

State of **SKILLS**



International
Labour
Organization

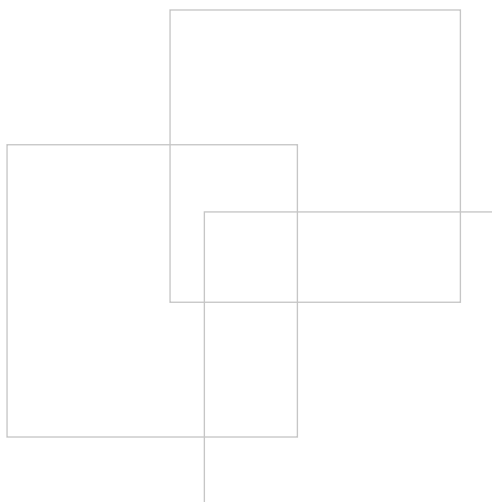
100
1919-2019



Lebanon

State of

SKILLS



Lebanon

Table of contents

The socio-economic context	7
Development and employment policies	12
The skills system in Lebanon	16
Skills anticipation	24
Skills development	26
Social inclusion	32
Lifelong learning	36
Key challenges	38
The way forward	42
Sources	50



The socio-economic context

Lebanon's economy has come under pressure due to the war in neighbouring Syria.

Lebanon has a service- and trade-oriented market economy that accounts for 60% of its GDP (World Bank, 2017). Lebanon's economy had an average growth rate of 9.1 percent during the period 2007–10. After neighbouring Syria was plunged into civil war in 2011, driving an estimated one million Syrians to seek refuge in Lebanon, growth rates fell sharply to an annual average of 1.7 per cent between 2011 and 2017 (UNHCR, 2019; World Bank, 2017), GDP growth further dropped to -1.9% % in 2018 (CAS, 2019).

The Lebanese economy faces several challenges.

Disruption to trade and consumption has contributed to downcast economic performance, with the economy already having suffered from low private sector investment, corruption, high informality and insufficient competition prior to onset of the refugee crisis (OECD, 2018; Ajluni and Kawar, 2015). Weak economic growth has limited tax revenues, and widen the budget deficit. Today, Lebanon is one of the most indebted countries in the world. In 2019, its gross debt-to-GDP ratio was 175.6% per cent (Fiscal Recovery Plan, 2020). The spread of the COVID-19 epidemic has also had a significant impact on the Lebanese economy, contributing to increased unemployment, job insecurity and vulnerability, especially for Syrian workers and those in the informal economy (ILO 2020).

A large share of the economy comprises small- or medium-sized companies which do not generate enough jobs, especially in high value added sectors.

Important economic sectors include banking, commerce, tourism, real estate, construction and agriculture (Matta, 2018). SMEs in Lebanon constitute between 93 and 95% of enterprises in the country, with microenterprises constituting 73% of this share, and 50% of total employment in the enterprise sector (MoET and UNDP, 2014). In a 2012 study, it was estimated that, on average, 23,000 individuals enter the labour market each year, which is six times larger than the jobs created by the economy (Robalino and Sayed, 2012).

Moreover, a majority of the jobs created are concentrated in low productivity sectors employing mainly low-skilled workers (ETF, 2015a). According to CERD (2018), approximately 27,000 university graduates and 5,000 Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) graduates enter the job market each year. However, due to the pronounced skills mismatch between labour market demand and skill supply, the graduates and their acquired competencies do not match the needs of the labour market, resulting in an increase in underemployment/unemployment (NSF, 2018).

The macroeconomic environment has a negative impact on working conditions and society at large.

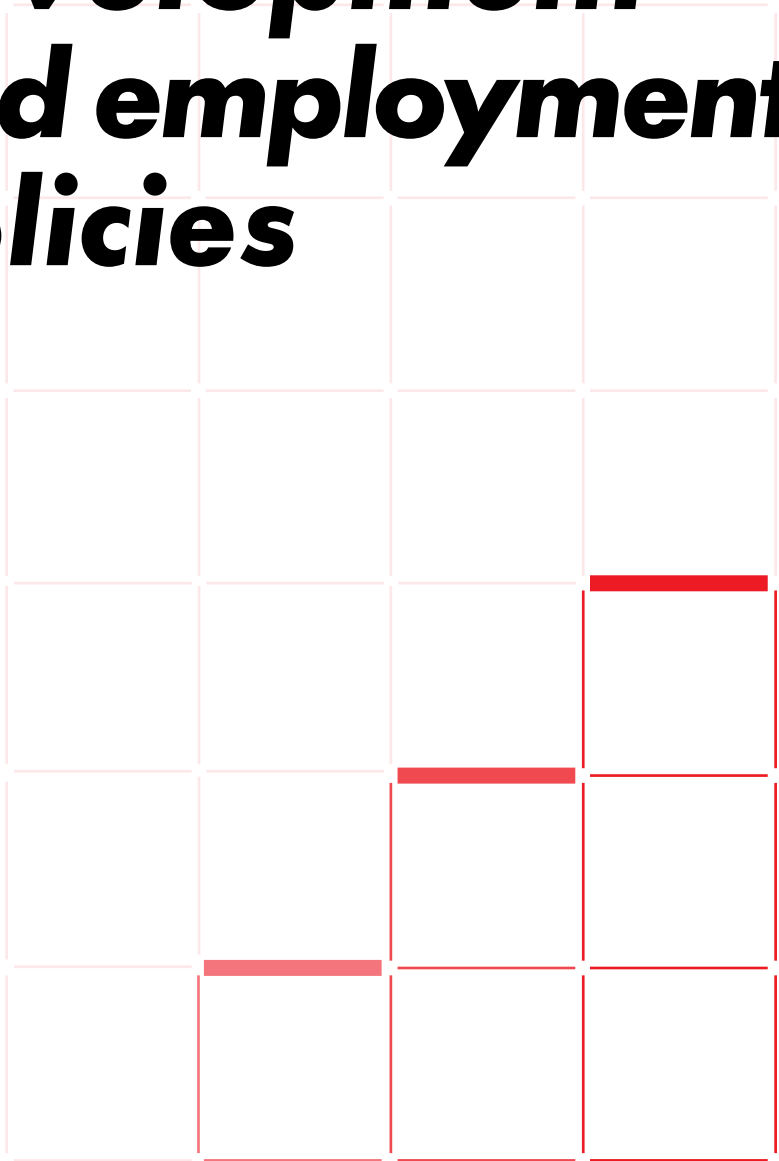
Lebanon's economically active population of around 1.79 million people constitutes nearly half of those aged 15 years and over (CAS and ILO 2020). Men account for 69.5 percent of the labour market; women only 30.5 percent. According to recent figures from 2018-19, the youth unemployment rate (age 15-24) is 23.3% and the unemployment rate of the total working-age population (15 and above) is 11.4% (CAS and ILO 2020). The situation has worsened since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, with 50% of respondents permanently dismissed from jobs since March 2020, another 34% temporarily laid off, and 94% in total reporting a reduction in wages since March 2020 (ILO 2020). Even before the current economic difficulties, the labour market and educational situation remains very challenging for Syrian refugees. Because of the high cost and difficulties associated with obtaining a work permit, most Syrians work in the informal economy. Nevertheless, formal employment is allowed in a limited number of sectors such as agriculture, construction and cleaning. Sixty-one percent of Syrian refugee youth are neither employed, nor in education nor undergoing training (UNHCR et al., 2018).

The economy's inability to create high value added, high-skill jobs has impacted the country's ability to retain and attract talent.

Lebanon has undergone a “brain drain” as young, skilled workers have emigrated, as well as in-migration of low-skilled workers from Syria and other parts of the world (ETF, 2015b; ILO, 2017). Companies have problems finding suitable technicians with relevant technical and transversal competencies. Various important industries, such as, agriculture, agro-food, construction, healthcare, software development, printing and packaging, and tourism, together with SMEs, have a pressing need for skilled and trained workers. They have urged the government to take action to improve the TVET system (Ministry of Agriculture, 2014; Ministry of Economy and Trade, 2014; Ministry of Tourism, 2015; UNDP, 2016a; UNESCO, 2017; WIPO, 2014). Female labour force participation and employment are also an issue. According to the LFHLCs (2018-19), the female labour force participation and unemployment rates were 29.3% and 14.3%, respectively (CAS and ILO 2020). The lack of meaningful data on labour supply and demand and the weak role played by employment service providers and a (ILO, 2017; Ministry of Economy and Trade, 2015; WEF, 2017) impede efforts to identify unmet skills needs, define trends, ensure accountability, offer adequate counselling, enable evidence-based employment policy-making and, ultimately, to match workers to jobs (ILO, 2017). This situation has become both more urgent and more pronounced as a result of the ongoing economic crisis facing Lebanon since October 2019 (LGFRP, 2020), and the additional effects of the COVID-19 crisis.



Development and employment policies



Following the April 2018 Paris Economic Conference for Development through Reforms and with the Private Sector (CEDRE) and Brussels III (2019), the Government of Lebanon renewed its commitments undertaken to reforms for economic growth and development at past conferences held in London (2016) and Brussels (2017-2018).

At the CEDRE conference, the Government of Lebanon presented its “Vision for Stabilization, Growth and Employment”. This vision is based on four pillars: (1) increasing the level of public and private investment; (2) ensuring economic and financial stability through fiscal adjustment; (3) undertaking essential sectoral reforms and cross-sectoral reforms, including fighting corruption, modernization of the public sector and public finance management; (4) developing a strategy for the reinforcement and diversification of Lebanon’s productive sectors and the realization of its export potential. Moreover, the need to increase investment and expenditure in social sectors critical to improving resilience, such as health and education, was also emphasized. Building on CEDRE, in January 2019 the Government of Lebanon announced its Economic Vision, which aims to grow GDP and create jobs through targeting selected productive sectors, including through education. (Presidency of the Council of Ministers, PCM 2018; Ministry of Economy 2019)

This recognition of the role of education, including TVET, in providing Lebanese as well as Syrian refugees with opportunities that lead to employment is reflected in current Government policy, following commitments made at these international conferences. The MEHE's RACE II strategy (2017-2020) aims at sustaining increased and equitable access to quality education and learning for all children and youth aged 03-18 years in Lebanon, included as well support to enhance accelerated non-formal market-based skills training. The Government of Lebanon's four-year emergency response strategy (LCRP 2017-2020) also place a strong emphasis on improved access to better education and livelihood opportunities within the plan build on the RACE II strategy. The National Strategic Framework for TVET, detailed below, is the critical orienting document for the TVET subsector, and the government's flagship policy document detailing its approach to addressing the challenges of the system.



The skills system in Lebanon

(© ILO)



TVET reform policies

The National Strategic Framework for TVET in Lebanon 2018–22 (NSF) is the latest and most important framework to promote and structure the TVET system. The NSF was adopted by the government in 2018 as a series of measures to improve the TVET system. With the support of the ILO and UNICEF, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) developed the NSF, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA), the National Employment Office (NEO), the Ministry of Labour (MOL), and other relevant national TVET stakeholders (MEHE, 2018). The main strategic goals of the NSF are to expand access to TVET, enhance the quality and relevance of TVET provision and improve TVET governance. Eight strategic priorities point to how these main objectives are to be attained, which actions need to be taken and how impacts could be measured. They are as follows:

- I.** an inclusive TVET system to ensure access for all and that everyone benefits equally from training;
- II.** an improved human resources (HR) management system for the TVET sector as a main contributor to the quality of training;
- III.** a National Qualification System (NQS) for a competency-based approach to training and testing that better signals graduate skills to employers;

- IV.** a functional quality assurance system to facilitate evidence-based planning and budget allocation;
- V.** the mainstreaming of life skills and entrepreneurship education to improve the school-to-work transition of TVET graduates;
- VI.** the provision of up-to-date job-related equipment and materials enabling trainees to acquire practical skills in safe conditions resembling the workplace;
- VII.** the involvement of employers' and workers' representatives to enhance the market relevance of training programmes;
- VIII.** a diversified financing framework based on multiple partnerships that allow training providers to take advantage of available opportunities.

Key TVET ministries and Government entities, (MEHE, MOA, MOSA, NEO and NVTC) have developed Action Plans to implement the NSF; all except MoA and MOSA are currently considered final.



Governance

To date, TVET governance is highly centralized and static under the Directorate General for Vocational Training and Education (DGTVE), with little involvement from the private sector and other stakeholders (ETF, 2017). While the MEHE finances the public TVET system and contributes to decision-making, the DGTVE, under the MEHE, is the main decision-making body. It supervises 158 public sector training institutes and 398 private training providers (including NGOs), the organization of TVET examinations, the development and implementation of curricula and qualifications, and the oversight of state examinations (MEHE, 2018). The Directorate General of Higher Education (DGHE), also under the MEHE, administers, among other things, technical education at the tertiary level and regulates the transition of TVET learners into tertiary education.

The Higher Council for VTE and the Centre for Educational Research and Development (CERD) have, in theory, supporting functions in TVET governance, but little influence in practice. The Higher Council for TVET is responsible for advising the DGTVE on how to ensure best the systematic involvement of workers', employers' and other organizations in TVET policy design and planning. But according to the NSF, the Higher Council for TVET has not met since 2000 and is not a functioning body.¹

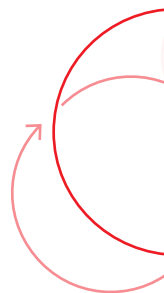
¹ The MEHE organised a meeting with members of the Higher Council (HC) for TVET, including DGTVE and the Ministry of Labour, in late 2018 to make the HC operational again. A draft decree was prepared to appoint the HC members in 2019, though the decree is not yet issued.



The CERD ought to provide research and advice for TVET policy-making, but its role remains minimal, focusing mainly on the general education sector (ETF, 2017). Other relevant governmental institutions involved in TVET are the National Employment Office (NEO) under the Ministry of Labour, the National Centre for Vocational Training (NCVT), the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture (MEHE, 2018). The NEO is mainly responsible for employment-related policy-making, job matching and placement through employment offices. They are also among the main supporters of NGOs providing accelerated VT programmes, but whose certificates are not always recognized by MEHE. The NCVT too is responsible for accelerated VT programmes, but suffers from low numbers of trainees, teachers and trainers, outdated curricula and poor infrastructure as the result of shortfalls in funding. The Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture manage their schools and centres and offer TVET courses at 220 social development centres and 28 agricultural centres, respectively.

Social dialogue

To date, there is no systematic and institutionalized way for the private sector and social partners to steer the TVET system (MEHE, 2018; ETF, 2017). This is mostly down to the inactivity of the Higher Council. Even though the need to improve TVET is undisputed by all stakeholders, the necessary actions and budgetary commitments that would make concrete public–private partnerships possible have not been implemented. The primary reasons for these shortcomings are a lack of trust in the efficiency and relevance of public sector TVET providers, insufficient mechanisms and incentives for fostering private sector engagement and, in the private sector, a lack of accountability in terms of the content of TVET programmes and numbers of people per year graduating from each programme. Nonetheless, recent progress has been made, with School Advisory Boards, including employer membership, being revived, and dialogue underway regarding the establishment of private sector-led Sector Skills Councils, a recognized priority for the NSF (NSF 2018).



Financing

Lebanon's VET system continues to be underfunded. The main source of funding is the MEHE's budget, which is not allocated according to the needs of TVET providers and is therefore distributed inefficiently (ETF, 2017; MEHE, 2018). The fact that, in the past, many TVET centres were set up without a prior analysis of the regional demand for training and already existing providers is a key factor in the current inefficient distribution of funds. The financial contributions made by stakeholders, such as education and training providers or employers, are limited. Trainees contribute to the funding of TVET, but 50 percent of the revenue generated from tuition and examination fees is redirected to the DGTVE (ETF, 2019a). The resources remaining are insufficient to cover maintenance costs and provide good quality training activities. Forty per cent of TVET students are enrolled in private TVET institutions and cover education expenditure privately (CERD, 2018).

In the absence of sufficiently diverse sources of funding, TVET financing depends greatly on external donors. Most of the additional resources that go towards improving the TVET system come from bilateral donors or international development agencies (EU, 2016; AFD, 2018; UNICEF, n.d.). An effective coordination mechanism should be established to harmonise the involvement of international organizations to avoid duplication (NSF 2018).



Skills anticipation

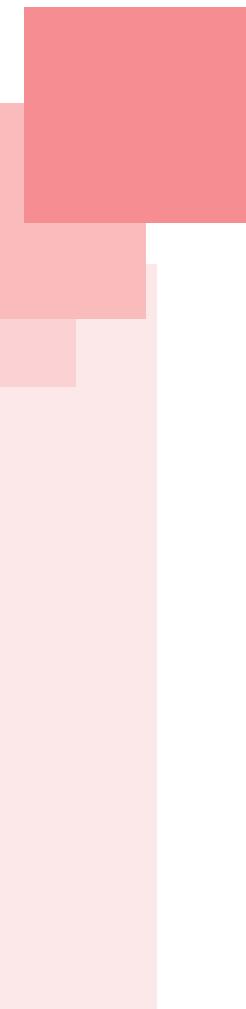
The planning and monitoring of skills development is highly challenging in the context of Lebanon. The main institution responsible for the quality assurance of TVET programme is the DGTVE. TVET administration, organization, schools, curricula, teaching staff and data is each managed separately in different buildings, which hampers coordination and makes planning and monitoring difficult (ETF, 2017). However, the DGTVE remains heavily understaffed with as many as 80 per cent of positions vacant in 2017 (MEHE, 2018).

Under the Council of Ministers, the General Educational Inspectorate of the Central Inspection (GEICI) is responsible for reviewing the efficiency of public training providers and the Department of Educational Monitoring and Guidance (DoEMG) under DGTVE examines applications for licenses to open new private TVET centres. The GEICI and DoEMG-DGTVE employ education supervisors who visit and monitor public sector and private schools to assess curriculum implementation, teaching methods and examinations. Due to understaffing, however, their work is restricted to a limited number of visits only. This lack of capacity impedes the DGTVE's ability to plan and monitor skills development. An absence of education-related data further curtails the planning and monitoring capabilities of the DGTVE.

The capacity of the National Employment Office (NEO) to fulfil its objectives of providing employment-related policy-making and job matching is hard to assess. Its job-matching website could be further developed to become a labour market information system (NEO, n.b.; Ghneim, 2018a). To date, a limited number of studies and statistics are available (NEO, n.d. b). What is more, there are no meaningful labour market data on skills and job matching, which in turn constrains the planning and monitoring of skills development programmes and policies (ILO, 2017). International organizations have, however, conducted valuable research into analysing the skills gaps in relevant sectors of the economy. Studies, such as those conducted by UNICEF-ILO-NEO on the packaging and printing industries and on the private health sector, highlighted the reluctance of employers to USE NEO to locate staff (UNICEF et al.). For the NEO to fulfil its mandate, significant reinforcement of its capacities for labour market intermediation through effective employment services and labour market analysis is needed.

Skills development



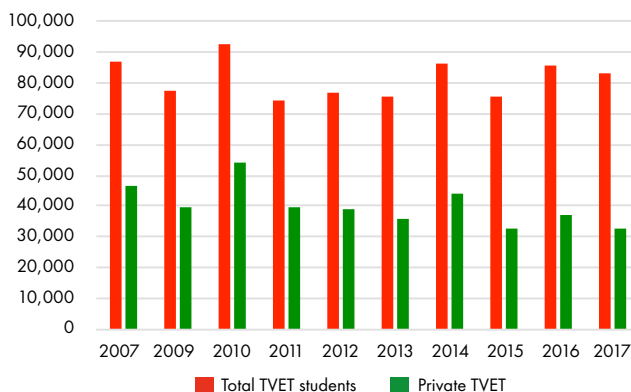


In 2017, just over 27 per cent of students enrolled in upper secondary education aged 15–19 years followed a TVET track (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2018). In the academic year 2017–18, 83,096 students were registered on formal TVET programmes, 45 per cent of who were female (CERD, 2018).

The Lebanese TVET system is divided along two basic tracks: Vocational Education and Technical Education (MEHE, 2018). Mobility between the vocational and technical tracks is possible if certain criteria are met, such as additional examinations, work experience or the completion of a vocational certificate involving practical on-the-job training at the workplace. Among the most popular TVET tracks are accounting, IT, nursing, nursery and primary education, buildings and machinery electrician, hotel management and car mechanics (CERD, 2018). There is a high degree of gender-based occupational segregation that corresponds to social norms (MEHE, 2018).

Almost 60 per cent of TVET students were enrolled at one of the 157 public TVET institutions. The rest attended one of the 398 private TVET institutions, such as those run by NGOs and for-profit organizations (CERD, 2018). Although these latter institutions are independent from the state in terms of funding and management (MEHE, 2018), they must obtain DGTVE accreditations. Private TVET schools mainly offer specialized courses in non-industrial disciplines, such as business, commerce and IT, which do not require costly investment in equipment.

Figure 1. Number of students in the formal TVET system and total numbers of students in private TVET (scholastic years 2007–17).



Note: Data for annual enrolment rates in 2008 are not available.

Source: Elaborations based on data from the CERD.

In 1996, Lebanon introduced the Dual System with the support of the German Development Cooperation (GIZ). The System consists of three years of study during which students receive centre-based training while at the same time developing workplace-relevant skills through apprenticeships in companies (Ghneim, 2018b).² A tracer study comparing labour market outcomes of students in work-based learning versus centre-based training found that 77.6 per cent of the former were employed compared to 68.8 per cent of the latter, concluding that work-based learning significantly enhances employability after graduation (ILO, GIZ, 2015). Despite this, the enrolment on Dual System (DS) programmes remains very low (i.e., 1.2 per cent of all students enrolled in TVET in 2017/18) (CERD, 2018). These promising employment outcomes warrant further consideration of the role of the DS in Lebanon's TVET system and expansion to other occupations beyond the pilot's coverage.

² This form of training is offered in eight different occupations, including industrial mechanics, restaurant service, car mechanics, heating and sanitary/plumbing, joinery, production cook, metal construction and maintenance.

Non-formal education is provided by private TVET institutions and NGOs dealing with accelerated training – it mainly consists of 3 to 9 month-long courses. Once the course is completed, students are awarded a certificate by either the school, the NEO or, in some cases, the DGTVE, depending on the provider. Programmes have for the most part no specific requirements as to competencies, structure or the learning activities included (e.g., having to be held at the workplace or in the local community, and so on) (Ghneim, 2018b). Although, no reliable data exists, this pathway is very common for some sectors and occupations in the informal economy, such as crafts, construction, retail, car maintenance, garment-making and repair. The ILO has developed guidelines for non-formal, market-based skills training on how to identify skills gaps, design curricula and implement training, link the training to employment and entrepreneurship and then monitor, evaluate and track programme results (ILO, 2018a).

Reforms carried out between 2014 and 2016 were aimed at strengthening work-based learning, incorporating core employability skills into curricula and creating new TVET specializations that included electro-mechanics, IT and sustainable and renewable energy development (MEHE, 2018). However, the formal TVET system remains mostly centre-based; work-based learning is weak and there is little involvement by the private sector in TVET delivery and assessment (ETF, 2019b). Because social partners are not involved in their development, many curricula are outdated and neither based on competency standards nor oriented towards the labour market. Consequently, employers complain that TVET graduates lack soft skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving and other interpersonal skills, as well entrepreneurial skills (MEHE, 2018); such skills are largely absent from existing TVET curricula. A shortage of qualified trainers and supervisors competent to adopt modern training methods responsive to labour market demand further impedes TVET delivery (MEHE, 2018; Ghneim, 2018b). Moreover, poor facilities and outmoded equipment and learning materials prevent students from developing practical skills fit for the workplace.

Skills recognition

The DGTVE is responsible for administering national unified examinations by announcing the dates of official examinations, supervising the assessment and subsequent issuance of certificates. Official exams mainly test theoretical knowledge (65% theoretical and 35% practical). Employers are neither engaged in the design of exams nor the evaluation process- for testing competencies against occupational standards (some exceptions are the electrical engineering, maintenance and IT coding pathways).

A Lebanese National Qualification Framework (NQF)³ outlining eight levels of qualification, was developed between 2010 and 2013 and piloted in four selected sectors: agro-food, electrical works, health, and hospitality (MEHE, 2018; ETF, 2018). The NQF is incrementally being applied to classify learning outcomes in certain areas, starting in 2019 with MEHE's TVET programs. However, the NQF itself has not yet been granted the formal endorsement required, either in law or by a necessary administrative mechanism, in order for it to be widely adopted by the educational system at a national level (Erasmus+ TLQAA+ WP1, 2017; ETF, 2018). Aside from the NQF, there are a few isolated initiatives that have developed new curricula and occupational standards with some level of private sector engagement. These initiatives could potentially be scaled up to a national level (e.g., in agro-food, car and elevator mechatronics, cooking, construction, electro-technical engineering, and maintenance (MEHE, 2018). As there has, as yet, been no successful transition made to a Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET) system, nor occupational standards or a NQF put in place, there is currently no possibility of developing a comprehensive recognition of prior learning (RPL) system in Lebanon.⁴

³ Also known as 'apprenticeship'.

⁴ Prior learning is knowledge or skills acquired in earlier study and work or through experience. "Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is a process of identifying, documenting, assessing and certifying formal, non-formal and informal learning outcomes against standards used in formal education and training" (ILO, 2018b).



Social inclusion

Lack of interest is a major issue impeding access to TVET (Ministry of Agriculture, 2014; IECD, 2019). Students and parents alike are reluctant to enrol on the TVET track, because of a lack of decent job opportunities in terms of salary and working conditions, the intense competition for low-skilled jobs and the low social status of blue-collar workers (MEHE, 2019). Many associate TVET with academic failure and poor career prospects. Tracer studies of TVET graduates in electronics, for example, have shown that only 21 per cent of graduates enter the job market after graduation (IECD, 2019). In line with the NSF, more efforts should be made to improve the contents, working conditions, and attractiveness of TVET level jobs (NSF 2018, UNESCO-UNIVOC, 2018).

Accessing skills development

It is estimated that there are around 1.2 million vulnerable children and youth in need of educational assistance (this includes poor Lebanese, as well as Palestinian and Syrian refugees) (Government of Lebanon and United Nations, 2019). About 40 per cent of Syrian children and youth aged 3–18 years remain outside both formal and non-formal education. Low enrolment rates are especially critical among youth: 20 per cent of 15–18-year-old Syrians were enrolled in education in 2016–17, but the rate was even lower for 19–24-year-olds, at 5.4 per cent (UNICEF et al., 2017). Only 2.3 per cent of youth aged 15–24 who were out of school attended education, literacy or training programmes during that period. A modest 1.6 per cent attended public TVET programmes, while a large number of non-Lebanese youth were enrolled on non-formal education programmes offered by NGOs.

Children with disabilities also have great difficulty accessing skills development provision. It is estimated that 50 per cent of Lebanese children holding a disability card are not enrolled in any form of certified education (UNESCO, 2013). This figure rises to around 80 per cent among disabled Syrian children and youth from the most vulnerable families (UNHCR and AUB, 2015). Most public sector TVET providers and training centres do not have accessible facilities and programmes (MEHE, 2018). Nevertheless, there are some NGOs, such as ArcenCiel and the Lebanese Physically Handicapped Union, that offer valuable vocational rehabilitation and training courses tailored to individual profiles (ILO, 2013a).

As already indicated, the participation of women in TVET is lower than for men. However, international organizations and NGOs have shown that it is possible for women to participate in male-dominated occupations. An inspirational example is the skills training programme supported by the ILO that enabled Lebanon's first female electrician to successfully complete a TVET programme in what is an all-male occupation. She now runs her the first electrical appliances shop in Southern Lebanon (ILO, 2011).

There are several strategic frameworks that stress the importance of improving access to skills development for all, and particularly for people with disabilities and for refugees. The law 220/2000 and the National Education Strategy (2007) grant equal rights to those with a disability to access education (MEHE, 2018). Humanitarian entities also already support refugee enrolment onto technical and vocational pathways (UNHCR, 2018).

Although such strategies stress the imperative of ensuring access to skills development for all, implementation remains a problem, either because capacities and resources are wanting, or what is on offer is not interesting enough to outweigh the opportunity costs of being enrolled (e.g., cost of education, opportunity cost of wages lost) (UNICEF et al., 2017; Buckner, 2016). Moreover, the lack of a legal status, a limited right to work and residency insecurity undermine the ability of Syrians to attain their educational goals.

Supporting transitions to the labour market

The school-to-work transition is generally hard for jobseekers in Lebanon. Whereas a vast majority of men aged from 15 to 29 make the transition from school to work, the majority of women are inactive (UNDP, 2016b). Most first-time salaried employees obtained their position through the help of personal contacts (Kasparian, 2009; Robalino and Sayed, 2012). It takes, on average, 10–16 months to find a first job, and the time taken can vary greatly depending on educational background.

There are numerous organizations and agencies providing employment services: the NEO, private recruitment agencies, educational institutions and NGOs all provide formal and informal job-matching services. The ILO has assisted the NEO in strengthening its capacity to connect employers and jobseekers via free online job-matching services (ILO, 2016). The ILO has also supported the establishment of employment service centres, together with UNRWA, providing alternative labour market information and job matching services specifically targeted at the Palestine refugee population (ILO, 2013b). However, the absence of a mandate for the NEO to coordinate and supervise alternative employment offices has had a negative impact on job-matching at a national level (ILO, 2016). Likewise, tracer surveys that assess graduate employment outcomes and satisfaction with training are carried out unevenly, not following a unified template or methodology. There can be no coordinated approach to filling in the gaps in labour market information and analysis until there is a standardized data collection method and a system of information exchange between agencies.

Lifelong learning

Companies in Lebanon provide training to employees in order to increase productivity, in particular, by up scaling their technical skills. They train their workers to operate new equipment and software, update them about the latest quality standards and to improve their soft skills. A qualitative study indicates that such training is, for the most part, needs-based, on-the-job, of 1–5 days in duration and provided both in-house and by private training providers. It has been observed that the bigger the company, the greater the likelihood of it having a human resources department capable of efficiently planning, organizing, monitoring and evaluating training (ILO, forthcoming).

(© ILO)



Key challenges

The Government is starting to pay greater attention to the TVET sector and has developed a National Strategic Framework for TVET that stress the importance of offering attractive and inclusive programmes to students. In line with this increased prioritization of TVET, the ILO's Decent Work Country Programme 2017–2020 aims to improve labour governance in accordance with international labour standards, develop policies to enhance productive employment opportunities, with a particular focus on youth employment, and improve social security provision and extend social protection to vulnerable groups:

1

Limited access and service delivery.

TVET faces difficulty in attracting a diverse pool of students and suffers from a poor reputation. Students and parents alike are reluctant to enrol in TVET programmes for several reasons: a lack of decent job opportunities for TVET graduates, low salaries and often strenuous working conditions, and a lack of an effective assessment and certification system to evaluate the competencies acquired through TVET programmes. The accessibility of TVET for vulnerable people, such as those with disabilities or a migrant background, remains constrained. Gender-specific issues are not tackled in a way that is strong enough to improve equality across the different TVET programmes. A weak infrastructure in terms of job-related equipment and learning materials impedes TVET trainees in acquiring the practical skills needed in the workplace.

2 **The low quality and relevance of the training on offer.**

The DGTVE has introduced some reforms to the curricula of the TVET pathways and some initiatives have the potential of being scaled up to a national level. Nevertheless, most curricula remain outdated, are not based on the competencies and life skills demanded by the most relevant industries and not assessed according to unified qualification standards. The scarcity of accurate and reliable information on the current and future needs of the labour market impedes TVET training in responding to these indicators and adapting TVET programmes accordingly. A shortage of qualified trainers and teachers compounds the poor quality of the TVET system and hampers its ability to respond to labour market needs.

3 **A weak governance system.**

The MEHE has managed to set a clear TVET strategy, with the technical assistance of the ILO, UNICEF and other relevant stakeholders. There have been efforts to improve the governance system by reinforcing institutions, such as the Higher Council that consults with social actors, or the CERD and the NEOs that foster knowledge management within the skills system. However, overall, governance structures continue to be centralized, static and slow.

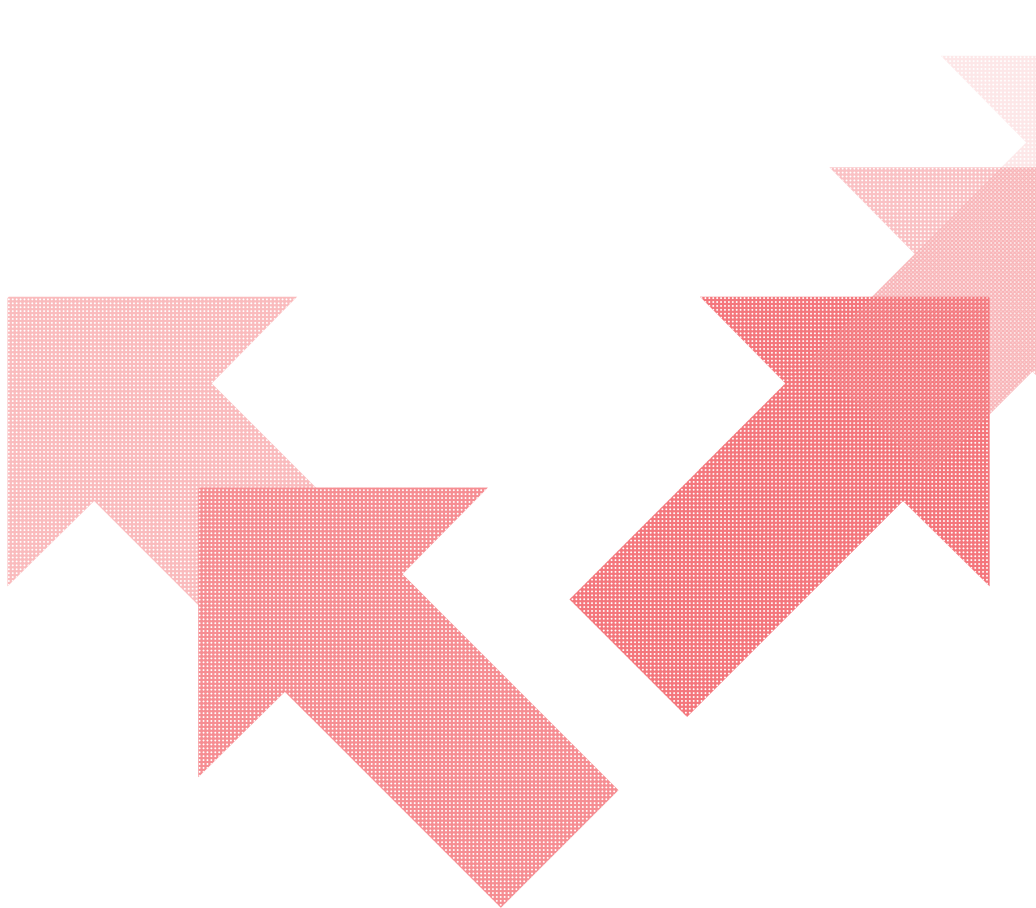
Lack of inter-institutional coordination hampers effective decision-making and any collective effort to define priorities and harmonize practices. There is no systematic attempt to engage social actors, such as employers organizations and trade unions, in the steering, design, implementation and financing of the skills system. The weak linkage that exists between the TVET system, intermediaries and the job market prevent effective school-to-work transitions. Multi-level and multi-stakeholder governance for the skills development system should be reformed to address these issues. This includes the reactivation and operationalization of the Higher TVET Council, establishment of skills councils in priority sectors and reinforcement of schools' autonomy and integration into their local environment (ETF, 2020).

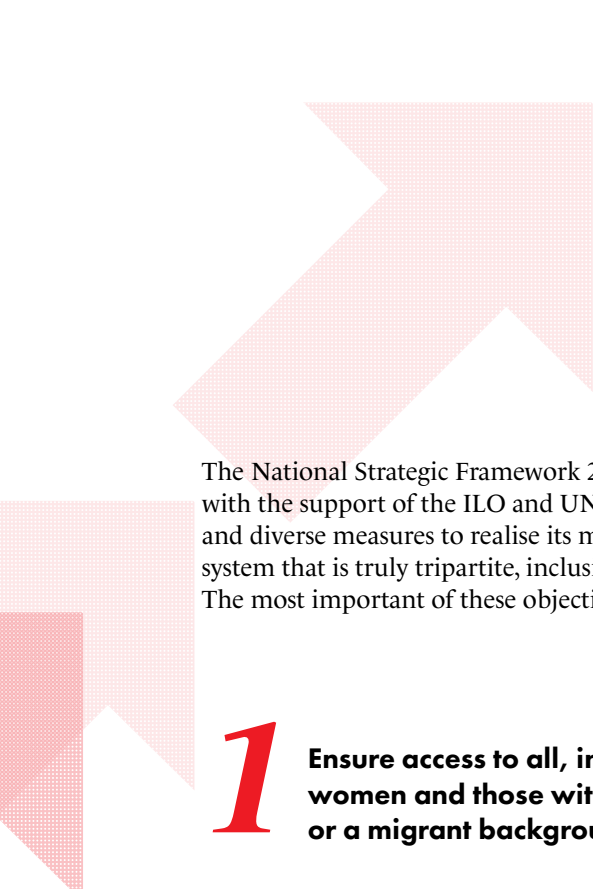
4

A centralized and cost-ineffective financing system.

Public TVET provision is funded from the DGTVE's budget and through tuition fees. The DGTVE budget covers mostly staff salaries. The resources allocated to the different institutions involved in TVET are neither sufficient nor adequately directed towards key areas, such as research and development (e.g., in the collection of relevant education and labour market data), the acquisition of appropriate and up-to-date equipment and tools, ongoing professional development for instructors, and the general maintenance and management of TVET institutions (e.g., for quality assurance, human resources and education management systems). This prevents evidence-based planning, effective monitoring and budget allocation.

The way forward





The National Strategic Framework 2018–2022, developed with the support of the ILO and UNICEF, comprises broad and diverse measures to realise its mission to establish a VET system that is truly tripartite, inclusive and fit for purpose. The most important of these objectives are as follows:

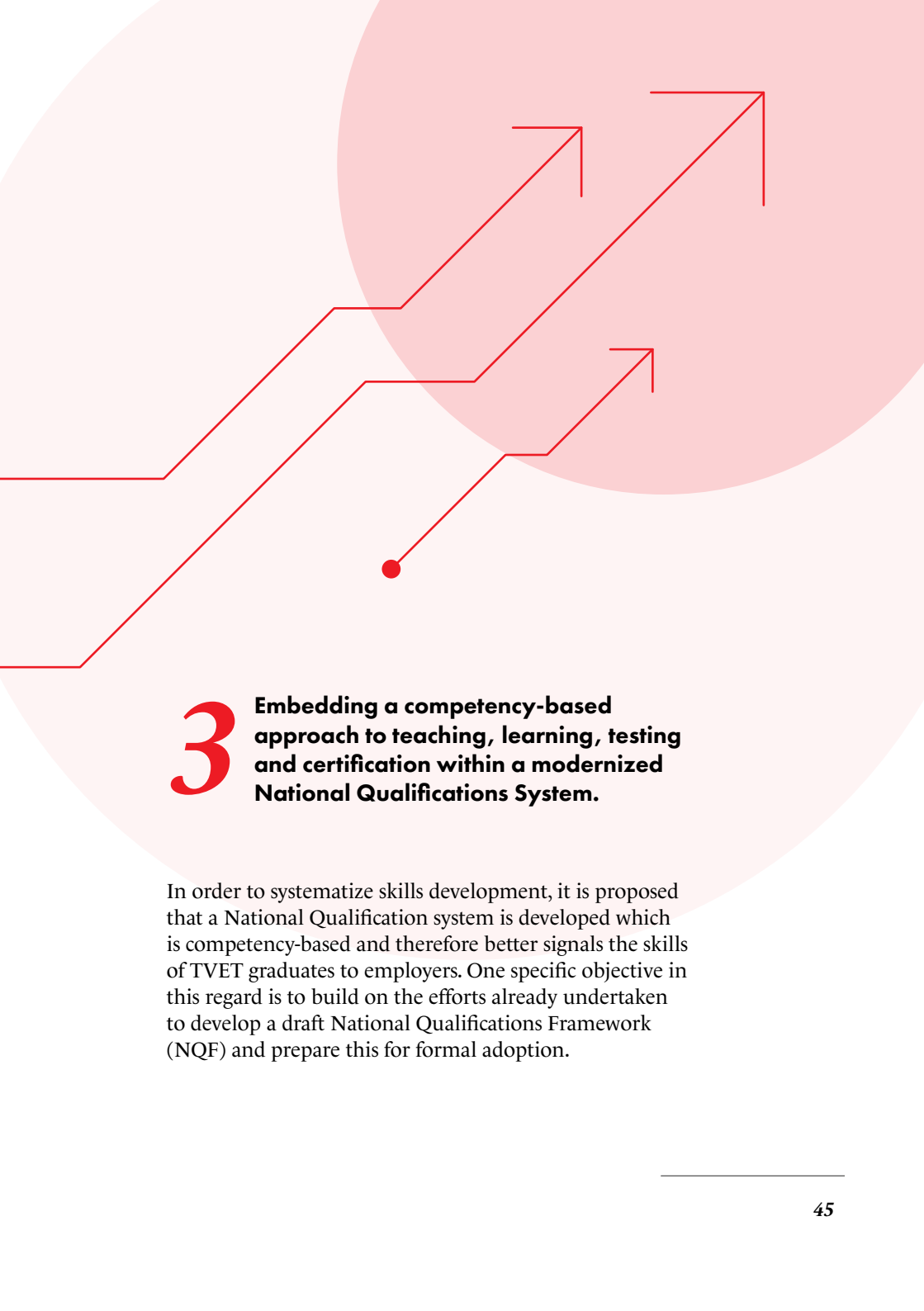
1 Ensure access to all, in particular women and those with disabilities or a migrant background.

Barriers remain to the full and equal inclusion of marginalized groups in TVET. Actions to be taken include reviewing and updating the current legal and technical infrastructure, to ensure they do not constrain the inclusion of marginalized groups, the creation of awareness-raising campaigns promoting the increased participation in TVET by women, people with disabilities of those with a migrant background, and improvements in disabled access and the training methodologies designed for people with disability. Publication by the ILO of guidance about good practice related to the training and job placement of people with disabilities includes inspirational advice on how to adapt programmes and facilities in accordance with these guidelines (ILO, 2013a).

2 Improving the HRD system for TVET, ensuring that instructors have up to date technical and pedagogical skills.

One of the most important steps towards enhanced quality of training is to strengthen the capacity of TVET instructors. Competency-based recruitment and training for all teaching and training staff, upgraded TVET staff job descriptions and ongoing professional development are priority actions identified for enhancing teaching standards.





3 Embedding a competency-based approach to teaching, learning, testing and certification within a modernized National Qualifications System.

In order to systematize skills development, it is proposed that a National Qualification system is developed which is competency-based and therefore better signals the skills of TVET graduates to employers. One specific objective in this regard is to build on the efforts already undertaken to develop a draft National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and prepare this for formal adoption.

In addition, the DGTVE will aim to build capacities within its Curriculum Department, incorporating international occupational and qualification standards and adapting them to the Lebanese context, and adopting a competency-based approach to the development of curricula, training materials and assessment tools. At the same time, the establishment of Sector Skills Councils is seen as an important step in identifying the skills and competencies in demand and ensuring their inclusion in training program design. Positive examples from initiatives taking a competency-based approach (in particular, the BT in maintenance and electronics, electrical engineering, the DACUM for cooks and car mechatronics and the agro-food school in Bekaa, third party assessment in the construction sector) provide models and inspiration for the design of future programmes and their up scaling to a national level.

4

Establishing a functional quality assurance system, and ensuring better data is collected from within the TVET system, especially on graduate employment outcomes.

The actions proposed to ensure a functional quality assurance system and therefore evidence-based planning and budget allocation are significant. These envisage the design and implementation of a Quality Assurance Agency to develop standards for the accreditation of training providers, the development of an education management information system (EMIS) at the DGTVE to collect better and more regular data, and a monitoring and evaluation framework in line with the European Quality Assurance in Vocational and Training (EQAVET) criteria for a yearly self-assessment of schools, validated by inspectors. Further actions to improve monitoring include conducting systematic tracer studies and employer satisfaction surveys. A positive development here is the recent initiative to establish an EMIS system for DGTVE, expected to be operational by early 2021.

5 Mainstreaming life skills into TVET curricula and teaching materials.

Together with training instructors about life skills, should facilitate better school-to-work transitions. Existing initiatives with a focus on life skills, such as ad hoc NGO programmes or the regional framework on life skills in the MENA region, can provide guidance on how to upscale successful pilot projects (UNICEF, 2019).

6 Providing up-to-date job-related equipment and materials that enable trainees to develop practical skills fitted to the world of work.

Should become a reality through the following actions: first, the prioritization of schools- and competency-based programmes according to their employment prospects and labour market outcome so as to better allocate resources and build strong public–private partnerships that ensure increased on-the-job training and the donation of job-related equipment. Second, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) should be promoted as a way of reducing costs and enhancing the learning process. Third, safe training conditions are to be sought through the design and enforcement of strong occupational safety and health rules, and through the integration of these rules into training programmes.

Increasing employer involvement in the skills development cycle and ensuring training programs are demand-driven.

It is foreseen that designing ways for greater involvement by social partners in TVET governance will prove significant in enabling the TVET system to transform into a more cooperative model in which the public sector, the private sector and social actors are jointly committed to investing in the VET system and play an active role in the steering of the overall system. The main ways to do this is are to first reactivate and then systematically include social partners in TVET institutions, such as the Higher Council, the Curriculum Committee and the Examination Committee at the DVTVE; to make it mandatory for every training provider to have a tripartite consultative board and involve to it in every step of the training process; to establish Sector Skills Councils with the goal of better engaging employers and identifying the skills demand for each sector, and to increase the involvement of trade unions and worker organizations to evaluate the results of training for workers. Application of the Dual System model to sectors where this practice-oriented approach is relevant will also improve the market relevance of TVET programmes.

8 Increasing autonomy of training centres and introducing performance-based allocation of resources.

In order to boost finance for training, public sector training providers need to become more autonomous and able to partner with private sector companies so as to encourage co-financing mechanisms for training. The system also needs to transform to a performance-based financing model that comprises benchmarks and allocates resources based on results. Furthermore, the establishment of a training fund to which international partners, the Lebanese diaspora abroad and private sector actors can contribute is an additional partnership avenue which may strengthen the financial resources within the TVET system.

9 Upgrading non-formal training.

Lastly, apart from the potential solutions for the formal TVET system, the guidelines for non-formal market-based skills training issued by the ILO at the request of the Livelihoods Working Group propose numerous detailed solutions for the improvement and harmonization of approaches to non-formal training in Lebanon.

Sources

1. Agence Française de Développement (AFD). 2018. In Lebanon, training for a trade... and for living together. Available at: <https://www.afd.fr/en/lebanon-training-trade-and-living-together>.
2. Ajluni, S.; Kawar, M. 2015. Towards decent work in Lebanon: Issues and challenges in light of the Syrian refugee crisis (Beirut, ILO). Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_374826.pdf.
3. AVSI. n.d. Lebanon. Retrieved from: <https://www.avsi.org/en/country/lebanon/1/> [12 Apr. 2019].
4. Buckner, E. 2016. Educational Policies and Schooling Practices for Urban Refugees – Stakeholder meeting – Emerging findings from a global survey and Lebanon case study, Columbia University, American University of Beirut, 28 June 2016.
5. Central Administration of Statistics (CAS), Lebanese Republic 2019, Gross Domestic Product, Second Quarter 2019.
6. CAS and ILO (2020), Labour Force and Household Living Conditions Survey (LFHLCs) 2018-19, Lebanon.
7. ETF (2020), Policies for Human Capital Development, Lebanon- An ETF Torino Process assessment.
8. Centre for Educational Research and Development (CERD). 2018. Statistical Bulletin for the academic year 2017–2018. Retrieved from: <http://www.CERD.org/dalilouna?la=ar>
9. Erasmus+ TLQAA+ WP1. 2017. Lebanese Qualifications Framework: A draft study. Available at: http://plus.tlqaa.org/sites/plus.tlqaa.org/files/LQF_draft_study_v_1_0.pdf
10. European Training Foundation (ETF). 2015a. Labour market and employment policy in Lebanon. Available at: https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/m/33A1850E6A358308C1257DFF005942FE_Employment%20policies_Lebanon.pdf
11. —. 2015b. Migrant support measures from an employment and skills perspective (MISMES): Lebanon. Available at: <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/migrant-support-measures-employment-and-skills-3>

12. —. 2017. VET governance: Lebanon. Available at: <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/vet-governance-partner-country-profiles-lebanon>
13. — 2018. NQF inventory: Lebanon. Retrieved from https://connections.etf.europa.eu/wikis/home?lang=en-gb#!/wiki/Wf591e43b607e_4ccf_8d94_a3256a255147/page/Lebanon%20-%20NQF%20Inventory [18 May 2019]
14. — 2019a. Governance arrangements for vocational education and training in ETF countries: Analytical overview 2012–17. Available at: <https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2019-02/VET%20governance%20in%20ETF%20partner%20countries%202012-17.pdf>
15. — 2019b. Lebanon: Education, training and employment developments 2018. Available at: <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/lebanon-education-training-and-employment-developments-2018>
16. European Union (EU). 2016. Training and education in the agricultural technical schools in Lebanon. Available at: https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/lebanon/7854/training-and-education-agricultural-technical-schools-lebanon_en
17. — Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ); International Labour Organization (ILO). 2015. Analysis of the employment outcomes of the Cooperative Training Programme in Lebanon supported by the GIZ DSME programme. Internal document. Unpublished.
18. Ghneim, O. 2018a. Review on Labor Market Information System (LMIS) in Lebanon (Beirut, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States). Available at: http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Beirut/images/Education/Labor_02.pdf
19. — 2018b. Work-based learning study reviewing work-based learning (WBL) programmes for young people in Lebanon (Beirut, Welfare Association for Research and Development; UNESCO). Available at: <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Beirut/images/Education/LB.pdf>
20. Government of Lebanon; United Nations. 2019. Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017–2020. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/lebanon-crisis-response-plan-2017-2020-2019-update>
21. Institut européen de coopération et de développement (IECD). 2019. Technical education answering market needs; Labour market study for electrical technicians in Lebanon, conference organized by IECD and Semeurs d'Avenir, 11 April 2019, Beirut, Lebanon.

22. International Labour Organization (ILO). 2011, 25 April. Lebanon: First female electrician. [Video file]. Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qv6qyYhvEHg>
23. — 2013a. Emerging good practices related to the training and job placement of persons with disabilities in Lebanon. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_232973.pdf
24. — 2013b. Manual for UNRWA employment service centres: Employment service centres for Palestine refugees under the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_232639.pdf
25. — 2016. Towards coordinated efforts for effective labour market information and employment services in Lebanon. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_554182.pdf
26. — 2017. Matching skills and jobs in Lebanon: Main features of the labour market – challenges, opportunities and recommendations, Policy Brief. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/beirut/information-resources/factsheets/WCMS_559673/lang--en/index.htm
27. — 2018a. Guidelines for non-formal market-based skills training in Lebanon. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_666243.pdf
28. — 2018b. Recognition of prior learning (RPL): Learning package. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_626246.pdf
29. — 2018c. Decent Work country programme for Lebanon 2017–2020. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/genericdocument/wcms_656561.pdf
30. — Forthcoming. Lifelong learning practices in Lebanon: Current practices at the workplace in Lebanon. Internal document.
31. — 2020 Rapid assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable workers in Lebanon-Facing Multiple Crisis.

32. Kasparian, C. 2009. L'émigration des jeunes Libanais et leurs projets d'avenir (Beirut, Presses de l'Université Saint-Joseph).
33. Matta, J.M. 2018. SMEs in Lebanon: Status, strategy and outcomes (Ministry of Economy and Trade). Available at: <https://www.economy.gov.lb/media/10367/smes-in-lebanon-180112-10-small-size.pdf>
34. Ministry of Agriculture. 2014. Ministry of Agriculture strategy 2015–2019. Available at: <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/leb149670.pdf>
35. Ministry of Economy and Trade. 2014. Lebanon SME strategy: A roadmap to 2020. Available at: https://www.economy.gov.lb/public/uploads/files/6833_5879_4642.pdf
36. —. 2015. Lebanon SME Strategy: A roadmap to 2020, presentation by Zeina El Khoury in Izmir, Turkey, 4 June 2015. Available at: <http://www.databank.com.lb/docs/SME%20Strategy%20Roadmap%20to%202020-Ministry%20of%20Economy-2015.pdf>
37. —. 2018. National Strategic Framework for Technical Vocational Education and Training in Lebanon 2018–2022. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/beirut/publications/WCMS_633487/lang--en/index.htm
38. Ministry of Tourism. 2015. Lebanon Rural Tourism Strategy 2015–2019. Available at: http://www.mot.gov.lb/Content/uploads/Publication/150225013030192~Rural%20Tourism%20Strategy_English.pdf
39. —. n.d. b. Manpower statistics. Retrieved from: <http://www.neo.gov.lb/Manpower-Statistics.aspx> [17 Apr. 2019].
40. — 2020. Lebanese Government's Fiscal Recovery Plan (LGFRP), 2020.
41. Ministry of Economy and Trade (MoET) and UNDP, 2014, Lebanon SME Strategy –A Road Map to 2020.
42. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2018. Country case studies: Building economic resilience in Lebanon and Libya, background note for the MENA-OECD Economic Resilience Task Force. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/mena/competitiveness/ERTF-Jeddah-2018-Background-note-Case-studies-Lebanon-and-Libya.pdf> [11 Oct. 2019].
43. Public Debt Directorate. 2019. General debt overview (Republic of Lebanon, Ministry of Finance). Available at: <http://www.finance.gov.lb/en-us/Finance/PublicDebt/PDTS>

44. Robalino, D.; Sayed, H. 2012. Lebanon – Good jobs needed: The role of macro, investment, education and labor and social protection policies (MILES) (World Bank Middle East and North Africa Human Development Group). Available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/230521468089355499/Lebanon-Good-jobs-needed-the-role-of-macro-investment-education-labor-and-social-protection-policies-MILES-a-multi-year-technical-cooperation-program>
45. Tuck, R. 2007. An introductory guide to national qualifications frameworks: Conceptual and practical issues for policy makers (Geneva, ILO). Available at: https://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS_103623/lang--en/index.htm
46. UNESCO Institute of Statistics. 2018. Education: Distribution of enrolment by programme orientation. Retrieved from: <http://data.uis.unesco.org/> [accessed 16 Apr. 2019].
47. UNESCO (2018) Improving the image of TVET, UNESCO-UNIVOC TVeT Forum, 16 to 24 July, 2018 Bonn, Germany. https://unevoc.unesco.org/up/vc_synthesis_21.pdf
48. United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF). 2019. Life Skills and Citizenship Education Initiative (LSCE): Middle East and Northern Africa. Available at: <http://www.lsce-mena.org/about>
49. —. n.d. Youth development. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/lebanon/youth-development>
50. —; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); World Food Programme (WFP). 2017. Vulnerability assessment of Syrian refugees in Lebanon 2017. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/VASyR%202017.compressed.pdf>
51. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). 2016a. Mind the gap: A labour needs assessment for Lebanon. Agro-food – Construction – ICT. Available at: <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/lebanon/img/SocialandLocalDevelopment/Mind%20the%20gap%20final%2022%20March%20.pdf>
52. —. 2016b. Spotlight on youth in Lebanon. Available at: <http://www.lb.undp.org/content/lebanon/en/home/library/poverty/Spotlight-on-Youth-in-Lebanon.html>

53. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). 2013. Social inclusion of young persons with disabilities (PWD) in Lebanon (Beirut). Available at: http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Beirut/images/SHS/Social_Inclusion_Young_Persons_with_Disabilities_Lebanon.pdf
54. —. 2017. Skills forecasting for the Agro-food sector in Lebanon. Available at: <http://www.databank.com.lb/docs/Economic%20contribution%20of%20software%20industry%202014.pdf>
55. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). 2018. Higher education in emergencies Q&A for refugees in Lebanon, 2018. Available at: https://www.refugees-lebanon.org/uploads/poster/poster_153208274916.pdf
56. —. 2019. Syria Regional Refugee Response: Total registered refugees. Retrieved from: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/71> [accessed 2 May 2019].
57. —; American University of Beirut (AUB). 2015. Profiling of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/59882>
58. —; United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); World Food Programme (WFP). 2018. Vulnerability of Syrian refugees in Lebanon (VASyR-2018). Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/lb/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2018/12/VASyR-2018.pdf> [11 Oct. 2019].
59. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). n.d. UNRWA technical and vocational education and training and youth programme. Retrieved from: <https://www.unrwa.org/what-we-do/vocational-training> [30 Aug. 2019].
60. World Bank. 2017. World Development Indicators (Washington, DC). Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=LB>
61. World Economic Forum (WEF). 2017. The Global Competitiveness report 2017–2018. Available at: <http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GCR2017-2018/05FullReport/TheGlobalCompetitivenessReport2017%E2%80%932018.pdf>
62. World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). 2014. Study on the economic contribution of the software industry in Lebanon. Available at: <http://www.databank.com.lb/docs/Economic%20contribution%20of%20software%20industry%202014.pdf>



Skills and Employability Branch

Employment Policy Department
International Labour Office
4, route des Morillons
CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland
Website: www.ilo.org/skills



Norwegian Ministry
of Foreign Affairs

