

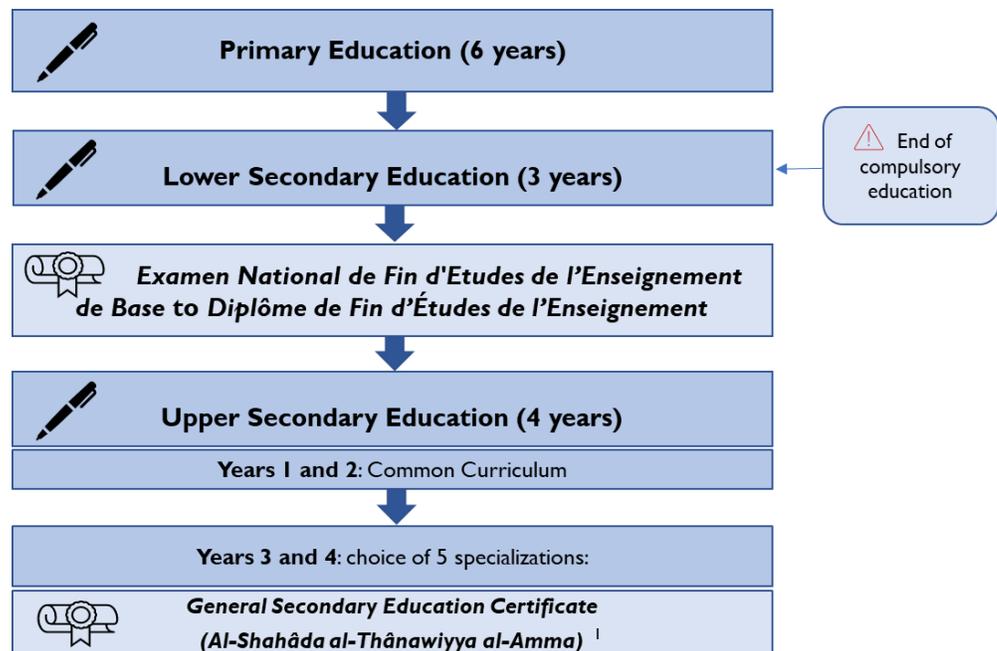


TUNISIA

This brief is part of a larger study investigating interventions that support lower and upper secondary school aged youths' transition through school to higher education (HE), to technical and vocational training (TVET), and/or to prepare youth (including out of school youth of secondary school age) to pursue career and livelihood pathways in 11 selected countries across the MENA region. This research does not examine the quality of education, but rather, the knowledge and skills needed to make successful transitions. Therefore, this study focuses on support that wraps around general and technical education curricula.

PROGRESSION AND DECISION-MAKING POINTS

GENERAL EDUCATION



TECHNICAL EDUCATION. After completing the first six years of basic education, students can choose to continue vocational training in a two-year *Programme de Compétence* or a two-year *Étape préparatoire, enseignement technique*. After completing either of these programs, or by continuing through the three years of general lower secondary education, students can opt into a vocational training program at the upper secondary level. Secondary vocational training (of two-years) results in a *Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle (CAP)*.² On receipt of the CAP, students can continue into a pro-

fessional technical program, of two-years, leading to *Brevet de Technicien Professionnel*. Students who pass the professional technician certificate are eligible for 2-year higher technical programs, *Brevet de Technicien Supérieur*.³

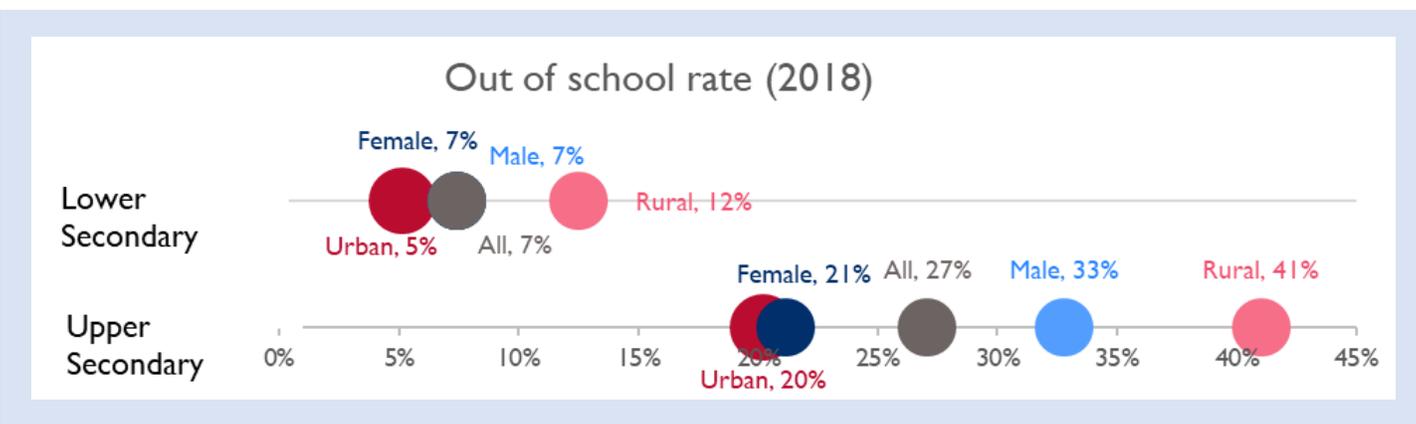
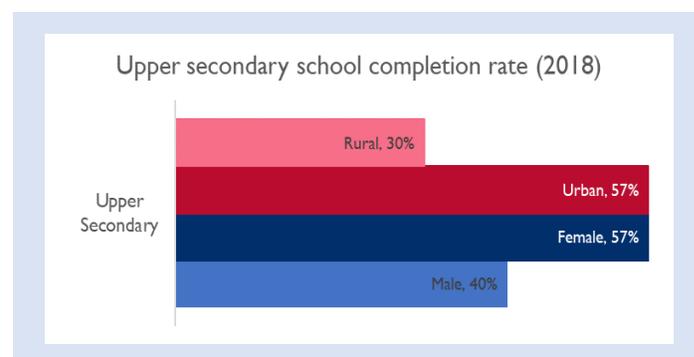
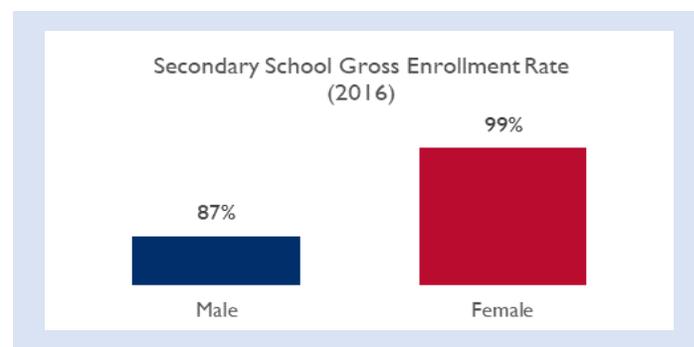
CAREER COUNSELING. Career counseling in schools was established in 1993 to provide information and guidance to upper secondary school (*lycée*) students to support transition to university. Career practitioners, called “school and university counselors,” are supported by teachers who are

allocated extra paid time for providing careers guidance. In 2015, there were only 112 active guidance counselors and 41 of these had managerial and administrative duties only, no contact with parents or students, and **the remaining 71 provided collective guidance to 424,051 students.** It is a legal requirement for school and university counselors working in *lycées* to have specialist training at postgraduate level. The University of Tunis offers a master's degree program in this field. In 2007 – 2009, the Ministry of Education, with support from World Bank, embarked on a project to set up a *Resource Center for Information and Guidance*, but this was discontinued when World Bank funding ended.⁴

To increase participation rates, the Ministry for Vocational Training and Employment (MVTE), in 2012, appointed career guidance counselors to vocational training centers run by the Tunisian Agency for Vocational Training (ATFP). Counselors' responsibilities involved marketing ATFP programs and raising the profile of TVET, in addition to supporting students in completing their training. MVTE, through the National Agency for Employment and Independent Work (ANETI), also provides career guidance for unemployed and employed adults. The main goal of staff who work in 112 offices spread throughout the country is to assist jobseekers in finding employment or to open their own business. As there is no legal requirement to provide career guidance at university level, they also manage labor market insertion programs for graduates. Although *lycées*, ATFP, and ANETI all employ career guidance counselors, there is no national association of career guidance practitioners. In 2014 – 2015, EuropeAid supported a national review of career guidance with the aim to help develop national strategy across ministries using Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) review benchmarks for policies and systems for career guidance. Results showed that

little or no career guidance was provided to most Tunisians.⁵

KEY STATISTICS. In terms of secondary school enrollment, the gross enrollment rate in Tunisia is over 10 percent higher for females than males; however, it is important to remember that gross enrollment measures total enrollment (regardless of age) as a percentage of the secondary-school age population. This means that a rate of close to 100 percent could indicate that there are many students who are older than secondary school age enrolled in the program. The out-of-school rate in Tunisia is 27 percent for upper secondary students, yet it is 41 percent for those living in rural areas, showing that location can be a driver of inequality.⁷ The upper secondary completion rates show a similar trend where 57 percent of females and those living in urban areas complete upper secondary school, compared to a rate of only 40 percent for males and 30 percent for those living in rural

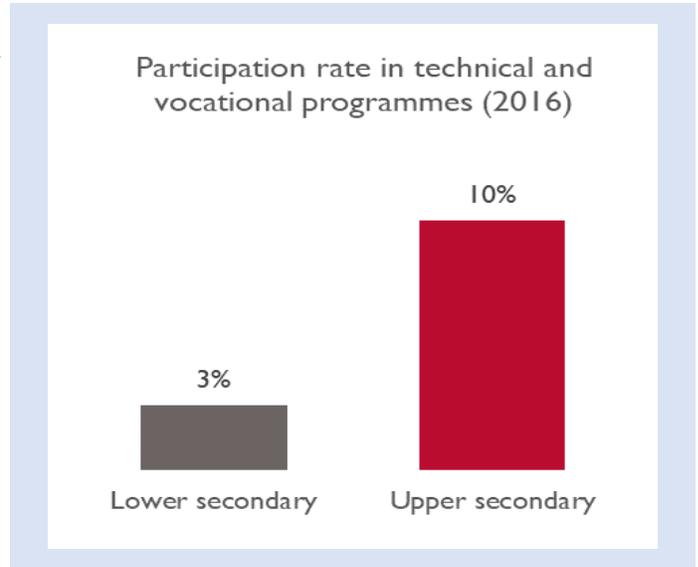


TVET STATISTICS. The TVET system is of relatively small size within the secondary education sector with only 9.7 percent of total students in upper secondary education in the TVET sector and 3 percent of those in lower secondary.⁹ Within TVET, there is a dual TVET system that combines classroom theory and practical training managed by Tunisian Agency for Vocational Training. Students spend one day a week in the training center, remaining days at the workplace. Training centers collaborate with firms to organize internships and apprenticeships, e.g., Sartex (garment company) offers CAP certificate with specific skills applicable to the firm or sector.¹⁰

One promising practice is student logbooks, which are issued by TVET centers to monitor progress of interns. Logbooks outline tasks to be accomplished and skills acquired with students delivering presentations to their TVET center.¹¹ Since 1993 the government has operated ANETI employment programs, which offer training with a focus on entrepreneurship as well as job matching. TVET students use ANETI services to register and access job vacancies.¹² Despite these efforts, TVET education is perceived as low status of compared with mainstream academic education, a perception that is reflected in instances of poor quality and out-of-date equipment in TVET institutions together with a limited budget that also contributes to the overall unpopularity of TVET education. This is compounded by the fact that trainers have not been trained in new technologies and many have little or no work experience. In addition to this, the graduation rates from TVET are particularly low, with less than 50 percent of students enrolled in courses in 2014 and 2016 graduating.¹³ At least one intervention, supported by German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ), was working to reduce TVET drop out.

This in part may be due to the mismatch between training delivered and the needs of the labor market because there is limited evidence of TVET/Employer linkage systems in Tunisia.¹⁴ In 2012, the government began developing a TVET reform strategy, focusing on the role of private and public sector in customizing TVET to the needs of the labor market. It aimed to improve the perception of TVET, highlighting the opportunities for women and youth. It was also intended to address the skills gap existing between TVET training and labor market requirements.

Numerous **systems-wide factors impact youth transitions and the interventions designed to support youth through this period.** Notable strengths and weaknesses related to the general and technical education systems include:





Strengths and Weaknesses of General and Technical Education Systems

Strengths



Career guidance, at the policy level, is part of the upper secondary education cycle.



USAID programs supporting career center development at tertiary level could be cascaded down to encompass all levels of education.¹⁵



There are promising sectors for TVET collaboration. For example: tourism and hospitality, renewable energy, and Information Technology.



Tunisia's legal and social system supports women's rights (political, social, education and livelihood) with long history of women's education and empowerment.

Weaknesses



Although some career guidance is available, career choice is largely determined by grades on key exams.



Significant discrepancies exist between the coastal governorates and the interior governorates in terms of access to education, quality of schooling, and career guidance.



Youth have a strong desire to immigrate, especially to France and Europe.

The macro-environment frames the lived experiences and decision making of secondary age youth, including the political and economic context, conflict/crisis, demographics, environmental constraints, etc. A selection of key factors include:



Opportunities and Threats of the Macro-Environment

Opportunities



USAID supports entrepreneurship training for those with clear business ideas. There could be training options for younger youth not quite ready for this stage of support.¹⁶



The strong civil society could contribute to providing career services through Civil Society Organizations partners, which would reduce the demand for government provided career guidance.



Technology could be leveraged to transform the active youth population's energy into support for youth to pursue career pathways.

Threats



Current challenging political transition and dysfunctional parliament delay needed education reforms.



Rampant corruption reduces public trust. Youth believe "wasta" (i.e., nepotism or "who you know") is key to landing a job.



Disconnect between Arabic as the language of instruction in public schools and French as the common language of business creates a divide between those privileged to pay for a French education, which links to unequal access to private sector opportunities.



Tunisia's ranking in gender equality dropped between 2006 – 2020, currently ranked 126 of 156 countries,¹⁷ indicating a need to review and bolster support for women in education and society.¹⁸

Interventions targeting the secondary school age group in Tunisia focus on:

PARTICIPATION IN GENERAL EDUCATION & TVET. Programs offer citizenship curriculum for primary and secondary education to reduce dropout and improve enrollment and participation. They support TVET centers to help youth acquire necessary skills for employment, allow youth to register their profile and access job vacancies, and offer training and employment, mainly in tourism and hospitality, as well as the energy sector. Non-formal education programs offer extracurricular life and social skills.

DEVELOPMENT, JOBS & EMPLOYMENT. Programs prepare students and youth for the labor market through job placements targeting disadvantaged, low- to medium-skilled women and youth in rural areas, and individuals working in hazardous environments. Support is offered to training centers to collaborate with employers to offer internships and apprenticeships, which builds linkages with potential employers to provide training leading to employment.

SKILLS & TRAINING. Upskilling with a focus on developing soft skills, entrepreneurial culture, enhancing communication, facilitation, and teamwork are core program aims. Additionally, efforts to enhance civic participation, political involvement, and how to deal with grievances in vulnerable communities. Programs offer safe spaces for out-of-school youth to develop life skills, including leadership, time management, conflict resolution, digital skills, and some incorporate careers counseling.

The following tables provide a non-exhaustive **list of general education and TVET-focused interventions targeting secondary school aged youth in Tunisia.**

KEY GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION AND FOUNDATIONAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS

Injaz Tunisia Volunteer Adviser Scheme

- Recruits volunteers to act as role models for school-going youth.
- Focuses on developing of soft skills, an entrepreneurial culture, enhancing communication, facilitation, and team management skills.
- Targets vocational training center students, including university students, supporting skill development that matches job market needs.^{19,20}

Project to reform the educational system, UNESCO

- New curriculum was designed to include life skills, review formal programs and pedagogical methods, and introduce effective use of non-formal education styles and social learning.²¹

Youth Clubs Association

- Brings together young people and students who belong to 54 youth clubs from throughout the country.
- Aims to ensure good education and develop healthy and responsible citizens through the inclusion of extra-curricular activities in all schools and involves training members in a range of skills, including transferable soft skills.²²

USAID Ma3an (“Together” in Arabic)

- Aims to enhance youth civic participation and political life, and respond to youth grievances in Tunisian vulnerable communities.
- Provided safe (refurbished and equipped) spaces in 47 communities across Tunisia where programming focuses on equipping youth with the skills to respond and address their communities’ needs and grievances through positive youth development and act to prevent violent extremism.
- Worked with Tunisia’s Ministry of Education at the national level to create and roll out a new civic education curriculum.²³

KEY SECONDARY-LEVEL TVET AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS

GIZ and Thomas Cook improvement of skills in TVET sector

- Aims to reduce dropout rates, particularly at the apprenticeship phase of training, in two TVET centers offering training in tourism and hospitality.
- Includes training of trainers on the sustainable use of energy in the tourism sector and is working to improve the flexibility of training programs and increase innovation in the curriculum.²⁴

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