KEY POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

AZERBAIJAN

2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Azerbaijan's institutions persistently pursue diverse programmes to enhance human capital within the country, aligning them with national commitments. Numerous legislative procedures have been formulated, and new public institutions are being established. Although the effective implementation of these initiatives poses a challenge, addressing their demands will need focused attention and strategic planning in the years ahead. Nevertheless, the dedication to fostering positive change remains a top priority of the institutions in the country.

Important priorities were set for the education sector as part of the new 'Socio-economic development strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2022-2026'. The objective is to increase access to quality preschool education, increasing the share of one- to five-year-olds enrolled in preschool education to 50%. In addition, the objective is to apply a competency-based curriculum in general education, with resources allocated to improve PISA performance. Vocational Education and Training (VET) is also a core focus, with aims to enhance access, align training with labour market needs, and integrate employers directly into the VET system.

Five key priorities for VET development are set as part of the 'Socio-economic development strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2022-2026: 1) expanding VET coverage, including higher technical VET; 2) establishing state-of-the-art VET centres; 3) aligning curricula with industry needs; 4) creating short-term upskilling programmes; and 5) transitioning successful VET schools to per-capita funding. These priorities build on the 2016 Strategic Roadmap for VET Development, which aimed to increase VET participation by 50%—an ongoing challenge in the sector.

In the 2023-2024 academic year, Azerbaijan made significant strides in digital education. A total of 4 305 educational institutions have been connected to the Azerbaijan Education Network (ATN) and the internet, with 1 824 schools having fibre-optic connections, 1 711 wireless, and 780 with ADSL. For the 2024-2025 academic year, the admission plan has been expanded to include nine new VET specialities, reflecting the evolving needs of the job market and technological advancements.

The Employment Strategy adopted in 2018, and subsequent Annual Action Plans set essential targets for young people, with the objective that by 2030, the proportion of young NEETs should have fallen to 15%. A significant challenge in Azerbaijan remains the low transition of unemployed individuals, especially those with a medium education level, into employment, reflecting the structural imbalances in the labour market. Specific measures are needed to enhance the relevance of upper secondary education, boost job creation, and implement adult learning initiatives for those vulnerable to joblessness due to sectoral changes.

In recent years, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population (MLSPP) has undertaken a comprehensive digitalisation programme within the social sector. By 2024, over 90% of its services (145 out of 160) are now offered online, including more than 50 proactive services accessible through the e-sosial.az portal and the 'Labour and Employment' subsystem. The Ministry's e-systems are integrated with data from nearly 80 institutions. In the first eight months of 2024, these systems processed 438 million transactions, including requests from partner institutions.

In July 2024, Azerbaijan amended its Law 'On Employment' to introduce 'targeted programmes' as a proactive employment measure. These programmes aim to enhance job opportunities for individuals with special social protection needs and those facing employment challenges, funded through unemployment insurance resources. According to Article 26.7, employers for these initiatives are chosen via a competitive selection process managed by the relevant executive authority. Article 26.8 requires that such competitions be announced publicly at least once a year. This legislation aims to improve employment opportunities for socially vulnerable groups while clarifying employer and authority roles in implementing targeted employment measures.

1. KEY POLITICAL, DEMOGRAPHIC, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Political developments

Parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan took place on 1 September 2024; they had been moved forward from their originally scheduled date in November 2024, following the dissolution of the Parliament in June. The New Azerbaijan Party, led by President Ilham Aliyev, secured a majority with 68 seats. These were the first parliamentary elections held throughout the internationally recognised territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and they unfolded amidst ongoing talks to sign a peace agreement to end the long-lasting conflict with Armenia and the hosting of COP29 to raise the country's international image (OSCE, 2024).

The EU and Azerbaijan maintain a dynamic partnership focused on energy, economic reforms, and digital transformation. In July 2022, the EU and Azerbaijan signed a memorandum of understanding on a strategic partnership in the energy field to enhance bilateral relations[1]. Recent developments include intensified renewable energy cooperation driven by Azerbaijan's strategic location and the EU's energy diversification goals. In March 2024, an EU-Azerbaijan agreement on wind energy collaboration was signed to tap into Azerbaijan's substantial wind potential, which could serve domestic needs and potentially supply Europe. Initially focused solely on natural gas, the Southern Gas Corridor initiative has expanded to include renewable resources and electrification[2].

As Azerbaijan is hosting COP29 in Baku in November 2024, its lead negotiator has called on all participating nations to endorse a Final Agreement on Climate Transparency, emphasising support for developing countries and stronger global partnerships. In October 2024, Azerbaijan approved a Memorandum of Understanding with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, supporting global information exchange.

The military confrontation between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh formally ended in September 2022. The Azerbaijani administration put resources in place to ensure that registration complies with Azerbaijan's residence laws. The majority of the Karabakh Armenian population left the region. A total of 100,632 displaced persons have entered Armenia from Nagorno-Karabakh; 99.3% have already been registered in Armenia[3]. Two UN missions took place – one in September 2022 and the second in October 2022 – to estimate the humanitarian needs.

The Azerbaijani administration continues to implement different infrastructure projects to reconstruct Karabakh. Extensive restoration is ongoing, in line with the 'First State Programme on the Great Return to the liberated territories of Azerbaijan'[4], outlining the preparation of 280,000 hectares of land in the Karabakh and East Zangazur regions for resettlement by 2026.

In the last few years, the EU has been actively engaged in promoting peace talks between the two sides through the direct involvement of the President of the European Council, the continued efforts of the High Representative/Vice President, and the engagement and support provided by the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia (Council of the European Union, 2022b).

---

[1] European Commission press release from July 2022, EU and Azerbaijan enhance bilateral relations (europa.eu), retrieved on 8 November 2024.
[2] EU steps up renewable energy cooperation with Azerbaijan - European Commission (europa.eu), DG NEAR News article 4 March 2024
[3] Data from 4 October 2023 available in local news media outlets. The EU's response to the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis | UCP Knowledge Network: Applied knowledge for action (europa.eu).
[4] President Decree signed in November 2022, https://ereforms.gov.az/en/media/xeberler/boyuk-qayidis-dovlet-programi-499.

Demographics

At the beginning of 2024, the population of Azerbaijan was about 10 million, while Baku reached 2.3 million. About 5.5 million people live in urban areas, while about 4.6 million live in rural areas (State Statistical Committee, 2024).

Between 2000 and 2022, the urban population increased by approximately 23% and the rural population by 17%, indicating accelerated urbanisation processes (State Statistical Committee, 2023). At the beginning of 2024, 54.5% were urban and 45.5% rural population (State Statistical Committee, 2024).

The Republic of Azerbaijan includes the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic (NAR)[5], ten economic regions (İqtisadi Rayonla), 63 regions (rayonlar) (sometimes referred to as districts), 79 towns, 262 settlements (qəsəbələr) (small villages) and 4 246 rural settlements (kənd yaşayış məntəqələri)[6]. (State Statistical Committee, 2022b).

The country has a young population. The relative size of the 15-24 age group was 19.4% in 2023[7]. The median age rose to around 34.4 in 2023, reflecting an ageing trend. The birth rate was about 11.7 births per 1,000 people early in the year, with boys slightly outnumbering girls among newborns (State Statistical Committee, 2024). Men predominate in the 19–29 age group due to the high rate of male children born at the beginning of the 1990s. However, a high rate of death among men over 20 years old has led to a more significant proportion of women in all other age groups (EU4Gender Equality Reform Helpdesk, 2021).

Azerbaijan hosts many internally displaced persons (IDPs) due to the conflict with Armenia over the Nagorno-Karabakh territory, which lasted over 30 years. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre8 (iDMC), at the end of 2021, there were 654 839 IDPs[9]. The number of new displacements due to conflict and violence is reported to have been 84,000[10] in 2020 (iDMC, 2021). In 2023, net migration was 1.2%, accounting for 37000 arrivals of foreigners requesting permanent residence, while about 25 000 permanently left the country (State Statistical Committee, 2024) (State Statistical Committee, 2023).

Key economic developments

Despite a robust post-pandemic recovery in 2022, Azerbaijan faced challenges from inflation and the war in Ukraine. Its heavy reliance on hydrocarbons for exports and fiscal revenue remains a key vulnerability, limiting long-term growth due to declining oil production, volatile prices, and a global shift from fossil fuels. Private sector development is also hindered by a significant state presence in the economy, limited business opportunities, underdeveloped financial markets, and a modest human capital foundation. Addressing these issues could create a more dynamic environment for private sector growth and economic resilience.

Economic growth, measured by GDP, slowed sharply from 4.7% in 2022 to 0.5% in the first half of 2023 and 1.1% for the year, primarily due to declining oil production and subdued non-energy sector activity (World Bank Group, 2024). The Gross Value Added (GVA) was distributed across various sectors, reflecting the country's economic structure. The agricultural sector contributed 5.5% to the GVA, underscoring its modest role in the economy. Industry, mainly driven by oil and gas production, remained the dominant force, accounting for 46.6% of the GVA. Meanwhile, the services sector, which

---

[5] Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic (preslib.az); Naxcivan | History & Geography | Britannica, accessed 29 November 2022.
[6] State Statistical Committee of Azerbaijan, Population | The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, accessed 10 October 2024.
[7] For more information on trends see Statistical Annex AZERBAIJAN.
[8] About us | IDMC (internal-displacement.org).
[9] Azerbaijan Displacement Data Azerbaijan | IDMC (internal-displacement.org).
[10] This figure refers to the number of movements, and not people, as individuals can be displaced several times, and the data that the iDMC collects do not always reflect this.

---

includes a broad range of activities such as trade, tourism, and finance, played a significant role, contributing 39.1% (ADB, April 2024).

In 2022, the inflation rate peaked at 13.9%. In 2023, it started to slow down, although it persisted in double digits as of June 2023. Average annual inflation slowed from 13.9% in 2022 to 8.8% in 2023 (ADB, April 2024).

The consumer price index (CPI) showed a 3.0% rise for food, beverages, and tobacco products, a 1.8% increase for non-food products, and a 5.6% growth in paid services provided to the population. Additionally, from January to August 2024, Azerbaijan's gross domestic product (GDP) reached AZN 80.96 billion, reflecting a 4.3% growth compared to the same period in the previous year. The added value in the oil-gas sector rose by 0.2%, while the non-oil-gas sector saw a 7.0% increase (State Statistical Committee, 2024a).

Between January and June 2023, there was a notable increase in public funding for the development of the country's economic and social sectors, amounting to AZN 7 148 300. This figure represents a significant 10.4% rise compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. Notably, investments in the oil and gas sector witnessed a remarkable growth of 21.4%[11] (State Statistical Committee, 2023a).

Azerbaijan aims to diversify its economy by strengthening the non-oil sector as part of its 'Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities on Socio-Economic Development'. The 'Socio-economic Development Strategy for 2022-2026', adopted in June 2022, includes key performance indicators across sectors. In September 2022, a bill on micro, small, and medium-sized enterprise (MSME) development was introduced, focusing on creating favourable conditions, boosting competitiveness, encouraging investment, and fostering MSME growth. In 2023, a small- and medium-enterprise (SME) digitalisation initiative was launched to provide tailored digital roadmaps that support SMEs in adopting technology. By 2030, the programme aims to digitise hundreds of SMEs, aligning with broader goals to enhance competitiveness and economic diversification.

Azerbaijan's key objective and 2030 strategic vision is to ensure sustainable and green growth, including transforming its oil sector. In 2023, the Working Group on Economic Growth was operationalised to design policy measures aligned with the objectives of a sustainable, growing, competitive economy consistent with the country's socio-economic development strategy for 2022-2026.

Key social issues

Since the early 2000s, Azerbaijan has remarkably reduced poverty and increased shared prosperity. Extreme poverty is non-existent, while the poverty rate[12] in 2021 was 5.9%(UNICEF Azerbaijan, 2023, p. 8). High economic growth, rising employment and high real wage increases all contributed to this decline in poverty and the expansion of the middle class. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted poverty reduction, and many households have experienced job losses and financial hardships, while vulnerable families have been pushed deeper into poverty. The pandemic has also seriously impacted human capital through disruptions to many essential services, including education[13]. Furthermore, the rise in the number of recipients of social benefits, coupled with a general increase in welfare initiatives and social activities, is shaping a new social landscape within the nation.

The Law on the Subsistence Minimum for 2022 sets the subsistence minimum at AZN 210 (AZN 196 in 2021, an increase of 7.1%) – for the working population AZN 220 (AZN 207 in 2021, an increase of 6.3%) and for pensioners AZN 176 (AZN 162 in 2021). The average monthly per capita social benefits on 1 January 2023; amounted to AZN 157.02, considering the several social benefits a person receives simultaneously (State Statistical Committee, 2023a, p. 62). At the beginning of 2023, the total

---

[11] For more information see Main Economic Figures for 2023, available at the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan economy.gov.az/en/page/iqtisadiyyat/esas-iqtisadi-gostericiler/2023-1/makroiqtisadi-inkisaf-gostericileri-2023-cu-il, accessed 12 October 2023.
[12] The poverty rate is the percentage of population living below the national poverty line.
[13] Education is key to sustained poverty reduction in Azerbaijan (worldbank.org), accessed 8 October 2024.

ETF
Working together
Learning for life
European Training Foundation

number of families receiving state social aid was 65,545, compared to 44,716 in 2022 (State Statistical Committee, 2023a, p. 67). Over the past five years, electronic systems for granting social benefits and scholarships have been launched and are now fully operational, significantly improving disbursement efficiency. Social protection and welfare allocations were about 12.2% of the state budget and constituted 3.9% of GDP in 2022. Overall, the share of social protection and social welfare allocations in the state budget has increased by 3% (USD 0.83 billion) in the last five years (2018-2022) (UNICEF Azerbaijan, 2023, p. 8).

2. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

2.1 Trends and challenges

Education strategy and legal framework for education

Important priorities were set for the education sector as part of the new 'Socio-economic development strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2022-2026'. The objective is to increase access to quality preschool education, increasing the share of one- to five-year-olds enrolled in preschool education to 50%. In addition, the aim is to apply a competency-based curriculum in general education, with resources allocated to improve PISA performance. The aim is also to increase access to and the quality of vocational education, focusing on the requirements of the labour market, integration of employers into the vocational education system, etc.[14].

The State Programme on Increasing the International Competitiveness of the Higher Education System 2019-2023 aims to develop state-of-the-art courses based on the latest educational technology and introduce dual diploma programmes. Although the programme focuses on higher education, vocational education will benefit from the supply of highly trained teachers and engineers[15].

In February 2024, a Memorandum of Understanding on establishing Turkey-Azerbaijan University was signed between the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Higher Education Council of the Republic of Turkey.

In December 2021, the new structure of the Ministry of Education was approved by a Presidential Decree, and 12 regional departments were established based on the *rayon* education departments. In July 2022, the Presidential Decree was signed, renaming the Ministry of Education as 'Ministry of Science and 'Education' (MoSE). The Decree also established the State Agency for Science and Higher Education and the State Agency for Preschool and General Education under the MoSE. In 2023, the public authorities continued operationalising these two agencies. The State Agency for Vocational Education (SAVE) under the MoSE, established in 2016, continues to work directly with the public VET providers in facilitating the implementation of national commitments in the sector. This governance structure is expected to bring further enhancements, incorporating decentralisation to expedite decision-making and streamline the implementation process within the sector.

Azerbaijan has announced plans to launch eight vocational schools in Karabakh to align education with the region's potential. A new institution with a capacity for 850 students is under construction in Fuzuli, while additional schools are being designed for Gubadli, Zangilan, Aghdam, and Shusha. These schools will focus on fields such as green energy, with the Shusha State Vocational Education Centre offering specialised training in stone monument restoration, artistic embroidery, and musical instrument craftsmanship. The proposed benefits for students attending these institutions in Karabakh are still being considered.

Education expenditure

USD 2.6 billion was allocated from the state budget for education in 2023, which is USD 315.5 million or 13.8% more than the allocations for 2022. The education allocation makes up 13.3% of the 2023 state budget. It will equal 4.2% of GDP based on projections (UNICEF Azerbaijan, 2023, p. 1).

Azerbaijan's public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP has fluctuated over recent years. Spending increased slightly from 3.0% in 2015 to 3.2% in 2019 and peaked at 4.3% in 2020, likely reflecting the added educational demands during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this rise was not sustained, with expenditure decreasing to 3.7% in 2021 and 2.9% in 2022. In addition, public

---

[14] Key performance indicators for the education sector are available on the website of the Ministry of Science and Education, as part of the new 'Socio-economic development strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2022-2026', https://edu.gov.az/az/announcements/18722-1, accessed on 10 October 2024.
[15] http://www.twinning4he.edu.az/

expenditure on education as a percentage of total public expenditure rose from 8.3% in 2015 to 8.6% in 2019. This commitment strengthened during the pandemic, with education's share increasing to 9.8% in 2020 and 10.8% in 2021. These increases suggest a focused effort to allocate more significant public resources toward education, likely in response to the need for enhanced educational infrastructure and resources during and post-pandemic. These trends highlight Azerbaijan's ongoing dedication to strengthening its educational sector within the broader public budget framework, although maintaining consistent support remains challenging amid shifting budget priorities[16].

In 2023, the Ministry of Finance continued with the introduction of a mid-term expenditure framework tool to increase the effectiveness of the state budget expenditure. The framework encompasses strategic action plans with targets and performance indicators for the sector strategies and the programmes to be implemented to achieve these goals for the education, agriculture and environmental protection sectors. These initiatives are significant shifts towards results-based budgeting, and the MoSE is already taking measures to move forward with long-term planning in the sector[17].

Access, participation and early school leaving

In the 2023–2024 academic year, Azerbaijan's education system highlighted foundational learning, especially for young students in early education. According to the State Agency for Preschool and General Education, 137 862 children began first grade this year, aligning with the government's priority on strengthening primary education. Furthermore, school readiness programmes reached 87 569 children across 5 069 preparatory groups. This trend underscores Azerbaijan's emphasis on supporting early education and adjusting strategies to meet educational needs amidst shifting population dynamics.

The net enrolment rate in the upper secondary education level stood at 80.0% in 2022 (down from 88.0% in 2021 and 93.7% in 2021). In addition, the share of VET students in upper secondary education (ISCED 3) in 2022 was 28.7%, and in 2021 was 37.9%. This decreased from 43.2% in 2020 to 47.2% in 2019. The total number of students in Azerbaijan has increased, reaching 2.1 million in the 2023/24 school year. Most (about 1.7 million) were enrolled in the general education. At the end of 2023, 29 144 vocational education students studied in 92 public vocational institutions and 65 640 students in 59 specialised secondary education institutions[18]. Participation in secondary VET is among the lowest in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) region, with 12.4% in 2020, compared with around 30% in Ukraine and 40% in Moldova and Belarus.

At the end of 2023, 51 higher education institutions were operational in Azerbaijan, of which 40 were state institutions, and 11 were non-state institutions; they were attended by 231,437 students, 201,855 of whom were at state higher education institutions and 29,582 at non-state institutions. This is a significant increase of about 80,000 students since 2014 when the total number of students was 158,212[19]. In 2022, 131 institutions carried out research and development work; of these, 86 were scientific research organisations, and 39 were higher education institutions. In the same year, 589 PhD students graduated in Azerbaijan (State Statistical Committee, 2023b, p. 147).

In the last five years, enrolment in higher education started to improve. However, the gross enrolment rate in tertiary education was relatively low in the past (27.24% in 2017)[20], compared with the average of 33.4% for higher middle-income countries.

Azerbaijan has moderate levels of educational attainment among its adult population. In 2023, most of the population aged 15+ had medium-level education (62.3%), 25.2% had completed higher education studies, and 12.5% had a primary education level or lower. Participation in education and training

---

[16] See Statistical annex.
[17] Strengthening Impact of Public Spending in Azerbaijan (worldbank.org), accessed on 8 October 2024.
[18] Source: State Statistical Committee of Republic of Azerbaijan, Education, science and culture | The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Note: Specialised secondary education provides training of specialists in various specialties, aligned with the needs of the labour market.
[19] Source: State Statistical Committee of Republic of Azerbaijan, Education, science and culture | The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan,
[20] http://uis.unesco.org/country/AZ

ETF
Working together
Learning for life
European Training Foundation

measures lifelong learning and covers participation in formal and non-formal education and training. In 2021, this indicator stood at 7.4% for the 25-64 age group, while the indicator for adult literacy in 2023 stood at 99.8%[21].

PISA results

Students' success in the later stages of education and throughout their lives is strongly influenced by their general basic education performance. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's 'Programme for International Student Assessment' (PISA), organised every three years since 2000, tests the proficiency level of 15-year-old schoolchildren in reading, mathematics and science. Azerbaijan participated in the PISA 2018 and 2022 cycles, covering only Baku's capital. The average PISA 2022 results were down compared to 2018 in mathematics, reading and science. Compared to 2018, the proportion of students scoring below a baseline level of proficiency (Level 2) increased by 11 percentage points in mathematics; it did not change significantly in reading or science.

In PISA 2022, in Baku (Azerbaijan), 38% of students attained at least Level 2 proficiency in mathematics, significantly less than the average across OECD countries (OECD average: 69%). At a minimum, these students can interpret and recognise, without direct instructions, how a simple situation can be represented mathematically (e.g. comparing the total distance across two alternative routes or converting prices into a different currency). Some 1% of students in Baku (Azerbaijan) were top performers in mathematics, meaning that they attained Level 5 or 6 in the PISA mathematics test (OECD average: 9%). At these levels, students can model complex situations mathematically and select, compare and evaluate appropriate problem-solving strategies for dealing with them (OECDb , 2023).

Azerbaijan was one of the 17 (out of 81) countries where girls outperformed boys in mathematics in 2022 (by 7 points). In reading, girls outperformed boys (by 37 points) as they did overall in 79 PISA-participating countries in 2022. Between 2018 and 2022, the performance in mathematics decreased to a more considerable extent among boys than among girls in Baku (OECDb , 2023).

Young people not in employment, education or training (NEET)

The share of young people not in education, employment or training ('the NEET rate') represents the number of young people aged 15 to 24 not in education, employment or training as a percentage of the total youth population. In Azerbaijan, the share of NEETs has fluctuated in recent years, peaking at 23% in 2017[22]and decreasing to 19.5% in 2023, with a visible gender gap: 18.5% among men and 20.6% among women[23]. The indicator aligns with the youth unemployment rate in terms of levels and gender gap. However, since 2020 and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, young people have faced additional challenges in their transition from school to work. The Employment Strategy adopted in 2018 sets important targets for young people, with the objective that by 2030, the proportion of young NEETs should have fallen to 15%[24].

2.2   Initial VET and adult learning

Strategic and legal framework for initial VET and adult learning

Five key priorities were set for the VET sector as part of the new 'Socio-economic development strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2022-2026'. The objective is to: 1) expand the coverage of vocational education, including higher technical VET; 2) establish additional state-of-the-art new VET

---

[21] See Statistical Annex.
[22] Baseline NEET indicator and reference year in the Employment Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2019-2030
[23] See Statistical Annex.
[24] The EU target for 2030 is to achieve a NEET rate below 9%. This is indicated in European Commission. (2021). *The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan*. Publications Office of the European Union. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1226&langId=en, accessed on 11 November 2024.

ETF Working together Learning for life
European Training Foundation

centres; 3) develop VET curricula in close cooperation with relevant sector industries; 4) develop short-term upskilling training programmes; and 5) gradually transition successful VET schools to per-capita funding[25].

These five priorities align with the objectives of the Strategic Roadmap for the Development of VET, adopted in 2016. In parallel with implementing the roadmap, new monitoring and evaluation mechanisms emerged. One of the critical targets of the strategic roadmap was to increase participation in VET programmes by 50% by 2020, which remains a challenge in 2024.

In April 2018, a Vocational Education Act was adopted. To implement the VET reforms envisaged in 2019 and 2020, the Government developed secondary legislation covering various aspects of VET, including the development of occupational standards, rules for admission to vocational education institutions, student assessment, and the transition from multiple levels of study. Furthermore, the Vocational Education Act and the Strategic Roadmap for the Development of VET in the Republic of Azerbaijan prioritise providing a relevant legislative framework for adult education and further training courses in vocational education institutions.

The Republic of Azerbaijan Decree on a National Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (AzQF) was adopted in July 2018. The AzQF supports Azerbaijan's convergence with the European Higher Education Area and is aligned with the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning. The AzQF includes qualifications for general education, initial vocational education and training, specialised secondary education (sub-bachelor education), higher education and further education/adult learning. Qualifications can be obtained through formal, non-formal and informal learning.

Starting in 2019, the government implemented policies allowing vocational training institutions to provide courses lasting less than six months to facilitate ongoing vocational education for the workforce. Nevertheless, the current landscape presents limited opportunities for adult learning, primarily due to the scarcity of suitable adult training facilities and programmes, especially in areas beyond urban centres.

Investments in the infrastructure in the sector continue, and in September 2023, the Ministry of Science and Education inaugurated the Jalilabad State Vocational Education Centre. Despite the ongoing investments and significant changes in the system, insufficient engagement of the VET institutions with companies and the private sector is one of the considerable obstacles to equipping students with the relevant skills required for both mid-level and higher-level job markets.

In the 2023-2024 academic year, the STEAM[26] project expanded to 400 secondary schools and 25 STEAM centres, engaging 180,000 students. The 'ECOTHON' competition was organised for schoolchildren aged 10-17 as part of the 'Year of Solidarity for the Green World' initiative.

As part of the strategy to expand vocational education and training, in the 2023-2024 academic year, vocationally oriented classes expanded to 232 classes in 196 schools, with 4,296 students across 12 professional specialities.

In 2023, 29,951 teachers participated in the certification process, with a 97.7% participation rate. Educators who passed certification received salary increases: 35% for 5,246 teachers and 10% for 17,914 teachers. Additionally, 1,217 teachers successfully changed their workplace through a competitive process[27]. The certification process is applied from 2022 to check the professionalism and professional suitability levels. Around 40-45,000 teachers pass the professional development programmes annually. As of 2023, the training needs are identified based on certification results and

---

[25] Key Performance Indicators for the education sector are available on the website of the Ministry of Science and Education, as part of new new 'Socio-economic development strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2022-2026', https://edu.gov.az/az/announcements/18722-1, accessed on 31 October 2024.
[26] Azerbaijan's STEAM project Ana səhifə - STEAM Azerbaijan, initiated by the Ministry of Science and Education, began in the 2019-2020 academic year. This project aims to integrate Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STEAM) education into general schools to foster creativity, critical thinking, and hands-on technical skills among students.
[27] Source: Ministry of Science and Education

PISA, PIRLS, TIMSS results, admission exam results, and the Education Quality Assurance Agency inspections.

As of June 2024, diploma information for citizens who have completed first-level and technical vocational education is integrated into the 'myGov' personal cabinet on the Electronic Government Portal. This includes the diplomas of individuals who graduated from vocational education institutions from 2019 onward, making it easier to access and verify educational credentials.

VET governance and financing arrangements

Initial VET (IVET) is the responsibility of the MoSE, the central executive body governing the country's education system, which participates in the development and implementation of state policy for education. Since April 2016, with the establishment of the State Agency on Vocational Education (SAVE), the governance of VET in Azerbaijan has been evolving. In a relatively short period, SAVE positioned itself as the leading institution in the field, focusing on vocational education institutions under the MoSE responsibility. Although SAVE has the authority to manage the VET institutions under the MoSE, decision-making and policy implementation are coordinated with the MoSE or other related government institutions. In May 2024, the Ministry of Science and Education (MoSE) established a dedicated Department for Vocational Education and Training (VET) to drive modernisation and expand the reach and effectiveness of VET programmes.

Since establishing SAVE, the business sector has been recognised as a critical partner in developing VET. There is a solid commitment to engaging representatives from the world of work at various levels. This collaboration is fostered nationally by involving social partners in consultations and strategic decision-making. At the sectoral level, it manifests through the identification of emerging training needs, as well as the formulation of occupational standards and qualifications. Additionally, at the local level, employers actively provide opportunities for work-based learning to students and teachers, contributing to the assessment of graduates and serving on the boards of VET providers.

One of the strategic targets identified in the VET strategic roadmap is to build a robust, outcome-based financing system. The objective is to incorporate a performance-based reward mechanism for vocational education institutions and teaching staff to ensure the efficient use of funds and improve the quality of VET provision. A fund for developing VET was established in August 2020. Its mandate includes providing financial assistance for developing vocational education.

Qualifications, validation and recognition

Two recently established bodies essential for further implementing the AzQF are the Lifelong Learning Unit at the Institute of Education and the Education Quality Assurance Agency. The Education Institute develops educational standards and curricula and handles assessment issues, while the Lifelong Learning Unit is the focal point for the AzQF.

New presidential decrees issued in November 2021 on changes to the Law on Education and the Law on Vocational Education provide for implementing a credit transfer system in higher vocational education and recognise accumulated credit points in higher education. Implementing a credit system in higher vocational education requires implementing a credit system at all levels of vocational education. Rules for organising credit system education at bachelor's and master's levels of higher education were approved and implemented since 2013. Introducing a credit system and aligning the education content of syllabi with the system is a significant challenge.

Informal and non-formal learning was introduced as a concept in Azerbaijan in the Law on Education adopted in 2009. The latest additions to the Law (Article 17(4) in 2018 and 2020) raised the possibility of validating non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL) through examinations. In August 2020, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the 'Rules on carrying out examinations and issuing the document confirming the professional qualification of citizens for the assessment and recognition of the knowledge, skills, competence and experience acquired by citizens through non-formal and informal forms of vocational education'.

VNFIL is a new process in Azerbaijan. The Education Quality Assurance Agency (TKTA) plans to raise awareness about the procedure and its benefits for persons without qualifications, especially those in the informal economy. Currently, VNFIL mainly covers Baku, and examinations are held in the capital. However, the TKTA plans to introduce the procedures gradually in the regions.

As part of its ongoing work on introducing new and modernised qualifications, in September 2023, the State Agency for Vocational Education signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Aurora Ltd to improve students' knowledge and skills, enhance training quality, and implement dual training programmes. A curriculum for 'Grinding Production Operators' has been developed to align with industry needs, and teaching of this vocational course commenced in the 2022/23 academic year.

For the 2024-2025 academic year, the admission plan has been expanded to include nine new specialities, reflecting the job market's evolving needs and technological advancements. Students can now pursue careers as drone maintenance and repair technicians, clerical and office services specialists, and food and beverage specialists. Additionally, the plan introduces specialised courses on electric and hybrid car repairs, technical operators for air transport systems, and operators of alternative energy installations and equipment. New training opportunities for solar panel installers and repairers, medical equipment repairs and services, electromechanics, irrigation machine operators, and pumping equipment machinists are introduced. This expansion underscores the commitment to preparing students for more diverse career paths for which there is a demand.

Quality and quality assurance

External quality assurance in Azerbaijan is regulated by the Law on Education, the Rules for the accreditation of educational institutions approved by the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of 14 December 2020 and other normative documents. The Rules mandate the Education Quality Assurance Agency (TKTA) under the MoSE to implement and coordinate the state policy in all educational institutions' institutional and programme accreditation. They also oblige education institutions to establish an internal quality assurance (QA) mechanism.

TKTA is responsible for the accreditation of all educational institutions and for organising advisory and methodological support services to establish and develop internal quality assurance systems in educational institutions. Furthermore, it is responsible for evaluating the activities of internal quality assurance systems of education institutions and providing recommendations for their improvement. In 2023, TKTA continued to work on improving the standards for the accreditation of the institutions and programme accreditation. SAVE and its Department for Vocational Educational Institution Management, Quality Assurance and Monitoring are responsible for the overall governance of quality assurance in VET. Vocational education institutions organise their internal quality assurance in line with state educational standards.

From September 2023 to June 2024, the Agency for Quality Assurance in Education awarded 160 citizens with documents validating their professional qualifications. Of these, 146 received certificates, and 14 were granted diplomas. Under the social initiative 'Professional Women,' 101 women who successfully passed the evaluation and recognition exams were awarded either a diploma or certificate in their respective fields. The Agency also expanded its technical capacity to support the evaluation and recognition process for seven additional vocational specialities: jeweller, construction master, clerk, security guard, polygraph designer, computer operator, and car engine assembler. This development increased the number to 26 vocational qualifications evaluated and recognised by the Agency in non-formal and informal education.

In the academic year 2023-24, the Agency also implemented institutional accreditation assessments in 13 higher education institutions across the country, including Azerbaijan Technical University, Baku State University, Azerbaijan State University of Economics (UNEC), Azerbaijan State Pedagogical University, Azerbaijan Architecture and Construction University, Zagatala branch of Azerbaijan State University of Economics, Gazakh branch of Baku State University, Sumgayit State University, Khazar University, Lankaran State University, Baku Engineering University, Azerbaijan Medical University, and ADA University. Furthermore, the results of programme accreditation evaluations for six specialisations at the master's level (high molecular compound chemistry, petroleum chemistry,

organic chemistry, inorganic chemistry, analytical chemistry, and physical chemistry) at Baku State University have been formally recognised through state accreditation. A pilot accreditation assessment was also conducted for two vocational training institutions: Baku State Vocational Training Center for Industry and Innovations and Baku State Vocational Training Center for Tourism and Social Services.

Work-based learning arrangements

The VET Law sets out the main principles and strategic orientation of the state policy on VET and the integration of employers into the VET system. In addition, the Strategic Road Map for VET highlighted the expected participation of the private sector in the VET system by 2020.

SAVE prepares and implements programmes within the framework of the joint public-private partnership established with employers to improve the efficiency of the VET system. Over 100 agreements have been signed between the Agency, schools and the private sector. Modern curricula (since 2018) are designed to meet labour market needs based on occupational standards and the involvement of employers in curriculum development. When a partnership exists, most schools limit the cooperation to the placement of interns in the relevant industry. Collaboration between schools and enterprises is emerging and needs to be developed further.

In May 2024, the TAMAL (Partnership and Information on Professional Staffing) platform was launched to strengthen and expand collaboration between vocational education and training (VET) institutions and employers. It aims to enhance employer engagement and increase opportunities for VET graduates to secure employment[28]. The focus is on green and renewable energy skills, one of Azerbaijan's key priorities.

Digital education and skills

Digital skills and competencies are usually reflected in policies and strategies for all education levels. The Law on Education regulates the roles of the state and education institutions in digital skills and competencies. The statutes of SAVE provide for developing a digital resource framework for VET. The policy for developing electronic textbooks, video lessons, and other materials is set out in this document, along with other relevant regulatory acts.

Digital skills are embedded in the existing legislation, National Qualifications Framework (NQF), legislation on general education and State Standards for VET and are defined as key competencies for VET and lifelong learning. Azerbaijan's NQF for Lifelong Learning, approved by the Cabinet of Ministers in 2018, outlines digital skills in all descriptors. The Roadmap for the Development of Telecommunication and Information Technologies for 2016-2025 is dedicated to fostering digital skills, developing 'e-schools' and creating ICT training for teachers. Similarly, the Ministry of Education has introduced coding and programming in the secondary education curriculum and a system for online learning (ETF, 2021).

With support from Microsoft, Azerbaijan launched its Virtual School initiative in 2020, using Microsoft Teams to provide a personalised online learning approach. In a short time, teachers and students nationwide came online. They formed a network that has grown into Azerbaijan's largest online community, with 1.4 million active users on Teams at the beginning of 2021[29].

In the 2023-2024 academic year, Azerbaijan has made significant strides in digital education. A total of 4,305 educational institutions have been connected to the Azerbaijan Education Network (ATN) and the internet, with 1,824 schools using fibre-optic connections, 1,711 using WiFi, and 780 using ADSL. Electronic educational resources have also expanded, with 19,531 resources available on the www.video.edu.az portal. The Digital Skills Project has grown, reaching over 410,000 students in 532 schools across 53 regions. Moreover, 28 schools introduced digital skills-oriented classes, providing 950 students with five hours of computer science education per week[30].

---

[28] Source: Peşə Təhsili üzrə Dövlət Agentliyi (edu.gov.az), accessed 7 October 2024.
[29] 'Virtual school' project |Ministry of Science and Education Republic of Azerbaijan
[30] Source: Ministry of Science and Education, www.video.edu.az

The Government of Azerbaijan recognises the potential of digital technologies in promoting growth, and a Centre for Analysis and Coordination of the Fourth Industrial Revolution was established in early 2021. The Centre is developing programmes to provide customised support for companies to adopt digital technologies, and a web portal has been set up to provide local firms with information on how to digitalise their businesses. Digital skills for adults and employees are an essential part of the policy measures (Asian Development Bank, 2023).

Statistics on education and training

The State Statistical Committee (SSC), in cooperation with the MoSE, produces a broad range of statistics on the educational system, essentially meeting the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) requirements in that regard and following the ISCED classification. The statistics include details on the number of students and graduates by sex, age group, level and type of education, admissions, numbers of students in specialist subjects, characteristics of teachers employed by the level of education, and the characteristics of international students. Comprehensive administrative data are also available for the vocational education and training sector. However, survey data and long-term VET analysis are lacking. A more targeted policy approach would require regular analytical tools such as tracer studies with graduates and employer surveys to provide data for more sophisticated planning and show whether the training is relevant to the labour market.

The shift to more targeted policymaking will require capacity-building for data collection and analysis. The newly established Labour Market Observatory under the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population (MLSPP) is a crucial step in this direction. Reinforcing the capacity of public authorities to gather and use evidence in policy analysis, design, planning, monitoring and implementation concerning skills development is an essential precondition for measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of the policies.

3. LABOUR MARKET AND EMPLOYMENT

3.1 Trends and challenges

Labour market characteristics

Data analysis indicates that Azerbaijan has a relatively high rate of economic activity when compared with the surrounding region, a low unemployment rate and a generally flexible labour market. The activity rate has risen, reaching 67.9% in 2023 (for the age group 15+, it is down from 69.7% in 2015). However, the outcomes show a considerable gender gap, with a difference between the rates for men and women of 12.5 percentage points (74.2% and 62.3%, respectively). The employment rate follows the same pattern, reaching 64.2% in 2023, and is much higher for men (70.7%) than for women (58.3%). The unemployment rate in 2023 stood at 5.5%, decreasing from its highest level in 2020 of 7.2%. It did not reach its pre-pandemic unemployment rate of 5% in 2019. Unemployment was also higher for women (6.3%) than for men (4.7%). Youth unemployment (15-24 age group) is considerably higher (13.1%), although this decreased by 1.9% from the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.

According to data from the State Statistical Committee, the economically active population was approximately 5.2 million in 2023, of which approximately 5 million were employed. 21.4% were employed in the state institutions, while 78.6% were non-state. The service sector is the largest source of employment, providing jobs to almost half of the workforce, reaching 48.5% in 2023. The agricultural sector, accounting for the smallest share of GDP (approx. 6%), employed around 35.8% of the workforce in 2023, indicating subsistence-type farming and low productivity. However, it also generates around two-fifths of household income in rural areas. The industrial sector accounted for 15.7% of employment in 2023 but had the highest GDP share (46.6%, although this substantially decreased from the 2022 share at 56.1%)[31].

As a result of recent economic diversification, market-oriented reforms and structural changes, the number of people employed in the private sector has increased. An essential characteristic of the employment structure is a high level of self-employment, reaching 64.8% in 2023. Self-employment is high across all sectors, particularly in agriculture and construction. However, at the same time, the proportion of informal work is high, mainly in agriculture and other sectors, such as transport, manufacturing, trade and construction. The incidence of vulnerable employment is also high, at 54% in 2023, slightly decreasing from 55.5% in 2015 (State Statistical Committee, 2022b, p. 129).

Women are in a more disadvantaged position due to lower wages in various sectors of the economy, as they are often hired as cheap labour without proper contracts, which makes them ineligible for social benefits. Men earn, on average, 46% more than women (EU4Gender Equality Reform Helpdesk, 2021). Women are heavily concentrated in lower-paid public sector activities such as education, health and social services (World Bank, 2022).

Azerbaijan has an abundant supply of semi-skilled and unskilled labourers. The service and agricultural sectors dominate the labour market but represent a disproportionally low percentage of GDP relative to the hydrocarbon sector. The construction sector uses temporary and contract workers; reportedly, many of these workers' agreements are not formally registered (US Department of State, 2023).

In 2023, 1,317,800 young people aged 15-29 were economically active; 1,194,600 were employed. The number of unemployed young people aged 15-29 was 123,200, including 59,600 men and 63,600 women. Among employed young people, 20.6% have higher education, 11.5% have secondary specialised education, 4.1% have primary vocational education, 55.3% have completed secondary

---

education, 8.3% have general secondary education, and 0.1% have primary education, and 0.1% have no schooling (State Statistical Committee, 2024).

Statistics on the labour market and employment

Labour Market Information (LMI) in Azerbaijan comes from various sources, typically including the Population Census (last carried out in 2019), the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and enterprise reporting. The LFS is carried out following the internationally standardised methodology introduced by the International Labour Organization (ILO). The LFS sample typically covers around 1% of all households in the country[32], while the Population Census includes all households.

Another essential source of LMI in Azerbaijan is the Labour Contract Database, which the MLSPP maintains. It is a unique source of information that facilitates evidence-based decision-making. The special features are the obligatory nature of the reporting (with which the employers comply) and the availability of both demand and supply data. The database provides information about both the employer and the employee. The Public Employment Service data usually only cover registered unemployed and jobseekers.

In Azerbaijan, enterprises must submit regular statistical reports to the State Statistical Committee (SSC) covering various operational and financial aspects. These reports typically include data on workforce size, wages, production volumes, sales, and other financial performance indicators. The SSC gathers these data to maintain accurate, up-to-date statistics to support national economic planning and policymaking. The Law establishes reporting requirements *on Official Statistics*, which mandates transparency and regular data collection across economic sectors.

A significant development is the establishment of the National Observatory on Labour Market and Social Protection Affairs (NO)[33], which started its operations in 2020 and has a labour market monitoring role. In addition, the State Statistical Committee is implementing the State Programme on Improvement of the Official Statistics in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2018-2025[34], and the primary objective is to introduce complex measures to improve statistics.

3.2   Employment policy and institutional settings

Strategy and legal framework in the employment policy field

The Employment Strategy for 2019-2030, aligned with the UN Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth and based on 16 key targets, aims to reduce the number of NEETs, lower unemployment rates, increase SME employment and expand VET opportunities for young people. One of the key targets by 2030 is to increase the proportion of the formally employed population in the non-agriculture sector to 80% from the baseline of 48.1% in 2017. The strategy also targets increasing the scope and scale of training measures and validating non-formal and informal learning. The related Action Plan approved in January 2022 includes measures for improving the labour market monitoring and forecasting system, developing the skills of the labour force and improving labour standards.

In July 2024, Azerbaijan enacted amendments to the Law 'On Employment,' introducing 'targeted programmes' as an active employment measure. These programmes aim to create job opportunities for individuals with special social protection needs and those facing difficulties in finding employment, financed through unemployment insurance funds. Under Article 26.7, employers are selected through a competition organised by the relevant executive authority, and Article 26.8 stipulates that such competitions be announced at least annually on official platforms. This legislation is designed to improve employment prospects for socially vulnerable groups and clarify the roles of employers and authorities in executing targeted employment initiatives.

---

[32] Source: The Labour Force Survey, Methodological explanations available from the State Statistical Committee of Republic of Azerbaijan, Labour Market | The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, accessed 12 November 2024
[33] https://obs.gov.az/
[34] https://www.stat.gov.az/menu/2/state_programs/2018_2025/source/en/2018-2025_DP_ENG.pdf

In 2018, the Law on Employment introduced a basis for state policy promoting employment. In addition, it established the legal basis for providing Active Labour Market Programmes (ALMPs). The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population (MLSPP) is developing secondary legislation to ensure the effective implementation of the new Law. The Law was updated significantly in 2021 to cover apprenticeships and vocational training.

Career guidance services are organised according to Article 22 of the Law on Employment. To implement Article 22, regulations on the 'Provision of career guidance services' were approved by the Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan No 266 dated 11 June 2019. The Regulations set out the directions and methods for providing career guidance services. Services are offered to jobseekers, including employed and unemployed persons, students, pupils and their parents.

Decree No 1077 of June 2021 states that the State Employment Agency (SEA), renamed in 2022 the 'Azerbaijan Public Employment Agency' (APEA) under the MLSPP, is a public legal entity responsible for the organisation of active employment measures, the management of unemployment insurance funds, measures for the social protection of jobseekers and the unemployed, and the control of compliance with the Law on Employment. It also conducts labour market analysis and provides control measures for detecting and preventing informal employment, providing information, public awareness campaigns, etc.

The National Observatory (NO) on Social Protection and Labour Market is key in monitoring and assessing the labour market and social protection sectors. Its responsibilities include defining strategic employment areas, forecasting demand for key occupations, skills, and competencies, conducting surveys, and proposing actions to reduce informal employment. It also analyses how well graduates adapt to the labour market, studies best practices, and develops proposals for improving relevant fields. The Governing Board is active and deals with general management and overseas operations. It is staffed by the Chairperson and two deputies — appointed by the MLSPP Minister. The Chairperson manages the day-to-day operations and represents the NO. The institution has gradually introduced corporate management instruments according to the ISO standards[35].
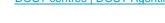
In recent years, the MLSPP has implemented a comprehensive digitalisation programme in the social sector, with the result that in 2024, over 90% of its services (145 out of 160) will be provided online. This includes more than 50 proactive services a feature-rich e-sosial.az portal, and the 'Labour and Employment' subsystem. The Ministry's e-systems contain data from nearly 80 institutions. Including requests from these institutions, 438 million transactions were processed through the Ministry's e-systems in the first eight months of the year[36].

Initiatives to boost employment

Azerbaijan provides a wide range of services to facilitate and boost employment. Career guidance is one of the active labour measures, together with vocational training for the unemployed and job seekers, support for the self-employed, the organisation of job fairs and labour exchanges, paid public work, etc. The MLSPP and APEA are also central to providing policies and active labour market measures, particularly career guidance to unemployed persons, jobseekers and young people. In addition, APEA supports employers by assisting them in finding a skilled workforce, etc.

There are 22 APEA offices and five offices of the Agency for Sustainable and Operational Social Security (DOST) that cover all regions of the country. Career guidance services, one of the active labour measures, are provided by these offices for the unemployed, jobseekers, and self-employed and employed persons. In addition, job fairs and labour exchanges are specific services. Overall, DOST centres provided services to 419,181 citizens in the period January-August 2022[37]. The

---

[35] Source: National Observatory on Social Protection and the Labour Market, https://obs.gov.az/media-en/press-release/national-observatory-for-labour-market-and-social-protection-affairs-awarded-two-iso-certifications#gallery
[36] Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population (MSLPP) New legislative acts for the expansion of e-services in the fields of labour and employment serve to improve the normative-legal base
[37] DOST centres | DOST Agentliyi

concept of DOST ensures the provision of 154 types of services in the social field from a 'one-stop-shop' on an operative, transparent and innovative basis.

In October 2022, a new concept was developed within the DOST Agency and APEA cooperation framework. The concept includes support to unemployed persons through a portfolio-based approach and follow-up on the portfolio. In addition, within the same framework, several employment services are planned to be provided by career counsellors in DOST centres.

From January to August 2024, 21.7 million applications were submitted for electronic services offered by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. During this period, the e-sosial.az portal, the country's social registry, was accessed 3.9 million times, and 170,000 proactive appointments were scheduled via the e-infrastructure. Additionally, 506,000 citizens were served at DOST centres during this period.

Since May 2019, seven DOST centres have opened nationwide, providing 160 social services through a modern, flexible, and transparent 'one-stop-shop' system focused on citizen satisfaction.

The project 'Creation of inclusive and decent jobs for socially vulnerable groups' implemented by the UNDP and APEA is expected to run until 2024. The project aims to increase the potential of the unemployed and jobseekers belonging to vulnerable groups and create opportunities for productive employment in the labour market.

In 2022, the 'Youth Business Workshop' project was launched as a joint partnership of the Azerbaijan Public Employment Agency, the Small and Medium Business Development Agency and the State Agency for Vocational Education. The objective is to enhance business skills and promote entrepreneurship among young individuals in vocational training centres. The initial phase, spanning 2021-2023, focuses on final-year vocational students in the Gabala, Aghdam and Jalilabad regions, offering business training and providing equipment to establish micro-businesses as part of the self-employment programme, particularly in fields such as tailoring, agriculture, carpet-making, agrotechnical services, carpentry, cooking, confectionery, tourism, and welding[38].

In September 2022, a new project was launched in partnership with the APEA, the Youth Fund of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and the Union of Student Youth Organisations of Azerbaijan – Sustainable Youth Employment Programme. The 'Sustainable Youth Employment' programme includes the 'Start Your Business Marathon', 'Wage Subsidy for Employers' and 'Professional Youth' projects[39].

In 2023, implementation of the 'Employment Support in Azerbaijan'[40] programme continued, led by APEA under the MLSPP. The goals are to enhance self-employment opportunities for individuals within various marginalised groups, including people with disabilities, unemployed individuals, family members of martyrs, internally displaced persons, recipients of state social assistance, women, young people and other vulnerable populations[41].

In 2023, the number of jobseekers stood at 217,608, of which 126,589 were men, and 91 019 women. The number of participants in labour market services was 409,455, while 127,916, took part in job-matching services, and 281 539 were provided with counselling services. Expenditure on labour market policies in 2023 was AZN 217.6 thousand, an increase from AZN 163.4 thousand in 2022. The total number of job vacancies in 2023, was 59,849.

303,300 people were covered by active employment measures in January-September 2024 by the State Employment Agency under the MLSPP. 124,000 were provided with jobs, and 11,900 people were involved in the self-employment programme to create small family farms. Vocational training courses were organised for 12,200 unemployed people for 9 months of this year, and vocational training was provided to 155,200 individuals[42].

[38] 'Youth Business Workshop' / Social projects / Projects - Azerbaijan Public Employment Agency (dma.gov.az), accessed 10 October 2023.
[39] https://dma.gov.az/projects/social-projects/sustainable-youth-employment-program, accessed 10 October 2023.
[40] https://dma.gov.az/projects/social-projects/employment-support-in-azerbaijan-project, accessed 10 October 2023.
[41] The programme is being implemented with a loan from the World Bank, with a timeframe of 2020 to 2025.
[42] More than 300 000 people were covered by active employment measures (sosial.gov.az)

Initiatives to increase the capacity of the public employment services

The APEA continuously upgrades and modernises its services by following its strategic vision towards increasing employment, labour productivity and decent work standards. The APEA cooperates actively with local partners, including employers and other social partners. The institution has also strengthened its international cooperation through active membership of the World Association of Public Employment Services (WAPES) and bilateral cooperation with Turkish PES (ISKUR) and several European PES.

In 2023, citizens in Azerbaijan continued to rely on the Centralised Electronic Information System of the MLSPP that provides information on 'Employment Contract Notification', 'Targeted Assistance', 'Disability', 'Insurance', 'Pensions', 'Employment', 'e-Reference' and others. Electronic services continue to be provided to the citizens through various subsystems and platforms available through the MLSPP. Based on an OECD study, a lack of digital skills limits citizens' use of the internet and digital solutions. Azerbaijan lags behind its peers and OECD countries in the share of the population with standard and advanced ICT skills. Acquiring skills through self-teaching is the most prevalent method for developing ICT skills in the country (OECD, 2022a).

Career guidance services are funded by the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) budget. A review of the laws on the Unemployment Insurance Fund (2018, 2019 and 2020) shows that AZN 1.15 million, AZN 1.3 million and AZN 2.0 million were allocated for career guidance services in 2018, 2019 and 2020, respectively. These amounts represented 1.3% of the Fund's budget in 2018, 1.3% in 2019 and 1.6% in 2020.

The results of investment in ALMPs are becoming increasingly visible. In 2022, APEA included almost 70,000 unemployed in active labour market measures, such as training (4,575 participants), employment incentives (882 beneficiaries), public works (7,213 beneficiaries), self-employment support (16 097 beneficiaries), while almost 40,000 registered unemployed were provided with jobs. Between January 2023 and September 2023, the APEA provided jobs to 83,197 people, career counselling services to 149,792 people and vocational training courses to 9,024 people. In general, participation in labour market measures follows the overall profile of jobseekers in Azerbaijan, i.e. more males and people with a medium level of education.

An important indicator revealing the absorption capacity and performance of labour market services and measures is the transition rate from unemployment to employment. In 2022, it reached almost 30%, with a higher probability for successful transition out of unemployment for women, younger people, and jobseekers with low and high education attainment levels.

The objective of the MLSPP is to strengthen the role of the APEA in organising short-term training courses (up to 6 months) for unemployed people and jobseekers. As part of the ongoing reforms, there is a comprehensive plan for developing Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) encompassing the: i) expansion of the infrastructure of VTCs, ii) improvement of the legal/institutional system, and iii) improvement of the quality of the training content.

In 2024, the strengthening of the VTCs in delivering short-term training courses for adults to support them in finding a job continued. The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection is expanding the vocational training infrastructure for the unemployed and jobseekers in the regions. Construction is underway of a Regional Vocational Training Centre in Guba, with design plans progressing for centres in Masalli, Sabirabad, and Shaki. These centres will provide modern, fully equipped workshops and classrooms to meet labour market demands. All necessary resources and facilities will be established to ensure the training aligns with industry standards, enabling jobseekers to gain skills that match current workforce needs. According to the Employment Strategy, the number of VTCs will increase from 4 to 10 by 2030.

For further information, please contact Margareta Nikolovska, Senior Human Capital Development Expert – Country Liaison for Azerbaijan, European Training Foundation, by mail to Margareta.Nikolovska@etf.europa.eu.

STATISTICAL ANNEX – AZERBAIJAN

The Annex includes annual data from 2015, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, or the latest available year.

	Indicator	2015	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
1	Total population (in thousands)[1]	9649.3	10024.3	10093.1	10137.8	10141.8	10112.6
2	Relative size of youth population (age group 15-24 and denominator age 15-64,%)[1] C	23.3	19.8	19.3	19.1	19.2	19.4
3	GDP growth rate (%)	1.1	2.5	-4.3	5.6	4.7	1.1
4	Gross value added by sector (%) — Agriculture	6.2	5.7	6.7	5.7	4.6	5.5
	Industry	44.9	48.8	42.0	48.8	56.1	46.6
	Services	40.0	36.5	42.4	37.7	32.1	39.1
5	Public expenditure on education (as% of GDP)	3.0	3.2	4.3	3.7	2.9	M.D.
6	Public expenditure on education (as% of total public expenditure)	8.3	8.6	9.8	10.8	M.D.	M.D.
7	Adult literacy (%)	99.8	99.8	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	99.8
8	Educational attainment of total population (aged 15+) (%) (5) — Low[2]	15.0	14.8	12.6	12.6	12.6	12.5
	Medium[3]	62.9	62.6	62.3	62.3	62.3	62.3
	High[4]	22.1	22.6	25.1	25.1	25.1	25.2
9	Early leavers from education and training (aged 18-24) (%) — Total	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
	Male	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
	Female	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
10	Total NET enrolment rate (%) — Lower secondary	90.2	99.8	82.9	85.6	87.1	M.D.
	Upper secondary	M.D.	99.7	93.7	88.0	80.0	M.D.
11	Share of VET students in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)	7.7	47.2	43.2	37.9	28.7	M.D.
12	Low achievement in reading, mathematics and science – PISA (%) (6) — Reading	N.A.	60.4	N.A.	N.A.	69.2	N.A.
	Mathematics	N.A.	50.7	N.A.	N.A.	61.9	N.A.
	Science	N.A.	57.8	N.A.	N.A.	65.9	N.A.
13	Total	69.7	68.2	68.3	68.3	68.1	67.9

ETF
Working together
Learning for life
European Training Foundation

	Indicator		2015	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	Activity rate (aged 15+) (%) (5)	Male	77.6	75.2	75.1	75.0	74.7	74.2
14	Inactivity rate (aged 15+) (%) (5)	Total	30.3	31.8	31.7	31.7	31.9	32.1
		Male	22.4	24.8	24.9	25.0	25.3	25.8
		Female	37.0	38.1	37.8	37.7	37.8	37.7
15	Employment rate (aged 15+) (%) (5)	Total	66.3	64.8	63.3	64.1	64.2	64.2
		Male	74.4	72.0	70.5	71.1	71.1	70.7
		Female	59.3	58.4	57.0	57.9	58.1	58.3
16	Employment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%)	Low[2]	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
		Medium[3]	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
		High[4]	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
17	Employment by sector (%) (5)	Agriculture	36.4	36.0	35.9	35.9	35.8	35.8
		Industry	14.0	15.0	15.1	15.3	15.4	15.7
		Services	49.6	49.0	49.0	48.8	48.8	48.5
18	Incidence of self-employment (%) (5)		67,8	65.6	64.0	64.6	64.5	64.8
19	Incidence of vulnerable employment (%) (5)		55,5	53.3	51.9	53.2	53.6	54.0
20	Unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%) (5)	Total	5.0	5.0	7.2	6.0	5.6	5.5
		Male	4.1	4.3	6.1	5.1	4.8	4.7
		Female	5.9	5.8	8.4	7.0	6.5	6.3
21	Unemployment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%) (5)	Low[2]	9.4	10.0	15.5	13.0	12.2	12.0
		Medium[3]	4.6	4.7	6.8	5.7	5.3	5.2
		High[4]	4.7	4.1	5.5	4.5	4.2	4.0
22	Unemployment rate (aged 15-24) (%) (5)	Total	13.4	11.5	15.2	14.6	13.6	13.1
		Male	11.4	10.4	13.0	12.9	12.1	11.8
		Female	15.8	12.9	18.0	16.6	15.3	14.7
23	Proportion of people aged 15-24 not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (%)	Total	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	19.8	19.5
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	18.8	18.6
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	20.9	20.6

	Indicator		2015	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	Proportion of people aged 15-29 not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (%)	Total	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
24	Participation in training/lifelong learning (% aged 25-64)	Total	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	7.4	M.D.	M.D.
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	8.1	M.D.	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	6.6	M.D.	M.D.
25	Human Development Index		0.751	0.762	0.722	0.738	0.760	M.D.

Last update: 29/08/2024

Sources:
Indicators 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7: The World Bank, World Development Indicators database
Indicators 10, 11: UNESCO, Institute for Statistics
Indicators 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24: The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, LFS
Indicator 12: OECD PISA 2018 Results (Volume I) Annex B1; OECD PISA 2022 Results (Volume I)
Indicator 25: UNDP

Notes:
[1] Estimation.
[2] Low – Main and primary education
[3] Medium – Secondary, Vocational and secondary specialised education
[4] High – Higher education
[5] The data for 2019-2022 have been recalculated in accordance with the results of the 2019 population census.
[6] PISA: 2019, the data are for 2018. Data refer to Baku only.

Legend:
C = ETF calculations
N.A. = Not Applicable
M.D. = Missing Data

ETF Working together Learning for life
European Training Foundation

ANNEX: DEFINITIONS OF INDICATORS

	Description	Definition
1	Total population (in thousands)	The total population is estimated as the number of people having their usual residence in a country on January 1 of the respective year. When information on the usually resident population is not available, countries may report legal or registered residents.
2	Relative size of youth population (age group 15–24) (%)	This is the ratio of the youth population (aged 15–24) to the working-age population, usually aged 15–64 (or 15–74 or 15+).
3	GDP growth rate (%)	Annual percentage growth rate of GDP at market prices based on constant local currency. Aggregates are based on constant 2010 US dollars. GDP is the sum of the gross value added by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or for depletion and degradation of natural resources.
4	Gross value added by sector (%)	The share of value added from Agriculture, Industry and Services. Agriculture corresponds to ISIC divisions 1–5 and includes forestry, hunting, and fishing, as well as cultivation of crops and livestock production. Value added is the net output of a sector after adding up all outputs and subtracting intermediate inputs. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or depletion and degradation of natural resources. The origin of value added is determined by the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC), revision 3 or 4. Industry corresponds to the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) tabulation categories C-F (revision 3) or tabulation categories B-F (revision 4), and includes mining and quarrying (including oil production), manufacturing, construction, and public utilities (electricity, gas, and water). Services correspond to ISIC divisions 50-99 and they include value added in wholesale and retail trade (including hotels and restaurants), transport, and government, financial, professional, and personal services such as education, health care, and real estate services. Also included are imputed bank service charges, import duties, and any statistical discrepancies noted by national compilers as well as discrepancies arising from rescaling.
5	Public expenditure on education (as% of GDP)	Public expenditure on education expressed as a percentage of GDP. Generally, the public sector funds education either by directly bearing the current and capital expenses of educational institutions, or by supporting students and their families with scholarships and public loans as well as by transferring public subsidies for educational activities to private firms or non-profit organisations (transfer to private households and enterprises). Both types of transactions together are reported as total public expenditure on education.
6	Public expenditure on education (as% of total public expenditure)	Public expenditure on education expressed as a percentage of total public expenditure. Generally, the public sector funds education either by directly bearing the current and capital expenses of educational institutions, or by supporting students and their families with scholarships and public loans as well as by transferring public subsidies for educational activities to private firms or non-profit organisations (transfer to private households and enterprises). Both types of transactions together are reported as total public expenditure on education.
7	Adult literacy (%)	Adult literacy is the percentage of the population aged 15 and over who can both read and write a short simple statement on their everyday life, and understand it. Generally, 'literacy' also encompasses 'numeracy' – the ability to do simple arithmetic calculations.
8	Educational attainment of total population (aged 15+) (%)	Educational attainment refers to the highest educational level achieved by individuals expressed as a percentage of all persons in that age group. This is usually measured in terms of the highest educational programme successfully completed, which is typically certified by a recognised qualification. Recognised intermediate qualifications are classified at a lower level than the programme itself.

ETF Working together Learning for life
European Training Foundation

	Description	Definition
9	Early leavers from education and training (aged 18-24) (%)	Early leavers from education and training are defined as the percentage of the population aged 18–24 with at most lower secondary education who were not in further education or training during the four weeks preceding the survey. Lower secondary education refers to ISCED 1997 levels 0–2 and 3C short (i.e. programmes lasting under two years) for data up to 2013 and to ISCED 2011 levels 0–2 for data from 2014 onwards.
10	Total NET enrolment rate	Total number of students of the official age group for a given level of education who are enrolled in any level of education, expressed as a percentage of the corresponding population.
11	Share of VET students in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)	Total number of students enrolled in vocational programmes at a given level of education (in this case, upper secondary), expressed as a percentage of the total number of students enrolled in all programmes (vocational and general) at that level.
12	Low achievement in reading, maths and science – PISA (%)	Low achievers are 15-year-olds who fail to reach level 2 on the PISA scale for reading, mathematics and science.
13	Activity rate (aged 15+) (%)	The activity rate is calculated by dividing the active population by the population of the same age group. The active population (also called 'labour force') is defined as the sum of employed and unemployed people. The inactive population consists of all people who are classified as neither employed nor unemployed.
14	Inactivity rate (aged 15+) (%)	The inactivity/out of the labour force rate is calculated by dividing the inactive population by the population of the same age group. The inactive population consists of all people who are classified as neither employed nor unemployed.
15	Employment rate (aged 15+) (%)	The employment rate is calculated by dividing the number of employed people by the population of the same age group. Employed people are all people who worked at least one hour for pay or profit during the reference period or were temporarily absent from such work. If a different age group is used, this should be indicated.
16	Employment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%)	The employment rate is calculated by dividing the number of employed persons by the population of the same age group. Employed persons are all persons who worked at least one hour for pay or profit during the reference period or were temporarily absent from such work. If a different age group is used, this should be indicated. Educational levels refer to the highest educational level successfully completed. Three levels are considered: Low (ISCED level 0–2), Medium (ISCED level 3–4) and High (ISCED 1997 level 5–6, and ISCED 2011 level 5–8).
17	Employment by sector (%)	This indicator provides information on the relative importance of different economic activities with regard to employment. Data are presented by broad branches of economic activity (i.e. Agriculture/Industry/Services) based on the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC). In Europe, the NACE classification is consistent with the ISIC.
18	Incidence of self-employment (%)	The incidence of self-employment is expressed by the self-employed (i.e. employers + own-account workers + contributing family workers) as a proportion of the total employed.
19	Incidence of vulnerable employment (%)	The incidence of vulnerable employment is expressed by the own-account workers and contributing family workers as a proportion of the total employed.
20	Unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%)	The unemployment rate represents unemployed people as a percentage of the labour force. The labour force is the total number of people who are employed or unemployed. Unemployed people comprise those aged 15–64 or 15+ who were without work during the reference week; are currently available for work (were available for paid employment or self-employment before the end of the two weeks following the reference week); are actively seeking work, i.e. had taken specific steps in the four-week period ending with the reference week to seek paid employment or self-employment, or had found a job to start later (within a period of, at most, three months).
21	Unemployment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%)	The unemployment rate represents unemployed people as a percentage of the labour force. The labour force is the total number of people who are employed or unemployed. Unemployed people comprise those aged 15–64 or 15+ who were

	Description	Definition
		without work during the reference week; are currently available for work (were available for paid employment or self-employment before the end of the two weeks following the reference week); are actively seeking work (had taken specific steps in the four-week period ending with the reference week to seek paid employment or self-employment, or had found a job to start later (within a period of, at most, three months)). Educational levels refer to the highest educational level successfully completed. Three levels are considered: low (ISCED level 0–2), medium (ISCED level 3–4) and high (ISCED 1997 level 5–6, and ISCED 2011 level 5–8).
22	Unemployment rate (aged 15-24) (%)	The unemployment rate represents unemployed people as a percentage of the labour force. The labour force is the total number of people who are employed or unemployed. Unemployed people comprise those aged 15–24 who were without work during the reference week; are currently available for work (were available for paid employment or self-employment before the end of the two weeks following the reference week); are actively seeking work, i.e. had taken specific steps in the four-week period ending with the reference week to seek paid employment or self-employment, or had found a job to start later (within a period of, at most, three months).
23	Proportion of people aged 15–24/15-29 not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (%)	The indicator provides information on young people aged 15–24 who meet the following two conditions: first, they are not employed (i.e. unemployed or inactive according to the ILO definition); and second, they have not received any education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey. Data are expressed as a percentage of the total population of the same age group and gender, excluding the respondents who have not answered the question on participation in education and training.
24	Participation in training/lifelong learning (% aged 25-64)	Participants in lifelong learning refers to persons aged 25–64 who stated that they received education or training in the 12 months preceding the survey (numerator). The denominator is the total population of the same age group, excluding those who did not answer the question on participation in education and training. The information collected relates to all education or training, whether or not it is relevant to the respondent's current or possible future job. If a different reference period is used, this should be indicated.
25	Human Development Index	The index is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and have a decent standard of living.

ANNEX: KEY DONOR PROJECTS IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

The EU AAP 2014 Support to Education in Azerbaijan (EUR 19 million), which ended in 2020, provided significant investment in various projects in the VET sector[43]. The EU AAP 2018 Education for Employment programme (EUR 14.4 million) signed in December 2019 seeks to: i) develop the legal and institutional basis at all levels of education according to the requirements of an Outcomes-Based Qualification System (OBS) for Lifelong Learning (LLL); ii) design a credit system and improve quality-assurance in VET; iii) modernise selected VET institutions for delivering competency-based training; and iv) enhance the system for skill needs/anticipation and develop mechanisms for assessment of competencies to minimise skills mismatch. Implementation of the programme started at the beginning of 2020 and will be completed by the end of 2024.

As part of the EU AAP 2018, since October 2020, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been implementing the four-year action 'VET for the future: development of VET providers' excellence in Azerbaijan', of approx. EUR 5.6 million. The objective is to support the Government of Azerbaijan in creating a high-quality VET system. This action supports the State Agency for Vocational Education (SAVE). The project 'Strengthening capacities for quality assurance and credit transfer in Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Azerbaijan', with a budget of approximately EUR 1 million, has been completed. The project focused on improving the State Agency on Vocational Education's capacity to develop and introduce the quality assurance framework and the credit transfer system in VET.

The project' support to the Ministry of Education in further developing NQF Level 5 qualifications and strengthening the resilience of the education system in Azerbaijan' has a budget of approx. EUR 2 million. Project design was completed in 2022 as part of the EU AAP 2018. The aims of this project, where the key beneficiary is the Ministry of Education, include: i) supporting relevant institutions in Azerbaijan to strengthen and further develop NQF Level 5 education and training as part of AzNQF; ii) supporting relevant institutions in Azerbaijan to improve the integration of graduates into the labour market; iii) strengthening the resilience of the education system in Azerbaijan through its operating model to better prepare it for a changing context.

The project 'Strengthening the Accreditation of Educational Institutions and Programmes and Quality Assurance Process at VET and higher education levels in Azerbaijan' has approximately a budget. EUR 1 million. Project design was completed in the first half of 2022 as part of the EU AAP 2018. This project aims to improve the capacities of the Education Quality Assurance Agency (TKTA).

The EU support project 'Strengthening the capacity of the MLSPP', with funding of around EUR 1.2 million in skills anticipation and workforce planning and supporting the establishment of a National Labour Observatory, started in February 2020. Implementation of this project was completed in March 2022.

In March 2020, the World Bank approved a USD 100 million loan to finance the Azerbaijan Employment Support Project. The objective is to help the most vulnerable attain employment and income by promoting self-employment opportunities in the labour market where job opportunities are currently scarce. The project is expected to be completed in December 2025.

The project' Promoting Innovation and Employment in Azerbaijan' (PROGRO) is implemented by UNDP and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population, funded by USAID, with a total budget of USD 1.1 million for 2016-2024. The project is implemented through Youth Employment & Training Centres in Ganja, Zagatala and Sumgait (formerly known as 'SYSLAB Centres', now renamed 'PROGRO Centres'). These Centres provide a range of services to local job-seeking young people, such as providing two-month on-site training and two-week online webinars on career

---

[43] Recommendation No 1/2018 of the EU-Azerbaijan Cooperation Council of 28 September 2018 on the EU-Azerbaijan Partnership Priorities: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu4business_azerbaijan_en.pdf

development, disseminating information on vacancies and other career-building resources, fostering young people's networking with potential employers, providing professional mentorships where possible, etc. As of August 2022, the project had trained 587 unemployed young people in Ganja, Masalli, Zagatala and Sumgait through in-person training sessions on effective job searching, career planning, building the inventory of professional skills, and developing an entrepreneurial mindset. With additional funding from USAID in 2021, the project initiated the 'English for Growth' activity to increase the number of young English speakers in Ganja, Zagatala and Sumgait through intensive English language courses and to subsequently improve their employability in target areas.

ABBREVIATIONS

AAP	Annual Action Programme
ADSL	Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line
AEN	Azerbaijan Education Network
APEA	Azerbaijan Public Employment Agency
ASAN	State Agency for Public Service
AZN	Azerbaijan manat (currency)
AzNQF	Azerbaijan National Qualifications Framework
DOST	Agency for Sustainable and Operational Social Security
EaP	Eastern Partnership
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
GoA	Government of Azerbaijan
GDP	Gross domestic product
GHG	Greenhouse gas
HCD	Human capital development
HEI	Higher education institutions
ICT	Information and communications technology
iMCD	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDPs	Internally displaced persons
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LLL	Lifelong learning
LMO	Labour Market Observatory
MoSE	Ministry of Science and Education
MLSPP	Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population
MSME	Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises
NEET	Not in employment, education or training
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NO	National Observatory
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
R&D	Research and development
SABER	Systems Approach for Better Education Results

SAVE	State Agency for Vocational Education
SEA	State Employment Agency
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
SSC	State Statistical Committee
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics
SYSLAB	Systems Laboratory for Innovation and Employment
TKTA	Education Quality Assurance Agency
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VET	Vocational education and training
VNFIL	Validation of non-formal and informal learning
WAPES	World Association of Public Employment Services
WBL	Work-based learning

REFERENCES

A.Valiev. (2020). *Attaining SDG 8 in Azerbaijan: The challenges of economic.* Geneva: ILO, International Labour Organization. Retrieved 2 December 2020, from https://www.ilo.org/emppolicy/projects/sida/20-21/WCMS_749432/lang--en/index.htm

Ahmadov, I. (2020). *Social Development in Azerbaijan: illusion and reality.* Baku, Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan. Retrieved from https://bakuresearchinstitute.org/en/social-development-in-azerbaijan-illusion-and-reality-2/

Asian Development Bank. (2023). *Harnessing The Fourth Industrial Revolution Through Skills Development In High-Growth Industries In Central And West Asia - Azerbaijan.* Manila: ADB. Retrieved 10 October 2023, from https://www.adb.org/publications/fourth-industrial-revolution-skills-development-azerbaijan

ADB. (April 2024). Azerbaijan. Asian Developement Bank. Retrieved 5 November 2024, from https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/957856/aze-ado-april-2024.pdf

Council of the European Union. (2022a). *Joint Staff Working Document Cooperation Implementation Report on Azerbaijan.* Brussels: EC.

Council of the European Union. (2022b). *Cooperation Implementation Report on Azerbaijan, SWD(2022) 197 final.* Brussels: Council of the European Union. Retrieved 29 November 2022.

ETF. (2021). *New forms of employment in the EaP countries.* Platform work. Azerbaijan country profile. ETF. Retrieved from https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-06/platform_work_azerbaijan_1.pdf

EU4Gender Equality Reform Helpdesk. (2021, August). '*Country Gender Profile: Azerbaijan*'. Retrieved 8 November 2024, from eu4genderhelpdesk_azerbaijangenderprofile_v3.pdf

EU Business Climate Report. (2022). *EU Business Climate Report Azerbaijan 2021, 6th Annual Edition.* Retrieved 27 July 2022, from https://euneighbourseast.eu/news/publications/eu-business-climate-report-azerbaijan-2021/

European Parliamentary Research Service. (2022). *The European Union's relations with Armenia and Azerbaijan: European Implementation Assessment.* Brussels: EPRS. DOI: 10.2861/856003.

Eurostat-funded project 'The provision of global assessments, sector assessments and light peer reviews for enlargement and ENP countries'. (2017). Global Assessment of the National Statistical System of Azerbaijan.

Gulylev, F. (2021). *Can Azerbaijan deliver on reform promises?* Retrieved 2 August 2022, from Gulylev, F., *Can Azerbaijan deliver on reform promises?*, Institute for War and Peace Reporting https://iwpr.net/global-voices/can-azerbaijan-deliver-reform-promises

iDCM. (2021). *Global Report on Internal Displacement iDCM, internal-displacement.org)* - accessed 31 August 2021.

IMF. (2022). *Azerbaijan: Staff Concluding Statement of the 2022 Article IV Mission.* Washington, D.C.: International Monetary Fund. Retrieved 25 July 2022, from https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2022/07/06/azerbaijan-staff-concluding-statement-of-the-2022-article-iv-mission

OECDa. (2022). *Azerbaijan Country Note PISA 2018.* Retrieved from OECD PISA 2018: https://www.oecd.org

OECD. (2022a). *Promoting Enterprise Digitalization in Azerbaijan.* Paris: OECD publishing. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1787/6a612a2a-en

OECDb . (2023). *PISA 2022 Results (Volume I and II) - Country Notes: Baku (Azerbaijan)*. Paris: OECD. Retrieved 11 November 2024, from https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/pisa-2022-results-volume-i-and-ii-country-notes_ed6fbcc5-en/baku-azerbaijan_20c688c8-en.html

OSCE. (2024). *INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION, STATEMENT OF PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS* . OSCE. Retrieved 11 November 2024, from https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/f/4/575497.pdf

SSCc. (2020). *Demography of Azerbaijan, Statistical Yearbook 2020*. Baku: State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Retrieved 3 September 2021, from https://www.stat.gov.az/source/demography/?lang=en

SSCd. (2021). *Youth of Azerbaijan, Statistical Yearbook*. Baku: State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Retrieved 2 September 2021.

State Statistical Committee. (2023d). *Labour Market. State Statistical Committee*. Retrieved 10 October 2023, from https://stat.gov.az/menu/6/statistical_yearbooks/?lang=en

State Statistical Committee. (2021). *Demographic Indicators of Azerbaijan, Statistical Yearbook*. Baku: State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Retrieved 15 October 2022.

State Statistical Committee. (2021b). *Demography and Social Statistics, The Social Benefits Allocated by Government for Unemployed*. Retrieved September 3 2022 from State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan: https://www.stat.gov.az/source/healthcare/?lang=en

State Statistical Committee. (2022b). *Youth of Azerbaijan. Baku: State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan*. Retrieved 1 November 2022, from https://stat.gov.az/source/demography/?lang=en

State Statistical Committee. (2023). Demographic Indicators of Azerbaijan, Statistical yearbook. Baku: State Statistical Committee of Republic of Azerbaijan. https://www.stat.gov.az/menu/6/statistical_yearbooks/?lang=en

State Statistical Committee. (2023a). *Azerbaijan in Figures. Baku: State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan*. Retrieved 12 October 2023, from https://www.stat.gov.az/menu/6/statistical_yearbooks/?lang=en

State Statistical Committee. (2023b). *Education, Science and Culture in Azerbaijan, Statistical Yearbook. Baku: State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan*. Retrieved 10 October 2023, from https://stat.gov.az/menu/6/statistical_yearbooks/?lang=en

State Statistical Committee. (2024). *Demographic Indicators of Azerbaijan 2024*. Baku: State Statistical Committee of teh Republic of Azerbaijan. Retrieved 7 October 2024, from https://www.stat.gov.az/source/demography/?lang=en

State Statistical Committee. (2024a). *National Accounts of Azerbaijan*. Baku: State Statistical Committee of Republic of Azerbaijan. Retrieved 11 November 2024, from https://www.stat.gov.az/menu/6/statistical_yearbooks/source/system_nat_accounts_2024.pdf

UNICEF Azerbaijan. (2023). *Budget Brief 2023 Investing in children in Azerbaijan*. UNICEF. Retrieved 2 October 2023, from https://www.unicef.org/azerbaijan/reports/2023-budget-brief

US Department of State. *2022 Investment Climate Statements: Azerbaijan*. Washington, D.C.: US Department of State. Retrieved 2 August 2022, from https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-investment-climate-statements/azerbaijan/

US Department of State. (2023). *2023 Investment Climate Statements; Azerbaijan*. Retrieved 14 October 2023, from https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-investment-climate-statements/azerbaijan/

World Bank a. (June 2021). *The World Bank Azerbaijan COVID-19 Emergency Response Project (P176503) Project Information Document (PID) Appraisal Stage | Report No: PIDA31656*. World Bank.

World Bank b, p.3. (2021). *The World Bank Azerbaijan Regional Connectivity and Development Project (P174379) Project Information Document (PID) Appraisal Stage Report No: PIDA30723*. World Bank. Retrieved 3 September 2021.

World Bank. (2022). Removing Barriers to Women Employment in Azerbaijan. Retrieved from https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/video/2022/03/08/barriers-to-women-employment-in-azerbaijan

World Bank Group. (2024). *AZERBAIJAN MONTHLY ECONOMIC UPDATE*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank. Retrieved 8 November 2024, from https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/5857827be6c735020587604167e41b09-0080012024/original/AZE-MEU-FEB-2024.pdf