

TVET Advancing the Palestinian Workforce

The Technical and Vocational Education and Training Sector in Palestine



By Ziad Jweiles

The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) began to address the governance and implementation of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Palestine with its foundation in 1994. Since then, progress can be seen regarding the widespread availability and improved quality of technical and vocational training in the country.

But despite these achievements, the Palestinian TVET sector continues to suffer from three main shortcomings, namely, the relatively low social image of the TVET sector's educational pathway, the fragmentation of TVET policy development and training delivery on the governmental level, and the lack of involvement of private sector stakeholders in the formulation and further development of TVET qualification needs. The sector's task is nothing short of the following: To supply businesses, companies, producers, and service providers with a highly qualified workforce and to meet the employment demands of Palestinian youth (male and female) – while simultaneously and adequately addressing the rise of environmental risks and challenges.

The National Technical and Vocational Education and Training Commission (NTC), established in 2021 and set up and equipped as an overarching governmental institution, is tasked with tackling this complex endeavor and aims to unify the TVET sector in Palestine once and for all. To understand the level of complexity involved in this challenge, we must understand some hard facts that frame the urgently needed action while placing the Palestinian TVET sector on a strong and lasting foundation.

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), Palestine has a population of 5.4 million that is growing by 2.4 percent each year. About two-thirds of the Palestinians who live in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are under 30 years of age. The country's workforce is around 1.4 million, out of which approximately one-quarter are currently unemployed (26 percent or 370,000). The system is required to create nearly 50,000 new jobs each year.

The opening of Hebron Expo in May 2022. Representatives from the Hebron governorate, German Representative Office, GIZ, UNESCO, Hebron Chamber of Commerce, and representatives from the private sector.



Vocational training has the potential to promote quality craftsmanship in a wide range of fields, raise the level of production, and reduce unemployment.

The establishment and setup of the NTC is based on the lessons learned from previous governmental attempts to harmonize TVET in Palestine. In 2010, the relevant line ministries, with the support of the German Development Cooperation, revised the TVET strategy that had been endorsed by the late President Yasser Arafat in 1999. From 2016 to 2018, the Higher Council for TVET was established as a policy





Dr. Jweiles meets Dr. Maliki Osman, Second Minister of Education and Foreign Affairs, during a recent visit to Singapore.

steering body and equipped with the Development Centre as its technical arm. The council aims to support the delivery of training, monitor and evaluate the sector's performance, and conduct research. However, this structure has not been able to meet the needs and challenges of the TVET sector. Although the Higher Council has acted as a coordinating body, it has been unable to provide uniform policies and support to the sector as a whole.

For this reason and because Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh has prioritized the TVET sector, a ministerial committee was formed in May 2019 to design a modified vision of how to guide the reform and development of the TVET sector. Based on the foundations of TVET governance, this new model tasks one national central body with setting the needed policies for a unified system, providing leadership, and enabling the implementation of the TVET system strategies, thus providing a holistic Palestinian TVET model.

Furthermore, and for the first time in Palestinian history, a unified legal foundation has been produced as a significant outcome of this process: In February 2021, Law No. 4 was endorsed by presidential decree,

landmarking the establishment of the NTC. The commission's board of directors is headed by the prime minister and the ministers of the various line ministries involved in the TVET sector: the ministries of labor, education, higher education and scientific research, social development, and transport. The board also includes private sector representatives, including the Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce Industry and Agriculture (FPCCIA), the trade unions, and Nablus University for Vocational and Technical Education, a governmental university in Nablus.

Based on Law No. 4, the NTC's mandate is characterized by the following: As the national body responsible for policymaking and development in the TVET sector, the NTC is responsible for organizing, supervising, following up, guiding, and controlling all institutions that work in the TVET sector. It also manages the unified funding and coordinates and harmonizes donor activity in the sector. In addition, the Palestinian government (the Prime Minister's Office, through its Local Aid Coordination Secretariat) has initiated a new Sector Working Group (SWG) that serves as a kind of roundtable for the TVET sector. It

coordinates the NTC's engagement with donors, development agencies, private sector stakeholders, and private training providers. This TVET-SWG is headed by the president of the NTC and co-chaired by the German Representative Office in Palestine; the technical advisory chair is held by the International Labour Organization.

Furthermore, the NTC is mandated to promote the quality of the sector's outputs and build an integrated TVET system that is efficient, effective, and flexible. In addition,

To foster the closer engagement of the private sector – namely industries, businesses, and service providers – in shaping TVET occupations, the NTC is piloting the setup of National Sector Skills Councils. They shall provide bridges between the labor market and the education and training systems to promote strong employer leadership, foster demand orientation, and facilitate better use and development of people's skills. This will improve the match between the demand and supply sides of the labor market.



Panel discussion on Day 2 of Hebron Expo about the mandate of the national TVET commission and roles of stakeholders. Speakers included (left to right): Mr. Jamal Jawabreh, CEO of FPCCIA; Dr. Ishaq Sider, Minister of Telecommunications and Information Technology; Dr. Ziad Jweiles, President of NTC; Dr. Amjad Barham; and Mr. Abdel Fattah Batran, GIZ-Facilitator.

the NTC focuses on keeping up with technological developments and the corresponding demands of the various industries and service areas, fostering the digitalization and automatization of production processes. Moreover, the NTC aims to contribute to the development of national human resources by helping to provide employment opportunities for young men and women as well as marginalized groups in society and by promoting lifelong learning in general. Thereby it aims to reduce unemployment rates and help meet the needs of the local, regional, and international labor markets.

To move the NTC and the TVET sector forward, the ongoing development of the NTC's internal organization is supported by the German Development Cooperation through an international consultancy firm. Currently, the NTC is implementing a transitional plan that structures the gradual transfer of TVET institutions and the involved ministerial staff members from the corresponding line ministries to the NTC. In parallel, the NTC is working to provide guidance and orientation material and expose Palestinian youth to the opportunities of the TVET sector.



During the first Steering Committee Meeting for Support to TVET in East Jerusalem project at UNDP Ramallah Office with Norway, Ministry of Education, National TVET Commission and UNDP. Increasing the possibilities of youth employment and entrepreneurship.

During this unfolding transitional period, the NTC will manage the readjustment of training delivery through the inclusion of the corresponding line ministries. In addition, the NTC is mapping out the field of needed and new occupations related to climate change adaptation efforts highlighted in the 2030 International Sustainable Development Goal Agenda. Under the headline Green-TVET Strategy, the NTC will develop progressive courses and training schemes in the broad field of renewable energy, such as photovoltaic and wind-turbine power, electric vehicle maintenance, and smart building and construction technologies. In accordance with this, greening-modernization efforts of TVET institutions such as TVET schools, TVET colleges, and vocational training centers will be implemented by the NTC as well.

Finally, the NTC would like to highlight that it appreciates the support of all friends, donors, and development agencies that are standing behind the reform, growth, and development of the TVET sector in Palestine.

Holding a PhD in educational administration as well as an MSc and a BSc in electrical engineering, Ziad Jweiles is currently the executive president of the newly established National TVET Commission in Palestine. He has previously served as the general director for TVET in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and worked at Palestine Polytechnic University, moving from the position of lecturer to university president. In the private sector, Ziad worked as director of the Electricity Company in Ramallah. With the donor side, he took office as the project manager for establishing an EU multi-purpose TVET center.

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