Youth Empowerment

Why does governance matter for empowering young people?

Transitioning to adulthood has become more difficult due to new challenges in accessing quality education, decent jobs and affordable housing. Socioeconomic insecurities have led to lower trust in national governments and institutionalised forms of participation amongst youth, potentially undermining the legitimacy of public institutions. In the context of ageing societies, these pressures are likely to increase and generate long-term social and economic costs. At the same time, many young people express concern about inequalities and climate change, as well as their repercussions on well-being, intergenerational inequalities and inclusive growth.

Achieving policy outcomes that are responsive to today’s youth and to future generations will depend on the ways in which public institutions work, laws and policies are designed, and decision-making processes are structured. Leveraging sound public governance to empower young people and to promote an equitable distribution of resources across generations is therefore critical.

This work delivers on OECD-wide objectives to empower young people and promote inclusive growth amid major trends such as population ageing and digitalisation.

Supporting sound policy-making by filling the evidence gap

The OECD Global Report (forthcoming in 2020) will explore the extent to which existing laws, policies, institutional capacities, engagement practices and governance tools are conducive to youth empowerment and intergenerational equity. Building on survey findings from 40+ countries and 85+ youth organisations, this Report will provide the first international comparative analysis in the field by benchmarking countries against international standards. It builds on the initial findings of the OECD Youth Stocktaking Report (2018), which provides a first assessment of how OECD member countries approach youth issues from a governance perspective. Drawing on a public consultation in which 56% of the 100+ respondents were under the age of 30, the report also identifies key areas for improvement.
Providing a forum for policy dialogue

The Friends of Youth PLUS meetings provide a forum for delegates to the OECD Public Governance Committee, youth policy makers, and representatives of both youth and elderly organisations to discuss cutting-edge research and good practices based on OECD findings.

OECD work in the Middle East & North Africa (MENA)

Country reviews for Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia (forthcoming in 2020) provide governments with a holistic assessment of the governance frameworks in place to tackle youth needs, and offer actionable recommendations based on consultations with government and non-government stakeholders.

The MENA Regional Youth Report (forthcoming in 2020) explores regional challenges faced by young people and governments’ actions to address them in a comparative analysis. The Report reviews current practices and benchmarks existing laws, policies and governance tools against OECD good practices. The Seven Key Findings summarises initial key findings of this report. The assessment builds on the 2016 report “Youth in the MENA Region: How to Bring Them In”.

The findings of country and regional reviews are discussed in annual regional youth conferences and the implementation of recommendations is facilitated through targeted capacity building programmes in each country (e.g. design of national youth-for-youth initiatives; creation of local youth councils; elaboration of practical guides).

How the OECD can help

Country reviews & regional reports
Provide holistic assessments and benchmarking of countries’ governance frameworks to ease the transition of youth into adulthood, increase youth’s trust in government and achieve intergenerational equity

Toolkits and indicators
Translate analysis into practical guidance for policymakers

Capacity-building & implementation projects
Support governments and youth stakeholders in implementing policy recommendations

High-level policy dialogue
Discuss and disseminate most recent evidence and findings from its 36 member countries and partner countries

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