ABOUT THE OECD

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an international body that promotes policies to improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world. It is made up of 35 member countries, a secretariat in Paris, and a committee, drawn from experts from government and other fields, for each work area covered by the Organization. The OECD provides a forum in which governments can work together to share experiences and seek solutions to common problems. We collaborate with governments to understand what drives economic, social and environmental change. We measure productivity and global flows of trade and investment.

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THE MENA-OECD GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME

The MENA-OECD Governance Programme is a strategic partnership between MENA and OECD countries to share knowledge and expertise, with a view of disseminating standards and principles of good governance that support the ongoing process of reform in the MENA region. The Programme strengthens collaboration with the most relevant multilateral initiatives currently underway in the region.

In particular, the Programme supports the implementation of the G7 Deauville Partnership and assists governments in meeting the eligibility criteria to become a member of the Open Government Partnership. Through these initiatives, the Programme acts as a leading advocate of managing ongoing public governance reforms in the MENA region. The Programme provides a sustainable structure for regional policy dialogue as well as for country specific projects. These projects correspond to the commitment of MENA governments to implement public sector reforms in view of unlocking social and economic development and of meeting citizens’ growing expectations in terms of quality services, inclusive policy making and transparency.

MENA TRANSITION FUND OF THE DEAUVILLE PARTNERSHIP

In May 2011, the Deauville Partnership was launched as a long-term global initiative that provides Arab countries in transition with a framework based on technical support to strengthen governance for transparent, accountable governments and to provide an economic framework for sustainable and inclusive growth.

The Deauville Partnership has committed to support Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen and the Transition Fund is one of the levers to implement this commitment. The Transition Fund demonstrates a joint commitment by G7 members, Gulf and regional partners, and international and regional financial institutions to support the efforts of the people and governments of the Partnership countries as they overhaul their economic systems to promote more accountable governance, broad-based, sustainable growth, and greater employment opportunities for youth and women.

The MENA-OECD Governance Programme is currently implementing the MENA Transition Fund Projects in Egypt, Tunisia and Yemen.
Youth engagement in public life in Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia

Project Update – Summer 2018

OBJECTIVE OF THE PROJECT

The project “Youth in Public Life: Towards open and inclusive youth engagement”, implemented by the MENA-OECD Governance Programme, supports Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia in strengthening public governance arrangements for young men and women to engage in public life.

In collaboration with the Ministries of Youth in these three countries, line ministries, parliament, local governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and relevant foundations, universities, civil society and youth associations, the OECD is supporting efforts to strengthen the legal, institutional and policy frameworks for youth engagement in public life, to improve horizontal and vertical coordination of youth policies and to better mainstream youth concerns across public policies and services. The project is supporting Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia in translating country-specific policy recommendations into practice at both national and sub-national levels.

First coordination meeting with OECD Chief of Staff, Juan Yermo, and project partners from the three countries (Paris, 15 September 2016).
HOW DOES THE OECD SUPPORT YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN PUBLIC LIFE?

In the context of their efforts to bring policies and public services closer to youth, the Governments of Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia requested OECD support for strengthening youth engagement in public life. The collaboration over three years (2016-19) is funded by the MENA Transition Fund of the G7 Deauville Partnership and provides support in the following areas:


2. Scaling up the institutional and legal framework to foster youth engagement and representation in public life at the central and sub-national level;

3. Promoting innovative forms to engage young men and women in decision-making and help mainstream young people’s demands in public policies.

IMPACT

Technical assistance and hands-on policy advice will support the implementation of OECD policy recommendations. At the end of the project, the expect impact is:

• New opportunities for youth to raise their voice at central and subnational level
• Improved vertical and horizontal multi-sector and multi-stakeholder coordination (notably through the creation or consolidation of Steering Committees gathering all key governmental and non-governmental stakeholders)
• More youth-responsive public services

The project provides opportunities for regional policy dialogue among Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia.
GETTING YOUTH CLOSER TO PUBLIC LIFE

In cooperation with the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Morocco, the OECD organised the first of three regional conferences on 3-4 October 2017 in Rabat on the theme “Getting youth closer to public life”. This event gathered more than 120 participants, including young men and women from the MENA region, high-level officials from Ministries of Youth, line ministries along with youth associations and NGOs. The event led to lively discussions on good practices and key mechanisms that allow tailoring youth public policies and services to the needs of young men and women of the MENA region. Representatives from Finland and Slovenia and the G7 countries France, Germany and the United Kingdom presented good practices and lessons learned, along with representatives from international organisations such as the European Union, UNESCO, USAID, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP.

Opening the conference, the Minister of Youth and Sports of Morocco, Mr. Rachid Talbi Alami, stressed that young people should be given opportunities to participate in the social and political development of their countries based on inclusive policies and their participation in civil society and electoral processes.

The Conference featured sessions on tools and institutional reform to encourage youth participation in public life, with lessons learned presented by several OECD countries. Discussions focused on the importance of developing a governance framework and management tools, such as an action plan, indicators and effective monitoring and evaluation frameworks to track progress and ensure the impact of youth national strategies. Participants raised the need to establish more sustainable youth engagement mechanisms at the local level, notably as part of the ongoing decentralisation process in Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. In this context, the organisation of “Youth Circles” on the role of Youth Houses provided a platform to discuss the current efforts in Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia to modernise youth houses and discuss their potential as spaces to foster active citizenship. Participants also engaged in a debate on the broader institutional frameworks for youth engagement, pointing to national and local youth councils and media in particular.

Participants adopted the Conclusions of Rabat which call upon the MENA-OECD Governance Programme to further collect evidence across the MENA region on the existing practices for youth to engage and become empowered with a focus on the governance arrangements in place. The creation of a working group on the productive role youth can play in building peace and fighting extremism was envisaged.
Jordan
Towards the effective implementation of the National Youth Strategy 2018-20

“We cannot achieve sustainable development, empower our creative youth or successfully execute our development plans unless we develop state administration and enhance the rule of law through strengthening the principles of justice, equality and transparency.”


WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE YOUNG IN JORDAN?

- Around 70% of the population in Jordan is below 30 years old;
- Empowering youth is high on the political agenda as stressed by King Abdullah II’s 6th discussion paper (2016) and Jordan’s leading role in adopting the UN resolution on youth, peace and security on 9 December 2015 (S/RES/2015/2250);
- In a challenging social, economic and political context the Ministry of Youth (MoY) has embarked on the formulation of a long-term vision for youth: the National Youth Strategy 2017-20 (NYS) which shall be linked to Jordan 2025, the country’s ten-year strategy;
- Jordan’s commitment to foster open, transparent and participatory policy making and strengthen accountability mechanisms through the Open Government Partnership (e.g. forthcoming elaboration of the 4th National Action Plan) and a stronger role for subnational levels of government provide a new momentum to leverage youth participation across the different levels of government.
HOW DOES THE OECD SUPPORT YOUTH AND THE GOVERNMENT OF JORDAN?

In Jordan, the project is supporting the Ministry of Youth, line ministries, local authorities, CBOs, foundations and youth-led civil society in the following areas:

• Supporting the process of formulating and implementing the National Youth Strategy 2018-20 by conducting the OECD Youth Governance Review of Jordan and deliver actionable policy recommendations based on OECD principles and good practices;
• Scaling up the institutional and legal framework to foster youth engagement and representation in public life at the central and sub-national level;
• Promoting innovative forms of engaging young men and women in decision-making to mainstream young people’s demands in the design and delivery of public policies and services.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

In collaboration with the Ministry of Youth (MoY), a Steering Committee was created gathering various line ministries, NGOs and foundations as well as youth(-led) associations and other civil society actors in Jordan. During its first meeting on 16 November 2016, the participants stressed the need for a holistic assessment of the public governance arrangements in order to analyse whether the current legal, institutional and policy framework and practices indeed result in policy outcomes that are tailored to their specific needs and priorities.

Following the official launch event with the Minister of Youth, the Ambassador of Italy to Jordan and policy practitioners from Slovenia and Germany on 6 December 2016, a series of fact-finding missions was conducted between December and March 2017 at central level and in six governorates (i.e. Greater Amman Municipality, Karak, Tafileh, Aqaba, Irbid, Mafraq) to collect evidence. Peers from the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth, the German Federal Youth Council and Karlstad Municipality in Sweden supported the missions. In a high-level conference on 1 March 2016 with the Minister of Youth and the OECD Deputy Secretary General, the concerned ministries committed to leverage the open government agenda and ongoing decentralisation reform to build mechanisms for young people to engage with public authorities across all levels of government. In the run up to the first local elections under the decentralisation and municipality law, the project supported mock elections with 23 young candidates and 2250 voters in on 23 May 2017 in Madaba. A first version of the Discussion Paper was presented and discussed with the members of the Steering Committee on 18 May 2017 in Amman in the follow-up of which additional feedback was collected.

Together with 20 trainers from local youth centres across the Kingdom and a Peer Education and Youth Involvement Expert from the United Kingdom and local training expert from Jordan, a consultation meeting was organised on 21 February 2018 in Amman. The meeting served to discuss a training module for staff from local youth centres to encourage young men and women to engage themselves in the development of their communities. Together, a list of priorities regarding the methodology to be applied and the logistical aspects to be considered was prepared and shared with the Ministry of Youth.

In a meeting with the Secretary General of the Ministry of Youth, H.E. Dr. Thabet Al-Nabulsi, on 14 May 2018 in Amman it was agreed that the OECD will support the implementation of the active citizenship pillar of the National Youth Strategy 2018-20. On 5 July 2018, a survey was sent to the Ministry of Youth and all line ministries. The answers will feed into the OECD Youth Governance Review of Jordan which is expected to be finalised by the end of 2018.

KEY ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE

FIRST MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE ON 16 NOVEMBER 2016

Left to right: Ambassador Giovanni Brauzzi, Italy, Minister Ramy Wreikat, Jordan and Miriam Allam, OECD.
H.E. Giovanni Brauzzi: “We need to adopt a youth agenda in Jordan which should be non-discriminatory, green, digital and knowledge-based. As Italy will assume the chairmanship of the Deauville Partnership in 2017, we will continue to promote the youth agenda in the MENA region.”

H.E. Hadeetha Khresha, Minister of Youth: “Young people must be active partners in building political, social and economic life. By delegating authorities to the directors of youth, my ministry is implementing decentralisation.”

OECD DSG Mari Kiviniemi: “Let’s think of our young generation as problem solvers, young decision-makers, business men and women, and social workers – not as a separate group in society!”

Nasser Al Zou’bi, Ministry of Planning and International Co-operation: “Youth have played a role in formulating the 3rd OGP Action Plan and will increasingly do so in its implementation.”

HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON 1 MARCH 2017: “NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY, DECENTRALISATION AND OPEN GOVERNMENT: WHAT ROLE FOR YOUTH IN MOVING FORWARD JORDAN’S DEMOCRATISATION PROCESS?”

Ms Tina Hočevar, Board Member, European Youth Forum.
COLLECTING EVIDENCE, ENSURING IMPACT

Ms Bani Wafa Mustafa. Member of Parliament, with the OECD team on 7 February 2017 in Amman

Consultation meeting with 20 trainers from local youth centers, 21 February 2018 in Amman

One of 2251 voters on the Election Day on 23 May 2017 in Madaba

The 23 young candidates received training to prepare their campaigns. The mock elections provided an opportunity to 23 young men and women, aged 18-24, to simulate the first local elections held under the 2015 Decentralisation Law and Municipality Law on 15 August 2017.
FINDINGS FROM JORDAN

1. The National Youth Strategy 2018-20:
With the backing of the Royal court, the National Youth Strategy 2018-20 is placed within the country’s broader national development process. For its effective implementation, mechanisms to improve inter-ministerial coordination, strengthen monitoring and evaluation capacities within the Ministry of Youth and involving youth systematically throughout the process will be critical.

2. Coordination between state and non-state actors:
Avoiding the duplication of efforts and costs among the many stakeholders involved in delivering programmes, trainings and services for youth in Jordan is a key challenge (e.g. ministries, CSOs, youth associations, national/international NGOs and foundations, universities, schools). Breaking up silo-based structures relies on the creation of new incentive structures for public officials and fora to facilitate dialogue in order to align youth programming across state and non-state actors and address parallel structures and fragmented coverage.

3. MoY’s capacities and inter-ministerial coordination:
The transformation of the Higher Council for Youth into a Ministry in 2016 was an important step to identify a responsibility centre tasked to coordinate youth policy and service delivery across the whole of government. To fulfil this mandate effectively, capacities need to be built in the area of strategic planning, policy/strategy formulation and facilitate horizontal communication and coordination across different ministries and departments.

4. Integrate a youth perspective into the formulation of public policies and services:
Governments have a variety of “tools” at their disposal ensure that young people’s perspective is integrated in the formulation of policies and the delivery of services. In Jordan, existing policy guidelines to foster the participation of citizens and CSOs could be amended such as to reflect the importance of engaging youth and successful examples of analysing child-sensitive budgeting practices and the publication of child-related expenditures in the General Budget could be expanded such as to cover the youth population.

5. Encourage youth to vote and run in elections:
According to data from the Independent Election Commission, the participation rate of youth between 17-30 years old (35.5%) figured below the average (37%) in the 2016 parliamentary elections. The minimum age to run in local elections (25 years) is still considerably higher than in OECD countries, however, it figures below the minimum age required to run for national parliament (30 years, Senate: 40 years). According to RASED programme, in the 2017 local elections, candidates in the age group 50-59 represented the highest share of elected members to the governorate councils (41.7%); around 10.5% of elected officials are between 26-34 years old.

6. Foster more open government and tailor government information and communication to youth habits:
Jordan was the first Arab country to join the Open Government Partnership (OGP). The forthcoming elaboration of the 4th National Action Plan provides a unique opportunity to advance youth participation and empowerment objectives in the broader context of increasing citizen participation, transparency and accountability.” MoY’s significant efforts to open up new information and communication channels, for instance by creating a twitter account, and Facebook and Instagram profile, have been taken up with enthusiasm by various youth stakeholders and young people.

7. Opportunities for civic engagement and political participation of youth (associations):
Various state and non-state actors in Jordan organise trainings and offer voluntary activities, such as the Al Hussein Youth camps organised by MoY for around 25,000 youth (2016). However, opportunities for the political participation of youth are much more limited. While tribal affiliations exercise significant influence in social, economic and political life, political parties continue to be weak. In the absence of an institutionalised mechanism for youth (associations) to represent their interests vis-à-vis the government, such as in the form of a national or local youth councils, activities to establish a dialogue between young people and decision-makers often rely on the initiative of CSOs.

8. Lever the decentralisation reform to empower governorates and municipalities:
The 2015 Decentralisation Law and Municipality Law have raised hopes that local elected authorities, in collaboration with citizens and CSOs, will play a more substantive role in identifying local needs in the framework of the national planning and development process. The reform hence provides a momentum to rethink how youth can be involved in decision-making at the level of governorates and municipalities. As of today, the 200 youth centres across the territory provide the main infrastructure to organise seminars, trainings and workshops for youth, however, they are not linked to local decision-making.

9. Scale up capacities at subnational level to engage youth in public life:
The MoY oversees 200 youth centres (110 for young men aged 12-24 years; 90 for young women aged 12-30 years)
which conduct specific activities for its male and female members. In 2017, the annual budget per youth centre was increased to 6000 JD and administrative and financial autonomy was delegated to the youth directorates in the governorates. However, many centres suffer from outdated equipment and limited space and lack of specialised supervising staff. Different ministries and non-state actors are running centres at community level that could be used to create synergies with the youth centres. Where operational, youth parliaments provide a mechanism through which young people can get familiar with democratic principles and proceedings and, in some cases, transmit their recommendations to local authorities.

On a similar note, despite a quota system for women in the national parliament and the elected governorate and local councils, overall women participation in public life continues to be low due to predominant gender bias and gender stereotypes.

**SUPPORTING THE YOUTH AGENDA IN JORDAN**

Based in the key findings, the OECD will support the youth agenda in Jordan by:

- Supporting peer-to-peer activities to encourage young people to be active citizens and become fully engaged in social and public life;
- Improving the coordination and communication among different ministries and between state and non-state actors involved in delivering state policies and services for youth;
- Promoting digital platforms to offer a space for genuine dialogue and interaction between government and youth (associations).

10. **Address the double challenge faced by young women:**

Data from the World Bank estimates that more than every second young women (15-24) in Jordan is unemployed (56%) compared to 29% of young men (2016) despite outnumbering their male fellows in both tertiary (47% vs. 43%, 2015) and secondary school enrolment (85% vs. 80%, 2014). Jordan displays one of the lowest female labour force participation in the world (16% compared to 22% in MENA countries and 57% in upper middle income countries).
In Morocco, the project is working with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, subnational governments as well as civil society in the following areas:

• Supporting the implementation of the National Integrated Youth Strategy at all levels of government;
• Strengthening the legislative and institutional frameworks for youth engagement and representation, including national, regional and local youth councils;
• Promoting innovative ways to strengthen dialogue between young people and public authorities.

“To the youth of Morocco, you are the true richness of this country, given the role you play as a stakeholder in the process of the social evolution of your country. You enjoy full citizenship, with the rights and obligations that flow from it, and the need to invest constructively in the transformations that society is experiencing, while remaining attached to the constants of national identity and open to universal ideals.”

H.E. King Mohamed VI, Youth Celebration, 2012
WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

An expanded steering committee, with representatives from various ministries working on youth issues as well as non-governmental actors met on 13 March 2017 to identify key priorities for the project and inform the development of the OECD Public Governance Youth Review in Morocco.

A technical session was also held back to back with the meeting of the steering committee. It was headed by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Youth and Sports and with representatives from line Ministries, the National Institute for Youth and Democracy and representatives from international organisations. Peers from France and Québec presented their respective experiences notably regarding the creation and development of a national youth strategy and vision, the establishment of related action plans and mechanisms for strengthening institutional coordination. The presentations were followed by an extensive question and answer session and an analysis of good practices and lessons learned that various stakeholders working on youth policies in Morocco can take into consideration.

The OECD also conducted a series of peer review missions at central and local levels to meet with government and civil society representatives to gather the information needed to draft the OECD Public Governance Youth Review in Morocco and develop evidence-based policy recommendations adapted to the Moroccan context, with good practices and lessons learned from OECD member countries. The missions included representatives of the OECD Secretariat as well as peers from France, Quebec and the Wallonia-Brussels Federation.

The first regional conference in Rabat was the opportunity to hold a session on “National Youth Councils: Composition, Mandate and Influence”, on 4 October 2017. It focused on the Moroccan model of the National Youth and Associative Action Council. The different experiences that were presented by OECD countries (e.g. Germany, France) were essential to better identify the wide variety of forms, functions and composition of such bodies and the importance to take into consideration youth needs that can widely vary within the country was particularly discussed.

KEY ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE

THE FIRST STEERING COMMITTEE
13 MARCH 2017

The first steering Committee was chaired by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, 13 March 2017

Peers from France and Quebec sharing good practices and lessons learned relating to the implementation of youth strategies
COLLECTING EVIDENCE FOR THE OECD REVIEW

MEETINGS WITH KEY GOVERNMENTAL ACTORS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Director of Cooperation, Communication and Judicial Studies of the Ministry of Youth Mr Yacine Bellarab and head of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme Ms Miriam Allam giving their opening remarks.

A FOCUS ON YOUTH HOUSES

Visit of the youth house in Ait ourir

A FOCUS ON THE REGIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS

Meeting with Mr. Brahim Sbiyya, Director of Marrakech-Safi regional Council and his team

Meeting with Mr. Abdelilah Motassim, Director of Casablanca-Settat Regional Council and his team
HAVE A LOOK AT OUR KEY FACTS AND INITIAL FINDINGS FROM MOROCCO

1. Toward a revitalization of the National Integrated Youth Strategy:
With the new constitutional provisions of 2011 and under the leadership of H.M. King Mohamed VI, the National Integrated Youth Strategy and its Action Plan aim at placing youth at the heart of public policies. This requires political will, a strong partnership with youth and civil society, and effective capacities for the centre of responsibilities in charge of implementing the strategy.

2. Role and capacities for an effective implementation of the SNIJ:
The transversal nature of youth policies requires strong coordination and communication. An inter-ministerial committee for youth is foreseen as part of the Youth Strategy. Incorporating all governmental entities working on youth within this committee is essential and ensuring adequate representation of youth and regular communication with them in the framework of this committee can lead to positive results. Capacities related to strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation are also essential for an effective implementation of the strategy.

3. Challenges and opportunities in the framework of advanced regionalization:
It is at the local level that youth have most interactions with the administration. Ensuring that policies and services at local levels respond to youth needs and aspirations is thus essential. Some regions have begun to set up regional councils on the interests of young people, which could serve as key platforms for youth engagement and representation.

4. What legislative framework for youth engagement?
The Moroccan Constitution of 2011 provides for the creation of an “Advisory Council on Youth and Associative Action” (CCJAA) in charge of extending and generalizing youth participation in the social, economic, cultural and political development of the country, as well as to help young people to engage into civil society organizations. Draft law 89-15 of the CCJA was adopted by the first chamber of Parliament in July 2017. While the main objective of the CCJA is to issue advisory opinions on youth affairs, its role in ensuring that youth voices are heard in this process is essential.

5. Towards a reform of Youth Centres in Morocco:
There are currently over 650 Youth Centres (“Dar Chabab”) and women’s centres throughout Morocco. These public structures play a central role for youth by facilitating their social integration, and can become key actors for youth engagement in public life. The government is planning on undertaking reforms to enhance the role of youth centres and establishing “pilot” youth centres that would provide platforms for essential services and information to youth.

6. Engaging youth in public life:
As Morocco launches its first open government action plan, ensuring youth have a role to play in its implementation is essential. Structuring youth and youth associations is another key lever for public engagement. Giving Moroccan youth the means to interact constructively with the State can lead to positive results. In addition, an inclusive approach to youth engagement also requires taking into consideration non-organized youth.

7. Youth and political engagement in Morocco:
According to a survey conducted by the “Haut Commissariat au Plan” (HCP) in 2012, one-third of Moroccan youth do not trust their government, while 42% do not trust the Parliament and 55% political parties. In a recent speech, H.M. the King highlighted that this lack of trust leads young people to disengage from political life and elections. Young elected officials is one means of gaining back youth interest in political life. Since 2011, 30 seats are reserved for those under 40 years of age in the Parliament.

8. “Thinking youth” for better policies and public services that are evidence-based:
Young people are at a turning point in their lives where they need to increasingly interact with the public administration in a number of areas such as housing, education or health. Ensuring that policies and services are developed based on tools such as youth-disaggregated data, youth-sensitive budgeting and regulatory impact assessment is essential. Evidence-based policies can indeed enable informed decision-making for concrete results.

9. Addressing the double challenge faced by young women in Morocco:
Data from the World Bank estimates that the unemployment rate for women aged 15-24 in 2016 was of 20%, while the overall rate was about 10% among the female labour force. While young Moroccan women account for 47% of tertiary education, they represent only 26% of the active population. A specific focus on the double challenge faced by young women in Morocco is essential. For more information, please see the discussion paper on Morocco.

SUPPORTING THE YOUTH AGENDA IN MOROCCO

Based in the key findings gathered during the different peer review missions, the OECD will provide support in the following areas:

- Strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Youth and Sports in coordinating, implementing and monitoring and evaluating the National Integrated Youth Strategy at central and and local levels;
- Working with regions to ensure that youth policies are developed based on data and youth needs;
- Supporting the establishment of regional and local youth councils and the mandate of the national youth council for youth and associative action.
Towards youth engagement in public life in Tunisia

“We have done a revolution, we have drafted the constitution, we have received the Nobel peace prize but five years after the revolution, our country is experiencing a crisis that threatens to stifle the dreams of youth who have lost hope”

H.E. Mr Youssef Chahed, Head of Government. First speech before Parliament, on 26 August 2016

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE YOUNG IN TUNISIA?

• Youth in Tunisia played a crucial role in the 2011 civil uprising but their participation in the current transition process remains low: only 6% of youth voted in the presidential and parliamentary elections, 3% of young men and women are active in an association and 1% of youth are members of a political party (Source: INS and ISIE).

• With youth making up a large part of Tunisia’s population (30% aged 15 to 29 years, and 51% under 30), their involvement in policy making is imperative to rebuild trust in government and design policies that are responsive to all.

• The new Tunisian constitution recognizes the importance of young people as they are the active force of the society. Article 8 of the said constitution states: “Youth is a living force in the building of the Nation”. Article 133 underlines that “the electoral law guarantees representativeness of youth in local councils”.

• In May 2016, the President of the Tunisian Republic launched a consultation process with youth representatives on the challenges faced by young people to inform the formulation of an Integrated National Youth Strategy 2016-2030.

• In January 2018, the President of the Tunisian Republic officially declared the year 2018 “the year of youth”.

• The new electoral code provides for an important representation of youth and women on electoral lists, which resulted in 52% of candidates to the local elections of May 2018 being under 35. Yet, challenges remain, as seen during the last local elections, with only 32.6% of youth voters.
HOW DOES THE OECD SUPPORT YOUTH AND THE GOVERNMENT IN TUNISIA?

In Tunisia, the project is supporting the Ministry in charge of Youth, line ministries and sub-national governments as well as civil society in the following areas:

- Supporting the process of formulating and implementing the Integrated National Youth Strategy 2030 by conducting a review of public governance mechanisms for youth engagement and empowerment and formulating tailored policy recommendations based on OECD principles and good practices;

- Strengthening the institutional and legal framework to promote youth engagement and representation in public life at the central and subnational levels;

- Promoting innovative forms of engagement of young men and women in public decision-making to ensure that the needs and requirements of young people are taken into account in the design and delivery of public policies and services.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

In collaboration with the Presidency of the Government and the Ministry of Youth (MoY), a Steering Committee was created gathering 19 line ministries. During its first meeting on 7 October 2016, with the presence of Ms. Rabiaa Nejlaoui, Youth advisor to the President of the Republic and Mr. Chokri Terzi, Youth advisor to the Head of Government, learned about the project, its objectives and deliverables. This meeting was also an occasion to discuss and adopt an implementation plan aligned with the national agenda on youth. The Committee members highlighted several youth related issues and challenges that should figure prominently in the OECD Review, mainly those related to coordination and communication.

Two technical workshops were held in February and May 2017 to present and discuss tools and mechanisms to establish effective dialogue between government and youth, to ensure that youth voice is being heard. They were opened by the Minister of Youth and te Secretary of State for youth and gathered representatives from public administration, civil society and young people from 34 regions of the country. Peers from France, Germany, the UK and Spain presented their respective experiences, notably regarding the development of an electronic platform for youth, and the creation of national and local youth councils. The presentations were followed by extensive question and answer sessions and analyses of good practices that Tunisian stakeholders working on youth policies can take into consideration.

With the presence of M. Abdelkoddous Saadaoui, State Secretary for youth and M. Habib Koubba, Director General for Governance at the Presidency of the government, the second meeting of the steering committee held in October 2017 brought together all representatives from line ministries with direct or indirect stake on youth issues, the youth commission in the Parliament, as well as representatives from civil societies active on youth issues. The meeting allowed presenting the national vision for youth prepared by the Ministry of Youth for the years to come. It provided the opportunity to discuss and exchange on the mechanisms and tools necessary for an effective implementation of these projects to foster youth engagement, using a cross-governmental approach that involves all relevant stakeholders.

In the framework of the 6th Mediterranean University on Youth and Citizenship (MedUni) in Tunis from 7 to 12th May 2018, the OECD organised a 3-days capacity-building workshop on “Youth participation in local governance”, in partnership with the Tunisian Observatory of Youth (ONJ) and the Tunisian Institute for Democracy and Development (ITDD). The workshop gathered participants from Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan, Slovenia, Spain and Portugal, as well as experts from OECD and a peer from the UK. With the presence of Mr. Habib Koubba, Director General for Governance and newly elected municipal councillor, and Ms. Imen Belhedi, Director of the Tunisian Observatory of Youth, the workshop featured interactive sessions, allowing participants to learn more about mechanisms and tools to foster participation at the local level. Representatives from national and local councils of Slovenia, Spain and Portugal shared their experiences, success stories and challenges faced by young people when engaging and participating in their respective localities. The discussion focused on five pillars of governance arrangements for youth engagement and empowerment, highlighted in the “2018 Youth Stocktaking Report: Engaging and empowering youth in OECD countries – How to bridge the “governance gap”, and experiences of young people at the local level with regards to integrated national youth strategies, strong and coordinated institutions, relevant legal frameworks, mainstreaming a youth perspective in policy-making, and youth engagement.
WORKSHOP ON 16 FEBRUARY 2017: “BUILDING A YOUTH ENGAGEMENT PLATFORM”

Divided in two groups (youth and public administration) the Tunisian actors developed their ideas for the platform and discussed next steps: “If you were the government...”

CONFERENCE:
“IN ORDER FOR YOUTH VOICE TO BE HEARD AND TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT: YOUTH CONSULTATION AND REPRESENTATION IN TUNISIA”

Young participants discussing with representatives from public administration how to improve communication between youth and the administration.
COLLECTING EVIDENCE FOR THE OECD REVIEW

Following three high-level activities, that gathered public officials from the central and local levels, youth workers and representatives from civil society and young men and women from all governorates of the country, a series of fact-finding missions was conducted between March and June 2017 at central level and in three governorates (Ben Arous, Nabeul and Beja) with the support of peers from France and Quebec.

The collected evidence will feed into the OECD Public Governance Youth Review of Tunisia.

Secretary of State for youth, Ms Faten Kallel discussing the upcoming steps to design an integrated strategy for youth, with the OECD team and peers from France and Quebec.

Peers from France and Quebec discussing key challenges against youth participation in public life, with the Youth Committee in the parliament during the first peer review mission.

Workshop with young people from different regions of Tunisia, discussing the composition and mandate of the future national council for youth, with the presence of moderators from the Tunisia ministry of youth, France, UK, Belgium, and Germany.

Workshop “Youth participation in local governance”, 6th Mediterranean University on youth and global citizenship (MedUni) - 8-10 may 2018, Gammarth, Tunisia.

Second meeting of the steering Committee – 25 October 2017, Tunis.
HAVE A LOOK AT OUR KEY FACTS AND INITIAL FINDINGS FROM TUNISIA

1. Towards an integrated national youth strategy:
The Ministry of Youth and Sport Affairs launched an open societal dialogue throughout Tunisia from October to December 2016 to build the National Integrated Youth Strategy 2030. The objective of this dialogue is to discuss with youth, families and youth stakeholders in order to elaborate a national diagnosis of the situation of young people in the country. With more than 40,000 participants to the national dialogue, the Ministry aims to use the results of the dialogue to build strong policies that reorient young people towards real life projects which are in line with their ambitions and potential.

2. Identification of the Responsibility Center and strengthening of its capacities:
As with all cross-sectoral policies, youth policy requires a clear definition of a Centre of Responsibility, which has the lead on conducting policy and coordinating the action of all involved actors. A reflection is currently being carried out within the Ministry of Youth and Sport Affairs to rethink how to organize an inclusive, representative and effective inter-ministerial youth delegation.

3. Evidence-based strategy:
Evidence-based policy analysis enables informed decisions to guide and implement medium and long-term goals of national strategies. The Ministry of Youth Affairs can be supported by the National Youth Observatory to collect and analyse recent and disaggregated data. The Observatory should also be involved in the preparation of the national strategy youth and in identifying the strategic axes of the ministry more generally.

4. Development of open government tools and the adaptation of dialogue with young people to their new modes of communication:
Tunisia joined the Open Government Partnership (OGP) in 2014, thus becoming the first North-African and the second Arab country after Jordan to join the partnership, and demonstrating its willingness to carry out its agenda for a more open government. The country is now implementing its second Action Plan, with a view to carrying out a number of reforms facilitating the principles of transparency, citizen participation and integrity in the public sector. The Plan contains two commitments for Tunisian youth, one on the creation of an Integrated Electronic Platform to facilitate communication with young people. An on-line platform for youth is now being created under the leadership of the ministry of youth.

5. Promoting a culture of engagement and participation through school and early childhood:
Tunisian youth (aged 15-29) have less trust in their government than their compatriots aged 50 and over. Cultural issues therefore play an important role in encouraging young people to engage in public life. The ministry in charge of youth affairs has made several efforts to foster a culture of commitment, through the various activities carried out in youth centres. For example, “Clubs of Integrity”, organized by youth centres aim to familiarize young people with the main principles of integrity.

6. Promoting youth engagement in associations and political parties:
According to statistics of polls in Tunisia, more than 80 percent of 18-25 year-olds boycotted the 2014 elections. On the opposite, the youth civil society is constantly growing (20,698 associations in 2017 against 9,969 associations in 2010). The Constitution of 2014 strengthened the place of associations in Tunisian public life, notably through the provisions of Article 35 which guarantees “the freedom of creation of political parties, trade unions and associations” both that the latter respect the provisions of the Constitution, the most important of which are financial transparency and the rejection of violence. According to Tunisian statistics, nearly 364 are youth associations, little more than 2% of the associative body, mainly dominated by cultural and sports associations.

7. Restructuring and building the capacity of youth centres:
Youth centres in Tunisia are public institutions dedicated to providing young people with opportunities to develop and train themselves through a multitude of socio-cultural activities. The network of youth institutions in Tunisia is very important (more than 500 centres across the country organized as youth centres, young tourist bus, campsites). However, they are not linked to local decision-making and their budget is not very substantive despite the fact that some of them require maintenance and refurbishment.

8. Integration of a “young vision” into the design of public policies and services:
Integrating the perspective of young people into the design of public policies and services, and taking into account the diverse needs and priorities of young people, governments can direct their efforts towards public policies that meet their specific needs. In Tunisia, citizen consultation mechanisms are becoming more widespread at the local level. For instance many municipalities organize open consultation meetings with the public on their annual budget to explain the main positions and allocation arbitrations. Discussions with civil society were launched in 2017 by the ministry of youth to identify the role, responsibilities and composition of youth national council.
9. The role of the local level:
It is at the local level that young people have the most
direct contact with the administration. Tunisia remains
a highly centralized state with great regional disparities.
A decentralisation process has started on the basis of the
new constitution. As regards youth policy, it still is mainly
delivered at the local level, where youth centres and
youth commissioners are the ministry representatives.
A reflection is being conducted to establish local youth
councils, to ensure that youth voice is being heard at the
local level.

10. The double challenge of young women:
Tunisia has long been the standard bearer of women’s rights
in the Arab world; as early as 1956, the Code of the Personal
Status granted several rights to women. The Tunisian
Constitution of 2014 reinforced these achievements,
notably through Article 20 which states that “All citizens
have the same rights and duties. They are equal before
the law without discrimination”. Similarly, article 45 of
the Constitution introduces “equal opportunities between
women and men”. Tunisia has also set up a Peer Gender
Equality Council, whose main mission is to integrate the
gender approach in Tunisia’s development policies and plans
(planning, programming, evaluation and budgeting), with
the aim of eradicating all forms of discrimination between
women and men and achieving equality in rights and duties.
It is also empowered to give its opinion on bills relating to
women’s rights. Though, engaging in public life remains a
real challenge for young women, especially in rural areas.

SUPPORTING THE YOUTH AGENDA IN TUNISIA
Based on the key findings gathered during the different
peer review missions, the OECD will support the Tunisian
Ministry of Youth and Sports in the following:

• Conducting workshops at the local level to raise
awareness about the importance of youth participation
to public life;
• Setting up a short-term operational plan on the basis
of a strategic vision for youth to reorient young people
towards real life projects that are in line with their
ambitions and their potential;
• Defining key objectives of the youth houses and
strengthening their capacities to improve public service
delivery.
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Information about the Project is available at