

# PALESTINE\*

## EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENTS 2020



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# KEY POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT (SEPTEMBER 2019–AUGUST 2020)

The current socioeconomic situation in Palestine is extremely challenging. In 2019, the country had already gone through a severe financial crisis due to a deduction of clearance revenues by the Israeli government<sup>1</sup>. The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has obviously worsened the situation. Apart from the negative consequences on public health and the economy, the pandemic has brought to the fore the implications of the prolonged deterioration in Israeli–Palestinian relations. It has shed a harsh light on the inadequacies of the status quo, including the framework governing the economic relationship between the two sides<sup>2</sup>.

The government has been working on emergency plans. More than ever, the Palestinian Authority is calling upon additional financial support from the international donor community to work in partnership with the government to overcome the current crisis, which seriously affects the lives of the Palestinian people.

In terms of education and training, the Covid-19 outbreak has pushed the relevant ministries, schools, teachers and students to move ahead with digital online learning. Especially in the context of Palestine, where there is limited mobility for individuals between the different areas, e-learning needs to be further developed. Several efforts have been made in this respect, in cooperation with different partners. Examples include the creation of electronic learning platforms by the Ministry of Education (MoE) (<https://i2.elearn.edu.ps/>), the development of an e-learning manual led by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHE), and the organisation by the Ministry of Labour, in cooperation with the local chambers of commerce, of the delivery of online short courses in solar energy and hybrid automotive technology (the theoretical part) for workers.

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) has been moved up the political agenda. One of the objectives of the newly revised Labour Sector Strategy 2020–2022 is to increase the effectiveness of the TVET system and to make it more relevant to the needs of the labour market. It also highlights the need for a functioning TVET governance system that is regulated with laws and legislations in line with international standards. For many years, the TVET system has suffered from a weak governance structure, and a proposal for a new national TVET commission has recently been put forward for government approval.

Employment creation has been placed at the centre of the national development plan, especially for young people and women, with an emphasis on marginalised areas near the wall, Gaza and East Jerusalem. The Labour Sector Strategy 2017–2022 has been reviewed

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<sup>1</sup> Israel collects taxes on Palestinian imports on behalf of the Palestinian Authority and transfers the results on a monthly basis. The Authority's self-generated revenue collected by Israel accounts for about 70–75% of total government income.

<sup>2</sup> Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Paper to the Ad-Hoc Liaison Committee, 2 June 2020.

and a new Labour Sector Strategy 2020–2022 was drafted in April 2020. The aim is to build a national trans-sectoral employment plan as a national comprehensive sectoral and cross-sectoral response towards employment. Therefore, all partners are invited to take a more clustered approach within different sectoral programmes, putting job creation and employment at the centre of the actions.

# 1. KEY DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Palestine has one of the highest population growth rates (2.41% in 2020) and fertility rates (4.06 children per woman) in the Middle East and North Africa<sup>3</sup>. The population of Palestine exceeded 5 million in 2019 (4 million in 2010). In addition, 1.5 million Palestinians live inside Israel and 5.9 million in Arab countries<sup>4</sup>. The youth population (aged 15–24) was estimated to account for 34.9% of the working-age population (aged 15–64) in 2019. Thus, Palestine has one of the youngest populations not only in the region but also in the world.

This population growth puts enormous pressure on social services (education, health and housing) and the labour market. Demographic projections made by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in 2016 found that Palestine sits on the cusp of significant changes in its demographic make-up. The population is expected to double to 9.5 million by 2050, despite a drastic reduction in fertility from 4.06 children per woman in 2019 to a projected 2.17 in 2050. By 2050 the Palestinian economy is expected to have 3.8 million potential workers, up from 1.3 million in 2016. This will require an increase of 72 000 new jobs per year<sup>5</sup>. The difficult economic and labour market situation, characterised by very low job creation, pushes many Palestinians towards migration.

Palestine's geopolitical situation has a disastrous impact on its economic situation, with zero growth or – as was the case in 2019 – contraction in the Palestinian economy. After a period of strong economic recovery between 2007 and 2011, economic growth in Palestine started slowing down and came to a standstill around 2018 (0.9%, down from 4.7% in 2016<sup>6</sup>). Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita declined by 1.6% compared to 2018 owing to natural population growth that was faster than the growth in GDP. This is also directly reflected in the regional differences: in 2019 the GDP per capita in the West Bank was more than three times that in the Gaza Strip<sup>7</sup>. Over recent decades, the economy has, to a large extent, survived through inflows of external transfers, but these have been reducing significantly over the past few years. In its 2019 report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee of the United Nations (UN), the World Bank sounded the alarm:

Under a baseline scenario which assumes a continuation of the Israeli restrictions, persistence of the internal divide between the West Bank and Gaza and a decline in aid levels, the Palestinian economy is expected to slip into a recession in 2020 and 2021, even if additional, one-off transfers from clearance revenues are made<sup>8</sup>.

The 2020 economic forecasts generated in late 2019 by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) and the Palestinian Monetary Authority had already highlighted the deteriorating economic situation prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. The pessimistic scenario envisaged a 2.2% decline in real

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<sup>3</sup> <http://worldpopulationreview.com>

<sup>4</sup> Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), *Palestine in Figures 2019*, March 2020: <http://pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2513.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ILOSTUDY040418.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> World Bank data

<sup>7</sup> PCBS 2019 data. The data excludes those parts of Jerusalem that were annexed by the Israeli occupation in 1967, and the data for GDP and its components for 2019 are preliminary, based on quarterly estimates, and will be revised.

<sup>8</sup> World Bank, Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, 2019, p. 1–7.

GDP, a 4.5% decline in per capita income, a 2.7% decline in public revenues, and an increase in unemployment by 4.5 percentage points. In the light of Covid-19, PCBS produced new estimates on 26 March 2020 highlighting that the growth forecasts for Palestine's GDP for 2020 could contract in a best-case scenario by 1.2% compared with 2019 as a result of a one-month shutdown, by 5.1% during a three-month shutdown or, in the worst case, by 7.1% in a six-month shutdown<sup>9</sup>.

Most sectors and economic activities have been affected by the Covid-19 crisis. From the beginning of the crisis, tourism halted completely, and other sectors in the Palestinian labour market and within the Green Line and the settlements followed suit. The sectoral distribution of Palestinian workers (including those working in Israel and the settlements) in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip shows that the biggest employer is the services sector, which accounts for 37% of those employed (30% in the West Bank and 56% in the Gaza Strip). Services was the first sector to be hit hard by the current pandemic, since it was the first to shut down in order to limit movement and the spread of the virus. Given that this sector is the largest employer, its disruption will have serious consequences<sup>10</sup>.

Such an unstable economic climate leaves little space for job creation. Moreover, Palestine has a history of a heavy public employment burden (20.7% of employment is in the public sector). About 13.2% of workers are formally employed in Israel and the settlements, while the remaining 66.1% are employed in the private sector<sup>11</sup>. The low level of investment in the private sector and its concentration in low-productivity sectors do not, however, create the required jobs. The Palestinian economy is dominated by small firms and there is a significant amount of self-employment (24.6%), which is more prevalent in the West Bank than in the Gaza Strip<sup>12</sup>. As many of the micro to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are family based and often operate in the informal economy, there is limited potential for job creation.

The Palestinian government has developed strategies to enhance national competitiveness in industry, agriculture, housing and tourism as levers of economic development. All these sectors, however, need better-qualified human capital. Through the work of the Palestine Trade Centre (PalTrade), the government has developed one national export strategy and nine sectoral export strategies (stone and marble; fresh fruit and vegetables; olive oil; footwear and leather; furniture; processed meat; textile and garments; information and communications technologies (ICT); and tourism). The time span of these strategies was 2014–2018 and it is not clear whether a new national export strategy will be developed. Nevertheless, the complex political situation puts severe restrictions on the Palestinian economy and its foreign trade relations.

Unlocking the potential of the Palestinian private sector would require the alleviation of Israeli restrictions on access to land, natural resources (e.g. water), exports and freedom of movement. Moreover, the business environment is not favourable. West Bank and Gaza has a low ranking in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index<sup>13</sup>, ranking 117th out of 190 economies in 2020.

Beyond the weak economic situation, the UN has warned that social stability is under pressure, with a lack of decent job opportunities, declining real incomes, high levels of unemployment, and levels of poverty that are rising to an alarming level. Three out of ten (29.2%) Palestinians live below the

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<sup>9</sup> Note from the Ministry of Labour, Plan to mitigate the effects of Covid-19 pandemic for workers, April 2020.

<sup>10</sup> Ministry of Labour, Plan to mitigate the effects of Covid-19 pandemic for workers, April 2020.

<sup>11</sup> PCBS, 2019.

<sup>12</sup> PCBS, 2019.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.doingbusiness.org/en/rankings>

poverty line<sup>14</sup>. Half of all Palestinians (2.4 million out of 4.8 million) are in need of humanitarian assistance<sup>15</sup>. Those in Gaza are most affected (53% are below the poverty line and 1.5 million are in need of assistance), but so are Palestinians living in the other areas that are under various access restrictions, such as Area C and East Jerusalem.

As stated above, the socioeconomic situation in Palestine was already extremely challenging before the Covid-19 outbreak, but the pandemic has worsened the situation. The Palestinian people are experiencing the same shock and uncertainty as the rest of humanity; however, their government is unable to respond to the socioeconomic effects with the same agency as that of an independent, sovereign state<sup>16</sup>. The Palestinian Authority must count on increased financial and development assistance to address its public health needs, provide essential services and respond to the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic.

As stated by the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (in July 2020), Palestinians and Israelis are grappling with a complex and potentially destabilising three-pronged crisis. First, there is the escalating health crisis as both struggle to contain the rapid spike of Covid-19 cases. Second, there is the spiralling economic crisis as businesses close, unemployment soars, protests increase and the economy suffers the financial impact of months of lockdowns and restrictions. Finally, there is the mounting political confrontation, driven by the threat of Israeli annexation of parts of the occupied West Bank, and the steps taken in response by the Palestinian leadership<sup>17</sup>.

## 2. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### 2.1 Trends and challenges

Over a third of Palestinian communities in the West Bank (Area C) lack a primary school, forcing children to travel or walk long distances to reach the nearest school<sup>18</sup>. Other issues include the shortage of physical infrastructure and the restrictions on movement. In the Gaza Strip, armed conflict and the resulting damage to and destruction of facilities, the Israeli blockade and the internal Palestinian divide have severely disrupted services, including the ability to conduct regular educational activities. At the same time, the school-age population is expected to increase in the coming years as a result of demographic changes. In fact, the number of students in Gaza is projected to increase from

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<sup>14</sup> The definition of poverty: according to PCBS Monthly Consumption Patterns, the estimation of a poverty line covers the basic household needs (shelter, clothing, and food) as well as health care, education, transportation, personal care, and housekeeping supplies. Deep poverty is defined as households 'unable to meet the minimum required basic needs for food, clothing and housing'. Poverty lines are adjusted to reflect the different consumption levels of families based on household size and number of children.

<sup>15</sup> <https://cerf.un.org/what-we-do/allocation/2020/summary/20-RR-PSE-41231>

<sup>16</sup> United Nations Bulletin, May 2020, Volume XLIII, No. 5: ([https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/MAY20MBFINAL\\_260620.pdf](https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/MAY20MBFINAL_260620.pdf))

<sup>17</sup> United Nations Bulletin, July 2020, Volume XLIII, No. 7: <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/action-by-un-system-and-igos-relevant-to-question-of-palestine-july-2020-monthly-bulletin/>

<sup>18</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 'Occupied Palestinian Territory – Humanitarian Facts and Figures', 2017: [https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/factsheet\\_booklet\\_final\\_21\\_12\\_2017.pdf](https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/factsheet_booklet_final_21_12_2017.pdf)

630 000 in 2015 to 1.2 million in 2030. To meet this demand, 900 additional schools and a significant increase in the number of teachers will be required<sup>19</sup>.

Although 5.3% of GDP was allocated to financing the education sector in 2017, funding of education is heavily reliant on foreign aid. In recent years, Palestine has faced a funding crisis as a result of cuts in foreign aid. This has led to significant reductions in public sector budgets and, in particular, salaries.

The PCBS recently announced that Palestine recorded one of the lowest illiteracy rates in the world (2.6% among individuals aged 15 years and over), while the illiteracy rate among individuals aged 15 years and over in the Arab countries reached 25.2% in 2018, according to data from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics<sup>20</sup>.

According to 2018 data, 58.1% of the adult population (aged 25–64) have attained only a low level of education, 21.3% a medium level and 20.6% a high level.

The Palestinian general education system consists of pre-school education; compulsory basic education or primary education divided into the preparatory stage (grades 1–4) and the empowerment stage (grades 5–10); secondary education (general, technical and vocational secondary education covering grades 11–12); higher education (grades 13–14); and non-formal education.

Palestine scores highly on school attendance and educational attainment, with net enrolment rates of 94.8% in primary education and 87.2% in secondary education (91.2% for females) in 2018<sup>21</sup>. Despite economic hardship, young people continue to prioritise higher education (44.3% gross enrolment rate in tertiary education in 2018, significantly higher for women (55%) than for men (35%))<sup>22</sup>.

Education in Palestine suffers from fragmented management. The MoE and the MoHE<sup>23</sup> are responsible for managing public schools, colleges and universities and have regulatory overview of those run by the private sector. Meanwhile, the VET arena (including non-formal vocational training) is home to an even more complex spectrum, with additional players such as centres affiliated to the Ministry of Labour (MoL), the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Former Detainees, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), civil society organisations (CSOs), including those that are faith-based, and private for-profit training providers.

Due to the fragmented VET system, it has always been a challenge to gain a complete picture of the system with administrative data such as enrolment figures. For a long time, the VET enrolment figures have included only formal secondary vocational education and have lingered around 2–3% (excluding the commercial stream). According to the Torino Process national report 2020, the share of VET students has risen to about 15% of students in the upper secondary education age cohort (16–18 years), including all forms of both formal and non-formal VET training programmes (except for the

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<sup>19</sup> World Bank, Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, 19 March 2018: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/324951520906690830/pdf/124205-WP-PUBLIC-MAR14-5PM-March-2018-AHLC-Report.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> Palestine Economy Portal, 'Illiteracy rates in Palestine among the lowest in the world', 8 September 2020: <https://www.palestineeconomy.ps/en/Article/17119/>

<sup>21</sup> <http://uis.unesco.org/country/PS>

<sup>22</sup> PCBS data.

<sup>23</sup> At regular intervals, these two ministries have been merged and separated again. Since April 2019, they have operated (again) as two separate entities.



commercial stream). In recent years, enrolment figures have been increasing in all VET tracks as a result of the efforts made in diversifying the training offer to boost the enrolment in VET<sup>24</sup>.

In recent years, the MoE has made efforts to increase enrolment in VET and to lower the barrier between VET and general education by introducing vocational units and a technology track in general education. In higher education, some universities are now also providing technical education, courses have increasingly been developed in cooperation with industry (e.g. through donor-funded pilot schemes for dual studies) and the idea of creating a VET university has been put forward. Such an expansion and diversification of the VET provision is reassuring in terms of increased enrolment, but it is also further exacerbating the existing fragmentation of VET training supply and the serious lack of an overarching governance of such training<sup>25</sup>.

The TVET sector has the potential to become stronger if resources are used more efficiently. The vocational training centres (VTCs) that currently offer non-formal training have limited absorption capacity and have to turn some students away, while most vocational schools are not used to their full potential as there are no classes in the afternoons. As a result of effective cooperation between ministries, it has been agreed that VTC programmes can be offered in the vocational school classrooms in the afternoons.

The TVET sector in East Jerusalem faces particularly challenging circumstances owing to the continuously deteriorating situation of the Palestinian Jerusalemites in the city. On behalf of the European Commission, the ETF is carrying out a comprehensive study of the TVET sector in East Jerusalem with the aim of identifying options for future EU or donor support in the sector.

## 2.2 Education and training policy and institutional setting

The National Policy Agenda 2017–2022 recognises the importance of education for economic growth and sustainable development. It identifies quality education for all as a national priority, building on Palestine’s longstanding commitment to quality and equality in education. With universal education almost achieved in Palestine, the focus now is on enhancing the relevance and quality of education. The National Policy Agenda identifies the key changes that need to be made to improve the quality of education: greater alignment of TVET and higher education institutions with labour market needs; upgraded and expanded TVET infrastructure and facilities; and enhanced scientific research capacity.

Sectoral strategies have been developed within the framework of this agenda and the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2020. The Education Sector Strategic Plan 2017–2022, developed by the former Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE), is considered to be the current strategic working document. It comprises three strategic goals:

- ensuring safe, inclusive and equitable access to quality education at all levels of the system;
- developing a student-centred teaching and learning pedagogy and environment;
- enhancing accountability and results-based leadership, governance and management.

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<sup>24</sup> ETF Torino Process 2019/2020.

<sup>25</sup> ETF Torino Process 2019/2020.

The MoE and the MoHE are responsible for managing public schools, colleges and universities and have regulatory oversight of those run by the private sector, which are attended by 67.08% of all students. UNWRA oversees 24.07% of all students in general education, while the private sector oversees 8.85%<sup>26</sup>. The private sector is providing an increasing number of education services and is funded by charities, religious groups, private enterprises and individuals.

The Palestinian education system is subject to political, financial and physical constraints and is vulnerable to many variables that cannot be controlled. The most vulnerable places in the West Bank are Area C and East Jerusalem, where Israel exercises full control over the land and the people. In these places, the ministries rely on the international donor community to provide education for Palestinian students and to support teachers.

The National TVET Strategy (2010) presents a detailed action plan that addresses legislation, financing, the relevance of skills to labour market needs, stakeholder engagement, qualifications frameworks, teacher training, and quality development and assurance, including internal and external evaluation. In terms of TVET reform, slow but continuous progress is being made in important processes, such as competence-based education and work-based learning (WBL). However, the complexity of the situation in Palestine and the limited capacity to operate the revised TVET system have not led to immediate and sustainable results. The national stakeholders still lack the capacity and resources to run the processes autonomously, but they are clearly committed to sustaining the outcomes of international processes and to continuing reforms, and some positive results have been achieved.

The government recognises the importance of raising awareness about the TVET sector by integrating vocational education into general education. In the academic year 2018/19, the MoE started with the introduction of vocational units in general education (18 units initially) to cover access to vocational education in all geographical areas. This was increased to 39 vocational units in the academic year 2019/20<sup>27</sup>, and another 17 vocational units opened during the current school year, 2020/21.

The WBL model implemented with the support of Enabel (Belgian development agency) at all levels of TVET (vocational schools, colleges, universities) is considered successful. The WBL model has been positively received by both providers and employers. In August 2018 the MoL and the former MoEHE approved the WBL strategy for the period 2018–2022. WBL is gradually being implemented in VET schools.

The governance of the TVET system is rather complex owing to the fragmentation of TVET providers and services in Palestine. This fragmentation worsened after the approval of the new government in April 2019, when the MoEHE was split into two ministries. The main actors in VET governance and policy making are now the MoE, the MoHE, the MoL and their supervised authorities. The former governance structure, with the Higher Council of TVET supported by the Executive Council and the Development Centre, is again under revision. In the latest attempt to address the fragmentation of VET, a new ministerial committee was initiated in May 2019 to come up draft a law identifying the functioning, roles and responsibilities of a new “National commission for TVET”. By the end of 2020, the draft law had received cabinet approval and is awaiting countersignature by the president.

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<sup>26</sup> Ministry of Education and Higher Education, *Palestine 2020: A learning nation. Education Development Strategic Plan, 2014–2019*, February 2014.

<sup>27</sup> Torino Process National Reporting Framework (NRF) 2019.

Historically, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in the TVET sector have been weak. To address this weakness, the ETF, in cooperation with GIZ (German development agency) and Enabel (Belgian development agency), supported the key TVET stakeholders in establishing a national TVET monitoring and evaluation framework. On the basis of this framework, the former MoEHE amended its monitoring system by including new indicators. However, this monitoring system covers only TVET schools under the ministry's supervision. Work still needs to be done, in particular by the MoL, to establish a fully functioning monitoring and evaluation system that covers the whole TVET sector. A systematic tracer system is needed at institutional and national level for tracking TVET graduates' employment situation to inform policy makers about skills mismatches and gaps. In this respect, in 2018 the ETF, GIZ and Enabel cooperated to carry out a tracer study for VET graduates of the short training programmes offered by GIZ and Enabel.

## 3. LABOUR MARKET AND EMPLOYMENT

### 3.1 Trends and challenges

As a result of Palestine's particular historical, political and economic situation, its labour market is highly segmented, not only by age and gender, but also geographically and administratively, as well as along public–private and formal–informal lines. The geographic and administrative separation between the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Israel is very pronounced and poses a major obstacle to growth. Each area operates with its own labour market characteristics, labour demand and wage levels. Compared to the West Bank, the Gaza Strip performs markedly worse for all measurable labour market indicators, with higher unemployment, lower activity and employment rates, lower wages and a smaller private sector. Moreover, the differences between the situations of Palestinians in the domestic labour market and those working in Israel are even more pronounced.

The challenging macroeconomic context seriously affects labour market outcomes. Between 2000 and 2016 the working-age population in Palestine increased by 83% to almost 2.93 million, or about 61% of the total Palestinian population. However, the working-age population remains largely inactive, particularly in the case of women and young people<sup>28</sup>. The total activity rate is relatively low (44.3% in 2019) and the female activity rate is one of the lowest in the world, at 18.1% in 2019. Employment rates are also very low (33.1% in 2019), particularly for women (10.6% in 2019). Major structural obstacles hinder women's entry into the formal labour force. These include a lack of affirmative policies that promote the hiring of women; a weak manufacturing sector; high unemployment rates for men; negative cultural attitudes and unfavourable societal views regarding women working outside the home; limited childcare opportunities; and traditional gender divisions of labour.

Alongside weak employment and labour force participation trends, unemployment is very high, with an overall unemployment<sup>29</sup> rate for Palestine standing at 25.3% in 2019. Unemployment varies significantly when further disaggregated, with large discrepancies by gender (21.3% for males and 41.2% for females) and by region (14.6% in the West Bank and 45.1% in Gaza).

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<sup>28</sup> International Labour Organization (ILO), 'The Occupied Palestinian Territory – An Employment Diagnostic Study', 2018: [https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ILOSTUDY\\_040418.pdf](https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ILOSTUDY_040418.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> Unemployment and youth unemployment figures have been revised following the ILO definition.

Youth unemployment is also very high (40.1% in 2019 for those aged 15–24), reaching the dramatic figure of 67.1% among young women. The recent available data shows that the situation in the Gaza Strip is particularly worrying, with a youth unemployment rate (aged 15–24) of 67.4% (85.6% for women and 62.7% for men) in 2019. This means that almost two-thirds of young people in Gaza have no income. In the West Bank, the youth unemployment rate (age 15–24) is 25.1%, 20.6% for men and 52.5% for women<sup>30</sup>.

Overall in Palestine, poor labour market outcomes for young people combined with a high level of early school leaving have led to a large proportion of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs). The NEET rate in 2019 was 33.4%.

Major efforts on the part of the Palestinian authorities to increase access to higher levels of education have had a limited effect on employment. The overall unemployment rate for highly skilled people (31.5% in 2019) is significantly higher than for other skill levels and has been increasing in recent years (24.1% in 2013), which demonstrates the limited capacity of the economy to create high-quality jobs. A school-to-work transition survey conducted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2014 found that higher education actually correlated with unemployment among both young men and young women (aged 15–29). It also found that the rate of unemployment increased with each incremental addition of an education level for both young women and young men.

The services sector is the largest employer, providing jobs for 64.2% of the labour force in 2019; 29.7% of the labour force was employed in industry and 6.1% in agriculture. Entrepreneurship is seen as a possible solution for unemployment, but it would need an enabling environment and investment to develop entrepreneurial capacities. Self-employment accounted for 28.6% of total employment in 2019.

The informal economy and job informality play a significant role in the Palestinian labour market. Various sources, including the ILO and the World Bank, have indicated that more than half of all workers in Palestine are hired informally. The definition of 'informality' is, however, not universally agreed. The PCBS uses the same definition as that for an 'informal establishment'; given the high incidence of self-employment and the predominance of micro and SMEs in the Palestinian economy, that definition could apply to the majority of businesses in Palestine and would bring them into the informal sphere<sup>31</sup>.

According to the ILO, the number of Palestinians working in Israel and the settlements has been growing recently and totals almost 120 000<sup>32</sup>. Some of them work illegally, informally or using illegally purchased work permits. The lack of jobs and potentially higher salaries are the main reasons for such a high outflow. Palestinians working in Israel or in the settlements are heavily affected by the political situation. In crisis periods, physical access to Israel is restricted, making it impossible for Palestinians to work. This also affects Israeli employers' willingness to employ Palestinians, as their presence cannot always be ensured.

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<sup>30</sup> PCBS, Labour Force Survey 2019.

<sup>31</sup> ETF Torino Process 2019/2020.

<sup>32</sup> International Labour Office, *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories. Report of the Director-General 106 Session*, ILO, Geneva, 2017.

## 3.2 Employment policy and institutional setting

In terms of employment policies, the latest main strategic documents are the ILO's Second Decent Work Programme 2018–2022 and the revised Labour Sector Strategy 2020–2022<sup>33</sup>. The strategies have strong links to the political interventions of the National Policy Agenda (2017–2022: Putting Citizens First) and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The revised Labour Sector Strategy 2020–2022 cross-cuts the existing sectoral and cross-sectoral strategies. The new government wants to head towards cluster development in the different productive sectors. The actual needs of the labour market will be given more importance with an emphasis on vocational training, the expansion of choices for young people, and the empowerment of weak and marginalised groups.

The new Labour Sector Strategy 2020–2022 has five strategic goals. The first one is to develop employment opportunities and services for all. Supporting and creating self-employment is a priority, as is creating new cooperatives in different specialisations and governorates implementing cluster development plans. The second goal is the preparation of a professionally trained labour force in line with the needs of the labour market. Increasing the effectiveness and relevance of the TVET sector has therefore become one of the government's key priority areas. The third goal is linked to the enhancement of the decent work principles. This involves labour inspection, occupational safety and health, developing labour relations and collective bargaining, compliance with the minimum wage law, protecting unorganised labour, tackling gender-based discrimination in the labour market, and protecting motherhood. Reinforcing and establishing a social protection system for workers is the fourth goal, while the fifth is reinforcing tripartite partnerships and social dialogue by institutionalising trilateral committees and expanding the area for partnership and social dialogue.

The National Youth Strategy 2017–2022, launched by the Higher Council for Youth and Sport in 2016, identifies economic empowerment, poverty alleviation, and education and training as strategic areas of intervention. However, this strategy has still not been endorsed by the government. The Cooperative Sector Strategy (February 2017) underlines the important role of cooperatives in providing livelihoods for people and communities in Palestine, as well as the need to invest in cooperative education and literacy for young people and to explore the potential of the technology industry to increase employment opportunities.

The institution responsible for employment policy is the MoL. It deals with the employment sector and works in close partnership with other stakeholders, such as the MoE, MoHE and the Federation of Chambers of Commerce. The MoL provides a range of employment services through its employment offices. There are 16 employment offices in the West Bank and 5 in Gaza. With support from GIZ, eight of the West Bank offices have been transformed into 'one-stop shops' that offer a comprehensive career guidance package including vocational guidance and employment counselling, in addition to guidance on self-employment and small enterprise creation, job search and job application support and information, and work permits for working in Israel. While significant capacity has been developed within the network of one-stop shops, several challenges remain. These include a lack of qualified personnel, limited capacity for networking with employers owing to a lack of transport facilities, and a lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities.

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<sup>33</sup> In April 2020, the new Labour Sector Strategy 2020–2022 came out but has not yet been officially approved by the government. It is a revision of the Labour Sector Strategy 2017–2022.

The Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection (PFESP) is a semi-independent, autonomous body that implements active labour market policies (ALMPs) (support for entrepreneurship development through business start-up loans, business incubation and acceleration; labour market training using work practice (on-the-job training) and job insertion strategies; and private sector employment incentives through wage subsidies to employers). The PFESP has its own strategic plan in place for enhancing and scaling up its ongoing programmes, as well as identifying new programmes that could effectively create employment and stimulate job-rich economic growth. New services to be added include one-stop shops for entrepreneurs, which will provide them with all the services and advice they need to be ready for financing and incubation.

The Council of Ministers designated the PFESP as the national umbrella institution for all employment, job creation and entrepreneurship development programmes implemented in Palestine. The Minister of Labour chairs and administers the Board of Management of the PFESP. All entities concerned are instructed to provide details of their ongoing ALMPs to the PFESP and to coordinate all future programmes with the fund. Several stakeholders within and outside government have expressed concern that expanding the mandate of the PFESP not only risks duplicating several of the MoL's mandated functions, but also places a huge responsibility on the PFESP and sets high expectations, which may not be met given both the difficult context and the fund's nascent institutional experience<sup>34</sup>. However, the revised Labour Sector Strategy 2020–2022 aims to improve the employment services and to reinforce the PFESP's role.

UNRWA and various Palestinian civil society organisations and associations (such as the Welfare Association, the Sharek Youth Forum and the Education for Employment Fund) also provide ALMPs through programmes that focus on the economic empowerment of young people. These programmes provide subsidies and support to young entrepreneurs through training, coaching and mentoring. About 20 community-based organisations and non-profit organisations also deliver employment programmes in the West Bank and Gaza. In addition, many civil society organisations are active in East Jerusalem. They deliver programmes targeted to women, university students, new graduates and, to a lesser degree, other categories of unemployed people and vulnerable groups. They can be classified into three categories: training and capacity-building programmes; on-the-job training and internship programmes; and online job search and training programmes.

In general, there is a lack of mechanisms to monitor and evaluate ALMPs, which undermines their effectiveness and accountability. ALMPs in both the West Bank and Gaza are fragmented, often with similar goals and overlapping objectives and target groups. They are not always coordinated, and are implemented by different organisations or funded by different donors. As much of the donor aid flows to CSOs, the NGO sector in Palestine is the most important sector for providing social and employment services.

Local Education and Training (LET) councils were established by the MoL with the support of GIZ. Each council comprises representatives from the government, the private sector and civil society. The objectives of the councils are to enhance social dialogue and foster local employment initiatives. Their main role is to maintain links and communication between different employment stakeholders and supporting partnerships. Eleven councils currently operate in the West Bank and one in Gaza. To date, the LET councils have been very active in international initiatives (e.g. the EU-funded TVET support programme) in which they have been given a specific role (e.g. skills needs analysis,

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<sup>34</sup> International Labour Organization (ILO), 'The Occupied Palestinian Territory – An Employment Diagnostic Study', 2018: [https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ILOSTUDY\\_040418.pdf](https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ILOSTUDY_040418.pdf)



assessment of proposals and advising on projects). Beyond these donor initiatives, however, the councils suffer from a lack of resources. The new Labour Sector Strategy 2020–2022 envisages a stronger role for the LET councils in carrying out needs assessments at local level.

In recent years, career guidance in TVET institutions has improved significantly, and a number of systemic and sustainable changes, for instance the establishment of career guidance units in universities, have been made. Career guidance services for adults are provided by the one-stop shops.

The Palestinian Labour Market Information System (LMIS) operates under the umbrella of the MoL. The LMIS is divided into four subsystems: population (demographic and labour data); education (higher education, formal and non-formal education, technical and vocational education, vocational retraining); enterprises (unmet needs, dismissals, firms, skills, sectors, work experience); and the labour market (unemployment, job seekers, vacancies and filled vacancies). The LMIS should, in principle, be kept updated by the MoL, but owing to a lack of resources and capacities this is not happening. It is mainly the PCBS that disseminates labour market and labour force information.

Labour market data is gathered from two main sources: labour force surveys carried out every six months by the PCBS, and information gathered through the one-stop shops. In addition, many organisations and research centres, such as PalTrade and the Palestinian Economic Policy Research Institute, carry out labour market studies to identify trends and skills needs analysis. However, there is a lack of financial resources to develop and implement a comprehensive skills forecasting model. Almost all initiatives in the area of labour market monitoring and skills anticipation are carried out within the framework of international projects. To date, the government has not allocated resources to new initiatives.

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# PALESTINE: STATISTICAL ANNEX

Annex includes annual data from 2010, 2015, 2018 and 2019 or the last available year.

|    | Indicator   | 2010                    | 2015    | 2018    | 2019    |      |
|----|---|-------------------------|---------|---------|---------|------|
| 1  | Total Population (,000) <sup>(1)</sup>  | 3,786.2                 | 4,270.1 | 4,569.1 | 4,685.3 |      |
| 2  | Relative size of youth population (age group 15-24 and age in the denominator 15-64, %) <sup>(1)(2)</sup> | 39.4                    | 38.1    | 35.7    | 34.9    |      |
| 3  | GDP growth rate (%)   | 8.1                     | 3.4     | 0.9     | M.D.    |      |
| 4  | GDP by sector (%)   | Agriculture added value | 5.6     | 3.6     | M.D.    | M.D. |
|    |   | Industry added value    | 20.2    | 18.9    | M.D.    | M.D. |
|    |   | Services added value    | 60.9    | 64.0    | M.D.    | M.D. |
| 5  | Public expenditure on education (as % of GDP)   | 6.7                     | 5.1     | M.D.    | M.D.    |      |
| 6  | Public expenditure on education (as % of total public expenditure)  | M.D.                    | M.D.    | M.D.    | M.D.    |      |
| 7  | Adult literacy (%)  | 94.9                    | 96.7    | 97.2    | M.D.    |      |
| 8  | Educational attainment of adult population (aged 25-64 or 15+) (%) <sup>(3)</sup>                         | Low                     | 57.2    | 53.7    | 51.4    | 49.6 |
|    |   | Medium                  | 14.5    | 14.8    | 15.1    | 15.2 |
|    |   | High                    | 28.4    | 31.5    | 33.5    | 35.2 |
| 9  | Early leavers from education and training (aged 18-24) (%)  | Total                   | 35.4    | 31.4    | 30.7    | 30.3 |
|    |   | Male                    | 41.4    | 39.6    | 39.8    | 40.2 |
|    |   | Female                  | 28.1    | 20.8    | 18.8    | 17.8 |
| 10 | Gross enrolment rates in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)                                    | 77.9                    | 68.0    | 75.1    | M.D.    |      |
| 11 | Share of VET students in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)                                    | 6.1                     | 2.0     | 2.3     | M.D.    |      |
| 12 | Tertiary education attainment (aged 30-34) (%)  | 20.4                    | 28.4    | 33.7    | 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. |
| 14 | Low achievement in reading, mathematics and science – PISA (%)  | Reading                 | N.A.    | N.A.    | N.A.    | N.A. |
|    |   | Mathematics             | N.A.    | N.A.    | N.A.    | N.A. |
|    |   | Science                 | N.A.    | N.A.    | N.A.    | N.A. |



|    | <b>Indicator</b>  | <b>2010</b> | <b>2015</b> | <b>2018</b> | <b>2019</b> |      |
|----|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------|
| 15 | Activity rate (aged 15+) (%) <sup>(4)</sup>   | Total       | 41.2        | 44.0        | 43.5        | 44.3 |
|    |   | Male        | 67.1        | 69.6        | 69.0        | 69.9 |
|    |   | Female      | 14.8        | 17.7        | 17.4        | 18.1 |
| 16 | Inactivity rate (aged 15+) (%) <sup>(4)</sup>   | Total       | 58.8        | 56.0        | 56.5        | 55.7 |
|    |   | Male        | 32.9        | 30.4        | 31.0        | 30.1 |
|    |   | Female      | 85.2        | 82.3        | 82.6        | 81.9 |
| 17 | Employment rate (aged 15+) (%) <sup>(4)</sup>   | Total       | 31.4        | 33.9        | 32.1        | 33.1 |
|    |   | Male        | 51.6        | 55.5        | 53.6        | 55.0 |
|    |   | Female      | 10.8        | 11.6        | 10.1        | 10.6 |
| 18 | Employment rate by educational attainment (% aged 15+) <sup>(4)(5)</sup>                            | Low         | 36.5        | 38.6        | 29.3        | 38.4 |
|    |   | Medium      | 27.1        | 30.6        | 24.4        | 29.9 |
|    |   | High        | 59.8        | 54.5        | 48.0        | 49.7 |
| 19 | Employment by sector (%) <sup>(4)</sup>   | Agriculture | 11.8        | 8.7         | 6.3         | 6.1  |
|    |   | Industry    | 24.3        | 28.1        | 30.7        | 29.7 |
|    |   | Services    | 63.9        | 63.2        | 62.9        | 64.2 |
| 20 | Incidence of self-employment (%) <sup>(4) (C)</sup>   | 32.4        | 31.4        | 30.3        | 28.6        |      |
| 21 | Incidence of vulnerable employment (%) <sup>(4)</sup>   | 26.0        | 25.1        | 23.2        | 22.1        |      |
| 22 | Unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%) <sup>(4)</sup>   | Total       | 23.8        | 23.0        | 26.2        | 25.3 |
|    |   | Male        | 23.1        | 20.2        | 22.4        | 21.3 |
|    |   | Female      | 26.8        | 34.3        | 41.9        | 41.2 |
| 23 | Unemployment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%) <sup>(4)(5)</sup>                        | Low         | 24.6        | 21.4        | 23.8        | 22.5 |
|    |   | Medium      | 19.7        | 17.4        | 20.8        | 20.3 |
|    |   | High        | 24.1        | 28.4        | 32.4        | 31.5 |
| 24 | Long-term unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%) <sup>(4)</sup>   | 12.5        | 9.5         | 14.3        | M.D.        |      |
| 25 | Youth unemployment rate (aged 15-24) (%) <sup>(4)</sup>   | Total       | 39.1        | 37.4        | 42.1        | 40.1 |
|    |   | Male        | 37.1        | 33.7        | 36.9        | 34.7 |
|    |   | Female      | 49.8        | 56.6        | 69.3        | 67.1 |
| 26 | Proportion of people aged 15–24 not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (%) <sup>(4)</sup> | Total       | 29.3        | 32.2        | 33.4        | 33.4 |
|    |   | Male        | 24.3        | 26.6        | 27.9        | 26.7 |
|    |   | Female      | 34.5        | 38.2        | 39.2        | 40.4 |

Last update: End of August 2020

**Sources:**

Indicators 8, 9, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 - Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS).

Indicators 5, 7, 10, 11, – UNESCO, Institute for Statistics

Indicators 1, 2, 3, 4 – The World Bank, World Development Indicators database

**Notes:**

(1) The values shown are midyear estimates.

(2) ETF calculations

(3) Active population

(4) Data from 2010 revised according to the results from population, housing and establishments' census, 2017; there is a break in series in year 2015 due to the adaptation to the new definition of employment (adaptation to 19th resolution of the International Conference of Labour Statisticians).

(5) Low: ISCED 0-2, does not include "no-schooling"; Medium: ISCED 3-4; High: ISCED 5-6 (from ISCED 97 classification);

(6) Low: ISCED 0-1; Medium: ISCED 3-4; High: ISCED 5-6 (from ISCED 97 classification);

**Legend:**

c = calculated

N.A. = Not Applicable

M.D. = Missing Data

# INDICATORS' DEFINITIONS

|   | Description  | Definition  |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | Total population (000)   | The total population is estimated as the number of persons 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 U.S. dollars. GDP is the sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or for depletion and degradation of natural resources.  |
| 4 | GDP by sector (%)  | The share of value added from Agriculture, Industry and Services.<br><br>Agriculture corresponds to ISIC divisions 1-5 and includes forestry, hunting, and fishing, as well as cultivation of crops and livestock production. Value added is the net output of a sector after adding up all outputs and subtracting intermediate inputs. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or depletion and degradation of natural resources. The origin of value added is determined by the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC), revision 3 or 4. |
| 5 | Public expenditure on education (as % of GDP)                      | Public expenditure on education expressed as a percentage of GDP.<br><br>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.<br><br>Generally, the public sector funds education either by directly bearing the current and capital expenses of educational institutions, or by supporting students and their families with scholarships and public loans as well as by transferring public subsidies for educational activities to private firms or non-profit organisations (transfer to private households and enterprises). Both types of transactions together are reported as total public expenditure on education.                  |

|    | Description  | Definition   |
|----|--|--|
| 7  | Adult literacy (%)   | Adult literacy is the percentage of the population aged 15 years and over who can both read and write a short simple statement on his/her everyday life, and understand it. Generally, 'literacy' also encompasses 'numeracy' – the ability to make simple arithmetic calculations.  |
| 8  | Educational attainment of 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.<br><br>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 four weeks preceding the survey. Lower secondary education refers to ISCED 1997 levels 0–2 and 3C short (i.e. programmes lasting under two years) for data up to 2013 and to ISCED 2011 levels 0–2 for data from 2014 onwards.  |
| 10 | 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 four weeks preceding the survey (numerator). The denominator is the total population of the same age group, excluding those who did not answer the question on participation in education and training. The information collected relates to all education or training, whether or not it is relevant to the respondent's current or possible future job. If a different reference period is used, this should be indicated. |
| 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 persons. The inactive population consists of all persons who are classified as neither employed nor unemployed.   |

|    | Description  | Definition   |
|----|--|--|
| 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 persons who are classified as neither employed nor unemployed.  |
| 17 | Employment rate (aged 15+) (%)                             | The employment rate is calculated by dividing the number of employed persons by the population of the same age group. Employed persons are all persons who worked at least one hour for pay or profit during the reference period or were temporarily absent from such work. If a different age group is used, this should be indicated.   |
| 18 | Employment rate by educational attainment (% aged 15+)     | <p>The employment rate is calculated by dividing the number of employed persons by the population of the same age group. Employed persons are all persons who worked at least one hour for pay or profit during the reference period or were temporarily absent from such work. If a different age group is used, this should be indicated.</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 are presented by broad branches of economic activity (i.e. Agriculture/Industry/Services) based on the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC). In Europe, the NACE classification is consistent with ISIC.   |
| 20 | Incidence of self-employment (%)                           | The incidence of self-employment is expressed by the self-employed (i.e. employers + own-account workers + contributing family workers) as a proportion of the total employed.   |
| 21 | Incidence of vulnerable employment (%)                     | The incidence of vulnerable employment is expressed by the own-account workers and contributing family workers as a proportion of the total employed.  |
| 22 | Unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%)                           | The unemployment rate represents unemployed persons as a percentage of the labour force. The labour force is the total number of people who are employed or unemployed. Unemployed persons comprise those aged 15–64 or 15+ who were without work during the reference week; are currently available for work (were available for paid employment or self-employment before the end of the two weeks following the reference week); are actively seeking work, i.e. had taken specific steps in the four-week period ending with the reference week to seek paid employment or self-employment, or had found a job to start later (within a period of, at most, three months). |
| 23 | Unemployment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%) | The unemployment rate represents unemployed persons as a percentage of the labour force. The labour force is the total number of people who are employed or unemployed. Unemployed persons comprise those aged 15–64 or 15+ who were without work during the reference week; are currently available for work (were available for paid employment or self-employment before the end of the two weeks following the reference week); are actively seeking work (had taken specific  |

|    | Description  | Definition  |
|----|--|---|
|    |  | steps in the four-week period ending with the reference week to seek paid employment or self-employment, or had found a job to start later (within a period of, at most, three months)). Educational levels refer to the highest educational level successfully completed. Three levels are considered: Low (ISCED level 0-2), Medium (ISCED level 3-4) and High (ISCED 1997 level 5-6, and ISCED 2011 level 5-8)   |
| 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 persons aged 15-24 by the total population of the same age group.   |
| 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 four weeks preceding the survey. Data are expressed as a percentage of the total population of the same age group and gender, excluding the respondents who have not answered the question on participation in education and training. |

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| ALMP     | Active labour market policy  |
| GDP      | Gross domestic product   |
| ICT      | Information and communications technologies                                    |
| ILO      | International Labour Organization  |
| ISCED    | International Standard Classification of Education                             |
| ISIC     | International Standard Industrial Classification                               |
| LET      | Local Education and Training   |
| LMIS     | Labour Market Information System   |
| MoE      | Ministry of Education  |
| MoEHE    | Ministry of Education and Higher Education                                     |
| MoHE     | Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research                           |
| MoL      | Ministry of Labour   |
| NEET     | Not in employment, education or training                                       |
| NGO      | Non-governmental organisations   |
| PalTrade | Palestine Trade Centre   |
| PCBS     | Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics                                       |
| PFESP    | Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection                          |
| PISA     | Programme for International Student Assessment                                 |
| SME      | Small and medium-sized enterprises   |
| TVET     | Technical and vocational education and training                                |
| UN       | United Nations   |
| UNESCO   | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization               |
| UNFPA    | United Nations Population Fund   |
| UNWRA    | United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East |
| VET      | Vocational education and training  |
| VTC      | Vocational training centre   |
| WBL      | Work-based learning  |

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