

Youth transition from education to work in the Mediterranean region: the ETF experience with partner countries

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Youth transition from education to work

Socio-economic and demographic context

Main challenges for transition from school to work

Tools for analysis

Range and type of programmes and services

Evidence of the impact

Topics for discussion / recommendations

Socio-economic and demographic context

- Scope of the analysis: eight Southern and Eastern Mediterranean (SEMED) countries (Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Lebanon and Occupied Palestinian territory – OPT.)
- Political turbulence and instability partly attributed to the lack of democracy, employment and social equity
- Important employment challenges: ‘youth bulge’ → 30 per cent of the population of these countries are between the ages of 15 and 30



Socio-economic and demographic context (II)

- Two key constraints:
 - **Insufficient job creation** (insufficient labour demand to meet the labour market supply):
 - Jobless growth in the past
 - SMEs (60 to 70% of jobs), mostly low skilled and low paid, mainly in the informal sector.
 - **Skills mismatch:**
 - Improvements in the level of education of the population and recent economic growth have not translated into employment growth.
 - Lowest activity rates in the world (between 40 to 50%, average female < 25%).
 - Youth unemployment close to or above 25% in almost all AMCs, with the majority (up to 80%) being first job-seekers with no previous work experience.
 - Inverse correlation between education and employment: educated unemployed → **weak links between the education and training system and the labour market.**

Main challenges for transition

- **Lack of labour demand** (main obstacle)
- **Weak business environment:** red tape and bureaucracy do not encourage self-employment and SME development
- **Low levels of qualifications and enrolment in VET:** high school drop-out and illiteracy rates, upper secondary enrolment rates relatively low, low perception of VET (second choice)
- **Lack of generic and/or soft skills (key competences) and skills mismatch**
- **Weak job-matching services and fragmented labour market information systems.**
- **Lack of relevant work experience**
- **Territorial disparities and weak geographical mobility**



Main challenges for transition: consequences

- **Duration** of school-to-work transition is increasing in most countries in the region (people tend to lose confidence and drop out of the LM)
- The vast majority of young labour market entrants resort to jobs in the **informal economy** (often never leave it)
- **Low quality and stability** of first job
- Most **women** are discouraged and become inactive (aging working conditions, fewer networking opportunities, lower levels of mobility, difficulties in engaging in entrepreneurship etc).
- Larger and larger cohorts of **NEETs**: serious social problems in AMCs

Women

Youth

Low qualifications

Most disadvantaged groups: high segmentation

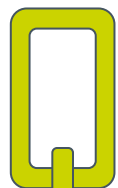
Tools for analysis

- Limited analysis of the transition in Semed countries → Enhancing the capacity of national and local stakeholders to undertake **evidence-based analysis** that feeds social dialogue and the policy-making process is crucial to ensure smoother transition paths
- Different methodologies include:
 - Transition studies and reports (CATEWE project for EU Member States, and ILO transition studies;
 - Graduate tracer studies;
 - Transition surveys (e.g. ETF, ILO studies) and school-to-work transition information bases (e.g. UNESCO in the Asia-Pacific region).

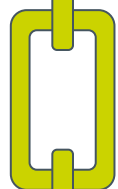


Tools for analysis: ETF transition surveys/national reports

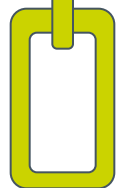
- Ukraine, Serbia, and Syria, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan. Desk review: Egypt
- Key questions to **measure the effectiveness of school-to-work transition** and to include in country reports (but general lack info/data):



1. How do young people move through the education system, and what factors determine the differences in their educational achievements?



2. How and through which channels do young people move from the education system into the labour market, and what factors determine their success at labour market entry?



3. Do processes, patterns and outcomes of early labour market entry influence the labour market outcomes and careers of young people at a later stage in life?



Tools for analysis: considerations from country reports

Clear disconnect between educational structure and LM

Instil in students skills requested by the LM
→ adapt the content of education programmes to the **needs of LM + role of LM intermediaries**

Subject selection by students: young people are insufficiently aware of employer demand

Provide greater information to youth on LM consideration so that they can make better **informed choices**

Expansion of higher education does not ensure better labour market prospects

Education systems to be capable of adapting to socio-economic changes → **education systems flexibility**

Two main challenges: how to make LM more inclusive and how to ensure transition towards more productive jobs

Improve business environment, incentives to prevent low-productive jobs, social safety nets, regulations to **tackle informality + improve productivity**, stimulate upward mobility, etc.

Programmes and services

- **Demand-side perspective:** try to affect the behaviour of employers (regulating the employment relationship, providing incentives for investments in training, etc.)
- **Supply-side perspective:** aim at improving access to education and training, and its quality and relevancy, to ensure a supply of workers with skills to match labour market needs.

Perceived needs → combination of programmes



Programmes and services (II)

- **Employment services and employment intermediation services**
 - Information on job vacancies, assisting in matching workers to jobs, assessment and testing to determine job readiness, web-based tools
- **Career information, guidance and counselling service**
 - Improves the ability of young people to make informed decisions about their education and careers, BUT very limited in AMCs
 - Psychological model vs. pedagogical model (focusing on what jobs an individual is qualified for, and what jobs are actually available)
- **Vocational education and training programmes**
 - Improves the employability and productivity of young workers while offering specific skills and providing concrete work experience. Classroom training, on-the-job training, and apprenticeships. Still limited in AMCs.
 - **More positive impact when part of a comprehensive package**
 - **Involvement of stakeholders:** involving end-users in programme design and management, and giving end-users a strong role in accrediting qualifications and institutions, can further contribute to the positive impact of the programmes

Programmes and services (III)

- **Work experience opportunities**
 - Develop and acquire important LM skills : internships and traineeships (ex. Morocco)
 - Provision of high-quality traineeships requires the involvement of all relevant actors: enterprises, national authorities, social partners, and representatives of youth and trainees.
 - Educational institutions, employers, and interns should jointly ensure that there is a strong learning component
 - Regulatory framework setting clear standards should be put in place



Programmes and services (IV)

- **Entrepreneurship promotion**
 - Financial and advisory assistance for those starting up small businesses and taking advantage of microcredit programmes
 - **PES + universities**, also to promote entrepreneurial thinking among youth
 - Possible incentives: financial and tax relief, fiscal incentives for business transfers, incentives for micro-companies to hire young people
 - Impact: training in self-employment has a positive impact on the sustainability of businesses. BUT rigorous evaluations are still scarce in AMCs (ex. Morocco)
- **Employer incentives**
 - Subsidizing wages and reducing the social security contributions required from employers when they hire young workers
 - Can have a positive effect in the short term, but that their net impact on the future employment prospects of participants can be poor
 - Specific targeting is needed



Evidence of impact

- Data on the effectiveness of transition measures are scarce. Few examples:
- Tunisia: placement rates of the *Stage d'Initiation à la Vie Professionnelle*: 23% in 2010
- Tunisia: Amal programme as revenue support rather than support to enter LM (with training)
- Algeria: wage subsidies benefit companies rather than young unemployed people (virtually free workforce, replacement effect).
- Algeria: apprenticeship training found to achieve higher employment insertion rates (60%) than school-based VET (national source)
- Morocco: concerns about quantitative/qualitative impact of Government programmes (Idmaj, Taehil, and Moukalawati)



Recommendations (I)

Improve the level of workforce education and qualifications

Increase enrolment in, and the quality of, post-compulsory education
(especially for females).

Enhance and diversify high-quality VET programmes to provide valid alternatives to general education programmes, in cooperation with **enterprises and youth organizations**



Recommendations (II)

Improve the content of **government** programmes aimed at easing the transition from school to work (and evaluate their impact)

Strengthen **PES** for a more efficient service delivery (capacity and monitoring development)

Set up appropriate career guidance systems, also involving **youth and student organizations** and for all levels and types of education

Improve the targeting of transition programmes : NEETs and women, also including **civil society organisations** and including them more explicitly and in advance into the planning and implementation of measures.

Implement **gender-sensitive measures** (infrastructures, training, regulatory frameworks, etc.)

Recommendations (II cont')

Ensure that all youth can obtain a first work experience placement when leaving school.

Support entrepreneurship and self-employment support programmes (targeting in particular highly skilled young people for wider spillover effect, with inputs from **enterprises** and support of **Universities, VET centres, and PES**)

Encourage local employment initiatives: use a bottom-up approach and mobilize **local social and economic stakeholders**

Establish a reliable monitoring and evaluation system (data collection methods to allow schools to use this information to reshape their educational offer)



Recommendations (III)

Improve the framework for transition support, equipping youth with skills that better match the needs of the labour market

Strengthen the cooperation between education and business through a participatory approach (with **enterprises** participating more actively in the design of education programmes, in support of the **Government**).

Strengthen transition analysis and set up labour market information systems (need to improve the information infrastructure that combines demand and supply side of LM and to develop foresight methodologies for anticipation of skills needs)



Roles and responsibilities

What

Governance of transition measures is fundamental to:

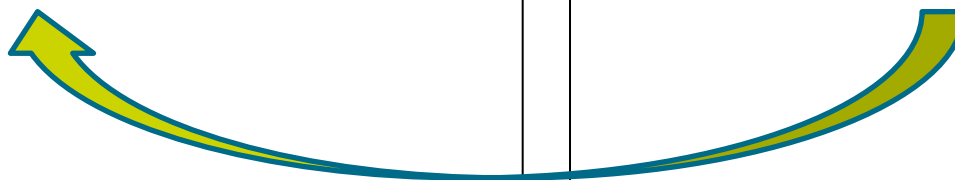
- Properly analyze the needs of each country (different topics, different stakeholders, etc.)
- Plan and adopt policy measures
- Monitor if actions taken work
- Possibly re-shape policy measures according to needs

Who

Changing nature of social relationships:

- Role of the State
- Role of different stakeholder (PES, youth organizations, enterprises, etc.)

Broader partnership is needed to:



Thanks!

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