

# TORINO PROCESS 2014

# LEBANON



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the war in 2006, Lebanon has been engaged in institutional reconstruction and decision-making processes targeted on achieving a balance of power between religious groups and providing sufficient stability for an economic and social relaunch. Unfortunately, the security situation has deteriorated in the past two years with consequences for various aspects of socio-economic life, affecting the continuity and stability of political institutions, operations in the business sector and economic development. Decision making on policy is difficult, if not impossible, with the main focus placed on the issues that require immediate action, linked primarily to security and peace keeping. Institutions are weakened by the ongoing lack of an elected government and the continual turnover of technical administrations. The unpredictable future outlook presents a further challenge to the formulation of long-term visions for economic or social development.

From 2011 onwards, the Syrian crisis has also had an impact, adding serious pressure onto various socio-economic aspects, pushing an already fragile socio-political balance even further off centre.

Education in Lebanon is very much valued by the population, and parents make great efforts to provide their children with the best input possible. The Constitution attributes a key role to education in socio-economic development, stating that 'the even development among regions on the educational, social, and economic levels shall be a basic pillar of the unity of the state and the stability of the system' (Preamble, Section g). The document further states that: 'Education is free insofar as it is not contrary to public order and morals and does not interfere with the dignity of any of the religions or creeds. There shall be no violation of the right of religious communities to have their own schools provided they follow the general rules issued by the state regulating public instruction' (Chapter I, Article 10).

Lebanese students generally have a high level of education, but the high youth unemployment (estimated 24%) has a strong impact on both economic development and inclusiveness. Many young people still aspire to move abroad, seeking better jobs, more desirable working conditions and more promising future perspectives.

Vocational and technical education (VTE) has traditionally received less attention and resources than general education, limiting its reform potential and ability to offer relevant and high quality skills for the labour market.

A VTE action plan was approved in 2011, but the current socio-political instability and limited resources (both financial and human) have resulted in delayed execution. The plan provides a clear sign of renewed interest in VTE and constitutes a potential basis for more structured discussion with an extended group of VTE actors. This could lead to the development of a more comprehensive and consolidated long-term strategy for reform.

Partnership and participation in VTE governance remain limited. The system is highly centralised, schools have little autonomy and social partners are not involved in decision making linked to skills development.

The Lebanese labour market is characterised by low activity and employment rates, limited female participation, a large informal sector, a high influx of foreign workers and a large number of skilled Lebanese people seeking and obtaining employment abroad.

Some structural challenges also impact on the labour market, including: (i) a lack of policies to stimulate the productive sector; (ii) social protection policies in need of revision and enforcement; (iii) a lack of mechanisms to match skills demand and offer; and (iv) a lack of employment policies.

The services sector is the most dominant in Lebanon, followed by industry and agriculture. However between 2004 and 2009 there has been an 8% decrease in the industrial sector, linked more to falling production than workforce availability, and a similar trend has been seen in agriculture (-2%).

Migration is another key factor influencing labour market development and increasing social pressure.

Work-related immigration has been a long-standing feature in Lebanon with generally low-skilled immigrant workers mainly from neighbouring countries. Political immigration has predominantly consisted of Palestinians, but they have now been outnumbered by Syrian refugees.

Emigration is also an established element. Emigrants are generally educated young Lebanese looking for opportunities abroad, usually in the European Union (EU) or the United States. The true extent of emigration is difficult to assess as no official data is available.

Lebanese society and education is characterised by inequalities. Young people from better-off families can afford to reach higher education and better quality education and often have the opportunity to move abroad. Young people from poorer families have fewer chances to access quality education and young VTE graduates find themselves contending with competition from informal workers, many of whom are immigrants willing to accept lower wages and poor working conditions. Young people in Lebanon recognise that one of the key obstacles to accessing the labour market is the role of family ties and personal contacts in the job-finding process.

The persistent mismatch between education offer and labour market demand for skills has an even more negative effect on employability. The disconnect between the education and business sectors and the lack of regularly updated labour market information present key challenges to overcome in bridging this gap.

The VTE system should consider measures encouraging resource use to enhance internal efficiency and, in particular, must set standards on quality of teaching and learning. Schools and school directors should be given greater autonomy, allowing them to more closely meet the local demands of their communities. Business sector involvement in VTE system governance should be encouraged, increasing shared responsibility for and engagement in skills development.

Challenges highlighted in the report and findings from previous Torino process reports are used as the basis for the key recommendations provided at the end of the report.

# INTRODUCTION

The European Training Foundation (ETF) Torino Process works to produce an evidence-based analysis of vocational education and training (VET) policies through the participation of major stakeholders. The first round was launched in 2010 and there have been two further rounds since, the last of these in 2014.

Lebanon has engaged in all three rounds of the Torino process. The key recommendations drawn from the 2010 process led to preparation and agreement of the VTE action plan. This was disseminated in 2011, along with the Torino Process findings, and was used as a basis for assessment in 2012.

The most recent round, in 2014, has been implemented with an almost entirely different group of counterparts and focus group members than in the previous rounds, with the obvious negative impact on process continuity. However, the process has been introduced to the new focus group and discussions have taken place with key VTE actors.

In 2014, an ETF initiative organised youth discussion groups on topics linked to employability and education opportunities for young people. The results of these discussions have been referred to throughout the report and the full details can be seen in Annex.

As has been the case in previous rounds, the Torino process in Lebanon suffers from a lack of recent data. Most of the data used has been provided by the Central Administration of Statistics, donor databases or ETF calculations on the basis of existing data from these sources. As most of the data refer to 2009, and no later figures are available, progress has been difficult to assess. More recent data from other national and international sources has been used wherever possible.

We would like to thank all of the Lebanese stakeholders who contributed to this report, especially the youth associations and young people who took part in the youth discussion groups. We would also like to thank the EU Delegation, the Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO (contact point for the Anna Lindh Foundation) and the European Institute for Cooperation and Development (IECD) for their contributions toward the preparation and organisation of the youth discussion groups.

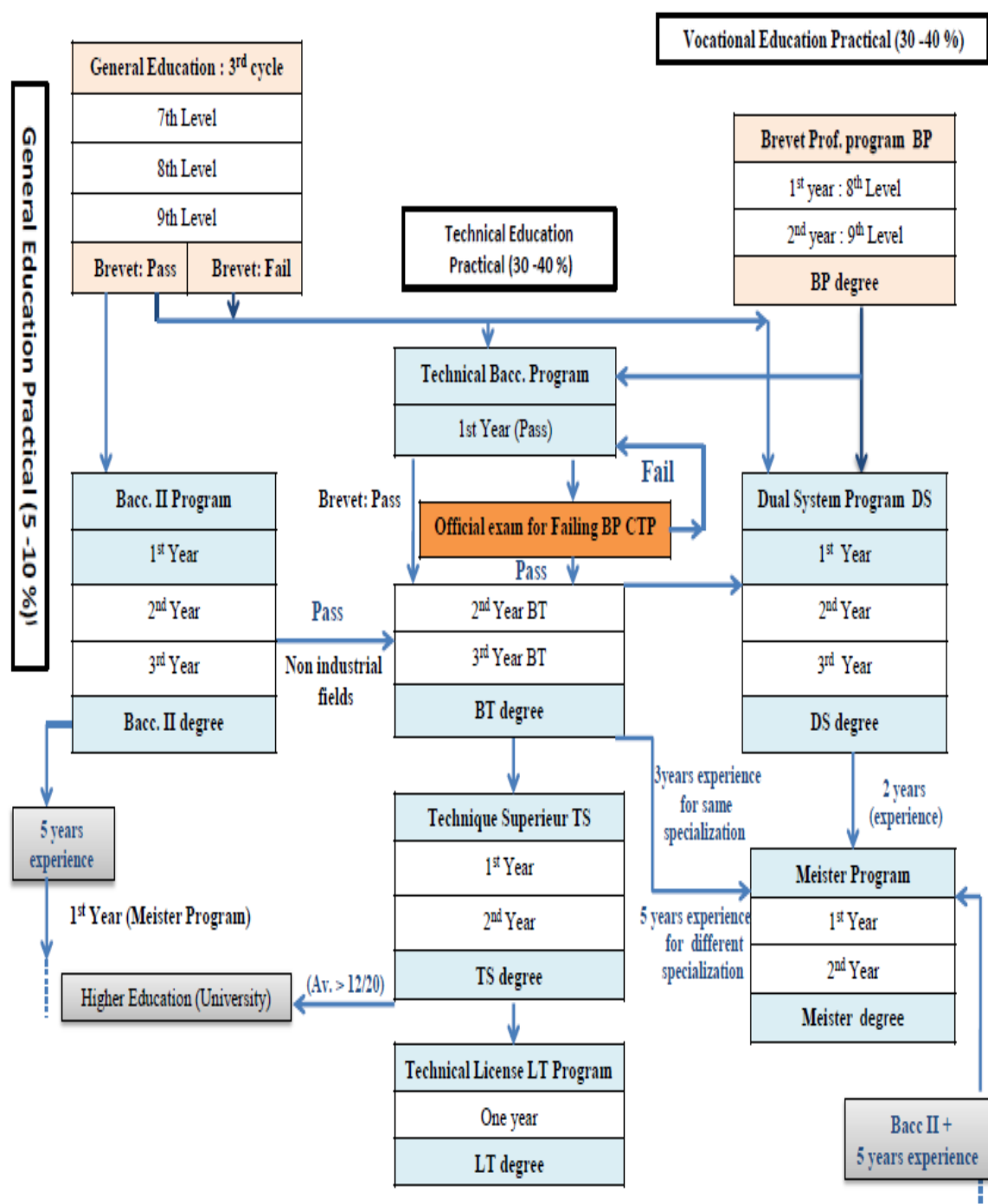
# 1. VISION FOR THE NATIONAL VET SYSTEM

This section provides a brief introduction to the VET system, including information on the strategic goals, principles and orientation for future development, and also assesses its capacity for reform.

## 1.1 Introduction to the VET system

The VET system in Lebanon is known under the title of vocational and technical education (VTE). This sector is primarily a Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) responsibility under the Directorate-General for VTE (DG VTE).

### STRUCTURE OF THE VTE SYSTEM IN LEBANON



The DG VTE is responsible for both initial and continuing VET (IVET and CVET). However, in reality, the CVET offer within the DG VTE is limited. The National Employment Office organises accelerated courses that are outsourced to public or private providers as well as non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The Ministry of Labour provides some training through the vocational training centres and the Ministry of Social Affairs also organises courses for adults or for specific target groups. The CVET offer is varied, highly fragmented and usually organised on an ad-hoc basis.

The formal VTE system provides programmes for the following qualifications:

- brevet professionnel,
- bac technique,
- technicien supérieur,
- licence technique,
- dual system,
- dual system meister.

Decree No 8590 was approved in Lebanon in 2013 in an effort to reform VTE fields, phases and certificates. The principle aims were to achieve better alignment with international practice, to create more flexible pathways between general and higher education and to bring in a credit system for VTE that has not yet been implemented. However, the VTE system still remains largely isolated from general and higher education, while the dual system and meister programme appear to have become even more cut off as a result of the decree. This apparently paradoxical situation results from the fact that pathways have been created onto these programmes, but no loops have been created back into the traditional (*technicien supérieur*-*licence technique*) levels of the VTE system for students who find the move too challenging.

The decree has also reduced the number of years of training included in the *technicien supérieur* and *licence technique* courses, leading to the need for programme adaptation that has also not yet been implemented despite this being a matter of urgency.

Students with the *technicien supérieur* qualification can move on to university with a grade average of 12/20 in the official certificate exam. Decree No 8590 also specifies additional requirements linked to academic regulations that demand a threshold number of hours and credits for university entry.

Certificates for the *licence technique*, technical teaching license, *technicien supérieur* and dual system meister are issued by the Minister of Education and Higher Education, while all other certificates are issued by the Director General for VTE.

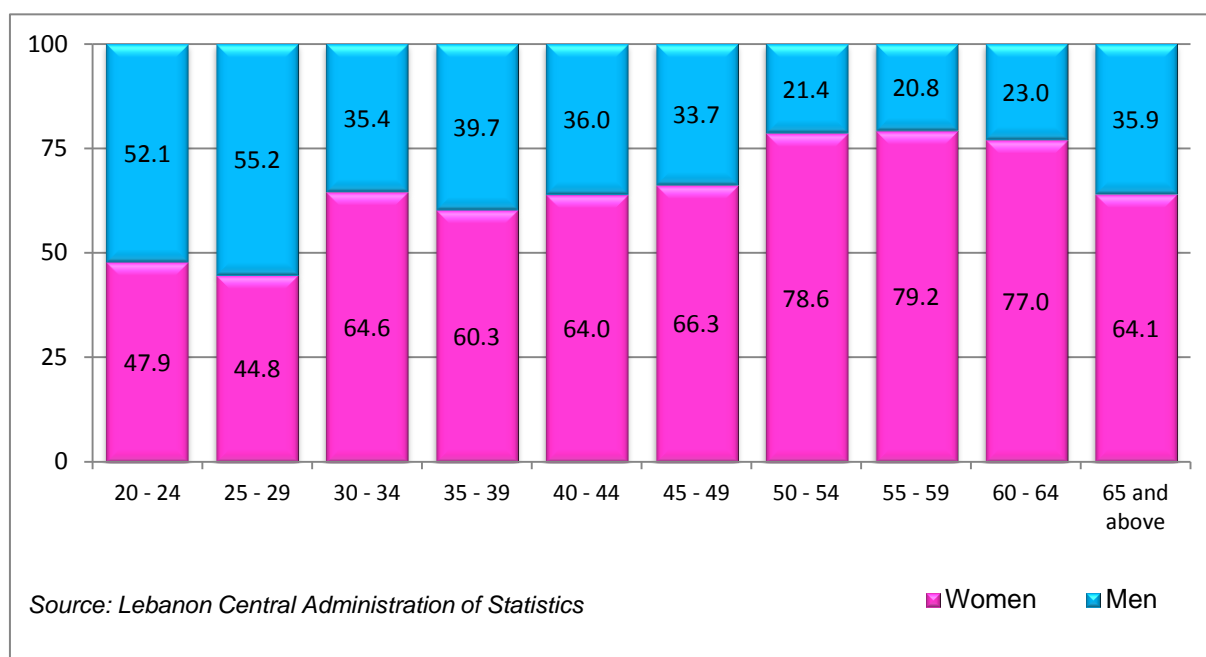
Other providers (private schools or training centres and NGOs) are entitled to issue the above certificates if they complete the MEHE accreditation process. Foreign certificates issued by the EU Member States or in the US can also be taken into consideration, rendering operation of the national qualifications system diverse and complex.

### Education levels, enrolment and trends

Data from 2009 indicate that 22.5% of the population aged 30-34 has tertiary level education. The distribution of adult literacy (age 10 and over) indicates that literacy levels are similar for men and women in the 25-29 age range (44.8% for women and 55.2% for men) while for the 60-64 age group the figures are 77% for women and a mere 23% for men, probably partly due to the difference in life expectancy for women and men, or the fact that women emigrate when young and return in their old age.



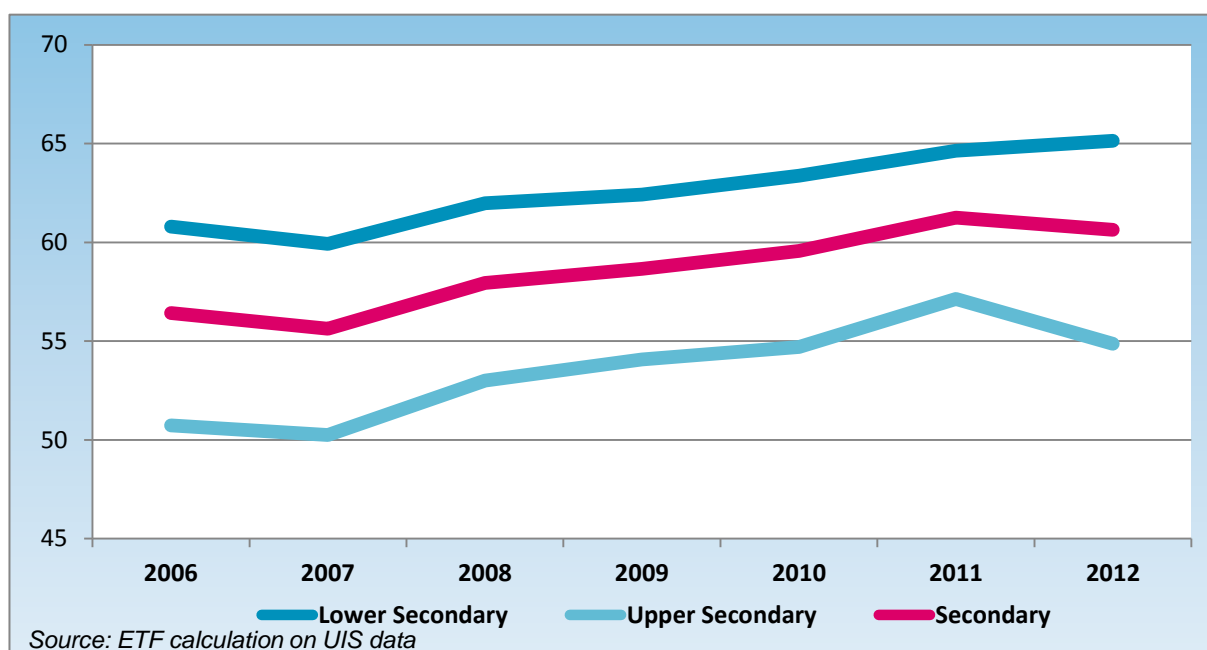
**FIGURE 1.1 DISTRIBUTION OF ADULT LITERACY BY SEX AND AGE, 2009 (%)**



Total expenditure on education represents 1.65% of GDP and 7.08% of the total government budget. These percentages are relatively low, and they also show a considerable reduction between 2006 and 2011, with the share of GDP falling almost 40% and the share of government expenditure dropped to less than 28%. Data referring to the proportion of expenditure by education level discriminate only between the crude categories of secondary and tertiary education, showing 34.9% going to the tertiary sector compared to just 15.5% for secondary. The share of expenditure on VTE is not given.

Lebanese education is characterised by a large proportion of private education at all levels. The share of private enrolment in secondary education is quite high and sits consistently at above 50%. Despite a slight dip in 2012, the trend is generally positive. The proportion of private enrolment is higher in lower secondary than in upper secondary education.

**FIGURE 1.2 SHARE OF PRIVATE ENROLMENT IN SECONDARY EDUCATION (%)**

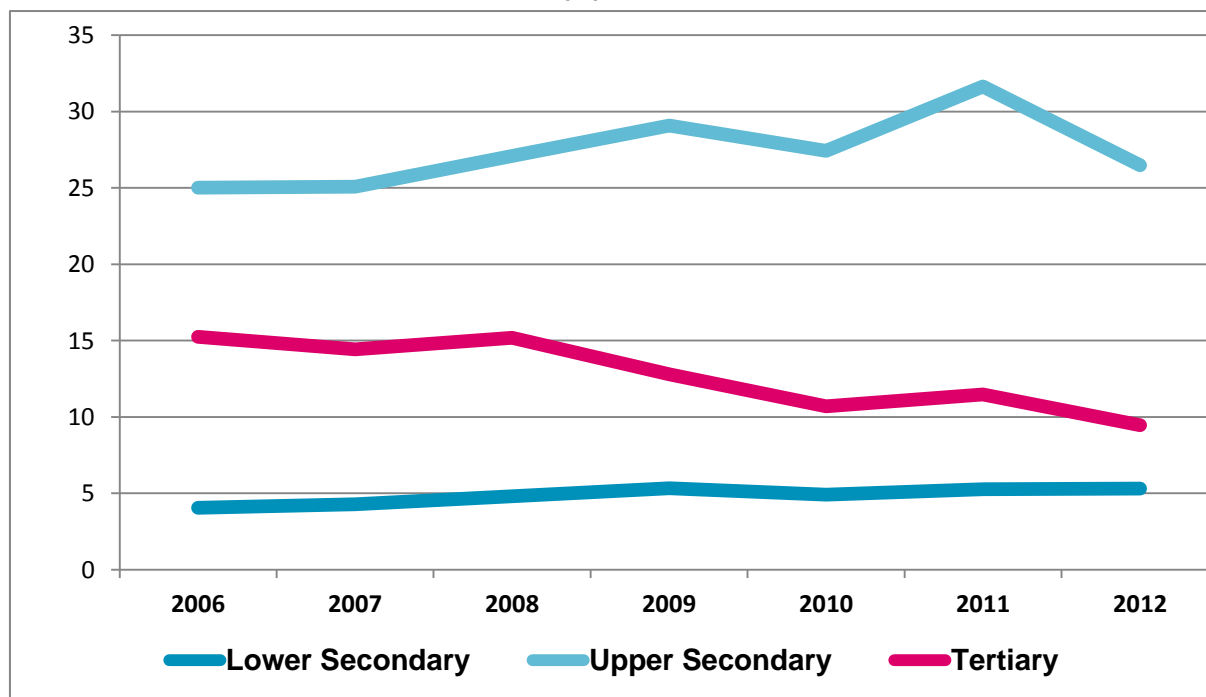


VET enrolment is higher in upper secondary than in lower secondary or tertiary education, with an average 25% of students in upper secondary choosing a VET programme.

Female participation in VET in Lebanon is generally high. Some 5.3% of all enrolments are in lower secondary level VET (ISCED 2), of which 31.2% are women. Upper secondary level VET (ISCED 3) accounts for 26.5% of enrolments, of which 42.8% are women, before enrolments drop to 9.5% in tertiary education, of which 57.1% are women<sup>1</sup>. A total 44.06% of VET students continue on from ISCED 3 to 5, perhaps due to the desire to continue on to university.

VET has retained approximately the same level of student enrolments over the years from 2006 with some very slight variations.

**FIGURE 1.3 SHARE OF VET ENROLMENTS (%)**



Source: ETF calculation based on IUS data

## 1.2 Vision for the VET system

There is currently no official national vision for the VTE system in Lebanon. In 2010, the Government of Lebanon approved the National Education reform Strategy which completely overlooked the VTE sector.

Until recently, just as is the case in many other countries, VTE has received less attention than general education as a broad trend and higher education in particular. As the previous edition of the Torino Process showed, and as the recent mapping of VET governance in Lebanon (ETF, 2014) has confirmed, VTE has a poor image within society, being mainly viewed as a place holder to fill a social gap or as a second choice for those students unable to keep up with the more academically-oriented education system.

Increased international and national attention on unemployment, particularly amongst the young, has pushed the issue of VTE up the priority list for the national agenda. In 2011, a strategic action plan was agreed for VTE reform, largely drawn from the outcomes and recommendations of the 2010 Torino Process in Lebanon. The action plan targets various areas of the VTE sector, although further

<sup>1</sup> Data refer to 2012 and they are ETF calculation based on UNESCO sources.

work is needed to make this operational. The current plan does not yet contain an agreed timetable, definitions of roles or details of the bodies responsible for implementation and execution.

Despite its shortcomings, the very existence of the plan is a sign that VTE is gaining in importance within the national debate on skills development. The current project requires further discussion and priority consolidation in close partnership with an enlarged group of VTE stakeholders, including the business sector, private VTE providers and civil society organisations. The latter group are particularly active in CVET.

The current lack of involvement of socio-economic actors results in an overly inward-looking focus. The concentration on internal efficiency should be complemented by reforms relating to links with the labour market that would prioritise the participation and engagement of other relevant actors.

As a discussion document, the plan provides a basis, but the process is currently stagnating. No one institution or body is responsible for steering execution, nor is any entity clearly accountable. Moreover the persistent socio-political instability in the country leads to a lack of continuity in policy decision making.

The institutional instability and lack of decision making creates mistrust from the side of the business sector, with actors doubting there is sufficient institutional capacity for reform. The business sector is generally reluctant to participate in joint debate with the government, while the younger generations repeatedly call for increased public institution support for good quality education and better opportunities for all as a necessary step in avoiding dispersal and emigration.

The overall security situation in the country and in the region as a whole means that the majority of socio-political energy is expended in dealing with immediate emergencies and crisis management; a situation that impacts on the overall country capacity for longer-term planning.

### 1.3 Capacity for innovation and change

VTE in Lebanon receives little in the way of financial and human resource capacity allocations as the entire sector was paid scant attention until recently. Consequently, the VTE sector faces a big challenge in finding the resources needed for innovation.

Additionally, the VTE system is highly centralised, with limited autonomy of VTE institutions, school directors and teachers to introduce change and innovation.

Although many individuals may have a drive for change and innovation, efforts are hampered by the current limited resources and lack of autonomy. The subjects offered, curricula, teaching hours and teacher contracts, are set centrally. Public schools are not allowed to advertise their courses unless they receive permission from the DG VTE central office.

There is no in-service teacher training and no obligation for teachers to receive training in pedagogical approaches before they start to teach. Teachers are recruited through a state examination, but fresh rounds of the exam have not been held for many years. Most teachers are on short-term contracts in unstable and precarious conditions. The system does not include any mechanisms to evaluate teacher performance and there are no incentives for good or innovative practice. Contractual terms for teachers and trainers have been a key issue of contention that has provoked several strikes during the school year 2013/14.

Tight financial resources and the lack of freedom in management of these, mean school directors have a limited remit in terms of innovation and change. Most of the resources are spent on basic school maintenance and the purchase of equipment. Only one school has been given permission to sell its products and to reinvest part of the profit.

## 1.4 Action and assessment of progress since 2010

A VTE system reform plan was drafted and agreed by MEHE and the DG VTE in 2010.

This plan has made limited progress, as the relevant institutions and actors do not feel accountable for its execution. One of the areas of reform involves the reorganisation of fields, certificates and phases with the VTE system. Other proposed reforms include the revision of contractual conditions for teachers, the development of a VTE credit system and the establishment of a VTE Quality Assurance Agency.

All of these proposals are at a standstill at the time of writing this report due to the political instability and as policy makers in Lebanon are concentrating their efforts on priorities linked to national security and peace keeping.

The VTE action plan and regular assessment of the system through the Torino process can, however, be looked upon as a starting point in the creation of a consolidated platform for exchange among VTE actors. Increased ownership of the process must be encouraged in order to advocate high-level decision making on the allocation of appropriate resources for reform. The business sector, in turn, should seek progressively greater involvement and engagement in VTE system governance.

## 2. EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY IN ADDRESSING ECONOMIC AND LABOUR MARKET DEMAND

This section looks at the broader economic context in which VTE operates and assesses how VTE is responding to the needs and expectations of the economy and labour market. Information is provided on economic and labour market factors shaping the demand for skills; the mechanisms for identifying skills demand and matching skills offer with demand; and the influence of the VTE system on skills demand, particularly in the promotion of entrepreneurship.

### 2.1 Economic and labour market factors shaping the demand for skills

#### 2.1.1 Key features of the labour market

The Lebanese labour market is characterised by low activity and employment rates, the limited participation of women, an extensive informal sector, a high influx of foreign workers and a large number of skilled Lebanese people seeking and obtaining employment abroad.

Certain structural challenges impact upon the labour market, including: (i) a lack of policies to stimulate the productive sector; (ii) outdated and unenforced social protection policies; (iii) a lack of mechanisms to match skills demand and offer; and (iv) a lack of employment policies.

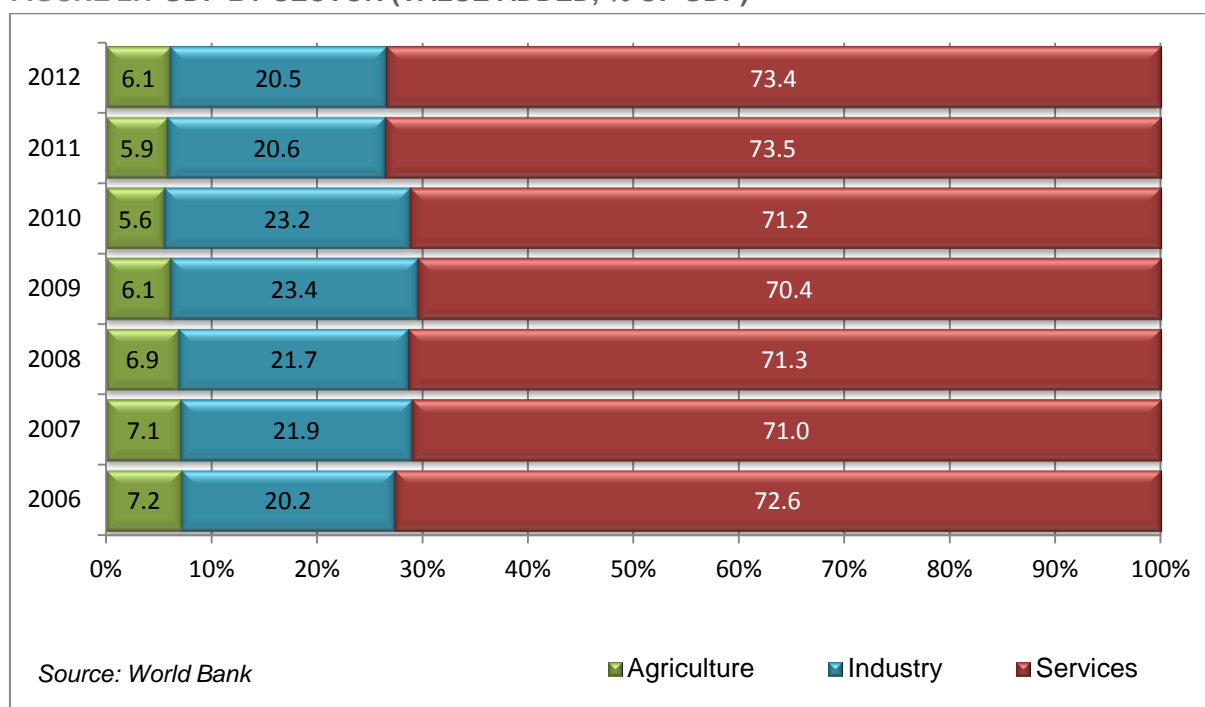
Employers state that labour regulations form a barrier to hiring new workers. The World Bank MILES project found that 95% of firms interviewed said they would hire more workers if the current regulations did not exist. Social security contributions are the main reason for not hiring more workers, in addition to the mandatory costs for hiring and firing employees. It is estimated that a typical firm conceals 14% of its workforce and 15% of salaries to avoid labour regulations and social security contributions.

From the point of view of young people wanting to enter the work market, these precarious working conditions and weak social security systems are viewed as obstacles to employment (see Annex – Youth discussion groups, June 2014).

The widespread nature of the informal sector exerts pressure upon the labour market. Informality is estimated to stand at 36.4% of GDP by the World Bank (2011) and an estimated 66.9% of employees do not contribute to social security.

Contribution to GDP by primary, secondary and tertiary sectors shows services to be the strongest with 73.4%, followed by industry 20.5% and agriculture with 6.1% (World Bank, 2012). The relative levels of contributions have remained fairly similar over the last six years.

**FIGURE 2.1 GDP BY SECTOR (VALUE ADDED, % OF GDP)**



An analysis of job creation by the Agence française de développement (AFD) in 2013, showed the construction and industrial sectors to have the largest employment potential. However, there was previously a decrease in the industrial sector (-8%) between 2004 and 2009, linked to falling production rather than workforce availability (with agriculture also down 2%), while trade (+7%) and services (+2%) both did relatively well over the same period.

Since 2011, the Syrian crisis has also been making an impact on sector developments and labour force changes. A study conducted by the World Bank in 2013 analysed the impact of the crisis on various socio-economic aspects. It found that the steady increase in labour force numbers would affect employability and that trade would undoubtedly be hit, especially in view of the fact that Syria was one of Lebanon's major trading partners and was also a country of transit for Lebanese trade with other parts of the world. The overall insecurity and instability has impacted, and will continue to impact, negatively on foreign investment and on the trust of industries already present in Lebanon.

The unstable socio-political situation has been indicated as a key obstacle to enterprise development in Lebanon, and direct foreign investment (net inflow as a % of GDP) was seen to decrease from 13.86% in 2009 to 8.67% in 2011 (World Bank, 2013).

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the predominant form of business structure in Lebanon, although there are no estimates available of their contribution to GDP.

Despite the potential of SMEs to create employment, there is currently no support for SMEs nor is there any policy framework for their development. SMEs and microenterprises are not organised in a specific formal association, although some sector associations do exist and some industrialists have expressed an interest in closer cooperation and relationships with the European Union.

The Ministry of Economy and Trade has operated a 'Support to SMEs' unit since 2005. The Unit's mission is to improve the business environment for Lebanese entrepreneurs and SMEs and to develop support strategies and incentives to promote enterprise development. Also, the Ministry of Industry provides technical and financial assistance to manufacturing enterprises. These enterprises requested an expansion of the Euro-Lebanese Centre for Industrial Modernisation and access to training facilities in order to upgrade the range of technical, administrative, financial, marketing and

entrepreneurial skills required to increase competitiveness (Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Beirut and Mount of Lebanon, 2012).

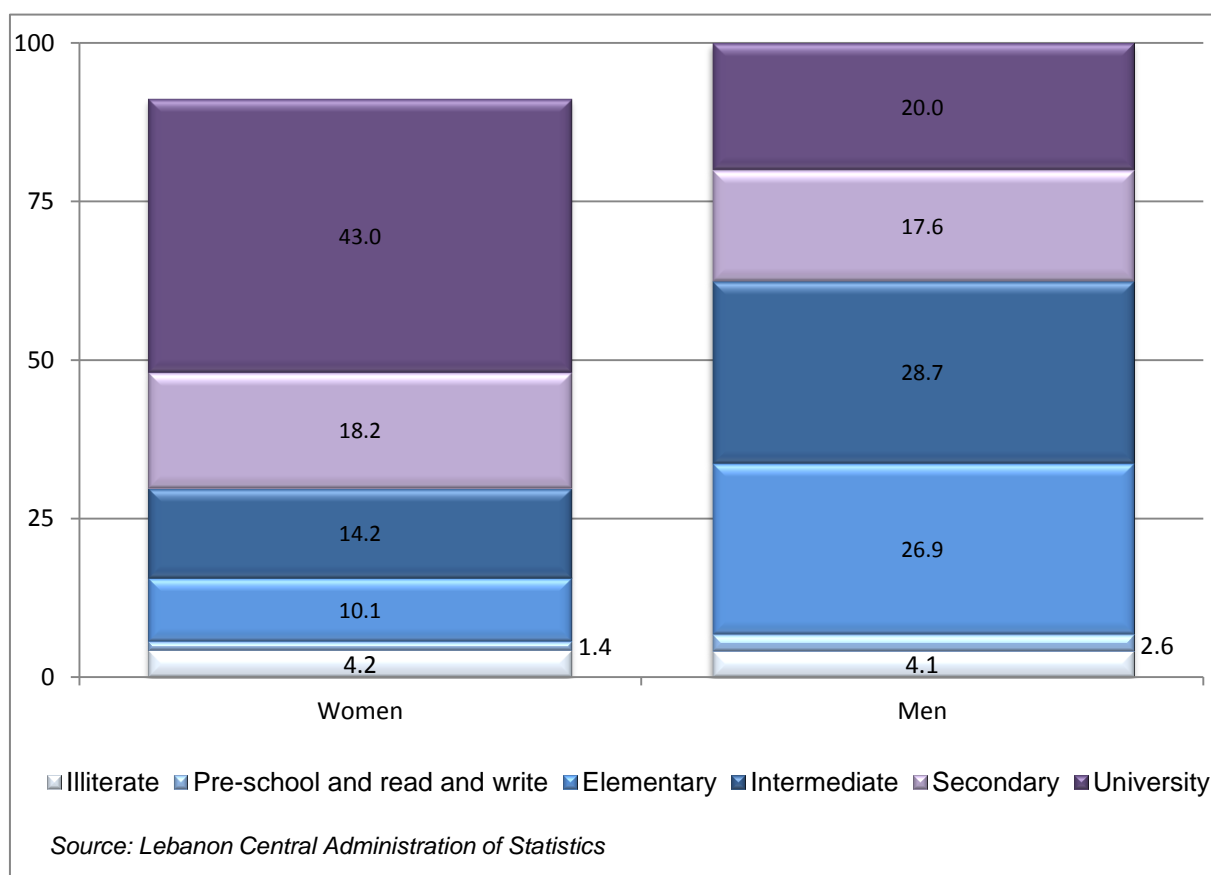
### 2.2.2 Main characteristics of the labour force

According to a World Bank report of 2010, labour force distribution by type of employment gives the largest groups as 31% low-skilled self-employed, followed by 29% formal sector employees. Around 35% of workers are employed in low productivity fields such as: commerce, repairs, transport and storage, nutrition and real estate. Public administration accounts for a further 30%, and the high productivity sectors such as technology, finance and insurance, technical and scientific account for a further 14%. Around 19% of all employees work in the informal sector.

The World Bank estimates that the labour force will grow by 1.2% on average each year in the 2010-20 period. Official data for 2009, show the employment rate for those aged over 15 years at 43.6% with a marked difference between women (19.7% female employment rate) and men (67.8% male employment rate).

Women in work are characterised by their higher educational attainment level, with 43% of employed women having a university degree. For employed men, there is no noticeable variation in employment rate linked to educational attainment. Furthermore, World Bank findings from 2011 record the time in unemployment of educated people as almost equivalent to that of less educated (1.4 year for secondary education graduates against 1.2 year for tertiary education graduates).

**FIGURE 2.2 EMPLOYED (15+) BY EDUCATION LEVEL AND SEX, 2009 (%)**



The Lebanese Centre for Policy Studies policy brief of 2013 stated that enterprises generally have no difficulties in finding either low or high skilled workers. However, finding a skilled technician takes only seven to eight weeks compared with three to four months to fill a managerial position, indicating a shortage of soft as opposed to technical skills.

In 2009, unemployment stood at 25.4% for the 15-24 age group (22.3% for women and 14.6% for men) while the overall rate for the 15-64 age group was only 7.8%. Over the same period, the activity rate for the 15+ age group stood at 49.2%<sup>2</sup>; a level that is high in comparison with other countries in the region.

However, the data available on unemployment are widely considered to be controversial and there is extensive debate amongst stakeholders on the reliability of the figures produced. The only information generally accepted by all Lebanese stakeholders is the youth unemployment rate of 34% given in the National Youth Policy Document and endorsed by the Lebanese Cabinet in April 2012.

### 2.2.3 Labour market and migration

The Lebanese labour market is characterised by high migration flows, with estimates of net migration increasing from 183,370 in 2007 to 500,001 in 2012 (World Bank database). These flows are characterised by high levels of immigration, generally amongst the low-skilled labour force in combination with the emigration of mainly young educated workers.

Low-skilled workers from the neighbouring countries, and sometimes beyond, typify the pattern. Foreign workers come mainly from other Arab countries and Asia, and the number of Syrian workers in Lebanon before the Syrian crisis was never counted. Outward remittance flow amounted to around USD 6 billion in 2009 (World Bank database 2011).

An intense influx of refugees from Syria has been registered in recent years, with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees citing numbers of 1.14 million refugees against government figures of closer to 2 million. The number of refugees in Lebanon is the highest in the region, especially in relation to the national population. Alongside with the immediate life-emergency, the high numbers of migrants coming to Lebanon will have a long-term impact on the number of people in search of jobs and in need of education.

Intense low-skilled migration creates a labour force surplus and high levels of competition for employment opportunities with VTE graduates. Industries do not currently indicate the lack of skills as an obstacle to doing business, meaning that they must have access to the skilled staff they need.

The salary conditions accepted by low-skilled migrants do little to move industry toward more comfortable working conditions and better paid jobs. At the same time, more highly-skilled young Lebanese people show a tendency to emigrate in search of more interesting and better-paid jobs. This leaves the low-skilled young Lebanese in competition with the low-skilled migrants.

Immigration is also linked to political factors, given that many long-term immigrants are Palestinian refugees. Information released by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency dating from 1 January 2014 indicates that there were 447,328 registered Palestinian refugees living in 12 camps, along with a further 50,000 Iraqis.

Emigration flows are characterised mainly by high-skilled workers, normally young graduates in search of jobs. In the past, emigration was also linked to socio-political instability, insecurity and the lack of perspectives for the future, which is still partially the case today although it is difficult to evaluate the

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<sup>2</sup> ETF calculation on Lebanon Central Administration of Statistics, online LFS 2009 data (last accessed 7 March 2014 at: [www.cas.gov.lb](http://www.cas.gov.lb)), Table EA.2A.



scale of emigration as there are no official figures available. According to unofficial calculations, there may be more than 10 million Lebanese emigrants living in the diaspora, including both those who did and did not retain nationality. Inward remittance flows amounted to around USD 8 billion in 2010 (World Bank, 2011).

## 2.2 Mechanisms for identifying demand and matching to skills supply

There are no structured and consolidated mechanisms in place to identify skills needs and to match skills supply. There is no labour market information system, there are no regular labour force surveys and no tracer studies have been completed.

Most of the surveys and analyses that do exist are performed with the financial support of donors, particularly the World Bank and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

There have been no labour market needs analyses since 2004, although international organisations and donors (among them the ILO, the AFD and GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit)) have conducted labour market and sector studies.

The World Bank is currently supporting the implementation of a labour force survey (LFS) that should be completed by the Central Administration of Statistics by the end of 2014. There is currently no census in Lebanon; therefore the LFS will be based on household surveys. The Chamber of Commerce also performs specific surveys at central and national level, but there are only very limited mechanisms in place to feed this information on into the education and training system, generally in the form of support for specific project initiatives.

In recent years, the ILO has supported the National Employment Office in establishing a labour market information system, although the resources currently allocated are insufficient for the Office to fulfil its mandate.

Limited dialogue with social partners and the business sector in particular remains a key problem in defining and implementing effective measures to address skills development and skills mismatch. There is increased awareness of the importance of cooperation between business and education, but there has been little progress so far in developing a clear policy framework for the concrete and structured involvement of business representatives in VTE governance.

In addition, there are no systematic school-to-work transition surveys and the little evidence available is largely anecdotal.

In this context, it is difficult for the education sector to assess and measure relevance to labour market needs, and the results of the World Bank MILES survey found that around 40% of workers are in jobs that do not match their skills.

### 2.2.1 Public-private partnership

Public-private programmes and initiatives on skills development, skills needs and skills mismatch in Lebanon are highly fragmented. While many of them show effort and dynamism in addressing the problems, they are not coordinated or integrated into an overarching systematic labour market strategy in any way and their scope and effectiveness remain limited as a result.

Opportunities for partnerships between education, the business sector and civil society are currently limited and the regulatory frameworks on partnerships for training programmes are weak. The Ministerial Decree on the Organisation of Joint Projects regulates cooperation between MEHE, civil society and enterprises. Under joint project agreements, MEHE provides curricula, teachers and trainers, school administration services, operational expenses, equipment and other basic educational services, while the partner or partners provide school buildings, equipment and financial support. The

projects are managed by an executive committee representing both parties, chaired by a ministry representative. Within this framework 23 schools have been established around the country: three projects are with government agencies (the ministries of Health, Tourism and Transport), 19 are with NGOs, and one is an EU-funded agro-food school project. This last project has been the most prominent initiative undertaken in attempts to match vocational training and labour market needs on a sectoral and local basis.

Over the last 18 years, GIZ has supported the integration of the dual system. The programme supports a practical training model that is lacking or very limited in other VTE streams. Although this type of approach is appreciated by business representatives, the initiative remains limited in terms of number of graduates and sectors covered.

The EU, through the ETF, has formulated a new specific intervention to consolidate the dual system, enhance its quality and expand work-based practice-oriented approaches in other VTE streams and levels.

### 2.2.2 Employment policies

There is no specific employment strategy or action plan for employment in Lebanon. There are a number of factors that hinder efforts to develop evidence-based policy on labour market and skills development, including a lack of updated data, a dearth of labour market analyses and an absence of updated and operational labour market information systems.

The National Employment Office is a public institution under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour. Its objectives include: (i) to conduct studies and research to formulate employment policies for Lebanon; (ii) to improve the employability and skill level of new entrants to the labour force through accelerated vocational training; (iii) to find job opportunities for job seekers through the Employment Bureau in order to reduce unemployment rates; and (iv) to build the capacities of people with disabilities in order to increase their employability. However, the National Employment Office does not have either the resources or institutional capacity to complete its overambitious mandate. There are currently three national employment offices across Lebanon, with a staff that has decreased in number from 35 in 2010 to 29 in 2012. The annual training budget is LBL 500 million, with additional LBL 250 million allocated for people with disabilities.

The National Employment Office activities include the offer of short or accelerated training courses in a limited number of occupations, ranging in length from six to eight months. These are outsourced to external training providers. As only limited and outdated information on the labour market is available, the Office is largely unable to present relevant responses to labour market challenges in terms of skills provision and the matching of demand and supply.

Active labour market measures are also run by other entities such as NGOs, private institutions and the Ministry of Social Affairs.

## 2.3 Potential of the VET system to influence economic and labour market needs

MEHE has been involved in a project for the integration of entrepreneurial learning into the education and training system in Lebanon since 2010. This ETF-led project is funded to 2014 by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and co-financed by the ILO and UNESCO. The project aims to integrate entrepreneurship into specific levels of general education and VTE as a key competence and a strategy for lifelong entrepreneurial learning will be developed in the mid- to long-term.

In 2013, a Small Business Act (SBA) assessment performed by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the ETF

on behalf of the European Commission, Directorate-General for Enterprises, indicated that Lebanon has made progress in moving entrepreneurship up the skills agenda in recent years but that a more coordinated and consolidated approach requires further development.

Similarly, there are no established systematic training-needs analysis mechanisms, as individual institutions act independently. The Chamber of Commerce training centre helps enterprises to assess training needs and to design and deliver training activities. As is the case for general VTE, several NGOs and private institutions provide specific training for SMEs (including business development centres such as Berytech, BIAT, Southbic; chambers and business associations).

Wamda (a platform designed to empower entrepreneurs in the Middle East and North Africa region) organises training events, including initiatives such as the start-up week-end, which is run as a joint event with the Beirut Arab University.

The assessment indicates that women are relatively well represented in top management positions and self-employment. The percentage of firms part-owned by women stands at 33.6%; almost double the regional average and practically on a par with the Business Environment Enterprise Performance Survey (BEEPS) average of 34.8% for all participant countries. Although, Lebanon does not have any specific policy to promote entrepreneurship among women, there are several NGO-led initiatives in place.

The Lebanese Centre for Policy Studies policy paper on youth employability indicates that lack of skills is one of the key constraints for Lebanon and other Arab countries (approximately 40% in Lebanon against 30% in Morocco<sup>3</sup>). Employers in the Middle East and North Africa also offer less training than their global peers: a low of around 20% against 50% for Latin America and almost 60% in East Asia.

An ETF and World Bank research project (ETF and World Bank, 2006) revealed that the acquisition of skills in SMEs and microenterprises is often constrained by the low skill levels of owners and workers. Most skills are obtained via informal apprenticeships and on-the-job training in small workshops.

Very few training programmes target the employees of microenterprises. Of the small offer, the most prominent are training activities from the Community Development Centres managed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and certain NGOs (Kreitem, 2009). These centres offer basic skills training to individuals with low levels of education, especially women.

The 'Mouvement social' has its own training centre and also runs a large number of training courses throughout the country, some of which are for the National Employment Office. This organisation also has programmes for at-risk youth. In South Lebanon, a group of NGOs has 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.

## 2.4 Action and assessment of progress since 2010

There have been no major changes or developments in terms of reforms to make VTE more efficient or responsive to labour market demands since 2010.

The main interventions available are donor-led and they are rarely accompanied by central decisions for structural and system reform taken on a national basis.

The ongoing and persistent socio-economic instability blocks attempts to reinforce institutional capacities in a way that impedes or limits decision-making powers.

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<sup>3</sup> International Monetary Fund (2010)

### 3. EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY IN ADDRESSING DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIAL AND INCLUSION DEMAND

This section focuses on the demand for VET education as determined by demographic and social developments and provides information on the efficiency of the VET system from a social inclusion perspective. It looks particularly closely at the demographic and social factors shaping VET demand, equity of VET provision in terms of access, participation and progression, and the ability of the VET system to reach out to the weakest segments of the population in order to provide them with targeted training.

#### 3.1 Demographic and social factors shaping VET demand

The total population of Lebanon was estimated at 4,424,888 in 2012, of whom 49% are women (World Bank data). The majority of the population falls into the 25-54 age range, a share of 42%, while the 15-24 age range accounts for approximately 18%, slightly below the percentage in other countries of the region.

Population growth is calculated at 0.96 (2012), 58% lower than the 2006 level of 2.3, and lower than other countries in the region (Jordan 2.2, Egypt 1.6).

Lebanon is also characterised by significant migration flows, partly linked to socio-political factors, as has been the case with Palestinians and Syrians in recent years.

At present, the Palestinian refugees, many of whom have been in the country for years, are still living in temporary camps although efforts have been made to improve conditions and provide access to education, training and the labour market.

However, for the most part, Palestinian refugees still do not have access to key facets of social, political and economic life in Lebanon. General living and environmental health conditions for these individuals are therefore extremely unfavourable. In 2010, an EU-funded study undertaken by the American University of Beirut highlighted that over two-thirds of Palestinians resident in Lebanon are poor (subsisting on less than USD 6 per day), while 6.6% live in extreme poverty (less than USD 2.17 per day).

Some reform initiatives have been implemented in recent years, including the establishment of a Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee, a decree by the Minister of Labour granting Palestinian refugees the right to work in 70 professions, legal amendments to the labour and social security laws approved by the Lebanese Parliament on 17 August 2010 and a government commitment to reconstruct Nahr el-Bared Camp. Between 2011 and 2012, the ETF has supported the EU Delegation in Beirut in the design of a project to enhance employability among Palestinian refugees through the provision of TVET programmes, accreditation requirements and the development of employment service centres. An accreditation process is under way to establish equivalence between some of these programmes and formal VTE education certificates, with the first phase of accreditation already complete.

Since 2011, the crisis in Syria has led to a large number of Syrian refugees moving to Lebanon and other neighbouring countries. As a consequence, donors, including the European Union, have allocated funds to support the Lebanese in addressing the emergency. The European Union has established projects to help manage the crisis and to support local communities in establishing countermeasures to deal with the exponential population growth.

Syrian refugees are concentrated mainly in the Bekaa region (East of Beirut, 415,205 refugees) followed by Beirut and Mount Lebanon (301,629), North Lebanon (286,214) and the South (134,995). Most live in temporary camps, while others have settled in villages and cities in the same areas. Initial studies have been undertaken to assess the social impact of the Syrian refugees and while the first wave influx of Syrian refugees was mainly categorised as humanitarian, the situation has now developed to a more complex socio-economic situation. The World Bank estimates that in the 2012-14 period, the impact in terms of health, education and social safety nets has had an implied fiscal cost of USD 308-340 million and around 3-3.4% of GDP has been spent on stabilisation. The report indicates that around 170,000 people will be pushed into poverty and that an estimated 220,000-324,000 will become unemployed, primarily in the young unskilled bracket. Enrolment of Syrian children in education is expected to increase from 40,000 in 2012 to 140,000-170,000 in 2014; a figure amounting to 57% of the overall Lebanese students population in public schools. Demand for non-formal education is also expected to increase as a result of the influx of Syrian refugees.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) figures record that 28.5% of the Lebanese population are poor and 8.0% live in extreme poverty (UNDP, 2009), while 20.5% live between the upper and lower poverty lines.

Poverty is concentrated in both the North (53.0% of the population) and South (42.0% of the population), while the overall poverty rate in Beirut is approximately 6% (excluding the southern suburbs).

High overall educational enrolment figures (99% in first grade) mask some significant disparities in geographical coverage and relative education level. The National Education Strategy 2010 shows an average net enrolment rate that declines to 68.5% in intermediate education, indicating that more than 30% of students have dropped out by the end of the elementary cycles.

The extensive private education sector creates disparities between those who can afford to pay and those who cannot. The highly- and privately-educated young Lebanese tend to emigrate to other countries looking for better paid jobs and improved working conditions, leaving those unable to afford private education or emigration in direct competition with the rest of the low-skilled labour force (often migrants from neighbouring countries who are prepared to accept lower wages, informal working conditions and the absence of social security). This social gap appears only to compound the processes of dropout and unemployment.

Social disparities and social inequality in general are also reflected in unemployment rates. The youth unemployment rate (15–24 years) stands at 34%, and 45% of the poor population have heads of household with lower than elementary education. Unemployment totals 14.9% among the poor, 14.0% among the 'near poor', and only 6.7% among the better-off population. In the poor category, one young person in three with a university degree is unemployed, compared to one in five among the more affluent groups. In total, more than 40% of unemployed people live in extreme poverty (Kreitem, 2009).

Vulnerable groups suffering from exclusion include: working children and young people aged 10-19 (around 76,000), people with disabilities (around 75,000), agricultural workers (more than 80,000), women and unemployed people (90,000) (UNDP, 2009). The actual number of people with disabilities is difficult to estimate, but a UNDP study from shortly after the civil war estimated that one Lebanese person in ten was disabled (around 300,000 people in total). In 2007, around 70,000 people were registered for official disability cards with the Ministry of Social Affairs (Consultation and Research Institute, 2007).

For people with disabilities, access to equal education and employment opportunities is extremely limited: 38% of people with disabilities are illiterate, only 5% attain secondary education and only 2.9%



graduate from university. Inactivity rates are high, with around 45.8% unable to work and not in receipt of any type of income. As a result, these individuals are obliged to live in poverty and are increasingly marginalised. The Social Action Plan of 2007 reported that the poverty rate among people with disabilities was three times higher than the overall national rate.

Lebanon ranks 116<sup>th</sup> in the gender gap index (World Economic Forum, 2010<sup>4</sup>), which has a knock on effect on employment. In 2009, the unemployment rate was estimated at 11.4% overall, 23% for women and 7.2% for men. As Section 2 showed, employed women have higher education levels than men (43% with university level education compared with only 20% of employed men).

Net enrolment in primary education in 2012 was 93%, with a little disparity between males and females (89.9% of females and 96.73% of males on the basis of UNESCO data), while net enrolment rate in secondary was 67.5%, with no difference between the sexes (67.6% for females and 67.45 for males).

Sexual segregation still exists between men and women in relation to type of work and salaries. Professions such as legislator, senior official and manager are still mostly held by men (16.3% of men and 6.5% of women), while women mostly work in the professional sectors (25.9% of women and 7.9% of men) services or retail (18.6% of women and 10.9% of men). The latest data available from the Central Administration of Statistics are slightly out of date, but for 2007, the gender wage gap stood at 6%, with an average male salary of LBP 702,000 against only LBP 660,000 for women.

### 3.2 Delivering to the individual demands and aspirations of learners: access, participation, progression

The VTE system in general is viewed as having limited attractiveness in Lebanon. The public image is poor for several reasons: the VTE curricula need updating, existing curriculum review mechanisms need improvement and more business sector involvement is required. An improved business sector contribution would lead to more relevant curricula and greater competitiveness in the labour market, especially in the rapidly-evolving sectors. Students and parents generally do not believe VTE qualifications add value to professional and personal development and they do not aspire to VTE-related occupations. Vocational education is widely viewed as a last chance option for students who fail in general education, most of whom are not even in a position to select a training path appropriate to their capacities and potential.

A youth discussion group organised by the ETF (see Annex) clearly identified the lack of career guidance services and support in the transition from school to work as key issues. The need for better guidance in the choice of education is considered particularly important as the current system of traditional values and family influence frequently guide students towards professions unsuited to the student's own competences and aspirations. Youth discussion groups found that Beirut is an exception to some extent, but families still have a strong influence over choice of education in other regions for both girls and boys. A need was expressed for structured and well-functioning career guidance and career orientation services.

Section 1 stated that GDP expenditure on education is limited to such an extent that much needed reforms, such as the increase of practical training or curricula reform, cannot be implemented. At present, the allocated VTE budget is primarily spent on staff pay (90%) with the remainder insufficient to fund modern laboratories and workshops. In combination with this issue, it is still proving extremely difficult to provide structured workplace training for students and trainees or for teachers on the VTE tracks, most of whom have no opportunities to update their skills.

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<sup>4</sup> [www.weforum.org/events/world-economic-forum-annual-meeting-2010](http://www.weforum.org/events/world-economic-forum-annual-meeting-2010)

The recent decree on VTE system reorganisation aimed to make the specialisms more focused and to make the overall system more flexible for students, allowing them greater choice and easier movement between general education and VTE. A ceiling was established in order to avoid that too many students graduated as *technicien supérieur* move to higher education (see Chapter 1). VTE stakeholders have suggested that some students choose to follow the VTE pathway in order to procure easier access to higher education.

General education students can move to VTE after the brevet or after the baccalauréat II degree. In case they decide to move, they are limited in the choice of specialisms as they can enrol only to non-industrial tracks.

It should also be noted that students must pass an official examination after the first year of the *bac technique*. If they fail this, they must either repeat the year or move to the dual system and dual system meister programmes. However, as the dual system and dual system meister programmes are offered mainly in industrial fields, girls who fail the official exam do not have a real alternative and they are more likely to abandon their studies (Torino Process discussion group, June 2014).

### 3.3 Delivering to socioeconomic and inclusion demand

The VTE system is highly centralised, with limited capacity to reach out toward the social needs in the periphery. Curricula and programmes are decided centrally and their distribution is not linked to any specific emerging skills need at local level. School directors have no autonomy in the choice of programmes, teachers or marketing of their schools, making it difficult for them to approach the needs of their students and local labour markets.

Public sector courses for adults and people with disabilities are in limited supply, leaving these mainly the prerogative of private providers and NGOs. Also, a lack of agreement means the restricted offer available is fragmented, ad hoc and often detached from real skills needs, while the lack of streamlining also leads to financial dispersion.

The National Employment Office and the Ministry of Social Affairs do offer some training as part of their active labour market measures, but these initiatives remain limited in scope and number.

### 3.4 Action and assessment of progress since 2010

No major progress has been reported since the previous assessment.

## 4. INTERNAL EFFICIENCY OF THE VET SYSTEM

This section looks at the efficiency and effectiveness of the VET delivery system including the issues of quality assurance, teaching and learning, and resource use.

### 4.1 Quality assurance

#### 4.1.1 Planning

There is currently no official definition of quality of VTE in Lebanon and references to the subject mainly relate to quality control mechanisms such as exams.

However, a definition of VTE quality assurance arrangements was agreed in the VTE governance mapping process as part of the Governance for Employability in the Mediterranean regional project. These arrangements are defined as a systematic set of procedures and processes based on the principles of accountability, transparency and effectiveness, quality assurance and financing in Lebanon. They ensure that the behaviours and activities of all actors engaged in VTE (in government, higher education or as public or private sector VTE providers) are congruent with criteria, standards and norms established to achieve clear and purposeful goals and outcomes through the work of the VTE sector.

The steps being taken toward quality assurance as part of VTE governance process in Lebanon are currently all ad hoc and there is no breadth of vision and application. The limited number of initiatives enacted is unsystematic and these do not engage the attention of all actors.

A number of ad hoc (bottom-up) initiatives offer significant quality assurance input across the policy cycle from planning through implementation to review. These include early initiatives and ad hoc work on discussions with Lebanese industrialists relating to improving links between the upskilling of learners in education and training in order to meet labour market needs, some of which were mentioned previously (the GIZ dual system support and the EU-funded agro-food project).

#### 4.1.2 Assessment and evaluation

There is no system-wide mechanism to assess and evaluate learning outcomes. Not all qualifications are described in terms of learning outcomes and there is some inconsistency in approaches. For instance, the new technical baccalaureate (*bac technique*) qualifications identify intended learning outcomes, but the curriculum and assessment are still formulated in the traditional way.

Exams are presented formally with the main objective being to test the theoretical knowledge of students. Similarly, while 'standards' for state employees are not established, the qualifications expected of civil servants and teachers are specified in the legal documents, and formal entry to permanent state employment is dependent upon success in the civil service board (*conseil de la formation publique*) examination. However, it has been some years since the last round of competition.

Once employed, Teachers are not formally assessed and there is therefore no link between performance and career progression.

#### 4.1.3 Accreditation of VET providers and programmes

Private VTE providers come in two forms in Lebanon, non-profit and for-profit VTE schools. The non-profit private VTE schools are mainly run by NGOs with a charitable or social remit. These NGOs are mostly community-based, with strong regional and religious ties. NGOs have been actively developing this sector since the 1950s, predating government creation of the DG VTE. Over 300 private VTE providers currently operate in Lebanon, some with little more than a single classroom and a handful of



instructors. The larger for-profit private VTE schools are concentrated around the major cities and population centres, and they offer highly competitive training. Some of these are members of European or North American networks and they provide internationally recognised degrees and certificates guaranteed by recognised quality-control systems and credentials.

The DG VTE Commission performs the accreditation of VTE providers and programmes in Lebanon. Private training providers need to comply with national programmes decided at DG VTE level and they must be recognised by a dedicated Commission. Students must be entered in the national examinations system and providers need DG VTE endorsement to appoint a new principal. Where a new school or centre is opened, this must be accredited by the DG VTE, which concentrates on checking premises and equipment. Once the new school or training centre is operational there is no DG VTE inspection system, nor is there any self-assessment on the quality of programmes delivered or the performance of teaching staff.

#### 4.1.4 Qualifications

Between 2010 and 2013, MEHE implemented a project to develop a Lebanese national qualifications framework with the support of the ETF and financing from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The primary objective of the project was to somehow rationalise the extensive number and type of qualifications offered by the education system, including public and private VTE providers delivering both national and international certification courses. During the process, it became clear that work was needed on the programmes as most were outdated, consisting of a simple list of subjects to be taught and duration in hours. A small number of programmes are presented in modular form and are described in terms of learning outcomes. The IECD has worked with the DG VTE recently to reform programmes in the electrical engineering/electrical-technical sector, but only at the *bac technique* level, meaning that there is currently no progression in content between the *bac technique* and the *technicien supérieur* levels in this track.

This eight-level draft national qualifications framework and the corresponding descriptors have been officially adopted although they are not currently used. This is mainly due to the current weak institutional and legal frameworks, incapable of supporting the decision making needed to prepare legislation and order organisational change. The governance structure for the national qualifications framework is therefore not in place and many legal and institutional arrangements must be made before the framework can be legal adopted and fully deployed.

#### 4.2 Policies for VET trainers and directors

Most of the teachers and trainers on contracts within the VTE system have academic backgrounds, and a large proportion of those employed on a rolling yearly basis are recent university and *technicien supérieur* graduates. The level of training for teachers and trainers entering the profession is considered inadequate for the delivery of modern VTE programmes. Initial teacher training implemented by the national teacher training institution for technical education (Institut pédagogique national de l'enseignement technique, IPNET) has not been adapted to the VTE curricula. Furthermore, trainers often lack the experience in industry necessary to enable them to deliver appropriate practical training. Continuing teacher-training programmes are limited.

VTE teachers are selected through a public competition, a national examination organised by the civil service board that has not been held for many years. After passing the exam, teachers are awarded a permanent teaching contract, but the shortage of long-term employed teachers means that a great many part-time teachers are contracted without undergoing the established process. In fact, there is no specific legal framework defining the mechanisms for contracting teaching staff and there are no set specific qualifications standards. Political loyalty and family ties tend to play an important role in the choice of contracted teachers.

No performance-based incentives are in place and there is no effective system for evaluating teacher performance, meaning that career progression is not based on performance.

In 2010/11, 90% of teachers were part-time and only 10% were on full-time permanent contracts (CERD, 2010/11).

In 2010/11 there were 1,052 teachers employed full-time, delivering a total of 2,968,054 teaching hours (CERD, 2012). A maximum is set of 20 working hours per week, and it is very difficult to calculate the students/teachers ratio as some teachers cover the full number of hours per week and others cover only a few. The current available data, therefore, refer to calculations based on headcounts, producing the following student-to-teacher ratios for 2011.

Pupil-teacher ratio – headcount basis (UNESCO)	2011
Lower secondary education	11.14602
Upper secondary education	7.74777
Secondary education	9.30599
Tertiary education	8.33241

The precarious working conditions of teachers have led them to organise several strikes in the 2013 and 2014 school years. No changes have been implemented as a result, although a law to recruit more full-time teachers and reduce the reliance on part-time teachers has been pending approval since 2012. The VTE action plan includes measures to employ more high-quality teachers and trainers with relevant practical work experience, along with the introduction of in-service and continuing training programmes.

School directors and principals are appointed centrally by the DG VTE although there are no specific qualifications standards to regulate these appointments. The accreditation process for private schools also demands DG VTE agreement on the appointment of principals and school directors, even though the actual employer is the private institution.

Outcomes from the youth discussion groups in Lebanon indicate that teachers demonstrate uneven performance and there are big disparities between individual pedagogical methods. As career guidance services are non-existent, students often seek advice from their teachers, but most of the staff have insufficient experience or ability to guide students as their knowledge of the world of work is limited. It was also noted that teachers can work in both public and private schools, and that their performance may vary considerably from one sector to the other, principally as a result of the better working and salary conditions in the private sector.

## 4.3 Teaching and learning

### 4.3.1 Teaching and learning environment

With the exception of private VET providers, there is no legislative framework to permit private investment in public schools. Additionally, most public schools are not allowed to make any profit; the one exception being a school teaching hospitality that is allowed to make profit to reinvest partially in infrastructure and maintenance.

Current opportunities for public and private partnership, business and education cooperation programmes are limited and the regulatory frameworks to facilitate this are largely lacking. Section 2 included some examples of these, but most of this cooperation takes the form of job placements and the offer of practical training rather than private investment in schools.

The only form of work-based training available is the dual system introduced by the Germany-Lebanon bilateral cooperation initiative. The more traditional types of VTE programmes include summer placements, but these mainly take the form of internships and they are not monitored or evaluated

Working conditions for teachers are precarious and this affects their motivation. Teaching materials do not exist for the most part, and teachers have no pedagogical support for teaching their subjects. The level of performance of individual teachers is very much dependent upon their individual will and motivation.

Inspection in schools does formally exist but it is limited. The youth discussion group identified a clear need for a better structured, regular and effective inspection process, based on clear criteria and with recommended follow-up actions. The discussions stressed that inspections should be compulsory particularly in private establishments.

#### 4.3.2 Learning content

As per the previous Torino Process assessments, there is a need for curriculum reform and refreshment to ensure relevance to labour market needs.

Some initial curriculum reform was undertaken in 1993, and the Curricula Commissions and the Higher Committee for Curricula have met regularly since then. However, a more consistent and coherent system-wide curricular reform is needed throughout technical secondary education with the involvement of all responsible VTE stakeholders.

MEHE commissioned groups of specialist academics to develop 56 separate curricula for the *bac technique* and *technicien supérieur* levels, but the task did not consider occupational profiles or skills needs analysis. The resulting curricula were heavy on academic content (70%) and lacked information on skills and competence development (including practical skills). Furthermore, the curricula developed did not incorporate educational and quality standards, nor did they include any pedagogical support, student materials, learning resources or teacher manuals. The teachers were left to define content and the selection and use of teaching materials for themselves, with very few guidelines provided.

Another round of curriculum updating took place in 2001. This had no impact on the quality of curriculum delivery as teacher guides and student manuals were never produced. Some limited standardised curricula are in place for the training programmes offered by private schools, although the quality-control mechanisms and standardised requirements for certification need to be enhanced.

Full-scale curricular reform is needed and this will require an enormous effort in terms of time and resources. More structural changes are required to ensure the monitoring of curricula and regular updating, with private sector involvement and the consideration of real job profiles. MEHE has indicated support for this action as one of the key reforms.

#### 4.3.3 Parental involvement

There is currently no structured parental involvement in the formalised communication channels. Information collected during Torino Process discussion groups showed there to be no formal involvement of parents in either committees or associations.

Results of the youth discussion groups indicated that increased parental involvement would result in pressure that would enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

## 4.4 Efficiency in resource use

Only limited data is available on resource use; there is none on dropouts and also none on VTE system spending as part of public spending. Data provided by UNESCO give the proportion of public expenditure on education by level only for the secondary (15.5%) and tertiary (34.9%) bands.

Teachers are unevenly distributed across the subjects and there is no overall monitoring on the quality of programmes taught, meaning that students leave the technical and vocational tracks to enter the labour market with competences and skills of limited relevance. However, it should be noted that the private sector does not appear to value technical and vocational professions through the provision of adequate salaries and decent working conditions, in particular for the lower-skilled jobs.

The allocation of funding is not based on needs at local level. There is no mechanism to ensure funds are allocated in response to specific skills needs at sub-national or community level, nor is the distribution based on specific analysis of the labour market or the addressing of quality issues (in terms of subjects taught, competence, type and number of trainers, etc.).

The principle source of finance for public VTE administered by the DG VTE is the general public budget, comprising income gathered from taxation and other sources. This funding is dispensed by the government. The current budgeting framework has no provision for encouraging employers to support VTE and no tax breaks or training levies are in place. Schools are able to raise some income, particularly through tuition and examination fees, which means that learners and their families are asked to make a small contribution.

Under the legislation, the annual budget allocation process for VTE funding begins with the directors of VTE schools and institutes and DG VTE departments submitting their needs on a standard budget items form. The DG VTE consolidates all budget requests, then adjusts them as deemed appropriate and submits the overall DGTVE budget to MEHE. The Minister modifies and consolidates requests from all ministry units before submitting a complete MEHE budget to the Council of Ministers for approval. After this, the Minister of Finance amends the allocations, taking account of competing requests for available resources. The Council of Ministers submits the complete government budget to Parliament for approval and adoption as a budget law. The entire process should be a transparent and purposeful process, within which finance could be linked to reform.

However, the current scenario is quite different. This budget procedure has not been applied since 2005, probably as a result of the overall socio-political instability, the subsequent war and successive technical governments. From that time onward, the government has followed a different procedure for annual budget proposals without any parliamentary discussion or approval. In practice, the Minister of Finance applies a procedure known as the Twelfth Budget Rule which entails taking the previous year's budget for each government unit or department, adjusting it for any changes that have taken place (in particular staff increases) and dividing the total budget by 12 to determine the monthly budget for each unit. This approach to funding, widely described as incremental or historical, means that the annual budget allocated to the DG VTE over successive years has grown by approximately 10% per year.

In 2009, The DG TVE budget was 0.5% of total government spending. In the same year, salaries and benefits for DG TVE personnel (teachers, workers and administrators) constituted 94% of the overall DG TVE budget, leaving little room for flexibility at either national or local level.

In an otherwise centralised funding regime, VTE schools have limited operational responsibility over the tuition and examination fees paid by students. Approximately 90% of the collected fees stay in the school where they are used to pay for maintenance and cleaning services and minor purchases. Larger purchases, such as IT equipment, must have formal DG VTE approval. The remaining 10% is

levied as a contribution to the VTE Internal Fund created by decree in 1996. More than half of the Internal Fund budget goes toward joint programmes. Any remaining funding is used to support other schools, especially smaller schools, on the basis of need. With the exception of the hospitality school (see above), the level of financial responsibility delegated to school leaders is very limited.

VTE stakeholders (whether education and training providers or employers) are asked for very little input on budget needs and allocations, or on the adequacy of funding. As a historical funding procedure is in place, no clear needs analysis is performed, the funding of VTE providers is not used as an incentive to achieve specific reforms or outcomes, and no formula-based budgeting is implemented to incentivise school or system-wide improvements.

Setting the budget framework is the centralised responsibility of the Ministry of Finance, while MEHE and DG TVE decide on the use of funds and the Ministry of Finance and DG VTE are responsible for the little monitoring and evaluation that takes place. There are no openly-available published financial or budgeting reports, meaning a direct request must be made to the Financial Department of the DG TVE for information on allocated budget spending for VTE. The Ministry of Finance is likely to be the only entity with accurate records of how and where funds have been spent, as these fiscal transactions have been guided by budget proposals and not budget laws since 2006.

## 4.5 Action and assessment of progress since 2010

The MEHE 2011-14 Strategic Multi-annual Action Plan for VTE shows signs of intent to review and modernise the VTE structure and administration, strengthen partnership and cooperation with social partners and other stakeholders, and to enhance the image of VTE. The action plan also mentions revising, updating and improving vocational specialisations and curricula, and securing and increasing human and financial resources. Reviewing and modernising the structure, management and administration of VTE at the national and local level and strengthening co-working with social partners and other stakeholders would usher in major reforms for VTE governance. This would have to be linked to a rather more comprehensive and inclusive system of quality assurance and the Action Plan also states the intention to create a Quality Assurance Agency for VTE.

The outline stated above gives some indication of developments toward the elements of a quality assurance system and process. However, implementation of the action plan is progressing slowly in comparison to the 2010 assessment, mainly due to difficulties in making institutional changes as legislative decisions are blocked or proceed slowly. Some of the actions proposed are structural and therefore take time to be developed and put into place, while others are resource intensive in terms of human and financial resources not currently available.

## 5. GOVERNANCE AND POLICY PRACTICES IN THE VET SYSTEM

This section analyses governance and policy practices in VET in the domains covered in the previous sections. It looks closely at policy making, multi-level participation and the level of responsibility attributed to those involved.

### 5.1 Defining vision and strategy for VET

VTE system governance and policy practices are highly centralised. The system is administered by the DG VTE, made up of seven departments within MEHE. The Director General leads DG VTE with a mandate from the Minister of Education and supporting legislation to manage policy and administrative matters including: school management, curriculum and qualifications development and implementation, employment decisions, oversight of the private sector training schools, the organisation of programmes and most of the day-to-day management decisions in schools and centres.

DG VTE is also responsible for State Examinations and the inspectorate.

MEHE initiates policies, contributes to major decision making and uses government revenue to provide the bulk of funding for the public VTE system. The Minister plays a particular strategic role. DG VTE also plays a key strategic role, as it initiates policy, makes decisions, funds public providers and is responsible for assessment and quality control.

Two further bodies have a legally defined role in VTE management: the Higher Council for VTE and the Centre for Education Research and Development (CERD).

The Higher Council for VTE was established by government decree to operate as an advisory body to DG VTE. However, despite broad agreement on its role and mission, the Council has never been activated and has never met. The Council is formally headed by the Education Minister; it includes representatives from the various education entities, other ministries, public administration bodies and the private sector. The role of the council is to provide advice on proposed laws and strategic and policy development, budgets, decrees to establish new private schools, decrees to open new public schools and any other matters referred to it by the Education Minister.

CERD was designed to fulfil a role in applied research and development and this entity is now operational, although mostly in the field of general education. The intention was for this body to play a significant role in VTE and, in particular, to provide research and analysis on issues such as the VTE curriculum, curriculum development, training and standards for teachers and improvements in the management of VTE providers. However, to date, CERD has been given little if any effective role to play in supporting VTE policy or implementation.

The IPNET teacher training facility was founded in 1965 under MEHE and the DG VTE to provide pre-service and in-service training for VTE teachers. IPNET currently provides a few continuous training programmes, but it does not fulfil the whole of its mandate. There are currently three operational IPNET offices, in Beirut, Tripoli and Bir Hassan.

The public training providers (responsible for approximately 40% of the overall training offer) have little, if any, autonomy in terms of local management decisions, meaning that they are effectively totally dependent on DG VTE. Conversely, the private training providers who cover the remaining provision are granted management and funding independence as long as they comply with the state examination system and DG VTE quality control measures including an initial accreditation process.



Around 50 of these private training providers come under the umbrella of the National Council for Social Services consortium. Many of these have the support of NGOs and some have shown a degree of innovation in terms of reforms.

At present, employers and employer organisations are largely absent from VTE governance and management, and human resource development in general. However, some initiatives involving employers are currently operational within public sector initial training, as is the case for the dual system development led by GIZ, the EU-led agro-food training initiative and the DG VTE-funded special projects. Although limited in terms of numbers and scope, these initiatives have engaged with new approaches to industry-supported identification of training needs, more innovative curricula and cooperation with employers. However employers' involvement in the role of key partner is still limited and the concept has not been institutionalised. The trades unions hardly feature at all as either partners or advisors, mostly due to their limited capacities and human resource development aims.

#### MATRIX 1 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

	Objective setting	Implementation	Monitoring
Who is responsible?	MEHE Higher Council for Vocational Education and Training* CERD**	MEHE DG VTE CERD	MEHE DG VTE
Who is accountable?	MEHE Higher Council for Vocational Education and Training	MEHE DG VTE CERD	MEHE DG VTE
Who is consulted?	—	—	—
Who is (only) informed?	—	—	—

(\*) Currently not active

(\*\*) Not active for this function

#### MATRIX 2 MODE OF ACTION/DECISION MAKING OF THOSE RESPONSIBLE

	Objective setting	Implementation	Monitoring
Full autonomy/unilateral	MEHE DG VTE	MEHE DG VTE	MEHE DG VTE
After (obligatory) consultation <sup>1</sup>	—	—	—
If consultation, with whom? (please list)	—	—	—

(1) Consultation could be both because of an obligation to involve and for accountability purposes.

## 5.2 Effectiveness and efficiency in addressing economic and labour market demand

There are currently no mechanisms to match skills demand and supply, there are no multi-stakeholder committees and no regular analysis of skills needs is scheduled. There is no evaluation of currently available VTE programmes and curricula either.

## 5.3 Effectiveness and efficiency in addressing social and inclusion demand

There are currently no mechanisms for career guidance in VTE and no mechanisms for the recognition of informal learning. The reorganisation of VTE levels and phases was implemented in an attempt to provide greater flexibility to the VTE system, allowing students more opportunities to move to VTE from general education or vice versa.

## 5.4 Internal efficiency and effectiveness of the VET system

**MATRIX 3 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES FOR QUALITY STANDARDS**

	Responsible for setting	Accountable for compliance	Monitoring and assessment
Quality standards: learning environment	MEHE – DG VTE	MEHE – DG VTE	MEHE – DG VTE
Quality standards: learning outcomes	Only partial and ad hoc MEHE – DG VTE CERD*	MEHE – DG VTE CERD*	MEHE – DG VTE CERD*
Quality standards: teaching	MEHE – DG VTE IPNET**	MEHE – DG VTE	MEHE – DG VTE
Standards for provider <sup>1</sup> accreditation	MEHE – DG VTE	MEHE – DG VTE	MEHE – DG VTE

(1) This can also refer to individual programmes.

(\*) Not active for VTE

(\*\*) Limited for VTE

**MATRIX 4 MODE OF DECISION MAKING WHEN SETTING QUALITY STANDARDS**

	Unilateral	Obligatory consultation	If consultation, with whom
Quality standards: learning environment	MEHE – DG VTE	–	
Quality standards: learning outcomes	Only partial and ad hoc MEHE – DG VTE CERD*	–	
Quality standards: teaching	MEHE – DG VTE IPNET**	–	
Standards for provider <sup>1</sup> accreditation	MEHE – DG VTE	–	

(1) This can also refer to individual programmes.



## MATRIX 5 RESPONSIBILITY FOR CURRICULUM CONTENT AND TEACHING STANDARDS

	Responsible for determining	Obligatory consultation	If consultation, with whom
Curriculum content	MEHE – DG VTE CERD	Yes	CERD and ad hoc commissions for curricula validation
How curriculum is taught	MEHE – DG VTE CERD	–	–

### 5.5 Assessment of progress since 2010

The VTE system in Lebanon is centralised and the DG VTE has autonomy on some decisions, to the point where even MEHE is not consulted on some fronts. Schools have no autonomy and the lack of decentralisation prevents VTE schools from being able to consider local community needs.

The lack of links between government and social partners hampers the articulation of skills demand and offer.

There has been no significant change in the governance framework since 2010. Lebanese legislation requires a balance of powers between different religious groups in order to maintain stability. This specific socio-political context has implications for the process of change that make it difficult for the country to implement the key structural adaptations needed in current governance structures.

Our recommendations are that MEHE and DG VTE should implement the MEHE 2011-14 Strategic Multi-annual Action Plan and that wider public consultation should be put in place along the proposed lines of action. Clarification is needed of the respective roles and responsibilities of MEHE, DG VTE, CERD and the many other ministries and public-sector units with a central role in the management and leadership of VTE systems. Accountability must be established and reforms clarified.

The Higher Council for VTE should be activated to engage more systematically with employers and employer organisations and to bring other member organisations into formal, organised dialogue.

Employer organisations, Chambers and representatives of the business sector and social partners should review their role and levels of engagement in the identification of skills. They should work towards playing an active role in VTE policy making and in the VTE policy cycle.

MEHE and DG VTE should set up and improve the VTE management information system, including the implementation of tracer studies. There should be increased interaction between MEHE, DG VTE, the Ministry of Labour and the National Employment Office in order to improve the labour market information base and this should be regularly updated.

### 5.6 Summary of recommendations

#### Vision

A coordinated and consolidated vision for human resources development should be drawn up with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders.

The 2011-14 Strategic Multi-annual Action Plan should be extended and made operational. Wider public consultation should be held on the lines of action proposed. The roles and responsibilities and accountability of the Ministry, DG VTE, CERD and the various ministries and public-sector units that have a central role in the management and leadership of VTE systems and reforms should be clarified together with private sector responsibilities. Thus, a VTE national strategy is needed.

## External efficiency – labour market and social demand

- MEHE and DG VTE should establish an improved VTE management information and career guidance system, including the implementation of tracer studies.
- There should be increased interaction between MEHE, DG VTE, the Ministry of Labour, the National Employment Office, and the Central Administration of Statistics in order to improve the labour market information base which should be subject to regular updating.
- The role of the National Employment Office should be enforced and improved with regard to the coordination and monitoring of externalised services to support employability.
- VTE curricula must be updated and regularly revised to meet labour market demand and provide more relevant skills.
- Mechanisms must be put into place for the active involvement of social partners in the definition of skills needs (i.e. definition of occupational standards, curriculum review, analysis of skills offer, etc.).

## Internal efficiency – quality assurance, financing and governance

- Quality assurance mechanisms must be enforced. Experiences from the development of the Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education may be used to underpin similar work for the VTE system.
- Teacher pre- and in-service training must be revised. The recruitment processes, contracts and overall working conditions of teachers must also be addressed in order to increase quality and motivation.
- Comprehensive career guidance and orientation services must be put in place.
- Work on the national qualifications framework should be further pursued.

We recommend activation of the Higher Council for VTE, or the establishment of a similar body able to engage with employers and employer organisations more systematically, and to bring other member organisations into formal, organised dialogue.

Employer organisations, Chambers and other representatives of business sector and social partner should review their role and level of engagement in the identification of skills, aiming to play an active role in VTE policy making and in the VTE policy cycle.

# ANNEX: YOUTH DISCUSSION GROUPS

## Introduction

The European Training Foundation (ETF) is a specialised agency of the European Union (EU) based in Turin, Italy. The ETF provides advice and assistance to the European Commission and 31 partner countries for the reform of human capital development policies, in particular as regards vocational education and training (VET), under the EU's external relations instruments.

The ETF implements a biannual Torino Process review of VET reforms in its partner countries. This is a participatory process leading to an evidence-based analysis of VET policies that includes determination of the state of the art and vision for VET development in each country, or, two years later, assessment of the progress made toward the desired results. The first two rounds of the Torino Process were launched in 2010 and 2012, with the participation of most of the partner countries, including Lebanon. A further round was launched in 2014, where Lebanon is also present.

The Torino Process offers the added value of embedding VET within the socioeconomic context, ensuring that all analysis is informed by relevant evidence and that it takes place through structured dialogue. The ETF supports countries in gathering information from various sources of evidence and fosters policy dialogue.

In 2014, the ETF wished to take a further step toward fuller involvement of civil society representatives and young people into its projects, so youth consultation was included in the Torino Process in a number of countries, including Lebanon. Two discussion groups have been organised with youth representatives and youth associations, as youth unemployment is a key feature of the Lebanese labour market and many other countries of the region.

## Youth discussion groups

The discussion groups focused on youth employment and transition from school to work. This choice was made in consideration of the Torino Process analytical framework.

Key questions included:

- What do you think are the main obstacles for youth in finding employment?
- Are obstacles the same for women and men?
- Did you get any support in finding a job after school? If so, did this come from your school (private or public) or from external association, or from another source?
- Have you ever thought of working abroad and if so, why?
- How useful and relevant is the current education and training? Does education or training help in finding employment?
- Did you receive any career guidance? How did you choose your field of studies?
- In your opinion, what are the priorities for helping young people to integrate into the labour market?

The groups were organised with the support of the Anna Lindh Foundation Network (with the National Commission for UNESCO operating as the contact point for the network in Lebanon), the EU Delegation in Lebanon, the IECD and the ETF Young Mediterranean Leaders (YML). They provided support in terms of the identification of participants and associations. The two discussion

groups did not aim to be representative but to provide qualitative insight into youth outlook and experiences with the challenges of career choice, job search and labour market integration. The information and opinions gathered must be considered as anecdotal evidence provided by a small number of young people.

The participants were made up of two groups: (i) youth below 30 years who had undertaken studies/training in vocational secondary schools; and (ii) representatives of local youth associations. Moreover, those who had contributed to the preparation and concept of the discussion groups were invited to attend as observers.

The main criteria for selection of youth participants were that they should be representatives of local youth associations, and:

- participants of the focus group who had left the education system;
- below 30 years of age;
- cover a number of different profiles in terms of labour market situation (entrepreneurs, employed and unemployed etc.) and possibly show gender difference.

Initially, two discussion groups were organised in Beirut, at the Anna Lindh Foundation contact point (National Commission for UNESCO) on 19 and 20 June respectively. However, in the event, the number of participants for the meeting on 20 June was reduced due to 'force majeure' and the outputs of this discussion were therefore merged with those of 19 June.

In general, the young people were very open and willing to share their points of view. It soon became evident that the representatives of the youth associations were very well informed on youth policies, but the debate was kept open to all participants by allowing the independent young people to speak first, followed by input from the associations. This made for a lively and constructive debate where all points of view could be expressed, but it may be better in future to consider holding two separate feedback sessions; one with independent youths and one with associations.

## Outcomes

The outcomes given below summarize the opinions stated by discussion participants.

### 1. Labour market integration

#### **'What are the main obstacles you met in finding employment?'**

There is a general agreement among Youth that there are many obstacles to finding employment, with the major element being labour market saturation, making it apparent that the labour market is full and the only real channel into employment is via the 'wasta' or personal connections network. Young people leaving VET schools also miss out on practical on-the-job experience and are given no support on how to approach the labour market ('nobody trained us on interview technique' – former VET student). Moreover, scepticism among the young Lebanese is on the increase and the current backdrop of an unstable socio-political situation, weak security, terror attacks and the pressure exerted on the labour market and society in general by high migration inflows (particularly of Syrian refugees) leads a good number of them to dream of moving abroad.

The youth associations, most of which are NGOs, agree there is no national vision on youth employment and the national mechanisms to match skills with labour market demands are also missing. Collaboration does not take place between the government and private sector and the general feeling is that the National Employment Office does not function very well ('there may be a

lack of information or data dissemination' – NGO representative). A youth policy was endorsed in 2012 but this has not yet been implemented due to other political priorities.

Work in the private sector is generally preferred over work in the public sector, because of:

- greater job opportunities;
- greater stability and long-term contracts;
- better salaries ('Salaries in the public sector are irrational; it is not possible to effort cost of life in Beirut with those salaries' – NGO representative);
- a lack of trust in the public sector, where recruitment is not transparent;
- public sector quotas on a religious basis in terms of a set percentage of staff from each religious group ('Quotas in public sector are a must... and reserved posts are therefore assigned through *wasta*' – former VET student).

The impact of the *wasta* system is also felt in both sectors, discouraging youth from applying for jobs.

Moreover, VET students felt threatened by the incoming Syrian refugees and immigrants in general, feeling that they compete for the low-skilled jobs and accept lower salaries ('We have to compete also with Syrian immigrants...' – former VET student).

#### **'Are obstacles/problems the same for men and women?'**

Although female youth representatives were invited to the discussion group, none attended. The group therefore consisted of men plus two young women representing associations or NGOs.

No general agreement was reached on gender discrimination in entering the labour market, although various points were raised, many of which were based on strongly-embedded social stereotypes:

- sector differences (one young entrepreneur and most of the associations believed the obstacles depend on the type of job and the sector; for example, one participant stated that the leader of any kitchen is expected to be a man and women are only entitled to apply for jobs as an assistant chef, cleaner or cook);
- influence of cultural background ('In some areas, women are not independent and are expected to be housewives' – young female association representative; 'Some women are asked about their private lives and marriage/kids plans during interviews, I have personally been asked such a question' – female association representative);
- maternity leave as a barrier to employment (one female NGO representative mentioned the recent increased maternity leave of 10 weeks as a potential obstacle to job retention for women);
- the advantages of female appearance (one male VET student stated there was no gender discrimination, even stating that women's physical appearance can help them find a job).

#### **'Did you get any support in finding a job after school? If so, did you get it from your school (private or public) or from external association, or...?'**

There was common consensus among the youth participants, that nobody supported youth in finding a job after school, despite the fact that career guidance and career employment guidance were expressed as a priority. The young people received no training in how to write a CV or manage a job interview. However, one association (in this case the IECD) will provide job search support and further training if needed.

Association representatives stressed that the work of supporting youth people in finding employment is chiefly performed by civil society organisations and NGOs. They believe that young people are not told how to start looking for a job as there are no national mechanisms coordinated by the ministries of education and labour. There are many job opportunities on the market, but youth unemployment is also high. They firmly believe that there should be a national mechanism on the back of a national vision ('the government should be making the link in collaboration with the private sector' – female association representative).

### **'Have you ever thought of working abroad and, if so, why?'**

Participants showed an overall general agreement on consideration of the migration option, showing that there is a tendency to look for jobs abroad, even among VET graduates on the basis of:

- search for a better life, better social security;
- higher salaries;
- avoiding social tensions;
- more financing on entrepreneurship initiatives (start-ups) ('It is important to be properly trained but the government should also provide some financial support for youth start-ups. How can we put our ideas into practice? I personally got financed by foreign funding and I know a lot of young friends with similar experiences...' – young entrepreneur).

## **2. Relevance of education and training**

### **'Did your education help you in getting a job?'**

Most of the youth representatives found some courses useful and other not at all. There is a partial match between education and work, but they believe the programmes are lacking in practical working experience of an apprenticeship type.

The following opinions were recorded.

- Students from IT schools found the courses were broadly relevant although the areas of specialisation offered are not comprehensive. No comprehensive curriculum exists and not all of the relevant courses are available to all students ('Some relevant courses are not even available in school' – former VET student currently in employment).
- Teachers have been known to recognise that some educational courses are not entirely relevant to getting a job.
- Students discussed the central role of teachers in providing guidance, even though teachers are often not trained to do this (with weak or lacking practical skills). Many teachers are working on precarious contracts that impact on their motivation, having been recruited via non-transparent processes with an evaluation system that is not enforced.

## **3. Career guidance (and general information)**

There appears to be an overall lack of mentorship, career guidance and advice. Students tend to select their studies on the basis on family preferences or the nature of the family business. There is no effective or structured career guidance system, and while some private and public schools provide some form of service, most do not. Students receive no clear information on work options or career progression within different fields of study, and they are unaware of market demand for these.

Moreover, they are not provided with practical information on issues such as social security in relation to the various professional paths.

- One student from the mechanics school is aware that he may be able to find a job but the social security provided in his sector is so weak that he is hesitating to apply ('If I get injured I won't even have insurance – I didn't know that when I started to study. Nobody ever told me about those things... I'd better look for another type of job' – former VET student currently unemployed).
- Students expected more guidance from their teachers, but the teachers are not able to provide the necessary information and are not given sufficient preparation to guide students into the labour market.

## Conclusions and suggestions for improvement

### **'What are, in your opinion, the priorities to help young people integration into the labour market?'**

In brief, the challenges facing youth in finding a job are seen to result from the lack of a national strategy to support youth employment (this being endorsed but not implemented), the lack of guidance provided on study and career pathways and the poor opportunities for apprenticeship-style practical work within the school context. Low teaching quality and the *wasta* system also have also an impact.

Moreover, the recent high flow of immigration has led youth from the VET background to fear competition with Syrian and Palestinian refugees who are willing to work for lower levels of income.

The following priorities for youth integration summarise the group input.

- Young entrepreneur:
  - more funding opportunities for innovative ideas;
  - supporting exports as the Lebanese market is saturated, especially in IT and electronics.
- VET students:
  - better social security, especially for high-risk jobs;
  - prioritising more important issues such as the salaries of public schools teachers: ('they are currently protesting in the streets' – former VET student);
  - improved guidance and information ('I would have made different choices if I had known more' – former VET student);
  - better quality teaching;
  - more apprenticeship-style practical experience.
- NGOs/associations:
  - work at the policy level to create a link between market needs and educational needs, planning a national strategy (five-year vision);
  - revise taxation on industries;
  - implement and reinforce public education inspection ('Why do teachers working in both private and public schools perform differently?' – NGO representative);
  - increase the impact of parental committees in private and public schools, making the schools accountable and holding symbolic inspections;

- mandatory apprenticeships;
- improve data with better indicators and increased outreach.



# ACRONYMS

<b>AFD</b>	Agence française de développement
<b>CERD</b>	Centre for Education Research and Development
<b>CVET</b>	Continuing vocational education and training
<b>DG</b>	Directorate-General
<b>ETF</b>	European Training Foundation
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GDP</b>	Gross domestic product
<b>GIZ</b>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
<b>IECD</b>	Institut européen de coopération et de développement (European Institute for Cooperation and Development)
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organisation
<b>IPNET</b>	Institut pédagogique national de l'enseignement technique (National Teacher Training Institution for Technical Education)
<b>ISCED</b>	International Standard Classification of Education
<b>IT</b>	Information technology
<b>LBP</b>	Lebanese pound
<b>LFS</b>	Labour force survey
<b>MEHE</b>	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
<b>MILES</b>	Macro investment education labour and social protection policies
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organisation
<b>SMEs</b>	Small and medium-sized enterprises
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
<b>USD</b>	United States dollar
<b>VET</b>	Vocational education and training
<b>VTE</b>	Vocational and technical education

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