

EDUCATION & BUSINESS

LEBANON



EDUCATION AND BUSINESS STUDY LEBANON

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Foreword

Many countries reinforce the capacity of their education and training system to respond to the pressures of globalisation and the challenges of the knowledge society. Closer cooperation between business and education is one of the way to provide learners with new occupational skills and competencies. However, the information currently available about the forms and modes of cooperation between the education and business sectors and the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders is limited and fragmented.

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture has entrusted ETF to study education and business cooperation in the European Union (EU) neighbouring countries and territories in order to:

- draw up an inventory of current cooperation between education and business;
- identify to what extent EU approaches and policies are relevant in these countries;
- provide national policy makers and donors with tailored information and recommendations regarding future initiatives and capacity building measures.

For the purpose of this study, the term 'education' includes vocational and technical education as well as post-secondary tertiary and non-tertiary education, and encompasses both public and private institutions. The term 'business' refers to any entity with economic activity regardless of its legal status, including multinationals, public and private companies, large as well as small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and micro-businesses. It also encompasses actors in the informal economy, social partners (employer, employee and civil society organisations and their training bodies) as well as national, regional and local authorities. Focusing particularly on identifying and describing policy and strategy-driven approaches to cooperation, the study considers education and business cooperation in the broadest sense, including any kind of relevant policy provision and/or formalised or non-formalised interaction between an education/training provider and a business organisation.

This paper is the contribution for Lebanon. It has been elaborated jointly with key stakeholders and is based on a study design that included desk research, data exchange with partner institutions, focus group discussions in April and July 2010 and a validation workshop held in September 2010.

Throughout this intensive consultation process, which was facilitated by ETF, the main national stakeholders (representatives from ministries, civil society, employers and experts from the education system) discussed the state of play and made recommendations for improvement. ETF produced the final report based on the key discussion points and messages that emerged.

The findings of the present study will be incorporated into a regional ETF report on the whole southern region covered by the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument and will be included in a consolidated cross-country ETF report on education and business cooperation in all the countries where ETF cooperates, both due to be published in Spring 2011.

ETF is grateful for the opinions shared and the insights provided by participants during the fruitful discussions in all meetings.

Executive summary

Despite a difficult political and economic situation and the security problems that have affected the country in recent years, Lebanon is classified as an upper middle income economy thanks to the strength and resilience of its private sector and the entrepreneurial culture of the population. More than 85% of all workers in Lebanon are employed by private sector companies and institutions, and 64% work in the services sector.

The vocational and technical education (VTE) sub-sector is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Higher education (MEHE) and accounts for about 26% of students in secondary education. The predominance of the private sector is revealed by the high number of private schools (500 out of 610), which serve about 60% of all students. The formal VTE system comprises seven

levels of qualifications, ranging from skilled workers (Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle) to higher technicians (Licence Technique).

While there are many similarities between VTE and higher education in terms of cooperation policies and context, the latter sector enjoys much greater freedom and autonomy. Higher education in Lebanon is also provided by both public and private institutions. The Lebanese University—the only public university in the country—accounts for 42% of the total higher education population. The other 45 higher education institutions are all private. The higher education institutions offer degree courses and qualifications in 167 fields, a broader range than VTE.

Despite increasing awareness of the importance of cooperation between business and education, little progress has been achieved so far towards developing a clear policy framework leading to concrete involvement of business representatives in the governance of VTE and higher education systems. Currently, the only regulatory framework for such cooperation is a Ministerial Decree on the Organisation of Joint Projects. This regulates cooperation between the Ministry of Education and civil partners, including businesses. Under joint project agreements, partners provide a building for the school, equipment and financial support while the ministry provides curricula, teachers and trainers, school administration, operational expenses, equipment and other basic educational services. The project is managed by an executive committee chaired by a representative of the ministry on which both parties are represented. This framework has given rise to 23 schools around the country; 3 projects are with government agencies (the Ministries of Health, Tourism and Transport), 19 are with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and 1 is supported by the EU and the employers association of the agro-food sector. Other initiatives, such as alternance training in companies and good practices involving cooperation between universities and businesses, are also presented.

The main challenges for business-education cooperation in Lebanon are the small size and structure of businesses (more than 90% of enterprises have under 10 employees), the centralised governance of the VTE system and the lack of information concerning the needs of the labour market. The higher education sector faces the additional challenge of meeting labour market needs in terms of the quality and relevance of the education provided.

The recommendations for the VTE sub-sector focus on the design and implementation of a national policy framework to reinforce cooperation between the private sector and education, the revision of the mandate of the Higher Council of VTE and improvement of data collection and consolidation systems as well as planning and reporting capacities.

In the case of higher education, the principal recommendations concern the improvement of quality assurance by introducing business-education cooperation as a major criterion. Such cooperation must also become an integral part of the research and development sector.

Recommendations that affect both VTE and higher education include:

- establishing a national qualification framework to improve the visibility of qualifications and facilitate mobility between different segments of the educational system and between education and the labour market;
- motivating the business community to participate in the governance of education and training;
- creating sector skills councils and funding mechanisms on the national level.

Context and policy

To understand the major human resources development issues in Lebanon, it is important to take into account the country's difficult political and economic situation and security problems in recent years. The current political system, which was set up to recognise the plurality of different religious communities in the country, has resulted in a "Consensus-based management" rather than a development-based management of the country. After the Doha Agreement in May 2008, a new government was formed and this event was followed in June 2009 by successful parliamentary elections. The new democratic government formed in November 2009 now faces a wide variety of challenges, including political reform, economic recovery and rebuilding the confidence of the Lebanese population in order to revive the economy. Major challenges in human resources

development arise from the labour market situation and the critical deterioration of the public education and training system.

Despite these issues, Lebanon is classified as an upper middle income economy with a per capita gross domestic product (GDP nominal) of USD 8,157¹ (World Bank, 2009) thanks to the strength and resilience of its private sector and the entrepreneurial culture of the population. According to official figures, 85.4% of all workers in Lebanon are employed by private sector companies and institutions and 64% work in the services sector (Chaaban, 2010).

The active workforce is about 1.23 million workers. The adult literacy rate, calculated as a percentage of the population aged 15 and older, was 89.6% in 2007. The national surveys of household living conditions covering the period 1997-2007 report an adult literacy rate of 86% for women and 93.4% for men (Central Administration of Statistics, 2006 and 2008).

The general education system serves about a million students, with private schools accounting for 52.9% of the total student population, public schools for 33.2%, and NGO managed schools for 13.9%.

The VTE sub-sector, which accounts for about 26% of the students in secondary education, is the responsibility of the MEHE. The private sector plays a predominant role, accounting for around 60% of students. Of the 610 VTE schools in the country, 500 are private or run by NGO's. Private schools are further differentiated according to whether they are subsidised or wholly fee supported. The formal VTE system comprises seven levels of qualifications ranging from skilled workers (Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle) to higher technicians (Licence Technique).

While in many ways VTE and higher education are similar in terms of cooperation policies and context, the higher education sector enjoys greater freedom and autonomy. Higher education is also provided by both public and private institutions. During the academic year 2008-2009, the Lebanese University—the only public university in the country—catered for 74 134 students (42%) of the total higher education population while the other 45 higher education institutions catered for 100 163 students. With courses and qualifications in 167 fields, the higher education institutions offer a broader range of possibilities than VTE. More than 30 000 students graduate every year from Lebanese universities.

Cooperation between VTE and business

There is general awareness in Lebanon of the importance of a participatory approach in the development of VTE. Policy makers, administrators, VTE educators, businesses and government all agree that VTE plays a crucial role in the social and economic development of a nation. However, despite this awareness, little progress has been made so far towards developing a clear mission or vision that would lead to the articulation of the role of VTE within the national education and training system. Consequently, no policy framework has yet been put in place to guide the outputs, operations and development of the VTE system.

The tradition of cooperation between businesses and VTE in Lebanon dates back to the 1950s, when a number of businesses used the industrial shops of VTE schools as production facilities (Jean Akl, 2010). During the 1960s, the Directorate-General of VTE (DGVTE) signed an agreement with the French electronics company Thomson to manufacture televisions in the electronic shops of VTE Schools. The experiment proved very successful and hundreds of television sets were produced and sold on the local market. In a similar project, VTE students in Dekwaneh manufactured all the furniture and some of the basic equipment for the Lebanese University when it was set up. Students also operated a car repair workshop in the Dekwaneh industrial institute, maintaining vehicles for local businesses. The Hotel School operated a restaurant and provided services to the general public at competitive prices and advice to individuals and companies on restaurant management.

There have been a number of serious attempts to create an operational policy framework for cooperation between business and education at the national level. In the context of the preliminary appraisal for the VTE World Bank Project in the late 1990s (World Bank, 1998), business interests voiced their concern about the purpose of the VTE system and demanded immediate policy changes. One change proposed was the introduction of specialised schools. The initial project design tried to

¹ Data refer to the year 2009. World Development Indicators database, World Bank. Accessed on October 3, 2010.

address this demand through a sub-component supporting the establishment of four model schools in growth industries. The aim was to focus on new fields of specialisation considered to have export potential or to be of strategic importance to the economy, and the sectors initially identified were agri-mechanics and food technology, graphic arts and printing, clothing, and industrial engineering. However, the sub-component was subsequently cancelled due to cuts in the project budget.

A more systematic approach to initiating change was adopted in 2004, when industrial groups were strongly represented on the committee convened to develop the national strategic plan for VTE. Representatives from the Association of Lebanese Industrialists, the agro-food industry, the services sector, the hospitality industry and others were all active partners in the process of developing a national VTE strategy. The business sector representatives demanded fundamental changes in VTE policies and the entire system. Once approved by all stakeholders, these demands were reflected in the strategic plan (MEHE, 2006). The business interests identified two issues as the cornerstones of the new VTE strategy: the participation of businesses in the skills building processes, and the participation of businesses at all levels of education and training. While the strategy gained national approval, it was never adopted.

Today, the only regulatory framework for participation at the MEHE is Ministerial Decree 326/2005 on the Organisation of Joint Projects, which sanctions cooperation between VTE and civil society, including businesses. The difference between joint project schools and public schools is that under joint projects agreements, partners provide a building to house the school, some equipment and financial support. DGVTE provides curricula, teachers and trainers, school administration, operational expenses, equipment and other basic educational services. Projects are managed by executive committees on which each of the two parties to the agreement has equal representation. These committees are headed by a DGVTE civil servant.

The joint projects framework is applied in 23 schools around the country: 3 are partnerships with government agencies (the Ministries of Health, Tourism and Transport); 19 are partnerships with NGOs; and 1 is a vocational school in Qab Elias in partnership with the Syndicate of Lebanese Food Industries and supported by EU funding.

The projects involving NGOs are similar to existing VTE schools in terms of educational levels, territorial coverage and cooperation with business. NGOs tend to select projects on the basis of political and sectarian criteria. In the absence of a master plan for the coordination and implementation of these joint initiatives, projects are undertaken on a case-by-case basis depending on a variety of factors, politics being the most important.

The framework is supposed to promote cooperation between DGVTE and partners. However, under the Ministerial Decree, most of the power is in the hands of the Director General of VTE. All financial transactions and decisions of the executive committee must be approved by the director before they become effective. Despite these constraints, the framework does offer a window for cooperation and a space for businesses to participate in the skills building process.

Cooperation between higher education and business

Higher education in Lebanon enjoys greater autonomy than VTE. The Lebanese University is virtually independent. Although it falls under the jurisdiction of the MEHE, the university enjoys administrative, academic and financial freedom and it draws up its own policies and strategies. One of its educational goals is to improve the social value of its services through study and training aimed at accommodating the needs of society as a whole.

Despite this stated goal, cooperation between the university and businesses is very limited. While university policies appear to favour participation, there are no frameworks in place to foster such cooperation.

Some of the well-established private universities, such as the American University of Beirut and Saint Joseph University, do have frameworks that support cooperation with businesses. However, these tend to be vague, and cooperation remains selective.

The Directorate-General of Higher Education is extremely understaffed. However, despite its limited mandate, this directorate managed to develop a set of policies regulating the operations of private universities but it does not have the power to regulate cooperation between education and business

since this area falls outside of its jurisdiction. Nevertheless, the 2006 strategic plan for higher education did make reference to such cooperation, and one of its major objectives was to enhance cooperation between businesses and higher education.

Structures, methodologies, and approaches

VTE

In Lebanon, VTE is governed by a centralised bureaucratic system developed in the 1960s. The structure of the VTE system reflects the structure of the general education system in terms of levels and years of study. The academic approach predominates not only in technical education but also in the vocational stream, where a large part of vocational education is delivered in a classroom environment. School governance is dominated by the central administration and school directors are basically civil servants who follow instructions and implement regulations and have minimal independence or latitude for decision making. However, in a country with a liberal economy and a large private sector employing over 85% of the workforce, business interests could, if willing, play a major role in shaping VTE policies and operations.

Attempts to increase the participation of businesses in the governance of VTE in Lebanon started as early as the 1970s. Recognising the important role of businesses in VTE development and operations, the government tried to broaden the scope of business participation in VTE by creating the Higher Council of VTE². Chaired by the Minister of Education, the council was to be a consultative body made up of representatives of businesses and the government agencies involved in VTE. The council's mandate was to establish fruitful links with businesses in all sectors and to make recommendations that would guide the sector and develop VTE policy. Unfortunately, this body has been inactive since it was set up owing to the limited resources allocated to fund its operations.

Private schools fall under the mandate of DGVTE, and their contribution to the sector in terms of policy development is far below expectations owing to inadequate monitoring by DGVTE. Despite the fact that about 60% of VTE students are enrolled in private schools, with some exceptions, these institutions deliver low quality education and operate in isolation from the world of business and labour market demand.

The NGOs operating VTE schools and training centres around the country are mainly connected to and managed by sectarian groups and tend to serve their respective religious communities. Examples of sectarian ownership are Al-Amlieh, Kartbaoui, Makassed and Amal schools and training centres. Amal and many others are providers that have been operating in the country for decades and have collaborated with DGVTE on many occasions to develop the sector. These organisations have great influence on VTE policies and exert considerable political, sectarian and regional pressure on policy makers.

Many other public and private support structures, stakeholders and social partners involved in VTE also directly influence VTE policies and operations. Some of the most important of these are described below.

- The National Employment Office, part of the Ministry of Labour, which offers training, retraining and short vocational courses, primarily for the unemployed. In 2003-2004 the National Employment Office facilitated training for about 4 000 trainees in 49 disciplines by funding training carried out by 32 national NGOs. It also collaborates in the management of the National Training Centre, an institution operated and financed by the Ministry of Labour, and it runs three employment offices (Job Centres) located in Beirut, Tripoli and South Lebanon.
- The Directorate-General of Social Affairs. This department supports underprivileged social groups by providing financial support to NGOs and private VTE institutes to subsidise the education of trainees and regular VTE students.

²Presidential Decree No. 5768, 23 December 1960, and Amendment Decree No. 16980, 1964 'Establishing a Higher Council for Vocational and Technical Education'.

- Business associations, federations and groupings representing diverse industries and employer groups. These include entities such as the Association of Lebanese Industrialists, which represents the large industries in Lebanon and has about 1300 members (Chamber of Commerce, 2010), the Syndicate of Lebanese Food Industries and other business associations and chambers of commerce. To date, the role of these bodies in shaping VTE policies and frameworks has been minimal. Their contribution has been limited to specific initiatives and has involved relatively few students (for example, the Qab Elias project).
- Labour Unions. The ultimate benefits of an effective VTE system would be the development of the skills of the labour force. Labour unions in Lebanon have absolutely no involvement in VTE policy development and operations. They tend to focus on defending the rights of workers and to date have shown little interest in developing workforce skills and employment opportunities.

The literature on the structures supporting VTE policies demonstrates that all the key elements for formulating a clear vision and effective policies are available. However, despite the maturity of all the parties concerned, no systematic approach for developing participatory models has evolved. Since the Al-Taif National Reconciliation Accord in 1989, the least that could have been expected would have been the formulation of regulations and legislation to support the participation in policy formulation of all the parties concerned. However, this did not happen owing to a lack of coordination between all the governmental and non-governmental departments involved in VTE.

While the absence of clear cut frameworks and guidelines for business-education cooperation has limited nationwide initiatives, a number of bilateral agreements and arrangements for training development have emerged. Some businesses and stakeholders have taken the initiative and entered into bilateral agreements to compensate for the shortage of qualified technicians and skilled workers in their sector. The agro-food industry, represented by the Syndicate of Lebanese Food Industries, signed a bilateral agreement with MEHE to satisfy its needs for skills. The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) has helped schools to develop bilateral agreements with businesses to give students the opportunity do apprenticeship training³.

In the current VTE system, program delivery is mainly based on an academic approach and students are evaluated by official government exams at the end of each stage. Certificates are granted by the government on the basis of the results of exams. Businesses are not involved in any evaluation or certification processes. The value of a certificate is that it enables the student to move on to the next educational level or gain admission to a university (in the case of Baccalauréat Technique graduates). It does not, however, prove that the student has acquired the skills corresponding to the level of study because evaluation is an exam-based pass-fail system rather one based on the student's abilities, skills and knowledge.

Despite the lack of appropriate structures and frameworks, cooperation between business and education has been shown to be feasible. Supported by an EU initiative, the Syndicate of Lebanese Food Industries managed to form a partnership with VTE and open an agro-food vocational school in Qab Elias (Annex I, Box 1). The GTZ set up an apprenticeship training program leading to direct interaction between schools and businesses (Annex I, Box 2). This program has been running for six years and is based on the participation of a group of stakeholders.

Although these two initiatives serve only a small proportion of students and businesses (3% of students in public schools), they have had a positive impact on cooperation between businesses and the VTE system. The perception of VTE students and VTE schools has improved among the enterprises that have accommodated trainees. Businesses are more open to entering into projects with MEHE that will enhance the range of skills of the eventual graduates.

Higher education

Governance of higher education differs from that of VTE in that higher education has greater independence and is more fragmented. Although there is a Directorate-General for Higher Education, the Lebanese University is a totally independent institution. While the Directorate endorses the

³ GTZ Reports on the Lebanon Initiative, Interview with Dr Gooder, the head of the GTZ delegation in Lebanon, and GTZ website <http://www.gtz.de/>

qualifications issued by private universities and is responsible for supervising the implementation of the rules and regulations governing private education, private universities also enjoy a high degree of independence.

The Council of Higher Education, chaired by the Minister of Education and Higher Education, is the body responsible for licensing private universities and regulating their operations. Other permanent members are the Director General of Higher Education, the President of the Lebanese University, and the Director General of the Ministry of Justice. Professional associations, such as the Order of Engineers and the Syndicate of Medical Doctors, are represented when subjects related to their field of speciality are discussed. A nine-member technical committee is attached to the council. This body is chaired by the Directorate-General for Higher Education and composed of representatives of the Lebanese University and well-established private universities.

The technical committee studies all applications for establishing new universities, departments and programs, audits the implementation of standards in private universities and reports its recommendations to the council. Based on these recommendations, the council grants licences to new universities and approves new programs in existing institutions. It also recommends actions based on the committee's analysis and audit reports. The Council of Ministers is the decision making body that ratifies the Council of Higher Education recommendations when these are approved. The Directorate-General for Higher Education implements the decisions of the Council of Ministers.

There are no private sector representatives on the Council of Higher Education. It remains a purely government body that controls the expansion and monitors the operations of private education. The council of the Lebanese University is an academic council that admits no representation of business interests. Private universities usually have a board of trustees, which may include representatives of industries. Such boards of trustees approve strategies and policies, but no initiatives for cooperation between education and business on the national level have been proposed or implemented despite the large number of universities around the country.

Cooperation between higher education and businesses is therefore based on individual interactions since universities are independent as far as the management of their internal affairs is concerned. Limited cooperation between businesses and universities has been recorded. Some universities run programs based on the needs of businesses. The examples presented in Annex I, Box 3 include collaborations between Saint Joseph University and the Association of Banks, the Lebanese University and Jumail Enterprise for Paper Industries, Beirut Arab University and various companies, and the American University in Beirut and the local community.

The EU Tempus project supports the development of higher education within a regional framework. Among other activities, it supports structural measures aimed at enhancing the management of universities and establishing international links. It also supports the establishment of community affairs offices at universities as well as internal and external quality assurance processes and accreditation. In addition, it encourages community–university cooperation and finances joint projects. TEMPUS is currently funding a project involving cooperation between the Centre National des Arts et Métiers in Paris, the Lebanese University in association with local businesses and the Lebanese Industrial Research Association. The project concerns the development of industrial platform systems. Tempus also supports a joint program between Ministry of Defence and the Aeronautics College in collaboration with Middle East Airlines and Trans Mediterranean Airlines for the training of airport technical staff.

Challenges

VTE

- Over 90% of Lebanese businesses are SMEs with fewer than 10 employees, not an ideal environment for education and business cooperation. Organising sectors primarily composed of SMEs is a challenging task because these companies require a great deal of support to build the capacities they require to identify and articulate their needs and participate in the skills building process in order to meet their current and future needs.

- The current supply system is based on an academic approach that uses traditional evaluation methods based on national examinations. The system is divorced from the surrounding environment and can no longer respond effectively to the growing demand for higher skill levels and new occupations. Developing a system capable of meeting national needs is a task fraught with difficulties, some of which cannot be resolved without major structural and methodological change.
- The administration and governance of VTE remains a cornerstone of the skills building process, and radical change in both of these areas is overdue. The centralised VTE administration system is a major obstacle to positive cooperation between education and business. Centralisation prevents schools from interacting with the community and forming alliances to improve the quality of their graduates. Schools should have sufficient independence to enter into partnerships.
- Greater organisation of the labour market would make it easier to establish mechanisms of cooperation. Work is needed to identify the skills ladder and occupations that should be targeted by VTE students and the skills required for each occupation. Occupations need to be classified at sector and sub-sector level. The development of a National Vocational Qualifications Framework will offer a fertile medium for fruitful education-business associations.
- Low awareness of the benefits of education and business cooperation. At government level, partnership initiatives are treated in a bureaucratic manner and businesses may see such initiatives as expenditure with no return. Raising awareness of the benefits of cooperation is a challenge that will have to be met at all levels of society.
- The ultimate challenge is still the political will to introduce change at all levels of the society. The VTE system, like other sectors in Lebanon, is highly influenced by political, sectarian and regional issues. Creating a politics-free system to serve national skills development remains a challenge for government, education policy makers and businesses.

Higher education

Higher education institutions are autonomous and in a position to develop their own cooperation frameworks. However, the government should foster this cooperation through incentives, mentor the institutions and fund frameworks for initiatives. Some of the challenges are:

- to match higher education outputs with available employment by sector in local and neighbouring labour markets;
- to ensure the provision by all higher education institutes of consistent and high quality education and services;
- to guide students towards alternative forms of higher education, such as VTE, and to reduce the number of university graduates and the oversaturation of some trades with graduates;
- to increase the range of services supplied by the Lebanese University at national level, including community and business services.

Recommendations

VTE

Schools are faced with the need for educational reform measures that would better prepare a diverse student population for the higher order thinking and reasoning skills required in an increasingly knowledge-based and service-driven economy. Businesses are faced with the threat of an

inadequately prepared workforce that would jeopardize competition with other industrialised nations (Lankard, 1995). Motivated to improve the academic and technical skills of the future workforce, businesses and schools should be involved in partnerships of differing sizes and types to achieve their common and separate goals. Efforts should be directed towards creating a healthy environment for such cooperation in terms of flexible policies and sound implementation procedures. Initiatives should be supported by active national bodies and monitored by the government.

The following are recommendations for creating a better environment for participatory skills building.

Policy

- A national policy framework for cooperation should be drafted to foster and facilitate cooperation between education and business. This framework should be supported at the highest political levels and should be put into practice as soon as possible.
- The structure and mandate of the Higher Council for VTE should be revisited. This body should be reactivated and allocated the necessary resources to lead and mentor business-education cooperation at strategic level.
- A national process is needed to develop National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) as part of the ongoing National Qualifications Framework initiative. This process must be supported by all stakeholders and led by industries. Quality assurance mechanisms for VTE outputs should be developed and applied to both public and private schools. NVQs should be the reference for all schooling and training functions. The NVQ system should also be implemented in the private sector. The concept of specialised schools should be introduced. VTE should be more focused on professions that require specific technical skills rather than academic skills.

Governance

- The central role of DGVTE should be changed and the whole system of administration made more decentralised. DGVTE should manage resources and supervise education and training. Public schools should be autonomous and responsible for the quality of the education and training they provide and the range of programs they offer. A participatory management approach involving businesses should be adopted. Schools should cooperate with businesses and sector skills councils in developing curricula and training packages to meet local and national needs.
- Businesses should work towards establishing sector skills councils. The key purpose of such councils is to provide a platform for effective participation of industry in VTE operations in terms of needs analysis, occupational profiles, skills range and training needs. Another role for the sector skills councils is to provide advice and to participate in the development of the training products and services needed to meet industry needs.
- The funding of training should be managed by a national body, a National Skills Development Fund. All funds allocated to support and finance training and skills development, including government contribution, international initiatives, donations and mandatory business contributions should be managed through this fund. This fund would finance training at national level and integrate the efforts of businesses, donors and government to move in the direction of a systematic skills development approach based on socioeconomic needs.

Implementation

- A national reporting process should be undertaken annually in each sector by professional associations or sector councils. The reports would discuss skills demands and shortages, potential growth, future prospects, trades with high employability potential, and other aspects of skills development. As an informative tool, it could be used effectively by policy makers to respond

to immediate and evolving national needs. Moreover, this exercise would provide important input for the national VTE statistics system that needs to be established to collect and consolidate the available data.

- The MEHE should develop a range of agreement frameworks capable of serving the cooperation objectives of different economic sectors and diverse types and sizes of businesses. These new models would complement the current joint project framework. An inventory of models for cooperation should be drawn up and made available to businesses and education; apprenticeship programs, work experience programs, youth mentoring and modular training should all be covered.
- Planning capacity should be improved in both education and business. The concept of establishing a joint planning body incorporating the experience of both education and businesses should be revived. A comprehensive study on this topic was conducted in 2004 as part of the World Bank project. The study is available and can be used to start building capacity for planning at all VTE levels.

Higher education

- Due to the nature of governance of higher education, the main recommendation relates to quality assurance. As the government has already started to work on the task of introducing accreditation mechanisms into higher education, the level of cooperation between the university and businesses should be included as a major criterion in such accreditation.
- Efforts are needed to motivate businesses to participate. The introduction of regulations providing incentives for businesses to partner with educational institutes could give rise to new forms of cooperation.
- Higher education institutes need to be motivated to develop education and business frameworks for cooperation in order to increase their financial resources, enhance the scope of their services and create better job opportunities for graduates.
- Higher education institutes should foster cooperation programs with businesses. Universities have the human resources to conduct annual needs assessments and analyses that would help businesses to improve their knowledge of local and international labour market dynamics.
- The government should establish a national fund to encourage cooperation. Such a fund could be financed from tax revenues, donors, businesses, universities and other stakeholders.
- Research and development cooperation between universities and businesses should be enhanced and institutionalised.
- The role of Directorate General of Higher Education in compiling national statistics, data collection, data consolidation and analysis for higher education graduates needs to be established.

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ANNEX I: Examples of cooperation practices

Joint project: vocational training and employment project

Agro-food school at Qab Elias

مشروع مشترك: مدرسة قب الياس للصناعات الغذائية

EuropeAid/125032/D/SER/LB

The project was started in the late 1990s by the Syndicate of Lebanese Food Industries. In 2000, DGVTE signed a joint project agreement with the Syndicate under the existing legislation that allows DGVTE to partner with non-government institutions. The MEHE, represented by DGVTE, is responsible for the implementation of the project. The main partners are the National Employment Office and the Syndicate of Lebanese Food Industries. The project targets agro-food businesses and students. The main beneficiaries are the agro-food industries.

The overall objective of the project was to establish and promote a sustainable and reproducible VTE model that would generate a pool of potential employees having the skills and competencies required by the manufacturing industry in Lebanon.

The desired outcomes are: (i) to improve the agro-food industry's capacity to identify and formulate skill needs; (ii) to create an agro-food VTE institution through partnership between the Syndicate of the Lebanese Food Industries and the DGVTE; and (iii) to improve the capacity of the National Employment Office to deal with the design and management of active employment programmes and the provision of information on employment and training opportunities in the agro-food sector.

The school was set up in 2007 and currently serves 60 students. Technical assistance is provided by an international service provider. The main technical assistance activities are expected to be completed by 31 August 2010. The project started on March 27, 2008 and has a duration of 29 months. The expected closure date is July 2010.

The project is jointly financed by the EU and DGVTE. The EU contribution was a 5 million euro grant to fund technical assistance and equipment. The DGVTE provided the building and funds the operational costs of the school.

Promoting technical and vocational education and training and SME development

تشجيع التعاون بين التعليم المهني والتقني والمؤسسات الصغيرة والمتوسطة في لبنان

GTZ has been working in Lebanon since 1995 managing a grant from the German Government to support a range of specialist vocational courses imparted using the dual system and leading to Meister Certificates. The dual system requires students to spend more than 60% of their study time in the workplace. Schools took the leadership in establishing relationships with local businesses, creating practical training opportunities for students. Today, schools around the country are partnering with 630 enterprises, most of which are SMEs. The arrangement provides students with hands-on training and workplace exposure.

The GTZ initiative has produced administrative and legislative changes in the rigid VTE system. The dual system certificate is now officially and nationally recognised and the Meister degree is recognised by VTE and certain industries.

The lead executing agency for the project is the MEHE in association with the Federation of the Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture.

In addition to trainees, the main beneficiaries of the project are SMEs and companies working in car mechanics, industrial electrical engineering, industrial mechanics, the hospitality and restaurant industry and in the heating, sanitary and metal construction industries. The target groups are students at Baccalauréat Technique and Meister Levels 14-21.

The main objective of the project is to encourage the SME sector to employ more qualified experts within the supported professions.

The aims are (i) to transform the system through a shift from an academic supply-driven approach to a practical workplace-training approach; (ii) raising the skill level of graduates to meet market needs; and (iii) replicating in the Lebanese system practices that have been successful in other countries. The project currently mentors 1 555 students studying 7 industrial specialisations in 23 public schools throughout Lebanon, and 160 students studying 3 industrial specialisations in 2 private schools. The schools involved are now cooperating with 630 enterprises around the country.

The most obvious positive result is that a dialogue has been established between schools and businesses. Skills needs, training needs, feedback and employment of graduates are now discussed between the two parties. This dialogue could be extended and built on to encompass the whole system or sector rather than individual cases. The project started in 2007 and the closure date is in 2013. The project was commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Two selected education and business programs in higher education

Case 1: Saint Joseph University programme of cooperation with the Association of Banks in Lebanon

Saint Joseph University signed an agreement with the Association of Banks in Lebanon to train bank employees with secondary education to acquire a diploma in banking. The program was originally set up for 3 years and it has now been running for over 10 years. The university provides the education settings; the association contributes to curriculum development, facilitates practical training and contributes financing.

Case 2: A programme of cooperation between the Lebanese University and the Jumail Enterprise for Paper Industries.

The objective of this program is to train highly qualified employees for the industry. The Lebanese University runs a Masters program to satisfy the needs of the enterprise. The enterprise contributes to the training of individuals, develops the curriculum, and also provides financing.

Case 3: Beirut Arab University Extension Programs include various examples of cooperation with businesses. The following are two successful examples.

- The university's consultancy centre cooperates with construction firms in Lebanon through its Concrete Testing Laboratory and the provision of other consultancy services.
- The Medical and Pharmaceutical Services division provides a range of advanced theoretical and practical training courses in many areas to companies, hospitals and government agencies

Examples are courses on the application of ultrasonic waves and endoscopy in diagnosis and treatment, family medicine, occupational medicine, preventive medicine, dealing with patients, preparing healthy meals, alternative medicine, health improvement, family planning and contraception, provision of medical advice via telephone, health in tourism, forensic medicine, pharmaceutical science, pharmaceutical marketing, pharmacology, pharmacy management, and dental implantology, first aid in war, crisis and car accidents, new approaches in newborn and infant resuscitation, nursing care for burn patients, pre-operative care and the role of nursing in infection control.

Case 4: The American University of Beirut runs and manages one of the most sophisticated hospitals in the region. The American University Hospital is a highly reputable institution and an excellent example of cooperation between higher education and business.

ANNEX II: Composition of focus groups coordinated by Dr Soubhi Abou Chahine

VTE Focus Group Members	Representing	Higher Education Focus Group Members	Representing
Mr Ahmad Diab	Director General of VTE	Dr Ahmad Jammal	Director General of Higher Education
Dr Soubhi Abou Chahine	Advisor to the Minister on VTE affairs, MEHE	Dr Soubhi Abou Chahine	Advisor to the Minister on VTE affairs, MEHE
Mr Raja Qortas	Agro-food Industry	Dr Ammer Halwani	Advisor to the Minister on Higher Ed. affairs, MEHE
Mr Adnanan Ataia	Association of Industrialists	Dr Aaref Sofi	Director of Tempus Project
Mr Maher Khatib	Ministry of Industry	Dr Shafik Mokbil	Antonieh University
Mr Issam Mohiedeen	Qab Elias School Director	Dr Pierre Gedeon	Saint Joseph University
Mrs Dolli Foghali	National Employment Office		
Mr Carlos Naffaa	GTZ Project		
Dr Ramzi Saade	IECD		

ANNEX III: List of abbreviations

DGVTE	Directorate-General of Vocational and Technical Education
ETF	European Training Foundation
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
VTE	Vocational and Technical Education