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List of abbreviations

BP	Brevet Professionnel
BT	Baccalauréat Technique
CAP	Certificat d’Aptitude Professionnelle
CRDP	Centre Régional de Développement Pédagogique
DGVTE	Directorate General of Vocational and Technical Education
DS	Dual system (Maister)
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross domestic product
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
NEO	National Employment Office
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
PWD	People with disability
TS	Technicien Supérieur
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VTE	Vocational and technical education

Foreword

In order 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 the security problems it has faced in recent years. The current political system was set up to recognise the plurality of different religious communities in the country. A new government was formed following the Doha Agreement in May 2008, 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 human resources development challenges can be attributed to both 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).

Investing in education has always been of crucial importance for Lebanon and the Lebanese. Consequently, the basic foundations for the country's new National Education Strategy are Lebanese tradition, the close partnership between the public and private sectors, and the unique place occupied by the country in the Arab world and internationally, which derives from its human capital and from its creative and technical power (Ministry of Education and Higher Education [MEHE], March 2010).

This country report reviews the vocational and technical education (VTE) system and policies in Lebanon. The study was launched by the European Training Foundation (ETF) in 2010 to provide a concise evidence-based analysis of the VTE subsector.

The study was coordinated by Soubhi Abou Chahine, Advisor to the Minister of Education and Higher Education on the VTE subsector with the support of the Director General of VTE, Ahmed Diab and his team and with input from a focus group specifically created to monitor the study.

Executive summary

A national education strategy framework and a 2010-2015 development plan for the general education sector were approved in March 2010 (MEHE, 2010). The development plan does not deal with the VTE subsector, but it is expected that the MEHE will publish a strategic framework for VTE in 2011 as a part of the national strategy.

The VTE subsector represents about 26% of students in secondary education. The large number of private schools reveals the predominance of a private sector that accounts for about 60% of students. The private sector is further divided into subsidised and wholly fee-supported schools. It is difficult to assess how successful the VTE system has been in addressing economic and social challenges and the extent to which it is providing the skills demanded by the labour market. It is, however, generally accepted that the attraction of the VTE system for both enterprises and individuals is currently quite low.

Despite Lebanon's real GDP growth of 8% in 2009, the labour market has not improved in recent years and the activity rate of the population remains one of the lowest in the Mediterranean region (ETF, 2009). The main challenges for improving the external efficiency of VTE concern the mechanisms for evidence-based policies, the management of the transition from school to work and the related active labour market measures. Indeed, one of the factors responsible for the low quality of VTE education is the lack of labour market information, which has led to outdated curricula and an inability to keep pace with technological developments. The mismatch between the output of the VTE system and the skills needs of industries and services is generally recognised. This situation has given rise to a growing imbalance between the overall supply and demand for labour and to increased unemployment among the young population. The very limited involvement of business interests at national, sectoral and school levels is another

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

weakness that directly affects the system's external efficiency. The main recommendation of this report with respect to the external efficiency of the system and responsiveness to the labour market is that a sector-wide strategic plan should be developed with the involvement of social partners at all levels. The need for better coordination between VTE providers and the labour market at program level is also emphasised.

The main social challenges affecting the demand for skills are access and equity, particularly inequalities between rural and urban areas, the low educational level of some sections of the population, high youth unemployment, high inactivity rates especially among women, the large size of the informal sector, and the growing influx of foreign workers and Palestinian refugees. Due to its very limited resources and capacities, VTE currently has scant provision for skills upgrading, skills development for the self-employed, active citizenship or personal development. Moreover, the system fails to promote equal opportunities in the labour market. The few programs led by the National Employment Office (NEO) in partnership with the Directorate-General of VTE (DGVTE) are insignificant, considering the size of the potential target group. They are also unattractive to potential students because of the low quality of the training delivered. Also of interest is the marked increase in the number of initiatives undertaken by civil society organisations and donors in the form of literacy and entrepreneurship courses for young people and job seekers. However, the impact of these initiatives is unclear owing to their fragmentation and the absence of clear policy direction. The policy agenda has recently taken into consideration equity and equal opportunity issues, which now clearly feature in the new education strategy framework in terms of enrolment, continuing education and success. The policy decision to develop a national qualifications framework, with the aim of increasing access to VTE and facilitating the progression of the student population, may also help to improve equity.

The absence of a clear vision or specific strategy for the subsector, the poor quality of the teaching staff, and the weakness of VTE institutions are the three main challenges to the internal efficiency and effectiveness of the subsector. The MEHE is aware of these issues. The National Education Strategy states that: 'The management of education is centralised without partnership with the local community. It is also centred in such a way that school administrations are not given, except in few cases, adequate authority to manage their schools. The school development is not given the authority or responsibility needed for self-management. The MEHE administration of public education suffers from weaknesses in administering its financial, material and human resources. The current structure does not provide modern systems or frameworks for economic analysis, rationalising of expenditure and managing financial resources' (MEHE, 2006). In general, the attractiveness of VTE for individuals, enterprises and society is enhanced by improving the quality and relevance to the needs of the labour market of the education and training provided. It also depends on the existence of pathways between VTE, general education and higher education. In terms of governance, modern VTE systems tend to keep the functions of policy making, monitoring and evaluation at ministry level and delegate the development and delivery of programs to the intermediate institutions and schools. In this context, the involvement of professional associations in VTE governance at national, sectoral and local level (schools) is crucial for the improvement of the system.

Finally, innovation is not a specific objective in the promotion and development of VTE. Nonetheless, innovation and good practice are seen in a number of areas. Several innovative initiatives are discussed, including the development of vocational guidance and the integration of entrepreneurship as a career choice in the guidance services, the importance of the role of civil society in the provision of innovative VTE, such as adult learning and non-formal entrepreneurial learning. The education-business cooperation and partnership projects mentioned are the European Union (EU) supported Qab Elias agro-food school and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) dual system projects. The agro-food project in particular is a good example of the willingness of stakeholders to form a partnership and develop a demand-driven system. It has not, however been sufficiently supported by political readiness and commitment.

An area in which Lebanon is making progress is the development of entrepreneurship as a key competence in secondary education, including VTE, a project driven by the European Parliament recommendation on key competences (European Commission, 2006). The aim is to promote entrepreneurial learning policy and to support the introduction of an entrepreneurial mindset and skills as key competences for lifelong learning.

1. VTE in Lebanon: current situation and vision for the future

Lebanon has recently reached agreement on a national strategy for education. In March 2010, a national education strategy framework and an education sector development plan (2010-2015) for general education were approved. The development plan does not include any specific action for the VTE subsector, but it is expected that the MEHE will develop a strategic framework for VTE in 2011 as a part of the national strategic framework². The national strategy for improving the quality of education and promoting economic growth has identified a number of challenges.

- Improving the achievement levels of students in Lebanon, which are lower than those of their peers in other countries in the region.
- Turning around the steep decline in enrolment rates in public schools caused by the widening gap in achievement between public and private schools.
- Addressing the low achievement in public schools, which is mainly due to the:
 - low qualifications of the teaching and administrative staff and the lack of coherence between the teachers' specialisations and curricular requirements;
 - inadequacy of the teaching and learning environment, in particular infrastructure (buildings and equipment);
 - lack of the necessary legal framework and incentives that would increase the possibility of improving the quality of education.

The VTE subsector is the responsibility of the MEHE and represents about 26% of the student population at secondary level. These students are spread across the 110 public schools and about 500 private and NGO schools currently operating in the country. The large number of private schools reveals the predominance of the private sector, which accounts for about 60% of students (DGVTE, 2010). The private sector is further divided into subsidised schools and wholly fee-supported schools (the so-called 'non free' sector). The formal VTE system comprises seven levels of qualifications, ranging from skilled workers (Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle) to higher technicians (Licence Technique). Annex 1 provides a comprehensive description of the VTE structure and its position with respect to other educational subsectors and the labour market.

In practice, in spite of its connection with the MEHE, the VTE subsector appears to function independently of the other components of the educational system. Since the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Vocational Education were merged in 2000, the administration of vocational education has been moved to the DGVTE, but its integration into the MEHE is still limited and its organisation, schools, curricula, teachers and data are still managed separately. Relationships with businesses are practically nonexistent in spite of a few limited initiatives and adult learning is led primarily by the very dynamic, albeit fragmented and uncoordinated, civil society and NGO sector.

In addition to the national strategy, a development plan (2010-2015) for general education has been drawn up. This document identifies five main priorities that focus primarily on equity and the relevance and quality of the education provided.

- To make education available on the basis of equal opportunity (early childhood education, improving retention, and providing and developing infrastructure).
- To develop quality education that will contribute to building a knowledge society (building a more professional teaching workforce, modernising school management, improving assessment and curriculum development).
- To achieve education that will contribute to social integration (citizenship education).

² This was confirmed by the new Minister of Education and Higher Education in an interview published in the Lebanon Delegation newsletter, 2nd issue, 2010.

- To ensure that the education provided will contribute to economic development (information and communications technologies in education and a national qualifications framework).
- To improve the governance of the educational system (institutional development).

However, in the opinion of the focus group set up in the course of this review, a specific strategy and action plan are needed for VTE consistent with and part of the national vision for human resources development in Lebanon. Beyond the strategy itself, the process of cooperation and involvement of the different VTE actors will be crucial to the success of this strategy. This report makes specific recommendations aimed at improving the internal and external efficiency of VTE.

2. External efficiency: addressing economic and labour market needs

The principal changes needed to improve the external efficiency of VTE are related to the mechanisms needed for developing evidence-based policies, greater involvement of social partners in the management of the transition from school to work, and the associated active labour market measures designed and delivered by national key stakeholders.

With a growth in real GDP of 9% in 2009 (International Monetary Fund, 2009), the Lebanese economy once again showed strong resilience to political turmoil and the direct impact of the global financial crisis. This resilience is largely due to the flexibility of its economic structure, made up almost exclusively of small and medium-sized companies, the strong entrepreneurial spirit of its population, and the solidity of its financial and banking sector. The economy is largely based on the service sector, which accounts for around 70% of GDP, while the share of industry and particularly of the manufacturing sector has been declining steadily. In 2006, manufacturing activities accounted for only 11.4% of GDP.

However, current economic growth has not yet had any impact on the labour market, and Lebanon still has one of the lowest activity rates in the Mediterranean region. The active population was estimated to be 1.23 million in 2007, representing an economic activity rate of 43%. Several factors have been identified as contributing to this low rate, including the low participation of women in the labour market, the fact that the contribution of women in rural areas is not declared and therefore under-estimated, and the overall importance of the informal economy.

The absence of relevant, up-to-date data on the labour market is an ongoing problem for policy and decision makers. The scant evidence available shows that the Lebanese labour market is characterised by a low employment rate, an influx of foreign workers equal in size to the domestic labour force, an oversupply of higher education graduates, a strong tendency towards emigration among the more educated population, a large informal microenterprise sector, dependence on family, personal and community connections in job search, and a very low esteem for manual work and most professions at the level of skilled workers (World Bank, 2003).

Mechanism for evidence-based policies

A number of factors hinder efforts to develop evidence-based policy on labour market and skills development.

Firstly, no accurate data is available on unemployment rates by type of education, gender and age. This data would normally be used to identify supply and demand mismatches for specific types of qualification and skills.

Secondly, the work of the NEO in collecting and processing labour market information and facilitating the matching of skills supply to demand is poor. For instance, key features of the Lebanese employment situation are not recorded in national labour market data. These include the influx of foreign workers into the Lebanese labour market and the presence of a large informal sector. In addition, taking into account the level of interaction of NEO with enterprises and the labour market in general, it is obvious that the vacancies reported by NEO do not necessarily reflect the complete labour market demand.

Thirdly, there is a generally recognised mismatch between the output of VTE and the skills needs of industries and services. This has led to a growing imbalance between the overall supply and demand for labour and consequently an increase in unemployment. The mismatch has not been studied and is poorly understood. At present, there are no systematic school-to-work transition surveys, and only a few tracer studies and anecdotal evidence provide information on the relevance of VTE provision to current economic and labour market needs. Hence, the system lacks the instruments needed to gain an understanding of the problems associated with the transition from education to the workplace.

Policy makers tried to address this problem by conducting a labour market study, a VTE graduates tracer survey and a competences needs analysis. These studies produced some valuable data of benefit to the VTE system. Surprisingly, no efforts have been made since 2004 to make use of these results or to systematise these studies.

Management of the transition from education to work and the involvement of social partners

It is difficult to assess how successful the VTE system has been in addressing the economic and social challenges and the extent to which it is ensuring the availability of the skills demanded by the labour market. It is, however, generally accepted, that the VTE system currently has very limited attractiveness for enterprises and individuals. This is due to the poor quality and the scant market value of VTE qualifications and also to the unfavourable image of blue-collar occupations in general.

The poor quality of VTE may be due, in part, to the lack of labour market information. This deficiency has led to outdated curricula both in terms of the occupations for which VTE programs exist and in terms of the vocational and technical content taught, which has failed to keep abreast with technological developments. The most telling evidence is that many qualifications have never been updated and that new ones are not being used (see the discussion on agro-food qualifications below). Furthermore, the lack of labour market information has not been compensated by a close partnership between the productive sector and the VTE system, and the revision and development of curricula, when updated, is still to a large extent driven by education system specialists.

The poor quality is also due to the low level of practical training. For instance, there is insufficient budget or mechanisms to ensure structured workplace training for students and trainees. In addition, inadequately equipped school workshops often prevent students and trainees from acquiring relevant practical skills. Teachers often lack the necessary experience of the productive sector to be able to deliver training of the appropriate quality.

Finally, the poor quality is due to the way young people are shunted into VTE. Vocational education is seen as a last resort for students who fail in general education and who, in most cases, are not even in a position to select a training course appropriate to their capacities and potential. For instance, there is very little career guidance for young students to objectively inform them about and guide them towards non-academic types of education and career paths.

In terms of enterprise involvement, the EU-funded agro-food school project has been the most prominent initiative undertaken to match vocational training and labour market needs on a sectoral basis and to raise the attractiveness and prestige of VTE. This initiative had the potential to bring about important change because it was also intended to act as model for a new form of governance and functioning for VTE schools. The project design envisaged that the new agro-food school would act as an effective autonomous institution that would benefit, through the EU funds, from high investment in infrastructures and human resources. The low priority that has been given to this school despite the commitment of the sectoral federation can be seen as a problem and evidence of low external efficiency. For instance, the project has developed new curricula to meet the needs of the labour market and has adopted a competency-based approach. At present, these curricula have not been fully implemented, which means that students are not acquiring the skills required by the labour market so that the labour market is receiving new students who do not have the relevant profiles.

Another important initiative has been the almost 15 years of support provided by the GTZ for the development of enterprise-based learning and workplace-based qualifications. This initiative is linked to the objective of developing professional practice in VTE in close cooperation with enterprises. The work done by the GTZ has been pioneering. However, to date few students are

enrolled in this type of program, and the new qualification developed in this context (the DS) is still marginal compared to other intermediate qualifications.

At present, there is no clear support for the small and medium enterprises that predominate in the national economy and account for most of the employment opportunities in the country. The government of Lebanon has yet to develop a policy framework for the development of small-to-medium enterprises. At the same time, the informal microenterprise sector in Lebanon has not yet set up any associations or representative groups. As noted by an ETF and World Bank research project (ETF and World Bank, 2006), the acquisition of skills in this sector is constrained by the low skills level of owners and workers. Most skills are obtained via informal apprenticeships and on-the-job training in small workshops. Very few training programs target those working for informal microenterprises. The most prominent are the training activities of the Community Development Centres managed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and certain NGO training schemes (Kreitem, B, 2009). These centres try to teach relevant basic skills to individuals with low educational achievements, especially women. Many of the larger active NGOs are also involved in skills training. For instance, the Mouvement Social has its own training centre and also runs a large number of training courses in its social centres throughout the country. This organisation has also started pre-vocational schools for 11- to 14-year-olds to acquaint them with certain occupations and work in the informal microenterprise sector as preparation for future skills training. In South Lebanon, a group of NGOs have joined forces to create the Intensive Vocational Training Project. Training is based on regular courses offered by the seven participating training centres, but it is condensed into full-time (three-month) and part-time (six-month) courses.

In reality, government approaches and strategies have failed to provide incentives to encourage enterprises to engage in VTE governance and management. For instance, although labour legislation requires employers to provide training opportunities for their employees, this does not happen in practice. Most Lebanese enterprises—with the exception of the banking sector—have no incentive to invest in human resources for a variety of reasons. They are often family owned companies focussed on fighting for survival rather than investing in the future and developing a long-term vision. The high unemployment rate and abundant migration make cheap labour available, and recruitment decisions are often based on family ties and connections rather than on the talent and competence of the employee. All of these factors make companies and their representatives reluctant to invest time and resources in training.

Fragmentation of active labour market measures

A number of programs and initiatives in Lebanon can be considered to be active labour market measures, such as training for job seekers, entrepreneurship skills development, and on-the-job training. Most of these programs and initiatives are organised by NGOs, some with the support of donors. The government has only developed one program with limited scope, which targets job seekers. This program is managed by the NEO and the training is outsourced to private VTE providers. These programs are confined to short-term training (from one to three months) in a limited range of occupations and tend to focus on basic and narrowly defined skills. The key characteristic of the active labour market measures is their fragmentation in terms of both provision and strategic design and management (including funding). In the absence of clear guidelines and direction from national authorities, public, private and third sector initiatives are limited in their scope and relevance to target groups, businesses and labour market needs.

When discussing the efficiency of the Lebanese education and labour market system, it is important to recognise its unique characteristics and how it differs from other countries in the region, particularly with respect to international influences. Key features of the Lebanese labour market and education and training system are the huge inward and outward migration of labour, the presence of 400 000 Palestinian refugees, the presence of a strong and diverse private education and training system based on the model of several western countries (UK, USA, and France, among others), and the presence, particularly in higher education, of a large contingent of students from neighbouring countries and the Gulf states. This internationalisation has had an important influence on the way the labour market is managed and the way qualifications are designed and recognised throughout the education and training sector, and it should influence active labour market measures. It also affects quality assurance, including assessment and the accreditation of institutions and programs. Managing diversity is a key concept in this context, including the diversity of education and training providers (public and private, local and international, high and low quality). Mechanisms and approaches for harmonising local

qualifications and aligning with international ones will be a key issue in the upcoming development of the national qualifications system.

Possible approaches to addressing the challenges

The best way of improving the external efficiency of VTE in Lebanon is to involve the private sector in VTE policy and governance. The first step in this process could be a policy discussion concerning programs for developing human resources management functions and practices in companies and for building the capacity of businesses to identify and express skills needs.

Policy makers can benefit from international experiences to increase the external efficiency of the system and to boost cooperation between VTE and enterprises. One approach would be to develop a national inventory of job classifications, job descriptions and occupational analysis. The ongoing national qualifications framework and World Bank enterprise skills analysis projects constitute an opportunity to develop a clear certification process, implement quality assurance standards, and incorporate a system that will recognise prior learning and experience.

3. External efficiency: promoting equity and addressing social demands for education and training

The main social challenges that shape the labour market demand for education and training include: a) improving access and equity and, more particularly, reducing inequalities between urban and rural areas; b) improving the educational levels of certain sections of the population; c) combating high youth unemployment and high inactivity rates, especially among women; and d) addressing the large size of the informal sector and dealing with the growing influx of foreign workers in addition to the Palestinian refugees.

Poverty and low quality education

Two main social circumstances determine supply and demand in education: poverty and low quality education. These issues will be addressed together in this section due to their inseparable character.

According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), 28.5% of the Lebanese population are poor and 8% live in conditions of extreme poverty (UNDP, 2009). This means that almost 300 000 individuals in Lebanon are unable to meet their basic food and non-food needs and 20.5% live between the upper and lower poverty lines. The highest concentration of poor is in the north (53%) followed by the south (42%). In contrast, overall poverty in Beirut is approximately 6% (excluding the southern suburbs).

The educational system in Lebanon is a clear example of inequity that faithfully reflects the country's socioeconomic problems. The general education stream serves about one million students. Around 60% of these students are enrolled in private schools, 33.2% in public schools and 13.9% in NGO-managed schools. Geographical and socioeconomic disparities are reflected in student enrolment and attainment. Students in the north are less likely to attend private educational institutions (34.7%; only 4.6% among the poor and 60.1% among the non-poor). By contrast, students in Beirut are the most likely to attend private institutions (68.9%). Overall, 11.5% of students who come from poor families attend private schools as opposed to 65.7% of the better-off students.

Beirut and Mount Lebanon have the highest secondary level attendance rates (over 50%). The lowest enrolment rate in secondary education was found in South Lebanon (29.9%), where only 13.6% of poor children were enrolled in secondary schools. Low levels of internal efficiency are revealed by high repetition and dropout rates at all levels of education: 18.9% at the elementary level, 22.8% at the intermediate level and 10.6% at the secondary level (ETF, 2005).

There are clear regional disparities in educational attainment. Illiteracy rates are highest in Bekaa (14.45%) and South Lebanon (12.42%). North Lebanon has the highest concentration of students who finish elementary education and then drop out of school (43.2%). Some villages in North Lebanon have dropout rates in excess of 65%. The poor quality of education is considered

to be one of the main causes of these high rates. Students from poor households believe that the lower quality education provided by the public sector will have little influence on their future, and they consequently tend to drop out of school early to join the workforce. In their opinion, the trade-off between the opportunity cost of this education and the value added is very poor.

Beirut and Mount Lebanon have the highest ratios of university education attainment (25.77% and 17.06%, respectively). It is estimated that one in ten students overall attains a higher educational qualification compared to one in four among more affluent students.

Unemployment contributes to the rise in poverty indices. Youth unemployment (15-24 years) is 20%, and 45% of the poor population have heads of household with less than elementary education. Total unemployment is 14.9% among the poor, 14% among the near poor, and falls to 6.7% for the better-off section of the population. One in three poor young people with university diplomas is unemployed compared to one in five among the more affluent group. In total, more than 40% of the unemployed live in extreme poverty.

The social demand for high-level skills is evident. Quality VTE education and training schemes are urgently needed to reduce poverty and eliminate social inequities. While quality education alone cannot improve living standards, skilling for employment can make an effective contribution to raising the standard of living of the general population.

Exclusion

Exclusion is a fact of life in Lebanese society for many vulnerable groups, which include working children aged between 10 and 19 (76 000), people with disability (PWD; about 75 000), agricultural workers (over 80 000), women and the unemployed (90 000) (UNDP, 2009).

A UNDP study carried out in 1990 just after the end of the ruinous 15-year civil war estimated that one in every ten Lebanese people was disabled (as many as 300 000 people). However, today the Ministry of Social Affairs says it has registered only 70 000 people for official disability cards (Consultation & Research Institute, 2007)³. The National Survey of Household Living Conditions reports a population of 75 000 PWD (about 2% of the population resident in Lebanon). The actual figure remains unclear.

Educational inequity is overwhelming in the case of PWD. The PWD community is characterised by high illiteracy rates (38.2%), and only 5% attain secondary level schooling and 2.9% graduate from university. This situation is mainly due to the failure to integrate PWD successfully into mainstream and VTE schools.

Moreover, economic activity in this group with special needs remains low: approximately half (45.8%) are unable to work, 11% are still students, and the rest are able to work. These figures indicate that the largest percentage of PWD who do not work have no steady source of income, a fact that increases their marginalisation. The Social Action Plan reports that the poverty rate among PWD is three times the national rate (Social Action Plan, 2007).

Law 220/2000 stipulates that PWD have the right to live in an environment tailored to their special needs and that all public buildings, establishments and spaces must be equipped to facilitate accessibility. This law has also had a positive impact on changing the mainstream perception of PWD as people incapable of acquiring skills and performing normal activities because it obliges relatively large institutions in the public and private sectors to employ PWD (3% of all employees).

The situation may improve in the near future as the new strategy has made equity a priority. The aim is to make education available on the basis of equal opportunities.

Adult learning programmes

Lebanon ranked 83 on the UNDP 2009 Human Development Index. The adult literacy rate in 2007, calculated as a percentage of the population aged 15 and over, was 89.6%. The female adult literacy rate over the period 1997-2007 was 86.0%, while the male adult literacy rate was 93.4%. The UNDP report also provides some evidence regarding regional disparities in adult illiteracy, for example, the flagrant difference between Beirut (6.1%) and Bekaa (16.8%).

³ Data also taken from an interview with Sylvana Lakkis, president of the Lebanese Physically Handicapped Union.

Recent ETF research on adult learning in the Mediterranean region (Kreitem, B, 2009) shows that there are few national programs in Lebanon targeting adults and no national program for in-service training. The most prominent national initiative is the literacy program run by the National Committee for Illiteracy and Adult Education. The three-level 'For a Better Life' program is the foremost national program. According to the Committee's statistics, in the last 10 years 24 393 participants (around 6 112 women) benefited from this program. However, the bulk of adult learning is left to private sector and civil society institutions supported in many cases by international organisations, providing a range of adult learning programs of a vocational or more general character. The scale of these programs cannot be properly assessed owing to the lack of data and its fragmentary nature. Moreover, such training is not sustainable since it is conditional on the presence and interest of NGOs and donors.

The statistics available (see above) show that gender is an issue for both for adult illiteracy and unemployment. However, there is little or no mention of gender or gender approaches in the sectoral documents (strategies and action plans). Neither has any effort been made to analyse the reasons for illiteracy and low participation in employment among women, and no specific active labour market measures have been proposed to tackle these problems.

Active labour market measures and the informal sector

Due to the very limited resources and capacities of the subsector, VTE currently provides little opportunity for skills upgrading, self-employment, active citizenship, personal development or the promotion of equal opportunities in the labour market. The few programs undertaken by the NEO in collaboration with DGVTE are unattractive and not significant. Several initiatives have been undertaken by civil society organisations and donors (literacy and entrepreneurship courses for young people and job seekers), but the impact of these is uncertain.

The aim of current educational reform is to improve the quality of education. Raising the age for compulsory education to 15 should increase the educational level of the population. The new education strategy includes clearly defined goals related to equity and equal opportunity. These deal with enrolment, educational continuation and success. Students should be given the chance to choose between academic and technical education specialisations to reinforce their autonomy and improve their educational and career choices. The future implementation of a national qualifications framework also has the potential to increase access to education and the progression of VTE students. The reforms aimed at increasing the quality of education would help the VTE system to support the more vulnerable groups by increasing their employability and enhancing their basic competencies. There is still a need to better address gender equality issues and the needs of adults (more and better education and training opportunities and greater attention to the specific needs of adults, women and populations living in poor areas).

Possible approaches to addressing the challenges

- Improving equity and access. VTE programs should be accessible to all students, including those who drop out of secondary and higher education, working people, and people who want to improve their skills. An adequate variety of courses should be offered to satisfy different student needs. A database of unemployed persons, job leavers, and school dropouts should be compiled.
- MEHE should conduct annual tracer and market surveys to determine how successful graduates are in finding jobs and keeping them, and to assess the relevance and responsiveness of the VTE system to labour market demand. The match between the skills demanded by the labour market and VTE system outputs should be continuously monitored.
- DGVTE should adopt structured workplace training that would allow competencies to be developed and assessed in the workplace as deemed necessary for accreditation by industry and the MEHE. Employment placement should be introduced into the system as a way of developing skills and serving the community. Non-formal VTE should be integrated into the system by organising it into predefined models that can be recognised and accredited by formal systems.

- MEHE should establish a close relationship with the NEO, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the social partners and other government training providers in order to coordinate training, develop a national occupational and industrial classification system, and set up a labour market information system.
- A constructive dialogue should be sought with the PWD community to achieve inclusion. Approaches could include identifying occupations that can be filled by PWD and developing special programs to meet needs that arise. A modular training system could be introduced to help unemployed people who dropped out of the education system at an early age to gain access to adult education.

4. Internal efficiency: quality, governance and financing

The three main challenges shaping the internal efficiency and effectiveness of the VTE subsector in Lebanon are summarised below.

- The absence of a specific strategy or vision for the VTE subsector within the education system. It is unclear to what extent the education strategy recently adopted with the support of the World Bank's Quality Education for Growth program is going to cover the VTE system, although it does include some provisions for VTE and the development of a national qualifications framework. However, the development of a strategy for the VTE sector appears to have been of little concern.
- The poor quality of teaching staff. Despite the relatively high number of teachers in the country, there are, nonetheless, significant shortages in specific subjects and certain regions. Moreover, there is no performance-based incentive system or any effective system for evaluating teacher performance. There are no laws and no regulatory framework defining the mechanisms for contracting teaching personnel. Consequently, 71% of teachers are on tenure while 29% are contracted. Some 54% of teachers have no university degree. The quality of the teaching staff is one of the factors that has given rise to the high dropout rate.
- Institutional weakness. Although the educational system is highly centralised, its administration is inefficient. The administrative laws date back to 1959. Systemic reform is also hindered by the lack of reliable information sources and deficiencies in information technology as well as planning and resource distribution systems.

Internal efficiency

The formal VTE system comprises seven levels of qualifications, ranging from skilled workers (CAP) to higher technicians (Licence Technique). Annex 1 provides comprehensive information on the structure of the national education and training system. Programs leading to vocational qualifications are delivered principally in technical schools. According to the Educational Centre for Research and Development (CRDP⁴), there were 76 public technical schools in the school year 2007/08 compared to 54 in 2002/03. At the same time, there are close to 400 private providers. Total enrolment in VTE rose from 66 950 in 2002/2003 to 86 159 in 2007-2008. This is in line with the government objective to increase total enrolment to 90 000 by 2010.

Table 1 shows that the CAP was the only program in which enrolment decreased, a trend validating the policy decision to discontinue this qualification following recent changes in basic education.

Although the Brevet Professionnel (BP) remains a small program compared to some others, the number of students choosing this qualification almost doubled in six years, an indication that it is increasingly playing a role as a replacement for CAP. In the same period, the number of students in the DS program, organised jointly with enterprises, increased but remained insignificant

⁴ CRDP is public institution under MEHE in charge of designing and testing the curricula, writing and editing the national textbook, initial and continuing training of teachers, definition of criteria for evaluation and for national examinations, etc.

compared with other vocational qualifications. The reality is that the role of the DS, which is the only program that could be described as demand-driven, is still very minor, and the BT remains by far the most important qualification at secondary school level.

Table a: Changes in enrolment in VTE between 2002/03 and 2007/08

Qualification	Total enrolment 2002/03	Total enrolment 2007-2008	Change 2002-2008
CAP, Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle	1,202	847	-355
BT, Brevet Professionnel	5,296	9350	+ 4054
DS, Dual system (Maister)	735	1203	+468
BT, Bac Technique	39,038	45,610	+ 6572
TS, Technicien Supérieur	18,609	26,025	+7416
LT, Licence Technique	1,963	3,124	1161
TOTAL	66,843	86,159	+19317

Source: CRDP web site, Accessed June 2010.

Several studies (World Bank, 2003; ETF, 2005) have documented the positive attitude towards higher education in Lebanese society and the preference for white-collar occupations. In this context, it is not surprising that the BT is preferred to the BP and DS. It is clear that a large number of students graduate in accounting and other white-collar occupations and many fewer from CAP and DS, which focus on blue-collar manufacturing occupations (CRDP, 2008). It is not unusual in VTE that a few qualifications account for a large proportion of enrolment: the distribution in vocational education is very uneven. The problem arises when the system fails to meet the needs of the labour market and the mismatch is compensated by an increased use of migrant labour for the types of jobs that are neglected by the VTE system and rejected by Lebanese society.

In addition to its low attractiveness to students, enterprises and society in general, there is evidence that the Lebanese VTE system also suffers from internal inefficiency. In addition to what has been said earlier about practical training, implementation of curricula and links with business, there are two other key pieces of evidence of this: the high dropout and repetition rates, and the number of young people leaving secondary school and entering the labour market with no qualification whatsoever (see Annex 1, Table 1).

The decisions taken by the ministry to date confirm the general trend towards eliminating the middle level from the VTE system in order to concentrate on secondary levels and above. The government has decided to double the capacity of the public VTE provision by adding new schools and extending the system geographically. Most of the new schools planned have already been built with external donor funds (Arab and Islamic funds and contributions from the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) and are waiting to be furnished, equipped, and staffed. The relevant authorities have no definitive plans as to what educational programs will be offered at these schools and, as yet, no operating budgets have been allocated to them.

Governance

The current legislative framework governing VTE in Lebanon restricts the contribution of national bodies and stakeholders in the development of policies and strategies, and there is no provision in existing legislation to enable the system to attract external investment. Strong centralised governance isolates VTE institutes from their local communities. The rigid education and training system, which has not changed since VTE was first established in Lebanon, makes it impossible for stakeholders to contribute to the planning and implementation of VTE programs. As a result,

the contribution of stakeholders is very limited and planning is generally left to the public administration.

The system is centralised and hierarchical, controlled by the administration and driven by procedures. In general, planning is focused on operational issues and implantation (ETF, 2005). The system is administered by DGVTE and lacks management capacity; 95 employees, both civil servants and temporary staff, manage all its operations.

Schools are managed using the same hierarchical governance system. They have little autonomy and have to obtain approval from the central administration for most of their daily functions. All schools operate under the same set of rules and regulations, with the exception of some hospitality schools that are permitted to invest and make profits.

The level of financial and technical participation of the productive sector in the skills development process is very low, and any interaction that does occur must be administered through central management.

Quality and quality assurance

This section considers different aspects of VTE quality, including curriculum design and implementation, the mechanism for accrediting institutions and programs, the quality of teacher training and the professionalisation of the teaching body.

- Curriculum design and implementation

On an international level, a curriculum is increasingly perceived as a policy instrument that establishes the framework for the stakeholders involved in the education and training processes. This implies that more stakeholders should be involved in curriculum development at national level and in the design and implementation of educational programs and school curricula at local level.

According to CRDP, curriculum reform is currently ongoing in basic education and secondary general education. Consistent and coherent system-wide curriculum reform for technical secondary education has not yet been implemented. For instance, no clear steps have been taken to address either the problem of the relationship between VTE and the labour market (in terms of labour market analysis and enterprise involvement) or the interface between vocational and general education (especially in terms of examinations, progression and movement between subsectors). Furthermore, the fact that the design of the VTE curriculum is led by DGVTE, and thus does not involve the CRDP, reduces the sustainability of the curriculum development process. The weak role played by the CRDP is reducing the capacity of the MEHE to monitor and evaluate the design and implementation of the curriculum in line with agreed national quality criteria. It also weakens the capacity of the CRDP to support secondary education curriculum implementation (general and VTE).

Work on upgrading curricula was undertaken in 1997, when the ministry commissioned the development of 56 curricula for the BT and TS levels. A group of academics in each field of speciality were commissioned to develop the curricula. The work was carried out with no reference to occupational competency profiles or occupational analysis. The resulting curricula were 70% academically based and oriented, as opposed to being competency-based and applied.

The curricula developed did not incorporate educational and quality standards. They also lacked supporting material, such as student material, learning resources and teacher's guides. With only minimal guidelines, selection of course content and teaching material was left to teachers. Since most VTE teachers are overworked and underpaid academics on contracts who lack the necessary professional experience and training, the quality of delivery was left to the commitment, dedication and capabilities of each teacher. This created enormous variation in student attainment depending on the skills and competence of individual teachers.

Although another effort was made to review these curricula in 2001, this work has had little effect on the quality of course delivery. Teacher's guides and student manuals have never been produced. The curricula are not supported by effective evaluation tools designed to measure students' achievement of learning outcomes.

There are no standardised curricula for the training programs offered by private schools. Moreover, DGVTE imposes no quality control procedures on such training programs, and there are no standardised requirements for their certification.

- Professionalisation of the teaching body

The problem of VTE teachers and trainers is long-standing and still unresolved. Full-time teachers and trainers account for less than 13% of the total teacher and trainer population in the public VTE subsector. There are currently some 1 400 teachers employed full time in public VTE schools and over 12 000 teachers working on contracts, 50% of whom teach less than 8 hours a week. About 7 000 teachers are employed full and part time by private schools.

While the teacher/student ratio is estimated to be 1:26 in the private subsector, it is difficult to determine the real ratio in the public subsector. The factors used to calculate the teacher/student ratio include: a) the number of contracted teachers; b) the number of contracts signed by each teacher; and c) the number of teaching hours allocated to each contracted teacher (maximum quota of 20 hours a week). Rough calculations result in a 1:9 ratio. When the calculation is based purely on the numbers of students and teachers without taking into account the maximum quota of hours per week, the ratio is 1:3. Extreme cases were registered in some schools, where the ratio was lower than 1:2. Most of the contracted teachers and trainers have academic backgrounds, and a large proportion of those contracted on yearly basis are recent university and TS graduates who lack the minimum required professional background. Employment of teachers on temporary contracts is not controlled by any qualifications standards. Political loyalty and family ties play a dominant role in the choice of such teachers.

The level of training for teachers and trainers entering the profession is considered to be inadequate for the delivery of modern VTE programmes. Initial teacher training implemented by the national teacher training institution for technical education (the Institut Pédagogique National de l'Enseignement Technique) has not been adapted to the VTE curricula. Furthermore, trainers often lack the necessary experience in industry to enable them to deliver training of the appropriate quality. Moreover, this situation is not being addressed through continuing professional development for teachers and trainers. Less than 10% of teachers and trainers per year currently participate in courses to upgrade their skills.

In addition, with low salaries and a job in a generally unattractive subsector of the education system, the career path of VTE teachers is not seen as sufficiently motivating. This perception, and the extensive use of teachers with short contracts, considerably reduces the involvement of teachers in school projects and internal development. A national plan for the professional development of the teaching body is urgently needed. This should include three capacity-building programs: pre-service training, induction training, and continuing in-service professional development. This is a necessary adjunct to the programs the government has already planned, which will build capacities for supervising, monitoring and assessing teacher performance and competences through licensing and accreditation.

- Quality assurance

The reality today is that no sound and transparent quality assurance mechanisms are in place to ensure the proper certification of new institutions or programs in either the public or private VTE sectors. The purely administrative procedures for accrediting or licensing private VTE providers do not meet the standards for a modern VTE system, and the quality control of the public VTE system is no better. In practice, the only quality control mechanism in VTE is the national examination for each qualification. The assessment centres that administer the examinations are regulated and accredited. However, this isolated quality control system should be incorporated into the overall qualifications design and accreditation process. What is needed is a comprehensive system that would integrate all the stages of the process. This is the aim of the ongoing national qualifications framework project.

The Quality Education for Growth strategy framework has established a number of priorities relating to the quality and relevance of education in VTE. These include the creation of a system for evaluating curricula and outcomes and the development of standards for quality assurance and control. The key element of this strategy is the reform of curricula that are either outdated or not delivered using competence-based formats. The work has begun and the ETF is currently involved in collaborating on the design of a national qualifications framework. However, coordination will be necessary between the curriculum working group and the national qualifications framework working group.

Possible approaches to addressing the challenges

The MEHE's efforts are currently focused on developing the VTE system and a national qualifications framework. Work on these two cornerstones of the reform should involve the business community. The reforms should address the needs and concerns of the labour market and should be directed towards upgrading the labour force and the job market. A more decentralised system should be introduced to administer the VTE system. To that end, a number of measures designed to increase internal efficiency should be incorporated into the strategic framework.

Quality improvement actions

- Developing a national curriculum and a national evaluation database based on the needs of the labour market, including lifelong learning programs for adults and education dropouts.
- Employing more quality teachers and trainers with relevant practical work experience.
- Introducing in-service and continuing training programs.
- Increasing the number of permanent trainers and reducing the reliance on part-time staff.
- Geographical redistribution of schools and specialities to achieve economies of scale in terms of resources and trainers.
- Upgrading infrastructure. VTE institutes should be well maintained and suitably equipped to deliver quality education and training to a wide range of students, the business community and other interested populations.
- Forging strong links with employers. The business community must be involved in determining sectoral program priorities.
- Introducing structured workplace training and competencies development. Mechanisms are required to facilitate the assessment and accreditation of workplace training by industry and the MEHE.
- Developing policy guidelines, instruments, structures and procedures to facilitate the harmonisation and eventual standardisation of qualifications. Mechanisms are needed to make vocational qualifications comparable to those of other education subsectors in order to facilitate movement between different streams and courses.
- Definition and systematisation of standards regulating inputs, processes and outputs.
- Introduction of student orientation and career guidance functions and procedures as an integral part of the VTE system.

Institutional actions

- VTE policies and strategies guided by socioeconomic needs should be developed by a national body composed of key agencies and stakeholders under the supervision of the MEHE.
- A unit for VTE planning and development should be created at the MEHE. This unit would be in charge of developing plans and projects and would orient the development of VTE through studies and research involving all sectors of the economy.
- Greater autonomy should be introduced to create a more decentralised system and increase the role of business interests (employers) and local authorities in the administration and financing of schools to ensure that they fulfil the needs of the community.
- The MEHE should work with the productive sectors to set up sectoral councils. These bodies would play a leading role in the development and administration of sectoral VTE operations.

- The use of available financial resources should be optimised and great emphasis placed on developing cost recovery mechanisms and self-funding resources.
- Legislation is needed to allow more space and to create opportunities for the private industrial sector to invest in VTE. A participatory approach should be promoted that would allow employer groups and the productive sector to collaborate in planning initiatives and VTE administration and to be involved in the definition of current and future needs.

Private schooling and educational paths

- Regulations to ensure that VTE private schools fulfil accreditation standards need to be revisited.
- Private VTE institutes should be encouraged to maximise their provision of educational and training services while conforming with the regulations of the public VTE system.
- Partnership schemes between private schools and public schools should be developed. Initiatives and ideas that can bring together the experience of private providers and the resources of the public schooling system should be encouraged.
- The private industrial and services sectors should be invited to finance specialised VTE schools and training facilities. Flexible legislative frameworks to support such projects should be developed and partnership with NGOs enhanced. New regulation is needed to improve the yield of joint projects.
- An open door policy should be implemented to encourage VTE students and trainees to progress to higher education.
- The MEHE should regulate the movement of VTE students to other educational paths, and determine which VTE courses will count towards entrance to other educational institutions.

5. Innovation, partnership and entrepreneurship

This section provides an overview of cooperation between education and business interests. It identifies a number of innovative initiatives in which national authorities and private sector actors are making an effort to close the gap between education and business with particular reference to VTE. It then considers the need for entrepreneurship education in VTE, an area that has aroused particular policy interest in the country.

Innovation

The strategies for the promotion and development of VTE in Lebanon include no specific objectives related to innovation. However, innovation and good practice are found in a number of areas. Firstly, the Lebanese education authorities have taken an important step in the development of vocational guidance by including entrepreneurship as a career choice in the guidance services, promoting the development of career guidance staff and reinforcing links between schools and the world of business (See Annex 2). Secondly, the education system works directly with and benefits from innovative pilot developments in the non-formal area undertaken by NGOs. For example, a leading non-formal entrepreneurial learning developer is developing an entrepreneurship education curriculum based on the ILO Know about Business module with the objective of mainstreaming this in the VTE system⁵. The very active civil society in Lebanon plays a critical role in innovative areas in VTE, such as adult learning and non-formal entrepreneurial learning. However, these efforts are not coordinated and often overlap. The MEHE is collaborating with certain NGOs to develop and mainstream some of these initiatives within the formal system.

⁵ ILO project in South Lebanon in close collaboration with INJAZ. The project supports six VTE institutions in implementing the Know About Business module, including due reference to curriculum reform and training of trainers.

Partnership

Despite the strong tradition of participation and the capacity of professional associations to influence policy decisions, education-business cooperation and partnership is not yet a reality in Lebanon. Representatives from the private sector, such as the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture and the Association of Lebanese Industrialists participate in key government meetings on sector-specific issues. Among its specialised committees, the Association of Lebanese Industrialists has a VTE committee that monitors policy formulation on skills development. This association also has several product-specific focus groups, such as those dealing with the chemicals and beverage sectors (See Annex 1). The Syndicate of Lebanese Food Industries has played a prominent role in developing public-private partnerships in the agro-food sector, including school-based initiatives. The efforts in the Qab Elias project (Bekaa valley) to forge more direct connections between vocational training providers and agro-food employers, despite all the difficulties it has faced, is an example of how the educational system can be more integrated into key sectors of the economy.

Outside of the key sectors, private sector involvement in education tends to take place on an ad hoc basis, and the participation of stakeholders in the policy process is hampered by a lack of structures and support frameworks for education-business dialogue, by limited resources and, by the differing perspectives of the diverse communities in Lebanon. The options and opportunities for better education-business cooperation require more structured reflection and discussion to promote a more market-responsive VTE system.

Entrepreneurship

Lebanon is fully engaged in the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Enterprise⁶. An assessment led by the European Commission in collaboration with ETF has identified limited development on entrepreneurial learning with respect to both policy and delivery. In terms of skilled manpower in the business environment, Lebanon stands out in the fields of promoting trade skills for enterprises and in management development for expanding businesses. A concerted effort is, however, needed to compile baseline data on enterprise training needs and training take-up. Taking advantage of the Euro-Mediterranean Enterprise Charter, Lebanon has made progress in making entrepreneurship a primary pillar of career guidance and counselling⁷.

Lebanon also has a very active civil society, particularly in the form of NGOs, involved in entrepreneurship education. The MEHE collaborates with the more developed NGO providers, but coordination will be needed to avoid duplication of effort.

One area in which Lebanon is making progress is the development of entrepreneurship as a key competence in secondary level vocational education. This project, supported by the Italian government and ETF, is driven by the EU policy recommendation on key competences. The object is to promote entrepreneurship education policy and support the introduction of the entrepreneurial mindset and skills as key competences in lifelong learning. This effort will help ensure that VTE provision is more responsive to evolving labour market needs. Social partners are fully engaged and are providing support for cross curricular and extracurricular activities. Key to the developments in this area is promoting awareness of entrepreneurship and developing the skills and knowledge needed for self-employment.

To conclude, cooperation and partnership between education and business is paramount for the promotion of a more innovative, entrepreneurial and effective VTE system. Existing strengths in cooperation with key sectors provide good examples for wider education-business cooperation. An exchange of know-how on good practice and cooperation could be considered. The potential of the NGO sector for piloting projects in innovative areas of development should be supported, but clear policies for eventual mainstreaming should be built in to all projects. Finally, Lebanon's effort to develop policies and actions in line with the provisions of the Euro-Mediterranean Enterprise Charter for entrepreneurial learning should be continued.

⁶http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/international/files/2008_report_charter_en.pdf

Annex 1: VTE system: scope, legal and institutional frameworks, and additional data

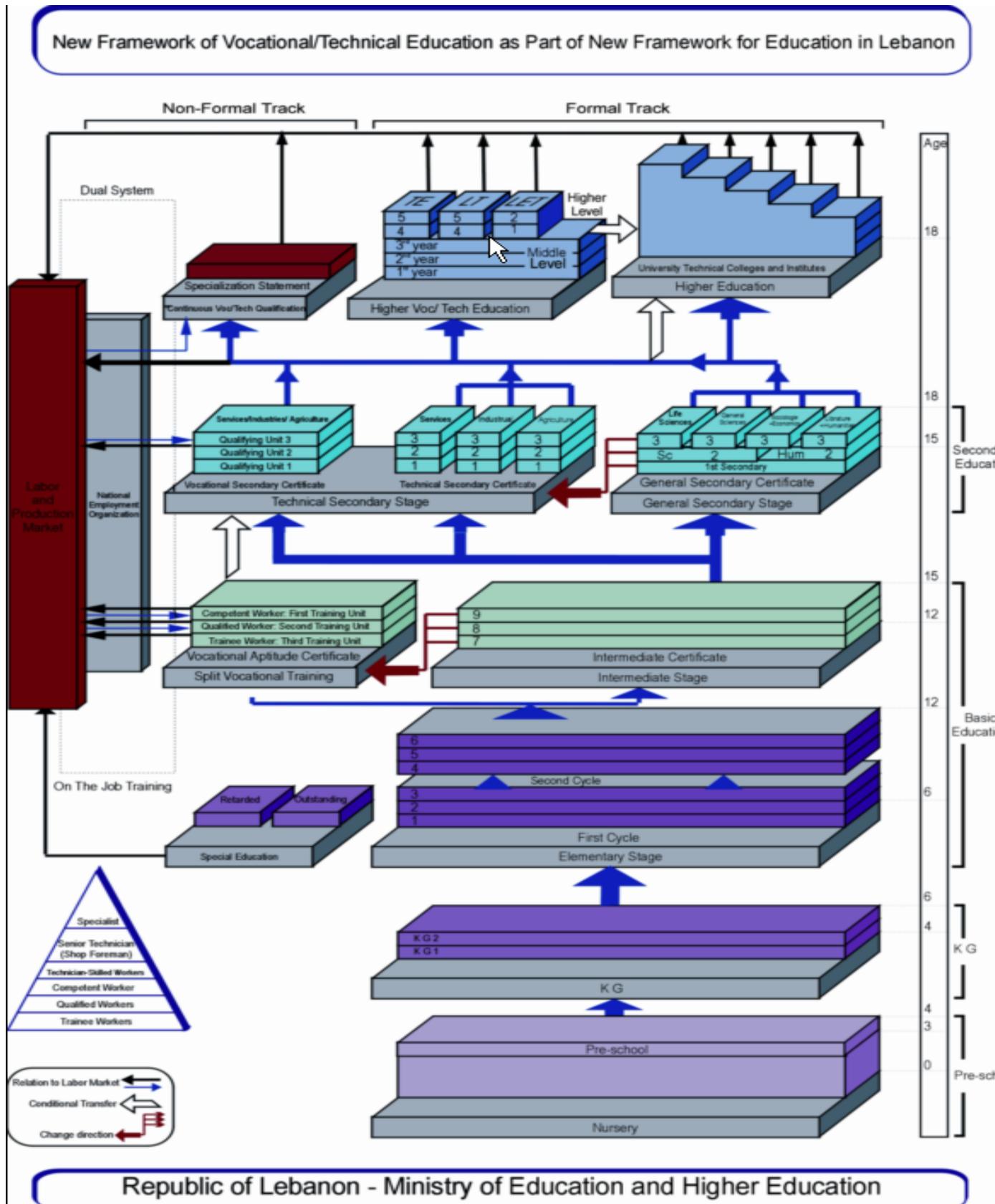


Table 1: Composition of focus groups coordinated by Dr Soubhi Abou Chahine

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 Lebanese Industrialists	Dr Aaref Sofi	Director of TEMPUS Project
Mr Maher Khatib	Ministry of Industry	Dr Shafik Mokbil	Antonine 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*		

*Institut Européen de Coopération et de Développement

1. Overview of the Lebanese VTE system

1.1 Administration, structure and governance

The Lebanese VTE system is a government-managed system based on national civil service rules and regulations. The system is managed by a central administration with the standard organisational profile of all government departments. VTE has been seen as a parallel system to the general education stream capable of providing education to school dropouts, the socially underprivileged and individuals who wish to acquire a trade to facilitate quick entry into the labour market.

Current legislation governing VTE in Lebanon restricts the contribution of national bodies and stakeholders to the development of policies and strategies. The highly centralised governance model and the absence of any legal framework that would open VTE to investment isolates VTE schools from the surrounding community. Stakeholder participation is very limited, and planning is done by the public administration. The following are the key bodies involved in the operations and management of VTE.

- The DGVTE, which is part of the MEHE, manages the VTE system in the public and private sectors through the following departments:
 - Management and implementation
 - Technical
 - Accounting and auditing
 - Vocational training
 - Control and exams

- Information systems and statistics
- The regional educational departments (schools, institutes, training centres).

These departments are severely understaffed with only about 90 staff in an framework with capacity for 247.

- The Higher Council for VTE is an advisory body chaired by the Minister. Its members represent the various education sectors in the country, other ministries, public administration bodies and the private sector. The role of the council is to formulate policy and development strategies for the VTE sector.
- The Curricula Committee is composed of civil servants and chaired by the Director General of VTE. The committee manages the curriculum development process. Its operations are mainly administrative and have no links to the private or productive sectors.
- The internal fund is a fund established to support schools. The budget surplus of large schools is allocated to the fund to support smaller schools. The managing board is chaired by the Director General and composed of the heads of the DGVTE departments.

The current structure of VTE in Lebanon, which is adapted from the French system, comprises two main areas.

- Vocational education develops mainly manual skills corresponding to specific trades and is subdivided into three strands on two levels:
 - level 1 (age group 11-14) leads to the CAP certificate and qualifies students to move on to the second level;
 - level 1 (age group 12-16) leads to the BP after two years of study;
 - level 2 (age group 15-20) leads to the DS Certificate after three years of study.
- Technical education, which mainly concerns the academic knowledge required for certain trades and professions, is subdivided into three levels:
 - level 1 (age group 15-20) leads to the BT after three years of study;
 - level 2 (age group 18-22) leads to the TS after three years of study;
 - level 3 (age group 21-25) leads to the Licence Technique after two years of study.

1.2 Facilities

The VTE system serves about 109 000 regular students and trainees, 41% of whom are in public schools (DGVTE Annual Report, 2010). and the rest are in Private schools. Most students graduating from the VTE system have obtained a certificate relating to a special program or a BT or TS qualification. This group represents 96% of the total population of VTE graduates (unpublished VTE data). These programs are supposed to qualify graduates to integrate effectively into the labour market at different levels. The following is a brief analysis of the breakdown.

BT graduates: In 2009, of the approximately 10 500 students who sat the BT national examination in 36 specialisations, 5815 (43%) graduated and 57% failed. It is estimated that 65% of graduates move on to higher technical education and university education.

A brief analysis of the composition of the student population in BT programs reveals the following:

- About half graduates are clustered in specialisations for which there is little market demand (accounting and computing, sales and commerce etc.)
- 12.3 % of graduates are in seven industrial disciplines for which there is high market demand;

- the industrial dual system BT is more efficient than the regular BT in terms of graduation rate (74% and 32% respectively);
- 1 477 students (35% of total graduates) graduated from 31 specialisations, with an average of 47 graduates per specialisation;
- 7 685 (57% of candidates) failed to graduate.

Table 2: Breakdown of students sitting BT exams

	Candidates	Graduates	% Graduating	% of all graduates
All specialisations	13458	5815	43%	100%
Nursing	1143	753	66%	12.9%
Sales and commerce	1525	329	21.5%	5.6%
Accounting and computing	4706	1957	41.6%	33.6%
Kindergarten teacher training	1296	717	55.3%	12.3%
Industrial BT	1542	496	32%	8.5%
Industrial dual system	116	86	74%	1.4%

TS graduates. In 2009, the TS graduation rate was better than the BT graduation rate, with 3 566 (54%) of TS candidates graduating in 26 specialisations. The data presented in Table 2 reflects the following statistics:

- 2 603 (64.4%) graduated from five non-industrial specialisations (continuations of BT programmes) for which there is scant market demand;
- 454 (8.3%) graduated from 4 medical technology specialisations and 432 (7.6%) from 7 industrial specialisations programmes, both with a high market demand;
- 692 (19.4%) graduated from 24 specialisations, an average of 29 graduates per specialisation;
- 2 994 (46% of candidates) failed to graduate;
- The range of specialisations offered at TS level failed to satisfy market demand in terms of quantity and trades.

Table 3: Breakdown of students sitting BT exams

Specialisation	Candidates	Graduates	% Graduating	% of all graduates
All specialisations	6560	3566	54%	100%
Nursing	1080	643	59.6%	18%
Administrative computing	777	288	37%	8%
Auditing and accounting	1380	547	39.6%	15.3%
Administration and marketing	451	245	54.3%	6.8%
Kindergarten teacher training	764	583	76.3%	16.3%
Medical sciences	454	297	61.4%	8.3%
Industrial	432	271	62.7%	7.6%

1.3 Involvement of main stakeholders

Stakeholders in VTE can be divided into two broad categories: public and private sector. Each sector can be further divided into two types of stakeholders: those acting directly in the VTE domain and those whose activities affect or are affected by the VTE system. Since VTE strategy is a matter of national interest, all stakeholders need to be included.

Public sector stakeholders

The Parliamentary Commission on Education: this is the legislative channel through which education laws and annual budgets are processed. It is also the highest planning and strategy development authority.

The DGVTE operating within the MEHE is responsible for the organisation and management of the whole sector. The DGVTE develops curricula, programs and courses and also administers national examinations and issues technical education degrees for the entire vocational and technical sector.

The CRDP. The CRDP is by law responsible for the development of strategy, curricula, programs and planning for the education sector as well as training, upgrading of human resources and all related tasks. The body comes under the jurisdiction of the MEHE. In practice, during the last ten years CRDP has concentrated on the general education sector using a hands-on approach to develop and update curricula and upgrade human resource programs.

The Directorate-General of Social Affairs. The mandate of this directorate in the Ministry of Social Affairs is, in addition to its budget, relates to financial support for NGOs and other institutions involved in social development, such as agencies offering VTE to needy groups in Lebanese society. As such, this directorate subsidises all or part of the tuition for VTE students at some of the largest non-profit NGO-operated schools, such as Al-Aamiliyah, Al-Makassed, Father Kortbawi Institution, and the Antonine Technical Schools.

The National Employment Office. The NEO, a part of the Ministry of Labour, has a broad mandate to act as a bridge between the labour market and employers and to provide data on the supply and demand of skills. It offers retraining and short vocational courses to the unemployed. In 2003, the NEO provided training for about 2 000 individuals by outsourcing training services to private non-profit VTE institutions.

The Council for Development and Reconstruction is an autonomous administration under the supervision of the Office of the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers. Its mandate is to plan, design, and carry out all infrastructure development works funded by international donors and agencies as well as some major nationally funded projects.

Private sector stakeholders

Non-profit NGOs operating private VTE schools. The largest private sector players in VTE education are the charitable and social work NGOs who operate non-profit schools as social development and poverty reduction activities. These NGOs are mostly community based, with strong regional and religious ties. The NGOs have been the developers of this sector since the 1950s, even before the government stepped in with the creation of DGVTE. The most important institutions are organised around sectarian communities: the Al-Aamiliyah (Shiia Muslim), the Al-Makassed (Sunni Muslim), the Father Kortbawi Institution (Christian), and the Antonine Technical Schools (Christian). Seven NGOs are working with DGVTE to establish public-private partnerships to run VTE schools, mostly in the South and Bekaa regions.

For profit private VTE schools. There are over 300 for profit schools, some with little more than a single classroom and a few instructors. The larger private for-profit VTE schools are concentrated around the major cities and population centres and offer highly competitive education. Some belong to European or North American networks and provide internationally recognised degrees and certificates guaranteed by recognised quality control systems and credentials.

Association of Lebanese Industrialists. This association groups some of the largest industries in Lebanon with some 1 200 members representing most of the country's industrial production and all of its industrial exports except for gold and gemstones. The association is directly involved with VTE as the main employer of its industrial specialist graduates. ALI cooperates with the DGVTE and other institutions with a view to improving system responsiveness and meeting the needs of industry in education, training, and retraining.

Specialised industry and professional associations. Employer associations representing diverse industrial sectors and subsectors, such as the agro-food industry, plastics, paper and packaging, stone and cement construction products, civil works contractors, wooden furniture, printing, clothing, chemicals, tanneries, leather goods, paints, and alcoholic beverages are involved in VTE to a greater or lesser degree, depending on their needs. The Syndicate of Lebanese Food Industries is probably the most proactive of these in translating needs into

action. It has established a public-private partnership to set up and run the first food technician's school in the Bekaa Valley. This project, however, has been interrupted due to institutional and political problems in the MEHE.

Chambers of commerce, industry, and agriculture. The regional chambers of commerce (Beirut and Mount Lebanon, North, South, and Bekaa Valley) and their head office in Beirut represent some 50 000 companies active in trade, services, and finance in addition to industrialists and agricultural producers. The chambers cater for the most immediate needs of their members and, as such, have been organising and offering training courses and continuing education on commercial practice, auditing, taxation and business practices through private sector service providers.

Professional groups. The professions in Lebanon are self-organised, operate as sovereign groups, and represent the interests of their membership. The main professions are engineers, physicians, pharmacists and dentists. These groups have strived without much success to provide the required connections between their needs and the supply of technical support staff. One example is the medical profession, which suffers because nurses and paramedical assistants are in short supply. The situation is similar in the engineering professions, where the normal ratio of three support staff to one professional is not attained, and unskilled labour or unqualified support staff is the rule.

Labour unions. Labour unions are organised by occupation or sector. They are all affiliated to the General Federation of Lebanese Workers (Confédération Générale des Travailleurs du Liban). Their main efforts in recent years have been focused on defending the basic rights of their membership, particularly with regard to benefits and salaries. The trade unions have not reached the level of maturity where they are active partners in the development of economic and educational policies with lifelong training components.

Private general education schools. As potential suppliers of the VTE stream, these institutions play an important role. However, to date they have not shown any interest in strategy or the challenges faced by the education system.

Table 4: Statistical references:

Country fiche for Torino process country papers							
	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	EU average, latest year available
Population, total	3772283.0	4081594.0	4125896.0	4162450.0	4193758.0		497649125
Dependency rates (%): 0-14 as % of working age population		42.17	40.94	39.77	38.63		23
Dependency rates (%): 65+ as % of working age population		10.90	10.88	10.87	10.86		25.2 27 (w/b, euro area 2008)
Life expectancy, years	70.6	71.5	71.7	71.9	72.0		76.07 (males) 82.21 (females)
GDP/capita, PPP (US\$)	7571.4	9526.7	9785.2	10705.7	11776.9		25100 33452 (w/b, euro area 2008)
GDP by economic sector (%)	7.28 (agriculture) 23.68 (industry) 69.04 (services)	6.22 (agriculture) 23.08 (industry) 70.70 (services)	6.70 (agriculture) 23.74 (industry) 69.56 (services)	6.41 (agriculture) 23.990 (industry) 69.60 (services)	5.46 (agriculture) 22.02 (industry) 72.51 (services)		2 (agriculture) 27 (industry) 72 (services)
Employment rates (%), total		(2004) 37		36			64.6
Employment rates (%), female		(2004) 15		16			58.6
Unemployment rates (%), total		(2004) 8		9			8.9
Unemployment rates (%), female		(2004) 10		10			8.8
% of 25-64 years old having participated in Lifelong Learning, total							42.00
Gross enrolment rate, upper secondary			72.91	74.31	74.69		110.88
Participation in VET in % of upper secondary			25	25	27		49.94
Students/Teachers ratios in VET (%) (ISCED 3)							
Students/Teachers ratios in general education (%) (ISCED 3)							12.17
Private education as % of total (ISCED 3), VET			57.53	54.61	56.90		12.58
Private education as % of total (ISCED 3), general			48.46	48.79	51.56		12.69
Public expenditure on education as % of GDP	2.0	2.6	2.8	2.6	2.0		5.04 (s)
Percentage of the population aged 25 to 64 having completed at least upper secondary education							71.5

Table 5: Youth unemployment

Country	Year	Youth unemployment rate (%) 15-24 year-olds			Total unemployment rate (%)
		F	M	Total	
Albania	2001	27.1	41.6	35.5	22.7
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2007	62.3	55.4	58.6	29
Croatia	2008	27.2	18.5	21.9	8.4
Montenegro	2008			30.5	16.8
Turkey	2008	18	18.1	18.1	9.4
Egypt	2005	62.2	23.3	34.1	8.7**
Jordan	2007	47.8	23.7	28.3	12.4
Syria	2003	33.1	15.6	19.5	10.3
Lebanon	2004	--	--	20.9	--
Palestine	2007	42.6	34	35.3	26
Algeria	2004	46.3	42.8	43.4	13.8
Morocco	2007	16.1	18.2	17.6	9.6
Tunisia	2005	29.3	31.4	30.7	14.2

Source: ILO-KILM, Montenegro: CPESSEC Statistical Bulletin 2008 No:2, Jordan: Statistical Dept.

Table 6: Activity rate

Activity rate (age 15 years and above)

Number in actual labour force	1 108 000
Number in total labour force	1 202 000
Economic activity rate: residents	44.0%
Economic activity rate: males	68.9%
Economic activity rate: females	20.4%

Source: The National Human Development Report, Lebanon 2008-2009, UNDP

Human development indicators and adult literacy rate

Lebanon was ranked 83 on the UNDP 2009 Human Development Indicators scale. The adult literacy rate in 2007, calculated as a percentage of the population aged 15 and over, was 89.6%. The female adult literacy rate over the period 1997-2007 was 86.0%, while the male adult literacy rate was 93.4%⁸.

⁸ The National Human Development Report, Lebanon 2008-2009, UNDP

Table 7: Some education indicators

Combined gross enrolment ratio in education (%), 2007	78.0%
Current public expenditure on primary education per pupil (USD purchasing power parity)	402
Public expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure, 2000-2007	9.6%
Primary school enrolment: gross % of school age population, male	97.98%
Primary school enrolment: gross % of school age population, female	102.34%
Secondary school enrolment: gross % of school age population, male	74.91%
Secondary school enrolment: gross % of school age population, female	81.60%

Source: The National Human Development Report, Lebanon 2008-2009, UNDP; and UNFPA

Distribution of residents by educational level (population aged 4 and over)

Illiterate	7.8%
Literate	4.1%
Pre-school	3.3%
Elementary	32.9%
Intermediate	21.8%
Secondary	15.0%
University	13.4%
Other	1.7%

School enrolment rates by age cohort

5-9	98.6%
10-14	95.2%
15-19	71.1%
20-24	34.2%
25-29	6.8%

Percentage of students in education system (population aged 15 and over)

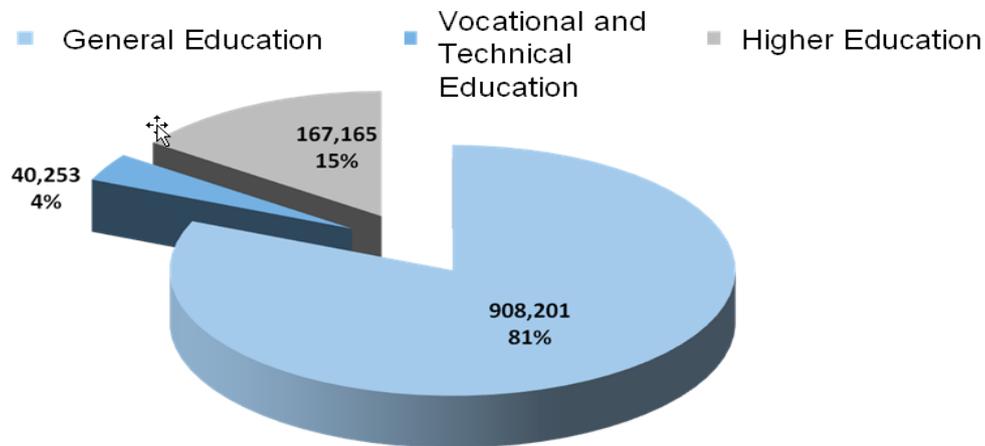
Private institutions	53.2%
Public institutions	44.6%

No data was found on the breakdown of the adult population (aged 25 and above) into low, medium and high educational attainment levels.

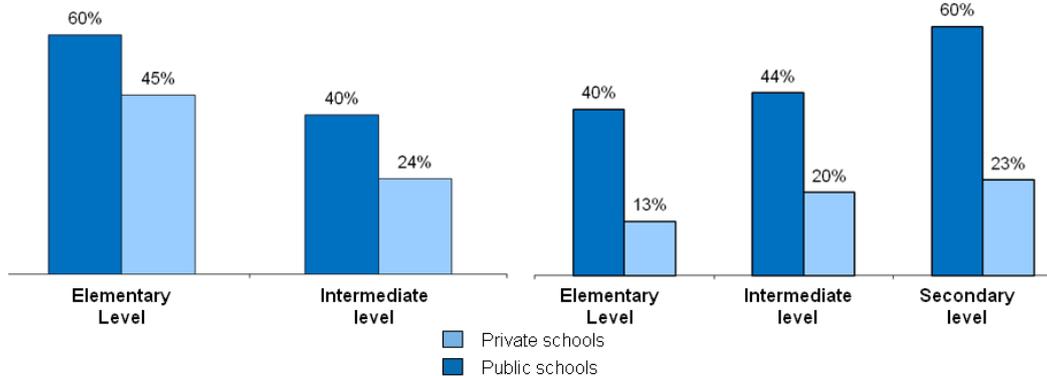
The main conclusions that can be drawn with respect to the country's educational system are as follows:

- the division of the educational system into private and public sectors is not functioning efficiently because the two sectors are working in parallel rather than generating synergies;
- high levels of government spending on education have failed to improve the quality of public education;
- the private sector, despite its inconsistency, provides a higher quality of education than the public sector;
- private individuals (through their use of the private educational sector) bear a high proportion of the cost of education;
- gender disparities in educational achievement are virtually nonexistent, but women still face difficulties in translating this achievement into greater participation in the labour force;
- marked disparities between regions in educational attainment are due to the low quality of education in remote and rural areas and not to a shortfall in the number of schools;
- people with disabilities are not being successfully integrated into mainstream education in spite of legislation guaranteeing them their right to quality education in an enabling environment.

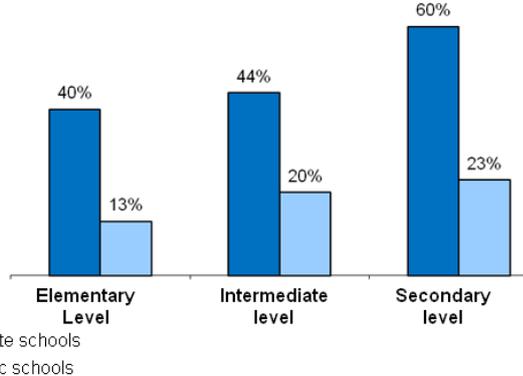
Total Number of Students According to Education Sectors 2007-2008



Student repetition rates 2008-2007



Over-age student rates 2008-2007



Results

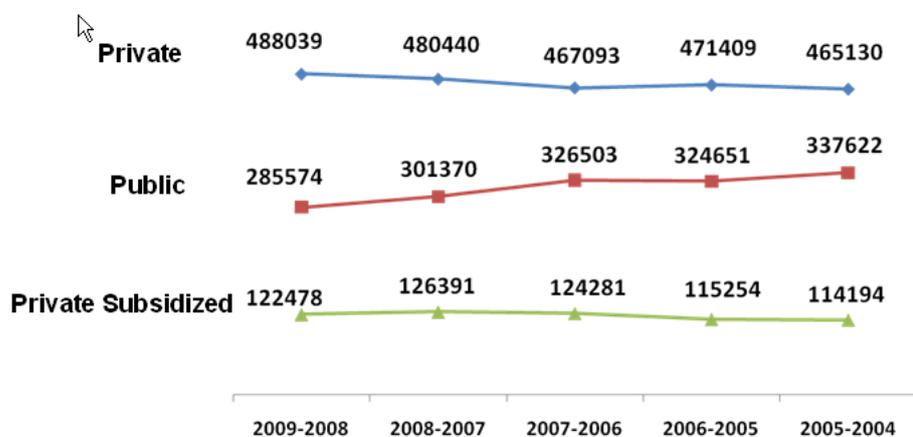
High repetition and drop out rates result in:

- Over spending on an education system that scores low on academic indicators.
- A negative impact on economic growth which results from the lack of use of students' potential and from students leaving school without qualifications.

Source: ECRD Statistics 2007-2008

Figure sourced from: Quality education for growth. National education strategy framework and education sector development plan (general education): 2010-2015, MEHE, Beirut, 2010.

Number of Students in Schools 2004-2009



Comments

- Some of the reasons for the decrease in the number of students in public schools are:
 - Low achievement rates in public sector
 - A relative weakness in foreign languages
 - The absence of extracurricular activities

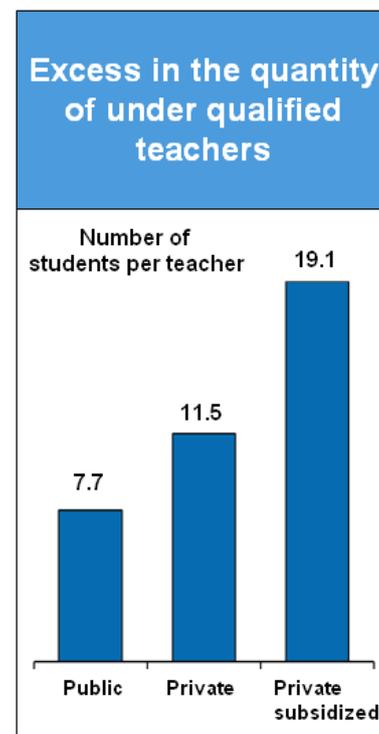
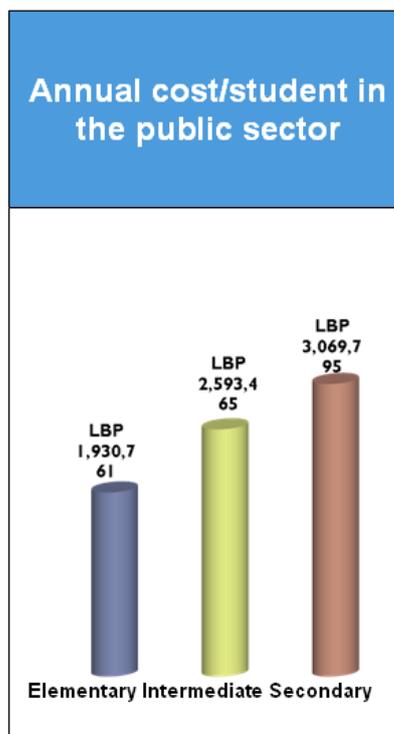
Results ■ An increase in the number of students in the private and private subsidized sectors, compared to a decrease in the number of students in the public sector

Source: ECRD Statistics 2007-2008

Figure sourced from: Quality education for growth. National education strategy framework and education sector development plan (general education): 2010-2015, MEHE, Beirut, 2010.

Comments

- Spending on public education sector is relatively inefficient due to inefficient resource distribution and a high number of teachers.
- Education sector administrative laws were issued in 1959
- The absence of an efficient system for resource distribution and planning
- The absence of efficient IT systems and trustworthy sources of information
- Discrepancies among educational data provided by different sources.



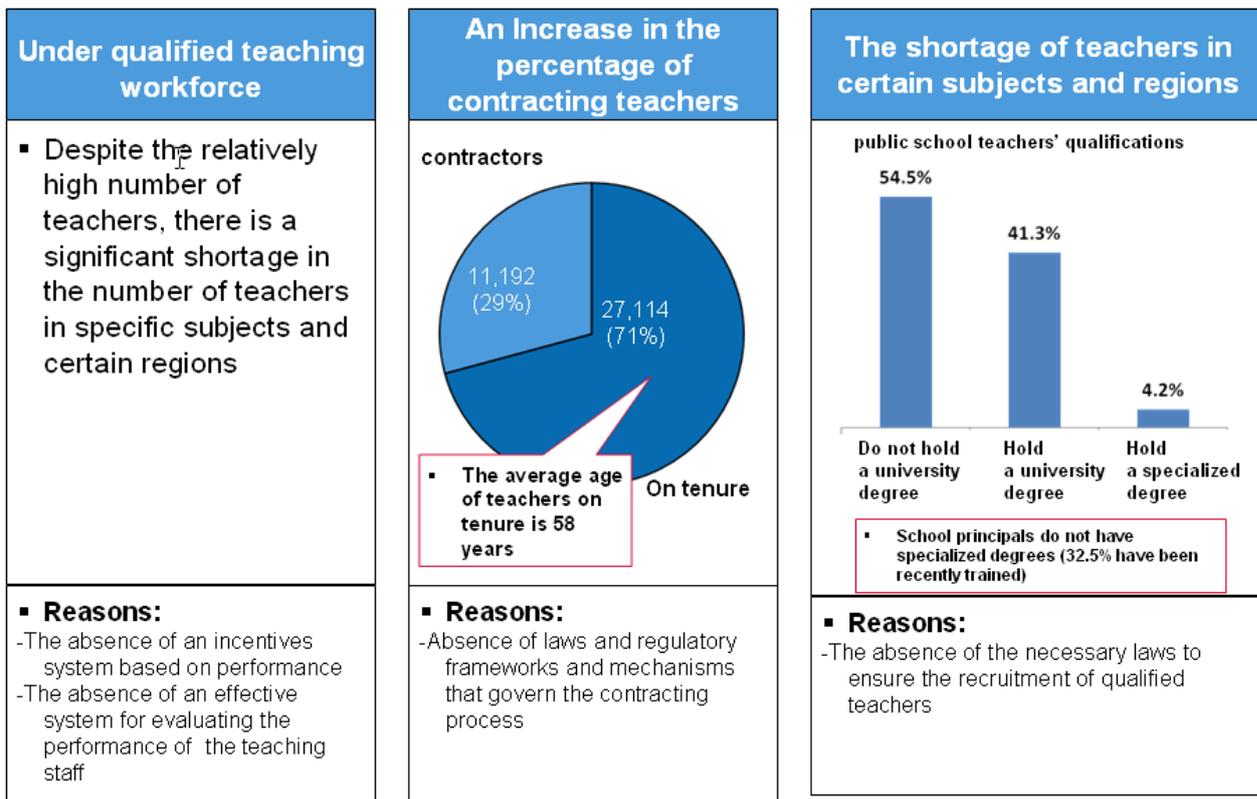
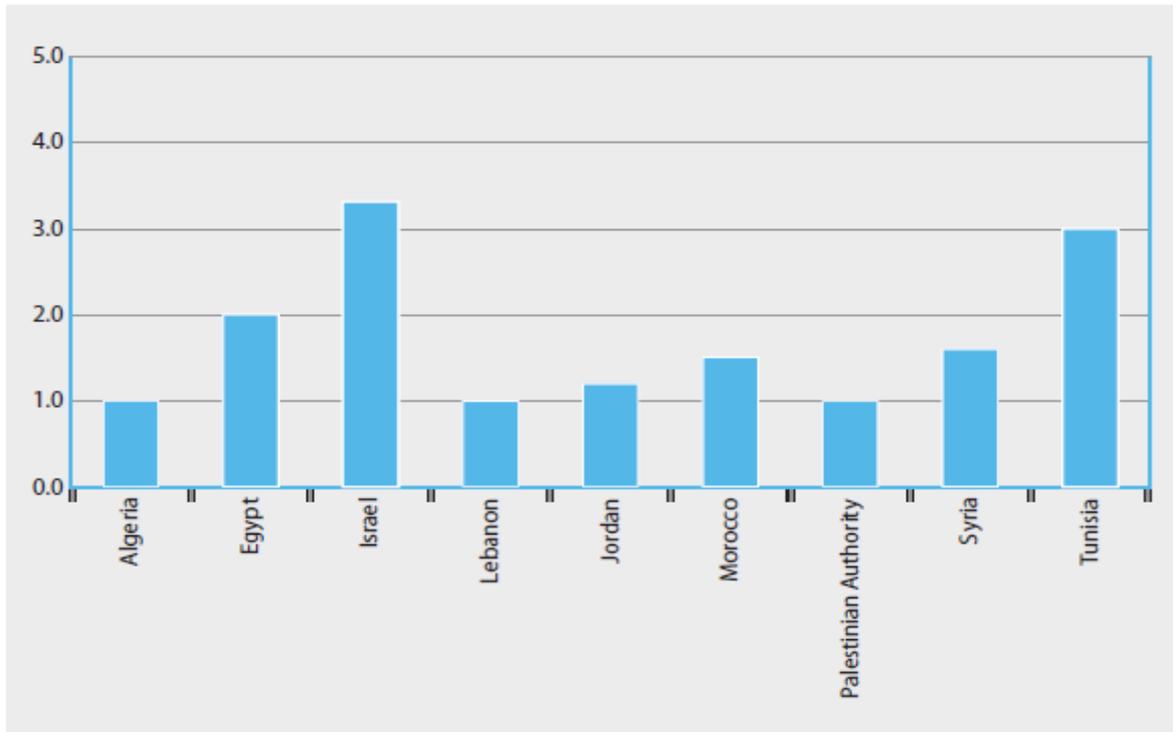


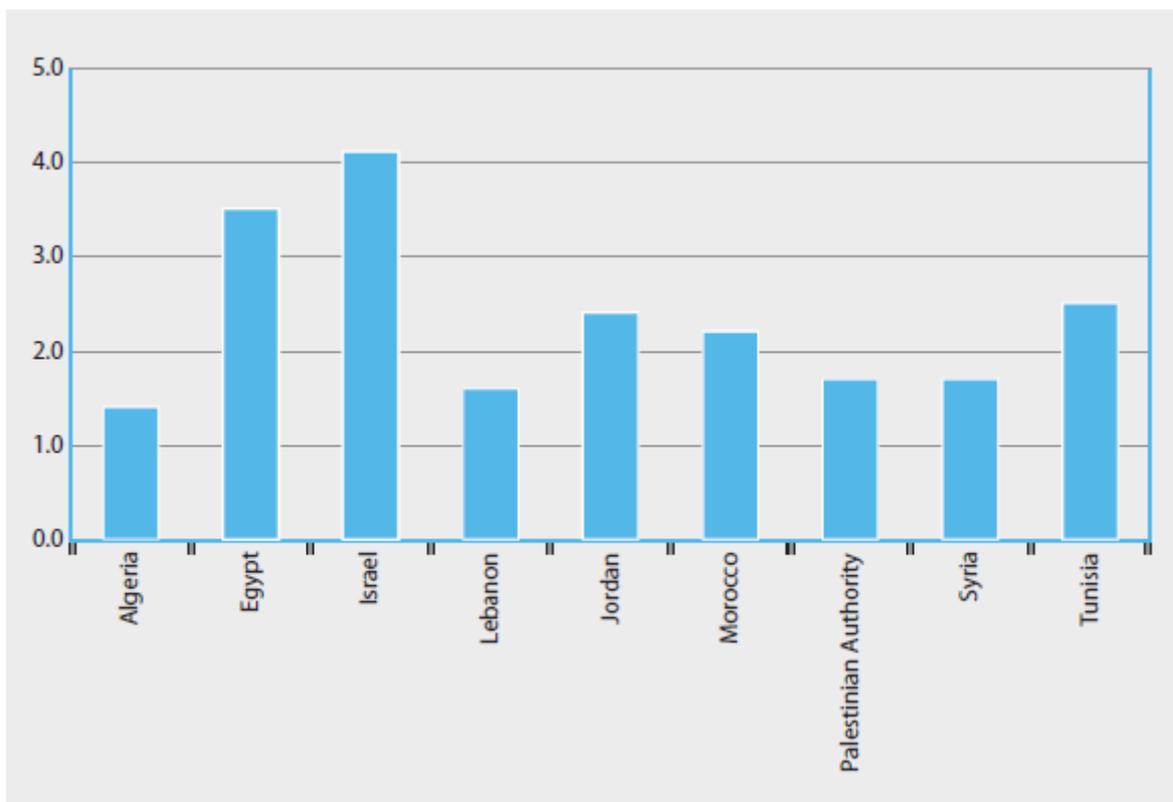
Figure sourced from: Quality education for growth. National education strategy framework and education sector development plan (general education): 2010-2015, MEHE, Beirut, 2010.

Entrepreneurial learning and entrepreneurship skills development

Report on the implementation of the Euro-Med Charter for Enterprise 2008 enterprise policy assessment EC, OECD, ETF Oct 2008 Meda Benchmarking for Dimension 2 (education and training for entrepreneurship)



Meda benchmarking for dimension 3 (improved skills)



Annex 2: Notable practices and experiences

Entrepreneurship in career guidance counselling

1. Background

In the context of Lebanon's new education strategy and based on prior work in the framework of the MEDA-ETE Education and Training for Employment project and the Euro-Mediterranean Enterprise Charter, ETF has followed-up one component that specifically addresses career guidance and counselling. More specifically, ETF is supporting the MEHE's Guidance and Counselling Directorate to develop entrepreneurship as a core feature of lifelong career guidance services, building on previous work that included training careers guidance counsellors, good practice exchange and the introduction of new methodologies and instruments used in career guidance in EU and neighbouring countries. The project focuses particularly on students in primary and lower secondary level education.

The project is particularly driven by the EU recommendations on key competences and it paves the way for the introduction of entrepreneurship as a key competence throughout the Lebanese educational system within a lifelong learning perspective. The progress of the project has been particularly ensured by the know-how and work of a Swedish partner (Open for Business) and the collaboration of INJAZ-Lebanon.

2. Aim and objective

The overall aim of the project was to improve the employability of young people in Lebanon through enhanced career guidance services.

The specific objective was to develop the awareness and understanding of the national career guidance services and to build their capacity to promote entrepreneurship as a career option for Lebanese youth.

3. Activities implemented

Capacity building workshops

Two capacity building workshops (4 and 3 days respectively) were successfully implemented. More than 20 career guidance counsellors and national experts from INJAZ were trained in Open for Business methodologies and tools for entrepreneurial learning.

- *Business for a day*: how to generate and apply an entrepreneurial idea
- *Pyramid*: the different levels of entrepreneurial attitudes and skills
- *Continuum*: step by step towards new goals (pre-aspiring, aspiring, need an idea, opportunity identification, planning and business start-up)
- *The five paths*: peers, specific knowledge, planning, experience and mentoring
- *Just do it*: I hear and forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand.

The programme also featured a general update on the career guidance situation in the EU and neighbouring countries as well as on new methodologies and instruments, including best practice.

Pilot exercise

On the basis of the training delivered and in order to apply the practice-oriented modules, the career guidance counsellors trained a pilot group of pupils in Beirut-Jdeideh (2 groups of 60 students in the 13-14 year age group) on the given modules.

Revision of the training module

In collaboration with the Guidance and Counselling Directorate, the training material was adapted specifically to the Lebanese context and the modules were integrated into the existing training programs for career guidance counsellors. The methodology and materials will be extended across the all general education in the country.

National dissemination event

A national dissemination day took place in Beirut on 19 January 2010, at which the results of the project were presented and next step was considered.

4. Project spin-off

One key result of this project has been a greater understanding and appreciation by the wider education community, beyond career guidance personnel, of the importance and potential of a greater effort to promote entrepreneurship (entrepreneurial mindset and skills) as a key competence among Lebanese young people.

A second issue is that the project attracted the interest of the Italian government and on the basis of this interest a more developed support framework for entrepreneurship education in Lebanon has been agreed by the two governments. In particular, the Lebanese education authorities are now poised to develop entrepreneurship as a key competence across all general education including VTE.

Thirdly, the Lebanese careers guidance project has already attracted international attention at an international good practice fair in Brussels (December 2009), where the Lebanese good practice was considered pioneering and was disseminated through representatives from education and business from some 33 countries.

Finally, the project activities and follow up activities will directly contribute to Lebanon's performance with the entrepreneurship education dimension of the Euro-Mediterranean Enterprise Charter.

5. Contact

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