

TORINO PROCESS 2012

ARMENIA



Unedited version

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ARMENIA



Country profile

Capital: Yerevan
 Population (de jure¹): 3.268.500 (2011)
 GDP per capita in PPP: \$ 5,681,60 (2011)
 Trends in GDP: (- 14.1% in 2009; + 2.2% in 2010;
 + 4.7% in 2011)
 Activity rate(2011): 63%
 Employment rate (2011), age 15-75: 51.4%
 (Female 44.4%)
 Unemployment rate (2011), age 15-75: 18.4%
 Enrolment rates (2010) :
 - basic education (SCED 2) 91.6%
 - upper secondary (ISCED 3) 84.4%
 - tertiary education (ISCED 5 and 6): 28%
 - preliminary VET as a % of total enrolment in upper
 secondary (ISCED 3): 8.6%
 Public expenditure on education (2010):3,2% of
 GDP

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¹ The total of all usual residents in a country is generally referred to as the de jure population and the total of all persons present as the de facto population.

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List of Acronyms

ALMP	Active Labour Market Policies
ANQA	National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation
CVT	Continuous Vocational Training
DNC	National Development Centre
EDSP	Education Development State Programme
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign direct investments
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
LLL	Lifelong Learning
MoES	RA Ministry of Education and Science
MTEF	Mid Term Expenditure Framework
NCVETD	National Centre for VET Development
NSS	National Statistical Service
NTF	National Training Fund
OECD	Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development
PRSP-2	Strategy for Sustainable Development
RA	Republic of Armenia
RSC	Regional state College
SBA	Small Business Act
SDP	Sustainable development Programme
SESA	State Employment Service Agency
SNS	Strategy of National Security
SPSP	Sector Policy Support Programme
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
TACIS	Technical assistance to CIS
TPE	Total Public Expenditure
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USA	United States of America
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Executive summary

Since the last review carried out with the Torino Process in 2010,² the situation in the economy registered a modest growth after the global crisis. However, the economic structure is still dominated by low productivity. Most of the workforce in Armenia is employed in labour-intensive sectors of the economy where low skills are required. Beyond the considerable waves of migration from the country in the past, Armenia is currently confronted with demographic challenges which influence the education and training policies within its lifelong learning perspective. There are few indications that the vocational education system managed to come closer to the labour market needs but reforms continued in the country aiming at increasing relevance and quality of VET.

The general level of educational attainment of the population remains high. However, the unemployment or precarious employment figures are still high and even higher for university than for VET Graduates. The high level of youth unemployment reinforced the need for political attention towards VET as the tool to ensure a competitive and qualified workforce. The Education Development State Programme for the period 2011 - 2015, recognises education as national priority and the need for improving VET quality and labour market relevance. For the overall VET vision, policy efforts were focused on continuing reforms, although mainly driven by donors and on a pilot basis involving only 12% of the VET schools (in the newly registered Regional State Colleges). Progress has been made in the development and implementation of the new educational standards, the relevant curricula and modular programmes as well as in elaborating methodologies for their revision.

Training programmes for teachers and school directors have been developed and implemented in order to teach on the basis of new curricula and for the management of the regional colleges. Short-term training courses for adults are organised in those colleges. However, limited resources are available for investment in the infrastructure and provision of the rest of VET schools.

In 2012 the Government endorsed the “VET Reforms Programme and Action Plan 2012-2016” containing the strategy for extension of the reform to the rest of the system.

A slight rationalization of school network took place. Twenty state preliminary (craftsmanship) and middle vocational educational institutions have been reorganized, as a result of which the overall number of the state educational institutions has decreased by 11. Starting from the academic year 2012-2013, the number of free seats in educational institutions providing preliminary (craftsmanship) and middle vocational educational programs has been increased by 50%. A slight increase in enrolment for the preliminary and middle VET was registered. The teacher student ratio is continuously decreasing, both in preliminary and middle VET.

The image of VET system started to change, transforming the perception of a second chance education for less privileged people to a more European oriented model of education. Families are more interested in VET as they start to perceive it as a more attractive option.

Although reforms in VET are in various stages of development the governance and financial mechanisms remained highly centralised. Social dialogue is well defined in official documents and the participation of social partners in meetings, advisory boards is ensured. Some progress has been made in extending the participation of social partner’s representation (including that of the local employment office) in the Governing Boards of the Regional State Colleges and actions aiming at increasing their autonomy are in very early stage. The budget allocation to education relative to GDP remained almost constant. Expenditures for VET are less than 5% out of this budget.

Reforms in the VET system will continue in the county specific context with the revision, development and implementation of new and learning outcome based curricula, and further training of teachers and principals. An EU assessment of the VET reforms will take place in the year to come. It aims at identifying areas where the planned investments (of EU and Government) should concentrate in order to increase the impact of the VET provision.

² See Assessment of progress in VET in the previous country report, (Corradini, 2010)

The 3 challenges for the coming years are:

- 1) To mainstream the pilot reforms from the RSC to the other VET schools.
- 2) To strengthen involvement of social partners in the dialogue on VET priorities and their implementation. The development of the National Qualifications Framework offers an important opportunity for engaging social partners.
- 3) “Supplementary and Continuing Education Strategy and 2013-2017 Action Plan” has already been drafted and sent for reviewing by stakeholder agencies after which it will be submitted to the Government.

1. VISION FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET) SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

On 19th of July 2001, the Law “On Education Development State Programme 2011-2015” (EDSP), which underlines that: “The reforms accomplished in the course of more than 10 years made possible to solve many problems existing in the education system, to stabilise the situation and create preconditions for further development. Nevertheless, the education system was still far from the full-scale and comprehensive accomplishment of its mission, whereas new challenges have emerged, surmounting of which predetermines the future of education”.

The State Programme says: “Education is valued highly in Armenia as an essential instrument for sustainable development, for preserving and enhancing the reproduction of valuable human resources”.

The perspectives of education development in Armenia must be viewed in the context of country’s overall development and the framework of the following goals and objectives of the national security, i.e.: 1.Reinforcement of sovereignty and development of civil society; 2.Overcoming poverty and ensuring prosperity; 3.Ensuring sustainable economic development and competitiveness; 4.Preservation of national identity; 5.International and regional cooperation.

Armenia is a resource poor country and, as stated in the Strategy for Sustainable Development up to 2021 (known as PRSP-2). Human capital is the countries’ main asset. Education is considered “the key competitive advantage and the tool to promote” the image of a country with developed scientific and technological capacities.

The “VET Reform Programme and Action Plan for 2012-2016” (elaborated by the MoES and adopted by the Government in July 2012) underlines the main achievements of the reform and includes a plan for the implementation of necessary measures. It underlines the need for integration of the VET system into the European Professional Education Area and it stresses the importance to provide people with skills relevant for the labour market and for a modern society, through training courses. The Programme recognises that it is vital to create effective mechanisms for cooperation and dialogue between the educational institutions and the business.

2. EXTERNAL EFFICIENCY: ADDRESSING DEMOGRAPHIC, ECONOMIC AND LABOUR MARKET NEEDS

2.1. Demographic trends

In 2011, the population was 3.262.600³ persons, with a composition of 51.5% female and 48.5% male. Although since 2008 the annual population growth increased steadily (0.2%), projections until 2050 underline a slight decline to 3.018.000 persons⁴. In 2011, almost 40% of the population was below 25 years. Last five years trends in the age structure of the population show a slow process of reduction for the young age group of population and an accelerate expanding of adult/labour resources (25-64), on short and medium term⁵. The long term projections (2050) identify a change in the structure of population, with a shrink of working age group (25-64) by almost 8% and an increasing share of retired population of 8.5%. This will have an impact in the overall society in terms of dependency rates, workforce, available skills, social and health care services provision etc.

³ See Armenia Statistic Yearbook, 2011 <http://www.armstat.am/file/doc/99466623.pdf>

⁴ See Eurostat : European Neighbourhood Policy Countries –Demography, 2011, ec.europa.eu/eurostat

⁵ ETF calculation based on information from Armenia Statistic Yearbook, 2011

In 2011, the urban and rural shares of population were 64% and 36% respectively in a slight decreasing trend for urban and increasing for rural⁶.

2.2. Migration

Emigration is still an important process in the country although to lower shares in the recent years. This is reflected in the increasing figures of the working age population in the country.

The ETF study on “skills and migration”, completed in August 2012 (as part of a multi-country project with Armenia, Georgia and Morocco) carried out a survey in the whole country with a sample of 2600 potential migrants and 1,400 returning migrants. Some findings from the responses of potential migrants underlined that: 36% of them (aged 18-50) are seriously thinking about leaving the country to find a job. 58% of those willing to migrate are men. The three main reasons for migration were identified as unemployment, improvement of living standards and lack of career prospects. The propensity to migrate is higher for men and women with university education, confirming that brain drain is a crucial issue.

Main destination countries for potential migrants are Russia, USA and France. Findings from the returning migrants underline that 87% of them are males, returning from Russia with a large percentage of them working in construction, manufacturing and trade. Most of them have worked in jobs with low skills requirement and below their educational level. The risk of deskilling increases with the education level; 42% of returning migrants were able to find a job after their return whilst 68% are seriously thinking of migrating again. The findings in the study, point out that consistent policies need to be developed aiming at creating the conditions for legal migration, allowing advantages for both sending and receiving country.

In 2011, the EU and Armenia signed the “Mobility partnership” agreement aiming at promoting legal mobility. Among specific actions identified, the need to provide VET for potential migrants in order to promote their skills within a labour matching perspective⁷ should be mentioned. Moreover, a system facilitating the recognition of skills and qualifications has been identified as a top priority.

2.3. Economic development

In 2011, the economy of this middle income country has continued to recover after the significant contraction registered in 2009. The economic growth picked up gradually from 2.1% in 2010 to 4.6% in 2011. Industry, which was driven mainly by the mining sector and, to a lesser extent, agro-industry, contributed to more than half of the economic growth. Agriculture also contributed to 8.1% of the growth. Continuing contraction in the construction sector, however, partly offset these achievements⁸.

The main part of GDP has been generated by the service sector (sharing 44.5% in 2010) with the highest share of employment (44% in 2010). Industry contributed with a share of 36% to the GDP in 2010 and with lower levels of employment (17.4% in 2010). This indicates the highest productivity among all sectors. Agriculture still plays a significant role sharing one fifth of added value to GDP and almost 40% of employment, showing the lowest productivity among economic sectors⁹.

The SME sector continues to be priority for the Government for its important role to boost economic development. Actions to improve the business environment and credit facilitation to industrial enterprises based on their business plans were among the reform undertaken in 2010. According to the calculations of the National Development Centre (DNC)¹⁰ in 2010, SME

⁶ See Armenia Statistic Yearbook, 2011 <http://www.armstat.am/file/doc/99466623.pdf>

⁷ The skills [development](#) and recognition are proposed as aspects to be considered.

⁸ World Bank – Armenia Partnership, Country Program Snapshot, April 2012

⁹ World Bank (<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NV.AGR.TOTL.ZS> and National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia (2010), (ETF calculation)

¹⁰ The Centre manages the funds allocated by the State Budget to the development of SME; provides technical assistance, including business consulting and training, financial support through the provision of loan guarantees, equity financing, seed capital and partial subsidy of credit interest rates.

contribution in GDP was 43% (growing from 41.7% in 2008). In 2010, the SME sector employment as percentage of total employment slightly increased to 42.2%.¹¹

The Global Competitiveness Index ranks Armenia on 82 position out of 142 countries in 2012-2013 improving its place since last year.

Remittances increased by approx. 20% comparing to previous years and reached 12.1% of GDP in 2011 contributing to the improvement of the current account deficit by 2.6%. About 36% of all the households in the country (including over 70% of the households that had migrants abroad) received regular remittances for their living costs.

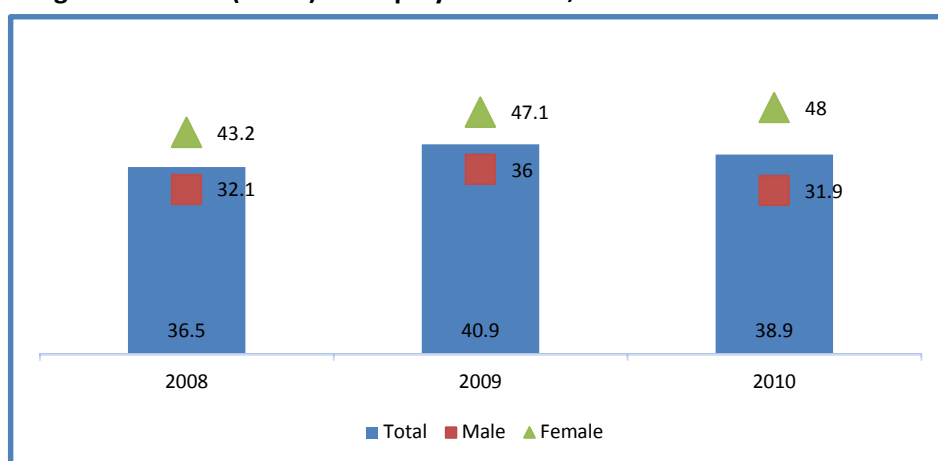
2.4. Labour market

The labour market is recovering slowly with a modest increase of activity rate (from 59.5% in 2008 to 61.2% in 2010) and employment rates (from 49.8% in 2008 to 49.6% in 2010). According to the Statistical Yearbook, in 2010 the share of public employment was 26.2 % (including community employment) and consequently 73.8% of employment in the private sector (including NGO's).

According to official data of the National Statistical Service, unemployment rate has been decreased over the recent years: it made 6.2% in 2011, while in 2009 and 2010 a 7% unemployment rate was registered in the country. Different indicators are observed, however, when comparing these data with the results of the ILO research, according to which unemployment rate remains high and is still increasing in the last years (from 16.6% in 2008 to 18.4% in 2011). There is a gender disparity concerning the employment indicators, with worse figures for women¹².

Youth (15-24) unemployment is the highest with shares more than double than the general unemployment rate (Figure 1). During the last three years the young males' unemployment rate decreased to 31.9% (in 2010) while for young females the rate increased reaching 48%. The data reveals that young people have difficulties in entering into the labour market. The situation is even more problematic for young females;

Figure 1. Youth (15-24) unemployment rate, %



Source: National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia

In 2011, the ETF carried out a study¹³ aiming at collecting qualitative information on the labour market from employers, employees and VET graduates. The research covered two regions and three sectors (tourism, construction, agriculture). Findings from the responses of VET graduates underline that: their employment depends not only on their skills but on the economic structure and job offer in the region (e.g. 59.1% of graduates were employed in Yerevan tourism sector and only 21.7% of them found a job in same sector in Tavush).

¹¹ World Bank – Armenia Partnership, Country Program Snapshot, April 2012

¹² National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia (2010),

¹³ Analysis of the adequacy of competences provided by VET system for labour market requirements, 2011

There is a structural misbalance between educational achievements and employment opportunities. Job seekers had difficulties in finding employment related to their field of education due to limited of job offers in the related sector (e.g. 87.5% represented employment of graduates in Yerevan construction sector but only 21.4% found a job in Tavush agriculture sector). The high share of unemployed in Tavush is connected with limited number of available vacancies in general (economic development of the region) and especially those vacancies relevant to graduate's qualifications. Two thirds of the interviewed responded that they had occupations related to their qualifications in Yerevan construction sector, one third in Tavush agriculture sector and only less than 10% in the Yerevan tourism sector. In tourism sector for Tavush region this relevance equalled 100%. However, the graduates' responses indicate that almost half of the unemployed have never actively looked for a job (not being interested for it or being discouraged due to failing in search for). The employed graduates reported that they keep positions which normally should relate to a lower level of qualification (e.g. graduates with qualification of Tourism Manager are employed as waiters and a graduate with higher linguistic education are occupied as receptionist).

There are regional disparities in terms of unemployment and not necessarily related to the level of development for the region. For example Yerevan (the capital city), has the highest unemployment rate (30.2% in 2011) although is the most developed region having the highest GDP per capita but with the lowest level of activities in agriculture sector (sector which may be a buffer against unemployment).

According to the data of 2011 of the National Statistical Service, 45% of VET graduates are specialists in healthcare and sports sectors; 16% are economists; 11% are teachers; 2% are specialists in industry and construction; and 1% are those in agricultural sector. According to the information on vacancies by State Employment Service Agency, as of October 1, 2012, the demand in the labour market is as follows:

Table 1. No. of vacancies

No	Jobs	According to data of Regional Employment Centers		Total
		Yerevan	Regions	
1	Engineers	4	7	11
2	Teachers	5	29	34
3	Doctors, pharmacutists	8	130	138
4	Accountants, secretaries	5	13	18
5	Specialists in service sector	206	103	309
6	Laborers	328	199	527
7	Controllers/inspectors, agents	14	22	36
8	Sewers	27	142	169
9	Drivers	78	66	144
10	Watchmen, cleaners	106	24	130
11	Other jobs	36	131	167
12	Community service		71	71
13	Civil service	69	34	103
Total		886	971	1857

The rate of informal employment (self-employment and unregistered employment) is very high and comprises 59.2% of total working age population (ILO, 2011). Observation¹⁴ of informal employment by agricultural and non-agricultural sectors shows that in agriculture 36.5% of the employed are informal or hidden employed and, in non-agricultural sector, they represent 19.1% of the total.

The structure of the unemployed by educational attainment (table 2) shows similar levels for persons with higher education and with VET qualifications (around the average value for all groups) but indicates a gender disparity since vocational or higher educated female have higher difficulties in finding employment than men at that levels. Also one has to consider that higher educated have to adapt to the requirements of the labour market and do jobs for lower skilled.

¹⁴ Actual unemployment rate in Armenia- Household Survey Analysis 2010, http://employment.am/up/attach/attach_eng18.doc

Table 2 - Unemployment and educational level 2010, (%)

Educational level	Total	Male	Female	Urban	Rural
Primary, incomplete primary	4.5	0.1	3.9	12.3	0.1
General basic	15.1	20.5	11.9	36.2	5.6
Complete general secondary	19.0	17.3	17.5	30.7	6.0
Preliminary Vocational	20.3	12.2	26.6	26.6	5.7
Middle Vocational	20.3	16.9	22.7	27.2	5.2
Tertiary and post graduate	19,5	17.9	21.0	22.3	6.9
Total	19.0	3.0	19.6	26.9	5.8

Source: 2010 integrated living Condition Survey.

According to the data of the State Employment Service Agency, the share of the youth registered in employment centres and having received the status of unemployed in the overall number of unemployed was 22.5% as of October 1, 2012, with 21.1% of the unemployed youth having middle vocational and 6.4% - preliminary vocational education, 16.4% - higher and postgraduate education, and 43.6% - secondary education.

According to the labour market data collected from administrative sources, the registered unemployment rate increased to 7% (in 2010) from 6.3% (in 2008). Among the registered unemployed in 2010, 70% were females and 11% of them lived in rural areas. 57.5% of registered unemployed in 2010 had been looking for a job for more than one year. In particular for females the share of long term unemployment was higher (59.5 %) while in rural areas 60% of registered unemployed were in this situation since more than one year (in 2010)¹⁵.

3. EXTERNAL EFFICIENCY: ADDRESSING SOCIAL DEMANDS FOR VET AND PROMOTING SOCIAL INCLUSION

3.1. Poverty and regional disparity

Between 1999 and 2008, poverty incidence was halved, from 56% to 27.6%, lifting over one million people out of poverty. But in just two years, about 30% of this reduction has been reversed. The poverty headcount increased to 35.8% in 2010 with an increase of 8.2% in rural and urban areas. Regions with predominantly rural population and difficult agricultural conditions have higher levels of poverty. In general, lack of employment increases the risk to be poor or extremely poor (e.g. in the two regions Kotayk and Shirak the highest unemployment coincides with highest level of poverty incidence). In the same time, the people employed in subsistence activities in agriculture and services may fall under poverty risk. Most of all employment in agriculture does not provide enough income to lift over the poverty level of individuals.

Country internal migration has largely contributed to disparities and poverty, increasing the population in the cities (in particular in Yerevan) and leaving in rural areas the elderly and more vulnerable groups, including underemployed women who have no-upgraded skills and sometime are single parents.

The issues of regional or urban/rural disparity have significant relevance as regards the access to and the quality of education. There are issues on limited access and lower quality, with fewer days of instructions in rural and/or less developed areas. Most of VET colleges do not have heating system (this was the case during the last 20 years) and lessons are suspended during the coldest period of the year.

3.2. Active labour market policies and measures

The main legal acts regulating employment promotion and poverty reduction are (i) Law on Employment and Social Security during Unemployment, and (ii) Sustainable Development Programme. Both regulate the issues concerning employment promotion programmes for vulnerable groups. Those may consist of provision to job seekers with information and consultancy, mediation, placement services, training and retraining. They may be more tailor made approaches for and with specific groups (setting up entrepreneurial activities, training of disabled, work rehabilitation and job search, public works etc.) and may include programmes

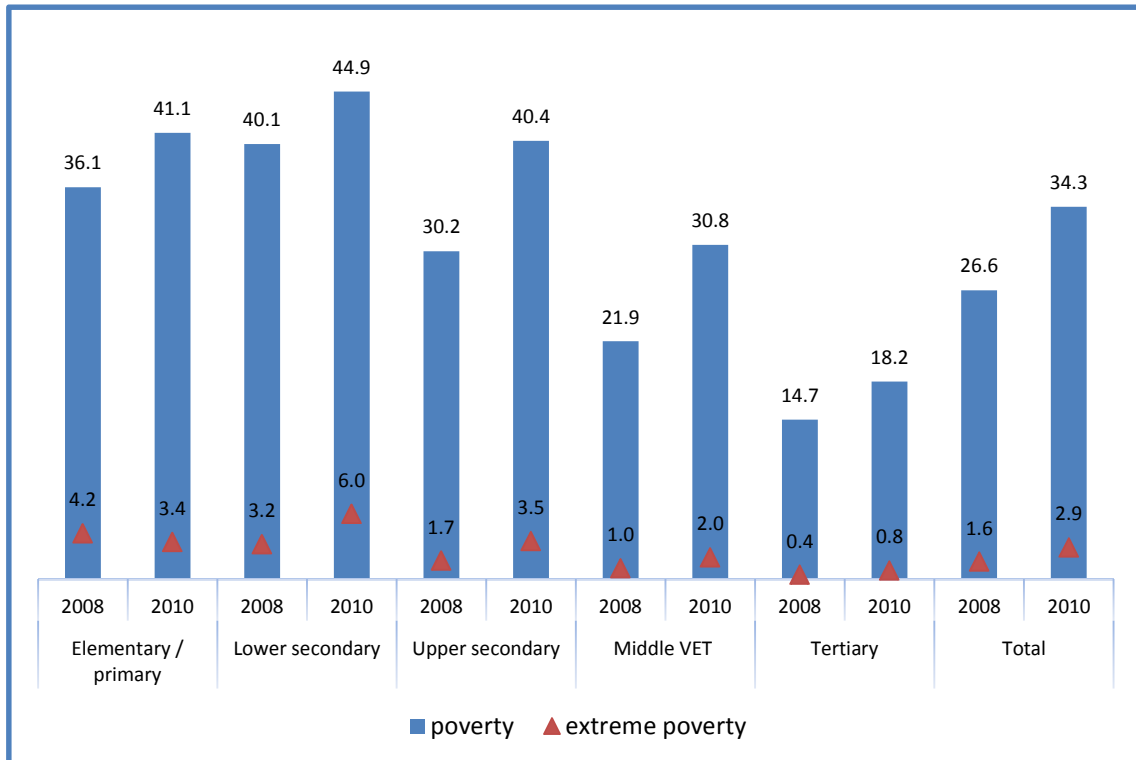
¹⁵ Our calculus based on Armenia Statistic Yearbook, 2011 <http://www.armstat.am/file/doc/99466623.pdf>

providing monetary assistance to unemployed job seekers and allocation of unemployment benefits. The information provided by the State Employment Service Agency (SESA) show an increase of 36% of participation in the active measures since 2007 but, although the training targeting vulnerable groups increased by 28% in the same period, it still represents only 3.4% of the total 2010 employment promotion activities.

3.3. Education and income

People with higher level of education are less likely to be poor and poverty incidence is almost half (14.7%) for the higher educated individuals comparing with the average (26.6%). Among individuals with Middle VET level the poverty incidence had the highest growth during the crisis (2008-2010) giving some indication of the difficult recovery in terms of jobs for qualified workers. Compared to 2008, extreme poverty increased for all educational levels except for those with elementary and primary education (Figure 2)

Figure 2. Poverty Incidence by Educational Level, 2008 and 2010 (Population 16 Years of Age and over)



Source: Poverty and Social Snapshot, NSS 2011

A survey of UNDP demonstrates that incomes are higher for the well-educated and highly skilled workers than for the less educated workers. The well-educated individuals have a lower rate and duration of unemployment than the less educated workers. Young women of all educational levels earn substantially less than men, but also gain a reasonable return on their investment in higher education.¹⁶

The economic divide between rural, urban and regions appear as the first among the more striking social challenges that shape the demand for skills. The second is the quality and value of education as, leverage for social mobility through access to general secondary and university.

3.4. Adult learning

To regulate the population's employment, the State Employment Service Agency of the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, based on its constitutional functions, implements state programs, including those focused on organization of vocational training that ensures the balance and flexibility of the labour market. Vocational training courses are organized based on the labour

¹⁶ Education, Poverty and Economic Activity Survey. UNDP, 2002

market demand; persons registered in employment centres and possessing an appropriate status can be involved in the programs.

Vocational training courses are organized when there is no jobs available in the labour market that would correspond to the beneficiary's professional education (in this case, re-qualification courses are organized), when the professional qualification of the beneficiary does not correspond to the requirements of the labour market (in this case qualification upgrade courses are organized), and when the beneficiary does not have any professional education and qualification, in which case preliminary vocational preparation and craftsmanship training courses are organized.

The above programs are implemented through the State Budget as well as funds provided by international and other organizations. During the period of 2008-2010, through funding from the State Budget, 4,307 people were trained, of whom 252 were disabled. More than 50% of those having completed the vocational training courses found jobs.

The misbalance existing in the labour market requires expansion of efforts in organization of vocational training. To make this process more effective and targeted, investment of additional means, tools and resources is needed.

Modern approaches and economic developments in the labour market require also continuous training and improvement of professional and personal qualities of individuals. This process should be obligatory and accessible both for employed and unemployed individuals.

In general, successful systems require a high degree of coordination and partnership among government agencies and the private sector, as well as giving the demand side of training (businesses and individuals) a strong voice in determining the training policy.

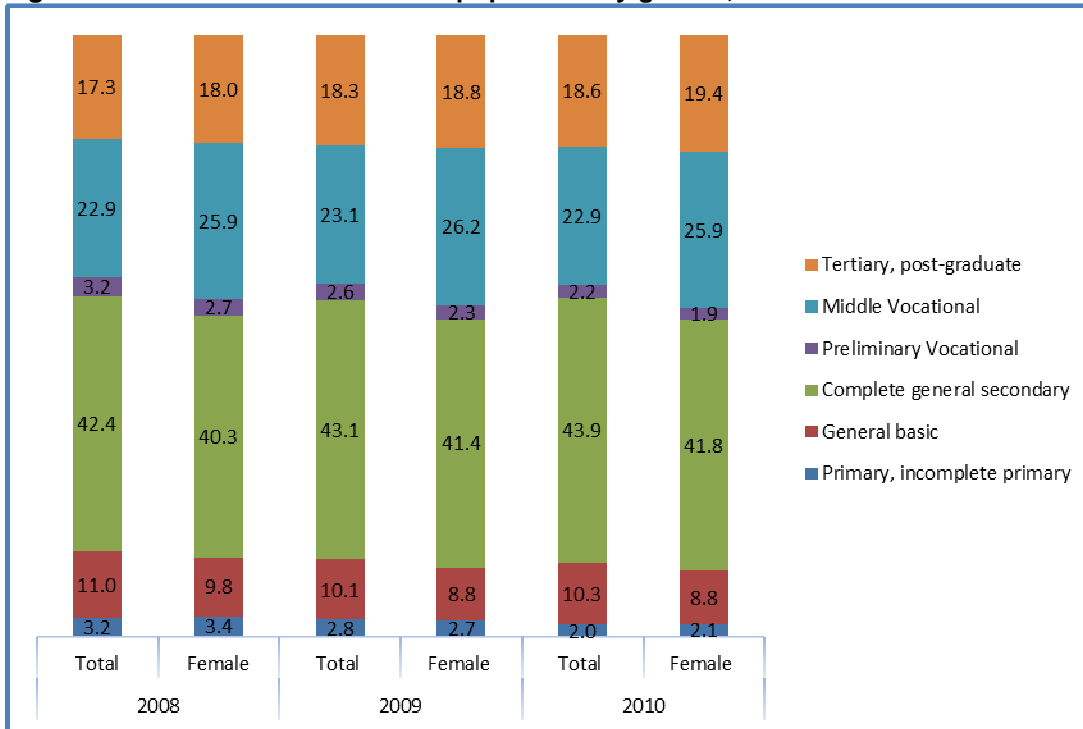
A "National Training Fund" has been established in 2011 through a Government decision, following some examples of similar bodies. The Fund is expected to promote a market for CVET on the basis of the needs of employers. The Government has allocated the equivalent of € 44,000 in 2012 for getting the Fund operational. It is unclear in which way the Fund will operate for improving provision and participation in CVET as well in generating resources to ensure its sustainability. The Fund Trustee Council includes governmental authorities and social partners.

Given the importance of the continuity of education and relevance of human resource development policies in ensuring the general competitiveness, a division of Supplementary and Continuing Education was formed within the RA Ministry of Education and Science in 2010. Efforts were made towards the "The National Report on RA Supplementary and Continuing Education" and development of the SCE Strategy, to be approved by the end of 2012.

4. INTERNAL QUALITY AND EFFICIENCY OF INITIAL AND CONTINUING VET DELIVERY

The educational attainment of the population (Figure 3) reveals a constant share of vocational and secondary specialized education of about 25%. Moreover, there is a slight positive trend for tertiary education (to 18.6% in 2010) with female participation higher than average. Compared to general education (43.9% in 2010), the participation in VET is low as its attractiveness did not register significant changes.

Figure 3. Educational attainment of population by gender, %



Source: National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia (2010),

The VET system is divided to two different levels: preliminary (craftsmanship) and middle vocational Education.

The preliminary (craftsmanship) education has duration of 6 months to 3 years, with qualification level of Craftsman, on the basis of basic general education (9 years) or secondary general education (12 years), which is compatible with the level of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 3).

The middle vocational education has duration of 2-5 years, with qualification level of a Specialist, based on the basic general education (9 years) or secondary general education (12 years), which is compatible with ISCED 5B level.

Both routes offer vocational qualification (access to labour market) and opportunities for secondary general diploma (Matura), providing therefore the option to pursue higher education (see also annex 2).

Students in preliminary VET increased¹⁷ by more than 28% from 2008 going up to 6,393 in 2010. About 25% of them were females. In preliminary VET about 90% of students are studying on free education basis (in 2011 being registered and increase of 1.6% as of 2009). The number of new students enrolled increased with about 48% from 2008 (to 3,119 in 2010) and about 27% of students were female. The students/teacher ratio continued to decrease arriving to 6.8 in 2010.

¹⁷ The increase in preliminary VET enrolment is compensated by decrease in middle VET so in total the share in VET is constant

The total number of students in Middle VET registered a reduction of about 7% from 2008/9 (to 29,575 in 2010/11). Among them about 61% are females. The number of new students enrolled in Middle VET in 2010 (11,666) remained almost stable and female represented 57% of total. The share of students enrolled in Middle VET with state subsidies¹⁸ (in the academic year 2009-2010) represented 29,1% and is higher than for the university level (of 16%). Students/teacher ratio declined to 7.9 in 2010. There is no available information on drop-out situation in VET.

In the academic year 2010/2011, 158 people dropped out from preliminary (craftsmanship) educational institutions, out of which 36 were women, while 1350 were dropped out from middle vocational institutions, of which 407 were women.

Approval of strategic documents and legal framework (in 2011) related to the VET reform and its relevance to labour market contribute to the continuing modernization of Preliminary and Middle VET. Among them the adoption of the “Armenian Qualification Framework” should be seen as a key reform instrument aiming to improve quality in the national education and training system. A highly ambitious timetable for its introduction from 2012-2013 has been adopted. Since the level descriptors in national qualification framework are the basis for the development of state educational standards, the existing educational programmes are going to be reviewed in accordance with the descriptors.

The National VET Centre continued its work with developing a methodology for reviewing educational standards and curriculum or for the development of new ones based on new occupational profiles. In 2011, 30 new occupational profiles, were developed by the Ministry of Labour Research Institute, under the supervision of Ministry of Labour¹⁹

Through the reform, 100 state educational standards, relevant curricula and modular programmes were developed for VET. Among them 61 were registered with the Ministry of Justice (having national recognition) out of which 39 are under implementation in the pilot colleges. The modules include core skills like, communication, general working skills, IT, safety and first aid, two foreign languages, applied economics and business related skills.

MoES and NCVETD developed a system to monitor the new curriculum/standards implementation due to some problems in the beginning (lack of experience). Training of about 4000 lecturers and masters was carried out to counteract this lack of experience and to accompany the process. Manuals, training materials and modular programmes were developed and published for VET sector specialists. Public awareness-raising activities were implemented.

In 2011, 81% of the VET institutions teaching staff achieved university degrees and less than 1% holds PhD and higher degree. The VET teachers have a lower salary than the national average salary and this leads to lower attractiveness and motivation. Given that Middle VET is mainly private financed (through enrolment fees), the colleges’ principals have autonomy in employment of teachers using as criteria mainly the number of students enrolled. Sometimes this leads to lack of transparency and quality in the system so a set of guidelines for selection, assessment and applying penalties/rewards were approved by the VET Council in “Guidance on Assessment and possible replacements/ rewards, financial incentives of teachers and school principals”. They have been approved as well by the Management Boards of the 12 RCS and started to be implemented. The results of this experience will be disseminated the rest of the system.

The EU has been the main donor in the field of VET reform through budget support, which started in 2007 for a total amount provided as grant of 34,5 M€. The main objective of the reform was to assist national authorities in improving the image of the VET system and making it more visible and attractive through a process of modernisation of the content of the infrastructure.

UNDP has also been very active in the field of VET reform through the financial assistance provided by the Danish Government. The reform has promoted in particular innovation, rehabilitation and refurbishment of the 12 multifunctional colleges (one per region + 2 Yerevan) to become models for the development of the system nationwide. The 12 selected pilot colleges were renamed in 2011 as Regional State College (RSC) and registered as a non-profit organization. Their main scope is to become autonomous educational institutions, more business

¹⁸ For students with limited resources the education is free of charge. This represents almost one third places in Middle VET

¹⁹ as it was agreed under EU Budget support programme conditionality

oriented within national and regional context and with a great potential for development thanks to improvement of the quality and of the teaching conditions. The RSCs should be prepared to become centres of excellence and undertake a leading role in the promotion of VET, as well as in implementing actions (awareness raising, training, improving qualification of staff, etc.) aimed at training specialists in accordance with labour market demand. However, their success will largely depend on the overall economic development of the country and, in particular, of each specific region. Investment in human resources development is important but its success depends on investment for economic growth.

The 12 RSC have a good infrastructure including workshops and they are a valid example of how a modern VET system should look like but they represent around 12% of total number of preliminary and middle VET colleges so there is still a long way to go in terms of resources and management capacities. Limited resources were made available for investment in the infrastructure and provision of the rest of VET schools and this still constitute a burden for the quality provision in the system. It was already developed the “VET Reforms Programme and Action Plan” containing the strategy for extension of the reform to the rest of the system, and it was submitted to Government for approval²⁰. Private investment mainly in middle VET is quite important so, together with public investment and improved planning, management and monitoring could make the system more attractive and effective.

An assessment of SME development policies has been carried out in 2011 by the European Commission, OECD, EBRD and ETF. Out of the 10 principles used for the assessment, 2 were directly related to the human capital dimension and aimed at measuring how the system promotes entrepreneurial learning, innovation and skills up-grading. The assessment has been carried out in co-ordination with the Ministry of Economy, under the guidance of a Small Business Act (SBA) co-ordinator and further commented by the ETF. Final findings outline that there is a very limited awareness and understanding of the importance of promoting an entrepreneurial learning culture. Some policy documents have been signed between public, private and non-governmental sectors like the memorandum of understanding signed in 2009 on the co-operation in the field of VET. However, there is no structured dialogue aiming at identifying a policy framework for entrepreneurship learning in particular within a context of lifelong learning principle.

5. GOVERNANCE AND FINANCING OF THE INITIAL AND CONTINUING VET SYSTEM AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES FOR CHANGE

In recent years the share of education in the state budget expenditure has been increased. In 2010 education has made 3.2% of the GDP as compared to 2.83% of 2008.²¹ . Despite the increase of the budget allocations for education, the ratio of the educational expenditure to the GDP is still quite low as compared to the countries of the OECD. Out of the total budget 2011 to education (106.085.022 AMD) only 4.8% went to VET, including Preliminary and Middle VET, whilst the rest was for general education. In the school year 2010/2011 the number of students attending Middle VET was 29.575 of which 26.5% with free seats, which means that 73.5% were private paying their education (21.737 students).

If one calculate an annual enrolment fee of 290 € per student (average AMD 150.000/each) we get a total of 3.260.550.000 AMD paid by the families, which correspond to the same amount allocated by the State Budget.

Since Soviet time, both preliminary and middle VET have not been considered very important and most of the limited budget resources for education have been allocated to general education. The VET system has undergone several phases of reform, in particular after the adoption of the Law on Education in 1999, followed by the rationalisation programmes aimed at reducing the number of less relevant VET schools. In order to ensure better use of the limited resources, the rationalisation of the system is on-going with the reduction of number of colleges and preliminary VET schools.

For economic reasons, the number of colleges has recently been reduced by 15.7% (from 101 in 2010 to 91 public and private middle VET in 2011) in an attempt to rationalize the system. There

²⁰ See Armenia VET TA Programme, Quarterly Progress Report 2nd quarter 2012

²¹ Education Development State Programme for the period 2011 - 2015

are 71 public middle vocational colleges, 5 universities providing middle vocational education and training and 13 private middle VET colleges which, however, are not allowed to issue “state” diploma. For this reason their number has decreased in the past years.

In 2010-2011 the number of preliminary/craftsmanship VET schools has decreased from 30 to 25 aiming at increasing efficiency in the system. In 2011, 51 public institutions provided preliminary professional (vocational) education (25 craftsmanship vocational schools, 20 middle vocational institutions providing preliminary education, 4 educational complexes, 1 university, 1 foundation).

From December 2011 all 25 public preliminary (craftsmanship) vocational schools are managed by the Ministry of Education and Science. At this level of Preliminary VET the professions related to spheres of services, trade and food industry are the most popular ones. Females enrol mainly in traditional fields like pedagogies, health and arts.

Since the academic year 2011/2012 the admission of students in all state educational institutions is implemented on the basis of results of final examinations, without taking any additional entrance test, except specialities in the field of art, sport and healthcare (the same principle is supposed to be maintained within the coming years).

There are no any mechanisms in the VET system for assessing the performance of institutions. The established (2008) National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance (ANQA), which is responsible for both higher and vocational education, has been taking the first steps towards the definition of quality assessment standards and criteria. The Centre concentrated its activity mainly on higher education (for which it compiled the Strategic Plan - Transitional Period 2011-2015). ANQA defined the institutional quality assurance process in three phases: (i) self-assessment, (ii) by external trained assessors and (iii) preparing/publishing the report (as a compilation of the first two)²².

The development and implementation of the VET management information system is on-going and this is expected to improve data collection process and producing the relevant information on the educational system.

Starting with 2008 the organisational structure of VET Department in the MoES was reviewed and a new Division of VET Policy Making and Strategy was established. The implementation of reform came under the responsibilities of National Centre for VET Development (established under the Institute of Education) with significant tasks in revising curricula, developing of learning material and preparing/providing teacher/staff training within the system. A structure of MoES is presented in annex 1.

In 2008, the National Council for VET Development (NCVD) was established as a tripartite advisory body, with equal representation (seven people) of Government of the Republic of Armenia, from organizations representing the employers and businesses as well as Trade Unions, which guarantees the implementation of social partnership in the VET sector on a national level. NCVETD convenes meetings 4 times a year, with the main goals to: 1. Identify the strategic development trends in the VET sector; 2. Facilitate designing of VET development programmes, enhance the efficiency of the reforms underway in the sector and strengthen and deepen social partnership; 3. Provide consultancy to the RA Ministry of Education and Science in making decisions related to the policies of vocational education and training and in designing and implementation of development programs.

In 2012, NCVETD made a decision to transform the existing 13 sectoral committees and make their number 15. The chairpersons of the sectoral committees are mainly nominees of employers; they study and perform expert examination of the developed state educational standards and the appropriate curricula and modules²³.

Aiming at increasing VET effectiveness and relevance to the regional and local levels needs, the college Governing Boards were established in all VET colleges in accordance with the law adopted in 2005 (it took 3 years to establish them with lengthy discussion about the representativeness). According to the law, Governing Board is established for a period of five

²² UNESCO-IBE (2011). World Data on Education: Armenia. VII Edition. 2010/11. Geneva: UNESCO-IBE

²³ Armenia VET TA Programme, Quarterly Progress Report 2nd quarter 2012

years and has in composition representatives from pedagogical staff, students, founder and public administration body for education. It has the power to approve budget, strategic programmes, tuition fee, to elect a director, etc.

Starting with 2011 in the Governing Boards of the Regional Colleges the membership was extended by involving new representatives of social partners and regional employment services. Changes were also introduced in the Management Board of all VET schools by involving more representatives of social partners, local authorities, NGOs and regional employment services in order to promote cooperation within the community and increase the relevance of education within the community context.

In 2009 the Concept on Social Partnership in the Field of Preliminary (Craftsmanship) and Middle Vocational Education was endorsed by the Government and, based on this, a Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation in the field of VET was signed by the Ministry of Education and social partners in the same year. The aim of the Memorandum is to improve cooperation and support for the future development of VET as a modernized system that provides qualified labour force suited to the requirements of employers.

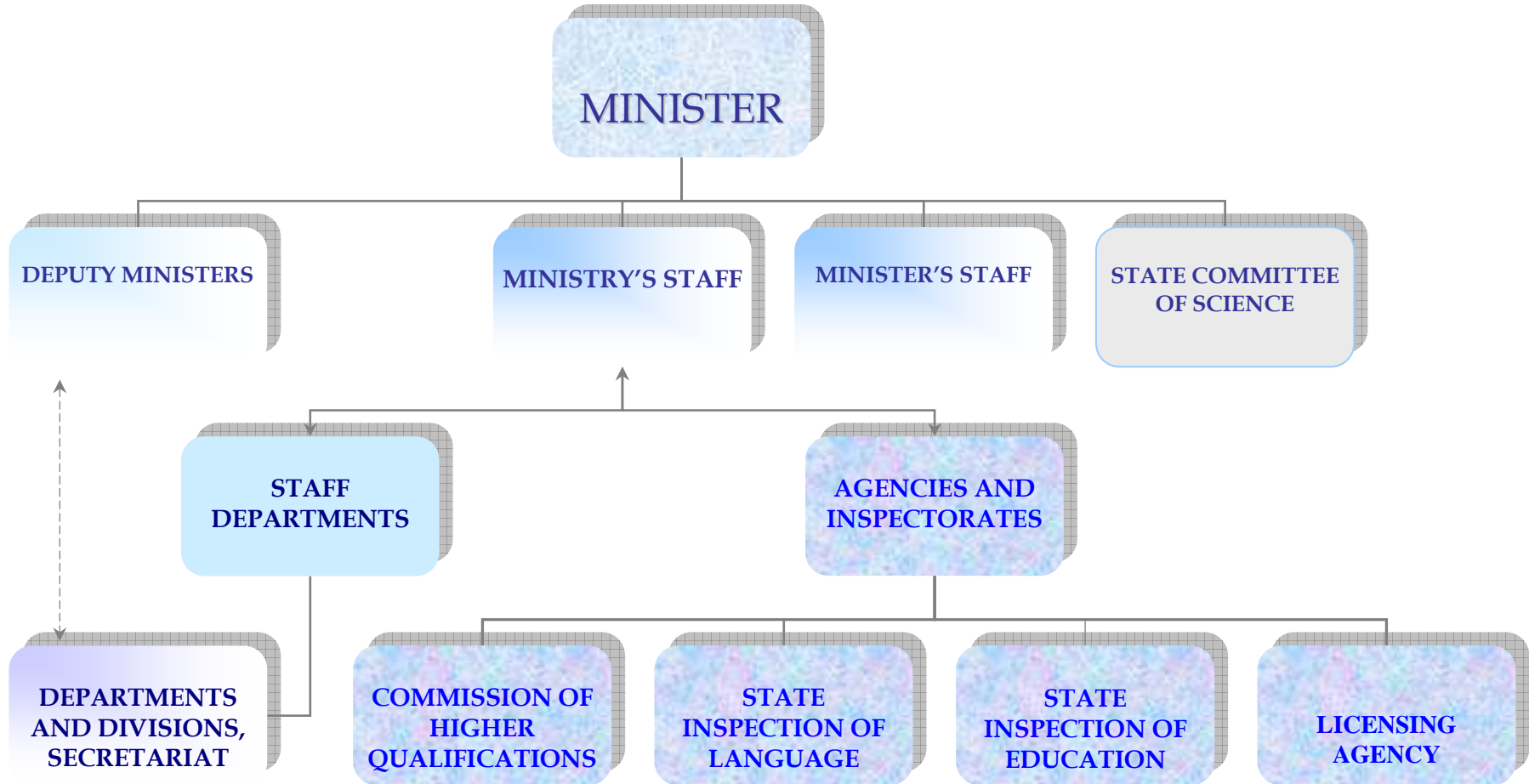
A strategy was also adopted in 2011 on the transfer of the administrative authority of all preliminary VET (craftsmanship) and vocational colleges to the MoES. As a result, in 2012 seven colleges from the Ministry of Agriculture, one from the Ministry of Culture and one from the Ministry of Energy have been transferred under the authority of the MoES and 11 colleges from the Ministry of Healthcare will be involved in this process in 2013.

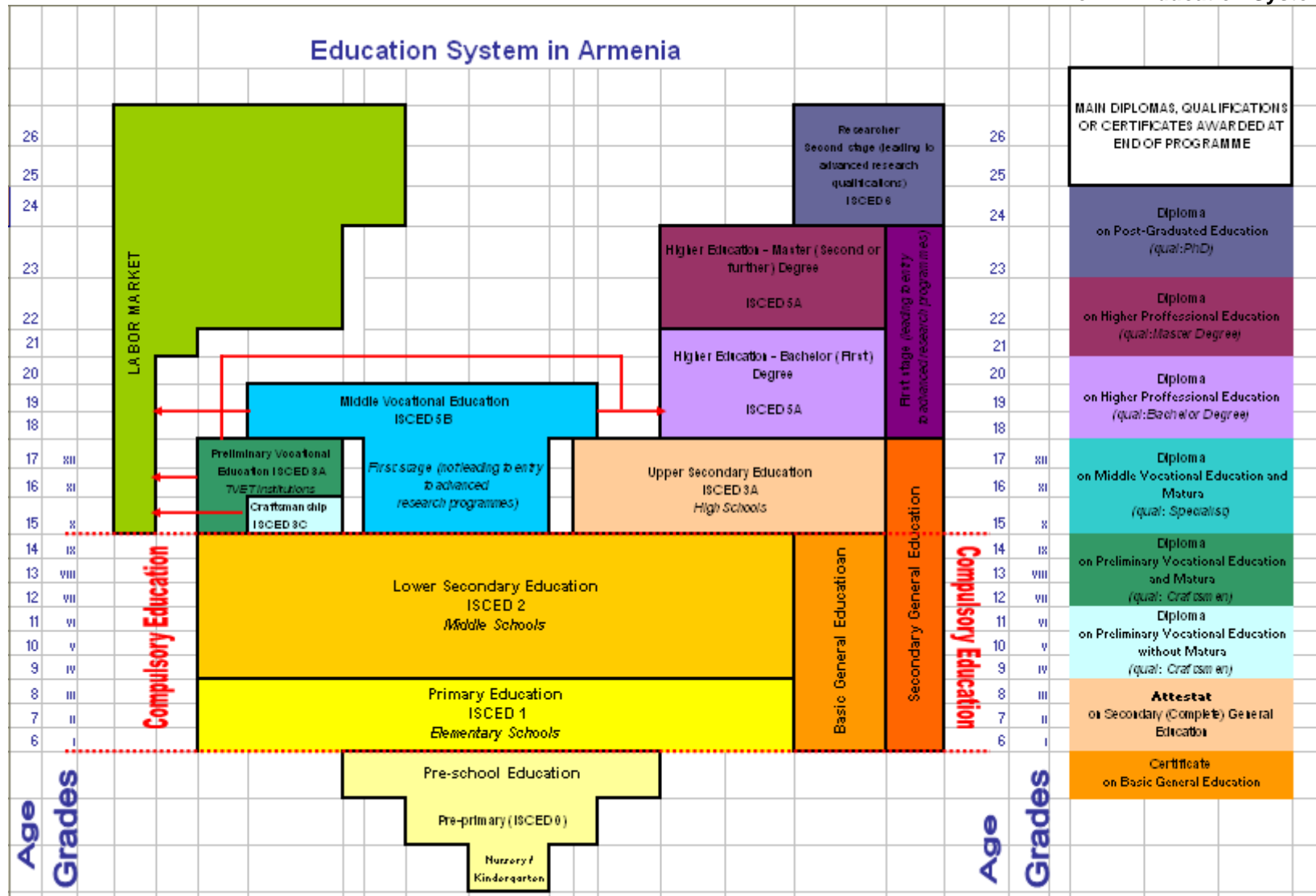
There is the commitment of the Government to continue the reform of VET system as it is mentioned in various strategic documents although not much commitment was done in terms of financial resources. For the coming period under the EU budget support assistance is foreseen to carry out an assessment of the VET reform. The aim is to identify areas where future financial investments (Government or donors) should concentrate for an increased impact of the VET provision.

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Annex I Organisational chart of the MoES





Annex III: Governance matrix

Functions within a VET system	Authority	Competence	Resources	Accountability
	Who are the actors legally in charge of this function? Have <u>roles</u> ²⁴ and <u>responsibilities</u> been adequately defined?	Do actors have the <u>technical competences</u> or what is needed to fulfil this function?	Do actors have adequate <u>financial and human resources</u> or what is needed to fulfil this function?	In which way are the actors in charge made <u>accountable</u> for the work done?
Policies and legislation				
Defining national VET and employment policies	<p>Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) in charge for preliminary (craftsmanship), middle VET and continuing education.</p> <p>The body of the methodological support for VET is the National Centre for VET Development /NCVETD/, which is under the supervision of the MoES.</p> <p>For providing advice to the MoES, facilitating the preparation of VET sector development programmes, promoting the effectiveness of reforms implementation in the sector and further deepening social partnership was formed National Council for VET Development.</p> <p>Ministries. But these will be transferred under administrative authority of the MoES gradually.</p> <p>Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA) in charge for employment policy. MoLSA has a separate division, is the State Employment Service Agency. The task of the agency is the execution of the state politics on employment regulation.</p>	The actors have adequate competences, but there is necessity of more efficient reforms implementation and policy development.	Human resources are adequate, but financial resources are not sufficient.	<p>National Center for VET Development accountable for methodological reforms /development of standards, modular curricula, teachers training and etc./ Twice a year the NCVETD send reports to the MoES and at the end of each year submit reports to the National Council.</p> <p>MoES is accountable to the Government and provides reports to the Government.</p> <p>There is a system of intradepartmental/interministerial accountability.</p>

²⁴ Actors could have decision-making, advisory or executive roles.

Monitoring national VET and employment policies	Ministries (mainly MoES and MoLSA), National Centre for VET, State Employment Service Agency	For monitoring implementation Ministries don't have sufficient competences. Develop strong reputation for collaborating on successful projects. Partner with similar organizations to increase capability and sustainability.	Human resources are sufficient, but the effective use of these resources is problematic. The staffs need to be better trained. Financial resources are not sufficient.	There is a system of intradepartmental/interministerial accountability. The Ministries are accountable to the Government and provide reports to the Government.
Legislation for VET (both initial and continuing)	MoES	The competences are sufficient	Financial and human resources are sufficient	MoES is accountable to the Government and provides reports to the Government. There is also a system of intradepartmental/interministerial accountability. The Legislation of VET and new reforms are discussing during the National Council VETD meetings.
Qualifications and curricula				
National, sectoral or regional skill or training needs analyses	National Centre for VETD, State Employment Service Agency	Lack of technical competences	Human resources are sufficient. Financial resources are not sufficient.	National Centre for VET Development is accountable to the MoES.
Designing a list of occupations	MoLSA /National Institute/, MoES /National Center for VETD/.	Technical competences are sufficient	Resources are not sufficient	National Centre for VET Development is accountable to the MoES.
Definition or revision of standards/ qualifications	MoES, National Centre for VETD. Appropriate Ministries, Social partnership and VET institutions are participate in developing standards.	Technical competences are sufficient	Resources are sufficient	National Centre for VET Development is accountable to the MoES. There is a system of intradepartmental accountability.
Development or revision of curricula (all kinds)	MoES, National Centre for VETD, VET institutions.	Technical competences are sufficient	Resources are sufficient	National Centre for VET Development is accountable to the MoES. There is a system of intradepartmental accountability.

Teachers and trainers				
Pre-service training and induction of VET teachers	MoES-National Education Institute, National Centre for VETD, Donors	Technical competences are sufficient	Human resources are sufficient. Financial resources are not sufficient.	National Education Institute, National Centre for VET Development is accountable to the MoES.
Recruitment of teachers	VET institutions do recruitment of teachers themselves.	Technical competences are sufficient	Resources are not sufficient	The accountability is done through intradepartmental reports.
In-service training of VET teachers	MoES-National Education Institute, National Centre for VETD, Donors	Technical competences are sufficient	Resources are not sufficient	The accountability is done through intradepartmental reports.
Teacher appraisal and career development	VET institutions	Technical competences are sufficient	Resources are not sufficient	The accountability is done through intradepartmental reports.
VET providers				
Network of providers of - initial VET - continuing VET	Ministries /that mentioned above/, National Education Institute, National Centre for VETD	Technical competences are sufficient	Human resources are sufficient, financial resources are not sufficient.	There is a system of intradepartmental/inter-ministerial accountability.
Planning VET programmes and student numbers	MoES, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs in agreement with Government of RA, VET institutions in agreement with MoES.	Technical competences are not sufficient	Human resources are sufficient, but lack of database and lack of capacities. Financial resources are not sufficient.	There is a system of intradepartmental/inter-ministerial accountability.
Planning budgets for vocational schools	MoES, Ministry of Finance	Technical competences are not sufficient	Human resources are sufficient, but lack of database and lack of capacities. Financial resources are not sufficient.	There is a system of intradepartmental/interministerial accountability.
Dealing with school expenses (managing school budgets)	VET institutions, Managerial Bodies of the VET institutions	Technical competences are not sufficient	Financial resources are not sufficient.	The principles are accountable to the Managerial Body of institutions each year. Some of the VET institutions elaborate their business-plan for every 3 years.
Learning materials and equipment				
Learning materials	MoES, National Education Institute, National Centre for VET	Technical competences are sufficient	Financial resources are not sufficient.	The accountability is done through intradepartmental reports.
Workshop equipment	Government, Donors	Technical competences are not sufficient	Resources are not sufficient.	The accountability is done through intradepartmental reports.

Practical learning sites				
Liaison with employers	MoES, National Council for VET, VET institutions, MoLSA /State Employment Service Agency/	Technical competences are sufficient	Effective use of these resources is problematic. There is a need of analysing labour market demand and strengthening of cooperation between employers and VET institutions.	The accountability is done through intradepartmental reports.
Practical training places within companies	VET institutions	Technical competences are not sufficient	Lack of resources. A lot of companies don't trust VET students.	The accountability is done through VET institutions.
Apprenticeships	VET institutions	Technical competences are not sufficient	Lack of resources Lack of workshops, laboratories, trained teachers.	The accountability is done through VET institutions.
Assessment and certification				
Assessment of students' skills	VET institutions	Technical competences are sufficient	Resources are sufficient.	The accountability is done through VET institutions.
Issuing certificates	MoES	Technical competences are sufficient	Resources are sufficient.	The accountability is done through intradepartmental reports.
Monitoring and impact				
Monitoring the quality of VET provision	MoES, National Centre for VET, National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance (ANQA).	Technical competences are not sufficient	Resources are sufficient. Lack of database.	The accountability is done through intradepartmental reports.
School-to-work transition surveys or tracer studies for graduates	Non-conducted	Technical competences are not sufficient	Lack of resources	No accountability
Research and innovation				
Research and innovation, incl. the transfer of innovations from pilot to system level	MoES, Donors	Technical competences are not sufficient	Lack of resources	The accountability is done through intradepartmental reports.
Donor coordination				
Efficient coordination of donors in VET	MoES	Technical competences are sufficient	The resources are sufficient.	The accountability is done through intradepartmental reports.

Annex IV: Key Indicators

Table A.IV.1a Torino Process Key Indicators 2012– External efficiency

Indicator	Year	AM
Total population (million)	2011	3.10
Annual population growth (%)	2011	0.3
Share of 15-24 in the total population (%)	2010	18.0
Total dependency rates (%)	2011	45.3
Young dependency rates (%)	2011	29.4
Old dependency rates (%)	2011	15.9
Global Competitiveness Index (rank, out of 144)	12/13	82
Annual GDP growth (%)	2011	4.6
GDP per capita, PPP (current international \$)	2011	5829.0
Agriculture, value added (% of GDP)	2011	20.7
Industry (incl. construction), value added (% of GDP)	2011	37.1
Services, value added (% of GDP)	2011	42.2
Share of employed in agriculture (% ,15+)	2010	38.6 ⁽¹⁵⁻⁷⁵⁾
Share of employed in industry (incl. construction) (% ,15+)	2010	17.4 ⁽¹⁵⁻⁷⁵⁾
Share of employed in services (% ,15+)	2010	44.0 ⁽¹⁵⁻⁷⁵⁾
Activity rates (% ,15-64)	2010	64.1
Activity rates, female (% ,15-64)	2010	54.9
Employment rates (% ,15-64)	2011	53.3
Employment rate, female (% ,15-64)	2011	46.3

Table A.IV.1b Torino Process Key Indicators 2012– External efficiency

Indicator	Year	AM
Unemployment rates (% ,15-64)	2011	19.3
Unemployment rates, female (% ,15-64)	2011	20.7
Youth unemployment rates (% , 15-24)	2010	38.9
Youth unemployment rates, female (% , 15-24)	2010	48.0
Completion of at least upper secondary education (% , total aged 15+)	2010	87.6
Adult literacy rates (% , 15+)	2010	99.6*
Adult literacy rates, female (% , 15+)	2010	99.4*
Employment rates by educational level, upper secondary VET (% , 15-64)	2011	65.3
Unemployment rates by educational level, upper secondary VET (% , 15-64)	2011	18.2
Participation in lifelong learning - % of 25-64 years old having participated in lifelong learning	2011	md

Table A.IV.2 Torino Process Key Indicators 2012– Internal efficiency

Indicator	Year	AM
Participation in VET (% of upper secondary)	2010	6.4
PISA results - % of students at proficiency level 1 or below in reading	2009	na
PISA results - % of students at proficiency level 1 or below in science	2009	na
PISA results - % of students at proficiency level 1 or below in mathematics	2009	na
Dropout rates in upper secondary VET	2011	3.8
Student–teacher ratio in upper Secondary VET	2011	5.3

Table A.IV.3 Torino Process Key Indicators 2012– Governance and financing

Indicator	Year	AM
Public expenditure on education (% of GDP)	2010	3.2
Public expenditure on upper secondary VET (% of total education spending)	2011	4.8

Sources:

World Bank (WB); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); UNESCO - Institute of Statistics (UIS); World Economic Forum (WEF); National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia.

Notes:

* = estimated; md = missing data; n/a = not applicable

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