

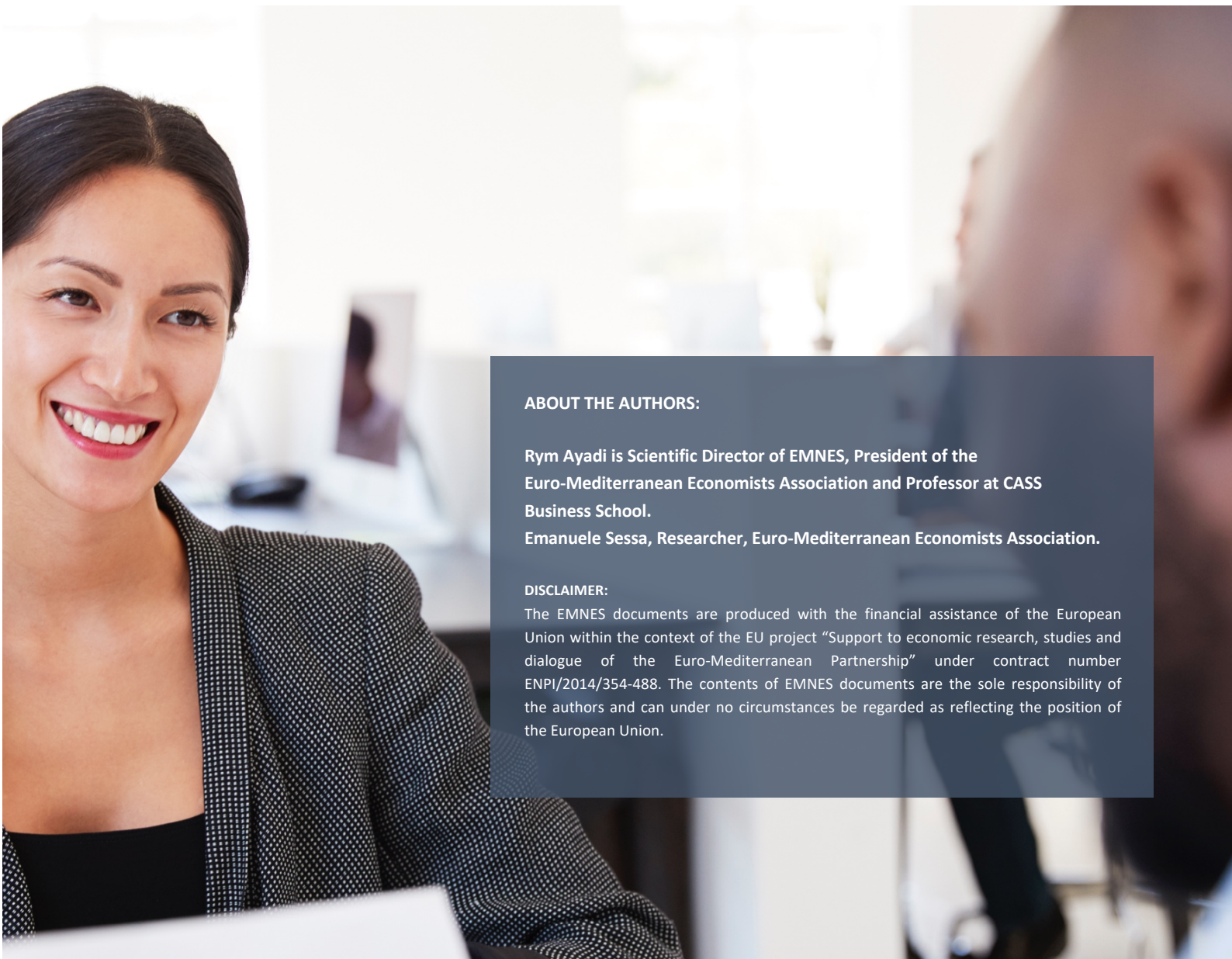


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POLICIES FOR LABOUR MATCHING WITHIN AND BETWEEN COUNTRIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

Rym Ayadi and Emanuele Sessa

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

Rym Ayadi is Scientific Director of EMNES, President of the Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association and Professor at CASS Business School.

Emanuele Sessa, Researcher, Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association.

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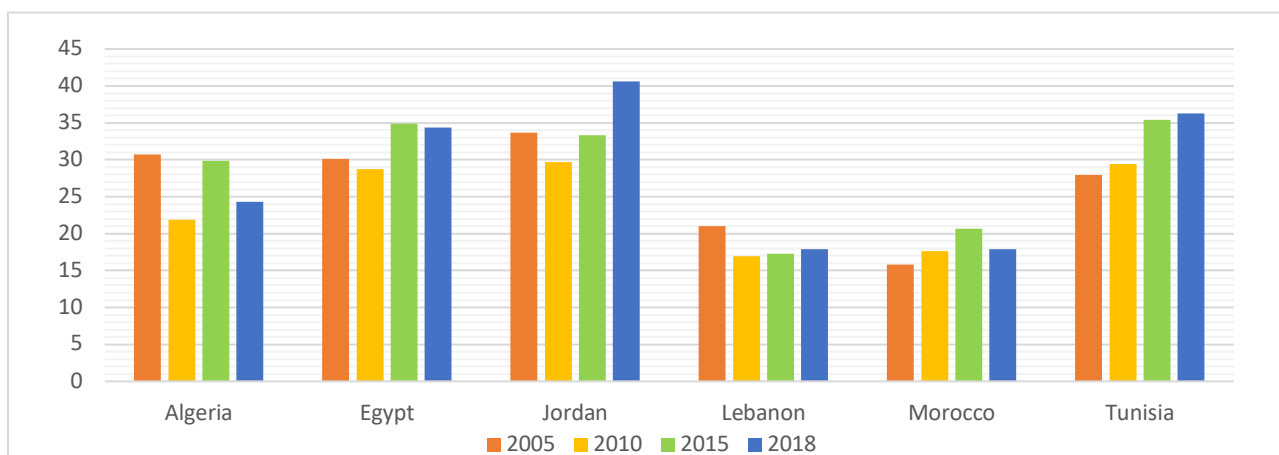
ABSTRACT

The objective of this policy paper is to provide an overview of the current state of affairs in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia regarding the formulation, implementation and monitoring of labour matching policies. To this purpose, a definition of labour matching policies encompassing both policies aimed at matching skills and jobs *within* countries – labour market policies – and *between* countries – labour migration policies – and a novel analytical framework for their assessment were proposed and used, to conduct interviews with key representatives within institutions responsible for labour matching in the six countries considered. The survey results attest that substantial efforts were made to develop active labour market policies in recent years but, for the most part, these are not backed with an adequate allocation of funds, whilst well-functioning labour market information systems remain to be developed. The same cannot be said of labour migration policies, which are almost inexistent, except in those countries having signed Mobility Partnerships with the European Union – in particular Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia – where national strategies for migration were developed and migrant support measures implemented, albeit largely under the impulse and with the support of international donors. The paper concludes with the formulation of a policy road map for the development of a Euro-Mediterranean platform for the matching of skills and jobs between countries of origin and destination, and a supporting Euro-Mediterranean labour market information system.

INTRODUCTION

Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries (SEMCs)¹ continue to register rates of unemployment twice as high as the global average - ten years after the global economic downturn of 2008 shook their economies. In 2018, their average unemployment rate was 11%, compared to a global average of 5%, according to ILO estimates. This phenomenon primarily affects the young, faced with unemployment rates two or three times higher than the average for the total population. Figure 1 provides data about youth unemployment rates in the six selected SEMCs in four reference years – 2005, 2010, 2015 and 2018. The situation does not show signs of improvement. In most cases, youth unemployment rates were higher in 2018 compared to 2015, with three countries above the 30% threshold, namely Egypt, Tunisia and Jordan, which registered a staggering 40% of youth unemployment in 2018. Morocco is the only country where the youth unemployment started decreasing from 2016 onwards, whilst in Lebanon, the other country with rates sensibly lower than its peers, the situation continued to deteriorate. Not in education, employment or training (NEET) rates are also very high in SEMCs, although the lack of data makes it difficult to have a clear picture. In 2017, Algeria and Egypt, the only countries for which ILO estimates are available, registered NEET rates of 21% and 27% respectively.

Figure 1: Youth unemployment rates in selected SEMCs



Source: own elaboration based on WBDI data

¹ SEMCs considered in this paper are Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia.

In the absence of decisive measures to address the situation, youth unemployment is bound to increase in the coming decades, as population projections point to a substantial increase of working age populations – and younger cohorts within these – in virtually all SEMCs.² In principle, an expanding working age population is an asset for long-term economic growth but, against a backdrop of chronic youth unemployment, there is a serious risk that this demographic dividend turns into a demographic penalty (for a discussion see Ayadi and El Mahdi, 2013). It is, therefore, a matter of urgency to address the root causes of youth unemployment, starting with the shortcomings of education systems and labour markets in SEMCs, which is critical when analysing the supply side of labour market needs.

In recent decades, the six countries considered in the analysis achieved significant progress in expanding access to education, resulting in increasing enrolment rates across all levels of education and considerably higher shares of public spending being allocated to education. However, these positive developments in the *quantity* of education did not coincide with substantial improvements in its *quality* which, in certain cases, even deteriorated as a result of larger class sizes and associated problems of understaffing. Adding to this, there was the poor level of employability and matching with the needs of the private sector. The sharp contrast between expanding educational attainment and declining returns to education in most of the selected SEMCs attests to this (see Assaad et al, 2016; Aydemir and Kirdar, 2017; Pellicer, 2018).

As regards to labour markets, virtually all SEMCs feature large public sectors and under developed private sectors, the combination of which is a major obstacle to sufficient job creation in the face of expanding working age populations. The weight of public sectors is actually one of the main factors behind the under development of private sectors, as both students and investors prioritise public entities over private firms in their choices, resulting in distorted educational outcomes and the crowding-out of financing opportunities. The rigidity of labour market regulations also negatively affected the dynamism of labour markets across the region, but job creation remains largely insufficient, even in countries that implemented ambitious reforms towards more flexibility, such as Jordan.

To understand the chronic situation of youth unemployment facing SEMCs in all of its complexity, thinking in terms of the dysfunctional relationship between education systems and labour markets is more insightful than considering them separately. The notion of mismatch is particularly useful to this purpose. In the absence of mismatches, in theory, education systems equip future job

² Groenewold et al (2016) found that the working age population is actually decreasing in Tunisia, but the country is the only one amongst SEMCs where the size of the non-employed population is expected to decline.

seekers with the skills required by the labour market – qualitative match – and labour markets create enough jobs to absorb all the job seekers coming out of the education system – quantitative match. In a situation of qualitative mismatch, the skills required in the labour market differ from those job seekers are equipped with by the education system and a certain share of the available jobs cannot be filled through a lack of suitable candidates. In a situation of quantitative mismatch, the number of job seekers coming out of the education system exceeds the number of available jobs in the labour market and those who fail to compete successfully for available jobs will eventually become unemployed, even if they are equipped with the right skills. In the six selected SEMCs, neither the qualitative nor the quantitative criterion of a functional relationship between education systems and labour markets are satisfied. The current situation of chronic unemployment is the result of both an excess of job seekers compared to available jobs and a lack of suitable candidates to fill available jobs.

To tackle the dysfunctional relationship between education systems and labour markets, structural reforms are needed to ensure that education systems equip future job seekers with the skills required in the industry corresponding to their field of study and labour markets create enough jobs across industries to absorb those job seekers. That said, those reforms alone do not guarantee a successful transition from school to work. In fact, even in the absence of structural mismatches between supply and demand of skills and jobs, job seekers equipped with the right skills might fail to identify suitable vacancies and, vice versa, employers looking to fill vacancies might fail to identify suitable candidates. The match simply does not take place because of information asymmetries. That is why leading institutions, such as the ILO and the OECD, advocate the formulation and implementation of active labour market policies (ALMPs) alongside more structural reforms to tackle unemployment.

ALMPs refer to all government interventions that might be used to increase the employment probability of job seekers and, thereby, decrease aggregate unemployment. The OECD identifies as ALMPs those interventions that are functional to enhance motivations and incentives to seek employment, improve job readiness and help in finding suitable employment, and expand employment opportunities.³ There are many ways to achieve these outcomes and, therefore, a whole range of possible different interventions - from intermediation in job search and skills training, to private sector hiring incentives and self-employment programmes. In order to be effective, ALMPs should be supported by an efficient labour market information system (LMIS),

³ See <http://www.oecd.org/employment/activation.htm> (accessed 19 March 2019).

providing accurate information about the availability of skills and jobs and enabling the identification of surpluses and shortages on which to build targeted interventions.

ALMPs have an important role to play in levelling asymmetries and frictions in the labour market and, where needed, complement the education system, but they are of little help in the face of substantial mismatches, as they can by no means replace the education system and the labour market in their core functions. At the same time, structural reforms take time to achieve tangible results and are difficult to enforce in a context of chronic unemployment and related socio-economic pressures. For example, any reform aimed at reducing the weight of the public sector and spurring the development of the private sector will have to come to terms with the fact that informality is widespread in the private sector and public employment is often the only guarantee of job security. In the short run, reforms might have a negative effect on employment and, in most SEMCs, governments are still grappling with the consequences of the so-called Arab Uprisings and lack the margin of manoeuvre to deal with delicate periods of adjustment. Against this backdrop, the establishment of legal and well-managed channels of labour migration can provide a safety valve for saturated domestic labour markets and give some breathing space to governments to implement reforms.

It must be noted, however, that labour migration per se is not a guarantee for migrants to find a job abroad. In fact, the incidence of qualitative mismatches is higher amongst migrants compared to natives, suggesting that labour migration does imply the risk of exporting unemployment to host countries, rather than solving it in home countries (OECD, 2014). To prevent this from happening, legal labour migration channels should enable the matching of skills and jobs between home and host country, starting with the identification of surpluses and shortages in their respective labour markets. This way of proceeding is similar to the one followed in the formulation and implementation of ALMPs within countries and also requires a supporting labour market information system to be effective, suggesting that national information systems should be integrated in regional matching platforms, in order for labour migration between countries to be managed efficiently.

The objective of this policy paper is to provide an overview of the current state of affairs in the six selected SEMCs regarding the formulation, implementation and monitoring of labour market policies and labour migration policies. It complements another EMNES policy paper focused on labour migration, which reviewed EU legal and policy frameworks for the management of labour migration from SEMCs (Alcidi, Laurentsyeva and Wali, 2019). Together, these two policy papers pave the way for the establishment of a regional platform for the matching of skills and jobs across



the Mediterranean, by providing a comprehensive overview of existing policies and instruments on which to take stock, in order to build such a platform, and identifying obstacles to its realisation.

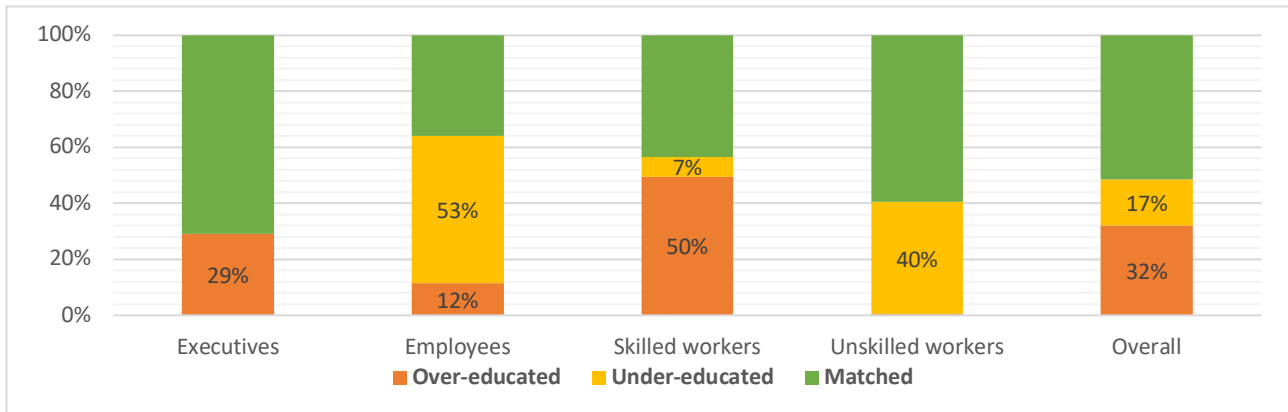
The remainder of the paper is organised as follows: the second section delves deeper into the unemployment situation in the six selected SEMCs, with an emphasis on the incidence of mismatches; the third section presents the methodology of the survey conducted for the purpose of the study; the fourth section focuses on labour market policies within SEMCs and looks at the current state of affairs in their formulation, implementation and monitoring; the fifth section turns to labour migration and looks at the formulation, implementation and monitoring of related policies in the SEMCs; the last section concludes.

INCIDENCE OF SKILLS MISMATCHES IN SEMCS

The most striking evidence that education systems in SEMCs do not adequately prepare future job seekers for the labour market is that unemployment is a phenomenon disproportionately affecting the most educated young people. Data on unemployment by level of educational attainment is not readily available in the countries considered, but the existing evidence attests that most unemployed have completed tertiary education. In Algeria and Jordan, respectively 37% and 40% of the total unemployed population held at least a bachelor degree, according to 2010 and 2015 data published by national statistical offices. In Egypt, almost one out of two unemployed held at least a bachelor degree in 2014 - 44.5% to be precise - according to ILO data. These figures must be considered within the bigger picture of the massification of higher education, a trend that has not spared SEMCs, even though premature de-industrialisation and incomplete structural transformation prevented the creation of a sufficient amount of high-skilled jobs in their labour markets (for a discussion see Mouelhi and Ghazali, 2018).

The incidence of over and under-education amongst young workers is more subtle evidence of a mismatch between education systems and labour markets in SEMCs. Over-education is associated with lower returns to education for workers, along with growing dissatisfaction and lower motivation. Under-education is associated with low performance of workers and under-utilisation of firms' capabilities, but the problem can be alleviated with on-the-job training which, nonetheless, implies further expense for firms. In Egypt, the results of the 2014 school-to-work transition survey conducted by the ILO, showed that one out of three unemployed youngsters refused a job because it did not match their level of qualification. In Tunisia, the survey was conducted the previous year in 2013 and its results brought evidence that a large number of workers are either excessively or insufficiently qualified for their current position (Kdhiri (2019)). That said, the respective incidence of over and under-education varies according to the type of occupation (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Distribution of educational mismatches by occupation type in Tunisia



Source: own elaboration based on school-to-work transition survey data for 2013

In Jordan, concerns about educational mismatches underpinned the formulation of the National Strategy for the Development of Educational and Vocational Training for 2014-2020. In the official document outlining the strategy, there is an explicit mention of the problem that “once graduated many Jordanians prefer to wait for a suitable job instead of accepting an employment below their level”, but also that the skills provided in higher education “are too academic and not sufficiently practical” to be useful in the labour market. In spite of this, educational choices continue to be biased towards academic institutions, whereas vocational training is treated as a second-best option, if considered at all. This problem is common throughout the six countries covered in the analysis. In virtually all cases, secondary education is still geared to push best-performing students towards universities, regardless of their aptitudes, thereby contributing to reinforce the prestige of the latter, at the expense of other education institutions.

The attractiveness of public sector employment is another major factor biasing educational choices towards universities. In SEMCs, the public sector provides a substantial share of available jobs, e.g. 25% in Egypt and up to 38% in Jordan, according to 2014 data published by national statistical offices.⁴ More importantly, public sector employment guarantees higher job security and, often, also better wages than a job in the private sector. The public sector recruitment process is closely related to the acquisition of university degrees, distorting educational choices accordingly, and job seekers often spend years waiting in line for a job in the public sector, undermining their employability and drawing talent away from the private sector. On the other

⁴ Morocco is an exception among SEMCs. The private sector provides the overwhelming majority of available jobs and this partly explains why the country’s unemployment rate is sensibly lower than the regional average, although relative political stability during an otherwise turbulent period for the region also played an important role.

hand, the pervasiveness of informal jobs is a major constraint to the attractiveness of the private sector. In 2014, the informal sector accounted for 21% of Morocco's GDP. In 2012, it accounted for 30% of Egypt's GDP and up to 42% of Tunisia's GDP (for a discussion on the estimates see Ayadi, Charmes, Ramadan, 2019). The quality of informal jobs is often low and their proliferation, reinforced by the recent spread of non-standard forms of employment, negatively affects both the quantity and the quality of jobs created in the formal sector.

The disproportionate attractiveness of the public sector and the high incidence of informality are problematic, insofar as they hinder the development of a thriving formal private sector, the main engine for employment creation. In particular, a weighty public sector crowds out financing for the private sector, hampering the growth of micro, small and medium enterprises and tapping their potential for employment creation. The lack of access to financing is the single major obstacle to the development of the private sector and, thereby, its contribution to employment creation (on this specific point see Ayadi et al, 2019). However, private firms in SEMCs also struggle to access the skills they need to grow, bringing us back to the failure of education systems in equipping job seekers with the skills required by labour markets and the related necessity to reinforce vocational education and training. In recent years, virtually all SEMCs implemented reforms in that sense, although with a varying degree of success. It is not our intention here to provide an overview of these developments, an exercise that other organisations have already carried out (for example, see European Training Foundation, 2015a). However, it is worth noting that despite the offer of vocational education and training expanded in relation to these reforms, a number of shortcomings have thus far undermined its relevance as a tool to tackle youth unemployment. In some cases, the lack of a sound regulatory framework led to the proliferation of public and private centres providing vocational training, but not necessarily delivering certified diplomas, raising concerns over the quality of the training. This, combined with little involvement of the private sector and the related failure to deliver evident benefits in terms of professional insertion, explains why vocational education has, so far, remained unattractive for young people in SEMCs.

Finally, unemployment tends to be long-term in the six selected SEMCs, a common feature pointing at the limited effectiveness of vocational training when it comes to providing opportunities for lifelong learning. Long-term unemployment is a particularly problematic issue, insofar as it entails a substantial deterioration of the job seekers' employability. In Tunisia, the results of the 2013 school-to-work transition survey attested that up to 65% of the employed youngsters interviewed had been searching for a job for over two years, explaining why most of the interviewees proved reluctant to the idea of changing job - despite their over-qualification.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

In the previous section, evidence about the incidence of skills mismatches in the six selected SEMCs was presented to stress the importance of putting a fully-fledged system of labour matching policies into place. In our definition, labour matching policies refer to both policies aimed at matching skills and jobs within countries – labour market policies – and between countries – labour migration policies. This definition emphasises the interlinkage between the two sets of policies. In an ideal situation where there is a matching between skills and jobs in domestic labour markets, labour migration would no longer be a necessity for countries to deal with skills surpluses, but a means for a limited number of migrants to circulate between them and to contribute to a diffusion of knowledge. Hence, the development of a fully-fledged system of labour market policies *within* countries is a precondition for the sustainable management of labour migration *between* countries through dedicated policies.

The extensive work on labour matching policies in SEMCs of the ETF (2014a; 2014b; 2014c; 2014d; 2015b; 2015c; 2015d; 2015e) and the ILO (2015; 2017) provided the starting point for the creation of a survey of institutions responsible for those policies in the different countries under consideration - namely Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia.

The aim of the survey was not to replicate the wealth of information produced by the two organisations, but to complement it with first-hand information collected from key representatives within the surveyed institutions. For this purpose, an exploratory qualitative approach was retained in formulating the survey, which consisted of the conduction of structured in-depth interviews by national experts, selected from EMNES researchers, to better understand the policy challenges and to provide practical recommendations. The value added of relying on structured in-depth interviews with key informants rather than other forms of data collection lay in the interaction between the national experts and the officials interviewed, which enabled the current state of affairs to be analysed from the SEMC perspective. This was deemed important, because in the latter, labour matching policies were often put in place under impulse and with the support of international donors, raising concerns about co-ownership and sustainability of existing initiatives.

Table 1 provides an overview of the institutions surveyed in the six selected SEMCs, along with the national expert responsible for conducting the interview. It is important to note that the survey conducted was only preliminary, insofar as only a limited number of interviews were conducted and the information collected reflected the personal opinion of the interviewees and not

necessarily the official position of the institutions they represented. In the case of Algeria, the national expert is a member of a public research centre, created by presidential decree and supposedly having access to all the information needed to answer the survey who decided, on that basis, not conduct any interviews. In the case of Jordan, the organisation of a focus group, with officials from the various institutions responsible for labour matching policies, was preferred over conducting in-depth interviews with individual interviewees.

Table 1: Overview of the institutions surveyed in November-December 2018

COUNTRY	NATIONAL EXPERT	INSTITUTIONS SURVEYED
Algeria	Khaled Menna and Moundir Lassassi	Research Centre in Applied Economics for Development
Egypt	Marwa Biltagy and Alia El Mahdi	Ministry of Manpower; Ministry of Immigration and Egyptian Expatriates Affairs; Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reforms.
Jordan	Nooh Alshyab	Ministry of Labour; Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
Lebanon	Sandra Challita	National Employment Office.
Morocco	Najat El Mekkaoui	National Agency for the Promotion of Employment and Skills; High Commission for Planning.
Tunisia	Jamel Trabelsi	National Agency for Employment and Self-Employment; Office for Emigration and Foreign Workers.

The national experts were provided with an interview guide prepared separately to assess labour market policies and labour migration policies, but which followed the same underlying rationale.

The interview guide was designed to collect information on six distinct but interrelated dimensions: formulation, implementation, monitoring, institutional setting, information system and financing mechanisms. Figure 3 illustrates the theoretical framework used to analyse the survey results. In a fully-fledged system, an adequate institutional setting and a well-functioning information system are set up to support the formulation, implementation and monitoring - the three key dimensions required for the assessment of labour matching policies. Furthermore, in the process of policy formulation, the financing mechanisms are identified that will enable their effective implementation and monitoring.

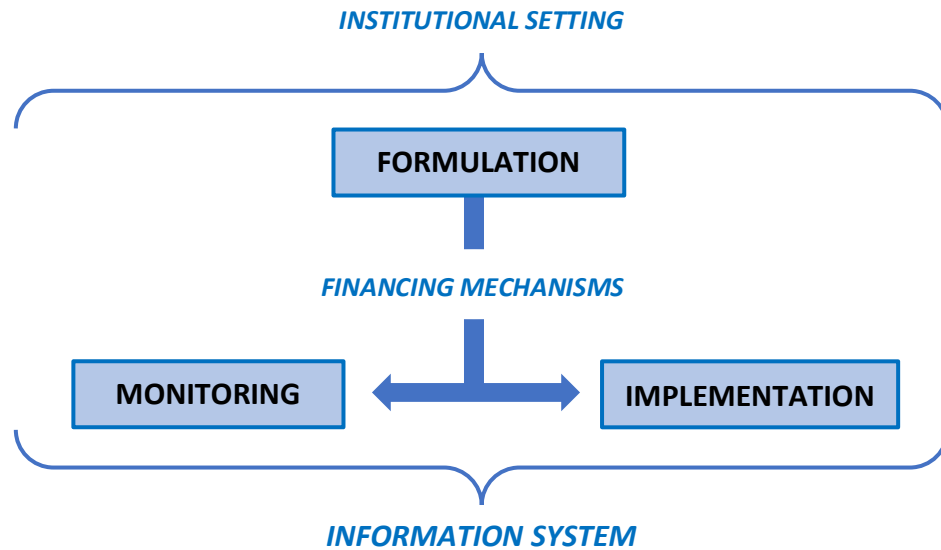


Figure 3: Analytical framework for labour matching

Source: own elaboration

Before moving to the analysis of the survey results, it must be noted that the survey and, by extension the study as a whole, only considered the supply side of the labour market, that is, labourers and their skills. As such, the analysis developed in the following pages will provide only a partial view on the matching of skills and jobs in the six selected SEMCs. To complete the picture, EMNES is designing further research on the topic, which shall look at the demand side of labour markets, to include the perspective of employers on the issues at stake.

LABOUR MARKET POLICIES IN THE SEMCS

In this section, we provide an overview of the current state of affairs in the *formulation, implementation and monitoring* of active labour market policies (ALMPs) in the six selected SEMCs. Within this framework, particular emphasis is put on the institutional settings, information systems and financing mechanisms that are in place to support ALMPs.

ALMPs refer to all government interventions that might be used to increase the employment probability of job seekers and, thus, decrease aggregate unemployment. There is no clear-cut definition of “active” policies, as originally these were defined as opposite to “passive” policies, such as unemployment benefits and other measures common in welfare states (Martin, 2014). For the purpose of our survey, ALMPs were sub-divided into five categories: assistance in job search (or intermediation); skills training; private sector hiring incentives (often through wage subsidies); public employment (usually a temporary measure); and self-employment programmes. These different categories are complementary rather than alternatives to each other and in fact, governments usually rely on a mix of different ALMPs to achieve their goals. In the SEMCs, several obstacles hampered the effectiveness of ALMPs implemented so far, including but not limited to poor labour market information systems, limited capacity of implementing agencies and sporadic collaboration with employers. These obstacles are the norm rather than the exception, even though their incidence varies from country to country (for further discussion see Angel-Urdinola, Kuddo and Semlali, 2013).

Formulation

ALMPs can be used to operationalise given components of a comprehensive strategy for the promotion of employment, but can by no means serve as a substitute for it. All SEMCs considered in the analysis formulated ALMPs as part of a national employment strategy, with the exception of Lebanon. In the latter, formulating such a strategy is a precondition for the development of effective ALMPs and, therefore, is a priority that should be high in the political agenda. In all countries bar Lebanon, a mix of ALMPs encompassing the five categories of interventions, highlighted above, was formulated, with the exception of public employment programmes in Tunisia and skills training in Algeria. Tunisia’s public sector is saturated and burdened to a certain extent by disguised unemployment, explaining why public employment programmes were excluded from the mix of ALMPs. For the same reason, Jordan planned to discontinue public

employment programmes under the 2011-2020 National Employment Strategy.⁵ Algeria's exclusion of skills training programmes from the mix of ALMPs is instead problematic, considering the incidence of skills mismatches and long-term unemployment in the country.

The literature on ALMPs suggests that in the absence of specific targeting, interventions tend to benefit disproportionately the better-off amongst the needy, i.e. educated males from middle or high-income groups (see for example Angel-Urdinola, Semali and Brodmann, 2010). In most SEMCs, formulated ALMPs do not have a specific target population, or make only a broad reference to youth without further detail. This is particularly problematic considering that in some cases, ALMPs are not only formulated as part of a national employment strategy, but also with the stated objective of alleviating poverty, e.g. in Morocco, where some ALMPs were formulated in support of the National Initiative for Human Development.⁶ Algeria and Egypt are notable exceptions to this rule. In Egypt, skills training is diversified between the provision of soft skills for job seekers, job-specific skills to aspirant workers in given sectors and on-the-job training for workers. In Algeria, potential beneficiaries are eligible for different job intermediation programmes, according to their level of educational attainment, used as a proxy for their skills endowment.

As regards to the institutional setting, in most of the countries considered, one or more dedicated agencies established under the ministry in charge of the national employment strategy are responsible for ALMPs. Egypt is an exception, with scattered initiatives falling under different ministries according to the category of ALMP and limited overall coordination. It is, therefore, a priority for the country to rationalise the institutional setting and, thereby, to ensure an efficient implementation and monitoring of the formulated ALMPs.

Tunisia, Morocco and Lebanon entrusted the formulation and implementation of ALMPs to one single agency. To this purpose, Tunisia established the National Agency for Employment and Self-Employment (ANETI) under the Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment. The country also institutionalised stakeholder dialogue to support the formulation of ALMPs, including not only relevant ministries but also employer's associations and labour unions amongst other social partners. Morocco reinforced the role of the National Agency for the Promotion of Employment and Skills (ANAPEC) in the 2015-2020 National Employment Strategy, which also paved the way for

⁵ For more information on the strategy, see: <http://inform.gov.jo/en-us/By-Date/Report-Details/ArticleId/36/National-Employment-Strategy> (accessed 26 April 2019).

⁶ The initiative was launched in 2005 and renewed twice in 2010 and 2019. The third phase of the initiative covers the period 2019-2023. More information available at: <http://www.indh.ma/en> (accessed 26 April 2019).

the establishment of inter-ministerial committees for the formulation of ALMPs.⁷ The Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs is responsible for coordinating these committees. In Lebanon, the formulation and implementation of ALMPs was entrusted to the National Employment Office (NEO) established under the Ministry of Labour, but in practice there is a dramatic lack of concrete initiatives, due to the very limited funding made available to the office and, more broadly, to the absence of a national employment strategy.

In Algeria, the National Agency for Employment (ANEM) is primarily responsible for ALMPs, but interventions targeting the young fall under the responsibility of the National Agency in Support of Youth Employment (ANSEJ). In addition to this, other institutions, such as the National Agency for Social Development, implement their own ALMPs. This type of institutional setting is prone to overlapping mandates and it would be preferable to centralise ALMPs under one agency, rather than relying on monthly coordination meetings between the different entities as is the current practice. Jordan did not establish an agency dedicated to ALMPs. The National Council for Higher Education and the National Council for Technical and Vocational Training are responsible for formulating ALMPs, whilst their implementation is entrusted to the Ministry of Labour, which collaborates with other institutions, such as the Vocational Training Corporation and the National Training Company.

Implementation

The focus of the survey, when it came to collecting first-hand information about the implementation of ALMPs in SEMCs, was placed on the collaboration between public agencies and private actors, which is a crucial aspect of effective intervention. As we have argued before, the lack of significant involvement of the private sector spoiled the efforts made so far by SEMCs in developing vocational education and training. It is important to prevent the same thing happening in the case of ALMPs and this explains the focus of the survey.

The importance of actively involving the private sector in the implementation of ALMPs is being increasingly recognised in SEMCs. In all the countries considered in the analysis, public agencies responsible for implementing ALMPs collaborate with the private sector, although to a varying degree. Here also, Lebanon is an exception to the rule. Private firms are not allowed to offer job intermediations services, notwithstanding public agencies which do not provide such services. On

⁷ For more detailed information about the strategy, see: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ed_emp_msu/documents/project/wcms_420201.pdf (accessed 26 April 2019).

the contrary, Algeria provided a legal framework for private placement agencies to operate, focused on enforcing standards of efficiency and transparency, and complementarity with the programmes implemented by public agencies. To date, 25 private placement agencies have registered and all of these signed a partnership agreement with the National Agency for Employment (ANEM), the institution primarily responsible for implementing public ALMPs. Jordan went a step further by institutionalising the participation of the private sector in the provision of skills training with the National Empowerment and Employment Programme, launched in 2018.

SEMCs should explore and develop the potential of public-private partnerships in the implementation of ALMPs, to the extent that a structured collaboration between the public and private sectors would yield greater benefits for both providers and beneficiaries than currently, but nonetheless would encourage the punctual participation of private actors in public programmes. Morocco set a standard for other SEMCs with the adoption of a law on public-private partnerships in 2014, which gave impulse to the development of partnerships for the provision of skills trainings and self-employment programmes amongst other ALMPs. It must be remembered that Morocco has a thriving private sector compared to other SEMCs, facilitating the development of mutually beneficial public-private partnerships. Egypt and Jordan proved more successful in developing collaboration between public entities and non-governmental organisations for the implementation of ALMPs. In the former, more than 30 non-governmental organisations were selected on a competitive basis to implement employment promotion projects, with financing from the Social Fund for Development. In the latter, the provision of direct or indirect support for business incubators and accelerators is becoming the norm when it comes to the implementation of self-employment programmes. This is in line with the increasing emphasis on entrepreneurship and innovation in policy dialogues as a solution to graduate unemployment (on this specific point see Sandri, Alshyab and Azzoui, 2019; Zaki and Zeini, 2019).

As regards to the financing of ALMPs, the survey findings point to a lack of clear financial commitments in government budgets, partly explaining why the funds eventually allocated to ALMPs are usually insufficient to cover running costs. This is particularly true in those countries where the implementation of ALMPs is not entrusted to dedicated agencies that are relatively autonomous in the management of their budgets, but instead is under the responsibility of one or more ministries, as is the case in Jordan and Egypt. However, giving the responsibility of implementing ALMPs to an agency with its own budget is not, per se, a guarantee of a sound allocation and management of funds. Tunisia is the only country where the survey respondents judged the funds, allocated from the budget of the Ministry of Vocational Training and

Employment and managed autonomously by the National Agency for Employment and Self-Employment (ANETI), sufficient to cover running costs.

In other SEMCs, institutions responsible for implementing ALMPs often depend on funding from international donors to complement insufficient allocations from the government budget. Egypt is particularly reliant on international donors, a situation that could improve if ALMPs, now scattered between different ministries, would be rationalised and running costs were curtailed in the process. In Lebanon, the lack of adequate funding prevented the formulation and implementation of any meaningful intervention, even though the National Employment Office (NEO) was established precisely for that purpose.

Monitoring

In the six selected SEMCs, ALMPs are neither continuously monitored nor periodically evaluated, precluding the possibility of enhancing the effectiveness of future programmes based on evidence and lessons learnt. Tunisia is the only country where assessments of implemented ALMPs were conducted, both internally and by external evaluators, but the lack of monitoring data complicated the task of assessing their impact.⁸ The survey results suggest that, in all countries bar Lebanon and Morocco, the institutions responsible for ALMPs follow-up in some way with the programmes' beneficiaries. However, the follow-up usually boils down to collecting basic information about the beneficiaries, chiefly through self-administered surveys rather than as part of a broader and systematic collection of labour market data. This explains the incidence of so-called attribution problems, as the nature of the information collected and the modalities of collection do not infer there is a causal relation between the benefitting of an ALMP and finding a job (on this specific point see World Bank, 2014).

To support the formulation and implementation of ALMPs and to enable their adequate monitoring and evaluation, SEMCs should put in place efficient labour market information systems. The current state of affairs concerning the collection of labour market data varies greatly, depending on the country being considered amongst those analysed. Jordan launched a National Employment Electronic System, also hosted under the Ministry of Labour, which contains a rather descriptive data on workers and employers, compiled on a voluntary basis. In order to motivate

⁸ For a discussion, see the fifth chapter of the report *Tunisia – Breaking the barriers to youth inclusion*, published by the World Bank (2014), which analyses quality and impact of ALMPs in the country. The chapter is available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tunisia/publication/tunisia-breaking-the-barriers-to-youth-inclusion> (accessed 26 April 2019).

people to contribute to the system, its launch was accompanied by an awareness campaign. To date, 350,000 people are registered on the database and 250,000 of these have uploaded full information. Tunisia hosts a similar database under the National Agency for Employment and Self-Employment (ANETI), the institution chiefly responsible for formulating and implementing ALMPs, with information on both the supply side of the labour market collected from national and regional employment offices and the demand side provided by the Tunisian Union of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts (UTICA). Algeria does not have a centralised information system containing labour market data, but the different institutions involved in the implementation of ALMPs keep their own databases and the one kept by the National Agency for Employment (ANEM) contains quite detailed information about job offers and applications by sector of activity, level of education and type of firm. In Morocco, the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs and the High Commission for Planning collect data on employment at a national and regional level, but the information collected is mainly descriptive and there is a lack of data on the demand side of the labour market. This is also the case in Egypt and Lebanon, where only employment data compiled by statistical bodies is available, put aside from the information collected for specific labour market studies at a given point in time and not updated since.

In those countries where a database containing information on supply and demand side of the labour market exists, the information is not publicly available and not shared with the institutions responsible for managing labour migration, with the notable exception of Tunisia. In the latter, labour market information is shared with the Office for Emigration and Foreign Workers and the International Organisation for Migration.

LABOUR MIGRATION POLICIES IN THE SEMCS

In this section, we provide an overview of the current state of affairs in the *formulation, implementation and monitoring* of labour migration policies aimed at matching skills and jobs between countries, with a focus on SEMCs, as countries of both origin and destination.

In its work, the European Training Foundation grouped these interventions under the umbrella term ‘migrant support measures from an employment and skills perspective’ (MISMES), a label we decided to retain in the conduct of structured in-depth interviews with representatives of the institutions responsible for labour migration in the SEMCs. In hindsight, it would have been preferable to use a broader definition in the survey, as it turned out that so-called MISMES were implemented in the SEMCs almost exclusively in the framework of international cooperation projects, rather than as integral parts of national labour migration policies. In fact, some of the countries considered in the analysis do not even have a labour migration policy worthy of the name. Against this backdrop, it is not surprising that the country experts who conducted the interviews reported little co-ownership of implemented MISMES, when these were actually implemented.

In the following pages, the survey findings are summarised and analysed. Overall, they attest that only SEMCs having signed a Mobility Partnership with the EU have set up a migration policy that includes measures for labour mobility, evidence of the important role played by the EU in encouraging SEMCs to manage (labour) migration. It must be noted, however, that Mobility Partnerships do not foresee the establishment of new legal migration channels and, judging by the funds allocated to the different areas of intervention,⁹ enhancing the management of labour migration can hardly be considered a priority of the partnerships (for a longer discussion see Alcidi, Laurensyeva and Wali, 2019). As a result, SEMC migration policies, when actually in place, are usually geared towards security concerns rather than being formulated as a result of labour matching rationale.

Formulation

The causality between having signed a Mobility Partnership with the EU and having a (labour) migration policy in place is not as straightforward as it may seem at first glance. Mobility Partnerships were concluded with three countries - Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia - that had a

⁹ The four areas of intervention are irregular migration, international protection, migration and development, and labour mobility.

certain track record in managing migration before starting to negotiate with the EU. Jordan has a long tradition of emigration towards GCC countries and had signed labour agreements with some of them long before the Mobility Partnership with the EU was concluded. Morocco and Tunisia also had already signed bilateral labour agreements with main destination countries for their migrants, e.g. France and Spain. It is, therefore, possible to argue that the EU succeeded in negotiating Mobility Partnerships with these three countries because they had already started to think about migration in terms of challenges and opportunities to manage, as opposed to other SEMCs that continue to have a traditional, repressive view of migrants. For example, Algeria's migration policy is exclusively focused on combating irregular immigration and does not feature any concrete measure for labour migration, whilst Egypt goes as far as forcing emigrants to ask for a permit to work abroad and to pay a corresponding tax.

In Lebanon, the only notable recent development in the formulation of policies for the management of labour migration came in the form of measures restricting access of Syrian refugees to the domestic labour market. The inflow of refugees is a serious issue in Jordan and Lebanon, insofar as their saturated labour markets can hardly sustain further socio-economic pressure, but the differences in the response of the two countries to the issue is nonetheless significant. Jordan stepped up cooperation with international donors to favour the integration of refugees in the labour market, provided that the initiatives implemented would also bring tangible benefits to domestic workers.

The signature of a Mobility Partnership with the EU did give impulse in the countries concerned to the development of migration policies and the reinforcement of the labour component within these. Tunisia adopted a National Strategy for Migration in 2017, with a focus on the promotion of skills and protection rights, denoting a shift of approach to migration.¹⁰ Morocco, traditionally a country of emigration but increasingly also a country of transit and destination, adopted a National Strategy for Immigration and Asylum in 2014. The strategy has a humanitarian focus but foresees the upgrading of regulations for labour migration and the development of a dedicated institutional framework, whilst also treating immigration as an opportunity rather than a threat.¹¹ Arguably, the adoption of a national strategy for migration is a precondition for the effective formulation and implementation of concrete measures for the management of labour migration under the Mobility Partnership with the EU. In Jordan, where no strategy of the sort has

¹⁰ The strategy was originally drafted in 2012 and revised twice before being adopted in 2017. The full text is available in French at: http://ote.nat.tn/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/SNM_FRA_FINALE.pdf (accessed 26 April 2019).

¹¹ For more detailed information about the strategy, the latest implementation report is available in French at: <https://marocainsdumonde.gov.ma/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Politique-Nationale-dimmigration-et-dAsile--Rapport-2018.pdf> (accessed 26 April 2019).

been adopted to date, the signature of the Mobility Partnership did not translate into a commitment by national institutions responsible for labour migration to formulate and implement MISMES.

For migration policies to succeed in facilitating the integration of immigrants and emigrants in domestic or foreign labour markets respectively, whilst also creating the conditions for their return and, thereby, containing the loss of talent that emigration entails for origin countries, it is important to create synergies with education and employment policies. However, there is not a single mention of labour migration in the national employment strategies of Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, whereas in Jordan and Lebanon employment policies were revised in response to the large inflow of refugees, but only to regulate or restrict their access to the domestic labour market. In those countries where some efforts to develop MISMES were carried-out, these were not formulated in relation to ALMPS, whereas the two sets of intervention basically target the same, i.e. the matching of skills and jobs. Algeria, Egypt and Jordan include immigrants with a work permit in the target population of ALMPS, whilst this is not the case in Tunisia and Morocco, although in the latter case there is an on-going attempt to develop a national strategy for the employment of regulated immigrants, which involves the institutions responsible for formulating and implementing ALMPS.¹²

As regards to the institutional setting, in those SEMCs where a migration policy with a labour component was formulated, the ministries responsible for foreign affairs and labour are usually seen to collaborate in its implementation, although the actual modalities of such collaboration often remain unclear. Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia appointed a minister or secretary of state to migration issues. In other SEMCs, migration falls under the responsibility of the minister responsible for foreign affairs and it is unclear how much importance is given to the labour market integration of migrants in the work of the ministry, if any. In the countries where MISMES are implemented, international donors played a fundamental role in their formulation and have substantially contributed to building capacity in managing labour migration within responsible institutions at the national level.

Implementation

The European Training Foundation published inventories providing detailed information and in some cases preliminary assessments of single MISMES implemented in Jordan, Morocco and

¹² For more information in French, see the website: <http://www.sharaka.ma/thematiques/integration-professionnelle-des-immigres-regularises-au-maroc> (accessed 26 April 2019)

Tunisia, the three countries having signed a Mobility Partnership with the EU (European Training Foundation, 2015f; 2015g; 2017). The aim of our survey was to collect, to the extent possible, the perspective of key informants within national institutions responsible for MISMES about a number of issues associated with their implementation. As we have previously argued, the country experts noted a certain lack of co-ownership by survey respondents concerning the MISMES under their responsibility, which is consistent with the fact that these were largely implemented under the impulse of international donors. For the purpose of the survey, MISMES were grouped in two categories and three sub-categories. The two categories are emigration and immigration MISMES and refer to the role of the country implementing them: origin or destination country. The three sub-categories are pre-migration, during migration and post-migration MISMES and refer to the stage of the migration process targeted.

As regards to pre-emigration MISMES, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia differ in the degree of information and support provided before departure to emigration candidates through dedicated MISMES. Jordan does not provide information on a systematic basis, only upon request of the candidate to the relevant authorities. Morocco and Tunisia provide information about the labour market in the destination country, e.g. administrative procedures, employment opportunities and, in the case of Tunisia, also about living standards, e.g. housing costs. Tunisia is the only country providing skills training and language courses for emigration candidates, whilst the three countries provide assistance on diploma recognition and job intermediation under bilateral labour agreements with the main destination countries. The survey respondents noted that the bilateral agreements with GCC countries tend to be focused on job intermediation linked to labour shortages in given sectors of the destination country, although broader memorandum of cooperation on employment matters were signed in some cases. Bilateral agreements with EU member states foresee, at least in principle, collaboration between institutions in home and host countries finalised at the point of matching available skills and jobs (for a detailed discussion see Alcidi, Laurensyeva and Wali, 2019).

As regards to during and post-emigration MISMES, both Morocco and Tunisia provide emigrants with administrative support for labour market integration in the destination country, but only the latter follows-up with beneficiaries beyond the initial phase. Jordan does not implement any significant during or post-emigration MISMES, but does collaborate with a diaspora of associations with their own initiatives, which is not the case of Morocco and Tunisia. The two countries, which have extensive reach in several EU member states, would benefit greatly from stepping-up collaboration with a diaspora of associations, especially for the implementation of return programmes. It is worth noting that France's Office for Immigration and Integration is formally

collaborating with a range of Tunisian associations to provide support to immigrants willing to return to Tunisia to set-up a business. In turn, Jordan and Morocco had not implemented return programmes at the time of writing.

The findings of the survey attest that, for the most part, MISMES implemented in Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia target emigrants, whilst measures supporting immigrants are lacking, with the notable exception of those targeting labour market integration of Syrian refugees into Jordan's labour market. This is explained by the three countries being traditionally emigration countries, but in recent years Jordan has received substantial inflows of refugees, whilst Morocco and Tunisia have become countries of transit and, increasingly, destination for Sub-Saharan migrants originally heading to Europe. Against this backdrop, the three countries would benefit from developing more initiatives on a pro-active basis, aimed at integrating immigrants into the labour market. Furthermore, MISMES were developed chiefly in the framework of the Mobility Partnership with the EU, something that might have influenced the measures that were eventually implemented towards the management of the refugee crisis in Jordan and the migration flows across the Mediterranean.

The survey respondents were asked to provide their personal assessments of the MISMES implemented under the Mobility Partnership, most particularly those concerning the lack of immigration measures. Tunisian respondents praised the Mobility Partnership for providing a framework for the promotion of skills through labour migration, but regretted the lack of concrete measures for its management, as opposed to other areas of the partnership where more tangible steps were taken. Moroccan and Jordanian respondents argued that it is too early to assess the initiatives launched under the Mobility Partnership. This is certainly true, but at the same time it appears quite clearly that the Mobility Partnership had a great impact on the formulation and implementation of concrete measures in support of labour migration in Morocco and Tunisia, compared to Jordan. According to the survey respondents, this is due to the widespread perception that MISMES are conceived for Syrian refugees more than for Jordanian nationals.

As regards to the financing of MISMES, the survey did not produce enough information to draw significant conclusions, but most of the funds allocated to their implementation in SEMCs, where they were actually implemented, came from international donors. This raises doubts concerning co-ownership of the MISMES implemented by responsible institutions at a national level and their actual level of commitment in institutionalising the measures, a precondition for the establishment of a regional labour matching system responsibly and autonomously managed by participating countries.

Monitoring

As regards to monitoring and evaluation, Tunisia is the only country that has run assessments of the implemented MISMES and collected feedback from the beneficiaries on a seemingly systematic basis. The resulting estimates suggest that more than two thirds of the beneficiaries of emigration MISMES were successfully matched with placement opportunities abroad, i.e. 190 out of 250 candidates in the specific case of Germany mentioned by the official interviewed. It must be noted, however, that the measures implemented targeted a small share of overall emigration candidates. Among the main obstacles to successful matching, the survey respondents mentioned concerns related to the candidates' attitude and the inadequacy of their profiles, compared to available jobs in the destination country. This is a problem that could be resolved, to a certain extent, with the provision of training. Moroccan respondents mentioned language barriers as the main obstacles to successful matching, whilst also stressing the need for more professional training associated with available jobs in destination countries.

Morocco and Tunisia have a database containing information on actual or potential candidates of MISMES, although this is not the case for Jordan. In both countries, the database contains general information about the candidates, i.e. gender and family status, place of birth and current residence, desired destination and, most notably, educational attainment and skills. Tunisia also compiles information on labour market conditions in a number of main destination countries, i.e. type and duration of contracts and level of wages which are publicly available upon request. In Morocco and Tunisia, databases are hosted by the same institutions responsible for ALMPs, something that would facilitate the establishment of an integrated information system for labour matching and migration. In Jordan, international donors and non-governmental organisations implement most of the MISMES without centralised coordination, resulting in scattered data. Interestingly enough, Egypt keeps a register of expatriates for tax purposes, who must have a permit to work abroad. The rationale behind the measure is that expats must contribute to the economy of their home country. The register is hosted under the Ministry of Manpower and also contains information on education and professional experience.

CONCLUSION

This paper focused on the matching of skills provided by education systems and the jobs available in domestic and foreign labour markets, as a means of tackling (youth) unemployment in SEMCs and managing (labour) migration across the Mediterranean. The analysis was based on a survey of institutions responsible for the matching of skills and jobs both within and between countries in SEMCs, with an emphasis on active labour market policies (ALMPs) and migrant support measures from an employment and skills perspective (MISMES). The survey covered six selected SEMCs – Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia – and labour migration between these and the EU, although where relevant, migration to GCC countries was also considered.

The recent increase in migratory pressures across the Mediterranean and the failure to manage them in a legal and coherent fashion, resulting in the overwhelming majority of migrants reaching the EU irregularly or, at best, through family reunification, came as a wake-up call that a policy framework for responsible, inclusive and sustainable migration in the Euro-Mediterranean is dramatically lacking. Such a framework should enable both an efficient management of migration flows through legal channels and the effective integration of migrants into the labour market of destination countries, whilst also facilitating their eventual return against the backdrop of an overall brain circulation rationale. Indeed, the region has much to lose from one-way migration flows, leading to the unequal dynamics of brain drain and gain, whereas creating the conditions for circular migration as a viable and desirable option for migrants, would benefit all participating countries. In our view, creating the conditions for circular migration supposes engaging in the necessary reforms to tackle the dysfunctional relationship between education systems and labour markets, characterising virtually all SEMCs. This would support them in setting up an effective set of labour market policies to match skills and jobs within domestic labour markets. Indeed, successful matching within countries is a precondition for labour migration to become an opportunity and not a necessity which, in turn, would result in reduced and more manageable flows between countries.

To deliver on its goals, the policy framework for responsible, inclusive and sustainable migration should entail the establishment of a regional platform for the matching of skills and jobs between countries of origin and destination, and a supporting regional labour market information system. Ideally, the latter would rely on direct access to data from inter-operable national labour market information systems, hosted by national agencies responsible for labour matching and migration within individual SEMCs. In a more realistic scenario within a shorter timeframe, the establishment of

a regional information system would require relevant and reliable data on the demand and supply side of the labour market, to be produced by national statistical offices in SEMCs and then compiled at the regional level. Standards for the production of harmonised statistics between SEMCs and the EU should be defined.¹³

The regional platform for the matching of skills and jobs between Euro-Mediterranean countries should be hosted by an international institution that would also be responsible for updating the regional labour market information system on a regular basis and providing a range of services. The latter would include, but not be limited to, analysing and disseminating the data contained in the regional labour market information system and conducting other outreach activities targeting emigration candidates and potential employers in participating countries. In particular, foresight analysis of skills shortages and related needs across the region should be conducted on a regular basis. Such analysis already exists in the EU, but is lacking in SEMCs. Furthermore, the survey results revealed evidence that the lack of training is an important obstacle to successful matching, suggesting that institutions could also be involved in the identification of training needs and even facilitate the organisation of joint training by institutions in countries of origin and destination. For example, the training could take place in SEMCs where associated costs would be lower with financial and technical support from the EU. Graduates benefitting from such training would then have the opportunity to apply for jobs in the EU. On a small scale, projects of this sort are already being implemented in Morocco and Tunisia.

As previously argued, the development of sound policy frameworks, institutional settings and information systems for the formulation, implementation and monitoring of labour matching policies at the national level is a pre-condition for the establishment of an efficient regional matching platform. The priority for SEMCs is to embark in the structural reforms needed to address the dysfunctional relationship between education systems and labour markets underpinning the current situation in which youngsters and, in particular, the most educated amongst them are disproportionately affected by unemployment. On the supply side, the quality of education should be enhanced with a focus on the employability of future job seekers. In particular, vocational education and training should be developed and made more relevant and attractive, by stepping-up collaboration with the private sector. On this specific point, the use of public-private partnerships in the education sector could pave the way to innovative developments. On the demand side, private sectors should be developed to increase their contribution to employment creation. Here, a crucial

¹³ The EU-funded MEDSTAT project, now in its fourth phase of implementation, aims at promoting the harmonisation of official statistics in SEMCs with EU standards, including labour market and migration statistics.

issue is to expand access to finance for micro, small and medium enterprises, along with other measures aimed at supporting their growth (see Ayadi et al, 2019).

SEMCs should expand and enhance ALMPs to compensate for the high incidence of mismatches in their labour markets. This should be done as a means to operationalise national employment strategies, the formulation of which is a priority in those countries that don't have one, i.e. Lebanon. The second step is to establish an agency dedicated to the formulation, implementation and monitoring of ALMPs and the governance arrangements for its supervision, which should consist of inter-ministerial committees and mechanisms for the systematic consultation of relevant stakeholders, e.g. statistical bodies, employer associations, labour unions, youth associations. The agency should not be given the exclusive mandate to implement ALMPs, but rather the responsibility to oversee initiatives implemented by a variety of actors and to perform certain functions that are key to the functioning of the system as a whole, e.g. conducting monitoring and evaluation. In line with what was recommended for the regional level, the agency should also host and keep up-to-date a national labour market information system, including data on the demand and supply side of the labour market, collected through employment offices and employer associations, as well as follow-up data on the beneficiaries of ALMPs implemented.

The survey results attested that in recent years the six selected SEMCs have made substantial efforts to develop ALMPs. Morocco and Tunisia have developed a policy framework and institutional setting close to the one recommended, that can be taken as an example for other countries in the region, but well-functioning labour market information systems remain to be developed. The same cannot be said of labour migration policies, which are basically non-existent in SEMCs, with the exception of Morocco and Tunisia, which developed national strategies for migration with a labour component, under the impulse of the Mobility Partnerships signed with the EU. For other SEMCs, the priority is to define such strategies and to adopt sound regulatory frameworks for the management of labour migration. The second step is to build the intellectual and operational capacity in the institutions responsible for managing labour migration. It is recommended to build an institutional setting similar to the one proposed for ALMPs and to entrust the same agency with both ALMPs and MISMEs, thereby ensuring a coordinated and synergetic management of all policy instruments for labour matching. To this end, national strategies for employment and migration should complement each other where relevant, which is currently not the case, even in those countries that have adopted such strategies.



In those countries where MISMES are actually implemented, namely Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia, they are mostly part of international projects, with seemingly little co-ownership by national institutions, especially in Jordan. In particular, the survey results showed evidence that the signature of a Mobility Partnership with the EU did give an impulse to the implementation of measures in support of migrants, but did not automatically lead to co-ownership of the measures implemented - quite the contrary in some cases. This raises doubts about the sustainability of the measures implemented and calls for future actions to put more emphasis on building understanding of the importance of managing labour migration, besides the capacity to do so. To achieve this, the benefits of managing labour migration amongst SEMCs themselves should be made clear, by adopting a holistic migration rather than focusing exclusively on containing migration flows towards the EU.

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