



# MYSEA PROJECT REPORT

## **SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED YOUTH SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AGENDA FOR LEBANON**

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# ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

<b>CSR</b>	Corporate Social Responsibility
<b>DE</b>	Digital Education
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>INGOs</b>	International Non-Governmental Organizations
<b>KPIs</b>	Key Performance Indicators
<b>LSE</b>	Life Skills Education
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>MEHE</b>	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
<b>MYSEA</b>	Mediterranean Youth, NEETs, and Women advancing Skills, Employment and Awareness in the Blue and Green Economy
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organizations
<b>PYSDA</b>	Proposed Youth Skills Development Agenda
<b>SSCs</b>	Sector Skills Councils
<b>SWOT</b>	Analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
<b>TVET</b>	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals

# INTRODUCTION

This Proposed Youth Skills Development Agenda (PYSDA) presents the skills development agenda, supported by experts. The agenda will be shared with TVET institutions, as well as other relevant education and training institutions, private organizations, and non-profit actors. The Project Partner will actively promote the adoption of the skills development agenda and facilitate agreements to enhance employability and address the experience and skills gaps in the agrifood and waste management sectors.

The proposed agenda is based on the findings from 268 questionnaires completed by young people, 104 questionnaires completed by individuals involved in the economy, 21 questionnaires completed by TVET institutions, 25 interviews conducted with stakeholders in agrifood and waste management, and 28 interviews conducted with TVET employees and managers. These results were supplemented by input from the participants in the training programs, as well as by experts in the fields of energy, agriculture, agribusiness, waste, digital technology, and entrepreneurship. The term "youth" in this context refers to both individuals aged 15–24, and those aged 25–29 and encompasses all genders.

The proposed agenda aims to create decent work for young people. This agenda is divided into three main pillars:

## **PILLAR 1: SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

- Implementing a national program for training and education excellence
- Collaborating with industries, stakeholders, and businesses to establish a market-oriented education initiative
- Enhancing capacity development programs

## **PILLAR 2: EMPLOYMENT PROMOTION**

- Providing access to market programs
- Establishing programs to ensure access to sufficient capital
- Implementing business development services
- Strengthening labor market analysis programs

## **PILLAR 3: MATCHING**

- Enhancing employment services programs
- Strengthening internship programs
- Global talent network program

# PILLAR 1: SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Pillar 1 focuses on enhancing Lebanon's production potential by emphasizing market-relevant skills through formal Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and business-focused training. The National Training and Education Excellence Program under this pillar aims to recognize and reward high-performing TVET institutions, promoting a performance-based management framework. Strategies include launching performance-based management, improving students' understanding of TVET benefits, and implementing a market-led education initiative involving private sector participation.

## **NATIONAL TRAINING & EDUCATION EXCELLENCE PROGRAM**

Institutions are urged to enhance education quality, with Excellence awards recognizing top TVET programs. The objective is to employ a performance-based management framework, allocating resources to boost high-performing TVET courses and institutions. The initiative aims to disseminate best practices and address the lack of incentives and performance information hindering TVET's employment potential.

## **STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS & ACTIVITIES**

- Launch a performance-based management system for TVET, incorporating an Excellence Award for outstanding institutions based on employability outcomes.
- Define performance metrics and decision-making framework, aligning Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) with public stakeholders and prioritizing students' employment outcomes. Metrics include graduates' employment rate, pre and post-graduation salaries, and student satisfaction.
- Collect data from TVET institutions with existing capacity for data collection. Utilize lessons learned from data collection for decision-making, assessing scalability, addressing challenges, and ranking institutions based on education quality.

- Introduce an Excellence Award for TVET institutions, rewarding high performers and implementing mechanisms to address challenges and share best practices.

## **IMPROVE STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF THE COSTS & BENEFITS OF SPECIFIC TVET**

- Conduct large-scale information campaigns to highlight the value of TVET, dispelling negative perceptions. Use diverse communication channels to educate students on the returns of various educational choices. Adapt campaigns to local contexts for maximum impact.

## **MARKET-LED EDUCATION INITIATIVE**

Private sector relevance and workforce readiness take precedence in formal education to equip individuals with market-relevant skills. Active involvement of the private sector in skills development, particularly in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), is essential.

## **INCREASE RELEVANCE OF TVET TRAINING TO LABOR MARKET NEEDS:**

### *IMPROVING GOVERNANCE OF TVET SYSTEM*

- Enhance private sector participation in TVET governance by involving practitioners and representatives from innovation institutes.
- Establish Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) with sector stakeholders, professors, and industry experts to guide skills development in TVET institutions.
- Prioritize digital education (DE) as the foundation of TVET for cost-effectiveness, constant updates, and personalized learning experiences.
- Promote dual learning to expose TVET students to the professional world through internships and practical in-company training. Strengthen vocational teacher training through practical in-company training and collaboration with businesses for course development.
- Enhance business and innovation centers at TVET institutions to support entrepreneurial endeavors of graduates. Establish joint training centers with

- private sector employers to act as incubators for student projects.
- Increase private sector involvement in curriculum design through joint ventures and tailored courses.
- Introduce TVET education as an option at the school level and promote ICT programs.

#### *INCREASE PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT IN CURRICULUM DESIGN PROCESS*

- Engage Sector Skills Councils and key companies at critical stages for effective consultations.
- Implement recommendations from sector skills audits.

#### *STRENGTHENING VALUE CHAINS & ADDRESSING MARKET CONSTRAINTS*

- Support high-growth value chains and identify constraints to decent work creation.
- Interventions may include creating export channels, strengthening business associations, and providing training and support services.
- Modernize small-scale agriculture and collaborate with downstream activities (agribusiness) to enhance employment quality.
- Aim for systemic change and improved job creation, acknowledging that results may not be immediate and interventions should be tested before expanding.

#### **CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

Addressing skills gaps in priority areas within targeted companies is the aim of the Capacity Development Programme, driven by the need to enhance public sector capabilities and improve institutional performance to overcome skills shortages hindering national growth.

#### **STRENGTHEN PRIVATE SECTOR CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT**

- Invite the private sector to contribute to human development through various funding schemes for skills development interventions.

#### **ATTRACT STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS**

- Develop a mechanism for accommodating specialized industries and companies through rapid response training.
- Provide rapid response training to large and specialized companies to meet future skills needs.
- Expand interventions to other sectors such as digital, ICT, plastic, agribusiness, waste management, energy, and similar sectors.

#### **STRENGTHEN PUBLIC SECTOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT:**

##### *REVIEW & ESTABLISH A CO-FINANCING MODEL*

- Introduce a co-financing element for individuals interested in pursuing training in identified skills gaps.
- Enhance continuous professional development for public servants, fostering ownership, dedication, and contributing to performance evaluations and promotional growth.
- Seek partnerships with skill development institutions to offer subsidized and flexible diplomas for civil servants to acquire essential skills while remaining in their current positions.

##### *UPGRADE DATABASE FOR MONITORING & EVALUATION*

- Enhance existing databases or establish a new one to record all trainings for civil servants and private sector practitioners.
- Track beneficiaries and evaluate institutional management performance.
- Verify the improvement of trained civil servants' performance through individual annual performance reviews.

##### *ATTRACT RENOWNED PROFESSIONAL TRAINING PROVIDERS*

- Proactively engage with diverse overseas training providers to address insufficient training opportunities in local institutions.
- Minimize expenses associated with sending government employees overseas for training.
- Explore the potential of utilizing civil servants with foreign training to train other public sector staff.
- Establish a framework to facilitate the transfer of skills.

#### **RISKS AND MITIGATIONS**

##### **ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RESULTS**

###### **Risk:**

Ensuring accountability for outcomes in a national, multi-institutional strategy may be challenging due to external factors or unforeseen events.

###### **Mitigation:**

Implement a robust Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) process, assessing approaches, identifying areas for improvement, and addressing systemic issues hindering accountability within institutions.

### COORDINATION AMONG INSTITUTIONS

**Risk:**

Collaboration among multiple institutions may lead to misalignment over time.

**Mitigation:**

Establish a strong governance mechanism with a designated lead institution overseeing each program, incorporating a cross-institutional technical team and potentially creating an implementation delivery unit for daily challenges and progress tracking.

### PROMOTING EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY

**Risk:**

Funding incentives for successful institutions may widen the gap for less successful ones.

**Mitigation:**

Consider the 'value added' by institutions, accounting for economic opportunities and student quality. Introduce an 'Excellence Award' providing additional funding to high-performing institutions, and use a pilot to assess the practical manifestation of this risk.

### ACCESS TO DATA

**Risk:**

Lack of skills and employment data can impact proposed interventions.

**Mitigation:**

Make strategic investments, leveraging reliable data in each program, and validating ideas through targeted investments. For instance, the "Evidence-based Workforce Planning and Matching Program" will collect and explore new data.

### LACK OF ENGAGEMENT/ATTENDANCE FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR

**Risk:**

The Market-Led Education Initiative requires commitment from the private sector, which may decline over time.

**Mitigation:**

Align with existing programs, involve well-attended bodies like Chambers of Commerce, empower Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) with influence, ensure focused and accountable meetings, and provide support from the Delivery Unit.

### LACK OF DONOR INTEREST

**Risk:**

Limited public sector funding necessitates private and social sector investment, and there may be a lack of donor interest.

**Mitigation:**

Invest in attracting donor interest and support by establishing a dedicated unit to source and coordinate donor involvement, thereby increasing overall support for skills development.



# PILLAR 2:

# EMPLOYMENT

# PROMOTION

## MARKET ACCESS PROGRAM

### OBJECTIVE

Facilitate businesses' access to domestic and international markets.

### STRATEGIES

- Support medium and large enterprises in international expansion through technical support and access to marketing platforms, including e-commerce.
- Promote cooperatives and collaboration among SMEs to enhance production scalability.
- Develop value chains by incentivizing procurement from SMEs and providing access to marketing platforms, including e-commerce.

## ADEQUATE CAPITAL PROGRAM

### OBJECTIVE

Provide entrepreneurs with suitable financing to foster business growth and job creation.

### STRATEGIES

- Facilitate access to relevant financial products for micro, small, and medium enterprises.
- Offer tailored financial products, including working capital lending, patient start-up capital, affordable interest rates, and quasi-equity.
- Support micro leasing for SMEs and cooperatives to enhance competitiveness by acquiring modern equipment.
- Extend access to capital for start-ups graduated from incubation centers through workshops, assistance channels, and business advisory services.

## PROGRAM FOR HIGH-QUALITY BUSINESS ADVISORY SERVICES

### OBJECTIVE

Develop business capabilities within private sector enterprises to promote growth and job creation.

### STRATEGIES

- Establish a performance-based framework for engaging professional business development service providers, ensuring collaboration between government, private sector, and NGOs.
- Provide product development support to micro and small businesses.
- Promote mentorship from successful entrepreneurs and business leaders, potentially via angel investing.
- Reinforce start-up incubators, connecting them with leading institutions nurturing innovation.
- Facilitate access to premises by allowing start-ups to operate in underutilized buildings.

## LABOUR MARKET ANALYSIS PROGRAM

### OBJECTIVE

Strengthen labor market analysis to inform policies and regulations.

### STRATEGIES

- Establish a specialist research unit informing decision-making entities about policy impacts on employment.
- Analyze the job impact of major policy changes, provide policy recommendations, and assess the employment effects of investments and bilateral projects.
- Build staff capacity for advanced labor market analyses to contribute valuable insights for policy formulation and negotiation processes.

## RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

### LACK OF SUITABLE SERVICE PROVIDERS

#### Risk:

Initiatives relying on external service providers face a risk if their capacity is insufficient.

#### Mitigation:

- Utilize existing relationships and increase private provider support.
- Incentivize new private sector entrants to invest more through relationship building.
- The delivery unit can identify and address specific capacity gaps where necessary.

### BUSINESSES WITH A DONOR MENTALITY

#### Risk:

Providing lower-cost or free services may distort the market for paid services and reduce the value placed on support by businesses.

#### Mitigation:

- Implement cost-sharing mechanisms to ensure businesses contribute to the cost of assistance received.
- Shift emphasis towards sustainable models, tailoring products to specific business needs and sectors rather than just providing low-cost finance.

### HIGH TURNOVER OF SUPPORTED BUSINESSES

#### Risk:

SMEs have a high failure rate, and tracking results can be challenging, especially if the same entrepreneur is supported multiple times for different businesses.

#### Mitigation:

- Strengthen Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) capability to maintain central records of every supported business and entrepreneur.
- Enable tracking of immediate results and the impact of multiple programs.
- Introduce interventions like specialized business advisory services and tailor-made products to address SME bottlenecks.

### LACK OF DATA ON JOBS FOR LABOUR MARKET ANALYSIS

#### Risk:

Limited data on job creation impact hinders effective labor market analysis.

#### Mitigation:

- Highlight data gaps and ensure caveats on the insights provided.
- Invest in capabilities to bring job creation to the forefront and improve job impact analysis over time.
- Leverage results from prior analyses to enhance the understanding of the impact of policies on job creation.

# PILLAR 3: MATCHING

The proposed initiative emphasizes the importance of active, evidence-based workforce planning and skill matching to address labor market challenges. It advocates for a data-driven approach, international talent networks, and increased accessibility to international employment prospects. The key components include:

## EVIDENCE-BASED WORKFORCE PLANNING & ANALYSIS

- Enhance existing labor market information systems by integrating talent databases and creating a centralized platform for employers and job seekers.
- Conduct a labor market demand analysis, develop a dashboard for employment and skill development, and inform national skill development agendas.

## IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT SERVICES & CAREER GUIDANCE

- Strengthen public employment services and career guidance, integrating matching with work readiness training.
- Build strategic partnerships with private matching providers, initiating a performance-based funding scheme for successful job-seeker placements.

## GRADUATE LABOR MARKET TRANSITION PROGRAM

- Revise internship programs with a focus on employability and skills development.
- Create and institutionalize a young professional program across government institutions.

## WORLDWIDE TALENT & OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM

- Attract external and Lebanese diaspora talent for skills transfer.
- Develop a joint database of Lebanese diaspora talents and provide support through information and career services.
- Offer scholarships for rare and critical skills, improving access to regional and global opportunities.

- Negotiate bilateral agreements with high-income countries to create employment opportunities for Lebanese talent.

## RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

### Risk:

Little reliable data for LMIS.

### Planned Mitigation:

Stage-gate insight delivery.

- Initial investments will be made to transform the LMIS into a usable asset, complementing other programs within the strategy to demonstrate effectiveness.
- Design the LMIS to be modular, allowing the incorporation of new datasets and layers (e.g., geolocation) for continuous improvement.

### Risk:

The database is not user-friendly for employers.

### Planned Mitigation:

Collaboration with employers should begin early.

- Involve employers in the design phase of the evidence-based workforce planning and matching program.
- Tailor the program closely to employer needs, ensuring that it provides value and is user-friendly.
- Consider implementing the program in collaboration with the private sector through public-private partnership programs.

### Risk:

Graduate labor-market transition programs linked to private-sector delivery requirements.

### Planned Mitigation:

Collaboration with employers should begin early

- Foster a mindset shifts by assisting major employers in developing their internship programs.
- Shift the focus from internships as a social responsibility to a critical tool for employers to attract and identify talent.
- Establish a collaborative approach where employers actively participate in the design and implementation of graduate labor-market transition programs.

# ANNEX 1: SAMPLE SKILLS NEEDED IN VARIOUS PRODUCTIVE SECTORS<sup>1</sup>

## GENERAL COMPETENCIES NEEDED

- International and digital marketing
- Food engineering processing and safety
- Financial management
- Quality control
- Innovation and new product development especially in the in the agrifood sector
- Science and technology
- Creativity and entrepreneurship
- Marketing
- Business administration
- Life skills, soft skills, and cultural dialogue skills
- Oral and written communication abilities
- New technologies
- Conducting and maintaining quality control
- Techniques of cost control
- Operation and management skills
- Digital skills
- Cognitive skills (such as critical thinking and problem-solving)
- Socio-emotional skills (such as self-esteem, adaptability, creativity, perseverance, and empathy).
- Ethics

## SECTOR-BASED TRAINING

### AGRICULTURE & AGRIBUSINESS

- Food lab
- Food safety
- Innovation
- Logistics
- Manufacturing
- Bio-farming (e.g., Hydroponics, Aquaponics)
- Beekeeping
- Fish farming

## WASTE MANAGEMENT

- Composting
- Recycling
- Sorting
- Management and recycling of agriculture and food waste
- Reusing
- Upscaling

## PLASTIC SECTOR

The latest survey<sup>2</sup> by the ILO in the plastic sector showed that competencies are needed in the following skills:

- Advanced IT and or software skills
- Maintenance of machinery
- Operating machinery
- Technical skills related to specific equipment or processes used in the industry.
- Efficient use of materials, tools, and equipment
- Ethics
- Punctuality
- Marketing and e-commerce
- Team work
- Green & environmental sustainability skills

## IT SECTOR

A new survey<sup>3</sup> in the IT sector revealed the need for the following skills:

- Software developers
- Digital marketing skills
- Social media skills
- UI/UX design
- Adobe programs skills

## SOLAR SYSTEM SECTOR

In an assessment<sup>4</sup> conducted in 2022 in the sector, indicated the need for the following skills:

- CIOM- Construct, install, operate, and maintain
- Safety measures training
- Solar PV installation according to international standards for homes, businesses, institutions, etc.
- Analysis and optimization performance
- Knowledge of policies and regulations

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<sup>1</sup>Most of the required skills were derived from the MYSEA surveys and interviews conducted in 2021.

<sup>2</sup>ILO. 2023. Skills Anticipation Survey: Plastics Sector Report.  
[https://www.ilo.org/beirut/publications/WCMS\\_867054/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/beirut/publications/WCMS_867054/lang--en/index.htm).

<sup>3</sup>Habibian, S. et al. 2023. Lebanon: Survey Reveals Gaps Between Education and The Job Market. Blogs World Bank.  
<https://blogs.worldbank.org/arabvoices/lebanon-survey-reveals-gaps-between-education-and-job-market>.

<sup>4</sup>USAID. 2022. Market Assessment Solar Energy Sector in Lebanon.  
[https://csplebanon.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Lebanon\\_CSP\\_Market\\_Assessment\\_Solar\\_Energy\\_Sector\\_APR\\_2022.pdf](https://csplebanon.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Lebanon_CSP_Market_Assessment_Solar_Energy_Sector_APR_2022.pdf).

# ANNEX 2:

# SWOT ANALYSIS

# RELATED TO YOUTH

# SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

# AGENDA

## STRENGTHS

What are the greatest strengths of the existing Youth Skills Development Agenda (YSDA) that now exists in Lebanon?

- Lebanon has a significant untapped youth population.
- Private sector institutions are interested in recruiting youth to benefit from their innovation and fulfill their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).
- ICT is an important tool for mobile learning.
- Many youth skill development programs are being implemented in Lebanon, but there is little coordination among them.
- INGOs and countries' international development agencies have a strong interest in youth development.
- Financial and market institutions are interested in investing in YSDA.

## WEAKNESSES

What are the greatest weaknesses of the existing youth development system that now exists in Lebanon?

- Failing to consider the sector as a whole and suggesting fragmented solutions.
- Bureaucracy, lack of motivation, lack of accountability.
- Inadequate data on the youth.
- Outdated curricula especially in the TVET educational institutions especially those of the public sector.
- Lack of current knowledge among the teaching staff.
- Limited documentation of programs, outcomes and impact.
- Poor coordination among providers local and international.
- Corporate social responsibility not being fully utilized.
- Training courses not market focused. and are more theoretical than practical.
- Youth do not get support to establish their own business.
- Youth lack soft and transversal skills.
- Insufficient funding and limitations on budget allocation.
- Resistance to change by the administration and teaching staff.

## OPPORTUNITIES

As you reflect on the existing youth skills development agenda in Lebanon, what do you see as the greatest opportunities for advancement of the agenda?

- The presence and willingness of international institutions and programs to support the sector's upgrading and growth.
- Engage the private sector.
- Opportunities for public-private partnerships.
- Leverage and collaborate with the foreign aid programs of countries, NGOs and non-governmental organizations interested in helping the country's youth.
- Build on existing, actionable programs.
- Providing administrators and teachers with the option of early retirement, accompanied by severance pay or a "voluntary separation option," to facilitate the recruitment of more qualified and current personnel.
- Introduce digital education (e.g., Virtual Reality).

## THREATS

As you reflect on the existing youth skills development system in Lebanon, what do you see as the greatest threats to the advancement of the agenda?

- Unfavorable political climate.
- Idleness breeds crime, drugs, and participation in gangs or armed groups.
- There is too much misinformation and misconception related to TVET education.
- Given the current cost of education, many young people may not be able to pursue higher education.
- The existence of training institutions that are below-standard.
- Lack of a board apprenticeship training approval program that examines TVET graduates and grants them licenses to practice their trade.
- No clear economic and employment strategies are implemented by the Lebanese government.
- Interruption of utility services (e.g., electricity, Internet, etc.).
- Absence of standardize policies and their related regulatory measures in all sectors of the economy.
- Destabilized exchange rate.
- Outdated value chains that fail to promote equity or enhance opportunities.
- Insecurity, instability, and conflict.



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