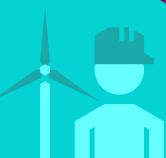
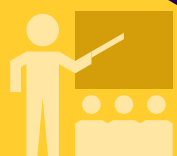




International
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Organization

► Statistical profile of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Empowering
Youth NEETs in
the Southern
Mediterranean
Region (Y-NEET)
Project



- **Statistical profile of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory**

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Printed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

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► Executive summary

This report presents an in-depth statistical profile of youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Young Palestinians face among the highest youth NEET rates in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, with significant regional and gender disparities. The analysis highlights systemic issues contributing to youth's exclusion from the labour market, exacerbated by political instability, economic barriers and societal norms. The profile is primarily based on data from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics' (PCBS) Labour Force Survey 2023. Therefore, it only reflects trends up to the end of 2023.

Regional disparities

- In 2023, youth NEET rates in Gaza (45.5 per cent) were far higher than in the West Bank (31.7 per cent), reflecting the severe socio-economic challenges faced by young people in Gaza as a result of economic stagnation, the blockade and recurrent hostilities. The gap between youth NEET rates in the West Bank and Gaza has been expanding since 2015. After the outbreak of war in October 2023, causing mass displacement and job losses, all youth in Gaza are either unemployed or inactive. Restrictions on the movement of people and goods in the West Bank since October 2023 caused the NEET rate to jump to 39.0 per cent in the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2023 from 29.1 per cent in Q4 2022.
- Unemployed youth NEET in Gaza are more affected by long-term unemployment than youth NEET in the West Bank.
- There are some differences in the determinants of youth NEET rates in the West Bank compared to the Gaza Strip. Trends in 2023 suggest a more dynamic labour market with better opportunities for youth to re-enter employment in the West Bank compared to Gaza.

Gender gaps

- Young women have significantly higher NEET than young men in both Gaza and the West Bank. In Gaza, 52 per cent of young women were NEET in 2023, compared to 39 per cent of young men. In the West Bank, the gap is narrower – 43.1 per cent of young versus were NEET in 2023, compared to 20.7 per cent of young men.
- In 2023, housekeeping and caregiving responsibilities were the main reason why young women were NEET. Unemployment was the main reason cited for young men being NEET.

Age patterns

- Youth NEET rates increase with age, reflecting difficulties in transitioning from education to employment. In 2023, 16.2 per cent of 15–19-year-olds were NEET, compared to 40.6 per cent of 20–24-year-olds and 58.5 per cent of 25–29-year-olds. These trends indicate that older youth struggle to find employment after completing education, leading to long-term unemployment.

Marital status

- Married women exhibit had the highest youth NEET rate in 2023 (73.8 per cent), largely due to caregiving and family responsibilities. Married men were far less likely to be NEET, reflecting the impact of traditional gender roles and the disproportionate burden of caregiving borne by women.

Education

- Young Palestinians with the lowest levels of education (ISCED 0–2) had the highest NEET rate in 2023 (52.5 per cent) compared to their peers with higher levels of education. However, highly educated youth (ISCED 5–8) also had an elevated NEET rate (44.7 per cent), particularly in Gaza. This reflects a mismatch between tertiary education outcomes and labour market demands, as well as a lack of graduate-level job opportunities.

- The probability of being NEET significantly increases for young people with a tertiary level of education. Most are categorized as “unemployed” youth NEET, indicating that tertiary education decreases the likelihood of tertiary education graduates becoming “inactive” youth NEET relative to young people who are not categorized as NEET at all.

Unemployed youth

- Most young people categorized as “unemployed” youth NEET were not engaged in any activity – including volunteering, subsistence production, or training – in the three months preceding the Labour Force Survey 2023.
- A large proportion of youth NEET lack work experience. In 2023, 53.8 per cent of young men categorized as “unemployed” youth NEET and 81.1 per cent of young women categorized as “unemployed” youth NEET had no prior work experience.
- Young men NEET in the West Bank reported the shortest duration of unemployment among in 2023 (3.9 months), while young women NEET in Gaza reported the longest duration of unemployment (22.7 months).

The findings of this statistical profile highlight the need for comprehensive, inclusive and collaborative efforts to address the high youth NEET rate in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. This report offers recommendations to this end, focusing on reducing barriers to technical and vocational education and training (TVET), advancing women’s empowerment as a vital first step to enhance their participation in the labour market, expanding access to technology, implementing active labour market policies, and promoting community service and voluntary work.

► 1. Background

Young people around the world face a range of challenges in the labour market. Rates of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) are high globally, especially in low and middle-income countries. While 6 per cent of the world's youth are unemployed, 20.4 per cent of youth globally are NEET, reflecting a broad picture of youth exclusion (ILO 2024a). The COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected youth NEET rates due to disruptions in education, increased unemployment, and reduced opportunities for training and internships. Global labour market conditions improved in 2023, with youth unemployment declining in most countries to lower than pre-COVID levels (ILO 2024a). However, this decline did not occur in many Arab countries, where youth unemployment rates in 2023 remained higher than rates in 2019 (ILO 2024a).

In the Occupied Palestinian Territory – where young people between 18 and 29 years old make up 22.1 per cent of the population – a high youth NEET rate is a particular challenge. Nearly one-third of young Palestinians between 15 and 29 years old are not in employment, education or training (PCBS 2024). Employment opportunities were already limited before the COVID-19 pandemic due to the occupation and economic challenges in the West Bank, and the long-term blockade of the Gaza Strip. Before the war in Gaza, NEET rates for young people between 18 and 29 years old exceeded 60 per cent in Gaza and 37 per cent in the West Bank (PCBS 2023). This gap between the West Bank and Gaza Strip reflects the impact of the blockade on youth exclusion in Gaza. After October 2023, almost all youth in Gaza are categorized as NEET. The majority of employed young people in have lost their jobs due to destruction or displacement, and most unemployed youth are not seeking employment because of the lack of opportunities available.

This statistical profile report explores trends in the youth NEET rate in the Occupied Palestinian Territory based on data from the latest available PCBS Labour Force Survey (2023). The trend analysis is disaggregated by gender and region (West Bank and Gaza Strip) to reflect on different dynamics in the Palestinian labour market for young women and men, as well as for young people in different locations. The report then presents the demographic, social and economic profiling of youth NEET.

There is no common predefined strategy to address the issue of youth inactivity since its causes may differ from one country to another and from one individual to another. However, there are four key steps in all outreach strategies: (1) identifying inactive youth, (2) contacting, engaging and connecting young people with services, (3) designing and delivering individualized reintegration programmes, and (4) monitor the outcomes of these programmes and adjust them accordingly (ILO 2017). The aim of this statistical profiling exercise is to contribute to the first step – identifying inactive youth. Based on its findings, the report recommends interventions for stakeholders to design reintegration programmes for Palestinian youth.

Youth NEET: A structural challenge in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

- ▶ The NEET phenomenon reflects the systemic issues that exclude a significant portion of Palestinian youth from the labour market.

▶ Key figures (2023)

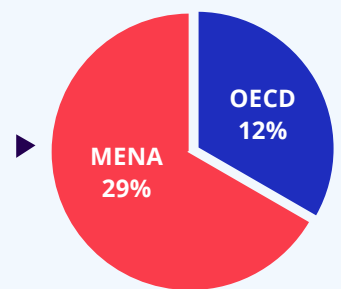


- ▶ **1 in 3** young people (aged 15–24) were NEET in 2023

This rises to:

- ▶ **37.2%** for young people aged 15–29

Young Palestinians face among the highest youth NEET rates in the MENA region

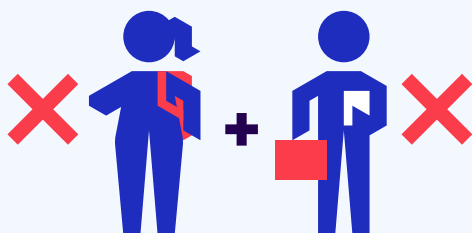


▶ Key takeaways

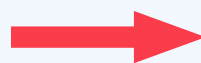
- Structural phenomenon
- Double divide (education/employment)
- Risk to social cohesion



- ▶ An “invisible generation” outside of education and employment systems



Education Employment



NEET

► 2. Methodology

The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines “youth” as young people between 15 and 24 years old. In this report, the definition of youth is extended to the 15–29-year-old age group to cover the definition of youth (18–29 years old) used by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). The ILO age group (15–24 years old) is used for cross-country comparisons of youth NEET rates, but the extended age group (15–29 years old) is used for the statistical profile of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

The youth NEET rate is defined as the percentage of youth who are not in any formal education or training programme and are either inactive or unemployed. The ILO defines the youth NEET rate as:

$$NEET\ rate = \frac{Youth - Youth\ in\ employment - Youth\ not\ in\ employment\ but\ in\ education\ or\ training}{Youth}$$

The youth NEET rate is classified as a tier 1 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator by the United Nations, which implies that it is conceptually clear and derived from a well-established methodology based on international standards. However, young people who are categorized as NEET are not homogenous. In an ILO technical brief, Elder (2015) discusses how the NEET rate as a labour market indicator can be misleading. For example, a similar aggregate NEET rate across countries can hide country-specific labour market dynamics. Youth NEET who are unemployed can re-enter the labour market once they find employment opportunities, but youth NEET who are out of the labour force or discouraged will be less likely to become involved in economic activities.

Annual labour force surveys by PCBS offer a large data set with which to identify trends in the NEET rate by gender, region and NEET category in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The NEET rate is calculated for different categories of demographic and socio-economic variables including gender, region, age, marital status, locality type and educational attainment. This profile also compares the Palestinian youth NEET rate with rates in neighbouring countries (Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon), based on data obtained from the ILOSTAT database for these countries.

To identify significant determinants of the probability of being NEET for young people, this statistical profiles report estimates a binary Logit model – a binary variable indicates being (or not being) NEET as the dependent variable, and a set of independent variables includes gender, region, locality type, age, marital status, educational attainment, and access to technology. A multinomial Logit model is also analysed to find differences in the determinants of the NEET group (unemployed or inactive, relative to youth who are not NEET). This statistical profile and its probit models analysis is built on the latest PCBS labour force survey (2023).

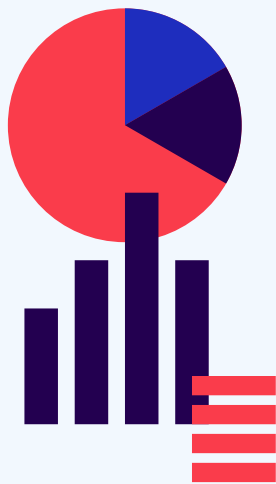
Following the statistical profiling and identification of significant determinants of youth NEET rates, the research team interviewed stakeholders about the reasons for the high youth NEET rate in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, existing programmes to reduce youth inactivity and unemployment, and possible policy recommendations to reduce youth inactivity and overcome the obstacles faced by programmes in the past. The stakeholders interviewed include:

- Representatives of the Palestinian Ministry of Labour, specifically the directors of the Employment Department and the Palestinian Employment Fund, to discuss youth employment programmes and policies.
- Private sector representatives, specifically of the Departments of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) at the Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industries and Agriculture (FPCCIA), and the Department of Entrepreneurship and Business Development at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Ramallah, to discuss the reasons for high levels of youth unemployment, especially among educated youth, skills in-demand in the labour market, and existing on-the-job training programmes.
- Representatives of the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) to discuss working conditions for young people, skills mismatches, the transition from education to employment, and youth-focused programmes.
- Representatives of the Sharek Youth Forum, an independent civil society organization (CSO) that works on youth development and engages in advocacy on social, economic, cultural and political issues.

A rigorous analysis to understand the youth NEET phenomenon

- ▶ This report is based on robust national data and an analytical approach that enables the identification of risk factors.

▶ Key data



▶ 2015–2023

- ▶ Analyses the profile of young people between:

15–29 years old

- ▶ National data used:

Labour Force Surveys

- ▶ Modelling used:

Logit & probit

▶ Key features

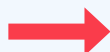
- Large national data set
- Multi-level analysis
- Identification of NEET determinants



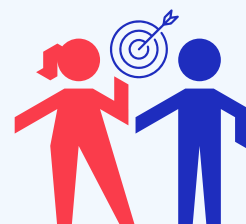
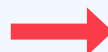
- ▶ Understanding precisely who NEETs are and why they become NEETs



Logit & probit modelling



Data analysis

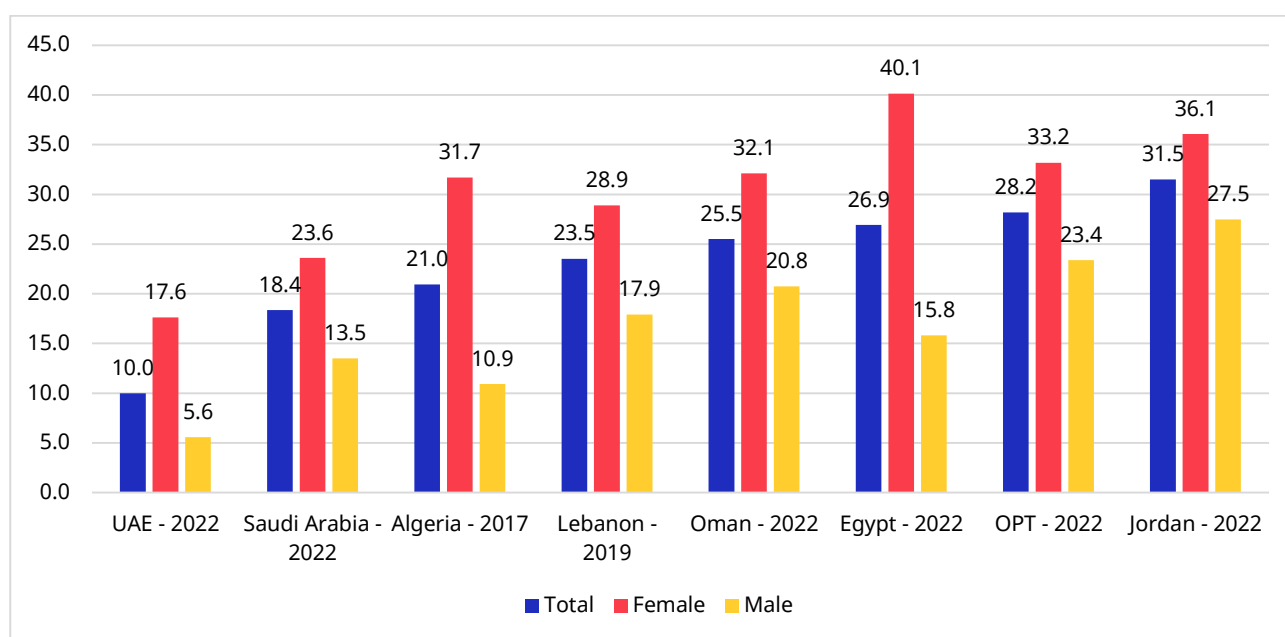


Targeted findings

► 3. Trends in the youth NEET rate in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

A large proportion of young people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory are not in employment, education or training. Figure 1 presents youth NEET rates (for youth aged 15–24) in selected countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, reflecting differences across the region and between genders. Young women experience higher NEET rates than young men across the region, reflecting gender inequities in access to the labour market, education and training. The Occupied Palestinian Territory has among the highest NEET rates in the region (28.2 per cent), reflecting severe challenges in young people's integration into education, training and the labour market. The NEET rate among young Palestinian women (33.2 per cent) is higher than in more conservative countries such as Saudi Arabia (23.6 per cent).

► **Figure 1. Youth NEET rates (15–24 age group) in selected MENA countries disaggregated by sex (%)**



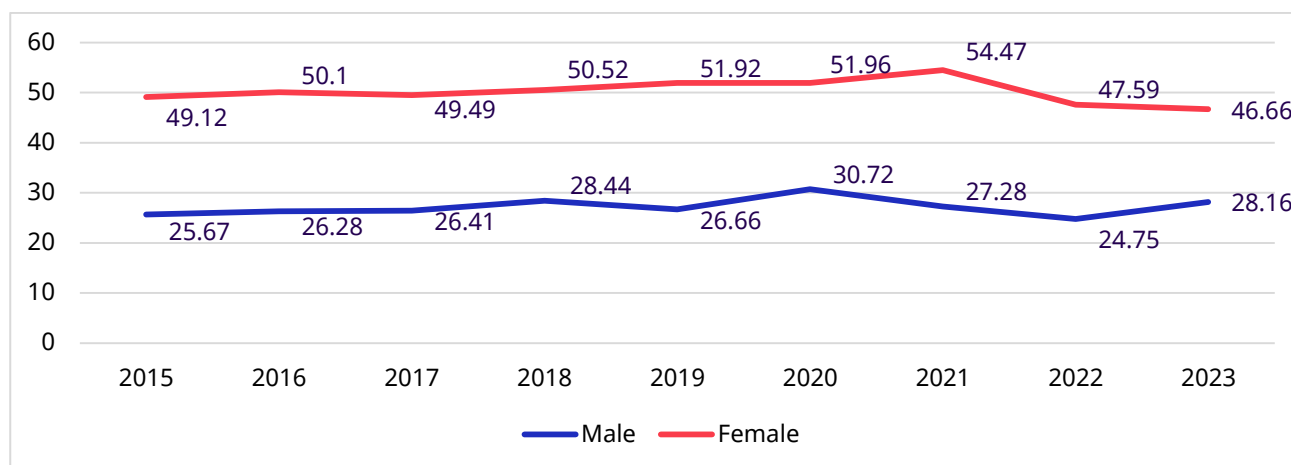
Source: ILOSTAT.

Figure 2 presents trends in NEET rates for youth between 15 and 29 years old in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, covering the period from 2015 to 2023. Including 25–29-year-olds in the analysis substantially increases the NEET rate from 27.6 per cent to 37.2 per cent in 2023. The high unemployment rate among higher education graduates and the low rate of women's labour force participation contribute to this substantial difference.

Young women's NEET rate was constantly high and relatively stable between 2015 and 2020 at around 50 per cent, peaking in 2021 at 54.5 per cent before declining in 2022 and 2023. This recent downward trend could signal progress in terms of reducing barriers to women's workforce participation or increased job opportunities due to external changes. However, young women's NEET rate remained considerably higher than the NEET rate for young men, which have been much lower but fluctuate slightly over time.

Between 2015 to 2019, young men's NEET rate remained stable at under 30 per cent, followed by a slight rise in 2020 (30.72 per cent) due to the COVID-19 pandemic, before declining slightly in 2021, largely due to employment opportunities for men in the Israeli economy.

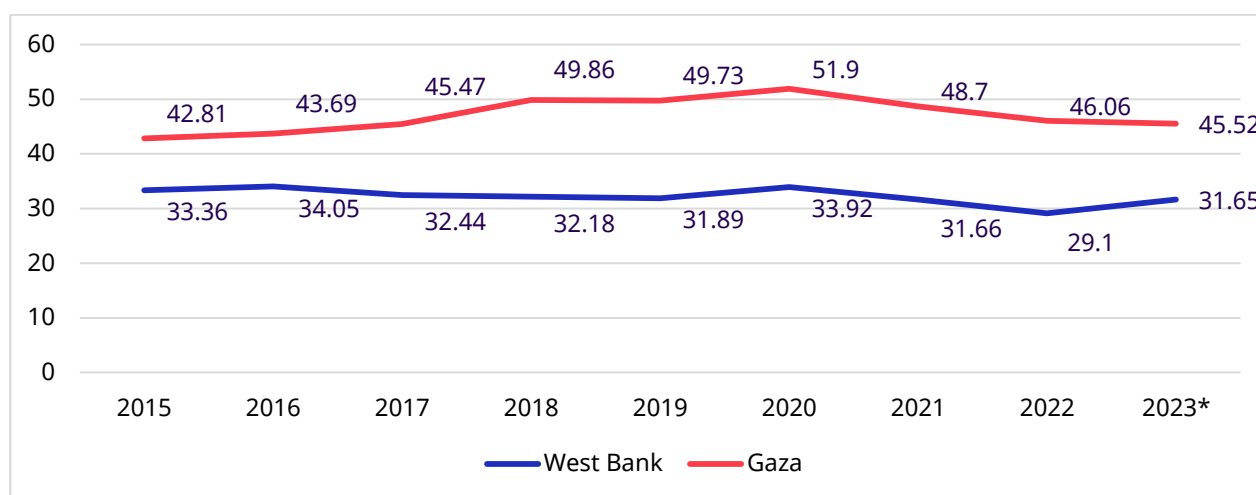
► **Figure 2. Trends over time in the youth NEET rate (15–29 age group) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory by sex, 2015–2023 (%)**



Source: Author's calculations based on PCBS, Labour Force Surveys 2015–2023.

There is a regional gap in youth NEET rates between Gaza and the West Bank, consistently widening from 10 to 20 percentage points over the 2015–2023 period. This reflects the different socio-economic conditions within the Occupied Palestinian Territory due to political and economic instability, the Israeli blockade, and hostilities in the Gaza Strip in 2014, 2018 and 2021. As figure 3 shows, the youth NEET rate has been significantly higher in Gaza compared to the West Bank over time, increasing steadily between 2015 and 2020 due to the blockade. Although the NEET rate for youth in Gaza decreased slightly in 2021, it remained higher than the rate recorded in 2015.

► **Figure 3. Trends in the youth NEET rate (15–29 age group) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory by region (West Bank vs Gaza Strip), 2015–2023 (%)**



Source: Author's calculations based on PCBS, Labour Force Surveys 2015–2023.

Note: *Data on the Gaza Strip for 2023 does not include the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2023.

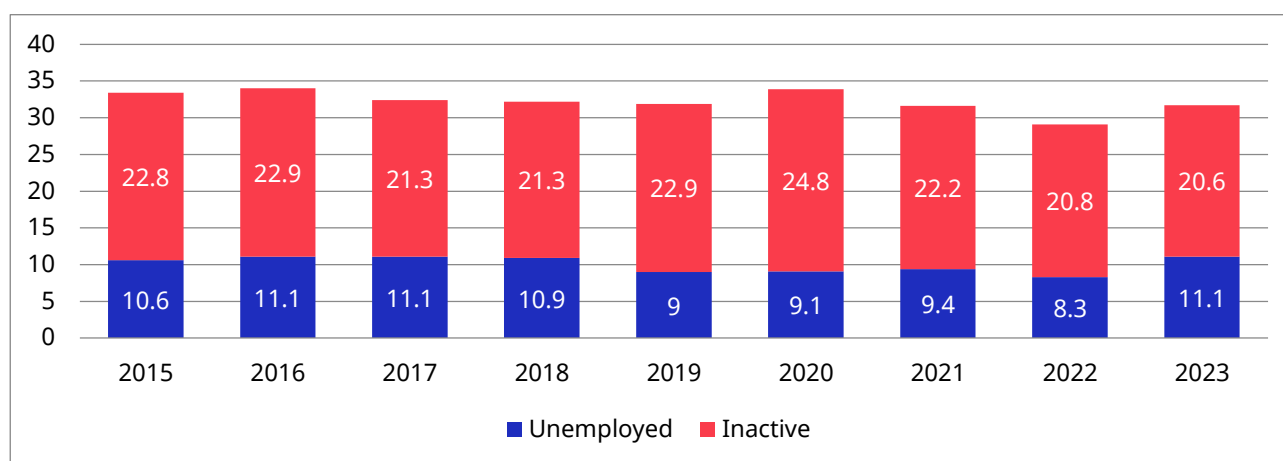
Figures 4 and 5 present the youth NEET rate disaggregated by labour force status (unemployed vs inactive) and region (West Bank vs Gaza). In the Gaza Strip, youth inactivity rates peaked significantly around 2020, exceeding 30 per cent, before steadily declining to just below 25 per cent by 2023.

The share of unemployed youth NEET in Gaza remained consistently high over the 2015–2023 period, fluctuating between 20–30 per cent. This highlights persistent barriers to workforce entry despite some variations over time.

In 2020, the share of unemployed youth NEET declined to 20.1 per cent, but the share of inactive youth NEET increased to 31.8 per cent. This indicates that unemployed youth became “discouraged workers” losing hope of finding work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

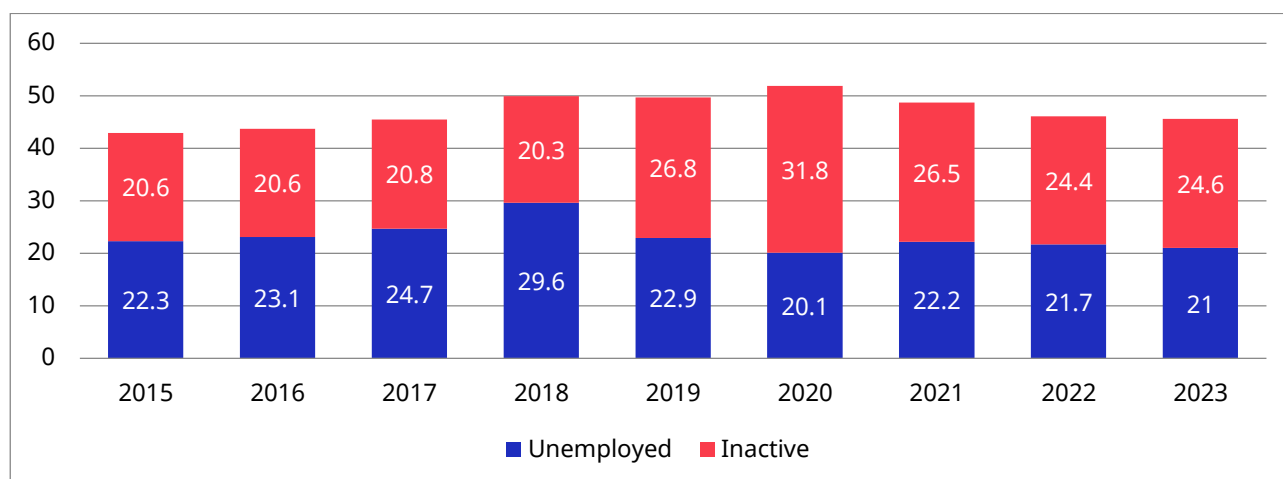
NEET rates for both inactive and unemployed youth in the West Bank were relatively stable and lower than the rates in Gaza throughout the 2015–2023 period. Inactivity among youth NEET in the West Bank remained around 20–23 per cent, with minimal changes over the period, indicating a steady but high NEET rate. The NEET rate for unemployed youth in the West Bank was lower, consistently at around 8–12 per cent. However, it rose slightly in 2023, suggesting challenges in the job market and access to education. Comparing both two regions reveals the disproportionate impact of economic and social challenges on youth in the Gaza Strip. The higher NEET inactivity rate in Gaza suggests systemic challenges, including severe labour market constraints worsened by political instability and the economic blockade.

► **Figure 4. Trends in the youth NEET rate (15–29 age group) in the West Bank by labour force category, 2015–2023 (%)**



Source: Author's calculations based on PCBS, Labour Force Surveys 2015–2023.

► **Figure 5. Trends in the youth NEET rate (15–29 age group) in the Gaza Strip by labour force category, 2015–2023 (%)**



Source: Author's calculations based on PCBS, Labour Force Surveys 2015–2023.

Note: *Data on the Gaza Strip for 2023 does not include the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2023.

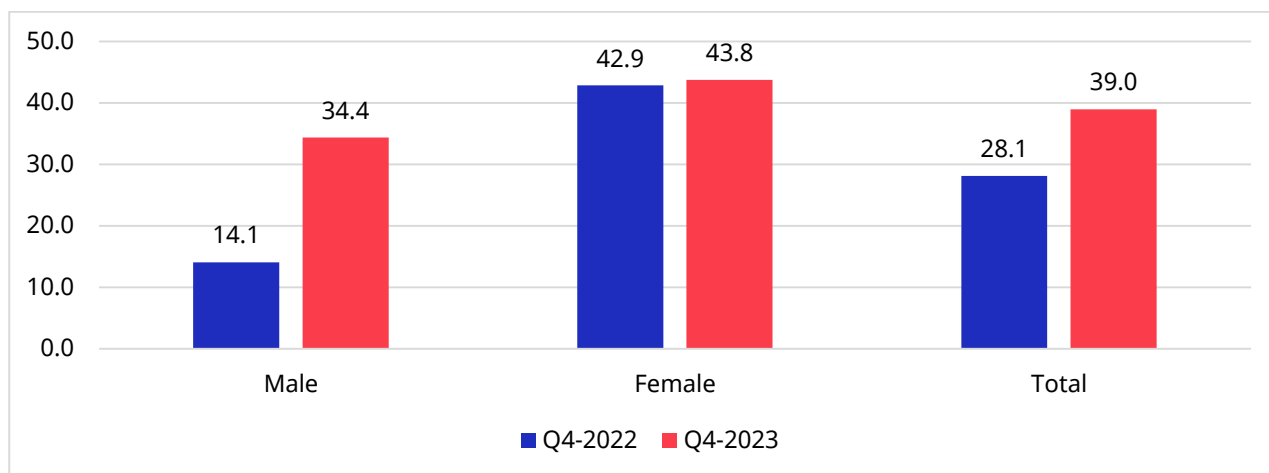
The figures above do not reflect conditions in the Gaza Strip since October 2023. The overall unemployment rate in the Gaza Strip between October 2023 and September 2024 was an estimated 79.7 per cent (ILO and PCBS 2024), with even higher rates among youth. Almost all young people in Gaza since October 2023 are considered either unemployed or inactive (ILO, 2024b).

► The majority of youth in Gaza are just moving with their families from one place to another, escaping the Israeli bombardment. The few people who have jobs mostly sell clothes or food in the markets, but all the products are expensive. People lose their jobs when they are displaced.

► **Mohammed A. S.**, a young humanitarian assistance volunteer in Gaza

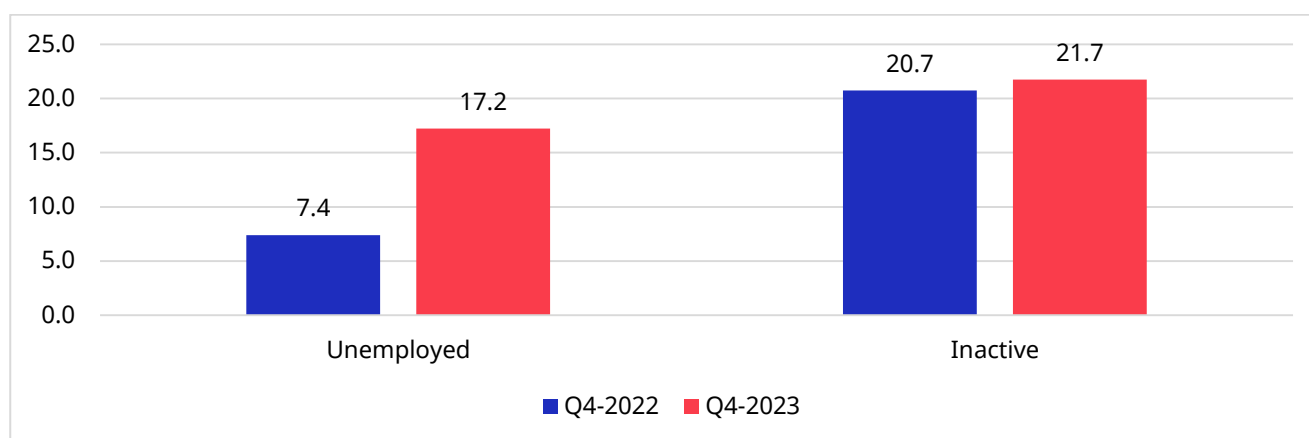
In the West Bank, hostilities and movement restrictions have had a major impact on youth's prospects in the labour market. Available data reflects a significant increase in NEET rates for both young women and young men in the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2023 compared to Q4 2022, indicating a broad decline in opportunities for youth and growing challenges in terms of youth engagement. The overall youth NEET rate in the West Bank increased from 28.1 per cent in Q4 2022 to 39.0 per cent in Q4 2023. The NEET rate for young men more than doubled, rising from 14.1 per cent in Q4 2022 to 34.4 per cent in Q4 2023. This sharp increase reflects growing barriers for young men driven by movement restrictions within the West Bank, restrictions on the entry of commodities, and the decline in Palestinians working in Israel and the settlements. The NEET rate for young women, already high in Q4 2022 at 42.9 per cent, rose to 43.8 per cent in Q4 2023.

► **Figure 6. Youth NEET rates (15–29 age group) in the West Bank by sex, Q4 2022–Q4 2023 (%)**



The rise in the youth NEET rate in Q4 2023 vs Q4 2022 was largely driven by a rise in youth unemployment. For unemployed young people, NEET rates more than doubled, jumping from 7.4 per cent in Q4 2022 to 17.2 per cent in Q4 2023. This sharp increase suggests that economic conditions in the West Bank have become less favourable for young people seeking to enter the workforce. The share of NEETs categorized as “inactive” also increased from 20.7 per cent in Q4 2022 to 21.7 per cent in Q4 2023.

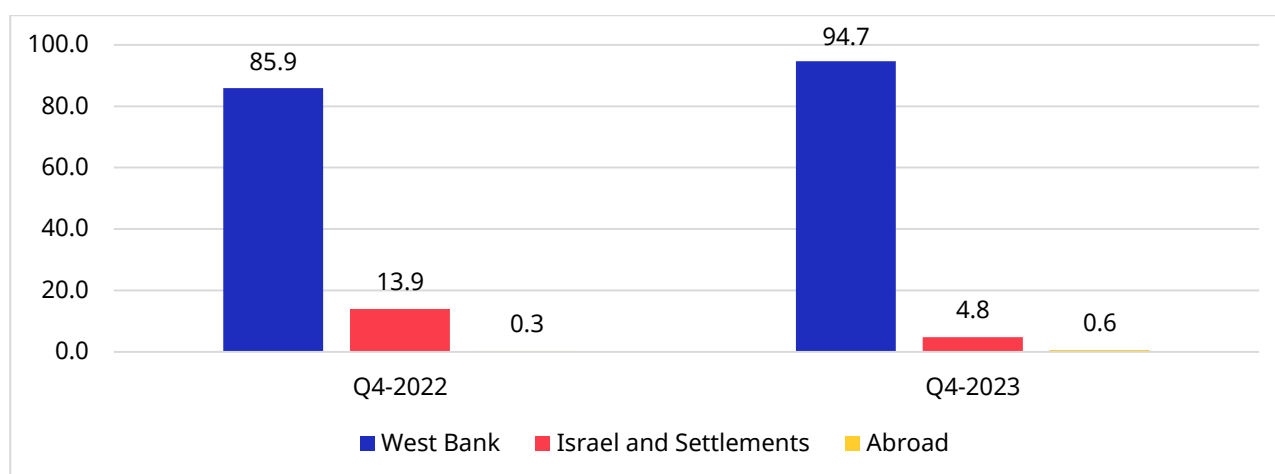
► **Figure 7. Youth NEET rates (15–29 age group) in the West Bank by labour force category, Q4 2022–Q4 2023 (%)**



Source: Author's calculations based on PCBS, Labour Force Surveys 2022–Q4 2023.

As figure 8 shows, the increased share of unemployed youth NEET in the fourth quarter of 2023 is driven by restrictions on Palestinian workers in the Israeli economy. The share of young Palestinians employed in the Israeli economy declined from 13.9 per cent in Q4 2022 to 4.8 per cent in Q4 2023.

► **Figure 8. Distribution of young workers (15–29 age group) from the West Bank by where they work, Q4 2022–Q4 2023 (%)**



Source: Author's calculations based on PCBS, Labour Force Surveys 2022–Q4 2023.

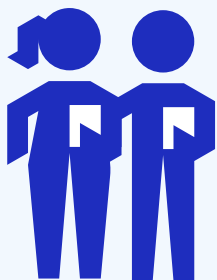
Trends over time reveal consistently high youth NEET rates

- ▶ Youth NEET rates in the Occupied Palestinian Territory have remained consistently high (between 2015 and 2023), especially in Gaza and among young women.

▶ Key findings



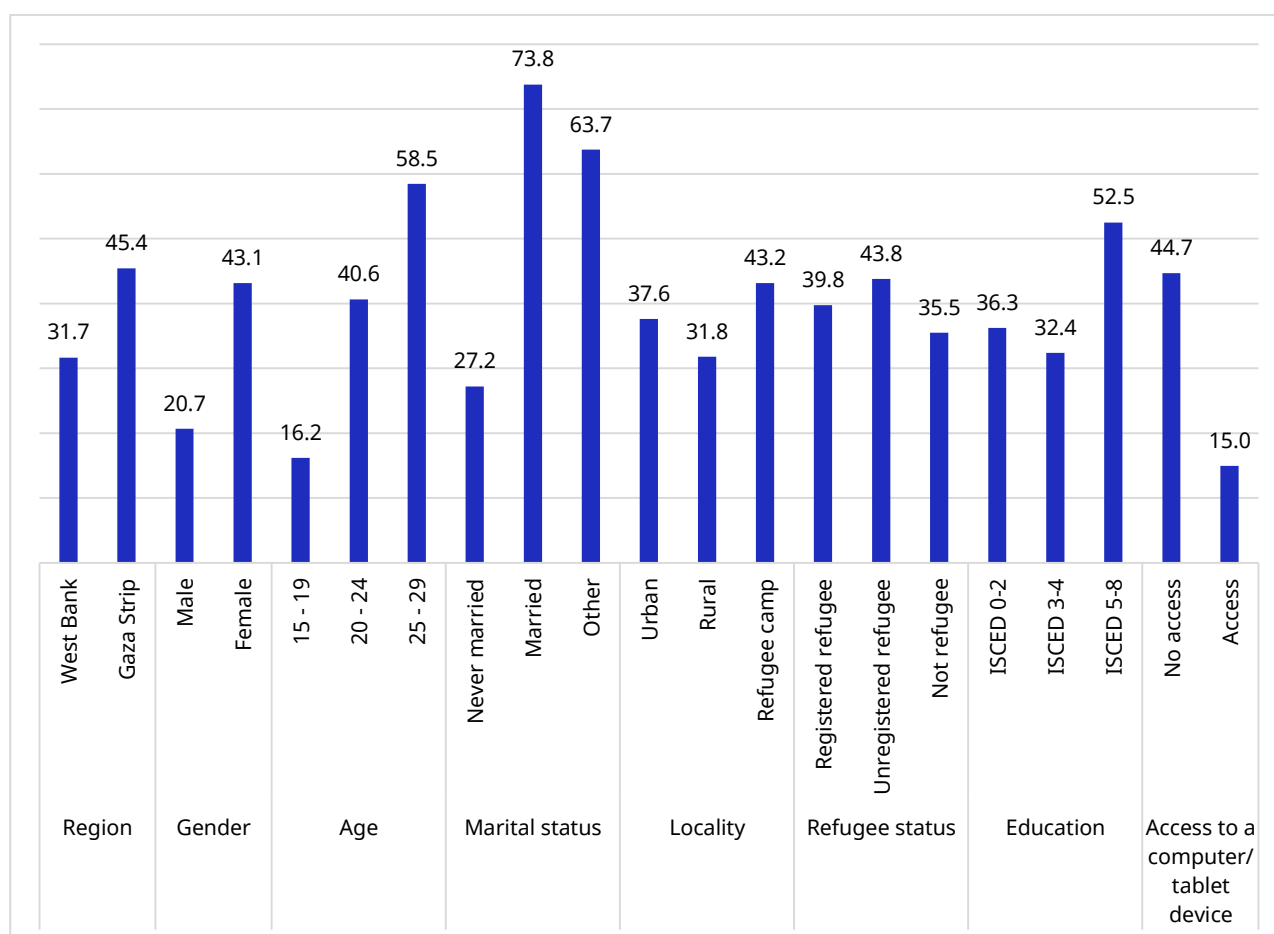
- ▶ Regional gap (Gaza vs West Bank) in youth NEET rates widened over the period from **10 to 20** percentage points
- ▶ Youth inactivity rates in Gaza peaked around 2020; unemployment rates remained **consistently high**
- ▶ More and more youth are becoming **discouraged workers**
- ▶ Youth inactivity and unemployment rates in the West Bank remained **high but stable, and lower than in Gaza**
- ▶ But after Q3 2023 and increased movement restrictions, there is **rising unemployment**
- ▶ Young women's NEET rate remained considerably **higher than the rate for men** (which has been much lower but fluctuates slightly over time)



► 4. Profile of Palestinian youth not in employment, education or training

An estimated 613,000 young men and women in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (417,000 in the West Bank and 196,000 in the Gaza Strip) were not in employment, education or training in 2023. The profile of youth NEET reflects differences across socio-economic subgroups. Figure 9 presents NEET rates among 15–29-year-olds across subgroups in 2023, reflecting differences influenced by region, gender, age, marital status, locality, refugee status, education level, and access to technology. Youth NEET were more likely to be young women, live in the Gaza Strip, be between 25–29 years old, be married, be more educated, and have limited access to technology.

- **Regional differences:** In 2023, the youth NEET rate was significantly higher in the Gaza Strip (45.4 per cent) than in the West Bank (31.7 per cent). This reflects severe socio-economic challenges in Gaza that increase youth disengagement, including restricted mobility, persistent economic instability and limited employment opportunities.
- **Gender inequalities:** Young women had a higher NEET rate (43.1 per cent in 2023) than young men (20.7 per cent). This difference points to persistent gender inequalities in access to education and employment, rooted in cultural and systemic barriers.
- **Age:** The youth NEET rate increases with age, rising from 16.2 per cent for the 15–19 age group to 40.6 per cent for 20–24-year-olds, and peaking at 58.5 per cent for 25–29-year-olds. This upward trend reflects the growing difficulties that older youth face in transitioning from education to employment.
- **Marital status:** Married youth had a higher NEET rate in 2023 (73.8 per cent) than their unmarried peers (27.2 per cent). This difference was particularly pronounced among married women, whose labour market participation is constrained by family care responsibilities.
- **Locality type:** Youth who live in rural areas had a slightly higher NEET rate in 2023 (43.2 per cent) than their urban counterparts (37.6 per cent).
- **Refugee vulnerabilities:** Refugee youth, whether registered (43.8 per cent) or unregistered (39.8 per cent), had a higher NEET rates than young people who are not refugees in 2023 (35.5 per cent). This disparity reflects the compounded challenges that refugees face in accessing the labour market, and the fact that refugees own fewer assets than persons who are not refugees.
- **Educational attainment:** The relationship between educational achievement and youth NEET rates is complex. Youth with the lowest education levels (ISCED 0–2) had the highest NEET rate in 2023 (52.5 per cent), indicating a clear disadvantage for those without basic qualifications. Middle level education (ISCED 3–4) correlated with a relatively lower NEET rate (32.4 per cent), but the NEET rate was notably pronounced among highly educated (ISCED 5–8) youth in 2023 (44.7 per cent).
- **Access to technology:** Access to technology plays a key role in reducing NEET rates. Youth without access to devices such as computers or tablets had a substantially higher NEET rate in 2023 (44.7 per cent) than those with access to such devices (15 per cent). This disparity highlights the transformative potential of technology in bridging gaps in education and training opportunities.

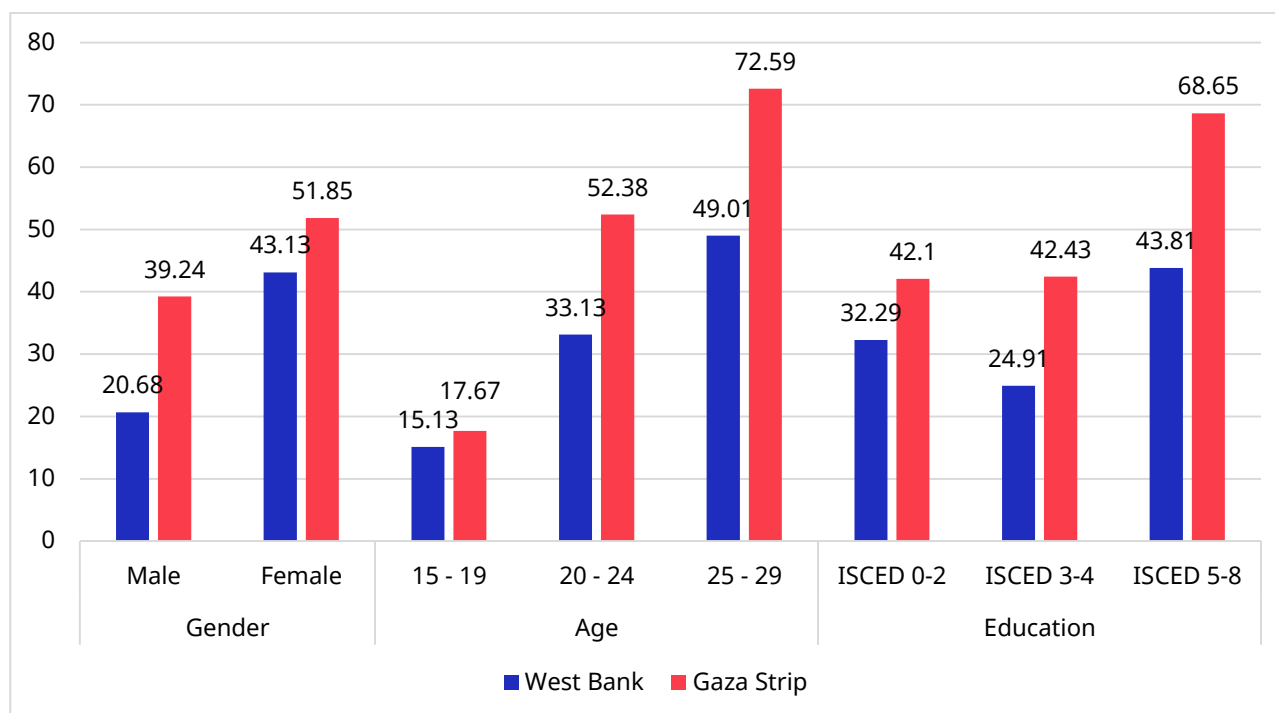
► **Figure 9. Youth NEET rate (15–29 age group) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory by sub-groups, 2023 (%)**

Source: Author's calculations based on PCBS, Labour Force Survey 2023.

Figure 10 presents youth NEET rates in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, focusing on differences by gender, age and level of education. It reveals significant regional, demographic and educational differences, highlighting the complex factors that shape youth disengagement in these areas.

The NEET rate was higher for both genders in Gaza compared to the West Bank in 2023. Young women had consistently higher NEET rates than young men in both the West Bank (43.13 per cent vs 20.68 per cent) and Gaza (51.9 per cent vs 39.2 per cent). NEET rates increase as youth grow older, indicating challenges in transitioning from education to employment. In the West Bank, the NEET rate was 15.13 per cent among 15–19-year-olds, compared to 49.01 per cent among 25–29-year-olds. The increase was even more dramatic in Gaza, where the rate jumped from 17.67 per cent for younger youth to 72.59 per cent for 25–29-year-olds.

Youth with a low level of education (ISCED 0–2) had high NEET rates in both the West Bank (32.2 per cent) and Gaza (42.2 per cent). A middle level of education (ISCED 3–4) was associated with the lowest NEET rates. Highly educated youth (ISCED 5–8) had an extremely high NEET rate in both the West Bank (43 per cent) and Gaza (69 per cent).

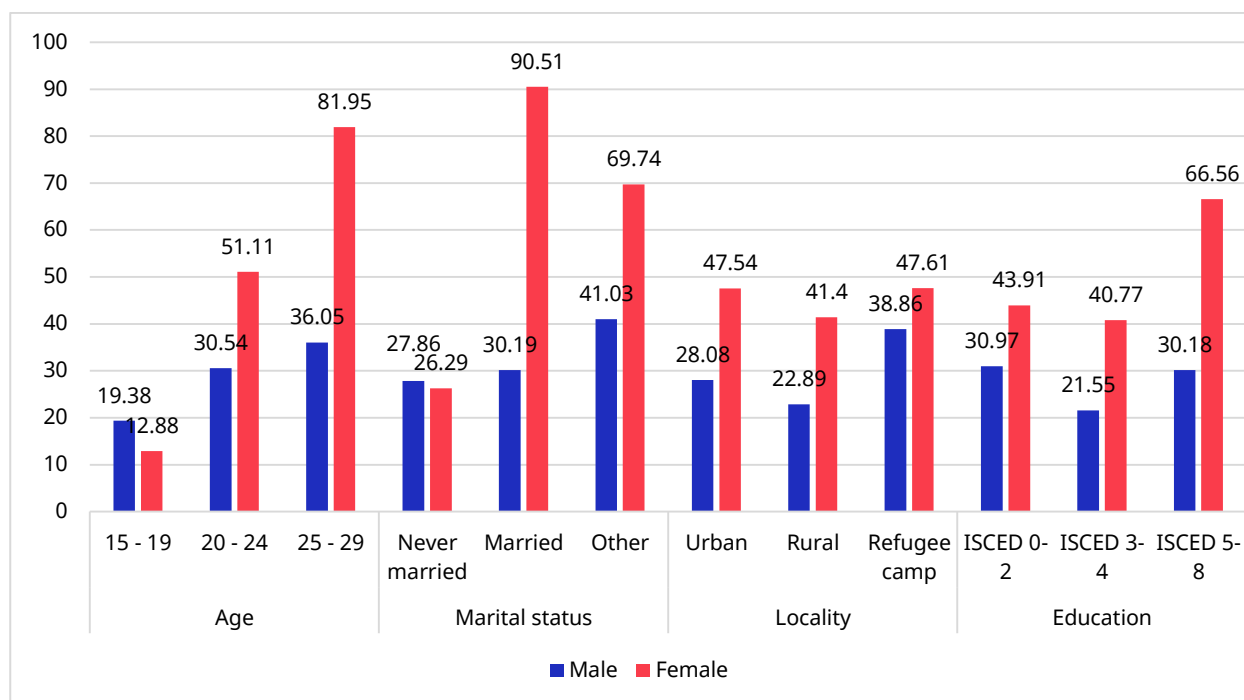
► **Figure 10. Youth NEET rates (15–29 age group) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory by region, sex, age and education, 2023 (%)**

Source: Author's calculations based on PCBS, Labour Force Survey 2023.

Figure 11 shows clear gender differences in NEET rates across age, marital status, locality and education. Young women consistently had higher NEET rates than young men across all sub-groups in 2023. The NEET rate for young men rises gradually with age, from under 20 per cent for 15–19-year-olds to 36.05 per cent for those 25–29-year-olds. For young women, the NEET rate increases much more sharply with age, rising from 51.11 per cent for 20–24-year-olds to nearly 82 per cent for 25–29-year-olds. Marriage further widens the gap, as married young women had an NEET rate of up to 90.5 per cent, far higher than the rate for married men. These trends reflect the disproportionate impact of social expectations, family responsibilities and caregiving roles on young women.

Location also affects NEET rates disproportionately for young women. While NEET rates for young men remained under 30 per cent across urban and rural localities in 2023, rates for young women ranged from 41.4 per cent in rural areas to 47.54 per cent in urban areas and 47.61 per cent in refugee camps. This reflects additional challenges for women in urban centres and refugee camps. Similar patterns are apparent in terms of education – while young men with higher education had lower NEET rates, the rate for young women with a high level of education remained high (66.6 per cent).

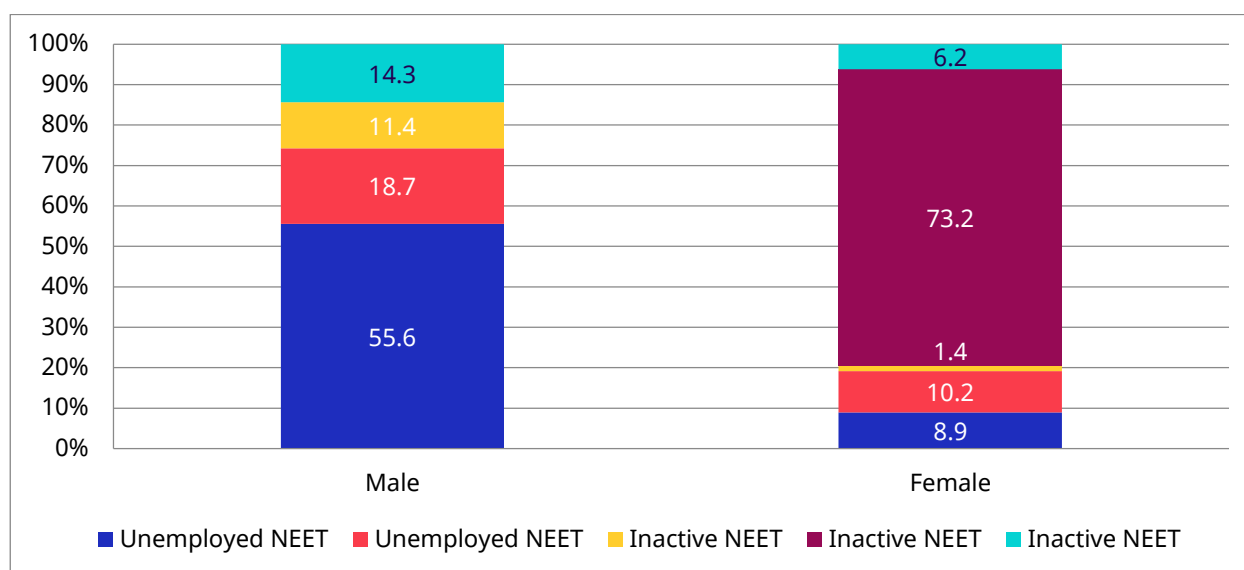
► **Figure 11. NEET rates (15–29 age group) for young women and men in the Occupied Palestinian Territory by age, marital status, locality and education, 2023 (%)**



Source: Author's calculations based on PCBS, Labour Force Survey 2023.

Available data reveals significant differences in the reasons why young men and young women were not in employment, education or training in 2023. Most young men who were NEET (55.6 per cent) were affected by short-term unemployment, with far fewer falling in the category of long-term unemployment (18.7 per cent). Among young women, 73.2 per cent reported caregiving as the primary reason for their inactivity, highlighting significant gender barriers to their participation in employment, education and training.

► **Figure 12. Distribution of youth NEET (15–29 age group) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory by sex and the reasons for their being NEET, 2023**



Source: Author's calculations based on PCBS, Labour Force Survey 2023.

Tables 1 and 2 present the reasons why young men and women (aged 15–29) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were unemployed or inactive NEET in 2023, disaggregated by a range of socio-demographic factors. The data reveals significant regional, demographic and educational differences, reflecting the structural and economic challenges facing young Palestinians.

Regional differences are pronounced among youth NEET. In 2023, long-term unemployment was more common in Gaza than in the West Bank for both young women and young men. In Gaza, there was a clear gender difference in the distribution of youth NEET – 48.4 per cent of young men NEET were affected by short-term unemployment, while 26.0 per cent were affected by long-term unemployment, compared to 6.6 per cent and 17.2 per cent of young women, respectively.

Age plays a critical role in determining the reasons for being NEET. In 2023, long-term unemployment most affected older youth between 25 and 29 years old (23.9 per cent of young men and 12.5 per cent of young women). Young men between 20 and 24 years old were more likely to be NEET because of short-term unemployment (49.6 per cent) or inactivity due to illness or disability (21.6 per cent). Regardless of age, most young women were NEET because of housekeeping responsibilities or caring for family members.

Marital status also influences the reasons youth not being engaged in employment, education or training. Far more married young women (89.4 per cent) cited housekeeping or caregiving as the main reason why they were NEET in 2023 compared to women who have never been married (48.1 per cent). Young married men were more likely to be NEET due to short-term unemployment compared to unmarried men.

Location matters for youth not in employment, education or training. In 2023, young men NEET in rural areas were less likely to experience long-term unemployment (8.9 per cent) than young men in urban areas (20 per cent) and refugee camps (20.6 per cent). This reflects competitive job markets in cities and problems of structural unemployment, as well as the fact the accessibility of the Israeli labour market for young rural men. Caregiving-related inactivity was the reason of why young women were NEET in 2023, particularly among young women in rural areas (80 per cent). However, this was also a key reason for not being in employment, education or training among young women in urban centres (73.1 per cent) and refugee camps (63.1 per cent).

Refugee status exacerbates challenges for youth. More youth NEET who were registered refugees in 2023 experienced long-term unemployment (22.3 per cent among young men and 16.1 per cent among young women) than young people who were not refugees (15.1 per cent among young men and 6.6 per cent among young women). While the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has historically provided vital support for registered Palestinian refugees, a lack of funds and restrictions on its workspace has severely affected refugees, including young people.

Long-term unemployment was more prevalent among highly educated young Palestinians in 2023, reflecting a mismatch between tertiary education programmes and the skills required by the labour market. This was a particular challenge for young men, for whom long-term unemployment increased from 14.0 per cent among youth NEET with the lowest level of education, to 40.2 per cent for those with a tertiary level of education. Most young women with a low level of education (88.7 per cent) attributed being NEET to their caregiving duties.

More young men who were NEET in 2023 and had access to a computer or tablet were affected by short-term unemployment (58.7 per cent) than those without access to such devices (29.1 per cent). Although access to technology could provide opportunities for young women to connect with social and professional networks, more young women with access to a computer or tablet (73.9 per cent) cited caregiving as the reason why they were NEET in 2023 compared to women without access to devices (62.9 per cent).

► **Table 1. Distribution of young men NEET (15–29 age group) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory by the reason for being NEET and other factors, 2023**

		Unemployed NEET		Inactive NEET			Total
		Short-term unemployment (%)	Long-term unemployment (%)	Illness/ disability (%)	House keeping/ caregiving (%)	Other reasons (%)	
Region	West Bank	64.8	9.3	13.7	0.0	12.1	100
	Gaza Strip	48.4	26.0	9.6	0.0	16.1	100
Age	15–19 years old	49.6	11.7	21.6	0.0	17.0	100
	20–24 years old	60.2	17.7	7.3	0.0	14.8	100
	25–29 years old	55.3	23.9	8.5	0.0	12.3	100
Marital status	Never married	54.4	18.3	11.8	0.0	15.5	100
	Married	64.1	21.6	9.0	0.0	5.3	100
	Other*	48.4	21.7	0.0	0.0	29.8	100
Locality	Urban	54.9	20.0	10.3	0.0	14.8	100
	Rural	61.7	8.9	18.2	0.0	11.2	100
	Refugee camp	53.4	20.6	11.4	0.0	14.6	100
Refugee status	Registered refugee	51.4	22.3	11.3	0.0	14.9	100
	Unregistered refugee	54.4	19.8	11.0	0.0	14.8	100
	Not a refugee*	59.7	15.1	11.5	0.0	13.8	100
Education	ISCED 0–2	56.6	14.0	15.2	0.0	14.2	100
	ISCED 3–4	57.2	21.7	5.3	0.0	15.9	100
	ISCED 5–8	46.7	40.2	0.8	0.0	12.4	100
Access to a computer/ tablet device	Has access	58.7	19.6	10.5	0.0	11.2	100
	No access	29.1	10.7	19.0	0.0	41.2	100
Young men (15–29 years old)		55.6	18.7	11.4	0.0	14.3	100

Source: Author's calculations based on PCBS, Labour Force Survey 2023.

Note: *Insufficient number of observations.

► **Table 2. Distribution of young women NEET (15–29 age group) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory by the reason for being NEET and other factors, 2023**

		Unemployed youth NEET		Inactive youth NEET			Total
		Short-term unemployment (%)	Long-term unemployment (%)	Illness/ disability (%)	Housekeeping/ caregiving (%)	Other reasons (%)	
Region	West Bank	10.8	4.5	1.3	80.6	2.8	100
	Gaza Strip	6.6	17.2	1.6	64.1	10.5	100
Age	15–19 years old	1.2	1.1	4.1	82.3	11.4	100
	20–24 years old	13.5	9.3	1.8	68.1	7.3	100
	25–29 years old	7.4	12.5	0.7	74.8	4.6	100
Marital status	Never married	18.1	17.4	3.5	48.1	13.1	100
	Married	3.1	5.7	0.2	89.4	1.6	100
	Other	9.5	8.6	0.2	66.2	15.6	100
Locality	Urban	8.1	10.9	1.3	73.1	6.5	100
	Rural	12.9	2.6	1.5	80.0	3.0	100
	Refugee camp	10.3	15.7	2.3	63.1	8.7	100
Refugee status	Registered refugee	10.3	16.1	2.0	63.5	8.1	100
	Unregistered refugee	0.0	7.3	5.2	87.5	0.0	100
	Not a refugee	8.1	6.6	1.1	79.2	5.1	100
Education	ISCED 0–2	1.3	0.5	3.0	88.7	6.5	100
	ISCED 3–4	4.6	7.9	0.4	80.8	6.3	100
	ISCED 5–8	27.4	29.3	0.2	37.3	5.7	100
Access to a computer/ tablet device	Has access	9.4	10.7	1.0	73.9	5.0	100
	No access	1.7	2.3	7.4	62.9	25.6	100
Young women (15–29 years old)		8.9	10.2	1.4	73.2	6.2	100

Source: Author's calculations based on PCBS, Labour Force Survey 2023.

Note: * Insufficient number of observations.

Although young people have the potential to contribute immensely to socio-economic development, table 3 shows that an absolute majority of youth NEET youth in the Occupied Palestinian Territory did not participate in any training, voluntary work or own production for subsistence income in the three months preceding the Labour Force Survey 2023. The only activity that almost all NEET youth participated in was performing unpaid services in their own households. This reflects strong social expectations, especially for young women, in terms of caregiving and domestic work. It is problematic when unpaid work within their own households is the only option available for youth NEET, since it gradually drives them towards exclusion from the labour force.

► **Table 3. Share of youth NEET in the Occupied Palestinian Territory who participated in activities in the past three months, by labour force status, 2023**

	Unemployed youth NEET (%)	Inactive youth NEET (%)	Youth NEET (%)
Trainee	0.79	0.19	0.39
Volunteer work	1.71	0.12	0.66
Own production	1.42	0.33	0.7
Unpaid services in own household	98.28	99.87	99.33

Source: Author's calculations based on PCBS, Labour Force Survey 2023.

► **Box 1. Challenges and success stories of youth engagement**

According to an interview with the Projects Manager at the Sharek Youth Forum conducted for this statistical profile, before the war in Gaza began in October 2023, voluntary work was not a priority for young Palestinians. Many aimed to work in Israel or the settlements, as this offered higher wages than those available in the West Bank. After October 2023, youth in the West Bank have been more engaged in voluntary work, including providing assistance for workers from Gaza who were unable to return home. In the Gaza Strip, many young people engage in humanitarian assistance.

One success stories of youth engagement in voluntary work is “Youth Village”, a project implemented by the Sharek Youth Forum in Kafr Ne'meh, a village near Ramallah. Youth organize camping for several days in the village, where they are coached on voluntary work and community service. They learn about land cultivation and engage in community service by helping locals cultivate the land. Such projects could be expanded to other villages to engage youth in voluntary work and community service.

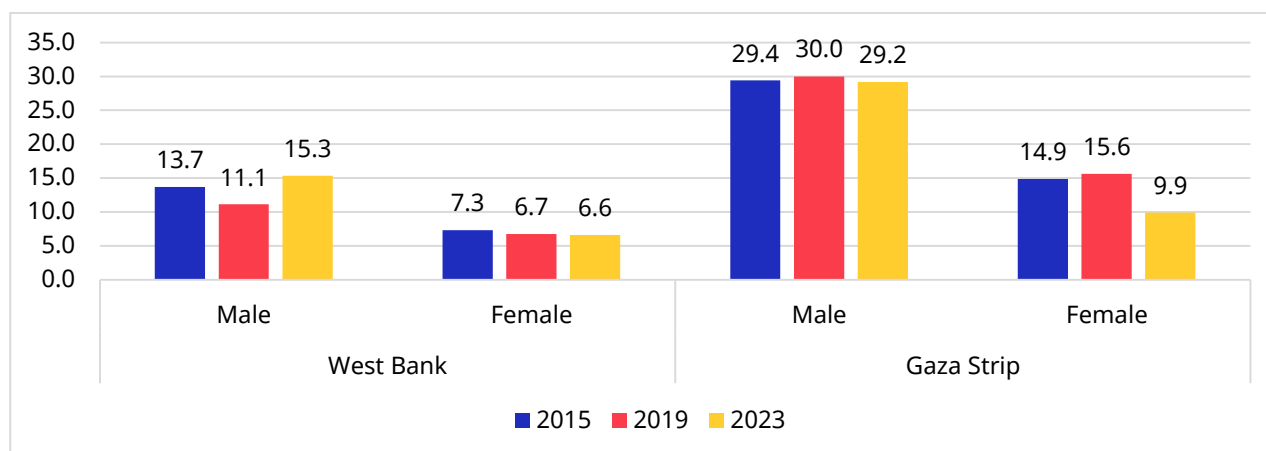
4.1. Key characteristics of unemployed youth not in employment, education or training

In 2023, unemployed youth represented 40.4 per cent of youth not in employment, education or training in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. As figure 13 shows, unemployment-driven NEET rates were higher in Gaza than in the West Bank, and among young men compared to young women (since most young women who are NEET were categorized as inactive rather than unemployed).

In the West Bank, the rate of young men who were NEET and unemployed decreased from 13.7 per cent in 2015 to 11.1 per cent in 2019, but rose slightly to 15.3 per cent in 2023, reflecting an increase in unemployment challenges. The rate for young women remained stable, decreasing from 7.3 per cent in 2015 to 6.7 per cent in 2019 and 6.6 per cent in 2023. This indicates that the NEET rate for young women in the West Bank is influenced more by caregiving and household responsibilities than by unemployment.

In the Gaza Strip, the rate of unemployment among young men who were NEET in 2023 was far higher than in the West Bank. This rate has remained consistently high with minimal changes over time – ranging from 29.4 per cent in 2015 to 30.0 per cent in 2019 and 29.2 per cent in 2023 – reflecting a trend of chronic unemployment and limited job opportunities. The rate of unemployment among young women who were NEET in Gaza decreased from 14.9 per cent in 2015 to 9.9 per cent in 2023, indicating a slight improvement.

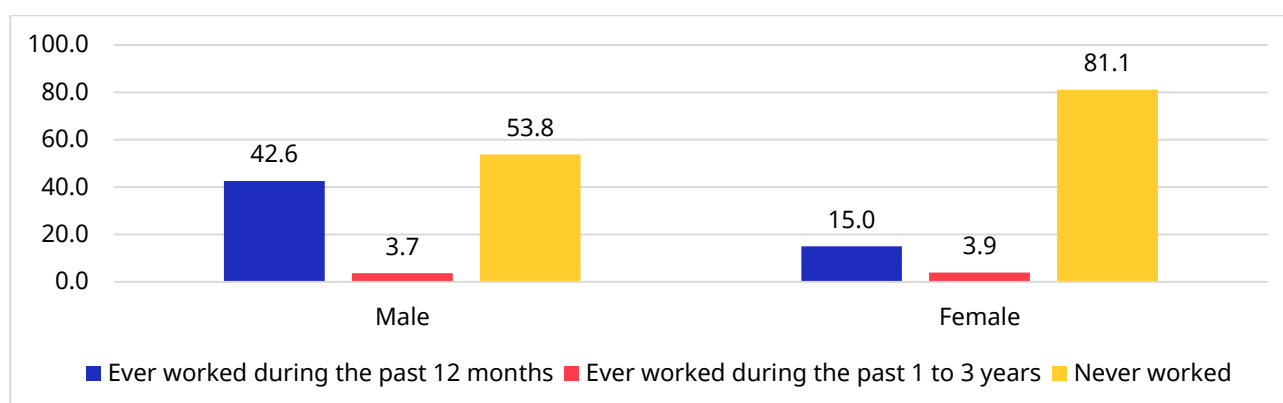
► **Figure 13. Share of unemployed youth NEET (15–29 age group) among the youth population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory by region and sex, 2015–2023**



Source: Author's calculations based on PCBS, Labour Force Surveys 2015, 2019 and 2023.

The majority of unemployed youth NEET, especially young women, have never worked (see figure 14). Among young men in this category, 42.6 per cent worked in the 12 months preceding the Labour Force Survey 2023, 53.8 per cent never worked, and 3.7 per cent last worked 1–3 years before the survey. For young women, only 15 per cent worked in the year preceding the survey, 81.1 per cent never worked and 3.9 per cent worked 1–3 years before the survey. This reflects a gender gap in employment experience. Young Palestinian men are more likely than women to have recent work experience, while young women are far more likely than men to lack any work experience whatsoever.

► **Figure 14. Distribution of unemployed youth NEET (15–29 age group) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory by sex and previous work experience, 2023**



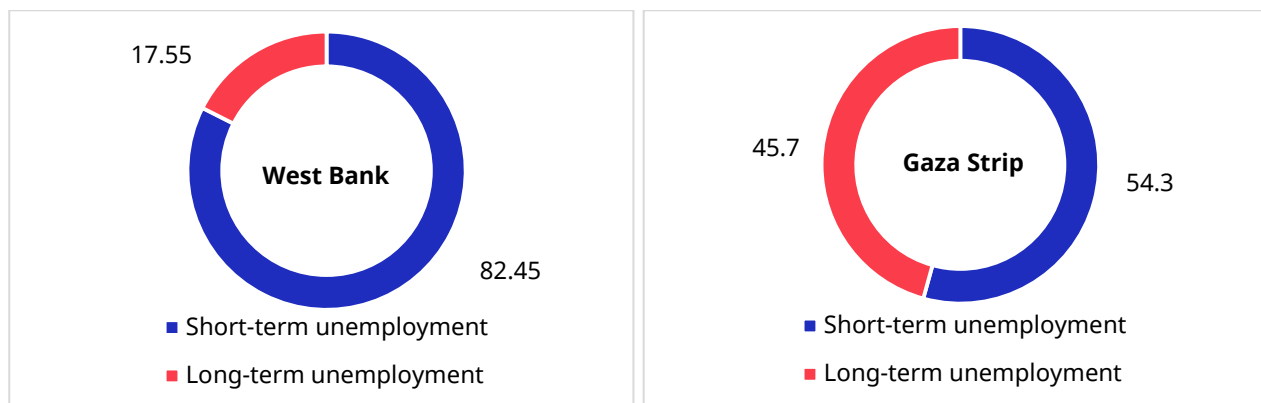
Source: Author's calculations based on PCBS, Labour Force Survey 2023.

Figure 15 compares unemployment among youth not in employment, education or training by duration (short-term vs long-term),¹ reflecting clear differences between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. In Gaza, long-term unemployment among youth NEET was high in 2023 (45.7 per cent of unemployed youth NEET), pointing to deep structural challenges such as economic stagnation and limited job opportunities.

¹ Short-term unemployment refers to a person being unemployed for less than 12 months. Long-term unemployment refers to unemployment lasting for 1 year or longer.

In the West Bank, short-term unemployment was prevalent (82.45 per cent of unemployed youth NEET), reflecting a more dynamic labour market with better opportunities for youth to re-enter employment.

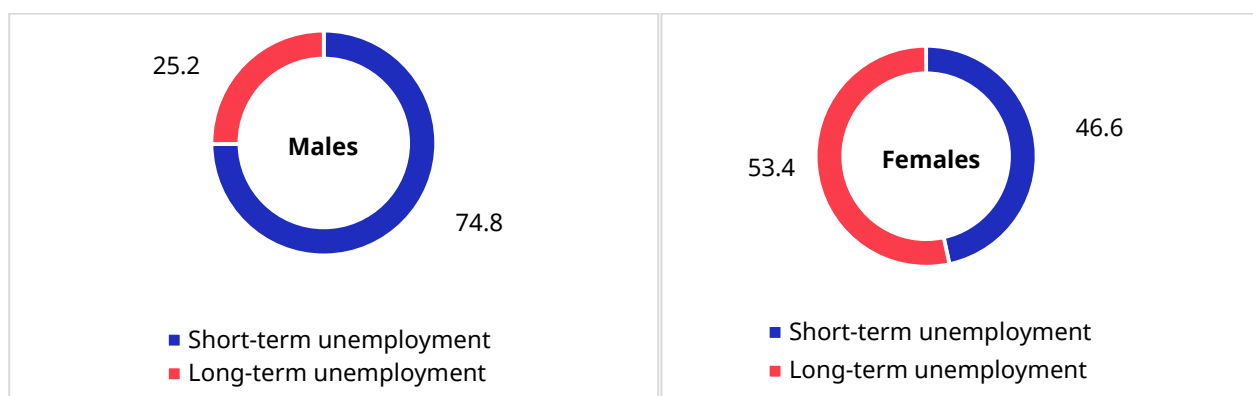
► **Figure 15. Distribution of unemployed youth NEET (15–29 age group) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory by unemployment duration and region, 2023**



Source: Author's calculations based on PCBS, Labour Force Survey 2023.

In 2023, young women who were and categorized as unemployed were more than twice as likely as to experience long-term unemployment (53.4 per cent) than their male peers (25.2 per cent). This reflects systemic barriers that disproportionately affect women, as well as greater opportunities for mobility in the labour market for men.

► **Figure 16. Distribution of unemployed youth NEET (15–29 age group) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory by unemployment duration and sex, 2023**



Source: Author's calculations based on PCBS, Labour Force Survey 2023.

On average, the duration of unemployment among youth NEET who were categorized as unemployed in 2023 was 11.1 months. The data reveals regional and gender disparities, with the average duration of unemployment ranging from 3.9 months for young men in the West Bank to 22.7 months for young women in the Gaza Strip. Considerable differences between the mean and the median unemployment duration for young men NEET in Gaza and young women NEET in the West Bank highlight the wide gap in duration within these groups. In other words, a small proportion of individuals within these groups were unemployed for extremely long time periods of time. The data also highlights long-term unemployment as a common issue for young women.

► **Table 4. Mean and median unemployment duration of unemployed youth NEET youth (15–29 age group) by sex and region, 2023**

Sex	Statistic	West Bank (months)	Gaza Strip (months)	Occupied Palestinian Territory (months)
Male	Mean	3.9	10.2	7.7
	Median	2.0	4.0	2.0
Female	Mean	9.7	22.7	18.1
	Median	4.0	24.0	12.0
Total	Mean	5.7	14.5	11.1
	Median	2.0	12.0	4.0

Source: Author's calculations based on PCBS, Labour Force Survey 2023.

Among youth NEET categorized as unemployed in 2023, 54.4 per cent reported “checking with employers” as their main method of searching for work, followed by using the internet (28.9 per cent). Social networks played a smaller role, with 14.0 per cent of unemployed youth NEET relying on friends or relatives to search for work. Table 5 highlights gender differences in job search methods. For young men, the most common method was checking with employers (69.7 per cent). This reflects a direct approach to searching for work, likely supported by the fact that men enjoy greater mobility and face fewer societal restrictions. Social networks also played a role, with 18.0 per cent asking friends or relatives. Other methods, such as using the internet (10.9 per cent) were less common.

However, using the internet was the dominant method for young women NEET and categorized as unemployed (72.1 per cent). Only 17.5 per cent of women in this category checked with employers about work opportunities, highlighting gendered obstacles to direct engagement in the labour market. Women rarely used other methods, such as asking friends or relatives (4.4 per cent). These findings indicate that young men prefer direct engagement methods to search for work, while young women heavily rely on remote methods like using the internet, reflecting the mobility and societal constraints they face.

► **Table 5. Job search methods used by unemployed youth NEET (15–29 age group) by sex, 2023**

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Overall youth NEET (%)
Registered at an employment office	0.0	1.2	0.4
Placed a job search announcement	0.3	2.4	0.9
Used the internet to search for jobs	10.9	72.1	28.9
Checked with employers	69.7	17.5	54.4
Took a recruitment test or had an interview	0.2	2.3	0.8
Asked friends or relatives	18.0	4.4	14.0
Waited at a workplace	0.1	0.0	0.0
Looked to finance a new business	0.2	0.0	0.1
Looked for a business idea	0.0	0.0	0.0
Applied for a permit or license to start a business	0.6	0.0	0.5
Other	0.1	0.0	0.0

Source: Author's calculations based on PCBS, Labour Force Survey 2023.

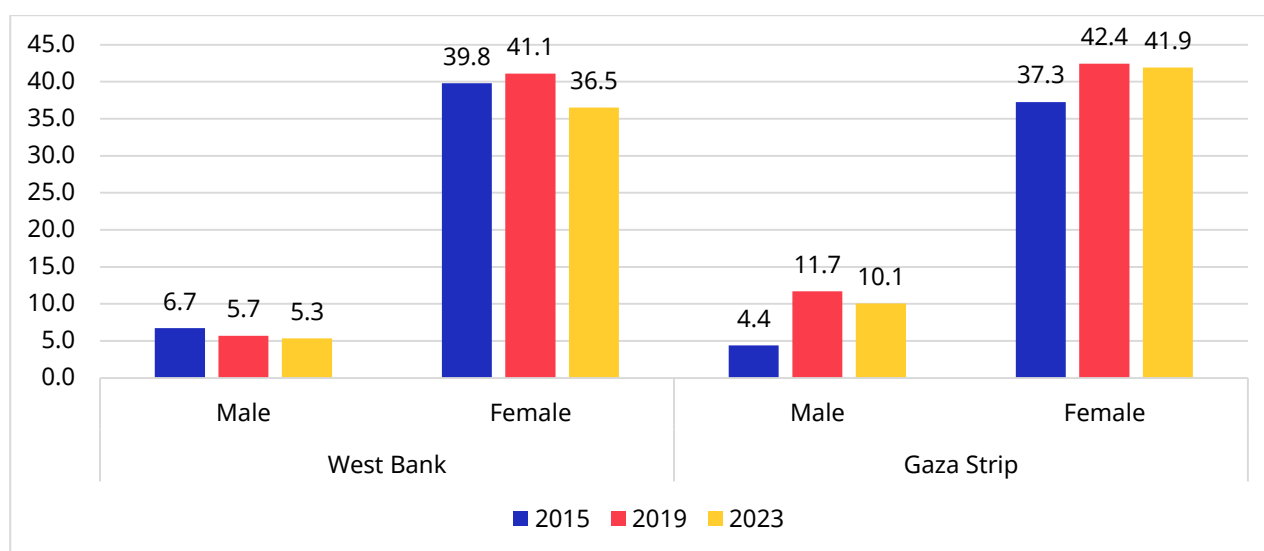
4.2. Key characteristics of inactive youth not in employment, education or training

Figure 17 presents the share of inactive youth not in employment, education or training as a percentage of the total youth population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, disaggregated by sex in 2015, 2019 and 2023. The data reveals persistent regional and gender disparities in youth inactivity.

In the West Bank, inactivity among young men remained consistently low (under 7 per cent) during this period, reflecting stable engagement in education or job-seeking activities. Young women's inactivity, however, was persistently high (around 40 per cent), indicating entrenched barriers to education and labour market participation for women.

Similar trends are apparent in the Gaza Strip, with low levels of inactivity among young men (under 5 per cent in 2015, before rising to around 10 per cent in 2019 and 2023) and high levels of inactivity among young women (consistently around 40 per cent).

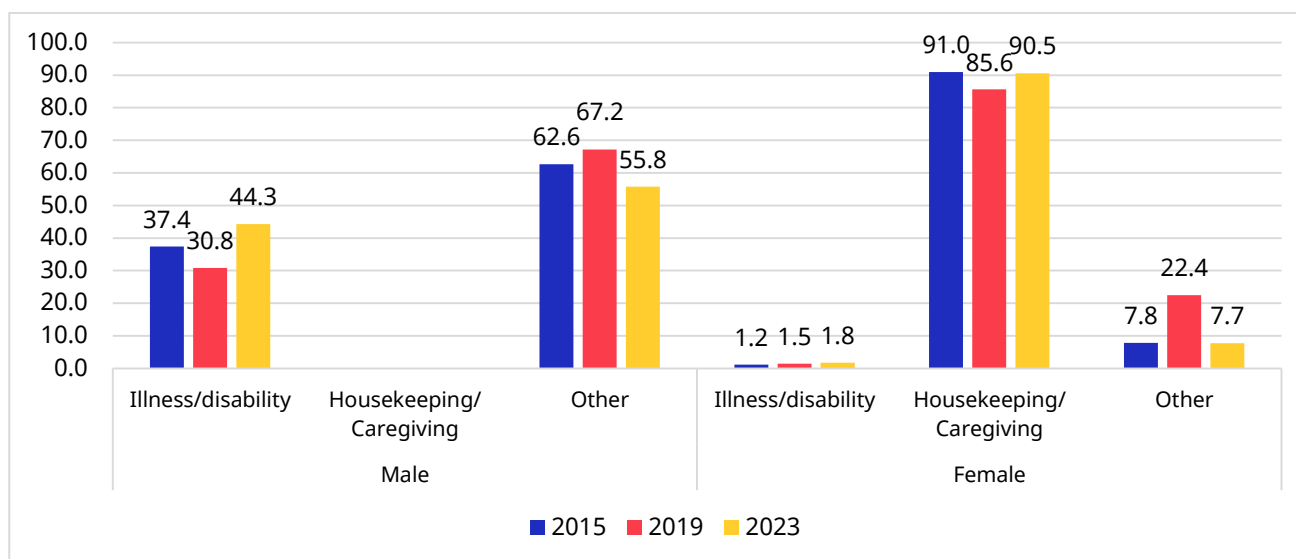
► **Figure 17. Share of inactive youth NEET (15–29 age group) among the youth population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory by region and sex, 2015–2023**



Source: Author's calculations based on PCBS, Labour Force Surveys 2015, 2019 and 2023.

The reasons for inactivity among young Palestinians who are not in employment, education or training varies by gender. Figure 18 shows that, for young men, illness or disability was the leading reason for inactivity in 2023 (44.3 per cent), as well as in 2015 (37.4 per cent) and 2019 (30.8 per cent). Housekeeping or caregiving was rarely cited as a reason for inactivity by young men, reflecting traditional gender roles and the gendered division of domestic care work. "Other reasons" for inactivity declined for young men, decreasing from 62.6 per cent in 2015 to 55.8 per cent in 2023. The category of "other reasons" includes discouraged workers. Housekeeping and caregiving were overwhelmingly cited as reasons for inactivity by young women (over 90 per cent).

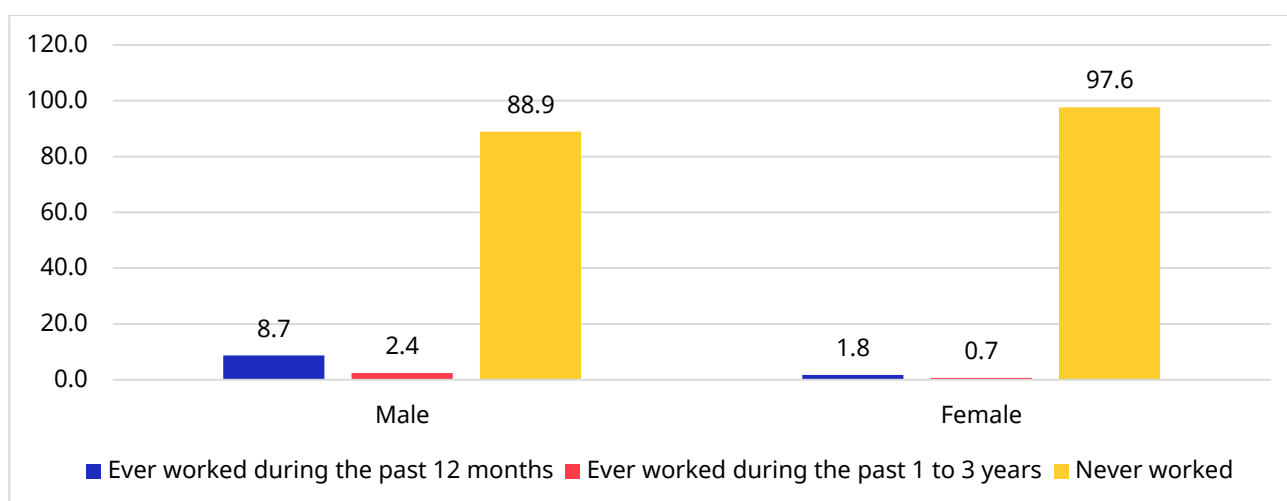
► **Figure 18. Share of inactive youth NEET (15–29 age group) among the youth population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, by sex and reason for inactivity, 2015–2023**



Source: Author's calculations based on PCBS, Labour Force Surveys 2015, 2019 and 2023.

The majority of inactive youth NEET have never worked before (88.9 per cent of inactive young men and 97.6 per cent of inactive young women). This reflects the exclusion of these young people from the labour market. As a result, they are highly likely to remain outside of the labour force.

► **Figure 19. Distribution of inactive youth NEET (15–29 age group) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory by sex and previous work experience, 2015–2023**



Source: Author's calculations based on PCBS, Labour Force Survey 2023.

A widespread phenomenon underpinned by stark disparities

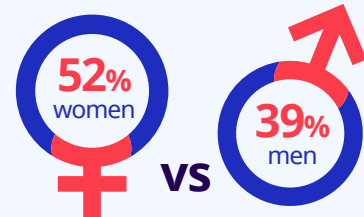
- ▶ The youth NEET phenomenon in the Occupied Palestinian Territory involves stark disparities across regions, genders and age groups.

▶ Key findings

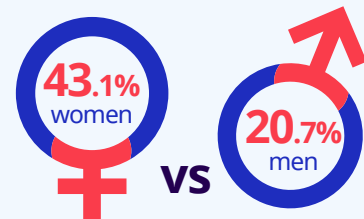
▶ **37.2%** young people aged 15–29 were NEET in 2023

▶ **45.5%** in Gaza **VS** **31.7%** in the West Bank

Gaza youth NEET rates



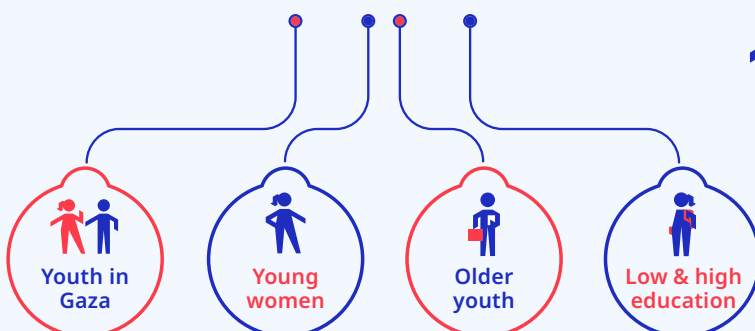
West Bank youth NEET rates



▶ Key takeaways

- Youth NEET rates increase with age
- Married women have the highest rates
- Youth with the lowest levels of education have the highest rates
- Highly educated youth also have high rates, especially in Gaza

Highest rates



▶ Youth NEET face a range of challenges, including:



- ▶ Barriers rooted in societal and gender norms



- ▶ Mismatch between qualifications and labour market demands



- ▶ Difficulties in work-life balance



- ▶ Challenges constraining the labour market

► 5. Determinants of the probability of young people not being in employment, education or training

The factors that determine youth NEET rates are interrelated. To study the effect of each factor on the likelihood of youth not being in employment, education or training, it is necessary to control for all factors in a logistic (logit) regression model. Table 6 illustrates the results of a binary Logit model for the West Bank and Gaza Strip, where the dependent variable is NEET status. Statistically significant coefficients at the 5 per cent level indicate key drivers of NEET status, highlighting disparities by sex, age, locality type, marital status, education, and access to technology.

As shown in figure 11 and tables 1 and 2 above, marital status is strongly associated with the likelihood of young Palestinians being NEET, particularly for young married women. Married young men are less likely to be NEET relative to unmarried young men (odds ratio: 0.48 in the West Bank and 0.39 in Gaza). Young married women are 12.291 times more likely to be NEET in the West Bank and 11.71 times more likely to be NEET in Gaza than young unmarried men. Comparing married and unmarried young women yields an odds ratio of 6.719 in the West Bank and 12.524 in Gaza, reflecting the disproportionate caregiving burdens borne by married women, particularly in Gaza.

There is evidence that the risk of falling into NEET status increases with age, especially in Gaza. The odds ratios of NEET status for the 20–24-year-old age group and the 25–29-year-old age group are 2.943 and 3.123 in the West Bank, respectively, and 5.785 and 10.651 in Gaza, relative to the age group of 15–19-year-olds.

All localities in Gaza are classified as urban localities or refugee camps. Locality type is an insignificant determinant of NEET status in Gaza. However, in the West Bank, young people who live in refugee camps are significantly more likely to be NEET relative to youth who live in urban areas. There is no significant difference in the likelihood of becoming NEET between youth in urban and rural areas in the West Bank. Although figure 9 above reflects a slight difference in the youth NEET rate by refugee status – with a higher NEET rate among registered and unregistered refugees – refugee status was insignificant in the logit regression for both regions. This is probably due to the redundancy of information when using the dummy variable of refugee camps. It appears that young refugees living in camps have significantly higher risk of not being in employment, education or training than young people who do not live in refugee camps, but there is no significant difference in risk between non-refugees and refugees living in urban or rural areas in the West Bank or Gaza Strip.

Education levels influence NEET status. Young people with a middle level of education (ISCED 3–4) are significantly less likely to be NEET (by 57.3 per cent in the West Bank and 38.5 per cent in Gaza Strip) than young people with a lower level of education (odds ratios: 0.427 in the West Bank and 0.615 in Gaza). However, young people with a tertiary level of education (ISCED 5–8) are more likely to be NEET (by 17.9 per cent in the West Bank and 37.8 per cent in Gaza) relative to young people with the lowest level of education. This may be due to two possible factors. First, a mismatch between the outcomes of tertiary education programmes and labour market needs, as indicated in an interview conducted for this report with a representative of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Ramallah. Second, a lack of job opportunities for tertiary education graduates. The lack of jobs in Gaza implies a significantly higher risk of tertiary education graduates being NEET.



University graduates lack several skills for the labour market, including personal, social, critical thinking, time management and digital skills. While graduates of technical and vocational education programmes have better technical and digital skills, they need more training on personal skills and commitment in the work environment.”

► Interview with the Director of the Centre for Entrepreneurship and SME Development, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Ramallah and Al-Bireh

Using the internet to was the method most used by unemployed young women NEET, and the second most used method by unemployed young men NEET. Therefore, having access to a computer or tablet device significantly reduces the likelihood of young people being NEET (by 81.5 per cent in the West Bank and 75.4 per cent in the Gaza Strip), relative to youth without access to such devices (odds ratios: 0.185 in the West Bank and 0.246 in Gaza).

► **Table 6. Binary probit regression analysis of the determinants of the probability of young people being NEET by region, 2023**

		West Bank		Gaza Strip	
		Coefficient	Exp(B)	Coefficient	Exp(B)
Marital status* and sex	Single woman	0.688*	1.989	-0.067	0.935
	Married man	-0.735*	0.480	-0.941*	0.390
	Married woman	2.509*	12.291	2.460*	11.710
Age	20–24 years old	1.079*	2.943	1.755*	5.785
	25–29 years old	1.139*	3.123	2.366*	10.651
Locality type	Rural	-0.001	0.999	-	-
	Refugee camp	0.285*	1.330	0.101	1.107
Education	ISCED 3–4	-0.850*	0.427	-0.487*	0.615
	ISCED 5–8	0.164*	1.179	0.320*	1.378
Access to a computer/tablet device		-1.686*	0.185	-1.402*	0.246
Constant		-1.597*	0.202	-1.397*	0.247

Source: Author's calculations based on PCBS, Labour Force Survey 2023.

Note: *Significant coefficient at 5 per cent.

Tables 7 and 8 provide insights into the factors that influence the likelihood of young people being categorized as unemployed youth NEET or inactive youth NEET compared to the baseline category of youth who are not categorized as NEET. They reveal how demographic, geographic and socio-economic variables contribute to NEET status, and highlight some significant differences between the categories of unemployed and inactive youth NEET. In both the West Bank and Gaza, unmarried young women are more likely to be NEET than unmarried men (see table 5, above). Unmarried young women are also more likely to be inactive NEET vs not being categorized as NEET at all relative to unmarried young men. However, they are less likely to be unemployed NEET vs not being categorized as NEET relative to unmarried young men in both regions.

Young people with a higher/tertiary level of education in the West Bank and Gaza are significantly more likely to be unemployed youth NEET than not being categorized as NEET relative to young people with the lowest level of education. In the West Bank, tertiary education graduates are the least likely, relative to young people with the lowest level of education, of being inactive youth NEET vs not being categorized as NEET. In Gaza, tertiary education graduates are the least likely, relative to young people with the lowest level of education, of being inactive youth NEET vs not being categorized as NEET.

In the West Bank, the likelihood of being an unemployed youth NEET vs not being categorized as NEET is highest among the middle age group (20–24 years old). The likelihood of being an inactive youth NEET vs not being categorized as NEET increases with age. Unlike the West Bank, young people in the older age group (25–29 years old) in Gaza are the most likely to be unemployed youth NEET vs not being categorized as NEET, and the most likely to be inactive youth NEET vs not being categorized as NEET. Despite no significant differences in the likelihood of being NEET across locality types in Gaza (see table 5, above), youth who live in refugee camps in Gaza are more likely to be unemployed youth NEET vs not being categorized as NEET.

► **Table 7. Multinomial logistic regression analysis of the determinants of being an unemployed youth NEET and inactive youth NEET (15–29 age group) relative to the base outcome (youth not categorized as NEET) in the West Bank, 2023**

		Unemployed youth NEET relative to youth not categorized as NEET		Inactive youth NEET relative to youth not categorized as NEET	
		Coefficient	Exp(B)	Coefficient	Exp(B)
Marital status* and sex	Single woman	-0.393*	0.675	1.837*	6.276
	Married man	-0.408*	0.665	-1.717*	0.180
	Married woman	0.757*	2.132	2.885*	17.911
Age	20–24 years old	1.16*	3.191	1.071*	2.918
	25–29 years old	0.994*	2.703	1.364*	3.914
Locality type	Rural	0.036	1.037	-0.053	0.948
	Refugee camp	0.319*	1.376	0.259*	1.296
Education	ISCED 3–4	-0.855*	0.425	-0.998*	0.369
	ISCED 5–8	1.043*	2.838	-1.138*	0.320
Access to a computer/tablet device		-1.428*	0.240	-1.903*	0.149
Constant		-2.086*	0.124	-2.835*	0.059

Source: Author's calculations based on PCBS, Labour Force Survey 2023.

Note: * Significant coefficient at 5 per cent.

► **Table 9. Multinomial logistic regression analysis of the determinants of being an unemployed youth NEET and inactive youth NEET (15 –29 age group) relative to the base outcome (youth not categorized as NEET) in the Gaza Strip, 2023**

		Unemployed NEET relative to youth not categorized as NEET		Inactive NEET relative to youth not categorized as NEET	
		Coefficient	Exp(B)	Coefficient	Exp(B)
Marital status* and sex	Single woman	-0.951*	0.386	0.915*	2.496
	Married man	-0.842*	0.431	-1.480*	0.228
	Married woman	1.222*	3.393	2.815*	16.689
Age	20–24 years old	1.867*	6.466	1.780*	5.930
	25–29 years old	2.521*	12.437	2.312*	10.094
Locality type	Refugee camp	0.231*	1.260	-0.075	0.928
Education	ISCED 3–4	-0.263*	0.769	-0.810*	0.445
	ISCED 5–8	1.137*	3.118	-1.415*	0.243
Access to a computer/tablet device		-1.444*	0.236	-1.449*	0.235
Constant		-2.011*	0.134	-2.443*	0.087

Source: Author's calculations based on PCBS, Labour Force Survey 2023.

Note: * Significant coefficient at 5 per cent.

Factors that determine the probability of youth being NEET

- ▶ Youth NEET status is influenced by strong social, regional, educational, and family-related factors in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

▶ Key findings

Factors that **increase** the likelihood of being NEET



- ▶ Living in the **Gaza Strip**
- ▶ Living in a **refugee camp** in the West Bank
- ▶ Being **married** (especially for women and particularly in Gaza)
- ▶ Being **older** (25–29-year-old age group, especially in Gaza)
- ▶ Having a **high or low level of education** (as opposed to a middle level of education)
- ▶ Not having **access to digital technologies**

▶ Key takeaways

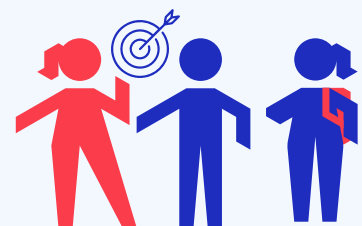
- Gender and region = key factors
- Tertiary education does not protect young Palestinians from being NEET
- Marital status is a factor, especially given women's unequal burden of care work



- ▶ Regional, gender-related and educational factors strongly determine young people's prospects

Determining factors
NEET →

- ▶ Region
- ▶ Gender
- ▶ Education levels
- ▶ Age
- ▶ Family responsibilities



► 6. Existing policy framework and projects

The Palestinian Authority's National Employment Strategy 2021–2025² focuses on:

- active labour market programmes that seek to advance skills development by providing technical and vocational education and training (TVET) aligned with labour market demands, alongside entrepreneurship promotion programmes;
- sectors like agriculture, industry and tourism to advance sustainable development;
- strengthening the governance of labour market institutions, including organizing elections for trade unions and the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PFGTU) – for instance, in 2023, the Ministry of Labour supervised 81 trade unions' elections, licensed 20 new trade unions and approved 15 bylaws of other trade unions (State of Palestine, Ministry of Labour 2023); and
- partnerships between government authorities, the private sector and international organizations.

The strategy's implementation has been slowed by persistent challenges, including the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the hostilities in Gaza.

More than 130 labour market programmes exist in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. However, according to the National Employment Strategy 2021–2025, data on the number of beneficiaries is lacking since multiple stakeholders contribute to implementing these programmes. These programmes include:

- Entrepreneurship programmes:
 - six incubation programmes;
 - two entrepreneurship support programmes;
 - three business acceleration programmes;
 - two support programmes for business incubation and acceleration; and
 - six programmes offering training, feasibility studies and financial assistance for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).
- Employment and training programmes and services:
 - 16 employment offices that support unemployed people to find jobs;
 - 16 on-the-job training programmes for young tertiary education graduates; and
 - four employment units within Chambers of Commerce and Industry.
- Private sector programmes:
 - Five training and scholarship programmes targeting tertiary education students and graduates, with a focus on skills development; and
 - one technical training programme for workers of firms that are members of Chambers of Commerce and Industry in the West Bank.

² Due to the political divide between the authorities of the West Bank and Gaza Strip between June 2007 and October 2023, several programmes implemented by the Palestinian Authority were implemented largely in the West Bank.

According to the Palestinian Employment Fund, the following programmes were implemented in 2023 within the scope of entrepreneurship support programmes and training programmes for young graduates:

- The Self-employment Programme supported 365 startups through financial grants and loans, resulting in the creation of 577 new jobs. No evaluation is available on the sustainability of these jobs. According to the Ministry of Labour, most supported startups operate in the information and communications technology (ICT) sector. They were targeted due to the lack of existing large-scale investment in the ICT sector, whereas startups in other sectors can find funding and partnership opportunities with established firms (State of Palestine, Ministry of Labour 2023).
- The Self-employment Programme supported on-the-job business development training for 740 university graduates. This enabled 500 participants to secure sustainable jobs.
- Through the development of the Palestinian Employment Portal – which includes data on more than 28,000 registered unemployed job seekers (53 per cent of whom are women) – 1,300 jobseekers were matched with work opportunities.
- Workshops were conducted on entrepreneurship and SME development for 407 participants.
- An Emergency Employment Programme in the West Bank engaged 3,974 beneficiaries, 86.5 per cent of whom are women.

Employment and entrepreneurship programmes in the Occupied Palestinian Territory depend on donor funding. Multiple programmes by different stakeholders have the same objectives. A lack of coordination between stakeholders may lead to inefficiency, dispersed efforts and the duplication of beneficiaries targeted for training or grants. The evaluation of programmes is confined to monitoring implementation indicators, without evaluating whether they have a sustainable impact on the labour market (Palestinian Employment Fund 2023).

In December 2024, the Ministry of Labour, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNRWA's field office in the West Bank launched an employment initiative, "Rebuilding Futures". It aims to provide 8,000 employment opportunities over the next three years, particularly for women and youth. UNRWA plans to support 6,600 temporary employment opportunities in 19 refugee camps in the West Bank. As part of this initiative, young TVET graduates will gain on-the-job training opportunities to support their long-term employability.

The Palestinian Authority adopted a TVET Strategy in 2010. However, students enrolled in TVET centres only account for 6 per cent of all secondary level students (Ministry of Education and Higher Education 2024). There are 17 universities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory offering Bachelor's or higher degrees, and 17 university colleges that provide degrees to more than 40,000 graduates every year, the majority of whom study business-related degrees, law and education. In addition, there are 76 TVET schools and 11 public TVET centres under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour, as well as 132 private TVET centres licensed by the ministry. In 2024, 1,582 students graduated from public TVET centres, while 4,749 graduated from private TVET centres.

According to the Ministry of Labour, TVET development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory faces the following obstacles:

- communities accord less value to TVET graduates compared to higher education graduates;
- a lack of governance of the private TVET sector;
- a mismatch between labour market demands and TVET programmes' outcomes;
- a mismatch between the skills of TVET teaching staff are and labour market demands; and
- insufficient financial, human and physical resources at TVET institutions.

Other stakeholders and initiatives that promote skills development for young Palestinians include:

- **Tamayyaz** ("*Be distinguished*" in Arabic), an initiative implemented by the Sharek Youth Forum, provides a 20-week training programme for young people on key pillars of self-development: guided learning, employability, active citizenship, and entrepreneurship. Tamayyaz empowers young people to become more employable and active. Through visits, guest lectures and training, the programme champions experiential learning.

Over 95 per cent of Tamayyaz graduates have secured employment, are volunteering or are continuing their studies. Since September 2012, the programme has trained more than 4,500 university graduates and 2,000 TVET graduates.

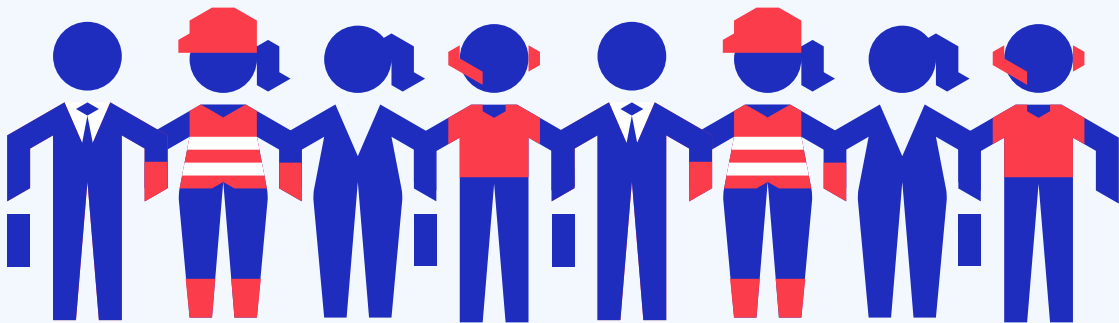
- The [Entrepreneurship and Business Development Centre](#) at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate provides technical training for youth and university graduates on digital marketing, graphical design and web design.
- The Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industries targets university graduates with training programmes on digital marketing, graphic design, life skills, accounting information systems, and management information systems.
- The PGFTU's [youth departments](#) at the governorate level organize training sessions and voluntary work camps for young Palestinians. Before October 2023, the departments focused on economic empowerment and skills development for youth to bridge mismatches between their skills and labour market demands. Since October 2023, the departments' new strategy focuses on temporary employment opportunities. Approximately 50 per cent of the young people engaged by PGFTU's youth departments are young women.

Wide-ranging policy frameworks and projects

- ▶ A range of youth-related policy frameworks and projects exist in the Occupied Palestinian Territory that have a bearing on addressing youth NEET rates.

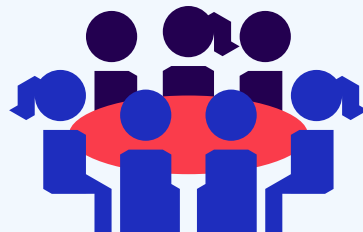
▶ Key findings

- ▶ Key national framework:
National Employment Strategy 2021–2025
- ▶ **130** labour market programmes exist
- ▶ Employment and entrepreneurship programmes depend on **donor funding**



▶ Key takeaways

- Multiple programmes by different stakeholders have the same objectives
- A lack of coordination between stakeholders may lead to inefficiency, dispersed efforts and duplication



► 7. Conclusions and policy recommendations

This report presents an in-depth statistical profile of youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The analysis reveals an alarming reality for Palestinian youth, particularly in the Gaza Strip, where socioeconomic hardship exacerbates their socio-economic exclusion.

The findings indicate that youth NEET represent a significant proportion of total youth population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, with differences across genders, regions and levels of education. The youth NEET rate is among the highest in the MENA region, with especially high rates for young women and youth in Gaza. In 2023, 45.4 per cent of young people in Gaza and 31.7 per cent in the West Bank were NEET. Far more young Palestinian women (43.1 per cent) were NEET compared to young men (20.7 per cent). Young women face particular barriers rooted in societal norms, as a result 73.2 per cent of young women who were NEET in 2023 cited caregiving as the main reason why they were not in employment, education or training. Highly educated youth experience elevated NEET rates due to a lack of work opportunities for them and the mismatch between their qualifications and labour market demands. This especially true for young women tertiary education graduates, many whom have degrees in humanities' subjects and education.

A range of challenges deepened the youth NEET crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as of 2023, including political instability, economic challenges, the occupation and restrictions in the West Bank, and the blockade in Gaza. These hindered labour market opportunities, disproportionately affecting young people.

Despite existing policies like the National Employment Strategy 2021–2025 and TVET Strategy, progress remains slow. As of 2023, only 5 per cent of secondary school level students were engaged in TVET, far below the target of 11 per cent set by the National Employment Strategy.

Structural challenges, including a lack of coordination among stakeholders, outdated training systems, and low societal value accorded to technical and vocational education, have limited the effectiveness of labour market programmes.

To address the high youth NEET rate in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, urgent interventions are needed to address barriers to education, employment and training opportunities. This includes tackling gender inequalities, enhancing digital access, and aligning educational outcomes with labour market needs. Addressing these issues is crucial for fostering young people's participation in economic and social activities, which, in turn, is vital for the long-term development and stability.

7.1. Policy recommendations

Based on this statistical profile's findings, the following recommendations are proposed to mitigate the challenges that Palestinian youth not in employment, education or training face, and to advance their active integration into the economy and society. These recommendations depend on comprehensive, collaborative and targeted efforts by all stakeholders, including the Palestinian Authority, the private sector, civil society and international partners.

1. Expand and strengthen technical and vocational education and training (since youth with a middle level of education, which includes TVET programmes, are the least likely to be unemployed youth NEET) by:

- **Promoting enrolment in TVET programmes**, including by launching awareness raising campaigns to address society's negative perceptions of vocational education and highlight its role in helping young people secure employment.
- **Expanding TVET programmes**, particularly in refugee camps, rural areas and marginalized areas.
- **Modernizing curricula** and aligning TVET with current and emerging labour market demands, including digital skills and the use of green energy.
- **Strengthening governance and coordination** among private and public TVET providers to avoid competition between them.

- **Enhancing the skills of TVET instructors** and providing training programmes for teaching staff to keep pace with labour market developments.
- **Enhancing digital literacy** by integrating ICT courses into schools and vocational curricula.

2. Enhance young people's life skills by:

- **Integrating life skills training** into education from the primary school level onwards to strengthen skills such as critical thinking, team work, dealing with challenges, problem-solving, learning independently, and adapting to work environments. This process should be reinforced through specialized training programmes for educators.
- Encouraging higher education institutions to place greater emphasis on **extracurricular activities and volunteer work** to complement students' academic learning and foster well-rounded skills development.

3. Expand gender-responsive services and policies to address the fact that caregiving is the main reason why young women are NEET by:

- **Expanding access to affordable public childcare services** and encouraging the provision of childcare services and nurseries **at workplaces**.
- **Offering flexible working hours** for women with caregiving responsibilities to increase women's participation in the labour market.

4. Expand access to technology by:

- **Providing subsidized or free internet access** and devices to youth in rural areas and in refugee camps.
- Developing young people's **digital skills**.

5. Align higher education with labour market needs by:

- Encouraging students to enrol in **multidisciplinary training** to expand their career choices.
- **Incorporate entrepreneurship into school and university programmes** to foster self-employment. Developing the entrepreneurial skills of tertiary education graduates can help them become job creators if they can successfully start their own businesses.
- **Establishing career guidance units** guide youth to make informed decisions about their education, training and employment.
- **Promoting mutual cooperation** between the private sector and higher education institutions. The private sector could provide internship opportunities for students while higher education institutions provide solutions to problems that businesses face, including through research and development (R&D) input for enterprises.

6. Support youth entrepreneurship by:

- **Providing** low-interest loans to young entrepreneurs.
- Offering technical support to young entrepreneurs to **develop business plans** and undertake feasibility studies.
- Providing technical support on **marketing and web design** for young entrepreneurs.

7. Implement active labour market policies, including:

- **Supporting on-the-job training** in collaboration with employers and in line with their needs.
- **Launching employment programmes** which create temporary job opportunities through infrastructure and community development projects.

8. Support the resilience of Palestinian youth in agriculture by:

- **Empowering young to establish agricultural cooperatives** by providing opportunities for the long-term rental of public land.
- **Establishing TVET programmes** on the use of technology in agriculture.

9. Enhance stakeholder collaboration by:

- **Reforming the Higher Council of Youth** to engage the private sector, higher education institutions, civil society organizations and trade unions.
- **Expanding the Palestinian Employment Portal** to include all job-seekers and incorporating all available employment and training programmes implemented by different stakeholders into the portal. A consolidated portal would help to avoid multiple training programmes with the same objectives and for the same beneficiaries by different stakeholders. This would lead to more young people being included in support programmes, making these initiatives more effective overall. As the portal would include data on all participants and could help track labour market outcomes, it would contribute to evaluating programme impact.
- **Seeking funding and technical assistance** from international organizations to scale up youth-focused initiatives. Large-scale youth-focused programmes, rather than small-scale temporary and dispersed efforts, can have a significant impact on the Palestinian labour market.

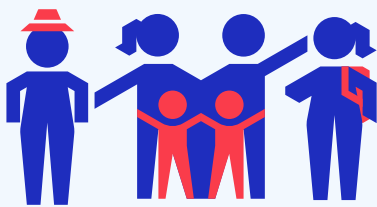
10. Promote youth engagement in community service and voluntary work by:

- **Raising young people's awareness of voluntary work** throughout their lives, starting from primary school.
- **Establishing youth villages for community service** in Area C villages and creating a network of these villages to share experiences and integrate resources.
- **Organizing scout groups and summer camps** in communities which need support.

Taking action to address the challenges facing Palestinian youth NEET

- ▶ Coordinated action by all stakeholders is needed to integrate young Palestinians into the economy and society, and address the challenges youth NEET face.

▶ Key recommendations



▶ **10**

key areas for action:

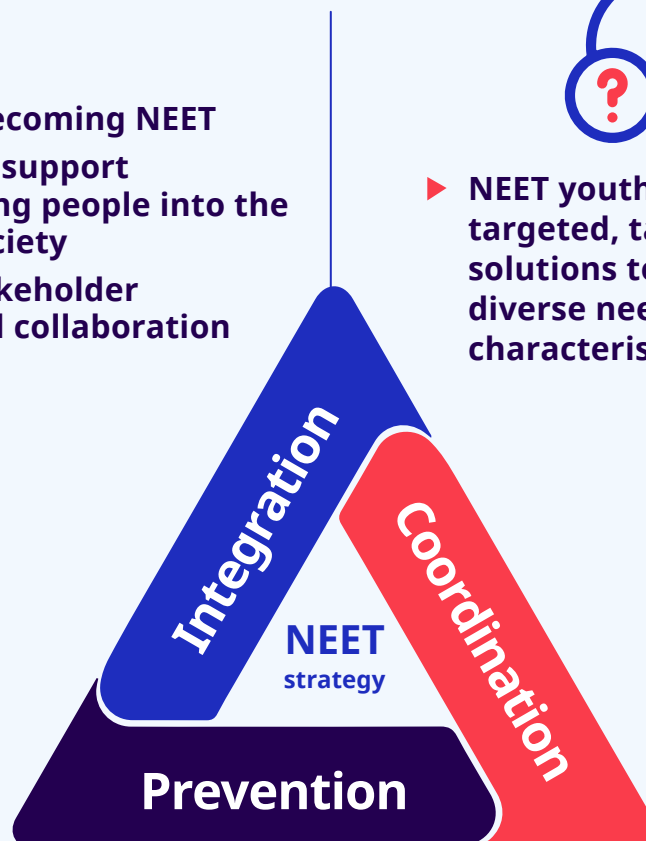
- ▶ TVET
- ▶ Life skills
- ▶ Gender-responsive services and policies
- ▶ Technology
- ▶ Higher education-labour market alignment
- ▶ Entrepreneurship
- ▶ Active labour market policies
- ▶ Agriculture
- ▶ Stakeholder collaboration
- ▶ Volunteerism

▶ Key takeaways

- Prevent youth becoming NEET
- Deliver targeted support to integrate young people into the economy and society
- Ensure multi-stakeholder coordination and collaboration



- ▶ NEET youth require targeted, tailored solutions to their diverse needs and characteristics



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► Statistical profile of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

This report presents an in-depth statistical profile of youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Young Palestinians face among the highest youth NEET rates in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, with significant regional and gender disparities. The analysis highlights systemic issues contributing to youth's exclusion from the labour market, exacerbated by political instability, economic barriers and societal norms. The findings indicate the need for comprehensive, inclusive and collaborative efforts to address high youth NEET rates. The report offers recommendations to this end, focusing on reducing barriers to technical and vocational education and training (TVET), advancing women's empowerment as a vital first step to enhance their participation in the labour market, expanding access to technology, implementing active labour market policies, and promoting community service and voluntary work.

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