



## **YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY AND THE ROLE OF VET AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN LEBANON**

Beirut, 22-23 September 2014

Seminar conclusions

# YOUTH AND EMPLOYABILITY IN LEBANON: THE ROLE OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

## Introduction

The European Training Foundation jointly with the Agence Française de Développement and in cooperation with the European Union Delegation to Lebanon have organised a seminar on “Youth Employability: the role of Vocational and Technical Education and Entrepreneurship” on 22 and 23 September 2014 in Beirut at the Economic and Social Council.

Lebanon, as other countries in the region, suffers from a high unemployment rate. The youth unemployment rate is particularly high. The National Youth Policy Document endorsed by the Lebanese government on 3 April 2012, states that the youth unemployment rate is 34%. Unemployment is higher among higher-educated youth: 21.8% among upper secondary graduates and 36.1% among university graduates.

Since the start of the Syrian crisis, the impact on the socio-economic life in Lebanon has been increasing and has exacerbated some of the challenges that Lebanon had to face such as the effects of the economic crisis, the high unemployment rate and the increasing migration of skilled labour force.

The seminar has brought together around 60 participants representing both the education and the business sector, international organisations and donors, researchers and representatives of the civil society.

The seminar included the presentation of recent studies on the labour market (AFD Study on the insertion of VET graduates in Lebanon<sup>1</sup>) and the VTE system, including the VET policy and system analysis carried out by the ETF (the Torino Process) in close cooperation with Lebanese stakeholders. The seminar also was an opportunity to present concrete projects and initiatives in response to those challenges. Entrepreneurship skills and entrepreneurial learning were presented and discussed, including the ETF project with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and CERD implemented jointly with the ILO and UNESCO. This initiative was presented in particular to address the importance of entrepreneurial learning to provide opportunities to students to become job providers instead of job seekers.

## Objectives of the seminar

The objective of the seminar was to present the current pressing challenges in the economic and social context in Lebanon and to debate on priorities and recommendations for reforms of the VTE system to support job creation and foster a better social and occupational integration of young people.

## Main conclusions and recommendations

Through presentation of studies and concrete cases as well as through lively debates, several issues have emerged, with various recommendations for government official, labour market actors and all those involved in skills development and the fight to unemployment. Some key challenges emerged, including the increasing sense of uncertainty of young people for their future and future opportunities,

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<sup>1</sup> AFD, Etude sur le secteur et l'insertion professionnelle des lauréats de l'enseignement technique et de la formation professionnelle au Liban, study carried out by CRI (Consultation and research institute), September 2013

linked mostly to the overall unstable socio-political situation but also to the limited working opportunities, generally unfavourable working conditions and a perceived impact of the family /religious/political affiliation in finding a job, rather than on the individual merit. Participants also indicated that the country should do more to fight corruption that studies indicate as being one of the limitations in doing business (third in rank after political instability and electricity<sup>2</sup>).

The points raised and key recommendations from the rich discussion, can be summarised as follows:

### ***Key recommendations***

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- The development of a comprehensive and coordinated **employment policy**, which draws from a regular in-depth analyses of the labour market;
- A coordinated and agreed **vision for human resource development should be developed involving all actors; A stronger involvement of the business sector and the civil society** should be sought to engage them in the whole VET cycle (planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation);
- **Better match skills demand and supply**, including the development of data collection, through a **labour market information system** to support a regular and stable analysis of the labour market situation and decision making; and tracers studies to regularly **survey the transition from school to work**
- Create conditions for **equal treatment** in accessing the labour market; currently less favourable for disabled and for women;
- There is an urgent need for **programmes to be updated** and adapted to the changing needs of the labour market, closing the current gap between skills offer and demand; More practical training should be included in the programmes; Better integrate professional and practical experience in the programmes to respond to the needs of the enterprises. **The lack of work-based models in VET** (with the exception of the Dual system) impacts on the practical skills that would be required by the enterprises and limits the chances of VET graduates to find an employment;
- Develop mechanisms to **modernise schools** and support students to find internships and appropriate jobs:
  - Promote partnership between schools and enterprises
  - Integrate periods of internships as part of the curricula
  - Link up old students with new students in order to exchange experience and knowledge
  - Reinforce pedagogical support and pedagogical material and equipment (adapted to the needs of the labour market)
  - Reinforce or develop **career guidance and orientation services** at school level; this service should also ensure relations and connections with the enterprises and support job search and job placement;

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<sup>2</sup> World Bank 2010 in The Lebanese Centre for Policy Studies, Youth employment in Lebanon : skilled and jobless Policy Paper, Mary Kawar and Zafiriz Tzannatos, Beirut, 2013

- Regarding **teachers and trainers**, it is recommended to promote **full time employment** and include professional experience as a criteria for recruitment; Put in place **continuing training for teachers** to update their competences, in particular with regard to fast changing sectors; Test **innovative teaching methods and** create centre of research and innovation in partnership with enterprises;
- **Streamline the number of specialities and distribution of schools** in the country; encourage schools to specialise by value chain (filière) and or to group in order to profit from each other's experience; Enhance and make more efficient the distribution of schools across the country to increase access ;
- Promote the **decentralisation of the decision making and increase the autonomy of the schools** to easy an efficient school management and relations with the enterprises;
- Put in place mechanisms of **quality assurance** and reinforce school inspection.
- Integrate **entrepreneurship** in general education and at university level ;
- **Support young entrepreneurs** to create their enterprises through tutoring and incubators