Youth employability and VET systems in the Mediterranean region

Social Protection and Employment Workshop
1-3 October 2012

Ummuhan Bardak, European Training Foundation (ETF)
Cairo University, 2 October 2012

Overview of the education and training systems

- Improved access to education – universal primary education and increased years of schooling (Graph 1)
- Increasing secondary enrolment, but significant difference between lower and upper secondary education (Graph 2)
- VET small, narrow and unattractive – not playing its potential economic and social role!
- Strong aspiration for higher education with limited employment prospects (Graph 3)
Overview of the education and training systems (2)

- Some left without access even to basic education & training (e.g. persisting illiteracy) (Graph 4)
- Human development level not always in line with economic development (Graph 5)
- Missing skills and mismatch between the education outputs and market demand (Graph 6)
- Problems with the quality of education and high numbers of early school leavers (e.g. PISA, TIMMS, national evaluations)

Youth in figures: where they are

- Large cohorts of young population, with high aspirations for their lives (education, jobs, housing) (Graph 7)
- Youth in education: around 30-to-40% (based on upper secondary and university enrolment rates)
- Youth in labour force: around 35-to-37% (ILO 2010) (50% males, 22% females)
- Youth in employment: 40% males, 15% females (ILO 2008), more likely working in low-paid, informal jobs
- Youth unemployed: 25% (with twice high rates for females) (LFS 2010) (Graph 8)
Three youth groups, diverse vulnerabilities

1. Unemployed youth with difficult school-to-work transition: unemployment tends to increase with education level
   
   **educated unemployed as a particular group (« wait unemployment ») – see Tunisia (Table 1)**

2. Low-skilled/unskilled youth who can not afford to be unemployed, but take precarious jobs in informal sector

3. Youth not in education, training or employment (NEETs): more likely inactive, most vulnerable to social exclusion

Addressing different needs of diverse youth groups in a balanced manner – crucial for ‘social cohesion’

Main reasons of difficult youth transitions

- Weak (skilled) job creation in private sector and saturation of jobs in public sector - business environment not encouraging SME growth
- Poor job-matching services: social networks are the main tool to find (good) jobs, less recruitment on merit-based competition
- Problems of inadequate education and training: overly-academic curricula, weak generic and/or soft skills and key competences, overwhelming humanities, poor learning environment
- Low share of VET, missing vocational/craft skills and weak links with enterprises (mostly SMEs)
- High social expectations of youth from jobs: preference for public jobs despite their poor quality and productivity
Challenges in VET systems

Low prestige, low attendance, limited access for adults, limited relevance/quality to changing economic and labour market needs

- VET vision: compliance with general education
- VET governance: fragmentation and missing partners
- Poor quality/relevance: links with business, horizontal and vertical pathways in education system, career guidance
- Need for both technical and core skills – entrepreneurship
- Missing element: accessible adult training in a context of LLL
- Specific skills needed for SMEs
- Slow implementation: from experimentation to mainstreaming

Main policy trends in VET systems

- National strategies and experimentation: bring closer VET supply to the demand for skills (demand-driven systems)
- Building partnerships with private sector at national and sectoral level:
  - Morocco: GIACs
  - Lebanon: Association of Lebanese Industrialists monitoring skills strategies; Syndicate of Lebanese food industry involvement in schools
  - Egypt: Sectoral HRD Councils in industry, construction, tourism
  - Jordan: centres of excellence (PPPs) in hospitality, pharmaceuticals, printing….  
- Support work based-learning
  - Egypt: Mubarak-Kohl Initiative
  - Lebanon: dual system experimentation
  - OPT: apprenticeship in auto-mechanics and tourism
- Curriculum innovation - introduction of competence based approaches (with limited preparation of teachers)
  - Morocco
  - Tunisia
The ways forward: more general

- Access, quality and relevance (of education at all levels) with special attention to upper secondary education
  increased enrolment rates in post-compulsory education, larger and diversified VET well-linked to education system, modern curricula, enthusiastic teachers, student-centred learning strategies, career guidance & counselling
- Increased size, options and attractiveness of VET as a valid educational pathway towards employment – special attention for girls
- The content and process of education: key competences, active learning, soft skills (entrepreneurship, citizenship, communication, ICT, foreign languages, etc.)
- Increased education and training opportunities for vulnerable groups: literacy courses, second-chance training etc.

The ways forward: VET specific

Short term responses – long term solutions
- System building actions: governance; evidence based policy development/ decision taking; teacher training (systems)
- Bottom up initiatives: training; strengthening capacity of training providers; school mobilisation
- Qualification frameworks: standards, assessment, validation of skills
- Vocational guidance, linked to labour market information
- Entrepreneurship training & support
- Balancing responsibilities between central level and regional or school level – decentralisation and school autonomy

Entry points: the economic sectors and the regions/local level

Overall objective: Every body has the opportunity to participate to skill development actions – “social inclusion”
Graph 1: Mean years of schooling and school life expectancy (years per person) Primary to tertiary – UNESCO, Last available year

Graph 2: Gross enrolment rates in secondary education and % of VET enrolment, UNESCO, last year
Graph 3: Gross enrolment rates in tertiary education, UNESCO, Last year available

Graph 4: Adult and youth literacy rates, UNESCO Last available year
Graph 5: Country ranking in the UNDP Human Development Index, 2011

Graph 6: Percentage of firms identifying skills as major constraint for business (BEEPS)

Source: Business Environment Survey BEEPS, World Bank and EBRD
Graph 7: Share of population aged 15-30 (\%), 2010, UN DESA

Graph 8: Youth unemployment rates
LFS 2010

Sources: National Statistical Offices, IFS databases and publications
MCM, CMH: 2008; HCV, HUN: 2011
### Table 1: Total unemployment rates by educational level in Tunisia (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational level</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011 (May)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No education</td>
<td>6.27</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>6.05</td>
<td>5.73</td>
<td>8.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>14.27</td>
<td>11.48</td>
<td>10.41</td>
<td>9.24</td>
<td>12.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>13.33</td>
<td>13.48</td>
<td>14.03</td>
<td>13.70</td>
<td>20.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education</td>
<td>14.03</td>
<td>18.17</td>
<td>21.91</td>
<td>22.88</td>
<td>29.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>10.29</td>
<td>12.20</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total average</td>
<td>12.87</td>
<td>12.39</td>
<td>13.29</td>
<td>13.05</td>
<td>18.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: LFS May 2011, National Institute of Statistics