

TORINO PROCESS 2014

SOUTHERN AND EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Three years after the popular uprisings known as the Arab Spring, which placed high levels of public demand and expectation on governments, the political and economic context in the SEMED region (in particular in the AMCs) is still marked by significant challenges and a high degree of volatility.

Although the process of evolution has varied from country to country, and several of them have initiated transition processes, the situation in the region as a whole has been, and remains, highly unstable, particularly on the political and security fronts. This, in turn, has affected the economy, and in particular key sectors such as tourism and foreign investment, resulting in recession in many countries, with trends starting to improve only very recently. Youth unemployment, in particular for women, continues to be one of the greatest challenges in a region whose economies are unable to create sufficient jobs for their very young populations. Poverty and inequality remain factors that strongly influence life in the region. Taken together, these elements do not create the most conducive environment for the implementation and consolidation of reforms across all sectors.

VET reform was initially pushed up the political agendas of most countries as a result of the expectations generated by the Arab Spring. In particular, VET has been perceived as a tool that could contribute to youth employability, competitiveness and social cohesion, and has thus been given greater relevance than it previously had in the policy agenda. However, over the past few years the difficult political and socioeconomic environment described above, and the need to pursue many competing reforms concurrently, eventually slowed down the pace of VET reform implementation in many countries of the region. Despite all this, the 2014 Torino Process identifies a general trend towards progress across all areas, more marked in some topics than in others, and naturally varying according to country specificities. VET reform remains an important priority for the countries of the SEMED region.

In terms of vision for VET, SEMED countries have made significant efforts to develop legislation, strategies and action plans for the design and implementation of the reforms. There have also been further attempts to better link VET strategies to the reform programmes of other sectors (including the economy, employment and general education). However, the achievement of a holistic vision for VET reform (in terms of both design and implementation) remains a challenge in the region, as does the lack of a concept encompassing lifelong learning. Most of the reforms focus on initial VET, while continuing vocational training (CVT) remains the weakest element of the VET system in most countries. The pace of implementation is still slow, with many countries reporting challenges in relation to the ownership, coordination and leadership of the reforms. The monitoring and evaluation of policies and strategies, as well as of the implementation of the reforms themselves, is an emerging area in which more efforts will be required in the future.

Countries in the region have allocated top priority to tackling the problem of unemployment, one of the drivers of the discontent that was manifested in the Arab Spring. Progress in developing employment strategies can be observed in most countries, although more attention has been paid to emergency measures than to sustainable job-creation policies. It is now necessary to move to full implementation of the strategies, scaling up the measures to create medium- and long-term systemic impacts. Job-creation policies and measures are a vital part of the plan. Almost all countries in the region have developed a wide range of ALMPs targeting young people in particular, although their effectiveness is still hampered by the lack of capacity in the systems and by problems of fragmentation and coordination. Progress can be observed in the setting up of many pilot initiatives to make VET provision more relevant to labour market needs. The main difficulty remains that of assessing and mainstreaming these projects and pilots into systemic national initiatives. VET must become more relevant to the labour market, but this needs to be associated with the creation of jobs that can be filled by VET graduates. Specific initiatives, such as the setting up of labour market observatories and

investing in measures for the transition from school to work (including apprenticeships, work-based learning and career guidance), have been identified as emerging areas for action in the coming years. There is a need for further work in developing national strategies for entrepreneurial learning and in mainstreaming the many pilot activities that exist in most of the countries.

With regard to how VET responds to the needs of society and the individual, access to VET remains a clear policy objective for all countries, while increasing the attractiveness of VET as a first-choice option for students is high on the policy agendas. However, measures to increase the attractiveness of VET must also be linked to the increased quality and relevance of VET systems, and to the creation of jobs that can satisfy the professional aspirations of learners and citizens. The need to address the influence of culture in determining the choices of young people, in particular women, is identified as an emerging policy challenge. Progress is demonstrated by the wide range of pilot measures that are being tested in the countries to address the needs of disadvantaged groups, though more sustained efforts need to be made, in particular for young people, women and individuals not in education, employment or training (NEETs). Another emerging topic in the SEMED countries is the role of VET and skills as a tool for territorial cohesion, particularly in disadvantaged regions. New pilot actions are being tested and implemented that will need further investment and sustained support from the national policy levels.

In terms of the internal efficiency of the VET systems, countries in the region have continued their efforts in a number of previously identified areas, such as curricula innovation and practical learning approaches. Most countries continue to be engaged in setting up national qualification systems, a process in which progress does not appear to be linear, and where there is further work to be done in terms of the design and implementation of such systems. Quality assurance mechanisms, as opposed to quality control, are still very much at an early stage of development in most countries of the region. All issues relating to teachers and trainers are still very prominent among the challenges to be addressed. Despite the existence of pilot initiatives in many countries, progress in the implementation of this type of reform is still rather slow. Directors of VET institutions have emerged as potentially important actors for reform, providing that higher levels of autonomy for VET institutions can be achieved. There is consensus across the region on the need to find new and more efficient tools for financing VET and to generally revise the financing systems in the countries. The need to diversify sources of funding should be associated with a shared vision of VET reforms among different actors. Awareness of real costs and transparent costing systems have emerged as topics to be tackled by policy measures.

Two main trends can be observed in the field of governance across the SEMED region: greater coordination among key partners, and increased decentralisation. Under the first of these, most countries are rehearsing different solutions to address the existing fragmentation among the institutions and bodies responsible for VET; while these solutions are being tried, new challenges have also emerged, and countries are making efforts to find solutions that are adapted to their national specificities. In terms of decentralisation, progress has been slower owing to the traditionally centralised context in which VET systems have operated up to now. However, in several countries there are moves towards the devolution of responsibilities towards the regional level, and, in some cases, towards sectors. Less progress can be observed (with some exceptions) in the achievement of greater autonomy for VET schools and centres. There is greater awareness in the region of the importance of increasing the participation of the world of work, social partners and civil society in VET reform. In some countries, progress can be observed in the establishment of mechanisms to foster such participation in the design phase of VET reforms. There remains the challenge of how to make this effective and ensure it is present equally in all phases of the policy cycle, in particular implementation and evaluation. There is still some way to go to achieving what could be termed the democratisation of VET systems in the region.

INTRODUCTION

The Torino Process is a participatory process leading to an evidence-based analysis of vocational education and training (VET) policies in a given country. Introduced in 2010 as a biennial methodology for partner countries, the Torino Process diagnoses policy problems and helps stakeholders to collectively agree on strategic goals for reform. The second round in 2012 established a robust baseline in each country against which policy progress can be monitored. The third round of the Torino Process started in 2014 and is designed both to monitor policy progress against the 2012 baseline and to address the partner countries' desire to move forward from problem diagnosis to the formulation of optimal policy solutions.

The added value of the Torino Process lies in the fact that it embeds VET within its socioeconomic context. Moreover, it ensures that the analysis is informed by relevant evidence and takes place through a structured dialogue involving wide participation from national stakeholders (public sector, private sector and social partners, civil society and young people). The Torino Process proposes a common framework for monitoring the progress of VET reform at both national level and regional, cross-country level. The objective is twofold: to facilitate policy making and to foster dialogue and peer learning.

This regional report summarises the main findings in monitoring progress of the 2014 Torino Process in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean (SEMED) partner countries (including both the Arab Mediterranean Countries (AMCs) and Israel). The report is based on the Torino Process reports prepared with ETF support by six countries (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Palestine¹), together with the two Torino Process self-assessment reports prepared by Israel and Tunisia. It also draws on intelligence, evidence and information on Algeria that is available within the ETF. These country reports have been prepared in broad consultation with all key VET stakeholders in the countries, including not only governments and VET institutions, but also employers, social partners and representatives from civil society. A new feature of the Torino Process for 2014 is the opportunity for countries to compare themselves with the EU benchmarks on education and employment as a peer learning exercise. In the SEMED region, three countries (Israel, Palestine and Tunisia) have volunteered to include this reflection in their Torino Process reports, and an overview of the findings is presented in Annex 2 of this report. Another innovation in the 2014 Torino Process for SEMED is the attempt to reach out to civil society. A first step was made in this direction in 2012 with the launch of the Young Mediterranean Leaders programme; in 2014, the consultation has included youth platforms as representatives of civil society (in Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Palestine), to provide a qualitative insight into youth perceptions and experiences on issues such as career choice, job search and labour market integration. In addition, an online consultation has been launched using social media (see Annex 3).

In order to monitor progress on VET reform, this regional report takes as a benchmark the Declaration of the Dead Sea Conference held in Jordan in September 2012 (at the first Torino Process Policy Leaders' Forum for the AMCs) and the ETF 2012 Torino Process regional report for SEMED (ETF, 2013). At the Dead Sea Conference, country representatives agreed that skills are at the heart of economic development and job-creation strategies, that they are a fundamental part of social cohesion, peace and democracy, and that they need effective public management. Common objectives on vision and governance were identified, as well as on youth employability. These topics were again debated at the second Policy Leaders' Forum for the AMCs, which took place in Marseille in October 2013. A first draft of the current report was debated at the third Policy Leaders' Forum for

¹ This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the EU Member States on this issue.

Ministers of the AMCs (Turin, 20 November 2014). This meeting represented an important opportunity to review progress on the implementation of VET reforms in the region, to acknowledge that youth employability remains a high priority, as limited progress had been achieved in this area, and to note a number of emerging policy challenges in the region. The conclusions of the third Policy Leaders' Forum have been incorporated into this report.

Other sources that have been used in the preparation of this report include the regional report on VET governance in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean region (ETF, 2014a), prepared in the context of the GEMM programme²; the regional employability report on the role of active labour market policies (ALMPs) in tackling youth employability in the AMCs (ETF, 2015a); and the regional report on the implementation of the Small Business Act (OECD et al., 2014).

Policy context in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean

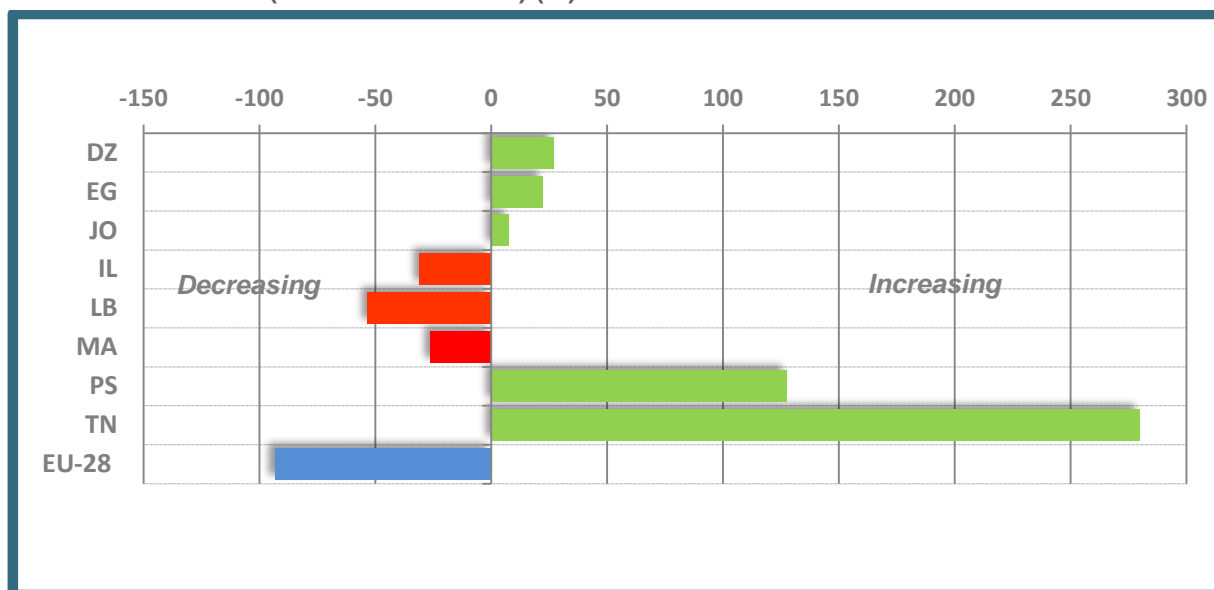
Since 2011, following the popular uprisings known as the Arab Spring, new demands and greater expectations from the population have been placed on governments of the AMCs, in particular in terms of calling for more transparency, accountability and participation in the policy and decision-making processes. VET reform has been pushed up the policy agendas of many countries, reflecting not only its importance to economic development and competitiveness, but also a social dimension that is directly linked to the problem of youth unemployment in the region and to the aspirations to achieve greater social inclusion in a part of the world marked by significant inequalities (ETF, 2013).

In 2014, the policy context for VET in the AMCs was still marked by important challenges and great volatility. Although the Maghreb has enjoyed a relatively more stable political situation than the Mashreq, the situation in the region as a whole has been, and remains, highly unstable. Tunisia and Egypt, the two flagship countries of the Arab Spring, have undergone very complex and contrasting political transitions, often marked by open conflict and social turbulence, and accompanied by a deep economic crisis (in particular affecting key sectors such as tourism and foreign investment) in which positive recovery trends have only recently become apparent. The Revolution in Libya led to the fall of the regime and a political transition process that was marked by continuing internal conflicts and a high level of insecurity, accompanied by a deep economic recession. Security concerns have heightened in the entire region following an escalation in the Syrian conflict and its spillover into neighbouring countries, including massive influxes of refugees in countries such as Jordan and Lebanon. These two countries are also affected by heightened political instability that is reflected in constant changes of government and in continuing insecurity. Taken together, these factors have not created the most conducive environment for progress in the implementation and consolidation of reforms across all sectors, including VET.

As mentioned above, economies in the region (with a regional average growth rate of 3% in the period 2012–14, according to the ETF Torino Process database) have been affected by political and social instability and insecurity, and the recent trend towards moderate growth (see **FIGURE 1**) is a very recent phenomenon.

² Governance and Employability in the Mediterranean, an EU project implemented by the ETF in nine countries.

FIGURE 1 ANNUAL GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP) GROWTH IN SEMED – CHANGE FROM 2012 TO 2014 (TORINO PROCESS) (%)



Note: No recent data available for Libya.

Sources: Torino Process 2012 and 2014 statistical databases; EU-28 average: ETF calculations based on World Bank data

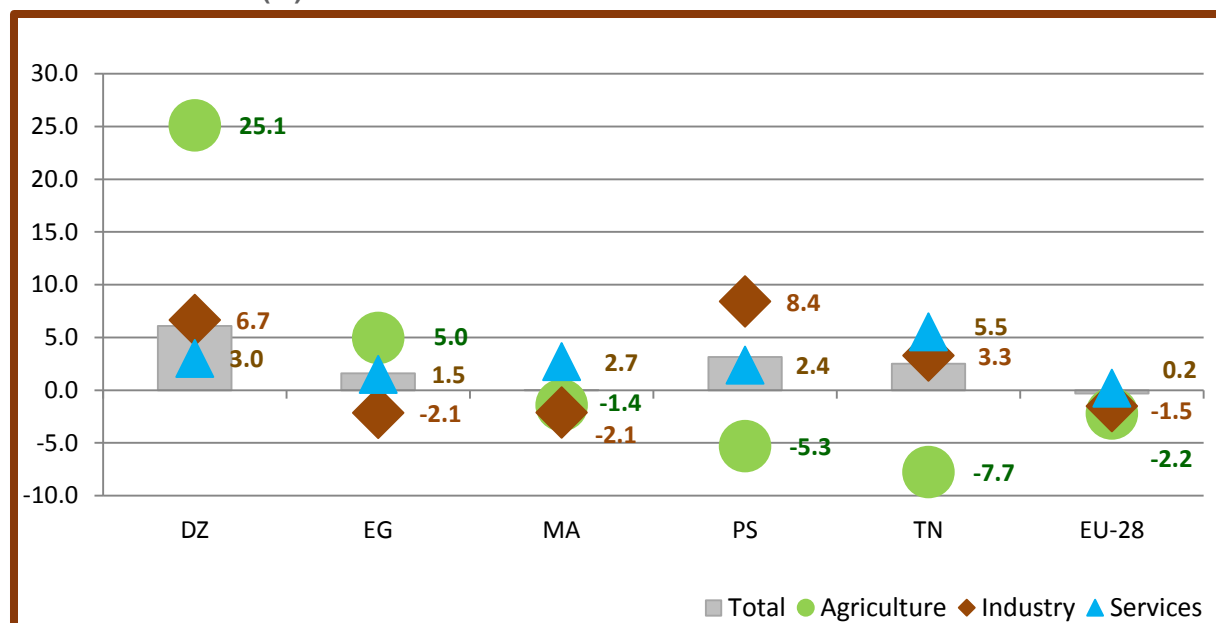
In Israel, economic growth has been strong over the past decade, and in terms of economic performance and human resource development, the country has improved rapidly and ranks among the advance economies. A favourable financial environment has contributed to making Israel an innovation powerhouse, and a combination of recent structural reforms and huge investment has led to a high-tech boom. The Global Competitiveness Index 2013–14 ranks Israel 27th in the world, highlighting a difference between Israel and the other economies of the region³.

According to Eurostat methodology, a positive value for employment growth (i.e. the percentage change in the employed population calculated with reference to the figure for the previous year), denotes the achievement of job-creation.

The last available data on job creation in the AMCs (see **FIGURE 2**) indicates that there has been positive growth in the services sector in all the countries, as well in the EU average, while for agriculture and industry the situation varies from country to country: both are negative in Morocco, as they are in the EU, both are positive in Algeria, and there are contrasting values in the other countries.

³ The decrease shown in Table 2.1 represents a slight decrease in GDP growth between 2012 and 2013.

FIGURE 2 JOB CREATION IN THE AMCS – CHANGE IN EMPLOYMENT FROM 2012 TO 2013, BY ACTIVITY BRANCH (%)



*Notes: Data for Morocco is for 2012. No information available for Israel, and only for 2009 for Lebanon.
Sources: DZ, NSO; EG, MA, PS, TN: ILOSTAT; EU-28: Eurostat.*

Employment in Israel has increased by approximately 13%, according to the OECD first quarterly report from 2014; this is the highest rate among all OECD countries. This is particularly encouraging when compared to the situation in 2010, when Israel had one of the lowest employment rates in the OECD. The employment rate is particularly high among adults (aged 55–66) and the rate among women is 6.5% higher than the OECD average.

1. PROGRESS ON VISION

Three years after the Arab Spring, VET is still perceived as an important factor in the region for enhancing economic competitiveness and for achieving better results in terms of youth employability and social inclusion. The commitment of the countries towards 'visions for skills to promote their drive towards economic competitiveness and inclusive growth', as stated in 2012 in the Dead Sea Declaration, remains visible in all the strategic documents and action plans from the AMCs, while in Israel there is consensus in the visions of all key actors that the lack of high-quality technological-professional human resources can have an adverse impact on the competitiveness of the country. The need for VET to meet the demands of the labour market and thus contribute to the employability of citizens is the main driver of most of the reforms. However, this effort must go hand in hand with enhanced opportunities for economies to create sufficient jobs for VET graduates. The real challenge is to come up with a holistic vision that reconciles the challenge of providing more skills with that of providing more jobs.

The latest available data (from 2010 to 2012) show that the share of VET participation at upper secondary level varies widely across the region, from 6.1% in Palestine to 48.7% in Egypt (close to the EU average of 46%)⁴. In Israel the share has been increasing, and more than one-third (39.1% in 2012) of total enrolment in upper secondary education is in VET programmes. However, VET is competing with many other priorities and reforms that need to be implemented more urgently. This is particularly true in countries where there are pressing concerns about political stability, security and peace. Political instability and constant changes of government are incompatible with the design and implementation of long-term vision policies, as illustrated in the Torino Process reports for Jordan and Lebanon. However, there are other examples, such as that of Palestine, where despite the difficult environment, the 2014 Torino Process shows evidence of positive developments in terms of vision and progress, together with sustained ownership within the VET sector.

VET is mentioned in some of the most recent constitutions in the region (Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia), as a tool for economic development and social cohesion. However, as reflected in the discussions at the second Policy Leaders' Forum in Marseille in October 2013, the necessary legislation for implementing VET reform is not always in place in the countries. Thus, there is a need to involve legislative bodies in creating supportive legislation for VET reform, as recommended by the Marseille Conference.

Most countries have continued to work on their strategies and action plans for their vision of VET. In some countries, further articulation between the VET strategies and other sectors has been sought. Discussions at the third Policy Leaders' Forum in Turin confirmed that general progress has been observed in this area over the past two years. For example, Palestine has a national technical and vocational education and training (TVET) strategy embedded, together with another 23 sectorial strategies, in the Palestinian National Plan; Jordan has a strategy associated with employment (E-TVET); in Tunisia there is clear articulation between the VET strategy endorsed at the end of 2013 and the Social Contract endorsed by all social partners in early 2014; in Morocco the new draft strategy 2020 is linked to the National Charter on Education and Training currently being evaluated; and in Israel the 2020 Strategic Vision for Economic and Social Development and the New Horizon Reform 2 address issues relating to VET and consider well-educated human resources to be one of the main priorities for the country. According to the Torino Process, the challenge remains to ensure that these links with other strategies are firmly embedded in reality during implementation.

⁴ Sources: UNESCO for all countries except Palestine (NSO) and the EU (ETF calculations based on UNESCO). Data for the EU refers to all 28 countries except Luxembourg, Italy and Greece (data not available for 2012).

In general, the 2014 Torino Process reports illustrate that, while strategic planning efforts are still ongoing, the pace of actual implementation of the reforms is still rather slow. The real challenge for the region in terms of vision remains that of moving more effectively and smoothly into policy implementation.

The 2014 Torino Process also highlights an absence of comprehensive lifelong-learning-oriented strategies in the region. With regard to CVT, there are clear strategies and a vision in some countries, particularly those that have training levies or an employers' tax (e.g. Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia), albeit that they also have to face additional challenges. Israel has CVT arrangements in place, in particular under the responsibility of the Ministry of Economy. In the countries of the Mashreq region, CVT is still the weakest part of the VET sector, and in many cases there are no systemic arrangements in place.

One of the main messages from the 2012 Torino Process (and the Dead Sea Conference) was the commitment of countries to establish coordination and participation mechanisms for a shared vision and understanding. This reflects one of the most important expectations that emerged following the Arab Spring, particularly in relation to governance issues. Participation and coordination remain areas in which significant progress has yet to be achieved in all the countries. The third Policy Leaders' Forum in Turin underlined, for instance, the low level of ownership and engagement in policy making on the part of social partners and young people in the AMCs, which is in part due to the limited capacities to play an active role in VET issues. The same Forum noted the importance of developing multidimensional partnerships to ensure a democratic, coordinated and flexible approach to human capital policy⁵. The 2014 Torino Process offers some positive examples of enhanced participation. In Tunisia, for instance, participation mechanisms exist in both the design and approval of the new strategy (December 2013) and also in the implementation phase through a steering committee with decision-making powers in which all key actors are represented. Attention is also given to the participation of the new actors (workers from the informal sector, women, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), young people). The Torino Process in Palestine reports that there is a good rate of participation in the reform on the part of representatives from the VET sector, and that these participants are buying into the process.

With regard to other phases of the VET policy cycle, the 2014 Torino Process indicates that tools and mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the progress of VET reform are not yet sufficiently developed in the region. Morocco and Tunisia are both examples of countries in which wide-ranging evaluations of the former VET strategies have taken place. In some other countries, such as Egypt and Jordan, there has been a move towards preparing new strategies without evidence of a proper evaluation of existing ones. Although in the majority of the countries there are no systemic arrangements for monitoring the progress of the reforms, monitoring does take place in various ways (e.g. in Palestine, where there is currently a donor-supported initiative to set up a structured system). Effective tools for evaluating the performance of VET systems are still absent in most countries, while in others (Algeria, Tunisia) this area is identified as a priority for improvement. The importance of evidence-based approaches for policy making in the region is growing, albeit that such approaches are not yet generalised or mainstreamed. One positive example is the participation of Jordan in the ETF's PRIME initiative⁶, with the aim of developing policy options to increase female employment in the country (2014–2015). The absence of quality data and information systems also hampers the use of evidence-based approaches to policy making, although the situation differs from country to country. The 2014 Torino Process provides some examples of progress in this field, such as the well-developed system of research and analysis that exists in Israel and the work that is currently taking place in Palestine to set up indicators to monitor the VET system.

⁵ ETF summary of outcomes of the Policy Leaders' Forum for the AMCs, Turin, November 2014.

⁶ ETF project on the application of ex-ante impact assessment to improve VET policies.

As for the role of the international donor community (who were very active in promoting different approaches to vision in VET reform in the AMCs), the 2012 Torino Process pointed out the need for more coordination and coherence among activities and approaches. Some progress is evident. In Palestine, for example, donors actively coordinate interventions and joint projects under the common umbrella of the strategy and the new TVET agency. In Egypt the government has recently taken a stronger coordinating role, particularly through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of International Cooperation and a dedicated unit within the VET Directorate of the Ministry of Education, while donors also regularly exchange information and try to build synergy in the design of new, joint or complementary activities through the Donor Partner Group and its specialist committees. There is still room to increase the ownership of donor-supported reforms, particularly in countries where the donor community is large and very active.

Key issues

- The first main challenge in the region remains that of achieving a holistic vision for VET, reconciling the different agendas of the various sectors. As well as addressing the need for more and better skills, VET must be accompanied by the creation of more jobs. The holistic vision also includes the elaboration of how VET can contribute to the modernisation of countries and its transformational impact on societies.
- The second main challenge still relates to implementation: the pace of reform remains slow in most countries. The political and socioeconomic instability in the region has also hampered the progress of reforms during the past two years.
- Although VET is now often mentioned in national constitutions, in most countries there is still a need to involve national legislative bodies in creating the necessary supportive legislation for VET reform.
- Progress can be observed in the design and approval of strategies and action plans, and in attempts to link VET strategies with those of other sectors such as education, employment and economic growth sectors. The next steps include ensuring that this link remains effective during implementation.
- In many countries there is still a lack of vision for CVT. The fragmentation of strategies from different subsectors prevents the existence of an overarching vision for lifelong learning in the countries of the region.
- Progress can be observed in some countries in terms of enhancing participation in the design of a shared vision. The main challenge remains to ensure that this participation is empowered and effective, including during implementation.
- Monitoring and evaluation of policies and strategies, mechanisms to measure the performance of the systems, and evidence-based policy options and choices remain areas for further improvement.
- A trend towards greater donor coordination efforts (both on the part of donors and at national level) is identified in the 2014 Torino Process. Increasing ownership of the reforms remains an area requiring further work.

2. PROGRESS IN ADDRESSING ECONOMIC AND LABOUR MARKET DEMANDS

2.1 The context

In a number of countries (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Tunisia), the impact of the Arab Spring led to a significant economic crisis, from which some countries are only now starting to emerge. Political instability and insecurity, in some cases involving open conflict, have seriously affected some key sectors, such as tourism and foreign investment. However, even in times of economic growth, the basic problem remains that AMC economies are unable to create sufficient jobs for the demographic pressure that these young societies exert both on labour markets and on education systems. The population growth in the AMCs is among the highest in the world, and the 'youth bulge' means that almost 30% of the population is aged 15–30 years and another 30% 0–14 years (ETF, 2015a). The demographic trends in Israel, a country in which there is moderate population growth (1.9% in 2012, according to Israel's 2014 Torino Process self-assessment report) and a trend towards an ageing population, is in general more similar to the pattern in Western countries, with the exception of the Arab and Ultra-Orthodox population groups, which have much higher growth rates than the national average. The extreme heterogeneity and complexity of the population structure in Israel and its links with unemployment and poverty is well illustrated in the 2014 Torino Process self-assessment report for the country.

International migration flows also influence labour markets in the region. Some of the AMCs experience a combination of significant patterns of emigration towards Europe, North America and the Gulf countries and the arrival of contingents of immigrants coming as 'cheap labour'. Another feature of the region is the massive influx of refugees (most recently as a result of the conflict in Syria), which affects countries such as Jordan and Lebanon in particular. Israel's situation is atypical as a result of migration waves and the presence of different population groups (75% Jews, 20.7% Arabs and 4.3% others, according to the country's 2014 Torino Process self-assessment report). Poverty and inequality continue to be very marked across the region, aggravated in some cases by a deteriorating economic situation.

As the ETF's regional employability study (ETF, 2015a) points out, this low economic growth rate, which is shown by low levels of both economic activity and investment, leads in turn to a low rate of overall job creation. This is the case in most of the countries in the region. At the same time, labour markets in the AMCs continue to be influenced by the legacy of a large public sector. The private sector is largely dominated by SMEs and microenterprises, with a prevalence of informal employment.

The low employment rates in the AMCs shown in **TABLE 2.1** (ranging from 32.4% in Jordan to 44.1% in Morocco) are strongly influenced by very low female employment rates (ranging from 10.3% in Jordan to 25.3% in Libya), and all are below the corresponding EU averages.

According to data from the 2014 Torino Process, the overall employment rates in Algeria, Tunisia and Israel are higher than those in the 2012 Torino Process results, while in all the other countries the rates are lower (see **FIGURE 2.1**). Rates in the EU have been more or less stable. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the increase in employment in Israel is remarkably high (13%, according to OECD data for 2014), and well above the EU average.

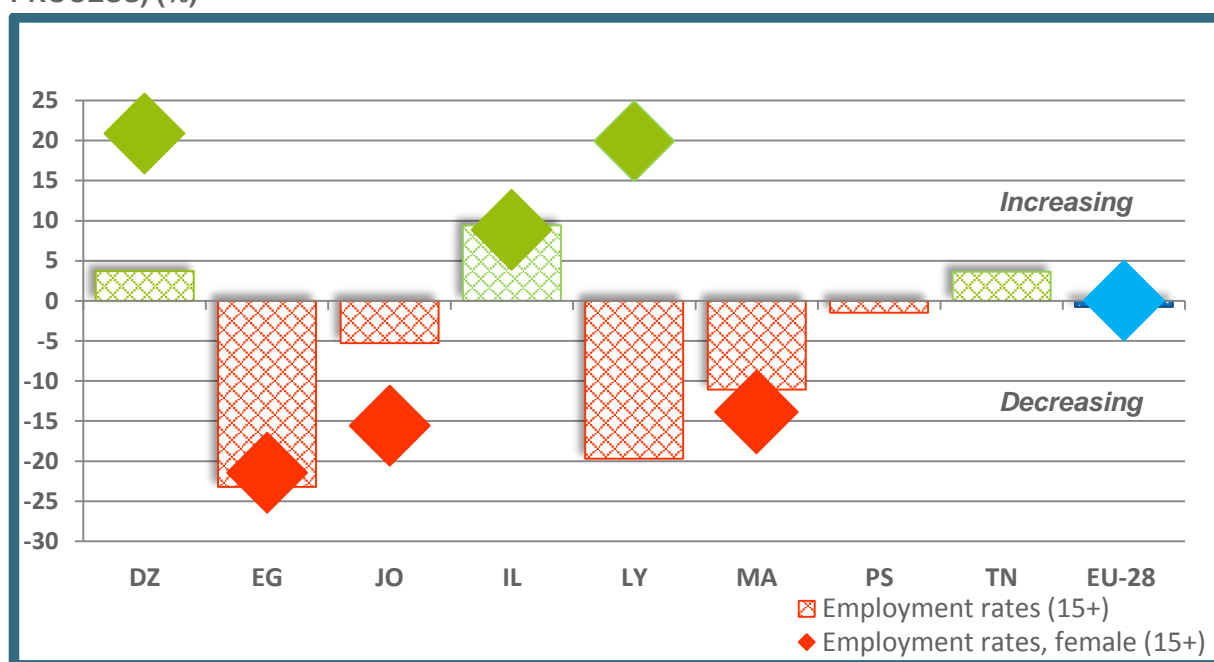
TABLE 2.1 LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS, 2013 (OR LAST AVAILABLE YEAR) (%)

		DZ	EG	JO	IL	LB	LY	MA	PS	TN	EU-28 average
Activity rates by sex (15+)	Total	43.2	51.3	37.1	63.6	49.2	47.8	48.4	43.6	47.4	57.6
	Female	16.6	23.9	13.2	58.1	25.6	33.8	M	17.3	25.6	51.2
Employment rates by sex (15+)	Total	39.0	36.7	32.4	59.2	43.6	38.7	44.1	33.4	33.9	51.4
	Female	13.9	15	10.3	54.1	19.7	25.3	22.3	11.2	M	45.6
Social burden* (15+)		M	1.0	M	0.6	1.2	M	1.1	1.7	1.3	0.8
Unemployment rates by sex (15+)	Total	9.8	12.7	12.6	6.9	11.4	19.0	9.2	23.4	15.9	10.8
	Female	16.3	24.1	22.0	7.0	23.0	25.5	9.6	35.0	23.0	10.8
Youth unemployment rates by sex (15–24)	Total	24.8	29.7	31.2	10.8	16.8	48.7	19.3	41	42.3	23.4
	Female	39.7	53.2	55.1	11.8	22.3	67.9	18.1	64.7	45.4	22.6

Notes: M – missing data. Data for year: EG (social burden, 2012; all other indicators, 2011); IL (all indicators except social burden, 2012); LB (2009); LY (2012); MA (social burden, 2011; activity rate by sex, 2012); PS (social burden, 2012); TN (unemployment indicators, 2011). (*) Social burden is the ratio between the number of inactive and the number of employed people. Values higher than 1 mean that the number of inactive people exceeds the employed population.

Sources: National statistical offices (LY, ILO; PS, ETF calculations based NSO data); Eurostat.

FIGURE 2.1 EMPLOYMENT RATES (15+) BY SEX – CHANGE FROM 2012 TO 2014 (TORINO PROCESS) (%)



Sources: Torino Process 2012 and 2014 statistical databases. EU-28 average: ETF calculations based on Eurostat

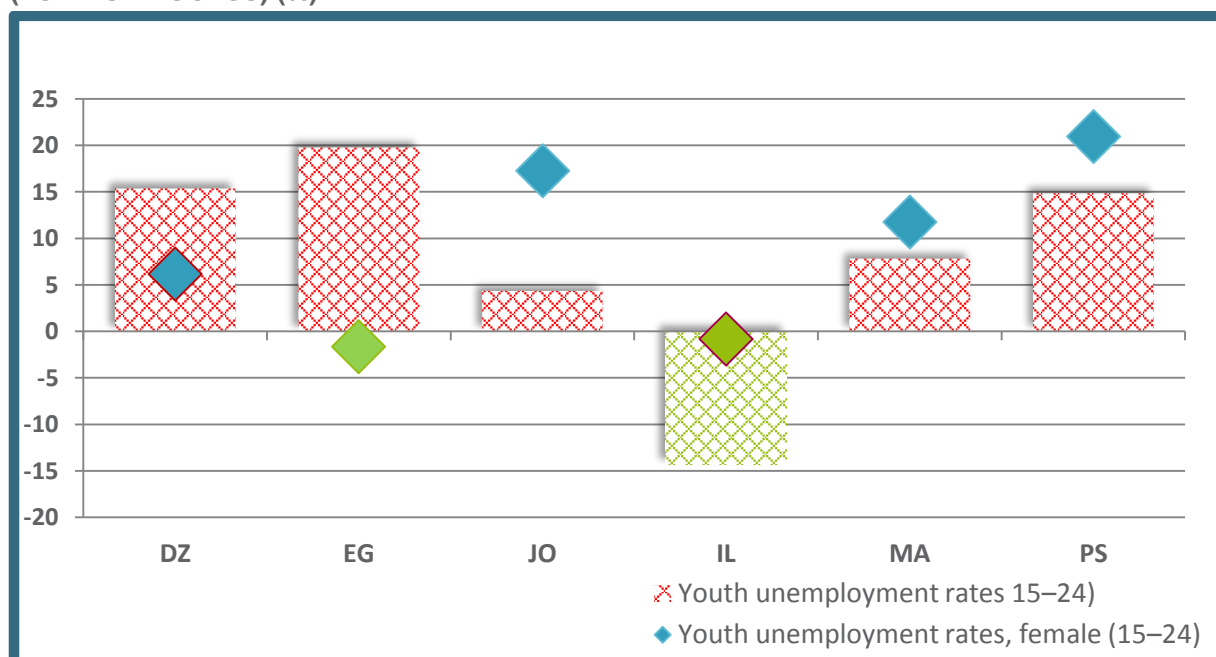
Unemployment rates are high in some countries (Libya, Palestine) and relatively low in others (Algeria, Israel, and Morocco) (see Table 2.1). Female unemployment rates are much higher than the overall unemployment rates, except in Israel and Morocco, where they are only slightly above the overall rate (which follows the EU trend). In the remaining countries the female unemployment rates range from 16.3% in Algeria to 35.0% in Palestine.

FIGURE 2.2 UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (15+) BY SEX – CHANGE FROM 2012 TO 2014 (TORINO PROCESS) (%)



Sources: Torino Process 2012 and 2014 statistical databases.

FIGURE 2.3 YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (15–24) BY SEX – CHANGE FROM 2012 TO 2014 (TORINO PROCESS) (%)



Sources: Torino Process 2012 and 2014 statistical databases.

Unemployment affects young people in particular, with youth unemployment rates ranging from 10.8% in Israel to 42.3% in Tunisia and 48.7% in Libya; the EU-28 average is 23.4%. Except in Morocco and Israel, young women are also hard hit by unemployment, with female unemployment rates ranging from 39.7% to 67.9% in most of the countries. In Israel the rate is 11.8%, in Morocco 18.1% and in Lebanon 22.3% (according to data from the 2014 Torino Process); the EU-28 average is 22.6%.

In Israel, the unemployment situation is influenced by the country's complex population structure. The overall unemployment rate has declined in recent years (from 10.7% in 2003 to 6.9% in 2012, according to the country's Torino Process self-assessment report for 2014), and this trend is also

observed among both Arab and Jewish men. The picture for women (and for Ultra-Orthodox men) contrasts with this: Arab women (as well as Ultra-Orthodox men) represent one of the most prominent groups with low participation rates in the labour market. Israel's 2014 Torino Process self-assessment report establishes a direct correlation between unemployment and poverty in the country, as a result of the highly segmented structure of the labour market.

As pointed out in the ETF regional employability report, another striking distortion of the labour market in the AMCs is the inverse correlation between education and employment. The higher the level of education, the higher the unemployment rates, which reach a peak for female university graduates (ETF, 2012). The data do not show a clear correlation between rates of participation in VET and unemployment rates.

2.2 Preliminary assessment of progress since 2012

The 2012 Torino Process identified the demands that the Arab Spring had placed on governments of the AMCs, and concluded that the employability of young people and women was the most urgent challenge (ETF, 2013). The Dead Sea Declaration of 2012 stressed the need for long-term measures in parallel with job-creation initiatives in key economic sectors. Other areas for action were enhancing access to skills development opportunities in both the formal and non-formal VET systems; creating apprenticeship or work-based learning opportunities and improving the transition from school to work, particularly for young women; and further supporting entrepreneurial learning. This section will focus on progress in these areas.

With regard to long-term measures in parallel with job-creation initiatives, the ETF regional youth employability report for 2014 (ETF, 2015a) describes the different stages of development of employment strategies in the region. Algeria, Jordan, Palestine and Tunisia have developed their strategies, while in Egypt approval is still pending. In Morocco the topic has been given special status in the policy agenda with the proposal to set up a national pact for youth employment. In other countries, such as Lebanon and Libya, no strategy exists. As the report points out, employment strategies in the AMCs place an overwhelming emphasis on ALMPs and focus to a much lesser extent on job creation, education and training, and social security.

In the case of Israel, the 2014 Torino Process self-assessment report illustrates the constant demand for specialisation and technological updates that characterises the Israeli labour market (data from the Manufacturers' Association of Israel). Its dominant features are an innovative industry and an economy that requires continuous updating. In parallel, a similarly constant shortage of skilled professionals is reported.

In terms of ALMPs⁷, in the aftermath of the Arab Spring almost all AMCs have experienced a proliferation of youth-targeted ALMPs, although the experience differs among countries; for example, Algeria has been implementing such measures since 1989, while in Jordan they have been introduced only very recently. The main constraints are weak labour market information systems (lack of data, particularly on the informal sector, and insufficient use of labour force surveys), very limited capacity in the public employment services, fragmentation and poor coordination, poor programme targeting, lack of monitoring and evaluation systems, and weak cooperation on the part of employers (ETF, 2015a). Progress on the implementation of ALMPs in the AMCs was also reviewed at the second Policy Leaders' Forum in Marseille in October 2013, at which countries confirmed their intention to develop new and innovative policy frameworks that bring together the central contribution of employment to economic growth and the need for incentives for job creation. One of the conclusions of the third Policy Leaders' Forum in 2014 was that short-term measures need to be scaled up in order to

⁷ The current report does not elaborate further on ALMPs, as more information can be found in the ETF regional youth employability report (ETF, 2015a).

generate medium- and long-term systemic impacts and to clearly serve the public good in the eyes of citizens. Full implementation of policies and strategies, as well as the development of monitoring and evaluation systems, were some of the priorities agreed upon by participating countries.

The 2014 Torino Process confirms that all AMCs are aware of the absolute need to move from the supply-led provision of VET to a demand-oriented system that is closely linked to the real needs of the economy and the world of work. VET is increasingly perceived as a tool for enhancing the competitiveness of enterprises, for attracting foreign investment and for promoting social inclusion. Nevertheless, since 2012 there has been very limited progress in some countries, such as Lebanon; in others, such as Libya, the Torino Process has identified the disconnect between VET provision and the needs of the world of work as one of the most urgent issues to be addressed in VET reform efforts. In many countries a wide range of pilot projects and activities, often linked to donor interventions, are being implemented in order to involve the business sector not only in the design of VET, but also in its implementation and delivery (partnerships). Some examples of this are the Local Employment and Training Councils in Palestine and the Employment and Training Partnerships in Egypt. The 2014 Torino Process finds that in Israel a variety of programmes exist to strengthen technological education for professionals and that closer ties are being developed between the Manufacturers' Association and the government. The area in which additional effort is still required in all the countries is that of assessing and capitalising on these pilots and of mainstreaming the most successful initiatives into the national systems.

In order to address the absence of structured information and analysis on labour market skill needs, which is perceived as a major problem for matching training programmes to actual employment opportunities (e.g. in Jordan), some countries, such as Morocco, are reviving the concept of national observatories for employment (May 2014), and similar discussions (facilitated by donors) are also taking place in Egypt. In Palestine the Labour Market Information System, which was officially launched in 2012 and has since been expanded, is identified in the Torino Process as the most ambitious reform in the employment strategy framework. The 2014 Torino Process report for Libya underlines the importance of filling the gaps that exists in terms of reliable labour market information in order to bring VET provision closer to the demands of the world of work. Moreover, the third Policy Leaders' Forum in Turin underlined in its conclusions the need for future-oriented skills policies and for anticipation of the needs of society and the economy in the medium term. At the same meeting the possibility of establishing labour market observatories in order to improve evidence and information for aligning the supply of and demand for skills was identified as one of the emerging policy measures in the AMCs.

Progress on work-based learning and apprenticeship also varies from country to country. Stakeholders in Jordan identify as one of the key problems the very limited (only 30%) practical element in secondary vocational education, in which there are no work-based learning opportunities. In Egypt a cluster of technical secondary schools follows the German-inspired dual system, and the number of schools involved has been increasing. However, many other VET schools in Egypt have neither access to practical training nor contact with the world of work, and several models coexist in the system, following the implementation of different pilots. In Tunisia the alternance system has continued to be successfully expanded; it now operates in the majority of VET centres in the country, although it faces a number of challenges, in particular the need for stronger involvement on the part of the private sector and for development of the role of the tutor. In Israel Regional Technology Centres have been established in which students engage in practical studies to complement their theoretical studies in schools; other policy measures are being investigated, such as the direct allocation of funds to enterprises to finance industry mentors, and incentives for employers. The 2014 Torino Process in Israel also illustrates the specific added value of the apprenticeship system operated by the Ministry of Economy, combining study and work with a double-certification system (recognition of technological

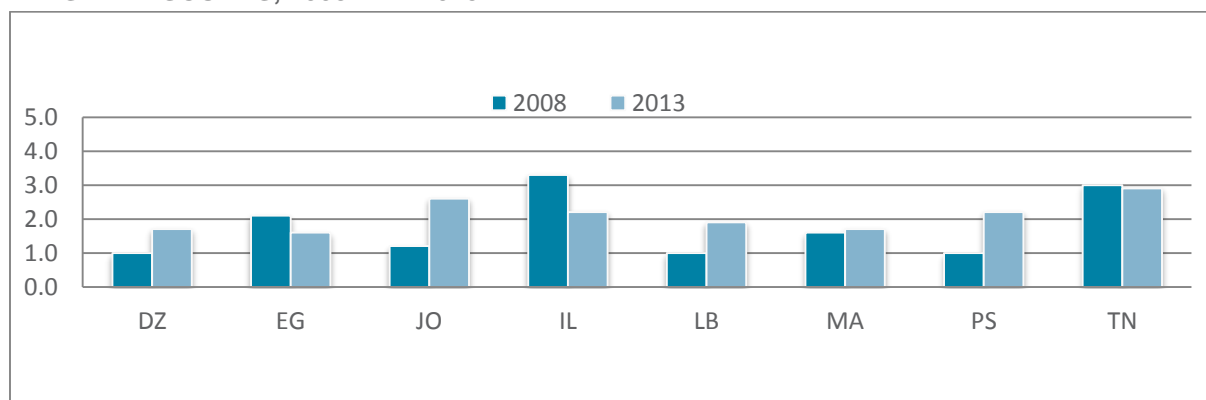
competence together with a trade certificate) that empowers students to integrate professional work through their subsequent military service, and allows for pathways towards higher education.

Developments have also taken place in the countries of the region in terms of more direct measures to support the transition from school. In Egypt a School-to-Work Transition Unit was set up in 2014, with donor support, at the Ministry of Education. Headed by the Technical Education Sector, this unit includes a division for career guidance that is the first of its kind in the history of TVET and education in Egypt. The development of career guidance and counselling systems, or their improvement where they already exist, is identified as a key priority area by many 2014 Torino Process country reports (e.g. Egypt, Lebanon, and Palestine). In Algeria the establishment of career guidance and counselling services is one of the achievements mentioned in relation to the most recent government Action Programmes, and the topic is also included in the new Action Programme (2014–2018). In Tunisia 67 career guidance and counselling units were set up in 2012–2013, while the start of a number of new national programmes was envisaged for 2014.

Career guidance and entrepreneurship were identified at the third Policy Leaders' Forum in 2014 as emerging policy measures that could transform the link between education and employment, in particular for young people.

Progress on entrepreneurial learning is addressed both in the 2014 Torino Process and in the Small Business Act (SBA) regional assessment (OECD et al., 2014). The latter shows that there has been limited progress in policy development since 2008 (the last time that the SBA assessment was implemented in the Middle East and North Africa region), in particular in terms of how education systems address entrepreneurship as a key competence, as illustrated by **FIGURE 2.4**.

FIGURE 2.4 DIMENSION 1: EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP – WEIGHTED SCORES, 2008 AND 2013



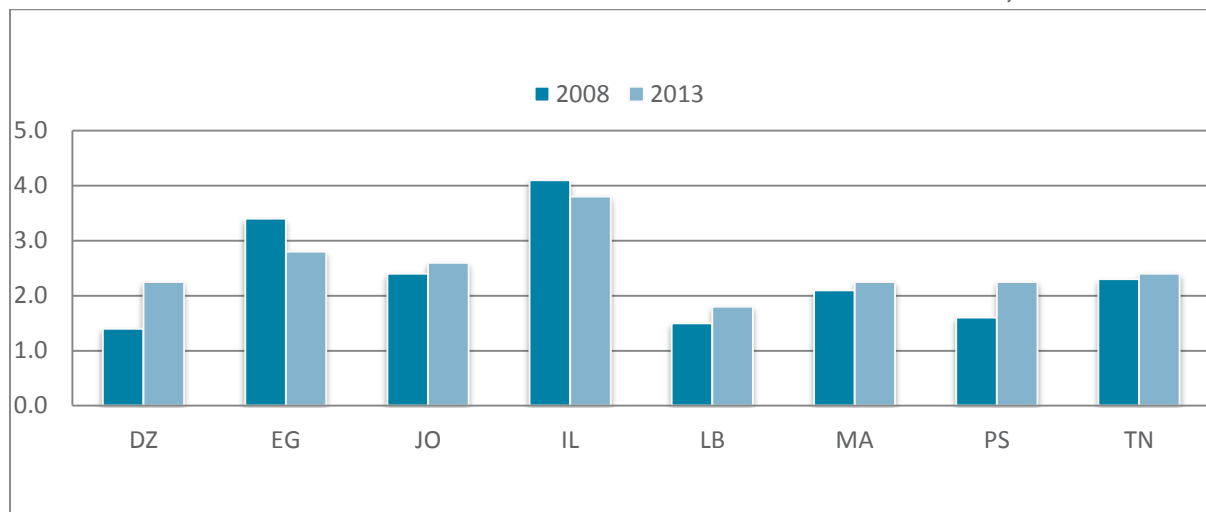
Note: Values show levels of policy reform, ranging from 1 (the weakest) to 5 (the strongest).

Source: OECD et al., 2014

As well as lacking a comprehensive strategy for human resources development, most countries in the region also lack a national strategy on entrepreneurial learning (e.g. Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon). Tunisia continues to lead the way in this area. Interesting work has been carried out in Jordan and Palestine in relation to the introduction of key components of entrepreneurship into the national curriculum in lower and upper secondary education, and efforts have been made in Lebanon in relation to strategic piloting. Most countries have improved their sharing of good practice. In Israel the ORT vocational school network stands out for its structured approach to teachers sharing the entrepreneurship curriculum, new pedagogic approaches and new assessment techniques, while in Jordan the Queen Rania Foundation provides an excellent support framework for schools, training centres and universities. With regard to entrepreneurship training for women, Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Palestine offer examples of and potential for more strategic development.

In terms of developing enterprise skills – in particular for SMEs and microenterprises, which make up the majority of the companies in the region – the SBA assessment identifies progress in the majority of the countries of the region, with Israel in the lead (see **FIGURE 2.5**).

FIGURE 2.5 SUB-DIMENSION 8.1: ENTERPRISE SKILLS – WEIGHTED SCORES, 2008 AND 2013



Note: Values show levels of policy reform, ranging from 1 (the weakest) to 5 (the strongest).

Source: OECD et al., 2014

However, the SBA assessment stresses that many countries of the region have no systemic mechanisms for analysing training needs, although most of them have pilot projects or ad hoc mechanisms to address this issue (e.g. Morocco and Palestine). The availability of training for SMEs has improved (e.g. Jordan, Israel and Tunisia for start-ups), while there remains a general problem with the availability of data, information and evidence across the region. In countries where there is a training levy for CVT (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia), proper funding and institutional arrangements exist for the provision of training to companies, although SMEs have more difficulty benefiting from them owing to often cumbersome bureaucratic procedures.

Another factor to be considered is the presence in the AMCs of a large informal sector, where skills are acquired through informal apprenticeships or on-the-job training in small workshops, but on which there is still very little information and evidence. Tunisia's 2014 Torino Process report specifically mentions skills acquisition in the informal sector as one area requiring further attention in the new VET strategy.

Key issues

- There has been progress on the development of employment strategies in the region, with wide variations by country. More attention has been paid to emergency measures than to sustainable job-creation policies. It is now necessary to move into full implementation of the strategies, establishing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and scaling up the measures to generate medium- and long-term systemic impact.
- Almost all countries of the region have developed a wide range of youth-targeted ALMPs in recent years, but the effectiveness of such policies is still hampered by issues such as weak labour market information systems, the limited capacity of public employment services and problems of fragmentation and coordination.
- In most countries there has been progress on establishing many pilot initiatives to make VET provision more relevant to labour market demands. The main difficulty remains that of assessing these projects and pilots, and mainstreaming them into national initiatives.

- Labour market observatories, which should improve evidence and information for aligning the supply of and demand for skills, have been identified as a potential emerging policy tool in the region.
- VET must become more relevant to labour market needs, but this must be accompanied by the creation of jobs that can be filled by VET graduates.
- Apprenticeship and work-based learning, career guidance and other specific measures for the transition from school to work remain high on the reform agenda for the future.
- There has been limited progress in the region on entrepreneurial learning, despite the growth in initiatives and pilots. Further work is expected to take place in developing national strategies and setting up national systems for training needs analysis, mainstreaming pilots and addressing in a more consistent way the training needs of SMEs and microenterprises in the region.

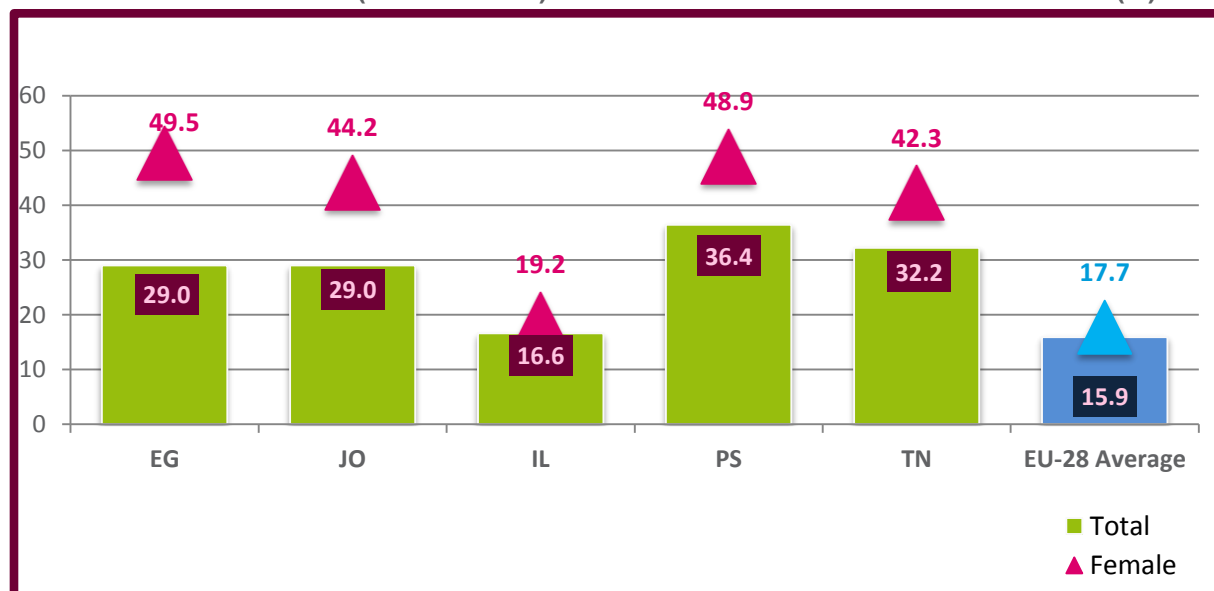
3. PROGRESS IN ADDRESSING DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIAL AND INCLUSION DEMANDS

3.1 The context

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the population growth rates in the AMCs are among the highest in the world, and the ‘youth bulge’ means that almost 30% of the population is aged 15–30 years and another 30% 0–14 years (ETF, 2015a). Thus, young people represent one of the main groups in terms of social demands in the region, in particular unemployed young people and women. The specific situation of Israel, which differs from the AMCs, is discussed in Chapter 2 of this report.

An alarming new phenomenon that has been attracting increasing attention is the rise in the number of NEETs. Although few data on NEETs in the region are available, a recent ETF study (2014b) found that NEETs could account for around 32% of the 15–29 age group in Tunisia, 36% in Palestine, 29% in Jordan and 29% in Egypt, all of which are above the EU average (15.9%); Israel (16.6%) is only slightly above the EU average (see **FIGURE 3.1**). The rate is much higher for young women (again, except in Israel), while in the EU the difference between the total rate and the female rate is not as dramatic. The study also revealed that in Egypt and Palestine, young people with higher education are more likely to become NEETs than those with lower education, while in Jordan and Israel those with higher education are less likely to become NEETs. Dropping out from education is a high risk factor for becoming a NEET and for being in low-quality employment in the future. The number of NEETs is one of the more serious problems in the AMCs, affecting both social inclusion and lost opportunities for economic growth. Moreover, prolonged unemployment or inactivity in early life can permanently impair employability, future earning potential and access to quality jobs (ETF, 2015a).

FIGURE 3.1 NEETS RATES (15–29 YEARS) BY SEX – 2013 OR LAST AVAILABLE YEAR (%)



Sources: Jordan and Tunisia: ETF calculations based on the ILO School-to-Work Transition Surveys (2012–2013); Egypt: ILO School-to-Work Transition Surveys (2012); Israel: Central Bureau of Statistics, labour force survey; data received by the country; Palestine: ETF calculation.

This socioeconomic context puts strong pressure on VET systems, raising expectations that they may become tools to facilitate youth employability. VET is also expected to be innovative in helping learners to gain a wide range of transversal as well as technical skills and competences, and to respond to changing labour market skill needs. However, VET is not yet highly regarded by learners, their families and employers across the region (ETF, 2014a). As expressed at the second Policy Leaders' Forum in Marseille 2013, the real challenge is to make VET an option for winners in society, rather than for losers. The VET systems in the region have traditionally suffered from problems of lack of relevance, quality, resourcing and internal efficiency. Their governance structures are highly centralised and at the same time fragmented, which imposes significant challenges in terms of the coordination, participation and autonomy that are demanded at the various levels (national, sectorial, local and institutional) by the new groups of stakeholders (the world of work, social partners, civil society and disadvantaged groups).

3.2 Preliminary assessment of progress since 2012

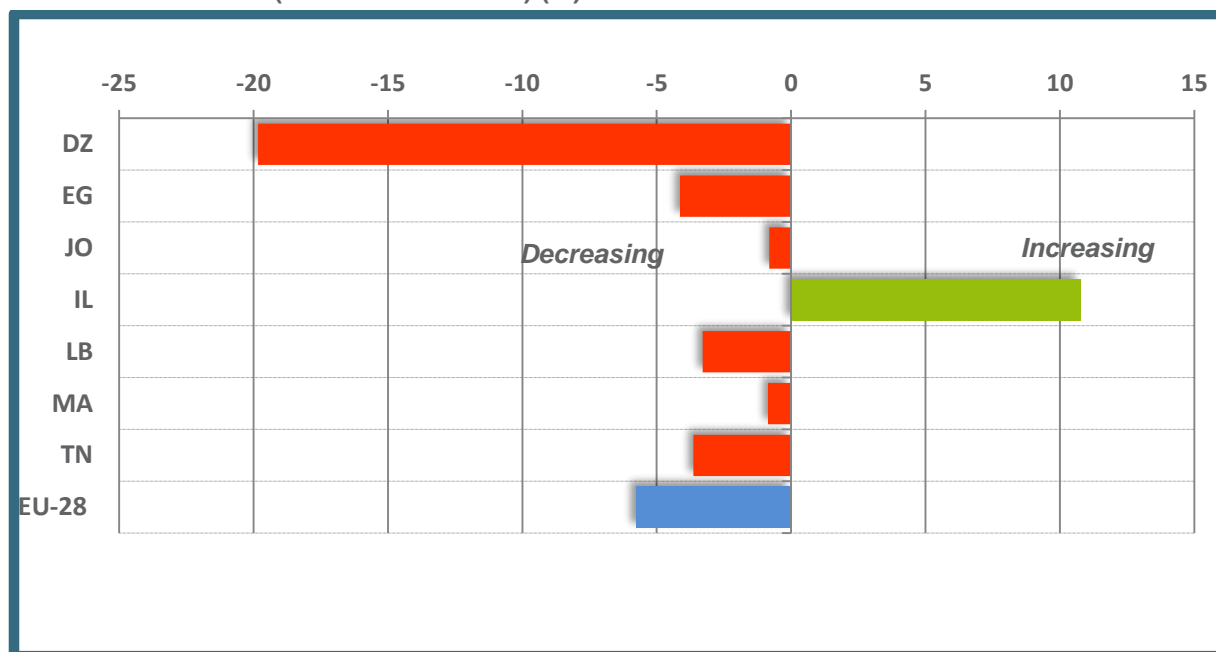
The 2012 Torino Process described the social demands created by the Arab Spring that would, in turn, be reflected in expectations for the VET systems across the AMCs (ETF, 2013). The main demand was for greater participation and representation from different groups of citizens in government decision-making processes. There was also a strong call to address the needs of disadvantaged groups (in particular unemployed young people, women and NEETs) and the less economically advanced regions within each country. The fight against poverty and for better, decent living conditions for all citizens was one of the banners of the Arab Spring revolts.

The Dead Sea Declaration in 2012 specifically mentioned the countries' commitment to increase the attractiveness of VET by providing pathways to different and higher levels of education, together with campaigns to improve the image of VET among citizens and enterprises. At the same time, countries acknowledged the importance of providing skills development opportunities for different groups, in particular dropouts, those working in the informal economy, and NEETs. The progress reported by the 2014 Torino Process in these areas is the main subject of this chapter.

With regard to access and participation in VET, it is important to point out that all the countries in the region include, in one way or another, universal access to VET as one of the objectives in their strategic documents. In some cases (e.g. Morocco) such access is mentioned in the constitution as a right of the citizen. There is evidence that VET has increased in importance in the AMCs in the aftermath of the Arab Spring as a tool not only for economic development and competitiveness, but also for social cohesion. In Israel the 2014 Torino Process mentions the government objective to increase the number of VET students, in particular in technological specialisms.

According to the comparison of regional Torino Process data for 2012 and 2014, participation in VET as a percentage of upper secondary education has fallen in all AMCs. The decreases range from 0.8% in Jordan and 0.9% in Morocco to 19.8% in Algeria, passing through 3.3% in Lebanon, 3.6% in Tunisia and 4.1% in Egypt (see **FIGURE 3.2**). The same trend occurred for the EU average. In Israel, participation in VET has increased.

FIGURE 3.2 PARTICIPATION IN VET AS A PROPORTION OF UPPER SECONDARY – CHANGE FROM 2012 TO 2014 (TORINO PROCESS) (%)



Sources: Torino Process 2012 and 2014 statistical databases. EU-28 average: ETF calculations based on UNESCO.

According to the 2014 Torino Process, the VET participation rate for women is much lower than that for men, at least in some countries (e.g. Jordan (with the exception of the Community Colleges), Palestine). At the same time, several Torino Process reports (Morocco, Tunisia) discuss the increasing number of dropouts from VET. The Tunisian report states that the higher the level of education, the more chance there is of students dropping out of the system. This trend mainly affects men and those in economically disadvantaged regions. A similar situation is described for Algeria, where men account for 72% of the total number of dropouts. This can in principle be attributed to the fact that men more often choose to enter the world of work, particularly in cases where their family's economic situation is not favourable. The Tunisian report also quotes the results of surveys in which students mention the lack of quality and relevance of VET as reasons for dropping out.

Connected to this, VET's lack of attractiveness remains a feature in the region, although countries have carried out specific activities to address this issue. For instance, Jordan and Palestine have recently organised public campaigns to improve the image of VET, while in Israel the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Economy have cooperated and invested joint resources to change the image of technological education in the country. However, overall in the region the 2014 Torino Process shows that VET remains a second-choice or last-resort option reserved for poor-performing students or dropouts from the general education system. The prestige and social recognition of higher education has a strong impact across the region's education systems. One of the clearest cases of the social disregard for VET reported by the 2014 Torino Process is that of Libya, though the trend exists across the entire region.

The 2014 Torino Process establishes a fundamental link between the attractiveness of VET and its increased relevance and quality. There is awareness in the region that effective links with the world of work and employability must be shown. However, VET must also be relevant to learners in terms of their own professional aspirations; this is connected to the availability in the labour market of attractive jobs for VET graduates. In addition, poor and ill-equipped VET premises with inadequately qualified teachers and obsolete theoretical curricula are also significant factors that contribute to VET's lack of attractiveness in many of the AMCs. There is consensus in the 2014 Torino Process reports that the approach to improving VET's image needs to be holistic. The third Policy Leaders' Forum in Turin

identified as an emerging policy challenge the need to address the influence of culture in determining the choices of young people, and especially women, in education, training and employment.

Another issue that is strongly linked to the attractiveness of VET is that of pathways to other subsectors of the education system. VET systems in the AMCs have traditionally been seen as 'dead ends' in the education system, offering few possibilities for progression, in particular to higher education. The 2014 Torino Process reports show a growing awareness among stakeholders and authorities in the region of the importance of this issue, though there are few examples of implementation. In Palestine, the development of a national qualification system has opened up new possibilities in this respect. In Tunisia, where the legislation supports mobility but is not yet operational, working groups were set up in 2014 to review the opportunities offered by the system.

The third Policy Leaders' Forum held in Turin identified progress in the development of specific policies and schemes to improve access and address the needs of disadvantaged groups (both social and territorial). However, there was consensus on the fact that there is still insufficient attention given to the training and employment needs of women and NEETs in particular.

The need for gender-sensitive career guidance and counselling provisions is an issue raised in the Torino Process reports of some countries, for instance Jordan, where a career guidance strategy approved in 2011 has not been fully implemented. In Palestine the introduction of an overall system is under development, and career guidance units and institutions have been considerably strengthened. In Morocco, the new National Portal for Professional Orientation was launched in July 2014, while in Tunisia, 67 new units were established in 2012/13.

Little progress is reported in the 2014 Torino Process regarding the expectations of learners and society of the availability and provision of adult learning. This remains a neglected area in which structured approaches are lacking (other than CVT in the countries where such provision exists, such as Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Israel) and which relies instead on individual initiative. This situation is linked to the absence of a national lifelong learning vision in most countries of the region.

With regard to the targeting of disadvantaged groups and regions, the Torino Process reports describe a number of initiatives in most countries that are basically channelled through ALMPs or through pilot projects (e.g. Jordan's women's satellite training and employment projects in rural areas). The situation of refugees in some countries, such as Jordan and Lebanon, requires specific measures that in some cases exceed the national capacities. In Morocco there is a new policy focus on regional development, and this has resulted in a number of programmes being implemented; more actors have become involved in recent years in the targeting of vulnerable groups. In Tunisia, the Torino Process reports mention the existence of 118 projects running in 2014 in support of training in disadvantaged regions and a wide range of programmes targeting groups with special needs. In Israel, a number of core programmes have been introduced in schools to support specific groups (young people at risk, girls studying technology) and to make VET accessible to individuals with a disability. In addition, a number of programmes specifically target the non-Jewish sector (in particular Arab females) and the Ultra-Orthodox population, although the 2014 Torino Process highlights the challenges involved in ensuring equity and the improvement of opportunities for disadvantaged groups in a society that is ethnically and religiously very diverse.

The dimension of territorial cohesion (providing support to disadvantaged territories by ensuring balance in the distribution of economic growth, but also the availability of skills) is gaining importance and is illustrated by ETF-supported projects in specific regions of Tunisia and Morocco. The Tunisian report identifies the need for further involvement in VET design of the new social actors (women, young people, SMEs and microenterprises, workers from the informal sector, and representatives of disadvantaged regions). Jordan provides a positive example in its choice of topic for the ETF's PRIME project: the development of policy options for increasing female employment through VET.

Key issues

- Access to VET remains a clear policy objective for all countries. In addition to its socioeconomic value, VET is perceived in the AMCs as an instrument for social cohesion.
- Increasing the attractiveness of VET as a first-choice option for students remains high on the agenda of policy makers in the AMCs. However, measures to increase its attractiveness must be linked to increased quality and relevance of VET systems, and also to the creation of jobs that can satisfy the professional aspirations of learners. Addressing the influence of culture in determining the choices of young people, and especially women, is identified as an emerging policy challenge.
- A wide range of pilot measures to address the needs of disadvantaged groups is being tested in the countries. Such efforts need to continue, in particular for unemployed young people, women and NEETs.
- The provision of skills and VET in disadvantaged regions aims to bring greater territorial cohesion. Progress can be observed in pilot actions, which should be incentivised and continued, but also in the growing importance of the issue in the policy agenda of specific countries. Increasing the local or territorial dimension of skills policy delivery is key for addressing the specific needs of target groups.

4. PROGRESS IN THE INTERNAL EFFICIENCY OF VET SYSTEMS

The 2012 Torino Process identified a wide range of issues to be addressed in the SEMED countries in this area (ETF, 2013): the absence of quality assurance systems (and their corresponding governing structures), the need to develop national qualification systems, VET curricula reforms, and overall, a more holistic approach towards quality. The poor cost-efficiency of the system and the need to rationalise resources were also highlighted. The need for greater investment in teachers' and trainers' recruitment, career development, pre- and in-service training and incentives also featured highly in both the country and regional reports. Finally, the urgent need to build pathways between VET and the other subsystems of education, notably higher education, was also widely referenced by the countries.

At the first Policy Leaders' Forum in 2012, country representatives mentioned their commitment to 'widen access and enhanced its quality by bringing it closer to the demands of the labour market, enterprises and learners'. At the second Policy Leaders' Forum in 2013, the AMCs again reviewed progress in the implementation of strategies for quality, long-term and holistic approaches.

This chapter focuses on progress in these areas, as part of the analysis of internal efficiency in the VET systems. The 2014 Torino Process shows that efforts are continuing in most countries, while at the same time all the topics would still benefit from further action and improvement, and progress is not always clearly identifiable. The slow pace of implementation is attributable partly to the long-term nature of these reforms and partly to the political instability and uncertainty in some of the countries, which makes undertaking the reforms costly and demanding in terms of the sustained political and financial commitment required. The Torino Process also illustrates that many of these reforms are tested through donor-supported projects, and identifies the difficulties involved in moving from pilot project approaches to systemic solutions.

4.1 Progress on qualifications and quality assurance

The 2014 Torino Process establishes a link between quality and the existence of national qualifications systems, to ensure transparency and create pathways between educational subsystems, and also as the main tool to ensure transparency and increase the confidence of employers. In many countries of the region there have been efforts over the years to reach consensus on the establishment of NQFs. The road towards NQFs is certainly not straight, as exemplified in the 2014 Torino Process in the cases of Egypt and Jordan. In Palestine the most recent initiatives have been implemented as part of the Standard Process for Curriculum Development, which aims to move the VET system towards a competence-based approach. Significant progress can be observed in Morocco, where a principle agreement on the NQF (*cadre national des certifications*) was reached in early 2013 (including structure, levels and descriptors, certification and governance), and in May 2014 the National Commission for the NQF was launched, while awaiting a law to regulate the full package. However, it is important to remember, as pointed out in the GEMM cross-country report (ETF, 2014a), that no country in the region has a fully operational NQF. This means that further progress in implementation is still to be made before it is possible to draw policy lessons in this field.

As regards quality assurance, the GEMM cross-country report and the 2014 Torino Process reports conclude that the focus in the region has been (and largely remains) on quality control procedures rather than on quality improvement and assurance systems. At the same time there is evidence that countries in the region are becoming more committed to quality assurance, albeit that initiatives have up to now been limited. In many countries of the region there is as yet no official definition of or vision for quality assurance, but rather a number of bottom-up initiatives that include quality assurance elements (e.g. in Lebanon and Palestine). Tunisia features as an example of good practice in both the

Torino Process report and the GEMM regional report: the country has invested carefully in quality assurance actions linked to the competence-based approach. Israel offers an interesting example of the way in which quality assurance mechanisms can be combined with decentralisation: the national curriculum, examinations and inspection remain under firm central control in order to ensure quality in provision, reforms and initiatives, while the education networks, local authorities and providers exercise a considerable degree of autonomy in other respects (ETF, 2014a).

The link between the lack of internal efficiency and fragmentation in governance is illustrated in the Torino Process reports for Egypt, Jordan, Libya and Morocco, countries in which different systems for quality assurance and accreditation coexist according to the different institutions involved. In Jordan, a positive development has been the setting up of the Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance (CAQA), but the centre still has to coordinate with two other councils that are under different ministries.

As can be deduced from the previous paragraphs, accreditation of VET providers and programmes is carried out in different ways in different countries: through various parallel systems (Jordan), through an independent institution (Egypt, but only for educational institutes), or through a specific ministry (as is the case for Lebanon's Directorate-General for Vocational and Technical Education in the Ministry of Education, which also has competence for accreditation of the large network of private VET providers in the country, or Israel's Ministry of Education and Ministry of Economy). In countries such as Egypt and Palestine there are no formal accreditation procedures for vocational training centres.

4.2 Progress on policies for VET teachers, trainers and directors

Many SEMED countries (e.g. Algeria and Tunisia) include issues relating to teachers, trainers and directors of VET among the main priorities for action in their strategic documents. This area covers a wide range of subjects, from recruitment and pre-service training, to career, salary and incentives, including in-service training. Across the region, the qualifications, career paths and working conditions of teachers are some of the critical problems in the internal efficiency of the system. According to the Torino Process findings, while relevant activities are going on in all the countries, this is one area in which it is most difficult to observe substantial progress in terms of implementation. This is due to a combination of internal and external factors.

The qualifications and selection procedures for VET teachers and trainers are among the main problems emphasised in many of the countries (e.g. Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine), according to the 2014 Torino Process. In Israel, where teachers are required to hold academic qualifications as well as teaching certificates and licences, the Torino Process report identifies a shortage of teachers of technological subjects, which leads to those holding practical engineering diplomas being employed as teachers.

A number of developments have taken place with regard to in-service training. For instance, Palestine has activated its Teacher Education Strategy (approved in 2008 but only recently operationalised) and a pilot initiative by GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) will lead to the setting up of a Human Resources Development Unit in either the Ministry of Education or the National Agency for VET (NAVET). In Egypt the Professional Academy for Teachers, which was set up some years ago with an extensive mandate (covering teachers in all areas, including technical education), started the process of developing professional support associated with the Teachers' Cadre, a scheme for promotion that established a career ladder of sorts. This independent organisation, directly under the Prime Minister, seems to have had less of an impact on teachers in VET than on those in general education. In Tunisia various activities were carried out in 2013/14 to support the competences of teachers, pedagogical counsellors, and inspectors. In Israel there is a variety of schemes for in-service training for teachers and trainers, although the Torino Process report highlights the difficulties of keeping teachers of technology (VET) professionally updated because of the lack of a

clearly defined certification standard for this group. There is currently a programme in place that is implemented in stages on yearly basis.

Palestine's Torino Process report defines directors of VET institutions as being crucial, and very much engaged in the implementation of the reform. However, with few incentives, owing to the centralised model of governance, they have little room for autonomous decision-making. This is the case in most AMCs. Although VET directors are mentioned as a key target group for further empowerment in the strategic documents of a number of countries, the 2014 Torino Process does not provide relevant examples of programmes or activities that are currently targeting this group.

4.3 Progress on teaching and learning

Few countries in the region (only Israel, Jordan and Tunisia) take part in international benchmarking processes such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Comparison between the data available in the Torino Process for 2012 (based on 2009 results) and 2014 (based on 2012 results) indicates an improvement in Tunisia's performance in reading and mathematics, with a decline in science; for Jordan there is a general decline in the three indicators; Israel shows improvement in all three indicators, with scores that are closer to the EU benchmarks (see Annex 2).

In terms of learning approaches, the main problem identified by stakeholders in the 2014 Torino Process is the limited availability of practical learning, with insufficient work-based learning opportunities (e.g. Jordan); the second problem is the narrow specialisations and the need to rationalise them (e.g. Jordan and Lebanon). In Tunisia, in contrast, the alternance training with enterprises, which was introduced in 2008, has witnessed great development and now operates in the majority of VET centres. The need for better equipment and resources in VET centres is mentioned in all the reports.

Curricula reform is the focus of significant attention in many countries in the region in terms of pedagogical innovation. In Lebanon the Torino Process identifies this as a key core challenge in which work has started but little progress is evident so far. Reasons for the delay are to be found in the unstable institutional and political environments, which prevent major institutional reforms in the country at the current time. In Palestine many issues are under review in the Standard Process for Curriculum Development (moving towards a competence-based approach). In Tunisia the competence-based approach has been consolidated, although the Torino Process report mentions new challenges (the need for a new financing model, more involvement from the professional sectors, and a greater focus on teacher and trainer training). In Morocco, following the work started by international programmes, investment has continued in the REM (*répertoire emploi métier*) and REC (*référentiel des compétences*). These are potentially powerful tools for quality assurance, certification and the validation of prior, non-formal and informal learning that need to be further disseminated and more widely used. In Israel the process for updating and reforming curricula, in particular in VET, is closely linked to innovation in technology, one of the main features of the Israeli economy and therefore requiring an approach to education that is strongly based in science.

In May 2014, as well as reforming its social partners, Morocco also launched a new law for the regulation of CVT. It envisages an expansion of the sector, with 30% of the VET tax to be dedicated to CVT. The law also sets out a new governance structure and arrangements for the validation of prior learning and professional experience. Further legislation will be needed in order to implement the law.

Also in Morocco, Specialised Institutes for VET, which are a new type of centre, are being developed in partnership with the economic sectors. This has been achieved within the framework of the National Programme for Industrial Emergence 2009–2015.

New baccalaureates have been launched in some AMCs. In Lebanon there is a new technical baccalaureate (which still has a traditional curriculum). Morocco's 'Bac Pro' (professional baccalaureate) is an ambitious project that pursues a closer integration between VET and the world of work; the pilot phase was launched in July 2014 in two sectors, supported through partnerships.

4.4 Progress on the efficient use of resources

The 2012 Torino Process indicated that financing, funding and the efficient use of resources were areas in which further work was required in the SEMED countries in order to further reflect on the funding tools available, their potential diversification, and their adaptation to the current needs of the VET sector (ETF, 2013). This section of the report examines the progress that has been made in this regard.

The financing of VET in the region is mostly public, except in some countries (e.g. Lebanon), where private VET provision is a very substantial component of the sector. In addition, some countries have a training tax or training levies (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia); in such cases, these funds are often oriented towards CVT, which would otherwise rely on private initiatives. In Israel the VET budget comes from the government and the educational service providers. In many of the AMCs, donors and international organisations contribute external funds to the financing of the VET sector; this is of great importance for some countries, such as Palestine. The public character of the financing system is directly related to the centralised nature of governance in the region.

The GEMM cross-country mapping of financing states that 80–90% of the budget goes on salaries, while little is spent on innovation. In general terms, VET is underfinanced in the region and this underfinancing has a persistent and structural character (ETF, 2014a). The 2014 Torino Process reports provide few data that are comparable across countries on public expenditure on education, and in particular on VET. The limited data available (Torino Process databases for 2012 and 2014) show that there has been a decline since 2012 in public expenditure on education in some countries (e.g. Jordan, with a reduction of 22.4%, and Lebanon, with a reduction of 5.6%), while in others (e.g. Tunisia) the situation is stable, with a level of expenditure comparable to the average in OECD countries. Furthermore, in Tunisia it is estimated that around 1% of the state budget is dedicated to VET. Israel is the only country in which expenditure on education has increased (by 1.3%). The country's national expenditure is high compared with that in OECD countries (7.4% of GDP, according to Israel's 2014 Torino Process self-assessment report), despite the high percentage of young people in the population of Israel compared to the relatively small percentage of the working-age population. However, the Torino Process in Israel reports a significant shortage of funds for VET infrastructure and equipment. In Egypt, according to the Torino Process report, Ministry of Education data suggest that total expenditure on education almost doubled from 2007/08 to 2012/13, despite the acute economic crisis in the country following the Revolution. Moreover, the costing scenarios for Egypt's new Strategic Plan for Pre-University Education point towards an increase of 40% in the short period 2014/15 to 2016/17. However, it is not possible to compare this with the picture in other countries owing to the limitation of data availability.

One of the problems identified by the Torino Process reports is a lack of awareness about the costs of VET, the absence of costing systems (e.g. Palestine) and the lack of sufficiently transparent data and information, which leads to the inefficient use of resources (e.g. Jordan). The fact that the budgets are allocated annually does not favour the financing of long-term reforms. In this sense, the adoption by some countries (e.g. Tunisia, Morocco) of budgeting by objectives is perceived as a more favourable tool for multiannual reform funding.

The 2014 Torino Process illustrates some of the progress that has been made by countries in recent years in increasing and diversifying VET funding. Tunisia is one of the countries that has innovated more in terms of alternative tools for more targeted financing with the introduction of the *cheque de*

formation. Despite the economic crisis that followed the Revolution, implementation of the *cheque* has continued steadily, with three versions prior to 2012 and a new version expected for 2014, featuring wider coverage for particular specialisms and regions. The Torino Process in Palestine reflects on the need to find additional sources of funding by giving greater autonomy to VET centres to enable them to generate and retain their own revenue, by creating closer links with the local labour market and offering services to external stakeholders, such as companies, in particular in the field of CVT and within a lifelong learning perspective. However, this type of policy decision needs to be associated with changes in the governance models of VET in the region.

Key issues

- Most AMCs continue to be engaged in setting up NQFs. Progress is not linear, and there is still work to be done in terms of the design and implementation of these systems.
- Most countries in the region have systems of quality control for VET, rather than systems of quality assurance that can lead to improvements in internal efficiency. Initiatives in this area are very much at an early stage.
- Teachers' and trainers' selection, qualifications, pre- and in-service training, career paths, salaries and incentives are still very prominent among the challenges to be addressed. Progress in the implementation of the reforms is slow, although there are pilot initiatives that demonstrate an awareness of its importance. Directors of VET institutions have great potential to achieve reform of the system, providing the autonomy of VET institutions is increased.
- Curricula innovation and practical learning approaches will continue to be two key areas for action in the quality agenda. Progress is ongoing, at varying speeds and at different levels across the region.
- There is consensus on the need to look for new and more efficient tools for financing VET. The need to also diversify the sources of funding (outside public funding, which has dominated up to now) must be accompanied by a revision of the financing system and by the development of a shared vision with other actors. Better awareness about real costs and transparent costing systems has yet to be developed in most of the countries.

5. PROGRESS IN GOVERNANCE AND POLICY PRACTICES IN VET SYSTEMS

The Arab Spring created great expectations in terms of increasing the participation of all actors in the governance of the system, as well as in terms of greater transparency and accountability on the part of the public powers. In the case of VET, this was expressed clearly in the Dead Sea Declaration of September 2012, with 'countries recognising the imperative of establishing effective coordination mechanisms and active participation of stakeholders including businesses and civil society. In that respect, the vision for VET must be shared among actors, who should also have a common understanding of their role, benefits and obligations.'

At the same time, countries in the region come from a tradition of strongly centralised systems, where decision making, competences and resources are concentrated in the hands of the government and where there has traditionally been little space for autonomy of territories and VET institutions. This starting point is not conducive to the participation of social partners and civil society. Moreover, in most of the countries fragmentation is a traditional feature: multiple stakeholders are involved in the governance of the system, often with overlapping roles and no specific mechanisms for coordination. All this must be borne in mind when discussing progress in this sector over the past two years.

5.1 Progress on institutional settings and coordination

The 2014 Torino Process and the GEMM mapping of governance in the region (ETF, 2014a) both report two major trends in governance in the AMCs, namely towards increased coordination and towards decentralisation. This progress was confirmed during the third Policy Leaders' Forum held in Turin in November 2014.

The trend towards increased coordination (and efforts to combat fragmentation) is reflected in the shifting of governance arrangements from a very fragmented approach (different ministries in charge, without coordination mechanisms) towards a system of councils or even one ministry or agency in charge of VET coordination. The 2014 Torino Process illustrates some of the decisions that are being implemented, together with a number of new emerging challenges.

One country example that illustrates the efforts being made to tackle fragmentation is Palestine, where NAVET was set up in May 2014. NAVET is a semi-governmental institution with financial and administrative autonomy that has responsibilities in relation to both the development and implementation of policy. However, NAVET is not yet operational owing to the complex political and security situation in Palestine during the summer of 2014. The 2014 Torino Process highlights as a potential drawback the risk of further separation or isolation of VET from the rest of the education system.

Israel, where there is fragmentation in VET in the form of two different parallel systems belonging to two different ministries (plus educational networks and employers), is also investigating the possibility of establishing a public council to promote VET.

In Egypt, which has a particular problem with fragmentation in the TVET system, rethinking VET governance has become the top priority in the sector following the Revolution of 2011. A number of options have been considered, including the possibility of creating a TVET agency, a ministry for TVET or, following decisions taken in May 2014, a system of 'cascading councils', with a National Council for Human Resources Development in charge of policies and strategies, and two Executive Councils (TVET under the Ministry of Education, and skills development under the Ministry of Manpower and Migration) in charge of operational issues. In early March 2015, during a Cabinet

reshuffle, Egypt's first Ministry for Technical Education and Training was created. It is too soon to assess the progress that has been made, its actual impact on the governance of the system and its articulation with other policy proposals for representation and coordination. In Jordan there is an E-TVET Council under the Ministry of Labour that seeks to bring VET closer to employment. However, there are ongoing problems with coordination with the other two councils (for education and higher education), and a lack of leadership and empowerment for the effective implementation of the reforms.

Even in countries where VET is led by one ministry, there are ongoing efforts to address the challenges and find new ways to improve coordination. In Morocco, VET is now the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (it was previously linked to the Ministry of Labour). Changes in the countries illustrate an alternating preference for linking VET to either education or employment, with all options having both advantages and potential drawbacks that must be addressed within the specific context of the country.

5.2 Progress on empowering participation

In the Dead Sea Declaration, representatives from the AMCs declared their commitment to fostering the active participation of the business sector and civil society in the different phases of the VET policy cycle. Building the capacity of all actors in policy design and implementation would be a necessary prerequisite, and a greater role for young people, as part of civil society and in response to the aspirations of the Arab Spring, was also envisaged.

The 2014 Torino Process illustrates some of the efforts that have been made in this direction. For instance, in Tunisia the signature of the tripartite Social Contract in January 2013 (including VET) represents an attempt to include the trade unions (which have traditionally been absent from the VET sector in most countries of the region) in the various phases of the VET reform. Also in Tunisia, new models of partnership between public and private VET centres are being tested. In the new Palestinian system, the active involvement of the world of work in the identification and matching of skills demand and supply (for instance, curricula development and the identification of new vocational profiles) is mandatory. Although the system remains centralised, this represents a step forward. In Morocco there is strong representation from social partners (particularly employers, but also unions) and professional associations in VET policy development and in some elements of implementation (e.g. certification), particularly in CVT. In most countries, governments have formally identified social partners and engaged them to some extent in dialogue (ETF, 2014a). In Israel, the existence of two important education networks (ORT and AMAL) that are involved in both the organisation of, and the learning processes in, schools and training centres managed by the public sector represents a unique and interesting model.

Other positive developments can be observed in the 2014 Torino Process in relation to implementation of measures aimed at increasing participation, in particular of civil society. These include the consultation with youth groups that has taken place in some countries (Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Morocco), the online consultation through social media, and the continuation of the Young Mediterranean Leaders programme, which started in 2012 at the Dead Sea Conference.

Despite these efforts, and despite the growing awareness of the issue, effective and empowered participation remains an unresolved problem for the AMCs. There are countries (Egypt, Lebanon and Libya) where the formal legal provisions for the active involvement of the social partners in VET (and the business sector in particular) are minimal. In other countries, dialogue takes place at the beginning (i.e. the planning stage, as in Jordan), but governments are still reluctant to share decision-making processes. The Torino Process report for Israel mentions that employers (through the Manufacturers' Association of Israel) have a prominent role in VET policy development and implementation of the reforms. However, collaboration with ministries and educational networks, although extensive, is still ad hoc.

In most countries, trade unions are not involved in the VET sector. The capacities of the social partner and civil society representatives remain generally low in terms of actively participating in the VET policy cycle.

5.3 Progress on decentralisation

The 2012 Torino Process identified a trend towards decentralisation in several countries (ETF, 2013), despite the strong, traditionally centralised culture in the majority of countries in the region. This trend is confirmed in the 2014 Torino Process, albeit that the pace of reforms in this direction is advancing only slowly. In 2014, the ETF GEMM mapping report of governance in the region stated that ‘a territorial dimension to VET governance, as a component approaching multilevel governance, has gained ground in some countries’ (ETF, 2014a). The concept of multilevel governance encompasses five levels: international, national, sectorial, territorial/local and training provider.

Morocco and Tunisia are prioritising reforms at the territorial level as a national policy objective, with a view to ensuring that VET can respond to local labour market needs. In Palestine, Local Employment and Training Councils have recently been established. In most countries (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon), employment pilots and training projects have been established to try to meet local employment and training needs (ETF, 2014a). The advantage of the pilot approach is that it offers the opportunity for innovation; the disadvantage is the difficulty of mainstreaming results in systems that remain heavily centralised in terms of decision-making processes and institutional arrangements, and that lack mechanisms for the real devolution of powers.

At sectorial level, the 2012 Torino Process noted the trend to set up sectorial skills councils in several AMCs. Although many such councils continue to operate, the trend to set up new ones is not as evident in the 2014 Torino Process, except in Libya, where the Torino Process report mentions the recent creation of two sector skills councils for tourism and construction. In countries such as Morocco and Tunisia there are quite strong links between economic sectorial priorities and the identification – using different modalities and tools – of the skills to be provided by the VET systems.

Little progress has been made in increasing the autonomy of VET institutions in the AMCs. All across the region, VET schools are unable to keep the revenue they generate, and their budgets are strongly centralised and allocated in a fixed manner. This offers them no incentive to try to provide services to the local labour markets (e.g. engaging in CVT activities). In Jordan and Palestine, the creation of centres of excellence and centres of competence may open the door to new possibilities in this respect. Any mechanisms to provide greater autonomy to the VET centres would have to be accompanied by corresponding measures to increase accountability, transparency, result orientation and resourcing. Israel is an exception in the region, as its education networks and VET providers have an established role in teaching and learning initiatives (ETF, 2014a), coordinated by the relevant ministries (of Education and Economy) and through Professional Committees.

5.4 Progress on the governance of financing and funding

Financing of VET in the AMCs continues to be strongly centralised. This reflects the governance context, in which most of the funding comes from the central governments, where the decision-making power lies. Countries that have an employers’ tax or training levies for CVT (Morocco, Tunisia) are an exception to this: here, the participation of employers is more naturally embedded in the system, although procedures are reported to be complex and bureaucratic. The Torino Process for Tunisia calls for a complete reform of the financing system, based on a shared vision and shared

responsibilities. In Israel, which has a more diversified model, there are three sources of funding: the government, the local authorities and the educational networks⁸.

In Tunisia, budgeting by objectives was legally formalised for the Ministry of VET and Employment in 2013. The mechanism allows for a 'contract of objectives' between the ministry and the structures under its supervision. However, regions are not yet included in this system. There is little indication that governments in the region are preparing to devolve or decentralise any significant management decisions on finance to the more local levels, except perhaps where there is a strong emphasis on regionalisation (e.g. Morocco and Tunisia) (ETF, 2014a).

As mentioned in previous sections, the lack of autonomy of VET institutions in most countries of the region (with the exception of Israel), including the fact that they cannot retain self-generated revenue to fund additional activities, determines that the budgets are allocated following a traditional input system and are not linked to performance, objectives or outputs.

Key issues

- It is clear that efforts are being made in the region to achieve better coordination. Most countries are rehearsing different solutions (councils, national agencies or overall responsible ministries) in order to combat existing fragmentation in the institutions and bodies responsible for VET in the region. New challenges have been identified through experimentation with these solutions and attempts to embed them in the country context.
- Another significant trend that can be observed is towards decentralisation. Although progress has been slow in countries that have traditionally been centralised, there are moves towards some devolution of responsibilities to the regional level, and in some cases, towards sectors. Less progress can be observed in the achievement of greater autonomy for VET schools and centres, with some exceptions.
- Some progress can be observed in enhancing the participation in VET design of the world of work, social partners and civil society in some countries. However, there remains the challenge of how to make such participation effective, rather than simply a formality, and how to expand it to other stages of the VET policy cycle, such as implementation and assessment. This could be described as the democratisation of VET.

⁸ In Israel 20% of the financing for education comes from households, but this is more significant in higher education than in VET (2014 Torino Process report for Israel).

6. KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

The 2014 Torino Process takes the findings of the 2012 Torino Process as its starting point for monitoring progress in the implementation of VET reforms in the SEMED region. These findings are reflected in particular in the 2012 Torino Process regional report and in the Dead Sea Declaration, as well as in the respective Torino Process country reports. This comparison between 2012 and 2014 highlights developments that have taken place in the different countries in relation to the five key building blocks of the Torino Process (vision, addressing economic and labour market demands, addressing demographic, social and inclusion demands, internal efficiency, and governance and policy practices). It is possible to conclude that, in general terms, there has been progress across all areas, hampered in some cases by the difficult conditions in the region, such as political instability, insecurity, conflicts and economic crises, among others. Moreover, progress has been more marked in relation to some specific topics than others, and also varies according to country specificities.

6.1 Key issues on vision

- The first main challenge in the region remains that of achieving a holistic vision for VET, reconciling the different agendas of the various sectors. As well as addressing the need for more and better skills, VET must be accompanied by the creation of more jobs. The holistic vision also includes the elaboration of how VET can contribute to the modernisation of countries and its transformational impact on societies.
- The second main challenge still relates to implementation: the pace of reform remains slow in most countries. The political and socioeconomic instability in the region has also hampered the progress of reforms during the past two years.
- Although VET is now often mentioned in national constitutions, in most countries there is still a need to involve national legislative bodies in creating the necessary supportive legislation for VET reform.
- Progress can be observed in the design and approval of strategies and action plans, and in attempts to link VET strategies with those of other sectors such as education, employment and economic growth sectors. The next steps include ensuring that this link remains effective during implementation.
- In many countries there is still a lack of vision for CVT. The fragmentation of strategies from different subsectors prevents the existence of an overarching vision for lifelong learning in the countries of the region.
- Progress can be observed in some countries in terms of enhancing participation in the design of a shared vision. The main challenge remains to ensure that this participation is empowered and effective, including during implementation.
- Monitoring and evaluation of policies and strategies, mechanisms to measure the performance of the systems, and evidence-based policy options and choices remain areas for further improvement.
- A trend towards greater donor coordination efforts (both on the part of donors and at national level) is identified in the 2014 Torino Process. Increasing ownership of the reforms remains an area requiring further work.

6.2 Key issues in addressing economic and labour market demand

- There has been progress on the development of employment strategies in the region, with wide variations by country. More attention has been paid to emergency measures than to sustainable job-creation policies. It is now necessary to move into full implementation of the strategies, establishing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and scaling up the measures to generate medium- and long-term systemic impact.
- Almost all countries of the region have developed a wide range of youth-targeted ALMPs in recent years, but the effectiveness of such policies is still hampered by issues such as weak labour market information systems, the limited capacity of public employment services and problems of fragmentation and coordination.
- In most countries there has been progress on establishing many pilot initiatives to make VET provision more relevant to labour market demands. The main difficulty remains that of assessing these projects and pilots, and mainstreaming them into national initiatives.
- Labour market observatories, which should improve evidence and information for aligning the supply of and demand for skills, have been identified as a potential emerging policy tool in the region.
- VET must become more relevant to labour market needs, but this must be accompanied by the creation of jobs that can be filled by VET graduates.
- Apprenticeship and work-based learning, career guidance and other specific measures for the transition from school to work remain high on the reform agenda for the future.
- There has been limited progress in the region on entrepreneurial learning, despite the growth in initiatives and pilots. Further work is expected to take place in developing national strategies and setting up national systems for training needs analysis, mainstreaming pilots and addressing in a more consistent way the training needs of SMEs and microenterprises in the region.

6.3 Key issues in addressing demographic, social and inclusion demand

- Access to VET remains a clear policy objective for all countries. In addition to its socioeconomic value, VET is perceived in the AMCs as an instrument for social cohesion.
- Increasing the attractiveness of VET as a first-choice option for students remains high on the agenda of policy makers in the AMCs. However, measures to increase its attractiveness must be linked to increased quality and relevance of VET systems, and also to the creation of jobs that can satisfy the professional aspirations of learners. Addressing the influence of culture in determining the choices of young people, and especially women, is identified as an emerging policy challenge.
- A wide range of pilot measures to address the needs of disadvantaged groups are being tested in the countries. Such efforts need to continue, in particular for unemployed young people, women and NEETs.
- The provision of skills and VET in disadvantaged regions aims to bring greater territorial cohesion. Progress can be observed in pilot actions, which should be incentivised and continued, but also in the growing importance of the issue in the policy agenda of specific countries. Increasing the local or territorial dimension of skills policy delivery is key for addressing the specific needs of target groups.

6.4 Key issues in internal efficiency

- Most AMCs continue to be engaged in setting up national qualification systems. Progress is not linear, and there is still work to be done in terms of the design and implementation of these systems.
- Most countries in the region have systems of quality control for VET, rather than systems of quality assurance that can lead to improvements in internal efficiency. Initiatives in this area are very much at an early stage.
- Teachers' and trainers' selection, qualifications, pre- and in-service training, career paths, salaries and incentives are still very prominent among the challenges to be addressed. Progress in the implementation of the reforms is slow, although there are pilot initiatives that demonstrate an awareness of its importance. Directors of VET institutions have great potential to achieve reform of the system, providing the autonomy of VET institutions is increased.
- Curricula innovation and practical learning approaches will continue to be two key areas for action in the quality agenda. Progress is ongoing, at varying speeds and at different levels across the region.
- There is consensus on the need to look for new and more efficient tools for financing VET. The need to also diversify the sources of funding (outside public funding, which has dominated up to now) must be accompanied by a revision of the financing system and by the development of a shared vision with other actors. Better awareness about real costs and transparent costing systems has yet to be developed in most of the countries.

6.5 Key issues in governance and policy practices

- It is clear that efforts are being made in the region to achieve better coordination. Most countries are rehearsing different solutions (councils, national agencies or overall responsible ministries) in order to combat existing fragmentation in the institutions and bodies responsible for VET in the region. New challenges have been identified through experimentation with these solutions and attempts to embed them in the country context.
- Another significant trend that can be observed is towards decentralisation. Although progress has been slow in the countries that have traditionally been centralised, there are moves towards some devolution of responsibilities to the regional level, and in some cases, towards sectors. Less progress can be observed in the achievement of greater autonomy for VET schools and centres, with some exceptions.
- Some progress can be observed in enhancing the participation in VET design of the world of work, social partners and civil society in some countries. However, there remains the challenge of how to make such participation effective, rather than simply a formality, and how to expand it to other stages of the VET policy cycle, such as implementation and assessment. This could be described as the democratisation of VET.

ANNEXES

Annex 1. Torino Process statistics database

TABLE A1.1 CHANGE 2012 TO 2014 (%)

Indicator	Change 2012 to 2014 (%)								
	DZ	EG	JO	IL	LB	LY	MA	PS	TN
Total population	1.3	1.5	3.2	1.3	2.3	1.7	2.2	4.8	1.9
Population growth rate (%)	0.0	-5.9	0.0	-5.3	0.0	-20.0	7.7	-0.3	0.0
Total dependency rate (%)	2.8	2.1	-13.1	0.8	-1.8	-3.9	10.9	-4.4	0.5
Young dependency rate (%)	3.3	0.6	-12.8	-0.7	-2.0	-5.3	-1.7	-4.7	-0.6
Old dependency rate (%)	0.0	1.1	0.0	3.1	0.0	nc	3.6	0.0	nc
Annual GDP growth (%)	26.9	22.2	7.7	-30.9	-53.3	nc	-26.3	127.6	280.0
GDP per capita	3.2	2.3	2.2	7.1	-2.3	nc	4.7	37.1	nc
Agriculture, value added (% of all branches)	34.8	4.3	-6.1	nc	-1.6	nc	-3.3	nc	4.8
Industry, value added (% of all branches)	-21.9	6.8	-3.2	nc	-4.2	nc	-1.0	nc	-10.2
Services, value added (% of all branches)	36.3	-6.1	1.8	nc	1.4	nc	1.3	nc	5.3
Share of 15–24 in the total population (%)	-4.0	nc	-2.9	nc	nc	nc	-5.1	47.6	nc
Completion of at least upper secondary education (% of total aged 15+)	nc	1.2	nc	1.3	nc	nc	nc	3.9	nc
Share of employed in agriculture (15+)	-9.4	-3.9	5.3	7.1	nc	nc	nc	-7.6	-7.3
Share of employed in industry (15+)	-10.6	-1.6	-2.2	-11.1	nc	nc	-4.6	0.0	2.1
Share of employed in services (15+)	8.3	3.7	0.4	2.7	nc	nc	3.7	0.8	-2.4
Activity rate (% of 15+)	3.6	-0.8	-4.9	10.8	nc	-9.5	-1.6	2.1	0.4
Activity rate, female (% of 15+)	16.9	-2.4	-10.2	10.5	nc	36.8	nc	6.8	2.8
Employment rate (15+)	3.7	-23.2	-5.3	9.4	nc	-19.7	-11.1	-1.5	3.6
Employment rate, female (15+)	20.9	-21.5	-15.6	8.9	nc	19.9	-13.9	nc	nc
Unemployment rate (15+)	-2.0	41.1	-2.3	23.2	nc	nc	3.4	25.1	-13.1
Unemployment rate, female (15+)	-14.7	6.6	3.8	25.0	nc	nc	-5.9	22.4	-16.1
Youth unemployment rate (15–24)	15.3	19.8	4.3	-14.3	nc	nc	7.8	14.8	nc
Youth unemployment rate, female (15–24)	6.1	-1.7	17.2	-0.8	nc	nc	11.7	20.9	nc
Adult literacy rate (% of 15+)	15.7	2.6	3.6	-0.2	nc	nc	19.6	0.2	1.9
Adult literacy rate, female (% of 15+)	10.5	3.6	5.3	-0.1	nc	nc	31.2	0.4	0.1
Participation in VET (% of upper secondary)	-19.8	-4.1	-0.8	10.8	-3.3	nc	-0.9	nc	-3.6
Public expenditure on education (% of GDP)	nc	nc	-22.4	1.3	-5.6	nc	nc	nc	0.0
Global Competitiveness Index (rank, 2011/12 out of 142 vs 2013/14 out of 148)	14.9	25.5	-4.2	22.7	15.7	nc	5.5	nc	107.5
PISA results (% of students at proficiency level 1 or below in reading, 2009 vs 2012)	nc	nc	5.4	-11.3	nc	nc	nc	nc	-1.6
PISA results (% of students at proficiency level 1 or below in mathematics, 2009 vs 2012)	nc	nc	4.1	-15.0	nc	nc	nc	nc	-8.0
PISA results (% of students at proficiency level 1 or below in science, 2009 vs 2012)	nc	nc	8.8	-12.7	nc	nc	nc	nc	3.0

Note: nc – no calculation possible.

TABLE A1.2 2014 TORINO PROCESS INDICATORS (YEAR, SOURCE)

Indicator TRP14		Southern and Eastern Mediterranean								
		DZ	EG	JO	IL	LB	LY	MA	PS	TN
Total population (000)		38 297 (13, NSO)	83 661 (13, NSO)	6 388 (12, NSO)	7 910 (12, WB)	4 425 (12, WB)	6 103 (12, WB)	32 950 (13, NSO)	4 357 (12, NSO)	10 887 (13, NSO)
Annual population growth (%)		1.88 (12, WB)	1.64 (13, WB)	2.19 (12, WB)	1.8 (12, WB)	0.96 (12, WB)	0.84 (12, WB)	1.43 (12, WB)	3.00 (12, NSO)	0.97 (12, WB)
Total dependency rate (%)		47.2	58.5	60.3	62.5	61.4	51.9	55.1	77.3	43.5
		(12, WB)	(12, WB)	(12, WB)	(12, WB)	(12, WB)	(12, WB)	(12, WB)	(12, WB)	(12, WB)
Youth dependency rate (%)		40.4	49.5	54.7	44.5	54.7	44.7	41.5	72.2	33.3
		(12, WB)	(12, WB)	(12, WB)	(12, WB)	(12, WB)	(12, WB)	(12, WB)	(12, WB)	(12, WB)
Life expectancy (years)		76.4 (12, NSO)	68.2 (m) 70.9 (f) (10, NSO)	73.6 (11, WB)	79.9 (m) 83.6 (f) (12, NSO)	79.6 (11, WB)	77.0 (11, WB)	72.2 (12, NSO)	72.8 (11, WB)	73.8 (12, NSO)
Net migration (000)		−50.0 (12, WB)	−2015.7 (12, WB)	+400.0 (12, WB)	−76.0 (12, WB)	+500.0 (12, WB)	−238.7 (12, WB)	−450.0 (12, WB)	−43.8 (12, WB)	−32.9 (12, WB)
Social burden (15+) (inactive/employed)		M	1.04 (12, ELMPS)	M	0.61 (13, NSO)	1.2 (09, NSO)	M	1.1 (11, NSO)	1.7 (12, NSO)	1.3 (13, NSO)
GDP growth rate (%)		3.3 (12, WB)	2.2 (12, WB)	2.8 (13, WB)	3.25 (13, WB)	1.4 (12, WB)	M	4.2 (12, WB)	17.3 (11, WB)	3.6 (12, WB)
GDP per capita (PPP, current international USD)		8 447 (12, WB)	6 614 (12, WB)	6 037 (12, WB)	32 309 (13, NSO)	14 372 (12, WB)	M	5 220 (12, WB)	2 489 (11, WB)	9 636 (12, WB)
GDP by sector (value added, % of GDP)	Agriculture	9.3	14.5	3.1	M	6.1	M	14.6	M	8.7
	Industry	48.5	39.2	30.1		20.5		29.6		29.9
	Services	42.2	46.3	66.8		73.4		55.8		61.4
		(12, WB)	(12, WB)	(12, WB)		(12, WB)		(12, WB)		(12, WB)
Global Competitiveness Index	Rank (out of 148)	100	118	68	27	103	108	77	NA	83
	Score (1 to 7)	3.8	3.6	4.2	4.9	3.8	3.7	4.1		4.1
		(13/14, WEF)	(13/14, WEF)	(13/14, WEF)	(13/14, WEF)	(13/14, WEF)	(13/14, WEF)	(13/14, WEF)		(13/14, WEF)
Small Business Act Entrepreneurial Learning (EL) Index		1.0 (08, OECD)	2.0 (08, OECD)	1.2 (08, OECD)	3.3 (08, OECD)	1.0 (08, OECD)	NA	1.5 (08, OECD)	1.0 (08, OECD)	3.0 (08, OECD)
Poverty headcount ratio at USD 2 a day (PPP) (% of population)		M	15.4 (08, WB)	1.6 (10, WB)	M	M	M	14.0 (07, WB)	0.3 (09, WB)	4.3 (10, WB)
Gini index		M	30.8 (08, WB)	35.4 (10, WB)	M	M	M	40.0 (07, WB)	35.5 (09, WB)	30.6 (10, WB)

Indicator TRP14		Southern and Eastern Mediterranean								
		DZ	EG	JO	IL	LB	LY	MA	PS	TN
Foreign direct investment (net inflows, % of GDP)		1.4 (11, WB)	−0.2 (11, WB)	5.1 (11, WB)	4.3 (11, WB)	8.7 (11, WB)	M	2.5 (11, WB)	M	0.9 (11, WB)
Employment by main sector (15+)	Agriculture	10.6	27.1	2.0	1.5	6.3	4.6	39.4	11.0	16.4
	Industry	29.6	24.9	18.1	17.7	21.0	21.3	20.8	26.8	33.7
	Services	59.8	46.4	79.9	80.8	72.7	74.1	39.7	62.2	82.7
		(13, NSO)	(12, NSO)	(13, NSO)	(12, NSO)	(09, NSO)	(07, NSO)	(13, NSO)	(13,NSO)	(11, EU)
Activity rate by sex (15+)	Total	43.2	51.3	37.1	63.6	49.2	47.8	48.4	43.6	47.4
	Female	16.6	23.9	13.2	58.1	25.6	33.8	M	17.3	25.6
		(13, NSO)	(11, NSO)	(13, NSO)	(12, NSO)	(09, NSO)	(12, ILO)	(12, NSO)	(13, NSO)	(13, NSO)
Employment rate by sex (15+)	Total	39.0	36.7	32.4	59.2	43.6	38.7	44.1	33.4	33.9
	Female	13.9	15.0	10.3	54.1	19.7	25.3	22.3	M	M
		(13, NSO)	(11, NSO)	(13, NSO)	(12, NSO)	(09, NSO)	(12, ILO)	(13, NSO)	(13, NSO)	(13, NSO)
Employment rate (20–64) (EU2020)		M	55.6 (13, ELMPS)	M	73.1 (13, NSO)	52.9 (09, NSO)	M	M	41.0 (13, ETF on LFS)	47.1* (13, NSO)
Unemployment rate by sex (15+)	Total	9.8	12.7	12.6	6.9	11.4	19.0	9.2	23.4	15.9
	Female	16.3	24.1	22.0	7.0	23.0	25.5	9.6	35.0	23.0
		(13, NSO) (15–59)	(11, NSO) (15–64)	(13, NSO)	(12, NSO)	(09, NSO)	(12, ILO)	(13, NSO)	(13, NSO)	(11, EU)
Youth unemployment rate by sex (15–24)	Total	24.8	29.7	31.2	10.8	16.8	48.7	19.3	41.0	42.3
	Female	39.7	53.2	55.1	11.8	22.3	67.9	18.1	65.0	45.4
		(13, NSO)	(11, NSO)	(13, NSO)	(12, NSO)	(09, NSO)	(12, ILO)	(13, NSO)	(13, NSO)	(11, EU)
Number of long-term unemployed as proportion of total unemployed, by sex and educational level (15+)		63.0 (13, NSO)	M	39.4 (13, NSO)	44.4 (12, NSO) (>14 months)	M	M	64.0 (13, NSO)	45.8 (13, NSO)	M
Population (15+) with at least upper secondary (ISCED 3) education (%)		29.1 (07, MEDA-ETE)	43.8 (11, NSO)	40.7 (13, NSO) (at least secondary)	75.7 (12, NSO)	34.6 (09, NSO) (at least secondary)	M	23.4 (11, NSO) (at least secondary)	53.7 (13, NSO)	31.7 (07, MEDA-ETE)
Tertiary educational attainment of population aged 30–34 (EU2020)		M	20.4 (12, ELMPS)	M	50.7 (12, NSO)	22.5 (09, NSO)	M	M	25.9 (13, NSO)	20.6* (13, NSO)
Adult literacy rate (15+)		84.1 (08, UIS)	73.9 (12, WB)	95.9 (11, NSO)	97.5 (12, NSO)	M	89.5 (11, UIS)	67.1 (11, UIS)	95.1 (11, UIS)	79.1 (10, UIS)

Indicator TRP14		Southern and Eastern Mediterranean								
		DZ	EG	JO	IL	LB	LY	MA	PS	TN
Early school leavers (EU2020)		M	27.8 (12, ELMPS)	33.2 (12, ILO)	8.1 (13, NSO)	M	M	M	37.4 (13, ETF on LFS)	37.5* (13, NSO)
Number of VET students as a proportion of the total number students in upper secondary (ISCED 3)		9.7	48.7	12.3	39.1	26.5	M	11.6	6.1	10.6
		(11, UIS)	(12, UIS)	(11, UIS)	(12, UIS)	(12, UIS)		(12, UIS)	(13, NSO)	(11, UIS)
Low achievers in PISA performance (%) (ET2020)	Reading	NA	NA	50.7	23.6	NA	NA	NA	NA	49.3
	Maths			68.0	33.5					67.7
	Science			49.6	28.9					55.3
				(12, OECD)	(12, OECD)					(12, OECD)
Public expenditure on education as % of GDP		M	M	3.8 (11, USAID)	8.1 (12, NSO)	1.7 (11, UIS)	M	5.4 (09, UIS)	M	4.6 (10, NSO)
Public expenditure on education as % of total government expenditure		M	11.7 (11, NSO)	12.7 (11, USAID)	16.0 (11, NSO)	7.1 (11, UIS)	M	25.7 (08, UIS)	M	19.9 (10, NSO)
Public expenditure on VET as % of total spending on education		M	M	3.2 (11, USAID) (% of MoE budget)	9.8 (09, NSO)	M	M	M	M	0.98 (07, EU)
% of 25–64 year-olds having participated in lifelong learning programmes by sex (ET2020)		M	M	M	9.5 (13, NSO)	M	M	M	2.9 (13, ETF on LFS)	1.3* (13, NSO)
NEET rate (15–24) by sex (%)	Total	M	28.4	15.2	15.7	M	M	M	31.3	25.4
	Male		10.2	24.6	14.6				24.1	21.2
	Female		44.8	34.8	16.8				38.8	29.9
			(12,ILO)	(12, ILO)	(13, NSO)				(13, NSO)	(13, ILO)

Notes: TRP – Torino Process; Bold text denotes EU/ET benchmarks 2020; (*) Second quarter; M – missing data; NA – not applicable (i.e. the country did not participate in the survey).

Sources: NSO – National Statistical Office; WB – World Bank; UIS – UNESCO Institute for Statistics; ELMPS – ETF calculations based on Egypt Labour Market Panel Survey; ILO – ETF calculations based on School-to-Work Transition Surveys 2012–13; OECD – Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development; WEF – World Economic Forum.

Annex 2. Benchmarking

TABLE A2.1 EU2020 AND ET2020 BENCHMARKS AND TARGETS FOR EU AND PARTNER COUNTRIES (%)

Indicator TRP14		SEMED			EU-28 2013			EU2020 target
		IL	PS	TN	EU-28 average	EU-28 best	EU-28 worst	
Employment rate (20–64) (EU2020)		73.1 (13, NSO)	41.0 (13, ETF on LFS)	47.1* (13, NSO)	68.3	79.8	53.2	≥75
Tertiary educational attainment of population aged 30–34 (EU2020)		50.7 (12, NSO)	25.9 (13, NSO)	20.6* (13, NSO)	36.8	52.6	22.4	≥40
Early school leavers (EU2020)		8.1 (13, NSO)	37.4 (13, ETF on LFS)	37.5* (13, NSO)	11.9	3.7	23.5	≤10
Low achievers in PISA performance (%) (ET2020)	Reading	23.6	NA	49.3	17.8	9.1	39.4	≤15
	Maths	33.5		67.7	22.1	12.3	43.8	
	Science	28.9		55.3	16.6	5.0	36.9	
		(12, OECD)		(12, OECD)	(12, OECD)			
% of 25–64 year-olds having participated in lifelong learning programmes, by sex (ET2020)		9.5 (13, NSO)	2.9 (13, ETF on LFS)	1.3* (13, NSO)	10.4	31.4	1.7	≥15

Notes: TRP – Torino Process; (*) Second quarter; NA – not applicable (i.e. the country did not participate in the survey).

Sources: LFS – Labour Force Survey; NSO – National Statistical Office; OECD – Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Annex 3. Youth discussions and online consultation

Introduction

In 2014 the ETF took a further step in involving civil society representatives and young people in the Torino Process by organising activities to consult young people in a number of SEMED countries. Seven discussion groups (consisting of 81 participants) took place in Jordan (3-5 June), Lebanon (19-20 June), Palestine (28 September) and Morocco (27 October). The events were intended to provide a qualitative insight into how young people see and experience the challenges of career choice, job search and labour market integration. The information and opinions gathered should be considered as evidence expressed by a small number of young people, and are thus not representative of the total youth population.

In order to further discuss questions addressed during the youth discussion groups, in September an online consultation was launched on social media to gather youth opinions from a larger audience. A Facebook page and a Twitter account were created and are moderated by an Arab-speaking facilitator, under the brand 'ETF4YOUTH'.

The Facebook consultation has been very successful, reaching around 7 000 fans and collecting several inputs, criticisms and suggestions on a daily basis. Again, this is not representative of the total youth population, though it has helped in the process of gathering their opinions and spreading their views.

Youth discussion groups

The discussion groups focused on youth employment and the transition from school to work. This issue was chosen in the context of the Torino Process analytical framework, and the key questions addressed were as follows.

- What are the main obstacles for young people in finding employment? Are the obstacles the same for women and men?

- Did you receive any support (guidance) in finding a job after school? If so, did you get it from your school (private or public) or from external associations, or from another source?
- How useful and relevant are education and training? Do education and training facilitate finding employment?
- In your opinion, what are the priorities for helping young people's integration into the labour market?

The groups were organised with the support of the Anna Lindh Foundation Networks, the EU Delegations in the different countries, and the ETF's Young Mediterranean Leaders programme. They provided support in identifying participants and associations.

In each focus group, the aim was to reach a balance between two categories: (i) in Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Morocco – young people below the age of 30 years who had undertaken studies/training in vocational secondary schools and represented different statuses in relation to the labour market (entrepreneurs, employed and unemployed, etc.); and (ii) in Lebanon and Palestine – representatives of local youth associations.

In general, the young people were very open and willing to share their views, and this allowed a constructive debate to take place in which all opinions were heard.

Youth online consultation

From September until the end of November 2014, in parallel with the youth discussion groups in SEMED countries, two social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter) were used to share the same questions posed in the discussion groups. Facebook was far more successful than Twitter: Facebook gained around 7 000 fans, Twitter around 120 followers.

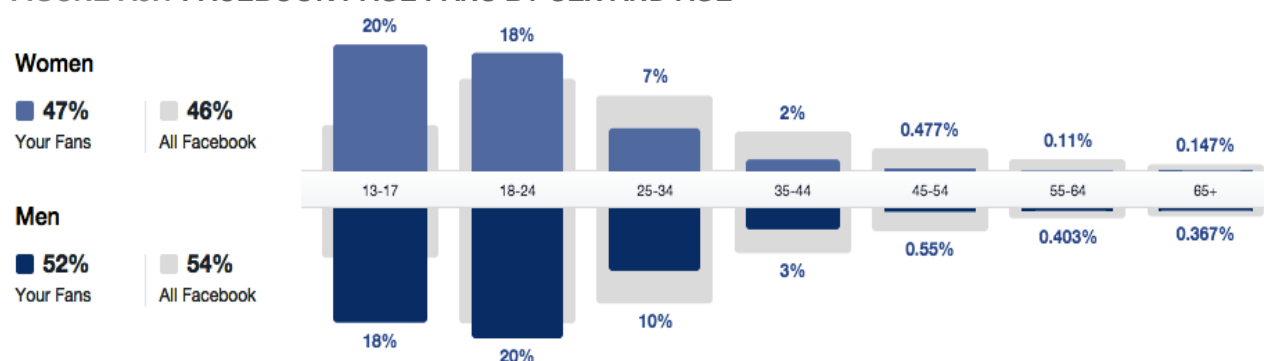
The online discussion on youth employment and transition from school to work was mainly conducted through 'posts', i.e. messages or images introducing data or real stories of youth unemployment with requests for feedback and opinions from the fans or followers. Answers were provided on the basis of different personal experiences, and most of the time they also stimulated further comments.

In addition, a call for a video was launched. This was target at young people, and asked them to explain, in a short message, the main challenges in finding a job in their own country. Moreover, young people were requested to provide inputs and suggestions to their national policy makers (<https://www.facebook.com/ETF4Youth/videos>).

Based on the statistics provided by Facebook Page Insights, fans are mainly young people, and almost 50% of the total fans are aged 13–24 years (see **FIGURE A3.1**). There was a good balance between genders (47% of fans were female and 52% male).

Those who commented or shared their opinions and answers on a post were mainly between the age of 13 and 24 (see **FIGURE A3.2**). Men were slightly more active than women: 59% of those who actively participated were men, while 41% were women.

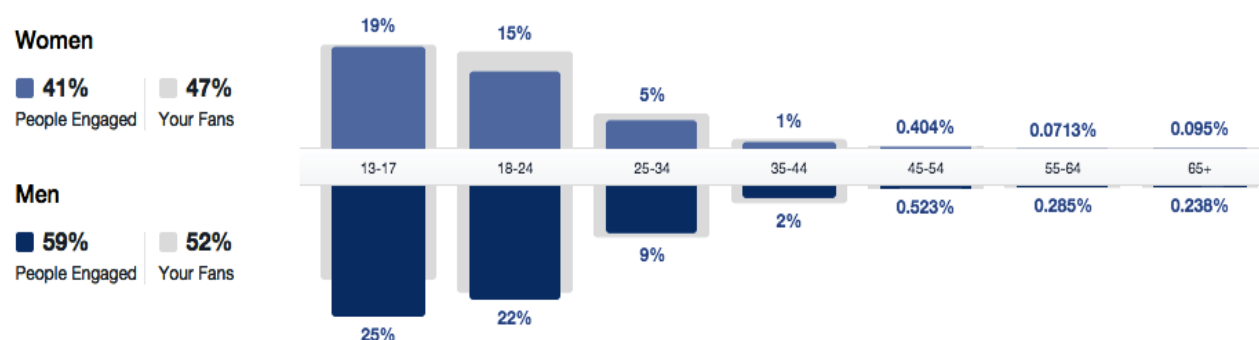
FIGURE A3.1 FACEBOOK PAGE FANS BY SEX AND AGE



Notes: In Facebook parlance, a 'fan' is someone who chooses to see posts and activities from a specific page and who can interact with and comment on that page. 'All Facebook' shows the gender and age of all Facebook users. The graph is a summary of a three-month trend between September and November 2014.

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/ETF4Youth>, September–November 2014

FIGURE A3.2 NUMBER OF PEOPLE ENGAGED ON THE FACEBOOK PAGE BY SEX AND AGE



Notes: In Facebook parlance, 'engaged' refers to liking, sharing, clicking on or commenting on a post; a 'fan' is someone who chooses to see posts and activities from a specific page and who can interact and comment on that page. The graph is a summary of a three-month trend between September and November 2014.

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/ETF4Youth>, September–November 2014.

Main messages from focus groups and online consultation

'What are the main obstacles you meet in finding employment?'

Many obstacles in finding employment were identified: saturation of the labour market, a lack of practical on-the-job experience, insufficient support in approaching the labour market, and lack of quality training/education. Moreover, the political instability in most of those countries, together with the presence of a high number of refugees, causes even more scepticism among young people and leads a significant number of them to aspire to move abroad. Associations (NGOs) expressed highly consistent views of the situation for young people in the different countries. They agreed that there is no national vision in terms of youth employment. A national mechanism to match skills to labour market demand is absent. The general feeling is that there is a lack of collaboration between the government and the private sector, and young people are paying the price for this.

'Nobody trained us to undergo an interview.' [focus group in Lebanon]

'Employers look for people with some working experience, but how can we get it if we never have a chance to start!' [focus group in Lebanon]

'We should also have been trained to promote our CVs online, to gain some e-skills.' [focus group in Morocco]

‘Teachers need guidance on how to teach and what to teach. Without tackling the system it might be difficult to have good TVET.’ [focus group in Palestine]

‘I studied a speciality and when I finished I realised there were no jobs, so I am not looking for a job.’ [focus group in Palestine]

‘Are the obstacles the same for women and men?’

Of the four countries in which discussion groups took place, Jordan and Palestine appear to be the ones where women face the most difficulties. In those countries, most of the participants mentioned that some professions seem to be gender defined (for example, project management). This is also a problem related to the social context, and in fact, there seem to be fewer employment opportunities available for women than for men.

‘Project management is for men while secretarial work is always for women, and this is not fair. There are women who can manage projects!’ [focus group in Palestine]

‘A restaurant (in a tourist area) was looking for women able to cook traditional food. Two women got the job and performed well, but the pressure from the local community towards the families made them quit the job.’ [focus group in Jordan]

‘Some women are asked about their private lives and plans for marriage/kids during interviews. I have personally been asked such a question.’ [focus group in Palestine]

‘Did you receive any support (guidance) in finding a job after school? If so, did you get it from your school (private or public) or from external associations, or from another source?’

There was agreement in all the discussion groups about the lack of guidance and support in finding a job. Young people feel alone once they leave school. There is not enough information on who to contact, and how to contact them, in order to start looking for a job. Students do not know what the labour market demand is. They also lack practical information, for example on social security issues relating to different professional paths. In countries such as Lebanon and Palestine, most of the support comes from NGOs (national and international), while in Morocco there is an active public service, which is generally well known, although some students felt its work could be improved (only jobs up to a certain salary are available, and support is provided for a limited time).

Associations made clear that job-search guidance should be offered by the public sector. The public sector should take the initiative in helping graduates to find a job.

‘There is limited information, and most of us do not really know where to start looking for a job.’ [online consultation]

‘We should receive more information on how to submit our CVs and who we can refer to.’ [online consultation]

‘How useful and relevant are education and training? Do education and training facilitate finding employment?’

Most of the participants found some courses useful and others not useful at all. There is a partial match between education and training and the world of work, though young people believe they lack practical working experience while at school. In most cases former students believe that the curricula are not comprehensive and that not all relevant courses (especially those in information technology) are available.

‘Now that I have a job I can say that some relevant courses are not even available in school.’ [focus group in Lebanon]

‘Even some of our teachers admitted that certain subjects are not so useful on a daily working basis.’ [focus group in Jordan]

‘I would have made different choices if I had known more about working opportunities in my field of studies.’ [focus group in Lebanon]

‘Believe me, in Palestine there are doctors driving taxis.’ [focus groups in Palestine]

‘In your opinion, what are the priorities for helping young people’s integration into the labour market?’

Several priorities were identified during the discussion groups, but most inputs came from the online consultation. Young people feel there is a need to:

- improve career guidance through well-known and easy-to-access systems;
- guarantee equal access to and opportunities for employment for men and women, through legislation and a well-monitored system;
- enhance entrepreneurial learning and skills, starting in primary education, and provide more funding for young innovative entrepreneurs;
- establish apprenticeship on a mandatory basis;
- establish a medium-term strategy policy for youth employment and make its implementation a political priority.

‘Policy makers don’t listen to us, because if they did they would know that entrepreneurship training can support our [young people’s] personal development. We need to learn about leadership and practical skills that promote personal success and social inclusion, whether or not we go on to start our own businesses. These skills are needed even if we go into traditional jobs.’ [online consultation]

‘There is no connection between different ministries. They should work together more to coordinate their efforts and guide us towards employment.’ [focus group in Palestine]

‘We export a lot of educated people abroad. It is not good to blame the local community – they do what they can.’ [focus group in Morocco]

‘Schools and the private/public sectors should work together to support our practical learning – learning on the job.’ [focus group in Lebanon]

‘Policy makers should support us in getting employment so that we can finally serve our country instead of thinking about how to get out of it.’ [focus group in Morocco]

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ALMP	Active labour market policy
AMC	Arab Mediterranean Country
CAQA	Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance (Jordan)
CVT	Continuing vocational training
EL	Entrepreneurial learning
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEMM	Governance for Employability in the Mediterranean
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LFS	Labour Force Survey
NAVET	National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (Palestine)
NEET	(Young person) not in education, employment or training
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NQF	National qualifications framework
NSO	National Statistical Office
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PPP	Purchasing power parity
PRIME	Projecting Reform Impact in Vocational Education and Training
SBA	Small Business Act
SEMED	Southern and Eastern Mediterranean
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
TRP	Torino Process
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VET	Vocational education and training

COUNTRY CODES

DZ	Algeria
EG	Egypt
IL	Israel
JO	Jordan
LB	Lebanon
LY	Libya
MA	Morocco
PS	Palestine
TN	Tunisia

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