

LIFELONG LEARNING SYSTEMS IN SEMED

9 JUNE 2026

Insights from ETF Torino Process monitoring

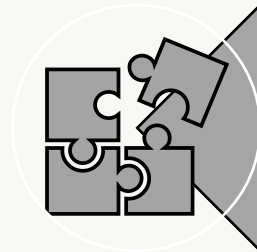
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ETF monitoring: sources of insight



COUNTRY REPORTING:

Country Fiches



CROSS-COUNTRY REPORTING:

ETF cross-country monitoring report



THEMATIC REPORTING:

Thematic reports

(e.g., on gender, on data availability)

KIESE DATA
EXPERT SURVEYS
PERFORMANCE INDICES

Formal education

Initial VET

Adult learning

Employment services

Recognition & data

connected?

What is a lifelong learning system?

- Lifelong learning comprises the schools, VET centres, universities and adult courses a country has on offer.
- However, to be a system, lifelong learning should also allow people to **enter, leave, return to and progress** through learning at different stages of life.
- This requires formal education, VET, adult learning, guidance, recognised qualifications, validation of prior learning, financing, quality assurance, data and employer links **to work together as a system, not only to co-exist.**

SYSTEM TEST

```
graph TD; enter[enter] --> learn[learn]; learn --> return[return]; return --> progress[progress];
```

enter
↓
learn
↓
return
↓
progress

Lifelong learning in SEMED

- SEMED countries **have building blocks, not yet fully connected systems.**
- Many of the **elements of lifelong learning are in place.**
- **Formal education and initial VET are usually the strongest** and most visible parts.
- **Adult learning exists, but is often fragmented**, project-based/donor-supported or linked to specific programmes.
- The **links between youth education, VET, adult learning, employment services and recognition systems are still weak** to non-existent.
- A fair conclusion is that **countries are moving towards lifelong learning agendas, but they do not yet operate coherent, interconnected lifelong learning systems.**

WHAT EXISTS

**strategies
VET reforms
qualifications
training providers
employment services
adult learning**

What learning opportunities look like in practice

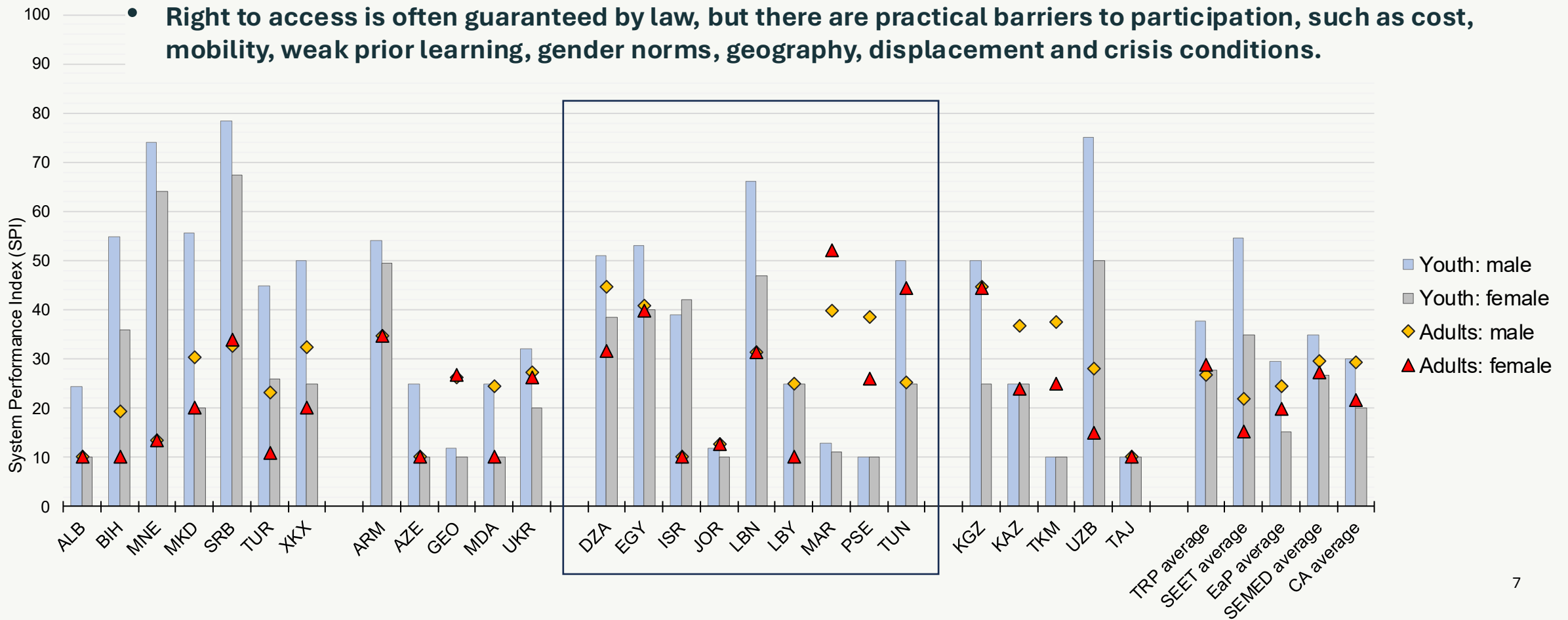
- For young people, **the main route is formal education**, followed by upper secondary education, VET, tertiary education or work.
- **VET is the main bridge** between education reform and labour-market needs, but its reach and attractiveness differ strongly by country.
- **For adults, learning often takes the form of literacy courses**, short vocational training, reskilling, active labour-market programmes, employer-led training and donor-supported initiatives.
- **Adult learning is mostly practical in purpose.** It focuses on basic skills, employment, entrepreneurship, digital skills, green skills, reintegration and crisis recovery.

YOUTH
formal education
→ VET / tertiary
→ work

ADULTS
literacy
short courses
reskilling
ALMP-linked training

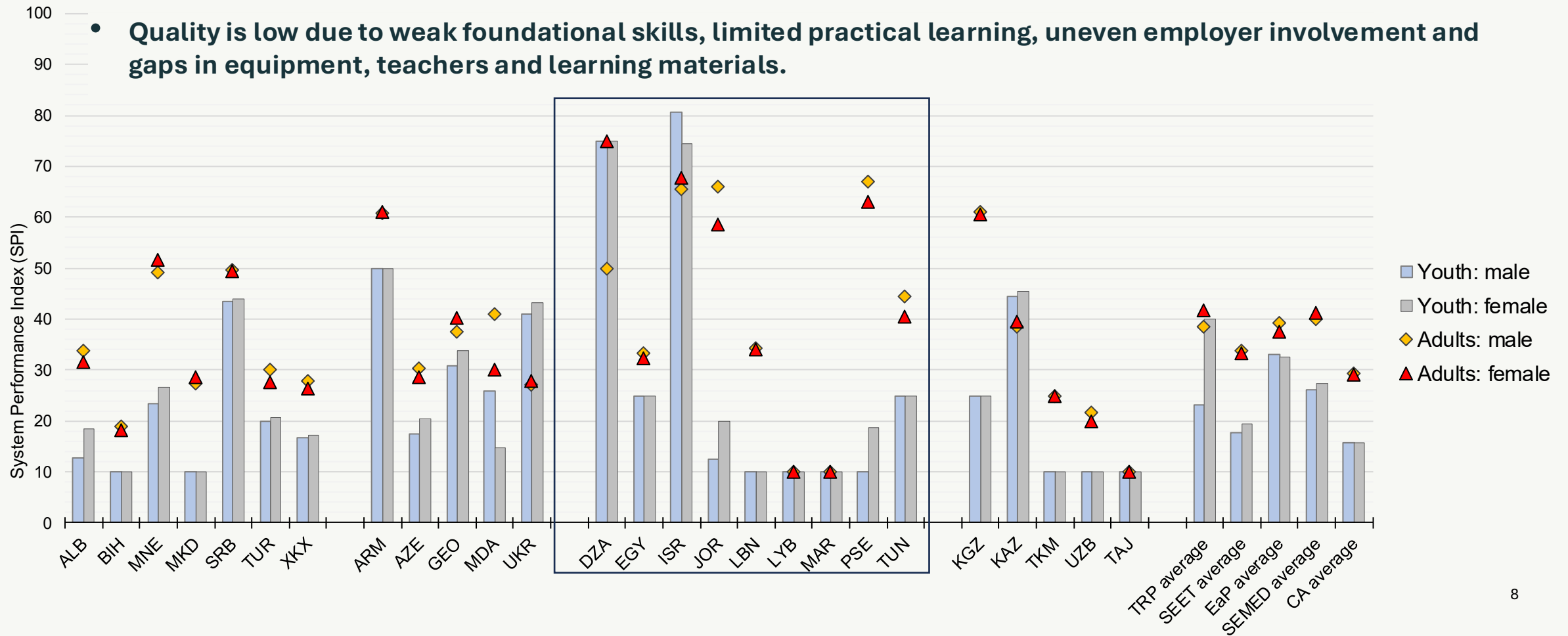
What the evidence says about delivery

Access to learning opportunities by country, age and gender of learners - system performance index (2025)



What the evidence says about delivery

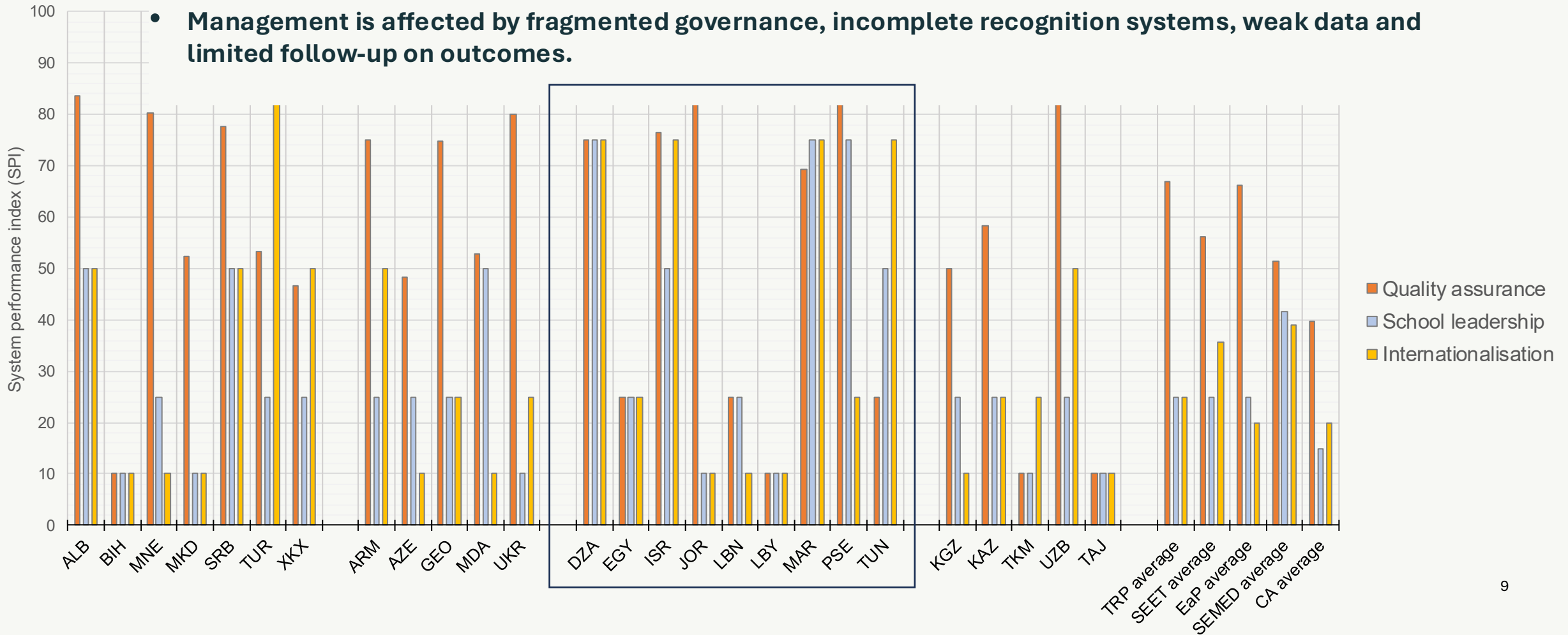
Quality of skills and competences by country, age and gender of learners - system performance index (2025)



What the evidence says about delivery

System performance – selected dimensions of system management (2025)

- Management is affected by fragmented governance, incomplete recognition systems, weak data and limited follow-up on outcomes.



SEMED countries do not need more initiatives, they need better ones

they need stronger connections between what is already in place

more usable adult learning

better support for learners at risk

stronger links with employers

better follow-up on whether reforms work

Thank you!