

## Summary of the Tunisia report on the E/T continuum

### Introduction

Over the last two years, Tunisia has launched successive reforms of its education, vocational training and higher education systems in order to upgrade training provision, improve training quality and widen access to education services for large numbers of children and young people. These reforms have helped increase the enrolment rate for 6 to 16 year-olds, to around 94% in 2015. However, it has not been possible to eliminate the phenomenon of youngsters dropping out of school. As many as 9.6% lower secondary school students did so in 2012, as did 11.2% of upper secondary school pupils (11.9% in 2014). The reforms have also increased training provision (100,000 places per year) although drop-out rates are still high (34% of students). The lack of pathways between the education, training and higher education systems are among the barriers preventing the internal effectiveness of the three sub-systems, and this is considered to be one of the reasons why students drop out.

### 1. Basic data on education levels in the Tunisian population

Changes in the net enrolment ratio for different age groups (%);

	2005/2006			2015/2016		
	boys	girls	Total	boys	Girls	Total
<b>Children aged 6</b>	98.9	99.0	<b>99.0</b>	99.5	99.5	<b>99.5</b>
<b>6 to 11 year-olds</b>	97.0	97.1	<b>97.1</b>	99.0	99.2	<b>99.1</b>
<b>6 to 16 year-olds</b>	89.8	90.8	<b>90.3</b>	93.1	95.7	<b>94.3</b>
<b>12 to 18 year-olds</b>	72.6	77.7	<b>75.1</b>	76.7	85.9	<b>81.2</b>

Completion rates in primary, preparatory and secondary education (%)

	2004/2005			2014/2015		
	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary
<b>Continued</b>	92.5	70.4	69.3	<b>98.93</b>	<b>76.1</b>	<b>69.4</b>
<b>Repeaters</b>	5.9	18.7	18.0	<b>0.03</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>17.8</b>
<b>Drop-outs</b>	1.7	10.9	12.7	<b>1.04</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>12.8</b>

The rate of transition to higher education fell from 69.2% in 2010 to 43% in 2015.

### 2. Basic data on technical and vocational training (TVET)

**The overall number of young people in vocational training:** 5.6% of young people aged 15 to 24 (98,000) were in vocational training in 2015. The number decreased

between 2011 to 2015 due to young people's lack of attraction to agricultural, construction and craft specialisations, the closure of courses in public training centres which were being reorganised, and mid-course abandonment.

**The number of young people trained in residential centres, on dual training courses, and via traditional or reformed apprenticeships:** of the 98,094 young people trained in 2015, 30,122 were trained in residential centres, 42,348 on dual training courses, 7,300 via reformed apprenticeships and 18,325 via traditional apprenticeships.

**Numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs):** there were 933,555 NEETs, accounting for 32.2% of the total. The rate for women in this category (42.2%) is higher than that for men (22.5%)

### 3. Non-enrolment at school and drop-out rates at different education levels

A significant number of young people are concerned: 7% of young people between the age of 5 and 14 do not attend school and 5.3% risk dropping out at primary and lower secondary school. The dropout rate is particularly important at upper secondary school, for which it rose from 9.6% in 2000 to 11.2% in 2012. Dropouts tend to come from families with limited income, rural areas and inner regions. They are mostly older and have a low level of education.

**The reasons youngsters drop out of education.** These include poor school governance (too centralised), poor provision (the lack of pre-schools and poor facilities in rural areas), poor teaching education and the lack of school life (lack of teacher training and the absence of any cultural and social support).

### 4. The reasons youngsters drop out of vocational training

Dropout rates are around 33% regardless of the level of training. They are higher for older, male youngsters who come from families with a low social level. Nearly 1 in 5 young people have never attended classes and nearly 1 in 5 young people leave during the first six months. The reasons include the fact that they have found a job (about 1 of 4 young people) or financial difficulties (about 1 in 2 young people). 32.3% of school dropouts immediately join the labour market and 14,4% return to training.

**Reasons why those enrolled abandon vocational education**

Training	Behaviour	Financial	Employment	Environment	Internship	Other
43.4	38.5	31.1	23.6	20.9	12.2	20.2

ONEQ 2011: Early leaving from vocational training in Tunisia (Reasons and career paths)

### 5. Schemes and strategies to reduce the lack of continuity between education and training and to establish a continuum between educational subsystems

**Current and future schemes to tackle non-enrolment and early leaving in the education system.** The five-year plan for the 2016-2020 period has made the fight against educational failure and abandonment a strategic objective of education reform. It aims to achieve the following results:

- Improved supervision of young people who risk dropping out;

- Effective schemes to help dropouts return to the education and training system;
- The revision of internal school regulations and disciplinary measures to promote a prevention strategy and treat the root causes of the problem.

**Current and future remedial measures to prevent early leaving in the vocational training system.** The national strategy to reform the vocational training system has been organised into projects over a five-year period (2016-2020). There are plans for a national training and integration programme for early leavers, the creation of a national centre for the reintegration of early leavers and the development of measures to promote:

- careers guidance;
- the attractiveness of the institutions;
- the development of new education and teaching approaches;
- the establishment of a system for training trainers in vocational training occupations.

**Measures to forge a proper continuum between training, education and higher education** include:

- the establishment of a National Human Resources Development Agency;
- changes to the pyramid of qualifications;
- the development of training capabilities in collaboration with regional education plans;
- the establishment of a system to accredit training bodies and establishments;
- the adoption of an effective mechanism to facilitate transition between the education, training and higher education sub-systems.

## **Conclusion**

Early school leaving and lack of continuity between education and training for young people are perceived as a factor hampering educational achievement. It fosters a return to illiteracy and reduces the ability of young people to gain the knowledge and skills they need in order to access the labour market. It also has a very high social and financial cost. This situation can be overcome by promoting complementarity between education and vocational training and by establishing pathways between educational sub-systems, including by developing skills development schemes and formal, non-formal or informal learning.