, and career choices, considering their interests, abilities, and aspirations*’, to support shared understanding and inform the development of related services and programmes. Although this strategy failed to deliver identifiable operational outputs, it has paved the way for the integration of entrepreneurship programmes into educational institutions, fostering an entrepreneurial mindset among students (TVSDC, 2024).

In 2024, a new strategy was approved: ‘*The National Strategy for Vocational and Career Guidance and Counselling*’ (2024 – 2033), developed by the Professional and Technical Skills Development Authority (TVSDC)⁷ with support from ILO and GIZ. This strategy is considered as a crucial component of the Jordanian Economic Modernisation Vision (2026-2033), which responds to increasing challenges faced by education, training systems, and the labour market due to global developments and labour changes⁸. The TVSDC strategy includes a detailed action plan, which distributes its objectives across four operational phases: the first involves immediate action on strategic objectives right after the launch of the National Strategy; the second focuses on goals that are preferable to work on after achieving some initial milestones and assessing their impact on target groups. The third phase induces the preparation stage, which involves providing necessary amount of qualified career guidance practitioners and resources such as manuals. Finally, the sustainability stage entails ongoing monitoring of activities, initiatives, and projects to ensure the sustained achievement of strategic goals (TVSDC, 2024). Despite these positive developments, a systematic mechanism enabling consistent collaboration among stakeholders is still missing, as noted in the country report.

Based on the country reports, the policy frameworks in Algeria, Lebanon, and Tunisia can be considered fragmented and it is difficult to assess the extent of progress made by each country:

In **Algeria**, career guidance integrates two main components: a) the orientation towards *employment*, implemented mainly by public institutions under the aegis of the Ministry of VET and the Ministry of Labour and b) the orientation towards *entrepreneurship*, supported by public bodies and structures of the Ministry of the Economy, higher education and scientific research institutions and public institutions of the Ministry of VET. Those components reflect the government's commitment to strengthening public employment services, recognising their essential role in managing the country's labour market. The legal framework of career guidance includes a series of laws and regulations designed to ensure guidance provision in the education and employment sectors (see box below). The country report does not provide insights on how various laws and regulations align in a career

⁷ The authority was established in 2019 to manage the technical and financial aspects of TVET management in Jordan

⁸ The ILO finalizes the development of the National Strategy for Career Counselling and Career Guidance. Retrieved from: <https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/ilo-finalizes-development-national-strategy-career-counselling-and-career>

guidance context, whether career guidance is explicitly referenced in employment-related legislation and whether there is a nationally agreed definition. Consequently, the extent of policy integration remains unclear.

Regulatory framework in Algeria (examples from the education sector)

The Guidance Law on VET (2008) stipulates that guidance is organised jointly between the public vocational training institution and the employer and candidates are referred to apprenticeships in accordance with their wishes and abilities. The *Direction de l'orientation des examens et des homologations* in the Ministry of VET is responsible for designing and implementing an integrated guidance system (including other sectors concerned) ensuring its periodic evaluation. Additionally, any applicant for (vocational) training may apply to a guidance counsellor available in each training establishment. The counsellor is obliged to inform learners about jobs, training and qualifications by providing them with the necessary advice.

The National Education Guidance Law (2008) provides for school guidance aimed at helping each pupil, throughout the schooling, to prepare his/her orientation according to individual aptitudes, aspirations, predispositions and the requirements of the socio-economic environment, enabling him/her gradually to build his/her personal project and to make informed school and professional choices. Counselling and information are provided by educators, teachers and school and vocational guidance counsellors in schools and specialised centres.

Source: *Revue du system d'orientation professionnelle: Algérie*, ETF (2025a)

In **Lebanon**, different legal frameworks and regulations have been created in order to enhance career development support services, however, there is still no comprehensive national career guidance policy. Nevertheless, to be highlighted are the ongoing efforts of the Department of Orientation and Pedagogical Supervision under the Ministry of Education and the Directorate General for VET to put career guidance high on the reform agenda. In 2023, the Lebanese government adopted the new *National Strategic Framework for TVET 2024-2029*, which represented an important step towards better collaboration between government institutions and stronger partnerships with the private sector. However, the strategy is not yet fully operationalised for several reasons, including the overall difficult situation in the country and the recent conflict.

Tunisia does not have an integrated career guidance system, even though several programmes and (draft) strategies are aimed directly or indirectly at improving workers' careers and skills. *The 2023-2025 Development Plan*⁹ considers human capital to be the foundation of Tunisia's inclusive development and relies on a wide-ranging system spread across several ministerial departments with the most important cross-cutting mechanism being that of the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training. According to the country report, the career development support scheme implicitly stems from three major strategies forming the basis of Tunisia's employment policy (see box below). Other ministries have their own specific programmes, for instance, school and university information counsellors, as well as education counsellors, are integrated into the educational and administrative staff, however, their roles and tasks are not specified in the respective regulations. The Ministry of Higher Education has been deploying for several years now the Higher Education Modernisation Project to Support Employability (*Projet de Modernisation de l'Enseignement Supérieur en Soutien à l'Employabilité, PromESes*).

As highlighted in the country report, the current diversity of programmes, some of which have proven their effectiveness, is an asset for implementing a new employment policy and putting an end to the dispersion of actions and their lack of coordination, thus helping to boost their effectiveness. The challenges facing Tunisia in terms of human capital development, career development and the fight

⁹ The 2023-2025 development plan is based on a vision called Tunisia 2035 and was adopted by the Council of Ministers on 09 March 2024

against unemployment, particularly among young graduates, call for greater efforts to put in place a regulatory framework that is inclusive and legible for all players in the labour market.

Employment strategies in Tunisia

The National Strategy for the Reform of the National Vocational Training System 2014-2018 was based on the idea that the promotion of human capital and career development must rely on a high-quality, equitable and inclusive education and training system. Although the strategy has included actions in the field of guidance (lifelong learning, bridges between courses, improved communication, etc.) it has never been implemented, evaluated or updated¹⁰. A main criticism of the strategy was that it focused solely on the employability of young people, neglecting the ongoing training of those already employed (ITCEQ 2018).

The National Employment Strategy - a draft strategy, initiated in 2016, still in the process of validation. It does not explicitly mention career guidance as a means for improving employability, but its ultimate objective is to respond to the need to offer decent jobs for all. The inability to validate and operationalise the draft strategy has handicapped government action to promote human capital. For several decades, this action has been fundamentally based on active labour market policies (ALMP). Admittedly, the names of such programmes change but their impact is weak and ineffective. The 'Contract for Integration into Professional Life' (*Contrat d'Insertion à la Vie Professionnelle*) remains the flagship programme that has endured through the various governments, but even this programme is increasingly criticised as an instrument that favours companies over jobseekers.

The National Entrepreneurship Strategy, validated in 2016. The operational plan for the strategy was launched in 2018, but the implementation of some of the programmes continues to be on hold due to the Covid-19 crisis and its aftermath. Career guidance is not explicitly mentioned in the strategy.

Source: National Career Development Support System Review Report: Tunisia, ETF (2025c)

¹⁰ http://www.emploi.gov.tn/uploads/pdf/Reforme_FP_Tunisie-Fr.pdf

6. COORDINATION AND COOPERATION MECHANISMS

Lifelong (career) guidance is an inherently cross-cutting policy area that highlights a crucial need for a comprehensive cross-sectoral, mobilising stakeholders from education, training, youth, employment, social sectors, and often involving international agencies - especially in low- and middle-income countries (ETF 2022a; ETF 2022b, ILO 2021, Sultana 2017).

Based on international research, comprehensive approach signals can include e.g.:

- **Strategic partnership(s).** In a career guidance context, strategic partnership involves managing policy and systems development across national, regional, and local levels (Cedefop 2008, ELGPN 2015, OECD 2004). At the national level, strategic partnerships can be formalised, for example, through the establishment of career guidance representative structures with a clear mandate, a delineated scope for coordination, and sustained cooperation among relevant actors (ILO 2021). In cases where formal entities are lacking, national lifelong guidance forums or cross-ministerial working groups, can still provide strategic coordination. It is important that national forums (government-initiated or bottom-up) align with national needs and ensure adequate resources for communication, documentation, and coordination efforts at all levels (ILO 2021).
- **Integrated service provision.** The shift of career guidance from a traditional service model to a transdisciplinary and collaborative network model (Kettunen and Felt, 2020) underscores the importance of delineating roles among service providers to minimise overlap and competition for resources, while promoting cooperative frameworks. Integrating service provision in shared spaces (e.g. one-stop centers providing career, employment, social, health and guidance services under one roof) encourages innovative 'public-private-people partnerships' (Kettunen and Felt, 2020). It can also provide for increased service transparency and accessibility especially with the support of digital tools (e.g. connecting labour market data, educational and training requirements, and occupational opportunities).

6.1 The situation in the SEMED countries analysed

The four national reviews highlight a growing recognition at the systemic level of the need for collaborative efforts and a comprehensive approach to career guidance. However, at the operational level, the countries continue to face fragmented career development support systems, with limited coordination among stakeholders.

Collaboration and coordination at a national level

Fostering structured partnerships with employers can enhance guidance services, ensuring they are responsive to both the individual's career needs and the employer's skills requirements (Arnkil, Spangar, & Vuorinen, 2017). For example, in **Algeria**, steps have been taken to enhance the cooperation between the Ministry of VET and the private sector, marked by agreements aimed at aligning education with industry needs. In 2024, a cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Higher Education and the Algerian Economic Renewal Council promoted collaboration between academic institutions and the economic sector, aiming to bridge the gap between universities and the workforce through technological innovation and scientific research applications. Additionally, the Ministry of Higher Education, alongside the Ministry of the Knowledge Economy, signed agreements enabling student support for patents, startup formation, and access to startup fund financing, showing a focus on innovation and entrepreneurship.

In **Jordan**, career development involves a diverse array of institutions, organisations, and bodies, but collaboration between them remains ad hoc, as noted in the country report, often tied to specific initiatives without a structured approach. While there is a shared understanding among policymakers and stakeholders across sectors about the importance of career guidance services, each sector's initiatives reflect its unique priorities, resources, and expertise. Nevertheless, strategic policy frameworks like the *National Career Guidance and Employment Strategy (2018-2023)* and *The National Strategy for Vocational and Career Guidance and Counselling (2024 – 2033)* can provide opportunities for enhancing collaborative efforts. In this context, public-private partnerships play a crucial role in funding and delivering career guidance and employability development services, contributing to a more holistic approach to career guidance.

Increasing role of public private partnerships in Jordan

Public private partnerships have materialised since 2019 through the 15 Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), established by the TVSDC in key economic sectors: ICT, construction, water and energy, agriculture, logistics, garment and leather, plastic and rubber, hospitality and tourism, food, jewellery, and cosmetics. SSCs gather representatives of private sector enterprises, Chambers of Commerce and Industry, trade unions and the Ministry of Labour in order to better engage the private sector to provide market intelligence and thus inform the curricula and programmes for TVET and academic education.

Source: ILO, 2019, 2020.

In **Lebanon**, there has been great effort in the last years from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and DGVTE to move towards a more integrated national policy and a coordination framework to be put in place including the allocation of a specific role to follow career guidance at school level both for VET and general education. The country report draws on efforts towards strengthening partnerships with employers including job fairs for university and TVET students serving as primary platforms for student-employer connections, thus making them critical for career placement in the country. NGOs play an essential role in career guidance, targeting high school and university students with the provision of training in entrepreneurial and soft skills.

In **Tunisia**, mainly governmental institutions and their supervisory agencies occasionally collaborate and are active in providing help for career development. So far, social partners have a limited role, except for participating in job fairs organised by governmental institutions, to help with job advice and information. This can be partly attributed to the general perceptions of career guidance as only related to guidance for vocational training, but it's also a result of the country's overabundance of graduates, especially those with higher education. Based on agreements with employers' unions, Tunisian universities have implemented employability-focused measures, such as co-created curricula and compulsory internships, yet overall public-private alignment for employability remains inconsistent.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) are critical for outreach, career guidance, and employability services, especially for vulnerable groups, dropouts, and underserved areas. However, their impact is limited by funding instability, resource constraints, and minimal involvement of the private sector. Given the fragmented career guidance landscape in the country, the national review highlights the benefits of establishing a national resource centre that could centralise and coordinate career guidance services, linking them with education, employment, and the youth and social sectors. It also suggests the development and implementation of a national lifelong guidance strategy including the set-up of a formalised working group integrating governmental and non-governmental organisations, education providers, international organizations and funding bodies as well as civil society organisations.

Collaboration and coordination at a local (regional) level

Much like the situation in the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership countries (ETF 2022a; ETF 2022b), examples of successful national coordination and collaboration are relatively uncommon across the SEMED countries covered. However, local collaborations (some of which supported by external donor funding, technical assistance, and expertise) tend to be effective in addressing community-specific career needs. For instance:

- In **Jordan**, local NGOs, educational institutions, and government agencies often work together closely to address the unique career development needs of their communities, leveraging local resources and expertise to maximise impact and effectiveness. These forms of collaboration are driven by a shared commitment to supporting youth and fostering economic growth at the grassroots level. For instance, career guidance centres cooperate with schools, PES, and local businesses to provide comprehensive support to students and job seekers, offering vocational assessments, counselling, and job placement assistance. Centers like the Queen Rania Center for Entrepreneurship and the Jordan Career Education Foundation play critical roles in youth support, offering guidance, counselling, and training in entrepreneurship and job skills. Positioned strategically in urban and suburban areas, these centers assist students, job seekers, and aspiring entrepreneurs across Jordan.
- In **Lebanon**, NGOs act as a bridge for vulnerable groups, complementing government efforts through parallel mechanisms as highlighted in the national review. These organisations design specialised programs to support marginalised and disadvantaged groups, including NEETs, refugees, and individuals with disabilities, by providing employment assistance and career guidance (e.g. the NGO 'ShareQ'). The Lebanese Red Cross and other NGOs offer youth-focused career guidance and training programs that emphasise job readiness and skill development. Such initiatives increased significantly following COVID-19 and the financial crisis in Lebanon.
- The **Tunisian** national review explains that NGOs typically emerge as a response to government shortcomings in addressing basic needs, protecting human rights, or improving quality of life. A few organisations aim to support the Agency for Employment and Self-employment in its efforts to facilitate the professional integration of job seekers. These include the Local Development Association Kalaat Andalous (Association Locale pour le Développement Kalaat el Andalous), the Association for Supporting Development Initiatives (Appui aux initiatives de développement, AID), the Association for the Professional Formation of Adolescents (AFPA), and the Tunisian Young Chamber of Commerce (La Jeune Chambre Internationale de Tunisie, JCI), among others.

Cooperation with international donor/cooperation institutions

Much of the career guidance and employability support in the countries explored depends on external donor funding. While these initiatives may be effective at the local level (e.g. through securing the endorsement and involvement of national institutions, creating a range of inter-sectoral linkages at the municipal or regional level), they often struggle with issues related to sustainability and long-term impact. Examples of donor-funded initiatives are provided below.

International cooperation initiatives (examples)

In **Algeria**, The Chamber of Crafts, through an ILO agreement, currently offers training to craftspeople in business management, alongside partnerships with local associations to improve communication with authorities. The AEDA project (2019-2024) aims to support the Ministry of VET, and certain universities, through its collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education, to improve the employability of graduates of vocational institutes and universities in targeted areas, in connection with energy efficiency, energy management and renewable energies.

In **Jordan**, the World Bank's operation 'Modernising Education, Skills, and Administrative Reforms (MASAR) Operation' will aim to improve access to foundational learning and to labour market-relevant technical and vocational education and training and enhance the efficiency of the education sector management. The MASAR comes in support for the implementation of the SMART (education and its outcomes) component of the Economic Modernisation Vision (2026-2033).

In **Lebanon**, The Education Development Center is a global non-profit organisation that advances lasting solutions to improve education, promote health, and expand economic opportunity. It is currently implementing USAID's five-year Higher Education Capacity Development (HECD) programme¹¹, which supports Lebanese higher education institutions in improving their administrative, academic, and job readiness capacity to better prepare graduates for employment and success in the labour market.

Tunisia's employability goals are actively supported by UNDP, EU, ILO, the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) through initiatives that enhance vocational education, foster entrepreneurship, and promote skill alignment with market needs. For example, since 1996 AFD has supported the establishment/rehabilitation of 28 training centres, run in dialogue with the private sector. The PAFIP project (*Programme d'Appui à la Formation et à l'Insertion Professionnelle*) focuses on four employment areas in the North and East of the country and on the 'industry' sector and is based on both an enhanced strategic management by the ministry and a strong territorial establishment of the reform.

Source: National Career Development Support System Review Reports: Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, ETF (2025a, 2025b, 2025c, 2025d)

¹¹ <https://sites.google.com/edc.org/hecd/overview>

7. MAIN SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

This chapter will document the contexts where career guidance is offered (e.g. in educational, employment, and community settings) in the countries analysed, also highlighting some examples of interesting practices, reported in the national reviews.

7.1 Education, training and work-based learning

In the SEMED countries studied, much of the career guidance and career education takes place within the context of secondary (general and vocational) and higher education. There are various ways in which these services are delivered, with notable differences such as: whether the programme begins at the secondary level or earlier, whether it is focused on key transition points within the school cycle (such as deciding between entering the workforce and pursuing higher education) or whether it is provided continuously throughout the educational journey in a more integrated way (ETF 2022a).

Primary and general secondary education

In all four countries studied career guidance and education are primarily offered at the secondary school level. **Jordan**, however, is an exception by introducing a range of activities as early as primary school. For instance, primary students engage in career counselling sessions designed to explore different career options which usually take place toward the end of primary education. The aim is to give students sufficient time to reflect on their interests and start considering possible career paths before moving on to secondary school. The sessions are typically facilitated by trained subject teachers or external career guidance experts from the Ministry of Labour's Career Guidance and Counselling Section. At the secondary level, guidance provision becomes more elaborated including: individual career planning, tailored to students' specific needs and goals, skill development programmes (e.g. workshops, projects, or extracurricular activities) with a focus on developing essential skills for the workplace, internship and job shadowing opportunities (often in collaboration with local businesses or community organisations), mentoring programmes as well as psychometric tests. It must be noted though that career guidance services are not uniformly mandatory in every school, and their quality and consistency vary by school.

Lebanon is currently building its framework, indicating a growing awareness and potential with the development of a Career Guidance Focal Point (CGFP) – to be put soon in place by the Department of Educational Guidance at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. The CGFP is a dedicated professional member of the school's community of specialists who will be in charge of creating, implementing, and reviewing career counselling and guidance programmes that support students' needs. Additionally, CGFP's activities will also include collaboration with internal and external stakeholders such as the School Director, parents, and universities to help students achieve their full potential. This role builds upon the experience of VET where Guidance Employment Officers are already present in several schools with a great potential to scale it up at national level.

Algeria and Tunisia have more generalised support. For instance, schools in **Algeria** organise national-level events in collaboration with universities and directorates of national education to guide and raise awareness among students to choose their future career path. The country report does not provide further information on individual or tailored support available for students. In **Tunisia**, career guidance was introduced through the 1991 education system reform, including the creation of the 'Regional Teacher Coordinator for School and University Guidance' in 1992. The reform was followed by the establishment of a professional body, the Information and Guidance Counsellors (IGC), established at the Ministry of Education in 1993. IGC provides informational guidance on different specialty streams in the baccalaureate through periodic visits to educational institutions, targeting secondary school students. However, the body does not provide accompanying, mentoring, or

advising services. The promulgation of the 2002 Education and Teaching Law ensured student's right to information and included a two-stage orientation services (provided in the first and second year of secondary school) as well as reorientation services (offered at the end of the second year of secondary school in case of successful completion). Listening and counseling offices were established to complement these services. By 2010, Tunisia had 200 such offices serving 500 colleges and secondary schools. However, by 2022, only 6% of these offices remained operational, and even those lacked psychologists or sociologists. Since 2002, no mechanisms have been implemented to provide individualised support and mentoring, resulting in a growing gap between the needs of the labour market and the educational system in Tunisia. As highlighted in the national review, this gap results in unemployment, early school dropout, distorted perception of vocational training, lack of choice for university orientation, and difficulty in university reorientation. Outside school, guidance for young people is often provided by associations and NGOs.

Technical Vocational Education and Training

All four countries have established formal institutions and frameworks dedicated to vocational education and training and guidance, supported by government ministries or specialised agencies. The role of guidance counsellors, training advisors, and support offices is crucial in providing structured support for students. For example, in **Algeria**, the Guidance Counsellor for Assessment and Professional Integration (COEIP), available in each training establishment, advises learners on jobs, training and qualifications. COEIPs also help learners to select training in line with their intellectual and physical capacities, and to follow the training successfully to prepare for professional integration, as the country report states.

VET institutions in **Jordan**, provide specialised career guidance services including tailored vocational guidance programmes that coincide with the stages of students' growth and maturity providing comprehensive support throughout students' vocational educational journeys. Furthermore, vocational guidance is integrated into educational activities, curricula, and teaching throughout the academic year, providing information and support for career decision-making.

In **Lebanon**, career guidance is offered to students and parents in a selected number of schools through the Guidance and Employment Office (GEO) and GEO Officer. Mainly, the GEO is responsible for the students' orientation before they start their vocational training and education, and then for monitoring students' growth both on a personal and professional level.

In **Tunisia**, vocational guidance is provided by the 101 youth support officers in vocational training establishments of the Tunisian Agency for Vocational Training (ATFP). In 2021, the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training has designated nine vocational training centres as entrepreneurship training centres. However, youth interest remains low, and start-ups struggle to address graduate unemployment, particularly outside the engineering field.

Informal support

Informal support outside traditional school systems has also been reported in the national reviews, for instance, the delivery of non-formal VET in **Lebanon** i.e. typically short-term programmes aimed at youth who may have dropped out of school. These programmes have a focus on immediate job placement in industries that require skilled labour but not formal education credentials. In **Tunisia**, under the supervision of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, youth animators have been tasked with providing informal information and advice to school dropouts who attend youth centres (450 centres nationwide) on accessing vocational training and job market opportunities.

Source: National Career Development Support System Review Reports: Lebanon, Tunisia, ETF (2025c, 2025d)

In terms of guidance delivery, all countries emphasise some level of guidance both before and throughout training, for instance, in **Algeria** and **Lebanon**, support begins with orientation and extends through students' vocational education. However, follow-up guidance has not been reported in any of the countries. Additionally, common across all four countries is the provision of career orientation services that include information about job opportunities, educational pathways, and training programmes. Counselling and psychological support is mentioned specifically in **Algeria**, where COEIP supports students psychologically to prevent dropout and demotivation. Services that prepare students for the job market, including job search techniques and CV writing, are noted in both **Lebanon** and **Tunisia**. Furthermore, **Jordan** and **Lebanon** integrate career events like job fairs to expose students to potential employers.

Regarding level of individual support, **Algeria** and **Jordan** provide tailored support through counsellors and structured orientation processes. **Tunisia** lacks individualised support mechanisms, leading to gaps in effectively helping students navigate their career paths. **Lebanon** offers targeted support via GEOs, but only in a limited number of schools given the difficult situation the country is facing now from some years.

Higher Education

A common feature across the countries studied is their effort to bolster career readiness and entrepreneurship among university students. While Algeria and Tunisia show a stronger focus on entrepreneurship, with developed infrastructure and funding support (e.g. Algeria), Lebanon and Jordan emphasise the role of career centres.

In **Algeria**, the Ministry's strategy for fostering university entrepreneurship includes the introduction of the University Diploma-Start-up and the University Diploma-Invention Patent. To support this, 96 university incubators across the country provide training, personalised coaching, and assistance for innovators and spin-offs to launch their start-up projects. By the end of the 2022-2023 academic year, over 2,240 innovative projects were recorded, with more than 700 eligible for micro-enterprise funding from the National Agency for Support and Development of Entrepreneurship (NESDA). Additionally, in 2023, the Higher Education Authority, partnering with the knowledge economy sector, established Centres de Développement de l'Entrepreneuriat (CDEs). Collaborating closely with NESDA, these centers focus on training and supporting MSME project leaders and university graduates (aged 18-55) to secure funding. Funding for approved projects can reach up to 10 million dinars (approx. 70 thousand euros). Since their launch in February in 2024, the CDEs have trained over 2,000 SME project leaders and held numerous awareness sessions at national higher education institutions. Additionally, universities along with the Career Development Centres, assist Algerian academics by providing job-search training, organising job fairs, forming business clubs for alumni entrepreneurs, and facilitating internships. Moreover, universities can host (guidance) activities tailored for individuals with special needs.

Tunisian universities are increasingly supporting entrepreneurship (in parallel to PES) through launching entrepreneurial education programmes or dedicated teaching units, launching of student entrepreneur centres supported by *Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie*, the organisation of entrepreneurial competitions and events, often in collaboration with student clubs, and partnerships with industry, local businesses, associations, and NGOs. In addition, the Ministry of Higher Education provides a range of career guidance and development services. Yet for several of them the country report identified some challenges:

- University entry information provided to students who have passed their baccalaureate (i.e. on choosing an academic career) is largely computerised, based on scores and institutional capacities and thus, does not align with individual's aspirations and labour market needs.
- University Career Centers (4C) offer guidance on academic and career choices, support for CV creation, internships, and workshops on language, IT, and soft skills. Despite positive reception for

aiding job market readiness, sustainability issues arise due to the lack of a comprehensive regulatory framework and reliance on limited, voluntary resources.

- Most university programmes require students to complete an internship in their field, which are typically unpaid and increasingly difficult to secure in certain disciplines.
- Jointly developed education programs involving professional organizations to align with market needs and enhance employability, are dependent on the willingness of industry partners.
- Professional placement studies, conducted under the Project for the Modernisation of Higher Education, aim to track graduate employability. Some universities have performed these analyses through their observatories¹², while others have not.

Career Guidance and Alumni Offices in **Jordan** provide training and career counselling for university students, including training programmes and extracurricular activities such as volunteer work. There are 27 such offices in both public and private universities, acting as key hubs for career development. These offices enhance students' employability by fostering partnerships with public and private sectors, NGOs, and international organisations. Activities like job fairs and networking events help connect students and graduates with potential employers. Endorsements from the Higher Education Accreditation Commission, integration of alumni office roles, and formal agreements with universities highlight efforts to standardise and improve service quality.

In **Lebanon**, public schools and universities lack formal career services or have more limited offerings (with alumni networks playing a significant role in career development), whereas private universities have dedicated career services offices providing career counselling and coaching, workshops and seminars on job search strategies, etc. Most universities, both public and private, organise job fairs that connect students with leading companies that introduce their fields and collect internship applications, aiding students in exploring career opportunities. Additionally, some universities hold annual summer camps for career exploration. Internships are also integrated as a mandatory course in university programmes, requiring students to find relevant company placements.

7.2 Support to unemployed, NEETs and other vulnerable groups

Support to unemployed

The studied SEMED countries show promising initiatives regarding guidance for job seekers and unemployed, with public employment services often playing a crucial role (e.g. through ALMPs). Nevertheless, enhanced collaboration among public and private sectors, better resource allocation, and tailored policies that address gender and regional disparities could improve outcomes in all countries.

The **Algerian** national review highlights that the introduction of unemployment benefits for first-time jobseekers (ages 19-40) in 2023 marked a significant policy shift. One year after its launch, nearly 320,000 of the two million beneficiaries had been oriented into employment with 30,000 of them (9%) benefiting from stable jobs, and 117,000 beneficiaries were trained according to market needs. Additionally, under an agreement between the Ministry of VET and the Ministry of Labour, recipients of unemployment benefits who never acquired qualifications are eligible for vocational training. The National Employment Agency (ANEM), active since 2006, manages various public schemes. For example, the Employment Integration Assistance Scheme, introduced in 2008 includes graduate (CID), vocational (CIP), and training-integration (CFI) contracts, enabling over 325,000 individuals to secure permanent positions. Despite progress, the scheme's dependence on employer commitment

¹² University observatories were established by a ministerial decree in 2008 with the purpose to collect quantitative and qualitative information aimed at producing analysis tools, decision-making aids, and strategic guidance for the benefit of the university and its stakeholders. The rate of active observatories is very low due to the institutional vacuum that characterises them

for contract extensions and training integration poses challenges (National Review Report: Algeria, 2024).

In **Jordan**, the public employment service mandates career guidance and job search assistance for beneficiaries of unemployment or social benefits, tailored by regulations considering factors like benefit duration and employment history. These services include one-on-one career counselling, training, workshops to improve job readiness, and access to labor market information. Additionally, they offer job placement assistance to match individuals with vacancies and conduct outreach activities, targeting inactive groups like women, individuals with disabilities, illiterate individuals, and NEETs (ILO, 2023). Dedicated personnel, which may include both career guidance experts and PES case workers, are responsible for providing guidance services. Furthermore, the development of the National Employment Platform (Sajjil) aims to provide a centralised hub for job seekers and employers to connect, access training resources, and stay informed about labour market trends. Despite these offers, PES faces some limitations, as noted in the country report, including limited coverage for certain groups such as the long-term unemployed or low-qualified individuals and faces resource constraints in terms of funding and staffing, which may affect the extent and quality of the services provided.

The National Employment Office (NEO) in **Lebanon** is by law the only institution that is allowed to provide labour intermediation services. It is primarily responsible for employment-related policymaking, job matching and placement through its employment offices. It should also provide basic career counselling and job placement services, mainly targeting job seekers, but also employ individuals looking to change careers or upskill. However, as noted in the national country review, NEO still does not have the human and technical capabilities to adequately perform its tasks.

In **Tunisia**, the Agency for Employment and Self-Employment (ANETI) mediates between job supply and demand, supports entrepreneurs, youth seeking vocational training, and collaborates with training organisations to enhance jobseekers' skills. Given the weakness and ineffectiveness of the career guidance system in higher education, ANETI offices were the first to call for graduates for first conversations about their careers. The Agency also collects and disseminates labour market-related information for businesses and job seekers and is responsible for the management of ALMPs.

Despite the laudable objectives of all the initiatives aimed to support jobseekers, there are some shortcomings as highlighted in the national review - in addition to budgetary and financial constraints, there is a lack of efficiency in the creation of sustainable and equitable jobs (in terms of gender and geographical distribution), insufficient coordination between the various players involved (other ministries, businesses, civil society organisations, the education system, international organisations, etc.), a poor match with the needs of the labour market, issues of governance and transparency, etc.

Entrepreneurship support in Tunisia

Entrepreneurs wishing to create their own business are supported through the 'entrepreneurial centers'¹³ (22 throughout the country) aimed at promoting the entrepreneurial spirit and self-employment through support mechanisms (training and access to financing). The Startup Tunisia programme, supporting innovation-driven start-ups, boasts over 900 accredited businesses, with 35% led by women as of 2023. However, the entrepreneurial ecosystem remains hindered by administrative burdens and financing difficulties. Gender disparities are notable, with female entrepreneurship rates below 10%.

Source: National Career Development Support System Review Report: Tunisia, ETF (2025c)

¹³ The Entrepreneurial Space aimed at promoting the entrepreneurial spirit and independent work. These centers are installed in the capitals of each governorate

Support to NEETs and other disadvantaged groups

As already noted, in all examined countries, a significant proportion of young people are not engaged in education, employment, or training with women and individuals with lower levels of education being disproportionately affected. To tackle youth unemployment, social integration, and support for vulnerable populations, Algeria and Tunisia implement predominantly state-led frameworks, characterised by a range of public schemes; Jordan emphasises the collaborative efforts of key stakeholders, and Lebanon shows an NGO-centric model, underscoring on a critical area for state intervention. Donor-funded initiatives play an important role in all four countries.

In **Algeria**, the 2009 *Social Integration Activity Scheme (DAIS)* targets individuals aged 18 to 60 facing social hardship, placing them in temporary public and social utility jobs. Local development actors, including authorities, businesses, and craftsmen, lead these efforts to integrate resource-poor individuals, especially early school leavers, and combat poverty, social exclusion, and marginalisation. Additionally, the Ministry of Economy oversees *The Microcredit scheme* to promote economic and social inclusion for individuals 18 and older, including those without income (e.g. housewives, people with special needs, victims of national tragedies, ex-prisoners, returnees, people living with HIV/AIDS, artisans, and graduates). Objectives include reducing unemployment and poverty through self-employment, home-based work, and crafts, particularly among women; supporting rural stability through income-generating activities; promoting local skills and production; and training in managing income-generating projects. Finally, *The Law on the Promotion and Integration of Persons with Special Needs* ensures their social and professional inclusion by mandating job creation and guaranteeing a minimum income. The State supports this through special education and socio-pedagogical assistance via 239 institutions and 17 annexes under the national solidarity sector - "annexes" meaning agencies or offices which operate alongside the 239 establishments mentioned that are often attached to one of the latter. The law requires 1% of workforce positions to be reserved for this group, a rate that interest associations (e.g. CASAM) advocate increasing for better integration and care.

In **Jordan**, identifying and supporting NEETs is a coordinated effort among stakeholders. The Ministry of Labour, educational institutions, local authorities, and NGOs identify NEETs through data collection and outreach. Identified individuals receive personalised career counselling to explore tailored educational and job options. Skills development workshops provide technical and soft skills training to boost employability. Job placement services, supported by the PES and local business partnerships, link NEETs to jobs or apprenticeships.

In **Lebanon**, career guidance for NEETs is primarily provided by NGOs and local organisations due to challenges in data collection. Employment opportunities for youth have become scarce, making career guidance essential. On one hand, competition for low-paid or informal jobs increases vulnerability; on the other, young people with foreign backgrounds often distrust the Lebanese education system and prefer early employment to support themselves instead of continuing their studies. 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.

In **Tunisia**, the 2024 agreement between the Tunisian Agency for Vocational Training (ATFP) and the Tunisian Organisation for Education and Family (OTEF)¹⁴ can be seen as an important step in addressing youth disengagement and promoting inclusive education and training. The agreement aims to align educational and recreational activities with ATFP programmes, support dropouts by integrating them into vocational or educational institutions and assist trainees with special needs through social and psychological clubs. The national country review highlights that enhancing active

¹⁴ OTEF is responsible for guiding youth and helping them succeed academically and make informed career choices

employment policies for NEETs requires strengthening existing support measures, including personalised job-seeker assistance considering also a gender perspective¹⁵.

Cap jeunesse in Algeria

The PAJE programme (Programme d'Appui Jeunesse Emploi), co-funded by the EU established information and guidance spaces (Cap jeunesse) to support inactive youth, job seekers, and NEETs, fostering also local and regional development. Cap jeunesse, launched in Annaba, Béchar, Khenchela, and Oran, offered three main services: career guidance for youth integration, voluntary activity development, and entrepreneurship promotion.

Source: Revue du system d'orientation professionnelle: Algérie, ETF (2025a)

Initiatives for vulnerable groups in Jordan and Tunisia

In **Jordan**, programmes tailored for NEETs, women, individuals with disabilities, and refugees are often run by PES or NGOs with government or donor funding. For example, the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development and the Jordanian Women's Union, provide guidance, advocacy, and awareness for vulnerable groups.

In **Tunisia**, the Ministry for the Family, Women, Children, and the Elderly launched Raidat, a programme promoting women's entrepreneurship to help unemployed women achieve financial stability, and the Ministry of Social Affairs supports disabled individuals, especially the blind, through specialised institutions.

Source: National Career Development Support System Review Reports: Jordan, Tunisia, ETF (2025b, 2025c)

7.3 Support to workers / employed

Based on the information available from the national reviews, **Jordan** shows the most diversified approach to career guidance services for workers catering to a wide range of target groups, including formally employed individuals, those employed in the informal economy, and the self-employed. In **Lebanon**, while career guidance services are available, they remain fragmented and limited in scope, resulting in some dependency on NGOs and international organisations. **Tunisia** offers structured career training through the National Center of Continual Training and Professional Promotion (CNFCPP), which serves businesses, workers, and professionals, including federations and chambers of commerce. The **Algerian** country report did not address support to workers/employed.

In **Jordan**, enterprises are encouraged to foster employees' career management skills, with best practices like career talks, skills assessments, and the creation of personal development plans. Emphasis is also placed on nurturing a culture of in-company learning and continuous professional growth. Support for MSMEs with limited resources for career development includes facilitating partnerships with trade unions and professional associations to provide sector-specific skills assessments, forecasts, and continuous professional development opportunities. However, a main challenge may reside in the fact that many MSMEs do not view skills upgrading as an employee entitlement or link it to career progression. The concept of ongoing professional development, especially during working hours, is not well-established (ILO, 2020). Trade unions occasionally provide career guidance during large-scale layoffs or closures to assist workers in finding new employment

¹⁵ According to a study carried out by the United Nations, women spend more time in NEET situations than men, despite having a relatively higher level of education https://tunisia.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/R/C3%A9sum%C3%A9%20analytique_Les%20NEET%20en%20chiffres_Nov%202023.pdf

opportunities. Additionally, the Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission is vital in formalising and recognising non-formal and informal learning, especially in specific industries. Initiatives supporting workers in the informal economy include raising awareness among this group with a focus on the opportunities available to access skills development, qualifications, decent work, and social protection. These initiatives often involve partnerships with NGOs and community-based organisations and are targeted at rural populations and individuals performing domestic work, particularly women. Finally, free of cost services such as business incubation, mentorship programmes, and online training and professional development are available to self-employed individuals (e.g. Jordan Enterprise Development Corporation).

In **Lebanon**, some NGOs and international organisations offer career counselling and guidance for employees in vulnerable sectors including workshops, career assessments, and advice on transitioning to other industries or sectors. A few private companies offer in-house career development programmes for their employees with a focus on leadership training, mentorship programmes, and career counselling aimed at fostering internal mobility or personal growth. The Chambers of Commerce (e.g. Chamber of Commerce of Beirut and Mount Lebanon) organise awareness raising activities that highlight the benefits of investing in employee training and fostering open corporate cultures. Some vocational institutions offer evening or part-time training programmes for employed individuals looking to enhance their skills or shift careers, often complemented by career guidance on pathways and job opportunities. Additionally, some international donor-funded programmes provide career guidance as part of broader workforce development efforts, focusing on upskilling or transitioning to new industries, particularly for workers in unstable sectors like construction or agriculture.

In **Tunisia**, the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training (MFPE) is in charge of supporting employee career development through the National Center of Continual Training and Professional Promotion. The CNFCPP collaborates with the Institutes for Higher Vocational Training - a network of university organisations and training centers, to offer training courses with approved diplomas. The initiative *Caisse de Dépôt et de Consignation* has developed innovative financing mechanisms to retain startups and talent in the country (e.g., Flywheel programme, Deal and Sail mechanisms, creation of Anava fund of funds etc.). However, the national review suggests that greater efforts are needed in regulation, the business environment, and talent retention policies (salary alignment, recognition and skills valorisation, personal career plans, creation of professional development opportunities, etc.). The Tunisian Agency for Technical Cooperation facilitates job placements between Tunisian employees and employers abroad, especially in Arab and African nations, via a vacancy platform. The Tunisian-German Chamber of Industry and Commerce has implemented the '*Centre d'Orientation et de Reconversion Professionnelle*' project to support public services in vocational guidance, career retraining, workforce training and intermediation between job supply and demand. Sector-specific initiatives by supervisory ministries also support career guidance and retraining (e.g. career guidance and retraining fairs, ICT sector services spearheaded by the Ministry of Communication Technologies).

8. FUNDING MECHANISMS

Funding is a key element of developing and enhancing national career development support systems. Characteristically, system development for career development support systems involves establishing and maintaining funding mechanisms for human resources, provision of facilities, various resources and supporting materials on institutional and national levels. The institutional frameworks and funding sources for establishing and maintaining career development support systems across Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Tunisia include a combination of state funding, international agencies and donor funding, along with a limited, but growing private sector involvement.

Table 4. Funding characteristics

Aspect	Algeria	Jordan	Lebanon	Tunisia
Diversity of funding	State, international	State, levy, international	Heavily international, NGOs	State, international
Focus of state funding	Public services for career guidance	School-based programmes, PES, outreach	Career information and guidance services	Public services for career guidance
Focus of international collaboration	Structural reforms	Capacity building	Multiple areas	Structural reforms
Areas of focus	Innovation ecosystems	Capacity building in HE and VET, regional projects	Multiple areas	Employability

Source: National Career Development Support System Review Reports: Tunisia, Algeria, Lebanon, Jordan, ETF (2025a, 2025b, 2025c, 2025d)

8.1 State funding

State funding for career guidance is a common feature across the four countries although the extent of reliance on state funding varies. While in **Tunisia** and **Algeria** the public career guidance services are primarily state funded, in **Lebanon**, the financial crises constrain state budgets for career services. In **Jordan**, government funding is earmarked for school-based programmes, public employment services, and outreach to vulnerable groups. A similarly common feature across these countries is the involvement of multiple ministries and public agencies in the system, making coordination of efforts a must.

In **Tunisia**, state funding is central for initiatives like the employment programmes, entrepreneurship support, and career guidance services. While career guidance services are not specifically identified for specific allocation of funds, the country's *National Employment Fund* supports various programmes such as the employment contract programme, programmes for higher education graduates, career guidance services, along with funds earmarked for small project financing for entrepreneurial support. Similarly, in **Algeria** the state is also a primary funder of career guidance and development services through multiple ministries. In contrast, in **Lebanon**, the provision of government funding for such services is being compounded by financial crises. The centrally available funds are primarily allocated to costs related to infrastructure and staff salaries across the system.

Varying degrees of financial constraints affecting career guidance across the four countries have led to the shared challenges of restricted opportunities for service expansion, particularly for underserved areas. Additional challenges often include limited funds available for innovative initiatives, resource

and staffing difficulties, such as insufficient number of trained practitioners available for a country-wide service provision.

8.2 Non-state funding

Non-state sources of funding are present in all four countries with international organisations and donor funding constituting the largest share, along with a smaller degree of private sector involvement.

In contrast, **Jordan** has more diversity in its funding mechanisms where levy-based national and sectoral training funds also supplement state funding. These funds provide resources for vocational training programmes, skills development initiatives, and for the expansion of career guidance services.

Funding by international organisations and donors in the four countries often provide pivotal supplement for national budgets, with projects and initiatives focusing on such areas as employability, alignment of vocational education and training to labour market needs, and entrepreneurship support. Tunisia and Algeria appear to leverage such funds for structural reforms aiming to enhance specific areas pertaining to career guidance. In **Tunisia**, the Modernisation of Higher Education in Support of Employability project (PromESsE) has been co-funded by the Tunisian government and the World Bank. As part of the project, a number of Career Centres and Competence Certification Centres (4C) have been established across the country on a pilot basis. In **Algeria**, areas of focus include employment, entrepreneurship, and youth leadership. The EU-funded SAFIR project is an example for the latter, where among the recently completed project's key results, 8 local incubators were established to consolidate and standardise support methods.

While such international and donor support offers valuable and often critical additional funding, strong reliance on these sources for supplementing government funding can raise sustainability concerns, especially post-project completion. The embedding and sustainability of outcomes may be enhanced through increased engagement of key local stakeholders to ensure alignment with local/regional needs and contexts.

Although the contributions of private actors to the overall career guidance budgets are modest across the four countries to date, it is still valuable to note this form of non-state funding and contribution. While these may be small-scale in terms of funding volume to date, there is potential in all countries. These primarily take the shape of microfinance institutions supporting entrepreneurship initiatives (**Tunisia**), youth employability projects and regional innovation spaces (**Algeria**), logistical support for internships and career events (**Lebanon**), and co-payment models for specialised guidance services (**Jordan**).

Non-state funding examples

In **Tunisia**, international and donor funding are primarily leveraged for structural reforms, and for strategic activities in employability and entrepreneurship support. Among the donor organisations that play an important role, the following ones can be highlighted: EBRD, WB, ILO, EU, and various NGOs.

In **Algeria**, extensive collaborations took place with such international organisations and donors as GIZ, ILO, and the EU to create innovation ecosystems and align training with labour market needs. A notable example is Algeria's Ministry of Vocational Education Training partnering with GIZ to improve the employability of VET and higher education graduates, aligning training programmes to labour market needs, and developing employment-related skills in targeted areas. Furthermore, the Programme d'Appui à l'Adéquation Formation-Emploi-Qualification or Training-Employment-Qualifications Support Programme (AFEQ), was co-financed by the European Union and Algeria. Ran between 2017-2020, the programme aimed to ensure a better match between training and employment through greater involvement of businesses and economic sectors in the training and integration of young people.

In **Lebanon**, NGOs, international organisations and donors provide crucial financial support, supplementing government efforts in such areas as reaching vulnerable groups and sustaining services.

In **Jordan**, government funding is being supplemented by levy-based training funds, client contributions, international and donor funding. The latter ones are used to complement state funding for capacity building in higher education and vocational education and training (these activities are mainly EU-funded). International organisations fund also regional projects across the country for initiatives such as equipping career centres with digital tools and internet access (e.g.: USAID).

Source: National Career Development Support System Review Reports: Tunisia, Algeria, Lebanon, Jordan, ETF (2025a, 2025b, 2025c, 2025d)

9. MEASURES TO ENABLE AND ENHANCE ACCESS TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT SERVICES

While access to career development support services is important for enhancing the employability, advancing career options, and socio-economic wellbeing of individuals, this is particularly the case for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Access implies that all individuals have the opportunity and the ways and means to engage with career development support services such as participating in career guidance sessions, exploring information through digital platforms, or being supported in job search or resume preparation. For career development support services to be inclusive and accessible, the provision of services and the underpinning infrastructure would be built ensuring coverage of all in terms of levels and types of assistance provided, ranging from self-guided access through to individual, tailored guidance sessions with qualified professionals either through online, telephone or face-to-face access.

9.1 Approaches to access provision

Considering the approaches in place to enable and enhance access to career development support services, all four national review reports indicate the importance of institutional support although the implementation methods vary i.e.: **Tunisia** emphasises public agencies like ANETI and universities while **Lebanon** and **Jordan** integrate career counselling within broader social programmes. **Algeria** appears to focus on the integration of digital technology in vocational training as an approach to facilitate access. **Tunisia's** and **Algeria's** more centralised systems, while providing a structured approach, can also limit opportunities to adapt to local needs. **Lebanon** and **Jordan's** more decentralised approach (see box below) point towards the effectiveness of provisions that utilise multiple, flexible channels and outreach strategies.

Complementing the government-based access provision, the national review report for **Tunisia** highlighted the presence of interpersonal mechanisms such as family and community networks, and associative mechanisms such as services provided by NGOs and development agencies. While the other review reports do not specifically mention family and community networks such informal information outlets are also likely present in the other three countries. However, to varying degrees, the other three national review reports also mention private, and donor funded mechanisms complementing publicly provided services.

Capacity building and practitioner development at a system-level supports provision for guidance professionals at high quality level, as bad services also lead to reduced access based on low reputation. Furthermore, expanding access to digital tools and improving digital literacy could significantly enhance the reach and impact of services across the four countries. Furthermore, an emphasis on lifelong guidance and career adaptability could also extend the reach of the access provision throughout the whole lifespan of individuals.

Multi-channel and outreach strategies

In **Lebanon**, mobile career units and community centres provide some forms of career counselling and training, enhancing the reach to underserved populations such as geographically isolated individuals. Additionally, online counselling, webinars, and telephone hotlines also extend services to those without

physical access to career centres. To enhance access, digital literacy training opportunities are provided, and career centres also provide tailored services based on individual, in-depth assessments.

Similar to Lebanon, **Jordan's** Ministry of Labour has established mobile career units in remote areas to provide career guidance, psycho-social and health support, and vocational training for vulnerable groups like refugees, individuals with disabilities and rural women. In a further similarity to Lebanon's approach, the accessibility of services is increased through the use of telephone-based counselling and tailored services for individuals with limited internet access or digital skills (provided by the Public Employment Services).

Source: National Career Development Support System Review Reports FOR Lebanon and Jordan (ETF 2025)

9.2 Tailoring support for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups

The importance of tailoring support services to provide enhanced access for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups was identified and acknowledged in all four national review reports. Although the identified groups show similarities across the countries, there is also some degree of variation, particularly the degree to which support services are then specifically tailored to these groups. Table 5 provides a summary of these groups, indicating which country has identified which groups as vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Table 5. Groups of vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals

Vulnerable group	Algeria	Jordan	Lebanon	Tunisia
Rural populations	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Women	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Refugees and migrants	No	Yes	Yes	No
People with disabilities	No	Yes	Yes	No
Youth and NEETs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: National Career Development Support System Review Reports: Tunisia, Algeria, Lebanon, Jordan, ETF (2025a, 2025b, 2025c, 2025d)

As indicated above, rural populations, and Youth and NEETS were identified as key underserved groups in all four national review reports. However, in terms of tailored support services that target rural populations, **Lebanon** and **Jordan** are leading the way through their mobile career units providing innovative methods to reach these communities (see box under 9.1). **Tunisia's** current suite of support services tend to target young graduates among the youth, which leaves NEETs further disadvantaged. ANETI provides guidance although these services tend to be centralised and focus on recent graduates while similar university-based mechanisms also struggle to reach beyond urban areas and provide support beyond groups of recent graduates. This approach is somewhat complemented by the presence of NGOs and development associations that support specific groups of people although their reach and impact also remain limited. In **Lebanon**, the long-term unemployed, inactive individuals and NEETs have access to job-readiness workshops, vocational training, and counselling services, with NEETs in particular provided with the opportunity to re-integrate through youth centres and dedicated engagement programmes.

Jordan's mobile career units also identify women, particularly rural women, as a target group for tailored services, aiming to address the compounded challenge of gender barriers and geographical isolation. **Lebanon's** services on offer include women's career centres that provide tailored training and flexible work options. While migration is a shared feature across the countries, **Tunisia's** national

review report highlights internal and external migration, whereas refugees and migrants are a key vulnerable group identified for **Lebanon** and **Jordan**. In **Tunisia**, career guidance services provide supports for internal (rural to urban areas) and external migrants such those by the Tunisian Technical Cooperation Agency (ATCT). The services offered include support measures for international mobility and recruitment. Such migration patterns, however, are a major socio-economic driver for the country that perpetuates regional inequalities and deplete local talent.

In **Lebanon** and **Jordan**, migrants and refugees are offered language courses, support towards cultural integration and job placement services to ease their adaptation (for Lebanon to keep in mind that there are sectors defined by the government where refugees and displaced people can work). In these two countries people with disabilities are also provided tailored support services, in particular through the mobile career units and online access, enhancing the disability-inclusive approach of their service provisions. Additionally, **Lebanon's** suite of tailored support services also includes prison rehabilitation programmes for inmates that focus on vocational training and counselling for societal rehabilitation.

10. USE OF TECHNOLOGY FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

The Covid-19 pandemic has reinforced across the globe that digital technology is indeed a transformative tool that can be wielded across multiple different sectors and systems. As part of these accelerated developments, career guidance and development services are one of many areas where ICT has been increasingly shaping the design and implementation of service provision. Countries exploring the enhancement of career development services with various digital solutions have seen how such approaches can open up opportunities but also highlight challenges at the same time.

With the digital transformation continuing apace across various areas of our lives, the country review reports showcase a strong interest across the countries in the design and use of ICT for career development support services. While the strategic focus of such activities varies from country to country, they share a commitment to exploring and integrating ICT in career services.

The country review reports also highlight some shared challenges regarding the use of technology such as the dichotomy of a growing internet and smartphone penetration in the countries that contrasts with an also clear presence of the digital divide. This latter manifests in rural and low-income populations facing challenges in accessing the platforms mentioned below. Additionally, even in areas with higher levels of digital technology coverage, the use of technology for job searching or for administrative services still remains underdeveloped.

10.2 Design and implementation of digital services

Tunisia's advanced strategies include a national Digital 2021-2025 Strategy that emphasises the expansion of internet access, digitalisation of public services to promote easier access, and supports the development of an innovation and start-up ecosystem. Furthermore, the World Bank-supported Digitising Employment Services in Tunisia (2023-2025) project aims to support that ANETI enhances its digital services through an expansion of the digital infrastructure, laying a digital foundation through governance and information system management structures, along with enhancing ANETI's skill-matching tools. In addition to various public sector and education sector service provisions, platforms such as Moubader.tn and financini.org.tn provide entrepreneurship support through networking and access to financial resources.

In **Algeria**, the strategic focus in recent years has been on digitalisation in vocational education and training, with multiple platforms developed providing services such as online registration, guidance and training resources (Mihnati), administrative and pedagogical management (Maharati and Tassyir), and trainer development (Takwini). Government backed platforms (Mukawil.dz and Start-up.dz) provide entrepreneurial support for self-employment and integration into the formal economy.

In **Lebanon**, ICT interventions in schools have focused on exploring how digital technologies can enhance decision-making skills in students, with studies showing promise and potential, although this has not yet been scaled for national level applications. In contrast to the other three countries, private platforms dominate career development support, providing job listings, career advice, and resources. To link people with jobs, the Ministry of Labour 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.

In **Jordan**, the comprehensive design of e-guidance platforms (For9a and Akhtaboot) offers a variety of services such as career guidance, job matching, online courses, with the aim of empowering users to access support independently and at their own pace. Additionally, various other types of digital career development services are in place such as e-guidance platforms (Khibra), digital portfolio development, and employability skills training. Although in its nascent stage, there are also pilots

ongoing in various ministries regarding the potential of big data and AI applications, and emerging technologies (gamification and virtual reality) for career guidance services.

10.2 Digital Career Guidance services in the public and private sectors

The use of technology in career guidance and development services is an area of interest across the four countries. Of the four countries, the national review reports indicate that **Tunisia** and **Algeria** rely more on government-driven initiatives while **Lebanon** and **Jordan** appear to lean more towards collaborative models for development.

While the sources of funding show a pattern of difference, all four countries share an interest in furthering the use of technology in career guidance. In **Tunisia**, while advisors offer structured career guidance in person, there is also a growing range of digital tools available through ANETI's portal and the 4C Career Centres (see box below). In **Algeria**, government supported digitalisation has been more focused on the education sector (see section 10.3), although career centres, along with vocational schools, have been expanding their activities to increasingly incorporate international skills and certifications.

In **Lebanon**, career centres currently do not appear to benefit from systematic technological integration. There is, however, a significant presence of private-operated platforms that offer a broad range of career development support (see box below). These platforms are sustained through job-matching fees and advertising. In **Jordan**, career centres have been equipped with digital infrastructure (see box below), although there is also a range of private-developed platforms that complement the state provision. These platforms also draw private sector participation in the services offered and, similar to Lebanon, the client-driven model also complements the public sector provision.

In a further shared characteristic, developing and enhancing the digital skills of career counsellors and public service providers continues to require dedicated resources across the four countries. The enhanced implementation of digital tools and services, similarly, will necessitate capacity building and training programmes and structured continuous professional development opportunities to equip practitioners with the skills to utilise these emerging technologies effectively.

Examples for digital tools in the public and private sectors

In **Tunisia**, ANETI administers online governmental services such as job boards and resources, although career guidance is mostly still provided in person. The ANETI Academy Digital (AAD) is being developed for e-learning and skills enhancement as part of a World Bank project (Digitising Employment Services in Tunisia, 2023-2025). This project aims to enhance individual and organisational effectiveness through connecting employees with multimodal learning offers.

In **Algeria**, platforms supporting entrepreneurship offer a range of services, such as Mukawil.dz as a one-stop shop guide for administrative, legal, registration, and regulatory steps required for starting a business. Start-up.dz supports such activities as applying for start-up labels and provides resources for incubators and accelerators. Anae.dz facilitates access to self-employment, encouraging young people to integrate into the country's formal economy.

In **Lebanon**, various private platforms provide career development support such as Daleel Madani that focuses on NGO, development, and humanitarian careers, providing job opportunities and career resources. Platforms with similar range of activities include bayt.com for interview advice and resume tips for careers in the MENA region, HireLebanese as a way to connect Lebanese talent with local and international employers. Additionally, Foras Online and Glassdoor Lebanon also provide career advice resources, tools to enhance jobseekers' skills, along with job listings and company reviews.

In **Jordan**, in addition to various platforms such as For9a and Akhtaboot for career guidance and for connecting with employers, web-based career development services are also offered by government

agencies, NGOs, and educational institutions. Complementing the range of digital tools and platforms, it is also notable that all career centres across the country have now been equipped with computers and internet access (through USAID YouthPower project).

Source: National Career Development Support System Review Reports: Tunisia, Algeria, Lebanon, Jordan, ETF (2025a, 2025b, 2025c, 2025d)

10.3 Digital tools in the education sector

Across the four countries, digital tools and technologies are leveraged for education sectors from school education, vocational education and training to higher education. The national review reports state that, aligning to the country context and strategic priorities, each country has been focusing on specific areas of interest to explore the use of technology for career guidance. While activities to develop digital tools across various areas pertaining to career development is evidence of the recognition of their importance, the presence of multiple platforms, without an overarching strategy, also leads to fragmented systems.

In terms of digital tools for the education sector, **Tunisia** has been developing a range of services in higher education and secondary education through various platforms (see box below). The somewhat heavier focus on higher education activities provides the country with valuable insights for sector-based developments, with such learnings potentially applicable for focused developments in vocational education and training, and adult education.

Algeria's activities have been focused on vocational education and training, with a range of platforms offering various services (see box below). Additionally, strengthening international skills and certifications, through for example the Cisco academies, indicates an interest in enhancing global competitiveness.

In **Lebanon**, recent ICT interventions for career guidance programmes highlighted digital technology's potential to enhance career guidance in public schools. In **Jordan**, the enhancement of the digital infrastructure of vocational schools have broadened the provision of digital skills education and career guidance alike.

Examples for digital tools in the education sector

In **Tunisia**, platforms like Orientini.com and orientation.tn offer university orientation tools, career interest tests, and digital career fairs, expanding access to guidance and skill-building resources. The national platform of the 4C Career Centres (4c.tn) connects all centres with various stakeholders, with such activities as offering free certifications in digital skills to all Tunisian students. The secondary-level distance education platform (scolarite.education.tn) provides parents with various services related to schooling, such as choosing specialisation for secondary education, and also enables teachers to interact with their students.

In recent years Algeria has been prioritising the digital transformation of vocational education and training. Key platforms launched include Mihnati ('my profession') which is a pre-registration and guidance platform for vocational training applicants, Maharati ('my skills'), a tool dedicated to those managing the pedagogical aspects of training institutions. Furthermore, Tassyr ('management') provides a direct link between institutions and the government departments to facilitate efficient workflows, and scope for follow-up activities at local and central levels.

In Lebanon, a study conducted in a public school in Beirut has shown the potential of ICT to enhance career guidance, highlighting how the tools enhanced students' ability to understand their interests, provided deeper career insights, and improved students' decision-making skills regarding career options.

In Jordan, the digital infrastructure of vocational schools has been enhanced through such programmes as the USAID YouthPower project that supplied computers and internet access across the country. Through such initiatives 60% of vocational schools maintain computer labs, enhancing digital capacities.

Source: National Career Development Support System Review Reports: Tunisia, Algeria, Lebanon, Jordan, ETF (2025a, 2025b, 2025c, 2025d)

11. QUALITY OF PROVISION OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT SERVICES WITHIN A CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Ensuring the quality of provision through continuous quality enhancement activities is key to continuous improvement and is also hallmarks of high-quality education systems. Highlighted for example in the EQAVET quality assurance cycle,¹⁶ a typical quality assurance loop incorporates the four phases of planning-implementation-evaluation-review where associated activities are regularly performed for achieving and maintaining high quality systems.

In this chapter, four aspects of career development support services will be examined in more detail: national professional standards, staffing, the quality of data and information, and monitoring and evaluation.

11.1 Standards

The national review reports indicate that, with the exception of **Jordan**, career guidance is yet to emerge as a formal profession with identified national standards. Jordan is leading the way in terms of established national occupational standards for career guidance professionals (see box below), along with certification programmes, ethical guidelines, and mandatory annual training provisions for professionals. Although on the job training is the dominant form of capacity building for the profession, the established annual mandatory training provisions cover foundational topics but also a range of emerging areas of need. Additionally, adopted in 2019, Jordan's National Qualifications Framework (JNQF) also provides a further comprehensive framework that promotes integration and consistency in education and career pathways.

Tunisia has a long-standing employment and VET system in place since the 1990s with committed staff involved in career guidance. However, there is not yet a national occupational standard in place to support the professionalisation of career guidance, and there is also no national professional association for practitioners to facilitate recognition and professional exchange. These characteristics impede the progression of career guidance as a recognised profession in the country. The limited public awareness of career guidance as a distinct profession is an additional challenge and the resulting conflation with vocational training adds to the professionalisation challenges in the country. Various EU and international donor funded projects have the potential to significantly enhance Tunisia's central structures and institutions, align training with labour market needs, and strengthen the national career guidance system.

Similar to Tunisia, there is no formalised national occupational standard for career guidance in **Lebanon** either. While there are activities ongoing to align practices with international standards, the absence of national standards constitutes an obstacle for the professionalisation of career guidance. Similarly, the fragmented efforts by various independent institutions, international organisation and donor-led projects also create a plurality of approaches without national consistency. However, thanks to the great effort of the national authorities, Lebanon is aligning to the practices of Jordan and Tunisia where efforts towards standardisation are government led as shown by recent efforts to integrate career education in schools and VET.

¹⁶ For more details, see: https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/skills-and-qualifications/working-together/eqavet-european-quality-assurance-vocational-education-and-training/eqavet-quality-assurance-cycle_en

Quality standards for career guidance practitioners in Jordan

Developed by the Ministry of Labour in collaboration with key stakeholders, **Jordan's** national occupational standards outline the qualifications, skills and competencies, and professional requirements for career guidance professionals.

Jordan's Career Development Association (JCDA) plays a further key role in developing and promoting standards of practice in the field. Overseeing certifications, JCDA ensures adherence to ethical and professional standards, it maintains these standards, while also working towards improving the quality of services. The JCDA also outlines mandatory codes of conduct and professional ethics for practitioners, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, ensuring consistency across sectors.

On-the-job learning is critical for practitioners as there is no dedicated master degree programme in career guidance in Jordan. Practitioners typically hold degrees in such fields as psychology, education or social work, and supplement their qualifications with additional training specific to career guidance. In employment services settings (Public Employment Services and community centres), practitioners may hold qualifications in such fields as HR, social work, or similarly related fields, with further additional on the job training.

Practitioners undergo mandatory annual training to stay updated on professional trends, technologies, and best practices. These training opportunities are offered by multiple providers and cover a wide range of topics such as counselling techniques, assessment tools, and labour market information. The training provision also addresses such emerging needs as ICT advancements, multicultural topics, and inclusive practices.

Source: National Career Development Support System Review Report: Jordan, ETF (2025b)

11.2 Staffing

In **Tunisia**, ANETI employs university-educated advisers most of whom work in the field of information and vocational guidance/retraining, placement and integration, or as recruitment advisers for companies. ANETI also employs executives who specialise in employment policies and prospecting, sectoral analyses, information and awareness raising, skills diagnoses, and supporting candidates in implementing their career plans. This service extends to all 24 governorates of Tunisia despite the disparities in resourcing between urban and rural areas. Although information on the ratio of staff to jobseeker is not published, ANETI's annual report for 2020¹⁷ identified several staffing-related challenges:

- Shortage of advisers in vocational information and guidance units, especially in remote areas;
- Insufficient training for advisers across most regions, particularly in support services;
- Work pressures hindering prompt data processing.

In educational institutions, career guidance counsellors as a role have been institutionalised where counsellors are integrated into the educational and administrative staff by law. Regional teacher coordinator for school and university guidance as a position was created in 1992, with information and guidance advisers in lycées established as a role in 1993. The 2022 law on education and teaching created listening and counselling offices that are geared towards providing individual support for secondary school pupils. However, this has nevertheless been an under-resourced area leading to high counsellor to learner ratios (1 advisor to approximately 7,000 learners), as reported in the Ministry of Education's figures for the 2022/23 school year¹⁸.

¹⁷ For ANETI's annual activity report for 2020, see

https://www.emploi.nat.tn/ckeditor/ckfinder/userfiles/files/rapport_aneti2020.pdf

¹⁸ http://www.edunet.tn/article_education/statistiques/stat2022_2023/education_ar.pdf

In universities, also under-resourced in terms of dedicated career guidance staff, guidance for students often relies on informal or group sessions organised without underpinning robust data. As a result of these data gaps, guidance counsellors often lack insights into career options and labour market trends, making the information and guidance provision rather anecdotal in nature as opposed to evidence based. Additionally, the absence of systematic data collection on graduates' future paths or the existence of data gaps in terms of drop-out rates, also reduces the effectiveness of guidance services advisers and counsellors can offer.

In **Jordan**, career development services are offered mainly by the Public Employment Services and educational institutions although both sectors face challenges to meet the increasing demand due to resource constraints and high client-to-staff ratios. Public Employment Services staff are either employed by various ministries or are contracted through external organisations. The shortage of staff often leads to high caseloads for advisors which also reduces their capacity for effective and timely service delivery. The challenge of high student-to-counsellor ratios is also present in educational institutions where career guidance is delivered by either school counsellors, or also by teachers and staff. This is the case for example in secondary and vocational schools whereas in primary schools the lack of dedicated counsellors mean that teachers integrate career development into the general curricula.

While the national review reports indicate that the shortage of staff is a challenge in **Tunisia** and **Jordan**, in Tunisia's case this shortage is more present in remote areas while Jordan reported similar issues for secondary and vocational schools. This difficulty is compounded by under-resourcing in both countries also in terms of training and development opportunities for staff, putting pressures on the system and reducing the effectiveness of services. Universities in Tunisia and primary schools in Jordan lack dedicated staff for career guidance personnel, which results in informal or more generalised approaches in services. Additionally, systematic data collection on graduates' trajectories and on drop-out rates, along with structured access to labour market intelligence would enhance the evidence-base for service provision.

11.3 Quality of data and information

Career development support services depend on quality data and information to fulfil their function. Characteristically, to support the evidence-base and to facilitate analysis and comparability, the data and information collected and analysed need to be of high quality, from a reliable source, up-to-date, and standardised using identified definitions and indicators.

In terms of areas for data and information collection, the national review reports underline that **Tunisia**, **Algeria**, and **Jordan** all focus on collecting data on employment outcomes, skills alignment, and job market trends.

Tunisia's ANETI, by virtue of its mission pertaining to employment and self-employment, collects data and analyses and forecasts changes in the labour market. Additionally, **Tunisian** universities also collect career data on their graduates and play an important role in disseminating information on career guidance and employability schemes and programmes. However, the institutions lack the resources to conduct in-depth analyses or to update the curricula based on the findings.

Going beyond the more labour market intelligence (LMI) type of data, both **Algeria** and **Jordan** collect data on candidates' profiles (skills, educational or professional backgrounds, demographics) and job search metrics (number of interviews obtained, success/failure rate in interviews). In **Algeria's** case, the data collection and analyses are the role of such key organisations as the Directorate of Employment, National Employment Agency (ANEM), and the Wilayale Employment Agency (AWEM). The main type of analyses are outcomes focused, for example to ascertain the success rate of candidates in job interviews following their completion of training.

In **Jordan**, similarly, multiple bodies are involved in data collection and analysis such as the Jordanian Labour Market Observatory (JLMO), Jordan Department of Statistics (DOS), and the Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission (TVSDC). In addition to collecting labour market information and skills forecasts along with information on candidates' profiles, the key types of information collected includes such categories as occupational information (job security, salaries, trends) that's supported by the Jordanian National Qualifications Framework (JNQF) that outlines occupational profiles and competency requirements. Furthermore, TVSDC, as the coordinator of VET skills development and certification, also collects information about services and the validation and recognition of skills acquired in non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL). Valuably, universities and VET centres track the career outcomes of graduates and provide insights into the effectiveness of educational programmes and the labour market relevance of qualifications. However, tracer studies are conducted on an ad-hoc basis and in a decentralised manner, although a nationally agreed framework for concept and methodology is in place to provide guidance for performing such studies.

Real-time updates and advanced integration are also emerging priorities across these countries, although, as indicated by the reports, the implementation can be uneven. The table below provides a summary of some of the characteristic features of the data and information collection approaches emerging based on the national review reports.

Table 6. Data and information approaches

Aspect	Algeria	Jordan	Tunisia
LMI integration	Outcome-focused metrics (e.g.; job interviews and training success)	Regularly updated, with centralised systems (LMIS/ Labour Market Information System)	Focus on multi-criteria data, limited inclusion of the informal sector
Technology use	Basic integration for statistical tracking	Early-stage AI and ICT adoption for labour market analysis	Advanced real-time systems, though underutilised
Stakeholder involvement	Strong public-private distinction in use of data for quality assurance	Collaborative frameworks with diverse stakeholders, including NGOs and private companies	Universities contribute, but lack resources for analysis
Data fragmentation	Moderate, regional disparities limit comprehensive analysis	Lower, with centralised platforms improving accessibility	High fragmentation, dense information system

Source: National Career Development Support System Review Reports: Tunisia, Algeria, Lebanon, Jordan, ETF (2025a, 2025b, 2025c, 2025d)

Reflecting on the quality of information provided, the national review reports acknowledged challenges pertaining to accessibility and utilisation, highlighting various degrees of fragmentation across systems, space to enhance dissemination and visibility, and room to enhancing stakeholder collaboration. Educational institutions often face resource constraints that limit their ability to analyse the data and to adjust relevant programmes accordingly. Furthermore, in a related challenge acknowledged by the national review reports, practitioners often also lack the skills to collect, analyse, and apply labour market data effectively to enhance the career development support services. Addressing the varying degrees of data fragmentation, capacity gaps, and the underutilisation of technology identified in the three national contexts, Tunisia, Algeria, and Jordan all have the capacity to enhance the quality and the accessibility of their data and information provisions.

11.4 Monitoring and evaluation

Regular monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation of processes and procedures are a cornerstone of quality assurance for activities in any area. While this is also true for career development support services, the view emerging from the national review reports indicates that there is room for enhancement across the four countries in this regard.

Currently, none of the four countries have institutionalised, national standards or established mechanisms for the monitoring and evaluation of career development support services. In countries where there are activities, these are often informal in nature, lacking the cross-sectoral or whole country perspective. Furthermore, resource constraints often also reduce the scope and depth of these evaluations. In addition, in some countries such as **Tunisia** and **Lebanon**, external actors such as NGOs or donor agencies¹⁹ are conducting monitoring and evaluation activities although they tend to focus on projects, not systems.

In **Tunisia**, the National Observatory for Employment and Qualifications (ONEQ) monitors VET policies and labour market trends. Observatories have been set up at various universities to monitor the professional integration of graduates in the labour market, mainly in response to employability becoming a fundamental mission in higher education. However, as career guidance initiatives are often established at the discretion of university managers and teachers, with no institutionalised or dedicated mechanisms, the evaluation of such initiatives is also patchy and largely informal. Given the informal nature of such career guidance services, it is difficult to estimate the volume of their usage or their impact. As noted by the country review report, little is known about the effectiveness of career guidance in primary and secondary education, and about any related mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation.

In **Lebanon**, the Directorate General of Vocational and Technical Education (DGVTE) oversees VET activities and the Guidance Employment Officers (GEOs), but there is not yet a systematic evaluation mechanism in place specifically for career guidance as a service. In general education, once the Career Guidance Focal Points (CGFPs) become operational in schools, the Department of Educational Guidance (DOPS) plans to establish a monitoring mechanism.

A shared challenge that compounds the establishment of systematic monitoring and evaluation in these countries is the fragmented nature of career guidance services. The decentralised and somewhat inconsistent coverage of services, with regional and/or sectoral gaps, establishing a framework for systematic evaluation can also be a difficult task.

Additionally, as noted elsewhere in this synthesis report²⁰, as lifelong guidance is indeed an inherently cross-cutting policy area requiring collaboration across multiple sectors, establishing an approach for the monitoring and evaluation for this policy area would require a collaborative approach to carry over into the design of a framework.

¹⁹ In Tunisia, for example the OECD, ILO, and the World Bank. Source: National review report, 2024

²⁰ See [section 6 on coordination and cooperation mechanisms](#)

12. SERVICE GAPS, UNTAPPED POTENTIALS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Closely related to the four phases of the quality assurance cycle for various areas, noted in the previous chapter, the identification of service gaps, potentials, and opportunities for enhancement can be performed at system and provider-level.

The four national review reports for Tunisia, Algeria, Lebanon, and Jordan have shown the following shared service gaps, untapped potentials and opportunities for the development of their career guidance services.

12.1 A system development approach to national strategy, coordination and cooperation structures

Policy frameworks, laws, and strategies shape the development and enhancement of career development support services. Among the four countries, only **Jordan** has a national, structured policy framework dedicated to career guidance and counselling. In **Tunisia, Algeria, and Lebanon** the policy landscape appears more fragmented with varying levels of programmes, strategies, legal frameworks, and regulations dedicated to different aspects of career guidance. These, however, exist without the integrated, standardised approach a national, structured framework can provide.

From the system development perspective outlined in chapter 3, collaboration and coordination structures that enhance governance and stakeholder engagement are a key element for career development support services. Stakeholders can play a critical role in supporting the development of national strategies, provide valuable input for the enhancement of the career guidance provision to improve the system's responsiveness to both individuals' career needs and employers' skills requirements.

The four national review reports echo the need for a systemic level, comprehensive approach to coordination and collaborative structures. However, as highlighted by the reports, at operational level, there are still limited opportunities for structured, regular stakeholder collaboration. This is also true for **Jordan** where, although the system is overall less fragmented with a national policy framework in place, a systematic mechanism for cooperation is still missing. Establishing formalised, regular, consistent collaborative structures that incorporate all key stakeholders from the public and private spheres would provide the four countries with opportunity to enrich service delivery. Such collaboration structures could be formalised at national, regional, and local levels to ensure a more holistic approach can emerge that takes various needs and contexts into account.

12.2 A sustainable footing for funding

Strengthening funding mechanisms through ensuring their sustainability and scalability emerged as a common gap across the four countries. An emerging shared gap for this area, relating to the collaboration and coordination gap above, is the insufficient coordination between ministries, agencies, and stakeholders that can lead to inefficiencies and duplication of efforts. The opportunity that enhanced coordination and resource allocation can provide was highlighted for all four countries in their respective reports. Strengthening private sector contributions through incentives and partnerships can in particular support diversifying funding sources.

Furthermore, relating to the sustainability of funding models was the shared reliance on external funding. While the level of dependence on international and donor funding varies between the four countries, this can nevertheless create sustainability, scalability challenges and difficulties with

embedding worthy initiatives or mechanisms into a country's system once the funding stream ends. The four country reports noted the importance of funding through NGOs and various international agencies, but the fact that such sources tend to be tied to project life cycles was also acknowledged as a gap. A hitherto mostly untapped potential may be the introduction of sustainable financing mechanisms like levy-based systems that can support ensuring a consistent resource flow. Among the four countries, it is only **Jordan** that currently utilises such a source of funding.

Tying to the topic of access, regional, and in some cases, gender-based disparities in funding allocation can limit access for underserved areas and disadvantaged groups. Furthermore, as entrepreneurship support is also an emerging shared priority area across the countries to support youth, relaxing capital requirements and fostering innovation ecosystems can promote small-scale and youth-led enterprises.

12.3 Enhancing access

The four country review reports have all identified various disadvantaged groups of service users who may struggle with accessing career development support services. However, although the identification of these groups may have taken place, not all four countries have tailored its support services provision to enhance reaching these identified disadvantaged groups. With career services and infrastructure often concentrated in urban areas, underserved regions can often be left with limited or no access. **Jordan** and **Lebanon** are leading the way among the four countries with their mobile access units that were deployed to extend access to more isolated communities, users with difficulties accessing the career centres either physically or online.

Furthermore, tailored supports for such groups as NEETs, women, and people with disabilities is an area where some of the countries (Lebanon and Jordan) have support services, however, in **Tunisia**, for example, services focus on young graduates at the expense of disadvantaged groups of users. The review report highlighted rural populations and NEETs in particular, whereas for **Algeria**, the review report provided no information on approaches to access for disadvantaged groups.

12.4 Closing the digital divide

The country review reports highlighted a strong interest across the countries in the design and implementation of digital services for career development services. However, the reports also point to the shared challenge of closing the digital divide across the four countries. Closely connecting to the access provisions above, the lack of nation-wide IT infrastructure and gaps in digital literacy across the different countries restricts access for disadvantaged users for example in rural areas, or for individuals who do not have sufficient digital skills to engage with digital platforms and online career guidance tools.

Furthermore, developing and enhancing the digital skills of career counsellors and public service providers continues to require dedicated resources across the four countries. In addition to digital infrastructure expansion programmes and digital literacy programmes for the wider populace, the four countries would also benefit from closing the gap in capacity building and training programmes, and structured continuous professional development opportunities for practitioners.

As noted above, a system-level perspective that aims to strategically develop and integrate digital tools, technologies, and infrastructure into the career guidance system would significantly improve the service provision while also enhancing accessibility across the whole demographics.

12.5 Strategic enhancements for the quality of provision

The national review reports indicate that, with the exception of **Jordan**, career guidance is yet to emerge as a formal profession with identified national occupational standards. Such national standards across the other three countries would significantly benefit the professionalisation and recognition of career guidance as a distinct area of occupation. Furthermore, the establishment of national professional associations would contribute to such recognition to grow across the countries while also providing practitioners with a forum for peer learning and exchange.

In addition to expanding staffing capacities across the various countries, investing in regular, targeted capacity building and training programmes for practitioners would also provide important scaffolding for career development support services. This is all the more important as on-the-job learning and training is critical for practitioners across all four countries. Based on the country review reports, currently it is only in Jordan where practitioners have mandatory, annual training as part of their professional journey.

It is worth noting that while all four countries have an approach for data collection and analysis, these tend to share the same difficulties with other areas of the services provision. Namely, resource constraints, limited stakeholder engagement, varying levels of fragmentation across the system, staffing difficulties, and inconsistencies with training provisions for staff to collect, analyse, and apply labour market data effectively.

12.6 Formalise monitoring and evaluation approaches

Currently, none of the four countries have institutionalised, national standards or established mechanisms for the monitoring and evaluation of career development support services. In countries where there are activities, such as **Tunisia** and **Lebanon**, these are often informal in nature, lacking the cross-sectoral or whole country perspective. Tying to the area of systematic approaches to developing a national strategy and structures for cooperation and collaboration, the establishment and implementation of structures for monitoring and evaluation would require an inclusive, collaborative partnership of all key stakeholders and a full back up at institutional level.

13 THE WAY FORWARD – PRIORITY AREAS FOR SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

This chapter synthesises key priority areas for developing career guidance systems, drawing from both national data and international policy development experience. While the four countries analysed have made significant efforts in establishing national career development support systems, the country reports highlight key gaps and challenges that have to be addressed for a comprehensive, lifelong guidance system to be built. Although each country is at a distinct stage of system development and faces its own unique challenges, Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Tunisia share some similarities and several common priority areas. The following paragraphs provide an overview of these broader shared priorities.

13.1 Policy frameworks, coordination and cooperation mechanisms

- **Establishing a unified, cross-sector career guidance strategy** is essential for streamlining efforts across ministries, state agencies, public institutions, the private sector, and civil society. Such a strategy should emphasise collaboration, coordination, and sustainability to ensure career guidance services effectively respond to the evolving needs of individuals, society, and the labour market.

Lebanon and **Tunisia** both stress the need for comprehensive national career guidance strategies to enhance coordination across various governmental ministries and private sector actors. Tunisia, in particular, highlights the need for a permanent cross-sector coordination mechanism to align policies in education, employment, and social inclusion, thereby ensuring coherence and resource efficiency. The country report also highlights the importance of defining the roles of school, university, and education counsellors in legal frameworks, ensuring their integration into both educational and administrative staff structures. **Jordan** advocates for the creation of a robust framework for collaboration across national, regional, and local levels, managed by a central coordination body. This body shall be responsible for aligning career development policies with national priorities and EU initiatives (e.g., EU4Youth), and ensuring that career guidance services are streamlined, regulated, and adequately funded. Additionally, the report suggests a strengthened role of social partners in supporting workers, self-employed, individuals, and microenterprises. The **Algerian** national review proposes a collaborative framework positioning university career centres as pivotal in aligning education with industry requirements.

13.2 Service delivery

- **Embedding career and entrepreneurship education early in the educational system** lays the foundation for informed career choices and fosters entrepreneurial mindsets that empower individuals to identify opportunities, take initiative, and adapt to changing environments.
- **Strengthening work-based learning opportunities** such as apprenticeships and internships, enhances the effectiveness of career guidance systems. They allow learners to develop job-specific skills, gain insights into workplace dynamics, and refine their career aspirations based on first-hand experience. Addressing the negative perception of VET and creating mechanisms for personalised career counselling and mentorship can help reduce dropouts and better guide students. Furthermore, developing regular evaluation and update mechanisms will ensure the alignment of VET programmes with job market demands.

- **Revising orientation criteria for baccalaureate graduates** to better align with students' interests and career aspirations helps reduce mismatches and failure rates in academic pathways. This need arises because the current university entry process (e.g. Lebanon, Tunisia), which is predominantly computerised and based on scores and institutional capacities, often fails to account for students' aspirations and labour market demands.

Algeria advocates for embedding career education and entrepreneurship from primary to tertiary levels as a structured curriculum to prepare students with life skills and career readiness, ensuring these subjects are core components of both general and vocational education and training. Furthermore, the promotion of apprenticeships through multi-stakeholder collaboration shall ensure graduates' smooth transitions into the workforce. **Jordan** similarly supports the development of early career and entrepreneurship education emphasising experiential learning. The country report also highlights the need to expand internships and apprenticeships to provide accessible career support. **Tunisia** calls for career education curricula across all education levels that foster career management skills and informed decision-making, addressing cultural biases and perceptions around vocational training and gender roles that limit career options for women. Furthermore, the national review suggests reforming access and remuneration mechanisms for internships including those before university level, so that these can fully play their role as students' first effective experience in the socio-professional world.

13.3 Sustainable funding models

- **Establishing sustainable and reliable funding models** is crucial for ensuring the long-term effectiveness and resilience of career guidance systems. Sustainable funding ensures that career guidance support is not subject to short-term budget fluctuations, enabling consistent service delivery over time. Reliable financial support allows for continuous improvement of these systems, facilitating the integration of new tools, technologies, and methodologies that meet the evolving needs of individuals, society and the labour market.

The **Jordan** country report advocates for the development of public-private partnerships and exploring diversified funding sources to ensure the long-term viability of career guidance services. **Tunisia** highlights the importance of mapping costs and outputs to support budgeting and resource allocation. This includes tracking expenditures for education-related guidance (e.g., practitioner salaries, infrastructure, materials, internships, and collaboration with education providers), as well as guidance for adults (e.g., outreach to vulnerable groups, online services, and assessment tools). Outputs such as hours of individual guidance per user should also be measured. Additionally, the country report calls for a dedicated funding to cover both career education and guidance for vulnerable groups, including NEETs, with a focus on prevention and support for at-risk populations. **Lebanon** puts emphasis on ensuring equitable resource distribution across urban and rural areas to avoid disparities with a special focus to areas impacted by the conflict.

13.4 Service accessibility and inclusivity

- **Prioritising tailored, needs-based support for NEETs, women, and other vulnerable populations** is essential to ensure that career guidance services are inclusive and accessible. Focusing on providing equal access to career guidance, regardless of background or location, helps to address disparities and ensures that all individuals have the opportunity to make informed career decisions and pursue meaningful employment.

The **Tunisian** national review highlights the need for personalised, needs-based career guidance for NEETs and disadvantaged groups, particularly through youth centers. It advocates for youth centers to be officially mandated and equipped with the necessary resources to offer career guidance. The review stresses the importance of providing individual support and mentoring for students in need,

ensuring a gender perspective in all guidance services, and addressing cultural barriers to vocational training, especially for women. It also highlights the need for career guidance for workers (including strategies to tackle brain drain and promote talent retention), and tailored career services for migrants, with mentorship and networking opportunities, outreach efforts, and mobile services to rural and disadvantaged areas. Jordan and Lebanon also call for expanding career guidance services for vulnerable groups, including targeting disadvantaged populations through ICT and grassroots outreach initiatives. **Jordan** emphasises the need to support informal economy workers in transitioning to formal employment by providing tailored support, skills training, and career management tools. Additionally, it calls for the development of programmes to prepare individuals for careers in emerging digital and green industries, promoting sustainability and innovation. The **Algerian** country report recommends targeting NEET youth through tailored outreach and programmes designed to develop career management skills, thereby encouraging their active participation in education and employment pathways. Additionally, it suggests expanding outreach initiatives for first-time job seekers by fostering collaborations between universities, the National Employment Agency, and NESDA, with a particular emphasis on entrepreneurship guidance.

13.5 Use of technology and digital tools

- **Integrating ICT tools into career guidance services is crucial for enhancing accessibility**, particularly for rural and disadvantaged groups. These platforms should provide virtual counselling, career management tools, and up to date labour market information. Additionally, combining online and offline services in innovative ways will support a customised delivery, tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of different population groups, thus ensuring equitable access for all.

The Jordan and Tunisian country reports emphasise the need for a digital strategy, integrating ICT platforms to enhance access and efficiency. **Jordan** advocates for developing a comprehensive digital strategy that integrates fragmented platforms into a unified entry point, leveraging virtual counselling tools and data management systems. It also highlights the importance of training both practitioners and clients in digital skills to ensure effective use of online resources. **Tunisia** calls for the development of user-friendly online tools and the integration of e-guidance systems across sectors and platforms, such as national and VET platforms, to enhance consistent service delivery and accessibility. The national review stresses the need for an intergovernmental approach to designing and implementing digital projects to ensure interoperability between information systems, aligning these efforts with national employment and digital strategies. **Lebanon** recommends investing in advanced digital tools and providing digital literacy training for both counsellors and clients. **Algeria** also identifies technology as a tool to enhance access to career guidance services, ensuring efficiency and widespread reach.

13.6 Professionalisation and quality assurance

- **Developing practitioner training programmes (initial and continuous)**, establishing quality standards, certifications, and accreditation mechanisms is crucial for enhancing the professionalisation of career guidance services. This ensures the delivery of high-quality, effective support that meets the diverse needs of all populations, including vulnerable groups, while promoting consistency and accountability in the field.
- **Introducing robust monitoring and evaluation systems** to track outcomes is central to improving the effectiveness of services over time.
- **Enhancing labour market information systems** as foundation for quality career education and guidance will be essential.

The **Jordan** country report emphasises training, certification, and accreditation for career guidance practitioners, aiming to implement national standards that ensure the competency of professionals across the system and the quality of services provided. **Lebanon** echoes this need by proposing the establishment of ongoing training programmes for career counsellors and implementation of certification schemes to set standardised qualifications for practitioners. Additionally, the country report highlights the need to develop consistent metrics to regularly measure the effectiveness of career guidance initiatives using feedback loops to refine services and ensure harmonisation amongst programmes. From the countries analysed, the **Tunisian** report provides the most detailed recommendations including, for instance, the development of a national career guidance framework including occupational standards, qualifications, and career management skills, applicable across all sectors (see box below). All reviewed countries show strong limitations in relation to labour market information and intelligence (LMI), i.e. labour market profile and trends; trends in skills, including skills needs and mismatches, skills gaps, together with current and future skill demands; information on occupations etc.

Quality, professionalisation and continuous improvement: Tunisia

- **Ensure the consistent use of a unified qualification and skills framework** to streamline and enhance the effectiveness of the career guidance system. Define national career guidance standards and ensure evidence-based practices aligned with international benchmarks.
- **Integrate the informal sector into career guidance** by leveraging informal work experience to support transitions to formal, decent employment. In this context, train the National Employment Agency staff to assess skills gained informally and make them visible, facilitating the inclusion of informal sector data into systems.
- **Provide continuous professional development** focusing on digital literacy, counselling techniques, and labour market insights.
- **Improve labour market information systems** to provide better career guidance by reviewing the quality and accessibility of existing data on job prospects at all education levels. This will help overcome the lack of comprehensive vocational information and ensure that guidance counsellors have the necessary insights into career options and labour market trends, moving beyond anecdotal advice.
- **Develop a nationwide monitoring system** to track graduates' transitions from education to employment, enabling tailored vocational guidance and integration support. Equip universities with trained, compensated staff to monitor post-graduation workforce transitions, using this data to improve student support and enhance job market outcomes.
- **Implement systematic monitoring and evaluation mechanisms** to assess service impact and guide policy adjustments. Enhance evaluation mechanisms by moving beyond surface-level indicators like training course numbers and questioning the assumption that all support systems are inherently beneficial.
- **Allocate sufficient human and financial resources** for long-term monitoring of programme beneficiaries, particularly those in informal or temporary employment.

Source: National Career Development Support System Review Report: Tunisia, ETF (2025c)

14. CONCLUSIONS

The national career guidance system reviews of Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon and Tunisia highlight a growing acknowledgment among policymakers of the vital role career guidance plays in aligning education with labor market needs, in fostering entrepreneurship, and combating youth unemployment. As key achievements can be considered among others:

- The adoption of public policies and programmes in Algeria addressing unemployment challenges, particularly among youth, by providing structured pathways to employment (e.g. through Graduate Integration Contracts, Professional Integration Contracts etc.) and by fostering entrepreneurial ventures (e.g. Entrepreneurship Development Centres, university incubators).
- The National Career Guidance and Employment Strategy 2018-2023 in Jordan has been instrumental in guiding efforts to enhance lifelong career guidance services from childhood to adult learning across the country. It has also paved the way for the integration of entrepreneurship programmes into educational institutions and the adoption of a new lifelong guidance strategy.
- The Lebanese career guidance support system has evolved primarily within the context of educational reforms (e.g. integration of career education in formal education) and workforce development initiatives, with significant input from international organisations.
- In Tunisia, career guidance counsellors hold an institutionalised role within educational settings, being officially integrated into the educational and administrative staff. Over time, youth support services offering informal guidance and project development assistance have grown, while the National Agency for Employment and Self-Employment has increasingly supported career guidance for both employed and unemployed adults.

Despite the progress made in the four countries, significant gaps remain between policy intentions and practical implementation. Challenges include fragmented efforts, insufficient quality standards, and inadequate monitoring mechanisms and LMI, which hinder progress across the four countries. Persistent barriers also encompass funding shortfalls, misalignment between education and training and market demands, lack of effective cooperation between government and the private sector, and cultural or structural factors impacting employability.

While NGOs, the private sector and international donors play a critical role in driving innovation and capacity building, highly centralised policy-making processes marginalising regional/local stakeholders, combined with heavy reliance on external funding, often leading to short-term gains without long-term sustainability. Additionally, uncoordinated efforts among stakeholders frequently result in duplication and inefficiencies.

As highlighted in the previous sections of this chapter, to address these challenges, the country reports emphasise the need for systemic, step-by-step reforms to strengthen career guidance systems, including:

- **Cohesive policy frameworks and enhanced coordination.** Formalise and integrate policies across sectors while promoting inter-ministerial and cross-sector collaboration at planning and implementation (field) levels. Ensure consistent incorporation of lifelong guidance from early education through adulthood. Greater coordination among donors is also essential to maximise the impact and sustainability of their contributions.
- **Sustainable funding.** Allocate sufficient domestic resources to support long-term initiatives and reduce reliance on external donors. Address the actual demand for services to ensure resource allocation meets real needs.

- **Capacity building.** Invest in training practitioners and developing quality assurance standards to enhance the delivery and effectiveness of services. Enhancing labour market intelligence availability.
- **Digital transformation.** Leverage digital platforms to expand access to career guidance, addressing geographic disparities (rural-urban) and bridging digital divides.
- **Monitoring and evaluation.** Develop robust mechanisms to assess the effectiveness and sustainability of policies and services, ensuring strategies remain adaptive. Importantly, cultivating a culture of cooperation and coordination is a prerequisite for fostering strong monitoring and evaluation practices.

The components highlighted in the country reports align closely with the elements of the model for conducting a national review of a country's career development support system based on the theory of change (see Chapter 0, **Error! Reference source not found.**). While these components must be tailored to each country's unique context and translated into context-specific missions, visions, activities, outcomes, and indicators, effectively addressing them has the potential to unlock the full benefits of career guidance, fostering inclusive and sustainable economic and social development.

ACRONYMS

AFD	Agence Française de Développement
AFPA	Association for the Professional Formation of Adolescents
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AID	Association for Supporting Development Initiative
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ALMP	Active Labour Market Policies
ANEM	National Employment Agency
ANETI	National Agency for Employment and Self-Employment
ATFP	Tunisian Agency for Vocational Training
AWEM	Wilayale Employment Agency
CAS	Central Administration of Statistics
CASAM	Support, Awareness and Mediation Cell
CDC	Career Development Centre
CDE	Centre de Développement de l'Entrepreneuriat
CENAFFIF	National Centre for Training for Trainers and Training Development
CID	Graduate Integration Contract
CMS	Career Management Skills
CNFCPP	National Center of Continual Training and Professional Promotion
COEIP	Guidance Counsellor for Assessment and Professional Integration
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations

CV	Curriculum Vitae
DAIS	Social Integration Activity Scheme
DC	Direct Current (not relevant here, likely formatting artifact)
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs (United Nations)
DGVTE	Directorate General of Vocational and Technical Education
DOI	Digital Object Identifier
DOPS	Department of Educational Guidance
DOS	Department of Statistics
ELGPN	European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network
EQAVET	European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training
ERF	Economic Research Forum
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEO	Guidance and Employment Office(r)
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für International Arbeit
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IGC	Information and Guidance Counsellors
ILO	International Organisation for Labour
ITCEQ	Tunisian Institute of Competitiveness and Quantitative Studies
JCI	Jeune Chambre Internationale

JLMO	Jordanian Labour Market Observatory
JNQF	Jordanian National Qualifications Framework
LLL	Lifelong Learning
LMI	Labour Market Information
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MFPE	Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training
MoL	Ministry of Labour
MSMEs	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NEETs	Not in Employment, Education or Training
NEO	National Employment Office
NESDA	National Agency for Support and Development of Entrepreneurship
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ONEQ	National Observatory for Employment and Qualifications
OTEF	Organisation Tunisienne de l'Education et de la Famille
PEE	Pôles Étudiants Entrepreneurs
PES	Public Employment Services
PSUT	Princess Sumaya University for Technology
SEMED	Southern and Eastern Mediterranean
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SSCs	Sector Skills Councils
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and training

TVSDC	Professional and Technical Skills Development Authority (Jordan)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	The United Nations Agency for Children
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VNFIL	Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning
WGCG	Working Group on Career Guidance

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