

LEBANON

**EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT
DEVELOPMENTS 2021**

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KEY POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

Over the last 3 years, Lebanon has experienced acute crises that have added to its **long-lasting political instability**, refugee crisis and economic depression, depriving the country of stable development for more than a decade. The country's deep economic and financial crisis has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 situation and the devastating explosions in the Beirut port in August 2020, leading to a fast deterioration of the socio-economic situation among both Lebanese people and refugees. If the situation remains stagnant and reforms are not implemented, with the gradual lifting of subsidies and deepening of the crisis, the potential for further deterioration and social tensions will continue to rocket. Such a trend will ultimately further increase the number of people in need of urgent and intensive humanitarian assistance.

On 10 September 2021, a **new government** was formed, ending a more than year-long power vacuum that began shortly after the August 2020 Beirut port blast. Prime Minister Najib Mikati will lead a cabinet of ministers that will preside over an economic depression that the World Bank considers one of the world's worst since the mid-19th century.

Lebanon is facing the most devastating **socio-economic crisis** in its recent history. Since October 2019, when the crisis began, the Lebanese pound has lost more than 90 per cent of its value, leading to year-on-year inflation of 120% between May 2020 and May 2021. Food prices increased by a staggering 400% between January and December 2020. The revised food survival and minimum expenditure basket (SMEB) recorded a 21% increase between March and April 2021. The overall cost is four times higher than at the start of the crisis. At the end of 2020, 19% of Lebanese nationals reported losing their main source of income. The national minimum wage, which was USD 450 in 2018, is now worth USD 30 according to the black market's exchange rate (World Bank, 2021). The figures are likely to become more severe as the Government will likely remove most, if not all, import subsidies in the coming months. Moreover, assessments indicate unemployment among migrants was up to 50 per cent, with significant job losses in the final quarter of 2020 (ERP, 2021).

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

Consequently, real **GDP** contracted by 20.3% in 2020, following a contraction of close to 7 per cent in 2019. An acute human tragedy is unfolding, with poverty expected to affect more than half of the population and unemployment expected to exceed 40% by the end of 2021 (UN; 2020). Given the socio-economic developments of 2020 and the first quarter of 2021, it will be difficult for the economy to improve in the short term. Subject to extraordinarily high uncertainty, real GDP is projected to contract by a further 9.5% in 2021 (World Bank, 2021). Without any reforms, or if priority is not given to covering people's essential needs, including food, electricity, health and education, there is a strong likelihood that vulnerable Lebanese, migrant workers and refugees will be pushed further into poverty and extreme poverty.

Over the last 2 years, obstacles preventing children from accessing a quality **education** have been compounded, and many more have emerged. With insufficient access to inclusive distance learning

tools, students have been out of meaningful learning for almost 2 academic years. More precisely, over 1.2 million school-age children had their education disrupted in 2020 alone, with 400 000 children being left out of school as a result of poverty and other factors (ERP 2021).

The Minister of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) recently issued a ministerial decision (No 385/m/2021) rescheduling the **start of the 2021-22 academic year** for all public schools, including secondary, for 11 October 2021 (the initial date was 27 September). The decision came as a result of a survey of the majority of school principals in primary and secondary education, and aims at dedicating more time to dialogue between the MEHE and teachers' representatives, who had previously announced a strike due to their socio-economic situation (Lebanon Education Sector, 2021).

1. KEY DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

- **Political developments and health situation**

As mentioned in the Executive Summary, over the last 3 years, Lebanon has experienced acute crises that have added to its long-lasting political instability, refugee crisis and economic depression, depriving the country of harmonious and stable development for more than a decade.

On 10 September 2021, a new government was formed, ending a more than year-long power vacuum that began shortly after the August 2020 Beirut port blast.

The previous cabinet resigned in autumn 2020, following the Beirut port explosion. The administration has remained in their posts in caretaker roles but no longer has the authority to make major policy decisions. The political impasse is one of the major obstacles ahead of the implementation of reforms, and a driver of local tensions that bear a heavy impact on the various economic sectors. Since the cabinet's resignation, political parties have continued fighting over the makeup of the new government and have not yet come to an agreement. The new government should have the power to negotiate a relief deal with the International Monetary Fund or to implement a recovery plan.

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

According to the 2019 survey, only 20% of Lebanese trust core public institutions.

On the **health situation**, the current crisis in Lebanon, coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic, has impacted both the health system and patients themselves.

A lack of reliable electricity, fuel and water supply threatens the daily operations of hospitals and health facilities, including intensive care units, dialysis units, cold chain requirements, sterilisation and diagnostic procedures. Currency exchange rates and cash flow restrictions on US dollars have limited international purchasing power for essential medicines, supplies and various reagents while local suppliers – including pharmacies – suffer similarly depleted stocks. These combined factors threaten the continued operation of health facilities and pharmacies. Moreover, decreased rates of routine immunisation in both the public and the private sector leave Lebanon at a higher risk of an outbreak of vaccine-preventable diseases.

With the national health system on the brink of collapse and hospitals reaching full capacity across the country, the Ministry of Public Health, in collaboration with the international community, has continued working within the National COVID-19 Response to expand hospital treatment capacities to ensure that all COVID-19 patients can obtain treatment in a timely manner without creating competition for care between individuals.

Poor, uninsured Lebanese – estimated to be half of the total population – and migrants in need of hospitalisation are facing demands for significant financial deposits to secure admission. Additional cost barriers are common, including COVID-19 PCR tests required for inpatient procedures and costs

of personal protective equipment (PPE) (Ministry of Public Health, 2020). The rising competition over resources for survival is fuelling tensions between Lebanese and Syrian individuals and communities, increasing the propensity to violence and generally eroding the hospitality of host communities.

Lebanon is still confirming cases of COVID-19 within its borders. At present, businesses and public institutions are operating under regular business hours with no restrictions on capacity. There are no limits on attendance for religious services. There is no current government mandate for mask wearing but individual private and commercial establishments may set their own requirements. All air travellers over the age of 12 arriving in Beirut are required to undergo PCR testing upon arrival.

The COVID-19 crisis has also highlighted the need for qualified staff in the health sector.

▪ **Demographics**

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

Lebanon's total population increased by 38.4% in 9 years – from 4.95 million in 2010 to around 6.90 million in 2020. Lebanon is undergoing a demographic transition, characterised by a sharp reduction in fertility rates and a significant increase in life expectancy. The middle phase of the transition has seen a drop in the size of the under-14 population, a bulge in the size of the working-age population (15-64 years) and considerable growth in the cohort aged 65+ (NSF for TVET, 2018-22). Lebanon thus has an age-distribution profile that is somewhere between the regional average and that of the more developed regions of the world. There are proportionally fewer children and more elderly people than in nearby countries.

Population growth has significantly exceeded natural population growth, owing to a net inflow of migrants to the country. Lebanon has historically been a country of immigration, and diversity is one of its main characteristics. However, the Syrian crisis, which is now in its 10th year, continues to have a significant impact on Lebanon's demographics. In November 2019, the Government of Lebanon estimated that the country was hosting 1.5 million people (Government of Lebanon, 2020) who had fled the conflict in Syria (including 918 874 people registered as refugees with the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), as well as 27 700 Palestinian refugees from Syria and a pre-existing population of an estimated 180 000 Palestinian refugees (UNRWA, 2021) from Lebanon living in 12 camps and 156 gatherings). According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) database, the total number of migrants at mid-year in 2019 was 1.9 million, and their main countries of origin were Syria (1.16 million), Palestine (0.5 million), Iraq (0.1 million) and Egypt (0.08 million).

▪ **Economic developments, informal economy and remittances**

As mentioned in the Executive Summary, Lebanon is facing the most devastating socio-economic crisis in its recent history.

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

Consequently, real GDP contracted by 20.3% in 2020, following a contraction of close to 7 percent in 2019. An acute human tragedy is unfolding, with poverty expected to affect more than half of the population and unemployment expected to exceed 40% by the end of 2021. Given the socioeconomic developments of 2020 and first quarter of 2021, it will be difficult for the economy to improve in the short term. Subject to extraordinarily high uncertainty, real GDP is projected to contract by a further 9.5% in 2021 (World Bank, 2021). 'Without any reforms, or if priority is not given to covering people's essential needs, including food, electricity, health and education, there is a strong likelihood that vulnerable Lebanese, migrant workers and refugees will be pushed further into poverty and extreme poverty' (UN News, 2020).

The outgoing government had issued a financial recovery plan in response to the current economic situation; however, it has been faced with major pushbacks and has not been properly implemented. Government negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), on the basis of a macro-economic stabilisation programme and a critical liquidity injection, have been halted given the delay in government formation, but should quickly restart shortly.

The crisis in Syria is still having a profound effect on the Lebanese economy, as are the financial crisis and the consequences of the August 2020 explosion, including the street protests it provoked and the absence of a sitting government for a rather long period. All these concurrent situations have severely impacted the key drivers of growth, i.e., the real-estate, industry, service and tourism sectors. Other sectors, such as transport and energy, need urgent overhauling – especially Lebanon's infamous electricity infrastructure. Moreover, the incidents in the port of Beirut indicate that Lebanon needs to prioritise investments quickly in the construction, transportation and logistics sectors. The possibilities for post-blast reconstruction are undermined by heightened vulnerability, rising costs of services, increasing incidence of eviction due to the inability to pay rent, delays related to repairs, and eroded capabilities of public agencies. Addressing the housing challenge in Lebanon is also a long-term process that requires a societal change vis-à-vis the land and property arrangements, and its translation into the genuine right to adequate housing.

2. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

2.1 Trends and challenges

In recent years, families in Lebanon have been buffeted by unprecedented challenges, due to the economic crisis, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, political deadlock, and the devastating explosions that shook Beirut. People of all backgrounds have been driven into deep poverty, and now find themselves unable to afford necessities, such as food and medicine.

These complex and interconnected issues are impacting every aspect of families' lives and jeopardising children's education and futures. Over the last 2 years, obstacles preventing children from accessing a quality education have been compounded, and many more have emerged. With insufficient access to inclusive distance learning tools, students have been out of meaningful learning for almost 2 academic years. More precisely, over 1.2 million school-age children had their education disrupted in 2020 alone, with 400 000 children being left out of school because of poverty and other factors (ERP, 2021).

The economic crisis is forcing families – particularly the most vulnerable Lebanese and migrant households – to adapt their livelihood-related coping strategies. This includes reducing household expenditure on education, including unenrolling children from school; sending children to work; and marrying off adolescents and girls to reduce the economic burden on families. In parallel, the cost of education has increased, with many families unable to afford textbooks, stationery, or IT equipment for online learning.

The country's education sector is also struggling to retain teachers due to the diminishing value of the local currency, putting an additional strain on the public education sector, which is already facing severe constraints in terms of available school infrastructure, education quality and service delivery. The situation is further exacerbated by the anticipated increase of 100 000 to 120 000 students transferring from private to public schools between 2019/20 and 2021/22 (ERP, 2021). Such acute shifts in student demographics seriously compromise the capacity of the public-school system to ensure basic conditions, including adequate human resources, to provide relevant, inclusive and quality education that adheres to national and international standards for education and child protection. The compounding factors of economic collapse, the inability to pay teachers, transportation costs, fuel to keep lights on, availability of supplies, space, and the pandemic threaten to overwhelm the Ministry's capacity to open schools in the upcoming school year. This will compound pre-crisis issues as children across the country already had lower than average literacy and numeracy rates compared with the rest of the Middle East (ERP, 2021).

As mentioned in the Executive Summary, the Minister of Education and Higher Education recently issued a ministerial decision rescheduling the start of the 2021-2022 academic year for all public schools, including secondary, for 11 October 2021.

- **Education expenditure, access, participation and early leaving**

Lebanon has both a private and a public (government) education system. The former charges for admission, while the latter is essentially free of charge. Private schools, the overwhelming majority of which are dependent on various religious communities, have a long and strong tradition in Lebanon. This has led to a great variety of educational institutions in the country, which can be seen as

openness on the part of the Government to the international community, but also represents fragmentation in the vocational education and training system.

According to the Lebanese Ministry of Finance, total expenditure on the education sector was around USD 1.2 billion in 2016, of which USD 900 million was spent on general education, USD 225 million on tertiary education, and USD 90 million on technical and vocational education and training. Public expenditure on the general education sector in 2013 (latest available data) was around 2.4% of GDP. However, there are indications that the share of education expenditure as a percentage of total public expenditure has remained more or less constant in the last few years.

The Lebanese education system enrolls nearly 1.25 million students, almost 60% of whom attend private schools (MEHE, 2021). The private school sector receives an approximately 25% share of public financing (World Bank, 2020), yet it is subject to minimal regulation and quality assurance. The burden of education in Lebanon falls on parents' shoulders. School completion rates in primary (78%) and lower secondary (59%) schools are declining. In addition, school completion is highly unequal among economic groups, with only half of 18-year-olds from the lowest economic quantiles completing school. The out-of-school rate for primary and secondary school-age children is extremely high (21%) (CAS, 2020).

Since 2012, Lebanon has experienced one of the largest influxes of Syrian refugees – more than 356 000 Syrian refugee children enrolled in formal and non-formal education in 2019 (No Lost Generation, 2020). According to the latest surveys, 40% of primary-age and 90% of secondary-age Syrian refugee children are not in school (CAS 2020). In addition to access, quality is an increasing concern in Lebanon.

As also highlighted in the last Torino Process (TRP) assessment run in 2018-19 in the pre-COVID era, despite the rapid expansion in the provision of training courses and student enrolment, the current TVET system in Lebanon does not meet the personal aspirations of young people or the needs of local and regional labour markets. The TRP assessment also pointed out that TVET was still associated with academic failure and poor-quality provision. The association of TVET-level jobs with low wages, poor working conditions and a lack of career prospects has discouraged young Lebanese people from enrolling in VET courses at secondary and post-secondary levels. The 2020 update to the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) highlights that enrolment in post-basic education remains low, with only around 8% of secondary school-age non-Lebanese youth enrolled in public schools and another 8% enrolled in private secondary, technical and vocational education schools (Government of Lebanon, 2020). Furthermore, most public TVET schools in Lebanon suffer from poor facilities, obsolete equipment and outdated learning materials that are no longer in use in specific trades. Deteriorating security conditions have adversely affected all economic sectors and placed huge pressure on the labour market (MEHE & UNESCO, 2020).

The system also suffers from an uneven geographical distribution of schools across the country. Moreover, although the conditions for entering the VET education system are transparent, the process for advancing to higher education is far from smooth and often perceived as restrictive by VET graduates wishing to continue their studies.

One of the main deficiencies in the education sector remains the lack of reliable national education data that can be meaningfully used for programming policy interventions. A lack of timely information and insufficiently detailed disaggregated enrolment figures hamper evidence-based programming. Since 2018, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) has been in the process of digitalising data collection – both centrally and at school level – yet no real developments can be

reported, especially considering that since October 2019, when the street protests began, the country has essentially been paralysed.

In response to this dramatic situation, the Emergency Response Plan (ERP) for Lebanon, published in August 2021, has a total funding requirement of USD 378.5 million, and was acknowledged during the International Conference in Support of the Lebanese People on 4 August 2021, attracting funding commitments from key donors totalling approximately USD 370 million (France will provide EUR 100 million). Under the ERP, the education sector has a total budget of USD 33.25 million, targeting 220 000 children, youths, parents/caregivers and teachers. 41% of the education sector is funded the appeal, with USD 176.7 million available as of 30 June 2021. The funds received by the education sector in 2021 constitute around 6% of all funds received for the Plan (all sectors included) (World Bank, 2021). Moreover, cash and voucher assistance (CVA) for education has become increasingly common in education programming and is integral to the ERP.

The influx of money into the country, if confirmed by donors, is massive, yet unless the new education action plan is properly operationalised, no real changes will happen and the risk of fragmentation amongst interventions remains high.

Overall, there are 631 209 Syrian children (aged 3-18) living in Lebanon (UNHCR, 2018). These children, in addition to 447 409 vulnerable Lebanese children in the same age bracket, are in need of education assistance. Despite efforts by the MEHE and education partners, it is estimated that 40% of the Syrian children – more than 250 000 – remain out of certified education (formal and non-formal). The enrolment rates drop significantly in lower secondary education, and the out-of-school rates are highest among 15 to 18-year-old Syrians, with only around 6% of registered Syrian refugees in that age group enrolled in formal education (secondary schools and TVET public schools) (Government of Lebanon, 2020).

Research conducted in 2020 by the World Bank, in cooperation with relevant ministries and other stakeholders present in the country, reveals how the public sector has increased its relevance and presence for refugee children from Syria. Post-2018, the number of non-Lebanese students was almost the same as the number of Lebanese students present in the public system. That year, 220 498 non-Lebanese children were enrolled in public schools in Lebanon, i.e. approximately 45% of all the students in the public system. This demand for education was accompanied by the need to increase the capacity of the public education system within a very short period of time. Second shifts is one of the solutions introduced in public schools (World Bank, 2020). In parallel, the number of donors present in the country aiming to finance education services for Syrian refugees increased steadily. Between 2014 and 2018, the annual average amount provided by donors to finance the public education system was USD 250-300 million, which was more than 25% of the finance attributed by the Government to education. The MEHE has adopted different strategies to ensure that Syrian children receive formal certification and recognition for their education achievements, but, as yet, no real results have been achieved at national level.

▪ **PISA results**

In 2018, Lebanon participated for the second time in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) exercise. Participants did not perform particularly well in any of the areas tested: low scores were recorded by 67.8% of students in reading, 59.8% of students in mathematics and 62.2% of students in science. Overall, the PISA results showed the need to tackle underperformance, address the issue of dropping out of school and assist those struggling with school performance in earlier grades. In brief, the PISA assessment shows that two-thirds of Lebanese students do not achieve basic literacy, which is very low by international standards (OECD, 2019). The limited learning

together with the recent crises have translated into a mismatch of skills and labour market needs and a spike in unemployment rates. A revision of pedagogical methodologies and practices, curriculum contents and approaches, and excellence in pre-service teacher training and teacher recruitment remains key for Lebanon.

- **Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)**

According to the Labour Force and Household Living Conditions Survey carried out between 2018 and 2019, about 50% of unemployed young people had been seeking employment for more than 12 months at the time of the survey. Moreover, the percentage of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) was about 22%, but was significantly higher among young women (26.8%) than young men (16.7%) (CAS, 2020). The vulnerable position of young people has been accentuated during the pandemic, where even access to quality health care is dependent on having the necessary financial resources.

- **Education during the COVID-19 pandemic**

The COVID-19 crisis has resulted in different risks, one of the most prominent of which is the drop-out rates among school-age children – especially girls – in both Lebanese and Syrian population groups. The Beirut blast also exacerbated the already adverse impact of COVID-19, economic and political instability and the refugee crisis.

Owing to the school closures necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) launched a Distance-Learning Plan for all public and private schools as part of the Education Sector Short-Term Response to COVID-19, which contains general guidance on three learning delivery methods: media, online platforms and non-ICT methods.

During COVID-19 restrictions, in-person formal education has been replaced with blended learning, which many schools, teachers and students were not ready to use. Additional lockdowns led to a reliance on full distance learning methods, which has placed additional strain on teachers and students. This has also impacted retention support programmes by donors that would normally be more effective in person. Non-formal education activities have been also suspended in person, with distance learning used as an alternative approach.

The most common challenge reported by children was a lack of internet or mobile data (73%), followed by having to share their learning device (phone, tablet or computer) with other family members (63%). 'A majority of children (84%) rely on shared devices to access online courses and many expressed that the frequent power-cuts disrupt lessons. These obstacles are likely to become more pronounced as power-cuts become more frequent and Lebanon teeters on the edge of a nationwide internet outage, according to the head of the state-owned telecom company' (Imad Kreidieh, 2021). Chronic fuel shortages and generator breakdowns have challenged online communication and undermined distance learning, which relies on a strong internet connection and access to digital devices.

Of significance are the challenges related to access to distance learning by refugee and vulnerable children. Children attending second shift in public schools were largely excluded from accessing distance education (Lebanon Education Sector, 2021), with the recent AVSI assessment noting that some schools only targeted first-shift students for distance learning (AVSI, 2021). Furthermore, the new approaches did not cater for children with special needs. Notably, the platforms used in distance learning were not suitable for children with disabilities who have experienced historical seclusion and marginalisation in education.

Key barriers to participation in distance learning include persistent power interruption, lack of electronic gadgets and an internet connection, lack of digital skills and limited learning supplies. The situation is now at a tipping point: urgent action must be taken to ensure that all children in Lebanon can safely return to school and have opportunities to learn.

At the beginning of October 2021, only universities and private schools had opened to students for in-person lessons. There are significant delays in the opening of public schools at all levels due to the parallel crisis that impacts logistics, as well as the precarious contractual situation for teachers.

When considering education during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is equally important to emphasise the scale of the impact of the latest devastating developments on the country. The explosion in August 2020 caused damage ranging from minor to severe to at least 163 public and private schools, which urgently require rehabilitation, repair and replacement equipment. This is affecting continuity of learning for at least 85 000 students. Five technical and vocational compounds have also been affected, including 20 technical and vocational education and training (TVET) schools and institutes. The negative impact on education goes beyond physical damage, however. The increased risk of dropping out from school, high vulnerability of marginalised children and those with special needs, and post-traumatic effects on learners all threaten the continuity of education (MEHE & UNESCO, 2020).

MEHE set up the 'MEHE Beirut Blast Committee' with the aim of following up the school rehabilitation process, mechanism and outcomes. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has been mandated to coordinate rehabilitation efforts, encompassing partnership development, finance, implementation, monitoring and reporting. Assessments of the damage to schools are being carried out by the MEHE and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in public schools, by the UN in private schools and by UNICEF in TVET schools and institutes (MEHE & UNESCO, 2020).

2.2 VET policy and institutional setting

▪ **Strategic and legal framework for VET and adult learning**

The National Strategic Framework (NSF) for TVET 2018-2022 remains the main policy document adopted for improving the TVET education system. The framework is structured along three main axes: i) expanded access and service delivery; ii) enhanced quality and relevance of TVET provision; and iii) improved TVET governance and systems. These axes will be followed via eight building blocks. The framework also represents an important step towards better collaboration between government institutions and stronger partnerships with the private sector.

In 2021, MEHE in cooperation with other partners developed a 5-year general education plan for 2021 to 2025 that builds on successes and lessons learned from previous programmes and plans. The plan presents an ambitious framework and recognises the importance of early childhood education and enrolment, keeping children in schools and providing learning opportunities for those who are not in school. The plan is currently being finalised.

In this context, and in light of the delays that have occurred in the last 2 years, the NSF Action Plan seems to be not yet fully operationalised.

▪ **VET governance and financing arrangements**

The education system is governed by the MEHE. A number of bodies work under the auspices of the Ministry: the Directorate General of Education, the Directorate General of Higher Education and

Directorate General of Vocational and Technical Education (DGVTE). The public VET training providers (representing around 40% of the overall training offering) do not have enough autonomy to make management decisions at local level and depend fully on DGVTE management. At the same time, large numbers of private training providers have management and funding independence, providing they use the state examination system and submit to certain DGVTE quality-control measures.

In addition, a number of ministries and government agencies are responsible for vocational training provision for unemployed people and other specific target groups, especially Syrian refugees. The main institution offering adult education and continuing training courses is the National Employment Office (NEO). The chambers of commerce also offer training courses through their own centres. As a result of all the recent crises, including the ongoing Syrian situation, there has been a proliferation of service providers offering private accelerated training.

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

- **Quality and quality assurance**

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

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

Lebanon plans a comprehensive eight-level national qualifications framework (NQF), covering all types of education and training. The latest developments to report were in 2019, when the Minister of Education and Higher Education adopted Decision 374/M/2019 on the VET component of the framework, applying to levels 1 to 6 of the planned full LNQF (ETF, 2021).

Nevertheless, this legislation does not apply to the general qualifications framework. Since piloting in 2012, no significant technical work on the general level descriptors has been undertaken, only those applying to VET qualifications. No working group is currently sitting, and the stakeholders required to cooperate in the framework's development have not been identified or convened.

- **Work-based learning arrangements**

Work-based learning (WBL) in Lebanon falls under the TVET sector and combines classroom-based learning. Unfortunately, Lebanon (excluding the Vocational Secondary Certificate (LP) – dual system) lacks structured WBL schemes that provide a framework with regulations regarding duration, content, roles and responsibilities for firms and supervisors, monitoring schemes, etc. (UNESCO, 2018).

Similar to Lebanon's broader VTE system, there are numerous challenges associated with apprenticeship. It is difficult to keep teachers updated on new technological developments in their

fields. Companies lack qualified trainers who can create links between theoretical education offered in VTE schools and practical training provided by firms. These two key components of the apprenticeship system create serious gaps in the training provided. Limited career guidance for students is one of the primary reasons for high drop-out rates. In some cases, students opt not to return to school once they have started earning wages, and employers like to retain students who have not completed their studies because they can offer them lower wages. Another important challenge is the relatively low cost of employing foreign workers in Lebanese companies, which leads employers to prefer and hire foreigners over Lebanese workers.

- **Digital education and skills**

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

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

The Distance Learning Plan 2021 recognises the importance of enhancing the digital literacy skills of both students and teachers to find, evaluate, create and communicate information, and aims at encouraging digital citizenship among both students and teachers.

- **Donor support to education and VET for young people and adults**

The EU has awarded GIZ International Services a EUR 4 249 300 project called ProVTE (Technical Assistance for More Practice Oriented VTE in Lebanon), with the overall objective of improving the quality, relevance and responsiveness of the public VTE system to the needs of the labour market by promoting and strengthening the planning, coordination and implementation of a more practice-oriented VTE. The project was launched in February 2017 and will end in December 2021. This project has been followed by a new EU-funded initiative called VTE4all, which started in September 2020 with a budget of EUR 4 350 000 and an implementation period of 36 months. This new project will build on the ProVTE experience in designing and delivering competence-based training by aiming to enhance the capacities of vulnerable individuals in Lebanon to pursue pathways to a decent livelihood through improved access to quality TVET. Its main objective is to increase the employability prospects of vulnerable Lebanese, as well as Syrian and Palestinian refugees.

Given the current situation in the country, the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2021 is the overarching programme in all sectors in need, including Education. It is a joint, multi-year plan between the Government of Lebanon and international and national partners. It aims to respond to challenges in a holistic manner with medium-term, multi-year planning through the delivery of integrated and mutually reinforcing humanitarian and stabilisation interventions.

In **Education**, the Plan aims at i) supporting the long-term processes of rebuilding and peace building; ii) mitigating the negative psychosocial impact of violence and displacement on children; and iii) sustaining increased and equitable access to quality education for all children through the MEHE's

RACE II strategy. The targeted beneficiaries are 528 213 vulnerable Lebanese, Syrians and Palestinians, with a partner appeal of USD 430 million and 62 partners involved.

3. LABOUR MARKET AND EMPLOYMENT

3.1 Trends and challenges

Several factors are responsible for the chaotic and unprecedented situation. The country is currently facing inaction by the political elite on reform plans, continued depreciation of the Lebanese pound against the dollar, restrictions on bank transactions and even on access to dollar banknotes, regular protests against the perceived failed government economic policies and the uncontrolled rise in the price of goods, and, of course, the blast at the port of Beirut in August 2020. Moreover, the Syrian refugee crisis continues unabated.

The main factors driving persistent poverty and the lack of inclusive economic growth remain weak job creation and low-quality jobs. Overall, the structure of employment in Lebanon has been shifting towards services, and there is potential for micro- and small enterprises to develop further in the field of information and communication technology, where there have already been successful start-ups, as well as in the agri-food, construction, industry and manufacturing sectors, all of which have been identified as catalysts for job creation (Government of Lebanon, 2017).

SMEs are considered the promoters of economic growth in Lebanon. They represent more than 90% of registered firms and employ 50% of the working population, yet contribute to approximately 27% of total revenues. However, SMEs are now facing challenges in Lebanon, caused by several factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the collapse of the banking sector, the LBP/USD exchange rate, and the Beirut port explosion. Although many instruments are being implemented by international donors, the country still lacks a major funding opportunity. The current economic situation in Lebanon may lead to an increasing default rate in SME loans. SMEs today are witnessing more defaults in the payments of their clients due to the complicated economic situation, and as banks are levying high interest rates on deposits, clients aim to deposit their money by using it in their businesses or starting a new business (ETF, 2021).

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

At this stage, it is not clear how the Government intends to finance its planned National Social Security (NSS) programme, the new health interventions, and support for SMEs. The total amounts to LBP 1.2 trillion (about USD 300 million, at market exchange rates) (EUROMESCO, 2020).

- **Labour market and employment challenges in general**

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

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

A report published by the American University of Beirut (AUB) Crisis Observatory in 2020 concluded that Lebanon was entering a third mass exodus wave of emigration. There are three internal indicators in this regard: the high chances of emigration among Lebanese youth, as 77% of them indicated that they think about emigrating and seek it; the massive emigration of specialists and professionals working in the health and educational sectors; and the anticipation that the crisis in the country is going to be a prolonged one.

▪ **Employment**

According to the Labour Force and Household Living Conditions Survey (LFHLCS) from 2018/19, 63.4% of men and only 25.1% of women were employed. Employment was concentrated mainly in the service sector (76%), followed by industry (20.0%) and agriculture (4%).

Agri-industry value chains, the cornerstone of the country's industrial economy, represent 18.2% of the total economic activity in Lebanon. Agriculture is generally considered one of the more promising economic sectors for Lebanon (Government of Lebanon, 2017). However, although investments by donors and international organisations have helped create jobs in rural and other selected regions and develop a start-up ecosystem in Beirut, the number of jobs created is still not sufficient. As the Lebanese economy does not generate enough high-skilled jobs to absorb university graduates, higher education has not led to better labour-market outcomes.

Digital transformation may present an opportunity for the country to support economic growth, particularly in some industrial sub-sectors. However, the overall digital preparedness of the business sector and society is rather low (EU, 2020).

▪ **Unemployment**

According to the Labour Force and Household Living Conditions Survey (LFHLCS) from 2018/19, the overall unemployment rate was 11.4%. However, the youth unemployment rate was more than double this, at 23.3%. Taking into account time-related underemployment and the size of the potential labour force, including discouragement from searching for jobs, the survey revealed that 29.4% of the extended youth labour force were in various forms of labour under-utilisation. As mentioned above, youth are significantly exposed to unemployment and inactivity risks (16.7%) (CAS, 2020).

Unemployment and high levels of informal labour were serious problems even before the crisis. Already in 2012, the World Bank was suggesting that the Lebanese economy would need to create six times as many jobs just to absorb the regular market entrants. Unemployment is particularly high in some of the country's poorest localities – nearly double the national average in some, which puts considerable strain on host communities. According to public opinion, the biggest threat is not the coronavirus but the hunger, poverty and desperation caused by the country's economic collapse. In light of this, implementing the Lebanese Crisis Response Plan has become a high priority.

▪ **Statistical data collection and labour market information**

The Labour Force and Household Living Conditions Survey (LFHLCS) was implemented between 2018 and 2019 as a one-off exercise. Given the overall critical situation in the country, the initiative has neither been replicated nor – for the moment – are there plans to make it a regular exercise. There is still no labour-market information system in Lebanon, nor is there a clear plan to develop one. The country also does not regularly collect administrative data on registered unemployed people and does not implement active labour market programmes. All of this hinders systematic data collection and the analysis of labour-market trends. Most of the existing surveys and analyses are performed with the financial support of donors and are not repeated over time. The Ministry of Labour and the National Employment Office – in cooperation with the ETF and a dedicated Task Force – worked for more than 3 years on designing and implementing a national employers' survey aimed at better understanding the demand for workers. Should the survey, which has just ended its third pilot phase, become a regular and national exercise, it would be instrumental in identifying and analysing vacancies and skills needs within companies.

No systematic school-to-work transition surveys are currently being conducted. Hence, the system lacks the instruments needed to gain an understanding of the problems associated with the transition from education to work. Guidance Employment Offices (GEOs) have been established within selected VET schools since 2014 and submit monitoring reports to the DGVTE every 6 months, including data on the number of jobs acquired by VET graduates and links to the private sector, as well as recommendations for improving the workflow process of the offices. As of 2021, the network has grown from 8 offices to 23 nationwide and the DGVTE has in pipeline to have GEOs in all public VET schools. Unfortunately, the data collected so far does not include the percentage of graduates who have pursued self-employment. It is evident that the majority of VET graduates pursue higher education, either academic or vocational, in the hope of increasing their chances of gaining better-quality employment with higher wages.

▪ **Poverty**

According to more recent estimates by the World Bank that include the impact of the COVID-19 shock, poverty was expected to rise from 30% in 2019 to 45% or more of the population by the end of 2020, while extreme poverty was forecast to more than double to 22%. The economic implications for the 1.5 million Syrian refugees have not been estimated.

The COVID-19 crisis will exacerbate this deterioration. While the economic crisis had mainly hit the tradable sectors, the COVID-19 crisis extends the shock to non-tradable sectors as well, due to the collapse in tourism, catering and transport. The budget deficit is now expected to rise to 15%, leading to a rise in inflation. The Ministry of Social Affairs estimates that the COVID-19 effects on top of the economic crisis will lead to a fall in GDP of up to 15%, an increase in poverty over 50%, and a rise in unemployment over 50%. The situation is so dire that it will lead in all likelihood to a new social explosion, especially in the poorest areas, such as in Tripoli (ETF, 2021).

3.2 Employment policy and institutional setting

▪ **Strategy and legal framework in the employment policy field**

Despite a clear need, Lebanon still has no specific employment strategy or action plan. The last but two Ministers for Labour had started a process of reforms aimed at bringing Lebanon's labour-related regulations and institutions into the 21st century, e.g. updating the labour code, which dates back to

1946, reforming the *Kafala* sponsorship system for migrant workers, regulating foreign workers in Lebanon, especially Syrians, and reforming the National Social-Security Fund. However, all the recent changes in government did not really ensure a concrete follow-up of the reforms initiated in 2019 by the Ministry of Labour.

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

Passive labour-market and social-protection policies are still underdeveloped. The current national social-security system provided by the National Social-Security Fund (NSSF) covers only around half of the Lebanese labour force. The NSSF provides mostly end-of-service indemnity, sickness and maternity insurance, as well as family and education allowances. It has 35 offices throughout the country and inspects companies and work sites to verify that companies are contributing to social security.

- **Initiatives to boost employment**

The Lebanese Government has underlined job creation as a key priority in stabilising the country following the Syrian conflict, and well before the most recent economic and political crisis. The Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2021 includes activities to stimulate local economic development and market systems to create income-generating opportunities and employment. It also envisages the delivery of short-term, accelerated courses aimed at quickly addressing gaps in the labour market and increasing the employability of the most vulnerable people, who are not typically able to join the formal system. The LCRP – despite being formulated in 2017, which means that prior to all the recent developments, it was a live document – is constantly reviewed and updated by a dedicated working group.

Despite these efforts, the capacity to develop and implement coherent economic and labour-market policies and develop appropriate institutions appears to be limited so far. Defining and implementing policies could be more effective in partnership with the fairly active business community in Lebanon, which is usually willing to assist these processes. Awareness of the importance of cooperation between business and education is increasing – despite the overall situation – and can only improve in the coming years, as long as the new Government rapidly takes action to remedy the historical weakness of the Lebanese administration.

- **Initiatives to increase the capacity of the public employment services**

The National Employment Office (NEO) is the main body for implementing labour-market policies. Training courses offered by the NEO are the main form of active labour market programme (ALMP) provided in Lebanon.

In 2021, NEO actively contributed to revising and piloting the employers' survey in cooperation with the ETF, the Ministry of Labour and the dedicated Task Force, showing a great level of dedication to improving the situation. Other types of ALMPs, such as employment mediation, career counselling and guidance, employment stimulation and entrepreneurship incentives, are still fragmented and often linked to an individual project's activities.

Another government institution involved in the provision of training-related ALMPs is the National Vocational Training Centre (NVTC), which operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Social Affairs. In 2019, on the initiative of the former, the NVTC began to provide continuous vocational training courses in a more systematic way. Known as 'accelerated vocational training', this is aimed at increasing employability among the inactive population.

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

- **Donor support to the employment policy field**

Given the current situation in the country, the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2021 is still the overarching programme in all sectors in need, including labour market and employment, falling under the Livelihood sector. It is a joint, multi-year plan between the Government of Lebanon and international and national partners. It aims to respond to challenges in a holistic manner with a medium-term, multi-year planning through the delivery of integrated and mutually reinforcing humanitarian and stabilisation interventions.

In **Livelihood**, the Plan aims at i) alleviating socio-economic shock of the Syrian crisis on vulnerable populations, especially youth and women; ii) improving access to income and employment; and iii) stimulating local economic development and local markets, improving employability. In 2021, the targeted beneficiaries amounted were 202 361 vulnerable Lebanese, Syrians and Palestinians, with a partner appeal of USD 199 million (of which 34% was received by mid-year) and 73 partners involved in different projects and initiatives. Amongst the key achievements, it is worth mentioning that out of the 2 000 individuals planned to benefit from internship, on-the-job training or apprenticeship programmes, 3 572 eventually took advantage of this opportunity, as well as 1 207 of the 2 000 jobseekers intending to start their own business.

For further information, please contact Simona Rinaldi, European Training Foundation, email: Simona.Rinaldi@etf.europa.eu

STATISTICAL ANNEX, REFERENCES, ACRONYMS- LEBANON

Annex includes annual data from 2010, 2015, 2019 and 2020 (or the latest available year).

		2010	2015	2019	2020	
1	Total population (000) ^(e)	4 953.1	6 532.7	6 855.7	6 825.4	
2	Relative size of youth population (age group 15-24 and denominator age 15-64, %) ^(e)	28.8	27.7	25.9	25.4	
3	GDP growth rate (%)	8.0	0.2	-6.7	-20.3	
4	GDP by sector (%)	Agriculture added value	3.9	3.4	3.1	2.5
		Industry added value	13.8	15.7	12.8	7.2
		Services added value	71.9	73.7	78.8	86.4
5	Public expenditure on education (as % of GDP)	1.6	2.4 (2013)	M.D.	M.D.	
6	Public expenditure on education (as % of total public expenditure)	5.5	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	
7	Adult literacy (%)	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	
8	Educational attainment of adult population (aged 25-64 or 15+) (%)	Low	M.D.	66.5 (2012)	49.2 ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾	M.D.
		Medium	M.D.	15.3 (2012)	17.0 ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾	M.D.
		High	M.D.	17.9 (2012)	33.4 ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾	M.D.
9	Early leavers from education and training (aged 18-24) (%)	Total	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
10	Gross enrolment rates in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	
11	Share of VET students in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)	27.4	26.2	26.2	M.D.	
12	Tertiary education attainment (aged 30-34) (%)	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	
13	Participation in training / lifelong learning (aged 25-64) (%)	Total	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.

			2010	2015	2019	2020
14	Low achievement in reading, mathematics and science – PISA (%)	Reading	N.A.	70.4	67.8 (2018)	N.A.
		Mathematics	N.A.	60.2	59.8 (2018)	N.A.
		Science	N.A.	62.6	62.2 (2018)	N.A.
15	Activity rate (aged 15+) (%)	Total	M.D.	M.D.	48.8 ⁽²⁾	M.D.
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	70.4 ⁽²⁾	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	29.3 ⁽²⁾	M.D.
16	Inactivity rate (aged 15+) (%) ⁽³⁾	Total	M.D.	M.D.	51.2 ^{(2) (3)}	M.D.
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	29.6 ^{(2) (3)}	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	70.7 ^{(2) (3)}	M.D.
17	Employment rate (aged 15+) (%)	Total	M.D.	M.D.	43.3 ⁽²⁾⁽³⁾	42.3 ^e
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	63.4 ⁽²⁾⁽³⁾	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	25.1 ⁽²⁾⁽³⁾	M.D.
18	Employment rate by educational attainment (% aged 15+)	Low	M.D.	M.D.	41.5 ⁽²⁾	M.D.
		Medium	M.D.	M.D.	36.5 ⁽²⁾	M.D.
		High	M.D.	M.D.	52.0 ⁽²⁾	M.D.
19	Employment by sector (%)	Agriculture	M.D.	M.D.	3.6 ^{(2) (3)}	M.D.
		Industry	M.D.	M.D.	20.5 ^{(2) (3)}	M.D.
		Services	M.D.	M.D.	75.8 ^{(2) (3)}	M.D.
20	Incidence of self-employment (%)		M.D.	28.9 (2012)	29.1 ⁽²⁾⁽³⁾	M.D.
21	Incidence of vulnerable employment (%)		M.D.	21.1 (2012)	20.1 ⁽²⁾⁽³⁾	M.D.
22	Unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%)	Total	M.D.	M.D.	11.4 ⁽²⁾	6.6 ^e
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	10 ⁽²⁾	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	14 ⁽²⁾	M.D.
23	Unemployment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%)	Low (ISCED 0-1)	M.D.	8.1 (2012)	5.0	M.D.
		Low (ISCED 2)	M.D.	8.7 (2012)	9.6	M.D.
		Medium	M.D.	13.9 (2012)	12.4	M.D.
		High	M.D.	11.4 (2012)	14.5	M.D.

		2010	2015	2019	2020	
24	Long-term unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%)	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	
25	Youth unemployment rate (aged 15-24) (%)	Total	M.D.	M.D.	23.3 ⁽²⁾	M.D.
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	24.5 ⁽²⁾	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	21.4 ⁽²⁾	M.D.
26	Proportion of people aged 15-24 not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (%)	Total	M.D.	M.D.	22.0 ⁽²⁾	M.D.
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	16.7 ⁽²⁾	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	26.8 ⁽²⁾	M.D.

Last update: September 2021

Sources:

Indicators 8 (year 2012), 20 (year 2012), 21 (year 2012), 23 (year 2012) – EUROSTAT
 Indicators 8 (year 2019), 15, 16, 17 (year 2019), 22 (year 2019), 25, 26 – CAS in cooperation with the ILO (LFHLCS)
 Indicators 17 (year 2020), 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 (year 2020), 23 (year 2018/19), – ILOSTAT
 Indicators 5, 6, 7, 11 – UNESCO, Institute for Statistics
 Indicators 14 – OECD
 Indicators 1, 2, 3, 4 – The World Bank, World Development Indicators database

Notes:

- 1) Data refers to active population
- 2) Data refers to the period April 2018-March 2019
- 3) ETF calculations

Legend:

N.A. = Not applicable
 M.D. = Missing data
 e = Estimations

ANNEX: DEFINITIONS OF INDICATORS

	Description	Definition
1	Total population (000)	The total population is estimated as the number of people having their usual residence in a country on 1 January of the respective year. When information on the usually resident population is not available, countries may report legal or registered residents.
2	Relative size of youth population (age group 15–24) (%)	This is the ratio of the youth population (aged 15-24) to the working-age population, usually aged 15-64 (74)/15+.
3	GDP growth rate (%)	Annual percentage growth rate of GDP at market prices based on constant local currency. Aggregates are based on constant 2010 US dollars. GDP is the sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or for depletion and degradation of natural resources.
4	GDP by sector (%)	The share of value added from Agriculture, Industry and Services. Agriculture corresponds to ISIC divisions 1 to 5 and includes forestry, hunting and fishing, as well as crop cultivation and livestock production. Value added is the net output of a sector after adding up all outputs and subtracting intermediate inputs. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or depletion and degradation of natural resources. The origin of value added is determined by the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC), revision 3 or 4.
5	Public expenditure on education (as % of GDP)	Public expenditure on education expressed as a percentage of GDP. Generally, the public sector funds education either by directly bearing the current and capital expenses of educational institutions, or by supporting students and their families with scholarships and public loans, as well as by transferring public subsidies for educational activities to private firms or non-profit organisations (transfer to private households and enterprises). Both types of transactions together are reported as total public expenditure on education.
6	Public expenditure on education (as % of total public expenditure)	Public expenditure on education expressed as a percentage of total public expenditure. Generally, the public sector funds education either by directly bearing the current and capital expenses of educational institutions, or by supporting students and their families with scholarships and public loans, as well as by transferring public subsidies for educational activities to private firms or non-profit organisations (transfer to private households and enterprises). Both types of transactions together are reported as total public expenditure on education.
7	Adult literacy (%)	Adult literacy is the percentage of the population aged 15 years and over who can read, write and understand a short simple statement on their everyday life. Generally, 'literacy' also encompasses 'numeracy' – the ability to make simple arithmetic calculations.

	Description	Definition
8	Educational attainment of adult population (25-64 or aged 15+) (%)	Educational attainment refers to the highest educational level achieved by individuals expressed as a percentage of all persons in that age group. This is usually measured in terms of the highest educational programme successfully completed, which is typically certified by a recognised qualification. Recognised intermediate qualifications are classified at a lower level than the programme itself.
9	Early leavers from education and training (age group 18-24) (%)	Early leavers from education and training are defined as the percentage of the population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education who were not in further education or training during the 4 weeks preceding the survey. Lower secondary education refers to ISCED 1997 levels 0-2 and 3C short (i.e. programmes lasting under 2 years) for data up to 2013 and to ISCED 2011 levels 0-2 for data from 2014 onwards.
10	Gross enrolment rates in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)	Number of students enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education.
11	Share of VET students in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)	Total number of students enrolled in vocational programmes at a given level of education (in this case, upper secondary), expressed as a percentage of the total number of students enrolled in all programmes (vocational and general) at that level.
12	Tertiary education attainment (aged 30-34) (%)	Tertiary attainment is calculated as the percentage of the population aged 30-34 who have successfully completed tertiary studies (e.g. university, higher technical institution). Educational attainment refers to ISCED 1997 level 5-6 up to 2013 and ISCED 2011 level 5-8 from 2014 onwards.
13	Participation in training / lifelong learning (age group 25-64) (%)	Participants in lifelong learning refers to persons aged 25-64 who stated that they received education or training in the 4 weeks preceding the survey (numerator). The denominator is the total population of the same age group, excluding those who did not answer the question on participation in education and training. The information collected relates to all education or training, whether or not it is relevant to the respondent's current or possible future job. If a different reference period is used, this should be indicated.
14	Low achievement in reading, maths and science – PISA (%)	Low achievers are the 15-year-olds who are failing to reach level 2 on the PISA scale for reading, mathematics and science.
15	Activity rate (aged 15+) (%)	The activity rate is calculated by dividing the active population by the population of the same age group. The active population (also called 'labour force') is defined as the sum of employed and unemployed people. The inactive population consists of all people who are classified as neither employed nor unemployed.
16	Inactivity rate (aged 15+) (%)	The inactivity/out-of-the-labour-force rate is calculated by dividing the inactive population by the population of the same age group. The inactive population consists of all people who are classified as neither employed nor unemployed.
17	Employment rate (aged 15+) (%)	The employment rate is calculated by dividing the number of employed people by the population of the same age group. Employed people are all people who worked at least 1 hour for pay or profit during the reference period or were temporarily absent from such work. If a different age group is used, this should be indicated.
18	Employment rate by educational attainment (% aged 15+)	The employment rate is calculated by dividing the number of employed persons by the population of the same age group.

	Description	Definition
		<p>Employed persons are all persons who worked at least 1 hour for pay or profit during the reference period or were temporarily absent from such work. If a different age group is used, this should be indicated.</p> <p>Educational levels refer to the highest educational level successfully completed. Three levels are considered: Low (ISCED level 0-2), Medium (ISCED level 3-4) and High (ISCED 1997 level 5-6, and ISCED 2011 level 5-8).</p>
19	Employment by sector (%)	This indicator provides information on the relative importance of different economic activities with regard to employment. Data is presented by broad branches of economic activity (i.e. agriculture/industry/services) based on the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC). In Europe, the NACE classification is consistent with ISIC.
20	Incidence of self-employment (%)	The incidence of self-employment is expressed by the number of self-employed people (i.e. employers + own-account workers + contributing family workers) as a proportion of the total employed population.
21	Incidence of vulnerable employment (%)	The incidence of vulnerable employment is expressed by the number of own-account workers and contributing family workers as a proportion of the total employed population.
22	Unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%)	The unemployment rate represents unemployed people as a percentage of the labour force. The labour force is the total number of people who are employed or unemployed. Unemployed people comprise those aged 15-64 or 15+ who were without work during the reference week; are currently available for work (were available for paid employment or self-employment before the end of the 2 weeks following the reference week); are actively seeking work, i.e. had taken specific steps in the 4-week period ending with the reference week to seek paid employment or self-employment, or had found a job to start later (within a period of, at most, 3 months).
23	Unemployment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%)	The unemployment rate represents unemployed people as a percentage of the labour force. The labour force is the total number of people who are employed or unemployed. Unemployed people comprise those aged 15-64 or 15+ who were without work during the reference week; are currently available for work (were available for paid employment or self-employment before the end of the 2 weeks following the reference week); are actively seeking work (had taken specific steps in the 4-week period ending with the reference week to seek paid employment or self-employment, or had found a job to start later (within a period of, at most, 3 months). Educational levels refer to the highest educational level successfully completed. Three levels are considered: Low (ISCED level 0-2), Medium (ISCED level 3-4) and High (ISCED 1997 level 5-6, and ISCED 2011 level 5-8)
24	Long-term unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%)	The long-term unemployment rate is the share of people in the total active population who have been unemployed for 12 months or more, expressed as a percentage. The duration of unemployment is defined as the duration of a search for a job or as the period of time since the last job was held (if this period is shorter than the duration of the search for a job).
25	Youth unemployment rate (aged 15-24) (%)	The youth unemployment ratio is calculated by dividing the number of unemployed people aged 15-24 by the total population of the same age group.

	Description	Definition
26	Proportion of people aged 15-24 not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (%)	The indicator provides information on young people aged 15-24 who meet the following two conditions: first, they are not employed (i.e. unemployed or inactive according to the ILO definition); and second, they have not received any education or training in the 4 weeks preceding the survey. Data is expressed as a percentage of the total population of the same age group and gender, excluding the respondents who have not answered the question on participation in education and training.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ALMP	Active labour market programme
AUB	American University of Beirut
DGVTE	Directorate General for Vocational and Technical Education
ERP	Emergency Response Plan
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEO	Guidance Employment Office
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LCRP	Lebanon Crisis Response Plan
LFHLCS	Labour Force and Household Living Conditions Survey
LNQF	Lebanese National Qualifications Framework
LP	Dual system
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
NEO	National Employment Office
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSF	National Strategic Framework
NSS	National Social Security
NSSF	National Social-Security Fund
NVTC	National Vocational Training Centre
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PPE	Personal protective equipment
SME	Small or medium-sized enterprise
SMEB	Survival and Minimum Expenditure Basket
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations Refugee Agency
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VET	Vocational education and training

WBL

Work-based learning

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT
OUR ACTIVITIES PLEASE CONTACT:
COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT
EUROPEAN TRAINING FOUNDATION
VIALE SETTIMIO SEVERO 65
I - 10133 TORINO
E: INFO@ETF.EUROPA.EU
T: +39 011 6302222
F: +39 011 6302200
WWW.ETF.EUROPA.EU