



3.1.1 Deepened Labour Market Analysis Report

GREENLAND PROJECT

GREEN-skiLls for a sustAiNable Development

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

The consultant Dr. Ghinwa Mikdashi and her team prepared this report on behalf of nine partners working in seven countries:

- Regione Calabria, Italy
- Planning and Development Agency (PDA), Lebanon
- National Agricultural Research Center (NARC), Jordan
- Arab Academy for Science, Technology, and Maririme Trasport (ASSTMT), Egypt
- Hisham Hijjawi College of Technology (HHCOT), Palestine
- ARCES Association, Italy
- University of Algarve, Portugal
- European Regional Framework for Cooperation (E.R.F.C), Greece
- Interbalkan environment Center (I-BEC), Greece

The study was designed, developed, and implemented in close cooperation with all partners and with the aid of their data collectors under the project entitled GREEN-skills for a sustAiNable Development (GREENLAND). It falls within the broader scope of a Market Analysis and Data Profiling assignment and constitutes the first phase. The overall aim of this phase specifically is to identify sectors with the greatest potential for economic growth and for offering employment opportunities for the Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs) and Women within Green and Circular Economies (GaCEs).

Findings have been compiled with the support of key stakeholders who together completed 258 survey questionnaires between the 28th of July 2021 and the 8th of October 2021. Data has all been entered into Kobo toolbox, cleaned, analyzed, and compared with the available literature. The team would like to take this opportunity to thank all stakeholders who provided invaluable feedback, contributing to the development of this report despite challenges faced.

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ACRONYMS AND ABRIVIATIONS

ASSTMT	Arab Academy for Science, Technology, and Maririme Trasport
E.R.F.C	European Regional Framework for Cooperation
GaCE	Green and Circular Economy
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GREENLAND	GREEN-skiLLs for a sustAiNable Development
HHCOT	Hisham Hijjawi College of Technology
I-BEC	Interbalkan environment Center
ILO	International Labor Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NARC	National Agricultural Research Center
NEETs	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PDA	Planning and Development Agency
RLO	Regional and Local Authorities
SME	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
VT	Vocational Training

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the past decades, a unifying concern across the globe has become how to achieve a better and sustainable future for all. With the diminishing overexploited natural resources, countries across the world are attempting to sustain and/ or achieve economic growth and development without adversely impacting the environment or depleting our resources.

Acknowledging the tripartite relationship between the environment, economy, and society, this market analysis aims at proposing solutions where the Not in Employment, Education, or Training (NEETs) in society can be involved to improve the economy while concurrently protecting the environment for the wellbeing of future generations. Untapped or under-tapped economic sectors where NEETS can be employed are thus highlighted within a Green and Circular Economy (GaCE). Implemented within the framework of a project aimed at promoting social inclusion and fight against poverty, GREEN-skills for a sustAiNable Development (GREENLAND) works to provide young people, especially those belonging to the NEETs and women, with marketable skills across seven countries; Italy, Portugal, Greece, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, and Palestine. An inspection of the labor markets trends and evidences of the seven addressed countries highlights the disturbing drifts while concurrently pointing out to promising prospects for the empowerment of NEETs and women through equipping them with marketable skills for a resource efficient, sustainable, and inclusive GaCE that ultimately contributes to combating climate change while concurrently improving lives and livelihoods. Thus, the focus of this study is on reducing the mismatch between the labor market and skills in NEETs and women by ensuring the availability of necessary provisions needed to facilitate their access into the labor market.

Main Findings

- Majority of businesses require workers who have some experience. Thus, internships and apprenticeships are key in any program addressing labor gaps.
- Employers often complain from workers' irresponsibility, lack of seriousness, and lack of proper communication skills. Accordingly, it would be recommended to offer NEETs soft-skills training as part of any curriculum that supports their employability.
- Many employers require employees who are able to read, write, and use computers. For this reason, as relevant, the curricula need to embed basic literacy and numeracy as well as digital skills.
- Noting that online platforms have become the number one recruitment platform, potential employees need to be trained on online job search and application. Additionally, having a recruitment platform that focuses on opportunities within GaCE is highly recommended.
- Key stakeholders consulted concur that NEETs are challenged by the limited employment opportunities, lack of experience, low salaries, and a skills mismatch.
- There is a growing awareness towards renewable and alternative energy as a potential sector of employment for NEETs.



Majority of businesses require workers who have some **experience**.



Employers often **complain** from workers' irresponsibility, and lack of skills.



Literacy, digital skills, & soft skills are pre-requisite for employment.



NEETs are **challenged by** a skills mismatch & limited opportunities



Renewable and alternative energy are **potential sectors** of employment for NEETs.



Online platforms have become the number one recruitment

Figure 1: Summary of Main Findings

Labor Market Study with Focus on Green and Circular Economies

I. OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Overview

People across the globe have overexploited natural resources in attempts to achieve economic growth and development. While such actions may have sustained populations for a duration of time, they have had a negative impact on the environment, concurrently leading to resource depletion. According to the Cambridge Judge Business School Circular Economy Center, “90% of raw materials used in manufacturing in Europe become waste before the product leaves the factory and 80% of products made in Europe get thrown away in the first six months of their existence”. These facts have necessitated interventions that would ensure a more sustainable economic growth model.

Acknowledging the multilateral relationship between the environment, economy, and society, this market analysis aims at proposing solutions where the Not in Employment, Education, or Training (NEETs) in society can be involved to improve the economy while concurrently protecting the environment for the wellbeing of future generations. Economic activities that are connected with the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services across the value chain are researched and investigated, while highlighting low carbon, resource efficiency and socially inclusive approaches. Unexploited or under-exploited economic sectors where NEETS can be employed are highlighted within a Green and Circular Economy (GaCE). The concept of implementing GaCE in struggling countries helps counter policy mismanagement through bringing together the environment and economy to achieve long-term sustainability. Investing in GaCE (a) nourishes the ecosystem by combating climate change and water scarcity, enriching the economy with a supply of products that will (b) increase economic activity and employment opportunities, thus generating a pool of environmental goods that benefit the economy through exportation. Green Economy represents a system of economic activities connected with the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services that results in better human wellbeing in the long term to avoid exposing future generations to significant environmental risks and ecologic shortage¹. Complementarily, Circular Economy refers to strategies that limit the environmental impact and waste of resources while concurrently increasing efficiency at all product economy stages².

¹ https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/8659/-%20Green%20economy_%20what%20do%20we%20mean%20by%20green%20economy_%202012Main%20briefing%202012

² https://www.eesc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/files/ceps_report_the_circular_economy_a_review_of_definitions_processes_and_impacts

A closer look at the economies of the seven addressed countries highlights the worrying trends while simultaneously accentuating a potential for the promotion of social inclusion and fight against poverty through providing young people, especially those belonging to the Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEETs) and women with marketable skills.

1.2 Italy

The Italian labor market has suffered substantial damage due to three main recessions (February 2001 to July 2003; March 2008 to May 2009; and June 2011 to April 2013) with unemployment higher than pre-crisis levels. A prominent distinction in unemployment and participation rates is seen between young (aged 15-24) and older (aged 55-64) individuals. Older workers have seen their participation employment level increase, which is mirrored by a worrying surge of nonparticipating youth – currently 15% less than its 2000 value (IZA World of Labor, 2017). The decrease in participation rate among youth, however, is not due to an increase in full-time enrollment in education, but to the emergence of NEET youth. The incidence of NEET youth was 17% in 2008 and reached 22% by 2013. Today it is stable at around 20% of the total population. An evaluation of the geographic dispersion of NEET youth reveals a worrying trend: 14% in the north, 17% in the center, and 28% in the south (ISTAT, 2016).

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Italy has witnessed an estimated 86,000 deaths of its citizens with an increased unemployment rate of 33% (ISTAT, 2020). Southern regions (Sicily and Calabria) have been mostly affected by these rates as the incidence of NEETs in these areas registered 37.5% and 34.6% respectively³, while the number of NEETs between the ages of 15 to 29 reached above 2 million (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development - OECD, 2018). The severity of these rates places NEETs at a higher risk of becoming socially excluded and impoverished, considering the lacking skills to improve their economic situation. Despite this gloomy outset, the Youth Guarantee program, a European initiative born from the need to tackle the difficulties of job placement and youth unemployment, had a significant impact on the youth employment generally, and on NEETs employment specifically, since the initiation of the program in 2013 till the end of April 2020, approximately 1.6 million NEETs have registered with the Youth Guarantee. About 1 million 200 thousand have been processed by the competent services (Employment Centers and Employment Agencies) and over 712 thousand have been initiated into an active policy measure. Most of the young people enrolled are between the ages of 19 and 24 (55.8%) and have a secondary school qualification (58.1%). 40.3% have a high profiling index, i.e., greater difficulty in entering the labor market.

The overall Youth Guarantee policy measures distributed since the initiation of the program are over 1.5 million measures: over 610,000 services at work, and more than 897,000 active policy measures, including 507,707 internships carried out in companies, 207,480 incentives provided to companies for the recruitment of NEETs and 136,242 training courses held. Within 12 months from the process, 53.4% of young people found a job, a percentage that rises to 57% for those who have started a policy measure. The employment rate of those who have completed a

³ White Paper

measure is equal to 55%, higher for men (56.9%) than for women (52.9%) and, in general, for those with better employability requirements. 82% of employees have a permanent or apprenticeship contract, 15% a fixed-term relationship. The insertion rate one month after the completion of the intervention is equal to 49.4% and rises to 58.4% after twelve months. Higher employment rates are observed in the case of young people who have benefited from accompaniment to work (70.9%) or an employment incentive (69.9%)⁴.

The difference in unemployment rates across regions in Italy has been as such for years. Higher levels of unemployment exist in southern regions than the north, with smaller differences between central and northern regions. In 2007, unemployment in southern regions was threefold of that in the north (11.1% and 3.5% respectively). Now, the gap has been slightly reduced because of the double-dip recession by roughly 2.5 times higher than in the north⁵. This ongoing convergence process, however, is not the result of improvement by southern regions but of poor performance by northern regions.

Despite the economic difficulties faced in previous years, Italy remains at a point of generating income and opportunities through GaCE. Symbola's Foundation report highlights the eco-friendly production of goods and services in Italy, being one of the low-level waste emissions producing countries.

Agriculture is Italy's primary growth sector, generating 9 million tons of waste and 20 million tons of crop residues annually (Green Alliance, 2015). Hence, valuable opportunities lie in composting, anaerobic digestion, and biorefining. Such benefits have been prevalent in Italy since 2015. Green factories dominated 32% of the manufacturing sector, which lead to the creation of 2,600 jobs in its 240 compost plants and 43 anaerobic digestion plants (Green Alliance, 2015). Yet, Italy can employ a more significant percentage of people and, more importantly, process more than 5.6 million tons of waste annually. Heat pumps, solid biomass, and hydropower are the leading employers in the renewable energy industry, which Italy can undoubtedly capitalize on (European Commission's JRC, 2018).

Italy ranks first on waste management performance, in addition to being a leader in bioeconomy. The country's policy framework shows a growing emphasis on circular economy and sustainability as well as a support for eco-innovation⁶. However, despite the overall good performance of Italy on eco-innovation, barriers such as low levels of research and development investments and differences in legislative procedures across regions continue to exist.

1.3 Portugal

With nearly ten years into the global financial crisis, the OECD average employment rate returned to its pre-crisis rate in 2016. The OECD-average unemployment rate on the other hand has regressed to its former state in 2019, while slightly being above its pre-crisis level. Though when

⁴ White Paper

⁵ http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-03/14/c_137036951.htm

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecoap/italy_en

it comes to Portugal, unemployment has fallen at a rapider rate, set at 9.8% in 2017 – still significantly above the 5.9% OECD average⁷. While the redevelopment of Portugal’s economy is a positive indicator, there lies a deep-rooted structural weakness considering that the labor market performance had been worsening prior to 2007.

As of recently, Portugal experienced a sharp decline in employment rates primarily due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic — closures and job losses. Unemployment had risen by 1% in October 2020, setting it at 7.5%, with 30% unemployment for youth aged between 15 to 24⁸, and 7.2% unemployment rate for women⁹. On the other hand, the most recent study (ILO, 2015) on NEETs population in Portugal shows approximately 272,000 persons concentrated in the Northern region (37.4% of the total), Lisbon Metropolitan Area (21.6%), and Central region (20.8%). Furthermore, Portugal experienced a 10% dip in GDP due to the COVID-19 pandemic as estimated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). One of the country's pillars for growth, tourism, posed a threat to its prospective development as it became at risk of complete collapse.

Additionally, Portugal suffered significant losses in its industry, construction, energy, and water sectors with this pandemic, especially considering that 78.3% of its energy is imported (International Trade Administration, 2020). Optimistic resolutions would have to be based on the regulation of sustainable policies and strategies based on GaCE, while taking into account the nation’s high-security standards, low crime rates, and most importantly the stable social climate. These factors can contribute to the initiation and implementation of new — solar-powered and renewable — energy sources, relying on domestic energy production whilst resolving climate change aspects with de-carbonizing strategies.

It is important to mention that Portugal has shown a significant leap forward in eco-innovation and has introduced policy instruments to implement circular economy projects across private and public organizations¹⁰. Expanding and applying solutions in this context can strengthen the economy through the decrease in prices, positively affecting citizens’ disposable income and reducing businesses’ operating costs.

1.4 Greece

Similar to Portugal, Greece finally began showing improvement in its labor market conditions as the global financial crisis ceased. After a prolonged and deep recession, the Greek economy started to grow again in late 2016 and was projected to continue growing during the next two years. Labor market recovery was expected to be a slow process despite Greece having implemented significant labor market reforms focused on introducing more flexibility. Gradual recovery was sustained for three years, which brought solid job creation increasing the employment rate to 57% from 2013 until the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic¹¹ in 2019. This

⁷ <https://www.oecd.org/portugal/Employment-Outlook-Portugal-EN.pdf>

⁸ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_767028.pdf

⁹ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.FE.ZS>

¹⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecoap/portugal_en

¹¹ <https://www.oecd.org/economy/surveys/Greece-2020-OECD-economic-survey-Overview.pdf>

shock set the economy's progress back while having the labor force shut down due to the government's movement restriction measures, raising the nonparticipation rate to what was reached in 2009. However, as the health situation improved, the economic situation managed to resume its progress, with governmental debt reduced to 176.7% of GDP and unemployment set below 16% (of which 21.5% are women)¹².

With optimism aside, NEETs currently comprise 12.5% of the total Greek population (Eurostat, 2020). The spread of the virus has exacerbated the heavy effects on the economy by leaving an eighth of the population inactive, lacking the necessary skills to counter their situation. Greece's economic activity is still heavily concentrated in traditional and low-innovation sectors, resulting in low productivity growth. Furthermore, the economy of Greece is based mostly on the service and industry sector, with agriculture providing about 3% of the total gross domestic product of the country. Its industries include tourism, merchant shipping (being the largest merchant marine in the world in terms of total capacity), and a producer of agricultural products¹³.

Nevertheless, other challenges persist in hindering the process of shaping a new growth model. For instance, imports of primary energy sources (oil and gas) are highly depended on by Greece. Second, 80% of municipal solid waste management relies on landfill disposal, ranking poorly in economic circularity. Investments in green technologies and more sustainable solutions with the up-skilling and re-skilling of the labor force towards a green and circular economy need to be executed.

1.5 Lebanon

As for the middle eastern region, Lebanon is experiencing calamities that range from governmental instability to economic stagflation. These conditions were worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic, and with Beirut's unforeseen port explosion on August 4th, 2020 claiming 200 deaths and 6,500 injuries. The health and economic crises have persisted since then, with no clear signs of resolution, especially with the extension of the collateral damage to the devaluation of the Lebanese pound, soaring inflation rates, retracting investments, and decreasing job opportunities, all driving youth immigration.

Delving deeper into Lebanon's situation, it's important to consider that statistics on employment and labor-market trends are outdated and contradictory. The latest official labor-market survey was published in 2009¹⁴. The ILO and the UN have deduced that the Lebanese population is roughly 4.68 million, while they placed the total number of employed individuals 15 years of age and above at about 2.061 million¹⁵. This showcases a low employment to population ratio of 44.1%. Additionally, there exists an estimated 1 to 2 million Syrian refugees, 174,000 Palestinian

¹² <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.FE.ZS>

¹³ https://www.greece.com/info/economy/greece_economy/

¹⁴ CAS, <http://www.cas.gov.lb/index.php/demographic-and-social-en/laborforce-en>

¹⁵ ILO, Employment-to-population ratio -- ILO modelled estimates, Nov. 2018, https://www.ilo.org/ilostat/faces/oracle/webcenter/portalapp/pagehierarchy/Page3.jspx?MBI_ID=7&_afLoop=1463911161474491&_afWindowMode=0&_afWindowId=hbalaocp3_196#!%40%40%3F_afWindowId%3Dhbalaocp3_196%26_af

refugees, and about 300,000 foreign workers. However, several discrepancies on the actual unemployment rate lie on the inconsistent research that does not take into account the influx of refugees and the economic crisis. For example, one survey conducted in collaboration with the Lebanese Army revealed an approximate 660,000 unemployed people, which would account for 36% of Lebanese nationals¹⁶.

What is certainly the case, though, is the inability of the Lebanese job market to sufficiently create a number of jobs to supplement to new entrants in the job market. Around 10,000 to 15,000 jobs are created annually in Lebanon, but the annual rate of university graduates lies between 23,000 to 43,000¹⁷ — almost threefold the available vacancies. Not to mention that most of the jobs created demand low-skill labor and low-productivity activities¹⁸, and have been limited to three main sectors: communications, financial services, and manufacturing¹⁹.

Lebanon's unemployment rate has been estimated to rise to 37% in 2020²⁰, having potentially increased after the port blast. More than 70% of the population is below poverty level, 22% of the population are NEETs, with 9.8% women unemployment rate²¹, and roughly only 14% of youth finding employment after graduation annually²². The economy needs to create 6 times as many jobs to simply absorb regular market entrants, which highlights a problem with youth employment. Higher-educated youth unemployment rates are 21.8% of upper-secondary graduates and 36.1% of university graduates²³. This stems from the inequality of the education system which in turn affects labor supply, and a lack of economic reform that impacts labor demand²⁴. Despite having high levels of tertiary education, the existing 'skills gap' and high expectations with regard to wages and responsibility restricts the likelihood of achieving economic growth and creating jobs in the Lebanese marketplace. Besides, 41% of the already employed population report their education being irrelevant to their current occupation, thus explaining the estimated 44% of educated youth migration (UNDP, 2018).

1.6 Egypt

Egypt has the fastest growing population in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, which has grown from 79.6 million in 2011 to almost 95 million in 2017 and is estimated to reach

¹⁶ Muadarat wa Kararat (2018): Labour Market Survey for Lebanese Army

¹⁷ EFT (2017): Lebanon Education, Training, and Employment Developments 2017

¹⁸ The main contributors to employment by order of importance were wholesale and retail trade, other non-tradable service sectors, and construction.

¹⁹ World Bank (2018): Program Appraisal Documents on proposed Loan in the Amount of 400.0 million USD to the Lebanese Republic for creating economic Opportunities in Support of the Lebanon National Jobs Program.

²⁰ https://stage.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/event/materials/lebanon_workshop_arabic_-_6-10-2020.pdf

²¹ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.FE.ZS>

²² https://www.ilo.org/beirut/media-centre/news/WCMS_633480/lang--en/index.htm

²³ EFT (2015): Labour Market and Employment Policy in Lebanon

²⁴ International Bank for Reconstruction And Development, International Finance Corporation, and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency Country Partnership Framework For The Lebanese Republic For The Period Fy17-Fy22, June 15 2016, P.11

151 million by 2050²⁵. The young population from 15 to 24 years old represents 27.3% of the total population, which poses challenges in terms of education, creation of job opportunities, fight against unemployment and improvement of living standards. 27.6% are NEETs and an incredible 21.3% of all women are unemployed²⁶. However, it also shows the possibility of implementing changes to further develop the economy. Converting the high influx of young workers into job growth can be achieved through targeted social and economic reforms in the education system and in the labor market.

Following the political crisis and revolutionary uprising of 2011 and the currency crisis of 2016, Egypt launched reforms in 2017 to stimulate public investment and support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Unfortunately, that recovery stalled with the COVID19 pandemic, adding to the impact on the economy. Egypt's ranking remains low on the 2020 Economic Freedom Index (130 out of 180). The IMF noted a significant decline in the Egyptian economy's GDP from 5.9% in 2019 to 3.5% in 2020 and forecasts a further increase of 0.7 % in 2021, which does not encourage investment.

The unemployment rate is estimated at 9.7% in 2021 and 2022 (ETF, 2018). A survey conducted by CAPMAS found that three-quarters of all employees are paid as informal workers and 32.5% of the population lives below the poverty line. Furthermore, young people, who constitute 90% of the unemployed (UNDP and INP, 2020), are disproportionately affected by unemployment, and 48% of them women (IMF, 2018). The exclusion of job applicants from the realities of the job market and the skills required by companies can illustrate this oversight.

Egypt is one of the largest producers of CO2 emissions globally and the thirteenth producer of gas in 2019 with an oil production of more than 650,000 barrels per day despite the pandemic (Le360Afrique). The agricultural sector contributes only 11% of GDP and employs only 23% of the workforce (World Bank, 2020). There is a tendency to avoid the implementation of environmental protection strategies within the framework of GaCE, since they impede rapid economic growth. However, they are necessary to achieve sustainability.

Egypt has adopted eight initiatives highlighting the benefits and possible implementations of the green economy in the Egyptian context, targeting sectors such as waste management, renewable energy generation, pollution, sustainable agriculture, cleaner industrial production and ecotourism²⁷. Structural reforms have positive prospects, but they must be intensified to avoid possible social tensions²⁸.

²⁵ <https://egypt.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/PSA%20Final.pdf>.

²⁶ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.FE.ZS>

²⁷ https://www.greengrowthknowledge.org/sites/default/files/downloads/resource/Green_economy_Egypt_success_stories_UNEP_0.pdf

²⁸ International Monetary Fund, Arab Republic of Egypt, Country Report No. 17/290, July 2017; World Bank Egypt's Economic Outlook, April 2017.

1.7 Palestine

Crippling blockade, extreme deprivation, and outbursts of violence in the West Bank (Nablus, Jenin, Tubas, Tulkarm, Salbit, Qalqilya) and Gaza have shaped Palestine's general framework. The seemingly indefinite conflict has rendered opportunities scarce considering the minimal investments and available vacancies, reflecting the heavy reliance on Israel for growth.

Palestine's labor force reflects traditional gender divisions whereby men stay outside the labor force to pursue their education and women to carry out their household duties (63.8%) or to study (23.9%) (ILO, 2018). Many women exit the labor force upon marriage which reflects the low participation rate in the age group 25 to 34. This is revealed by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) study in 2017 which showcased the labor force statistics, underlining a lower percentage of women in the labor force who are married (56.5%) compared to men (66.1%). In terms of educational attainment, Palestinians possess a fair educational background with 43.7% having completed 13 or more years of schooling.

According to ILO, the employment rate in Palestine was 33.4% in 2016²⁹. The 2016 Labor Force Survey adds findings setting youth unemployment at a 27 with 44.7% female youth, 34.3% of the unemployed population being unemployed for more than a year, and 33.4% of the population being NEETs³⁰. Unemployment is particularly severe in Gaza due to the crippling blockade, bringing construction, manufacturing, and transportation to a halt. Most employment opportunities are dependent on financial support from international donors or short-term jobs by small NGOs. As such, the perception of education in relevance to employment amongst the educated youth has become impaired.

The government's active labor market policies and effective plan management are insufficient. The agriculture and manufacturing sectors barely contribute to the GDP (2.9% and 13.9%, respectively), considering controls on imported capital goods and raw material and restrictions on accessing outside markets.

1.8 Jordan

Jordanian workers' purchasing power has been under pressure from governmental austerity since 2019. Several protests took place, along with the imprisonment of political and anti-corruption activists under violating charges to freedom of expression.

Jordan's total population in 2020, including an inflow of Syrian refugees, is estimated at 10.8 million people³¹. Consequently, the employment participation rate has experienced a steady decline between 2009 and 2013, which now remains stagnant at 39% — 23% for youth³². For comparison, the participation rates are significantly below the Arab States average: 51% and 27%

²⁹ https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ILOSTUDY_040418.pdf

³⁰ <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/977921537274068902/pdf/129981-WP-PUBLIC-Enhancing-Job-Opportunities-for-Skilled-Females-in-the-Palestinian-Territories-Final-Report.pdf>

³¹ CIA, The World Factbook: Jordan, 2020

³² <https://www.ulandssekretariatet.dk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/LMP-Jordan-2020-final-version.pdf>

respectively³³. In order for Jordan to experience growth in labor productivity, first it requires investment and saving in physical capital, human capital, and new technology. However, Jordan is challenged on all three facets of growth as capital formation and investments have been declining since 2010, in addition to the widespread informal economy, rigid labor and business regulations, and deteriorating human development.

With this crux, the unemployment rate in Jordan calls for necessary intervention, with a total unemployment rate of 19%, and youth unemployment and NEETs at 35% in 2020³⁴ with 23.8% female unemployment³⁵. Further, unemployment for a period of more than 12 months has been on a rising trend since 2010. These rates have worsened since the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic, having the government impose harsh lockdowns and safety measures that took a toll on the economy, surging the unemployment rate to 23% in mid-2020³⁶. Main contributors for such high unemployment rates also lie within skills mismatch and lack of job creation for natives and refugees; demand for jobs is significantly higher than job supply. In turn, this gap resulted in many becoming economically inactive or resorting to migration. Roughly 800,000 Jordanians (11% of the total population) live abroad³⁷ while 75% of them are academically qualified, skilled, and specialized; a prime contributor to brain drain³⁸. As a result, high unemployment rates in Jordan prompt youth to migrate with the purpose of finding opportunities abroad.

³³ ILO, Forms of work and labour force statistics conceptual frameworks

³⁴ ILO, Key Indicators of the Labor Market (KILM)

³⁵ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.FE.ZS>

³⁶ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/jordan/overview#1>

³⁷ The Jordan Times, Labour migration and the Jordanian labour market, 2019

³⁸ OECD, Key Issues affecting Youth in Jordan

Key Facts



Italy

- ❖ Surge in nonparticipating youth in employment
- ❖ NEET youth incidence reached 22% in 2013 and 20% of total population recently
- ❖ Eco-friendly productions, agriculture, and renewable energy industries constitute promising sectors

Portugal

- ❖ Labor market segmentation remains a key challenge
- ❖ 30% youth unemployment rate in 2020
- ❖ 78.3% of energy is imported
- ❖ High potential for new energy sources



Greece

- ❖ Labor market reforms implemented after a prolonged and deep recession
- ❖ 16% unemployment rate and 12.5% NEETs
- ❖ Economic activity still heavily concentrated in traditional and low innovation sectors
- ❖ Upskilling and re-skilling labor force towards GaCE is highly needed.

Lebanon

- ❖ Governmental instability and economic stagflation
- ❖ Low employment to population ratio with unemployment at 37% in 2020
- ❖ Vacancies created much less than annual rate of university graduates
- ❖ 22% of population are NEETs



Egypt

- ❖ Fastest growing population in MENA
- ❖ 27.6% of population are NEETs
- ❖ 21.3% of women unemployed
- ❖ Three-fourth of employees are informal workers
- ❖ 90% of unemployed are youth

Palestine

- ❖ Many women exit labor force to marry
- ❖ 33.4% employment rate
- ❖ 27% youth unemployment rate
- ❖ 33.4% of population are NEETs



Jordan

- ❖ 23% youth employment participation rates
- ❖ 23% unemployment rate
- ❖ Skills mismatch and lack of job creation
- ❖ Demand higher than supply

Figure 2: Summary of Key Facts on Participating Countries

II. SCOPE, PURPOSE, LIMITATIONS, AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Scope and Purpose

This study falls within a process designed to identify employment opportunities in the domain of GaCE as well as associated skill gaps that can be promoted to improve the overall socio-economic conditions at the community/ local level in the seven targeted countries. The focus is on reducing the mismatch between the labor market and skills in NEETs and women by ensuring the availability of necessary provisions needed to facilitate their access into the labor market while concurrently equipping target groups with marketable skills via training courses, e-learning services, coaching, mentoring, and traineeships. Consequently, the long-term objective of this study will promote sustainable entrepreneurship and the creation of GaCE enterprises and jobs, improving the conditions of the target groups by enabling them to meet their social needs. As a first stage, this study focuses on mapping the demand side of the market as well as identifying market-relevant short-term trainings that will lead to employment or self-employment of NEETs and women.

2.2 Limitations

A number of key limitations faced this study, including:

- Majority of data collection took place virtual and over digital means hindered by the COVID-19 movement restrictions
- People's low level of awareness towards what constitutes NEETs and GaCE
- Data collection took place during summertime when some stakeholders were on leave
- Data collection in some countries was restricted by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which limited the ability to transfer data outside of the European Union

2.3 Methodology

During this phase, an in-depth desk review of existing Labor Market Studies was conducted to cover the seven countries included in this project; Greece, Italy, Portugal, Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, and Egypt. Both the supply and the demand sides were looked into; however, focus was placed on the demand side within GaCE sectors across the whole value chain, including institutions operating within energy, transport, waste, water, and land management, in addition to green buildings³⁹. Noting the limited data found in literature on these topics, the study focused on primary data.

During the inception phase, data collection tools, methodology, sampling, and stakeholders were agreed upon. The research followed a mixed methodology, varying questions to include both quantitative and qualitative ones. Surveys were respondent-led to maximize quality feedback.

³⁹ Please refer to the Annex for a list of documents reviewed

During this phase, 14 different stakeholders were reached across the seven countries, using random convenience sampling that relied on participants' willingness and ability to provide information. Sampling was done in coordination with partner organizations. Similarly, data collectors were identified by partners and trained on the tools to consult with selected stakeholders. Data was collected using KoBo Toolbox; an open-source suite of tools for data collection and analysis in humanitarian emergencies developed by Harvard Humanitarian Initiative. KoBo Toolbox offered both online and offline options, which made the work of data collectors logistically easier. Over the period of two and a half months approximately, a total of 258 responses were reached as shown in Table 1.

For all qualitative questions, units of words or phrases that describe the different questions were selected and results transformed into numerical data that was qualitatively analyzed as part of a process called quantizing to enable descriptive analysis by determining the frequency (the number of interviewees whose answers contributed to each category) and prevalence rate (the proportion of interviewees whose answers contributed to each category).

Table 1: Number of Responses by Stakeholder and Country

Stakeholder	Number of Responses							Total
	Lebanon	Portugal	Greece	Italy	Jordan	Palestine	Egypt	
Experts	7	0	3	10	1	12	0	33
Enterprises and SMEs	50	20	23	4	4	0	13	113
TVETs	4	2	2	1	6	1	2	18
Regional Departments	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Ministry of Industry	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	3
Ministry of Agriculture	1	1	0	0	3	0	0	5
Ministry of Education and Higher Education	1	3	0	0	1	0	0	5
Ministry of Labor	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	4
Ministry of Environment	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	5
Ministries	0	1	2	0	2	0	0	5
NGOs/INGOs	4	4	0	4	0	2	9	23
Employment Agencies	4	5	0	2	0	0	3	14
Chamber of Commerce	3	3	0	0	3	0	0	9
Municipalities	17	2	0	0	0	0	1	20
Total Responses	94	43	30	21	22	15	34	258

III. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This section presents the results of the analysis from the input obtained from key stakeholders across the seven targeted countries. Figure 3 summarized the main findings related to the employment gaps identified by those stakeholders.

3.1 Data Collected from SMEs

Across the seven countries, the highest number of responses came from enterprises and SMEs, noting that they are main shapers of the labor market's demand. Of the 113 respondents, 40% employ less than 10 employees and 24% have between 10 and 25 employees. The majority employ more males than females with 15% indicating that they have no females at all. 45% of respondents indicated that they have vacancies, although when asked about the challenges facing the employment of NEETs nowadays, the number one challenge listed by 25.7% was lack of employment opportunities. Additional challenges listed included low salaries (20.3%), and lack of experience (8%).

When asked about their employment preferences, the majority indicated that they are willing to hire people without degrees if properly trained. In fact, experience seemed to be the number one characteristic that SMEs look for in both unskilled/ semi-skilled jobs as well as skilled jobs (47.8% and 28.3% respectively). Additionally, they look for workers with a sense of responsibility and seriousness at work.

As to employment gaps identified by this sector, they mainly included workers in the Agriculture field (different professional levels), Laborers, and Sales and Marketing employees. Table 2 reflects on some of the specialties SMEs indicated that they are currently looking for. Additional gaps observed include recycling, water treatment, distribution, and carpentry.

KEY FINDING
Majority of SMEs stated that they would hire people without degrees if properly trained. To them, experience represented the most important determinant of employability.

Table 2: Distribution of Highest Listed Specializations Respondents are Looking for

Country	Accounting	Sales and Marketing	Agriculture	Laborers
Egypt	10%	20%		20%
Greece		6%	18%	41%
Italy				
Jordan			33%	
Lebanon	14%	26%		
Portugal			56%	11%

3.2 Data Collected from Experts

KEY FINDING

Skills mismatch between specializations and labor market demand is a key challenge impacting employability.

33 experts were consulted across 5 countries (Greece, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine) to gather their feedback on market needs within GaCE. The experts came from different fields including education (with focus on GaCE relevant specializations), environment, agriculture, engineering, and project development. They

concurred that the main challenges facing employment in general and the employment of NEETs in specific included (a) the skills mismatch between specializations and labor market demand, (b) the limited opportunities available, and (c) the high potential of NEETs' exploitation because of their limited experience, vulnerability, and great need.

When asked about sectors that have potential for NEETs' employability, experts indicated agriculture and organic agriculture (32%), technology (25%), renewable energy, environment, and green/ blue economy (25%), and construction (15.6%). Other sectors mentioned include recycling, manufacturing, tourism, handicrafts, furniture and carpentry, and food, among others. Similar to SMEs, they believe that to improve their employability, potential employees need experience and soft skills that enhance their sense of seriousness and responsibility such as communication skills, teamwork, and other life-skills. Last but not least, experts mentioned basic literacy and numeracy as well as digital skills as core.

3.3 Data Collected from NGOs

The sample of stakeholders included 21 responses from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) working in Egypt, Italy, Lebanon, Palestine, and Portugal in different sectors, including education, services, community development, environment, renewable energy, and agriculture. Additionally, some NGOs support small projects

for vulnerable populations. 33% focus in their work on women and 57% focus on young people and NEETs. 52% of NGOs indicated that they offer employment opportunities for NEETs.

According to this stakeholder, the main challenge facing NEETs employability is the lack of employment opportunities (23.8% of respondents) impacted by a number of factors including the mismatch between labor market supply and demand and a skills gap. Other challenges include illiteracy, lack of experience, and low salaries.

When asked about majors needed by the market, NGOs indicated marketing, education, alternative energy, carpentry, computer, agriculture, and food manufacturing and dairy productions as key areas.

KEY FINDING

NGOs seem to be a main employer/ potential employer of NEETs.

3.4 Data Collected from Regional Departments and Chambers of Commerce

11 responses came from regional departments and chambers of commerce in Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, and Portugal. Challenges identified by these stakeholders in regard to employment complied with those identified by experts and included skills mismatch and lack of opportunities. Opportunities available to NEETs according to them rotate in the fields of environment, agriculture, renewable energy, construction, tourism, and services.

3.5 Data Collected from Ministries and Municipalities

21 responses were collected from ministries and municipalities in Lebanon, Egypt, Portugal, Jordan and Greece. The most frequent responses about the challenges that the NEETs are facing were lack of employment opportunities, low wages, lack of experience, negligence of the state for NEETs, and the mismatch between labor demand and supply. When asked about the characteristics of NEETs, respondents affirmed that the dominant age group of NEETs is between 18 and 35 years. Around 54% of respondents mentioned that 60% of NEETs are women, while 40% are men. In countries that include refugees like Lebanon, refugees are included within NEETs; however, the majority of NEETs are citizens (i.e. most of the NEETs are nationals holding the nationality of the country).

KEY FINDING

Majority of NEETs are women and citizens/ nationals (who have the nationality of the country). To be able to penetrate the labor market, they need experience as well as training.

Furthermore, when asked about the sectors that are able to employ NEETs, ministries and municipalities indicated agricultural sector, industrial sector, and tourism.

According to this stakeholder, most NEETs are aware of available employment opportunities that are mainly announced over social media.

Nevertheless, there is a consensus that NEETs need training before entering the job market due to their lack of experience, especially training on soft and technical skills, organic and smart farming, and construction.

3.6 Data Collected from Employment Agencies

14 employment agencies were consulted from Egypt, Lebanon, Portugal, and Italy, with the majority indicating that the number one recruitment method has become online. 42.9% believe that there are employment opportunities within GaCE, including solar energy, recycling, food, hospitality and tourism, and agriculture. Once again, mapped challenges include limited employment opportunities, exploitation and low salaries, and low qualifications of candidates. Among the gaps mentioned are the weak commitment of candidates, lack of experience, and lack of language and computer skills.

3.7 Data Collected from TVETs

18 responses were collected from Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Institutions from Greece, Portugal, Jordan, Egypt, Palestine, and Lebanon. Some of these centers provide official degrees while others don't.

More than 50% indicated that enrolment in TVET programs has increased, especially in the fields of technology, tourism, and car mechanics. Moreover, around 66.7% believe that women face more challenges than men in finding employment.

TVETs believe that challenges facing employability include the high unemployment rate caused by market saturation, low salaries offered, and employers requiring experience as a prerequisite. When asked about majors they feel are in need by the market and majors they aspire to give, some mentioned engineering, car mechanics, e-marketing, food, tourism, maintenance of machines, majors related to electric cars, and data technology and artificial intelligence.

The majority of consulted TVETs have a model of cooperation with businesses and associations to secure internships for their students. To determine needs, some conduct rapid market studies and consult local employers.

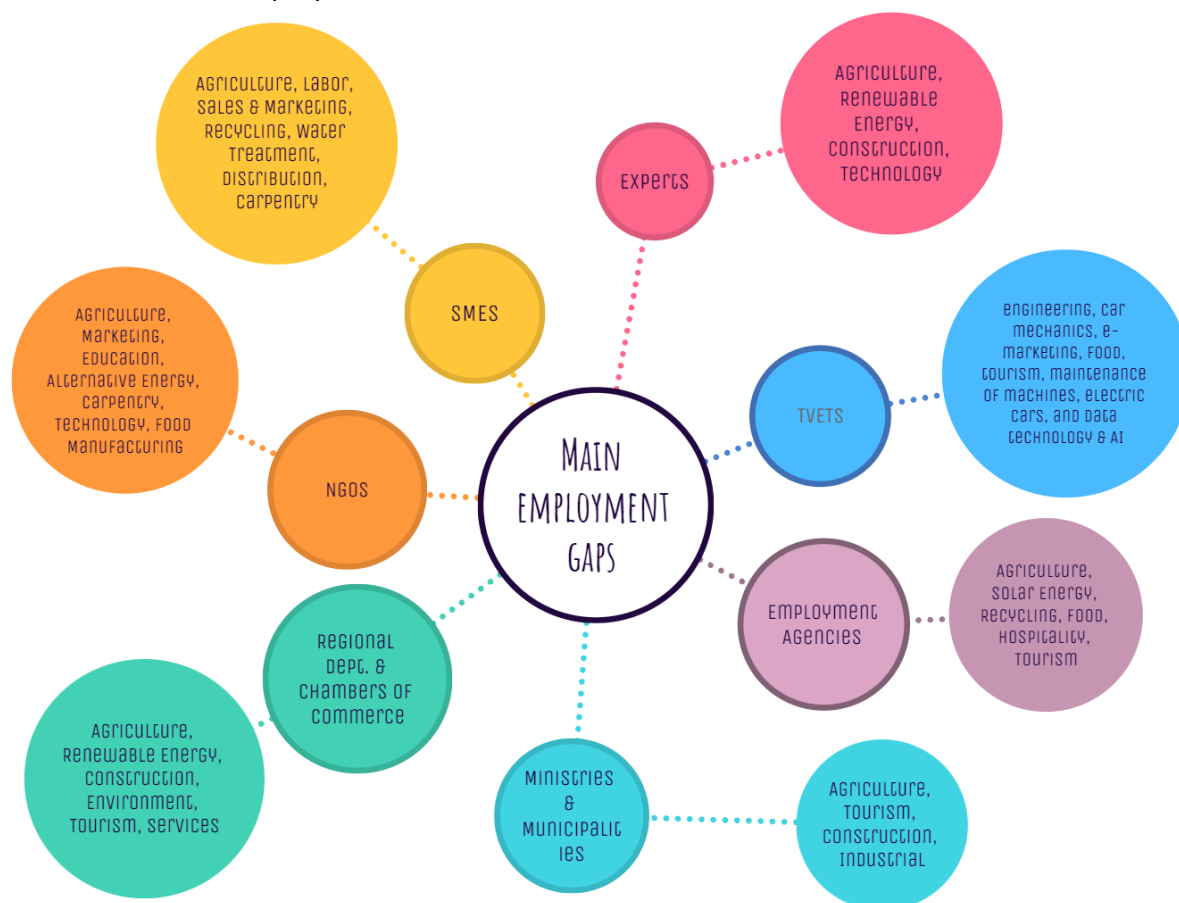


Figure 3: Main Employment Gaps Identified by the Consulted Stakeholders

IV. MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Main Findings and Intervention-Specific Recommendations

- Noting that the majority of businesses have indicated their need for workers who have some experience, internships and apprenticeships are key in any program addressing labor gaps. Such internships need to be paid to ensure that NEETs and women are covered at least for transportation costs so they can deliver. If equipped with some experience, NEETs and women can increase their chances of employability. Tripartite agreements can be done with employers and potential employees that cover the internship costs for a specific period of time (e.g. two months), after which the employer will select those who prove themselves and offer them employment.
- Among the main gaps identified by employers in workers is the latter's irresponsibility, lack of seriousness, and lack of proper communication skills. Accordingly, it would be recommended to offer NEETs soft-skills training as part of any curriculum that supports their employability. These skills can address dealing with others, customer services, and work ethics, among others.
- Many employers require employees who are able to read, write, and use computers. For this reason, as relevant, the curricula offered to enhance the employability of NEETs need to embed basic literacy and numeracy in addition to digital skills.
- Noting that online platforms have become the number one recruitment platform, potential employees need to be trained on online job search and application. This would include screening jobs, preparing their CV, writing a cover letter, submitting their applications, and acing an interview. It is also recommended to create a smart matching platform that focuses on jobs within GaCE.
- Key stakeholders consulted concur that NEETs are challenged by the limited employment opportunities, lack of experience, low salaries, and a skills mismatch. Nevertheless, the study has found that the limited employment opportunities are mainly caused by the mismatch between supply and demand.
- There is a growing awareness towards renewable and alternative energy as a potential sector of employment for NEETs. Noting that these sectors are still untapped, with the proper training, there is a margin for job creation.

4.2 Recommendations Related to Specializations

Triangulation of data between desk study, qualitative data, and quantitative data collected from consulted stakeholders have identified the following fields with potential employment opportunities for NEETs:

- Agriculture and food industry, including food safety certifications
- Tourism
- Energy efficiency

- Manufacturing, including that of environmentally friendly packaging and bags
- Recycling and handicrafts
- Water treatment technicians
- Heavy equipment drivers
- Carpentry

More specifically, and as a result of this study, it is recommended to address some of the untapped or under-tapped economic sectors where NEETS can be trained to improve their employability:

1. Climate proof agriculture. This field will focus on training NEETS to use technologically advanced farming to work towards a sustainable and profitable food system with minimal environmental impact. Potential jobs include Climate Smart Agriculture Expert, Solar Photovoltaic Installers, Conservation Specialist, Soil and Plant Technician, Compost Specialist, Seasonal Crop Diversification Specialist, and Irrigation Technician.
2. Agri-business. This trains participants on managing the whole process of agricultural business, including managing the finances of a farm, packaging, sales, marketing, providing supplies and equipment to farms. Potential jobs created here can include agronomy salesperson and agricultural accountant. Potential jobs include Poultry Specialist, Livestock Feed Processor, Grain Specialist, Green Farm Pest Controller, Green Farm Manager, Animal Welfare Keeper, and Production Hand Plant Nursery.
3. Aqua business. This curriculum will provide training to NEETs on how to use biotechnology in aquafarming, including the use of technology in hatcheries to enhance fast-track productivity while concurrently preserving the sea eco-system. Potential jobs include Aqua Fish Farm Technician, Hatchery Technician, Fish Feed Production Technician, Fish Processing Line Operator, Tank Room Operator, and Fish Cleaning and Packaging Workers.
4. Solar panel technicians. This can range from manufacturing to installation and repair. The countries we are addressing have abundance in sun light. Solar power is low in emissions, economical, and suitable for remote areas that are not connected or have weak connection to energy grids. Electricians can be retrained to become installers of photovoltaic solar panels. Concurrently, this will create new professions integrating NEETs through targeted training.
5. Land fill site assistant. This specialization focuses on assisting with the day-to-day management and administration related to the operations of landfills. Key tasks include weigh-pad technology operation.
6. Planting and organic farming. Roof garden planting and organic farming. Roof gardening makes use out of wasted roof space, turning it into a green area while generating products at the same time. This field trains participants on a system of management and agricultural production that combines a high level of biodiversity with environmental practices that preserve natural resources and has rigorous standards for animal welfare.

7. Manufacturing and recycling technicians. Trainees in this field work on collecting and organizing metals, glass, wood, paper, plastic, electronics, and more into their appropriate containers, they unload and load recyclables on trucks and may clean materials as needed for recycling requirements. Jobs include Sorters, Recycling Machine Operators, Sales Representative, Food Waste Recycling Specialist, Sewer System Worker, and Refuse and Recyclable Material Collector.
8. Eco-tourism. This field focuses on training employees in the tourism sector on tourism that centers around awareness of the environment and the local community. Fields of work can include Hiking Tour Guide, Marine Tour Guide, Culture Sites Guide, and Coastal Tourism Guide.
9. Workers in natural resources conservation and restoration. In this field, participants are trained to find policies for sustainable use to ensure that natural resources are protected and well-managed. Additional jobs can include Reforestation Specialist, Landscape Maintenance Officer, Pruner, and Logger.
10. Solar drying of agricultural products. In this field, trainers are responsible to dry agricultural products in the sun which facilitates extraction of humidity from crops inside a drying chamber.
11. Zero waste captain. These captains go to events to clean and gather all plastics and recyclable wastes. These are then transferred into a value chain of recycling including recycling of food wastes for manure. Other related jobs include Sorter, Recycling Machine Operator, Sales Representative, Food Waste Recycling Specialist, Sewer System Worker, and Refuse and Recyclable Material Controller.
12. Dairy productions, including food hygiene. Workers in this field are responsible of ensuring clean environment through the production process, especially with dairy production. Related specializations also include Food Safety Auditor, Production Line Safety Controller, and Quality Assurance Specialist.

Moving forward, actions set should ideally plan to contract specialized mentors who are able to assess the feasibility and profitability of the various under-tapped economic sectors depending on the area where the NEETs are located, noting that some solutions maybe more successful in one geographic location than another. Once the assessment is done, mentors should direct the youth towards those specializations and provide them with the needed mentorship during their study and first two months of employment.

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