

Challenges facing the reform program

In SMCs, donors' initiatives to reform the VET sector face several economic challenges such as the weakness of the private sector to generate jobs, the influence of the informal sector, and the scarcity of funds to undergo deep reform programs. It also faces social challenges such as the low attractiveness of the VET system and the increasing number of NEET population and political challenges such as the ongoing political unrest in most Southern Mediterranean Countries in addition to unstable governments.

Moreover, and from a practical perspective, donors-funded initiative to reform the VET system encounter specific challenges that characterize the socio-economic context of SMCs.

Major challenges faced by donors' led VET reform initiatives

- 1 Diversity of the linguistic context and the constraints imposed by SMCs local languages.
- 2 Lack of qualified trainers who can upskill local VET instructors.
- 3 Weak sustainability of donors' reform initiatives due to poor engagement of local VET stakeholders to scale up the reform project following the completion of donors' interventions.
- 4 Absence of Incentives for Private Sector Partners to guarantee their engagement in the reform process
- 5 Low attractiveness of the VET path and difficulty in changing misconception around the VET education path.
- 6 High Unemployment Rates in SMCs that reach 35% worsening social and political tensions and diluting efforts to reform the VET sector.
- 7 Lack of infrastructure in the VET institutions which reduces impact of technical assistance and capacity building initiatives.

Redesigning the role of BSOs in reforming the VET sector may include:



Recommendations to develop the VET sector

Private Sector Engagement



- Strengthen the linkages between the VET sector and the private sector through co-developed curricula, extra-curricular activities, incubators creation, and partnerships with business centers and technology-based hubs.
- Encourage private sector to undergo upskilling programs for their existing workforce by building partnership with vocational centers.
- Strengthen private sector engagement with the VET sector through developing skills-based courses, delivering practical workshops and hands-on activities, and promoting apprenticeship opportunities for new graduates searching for new career.

1

Adopt a multistakeholder approach

a donor's perspective Promote donors' engagement to fund and implement upskilling and reskilling interventions for future workforce through pre-employment training programs, review, and upgrade training curricula, etc.

- Adopt a multi stakeholder approach to successfully govern the VET sector reform strategies and sustainability



- Implement a robust skills development program and pursue a holistic approach to create active linkages and partnerships between education providers (VET and Academia), Businesses, public employment agencies, CSOs and BSOs.

- Conduct regional dialogue on skills development to promote collaborations between several stakeholders involved in skills development, employability of youth, workforce productivity, skills mismatch, and other relevant issues that concerns the employability of youth and women.

2

Capacity Building of the VET sector



- Develop and reinforce VET teachers and managers' capacity building programs.
- Improve skills forecast and skills development taking into consideration the importance of the blue and green economies which have a great potential to create jobs and foster jobs of the future in addition to leveraging job opportunities created by nearshoring trends dictated by post-pandemic measures.
- Capitalize on successful applications of the e-learning solutions during the pandemic for further development of the VET sector. This mechanism should further be exploited as an immediate solution to scale up and sustain upskilling and reskilling programs.
- Promote quality assurance mechanisms in the VET sector in a manner that sustains the reform programs. Provisions of quality assurance include VET curriculum content, training delivery, instructors' qualifications, and private sector engagement

3

VET Attractiveness

- Increase VET attractiveness among youth and their families and promote VET labor market perspectives.



- Organize awareness raising campaigns to sensitize the education sector of the importance of aligning training to the new needs of the labor market.

4

The VET sector has the potential to upskill and reskill the current and future workforce to become resilient and respond to the challenges of job transition. We suggest the following recommendations to develop the VET sector and strengthen its resilience to better respond to the challenges imposed by the pandemic and the fourth industrial revolution.

Successful cases of BSOs contribution to the VET sector reform initiatives:

In both shore of the Mediterranean , BSOs redefined their roles and developed successful programs to support young graduates and job seekers overcome job matching/transition issue.



The project involved SMEs in apprenticeship and created a cadre of trainers to coach SMEs on the importance of apprenticeships for the growth of their businesses.

The "Contrat d'alternance en Bretagne" gives access to both employers and job seekers to look for a candidate or an apprenticeship opportunity.

Excelsior of Union Camere offers several services to employers and job seekers such as the "skills forecast", a tool constantly updated and which allows job seekers to target efficiently their job search.

The DSME: Promoting Vocational Education & SME Development with GIZ/GOPA & MEHE



Active collaboration programs with the European Training Foundation (ETF)

The Mashreq Gender Facility: in collaboration with IFC (2020-2021)

YEP MED: an ENI CBC programs running from 2020 to 2023

INTERNISA: an ENI CBC programs running from 2020 to 2023

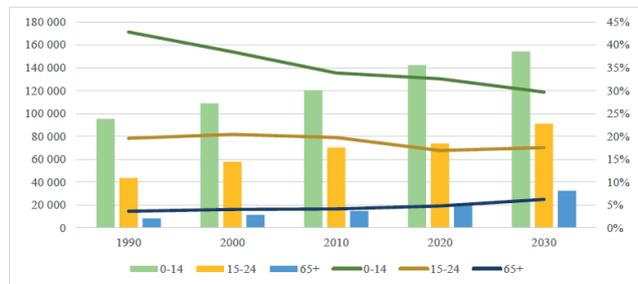
WHY SHOULD WE FOCUS ON SOUTHERN MEDITERRANEAN / MENA COUNTRIES?

42% of unemployment rate

Significant NEET population representing 22.5% of theyouth

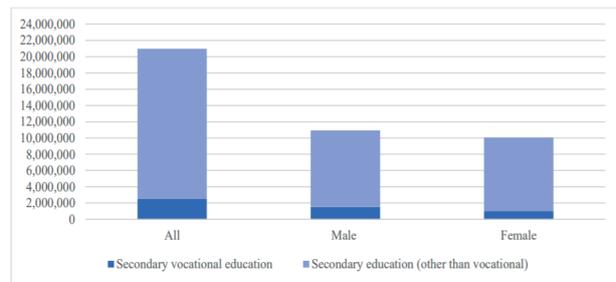
42% of female graduates are unemployed.

Despite the high demand, only 12% of secondary level students are enrolled in VET programs



Source: ESCWA calculations based on United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), World Population Prospects 2019 database, online edition.

Figure 1: Number (thousands) and proportion (percentage) of children (0-14), youth (15-24) and older persons (65+)



Source: ESCWA calculations based on UNESCO Institute for Statistics data (accessed 12 December 2019).

Figure 2: Youth unemployment rate (percentage), 2020

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