OECD Public Governance Reviews

Youth at the Centre of Government Action

A REVIEW OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

OECD

OECD Public Governance Reviews

Youth at the Centre of Government Action

A REVIEW OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

OECD
BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

This document, as well as any data and map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Please cite this publication as:
OECD (2022), *Youth at the Centre of Government Action: A Review of the Middle East and North Africa*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/bcc2dd08-en.

ISBN 978-92-64-41881-3 (print)
ISBN 978-92-64-48809-0 (pdf)
ISBN 978-92-64-60618-0 (HTML)
ISBN 978-92-64-39802-3 (epub)

OECD Public Governance Reviews
ISSN 2219-0406 (print)
ISSN 2219-0414 (online)

Photo credits: Cover design by Francesca Romani (OECD) on the basis of image from © John Lund/Blend Images/Getty Images.

Corrigenda to publications may be found on line at: www.oecd.org/about/publishing/corrigenda.htm.

© OECD 2022

The use of this work, whether digital or print, is governed by the Terms and Conditions to be found at https://www.oecd.org/termsandconditions.

Foreword

Young people have demonstrated resilience to shocks and led positive change in their communities across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Young people (aged under 30) constitute more than half (55%) of the population across MENA, compared with 36% of the population across OECD countries. While challenges vary significantly across the region, youth unemployment rates are among the highest in the world, young people tend to express low trust in public institutions, and nearly four in ten live in fragile and conflicted-affected areas. The COVID-19 crisis has underscored the need to place the needs of young people at the centre of an inclusive and resilient recovery.

To support this process, this report analyses the current governance arrangements and practices across 10 public administrations in the MENA region in three areas: 1) uniting all institutional stakeholders to implement a shared, integrated youth policy and deliver services to young people; 2) building administrative and institutional capacities to mainstream the perspectives of young people in policy making; and 3) encouraging the participation and representation of young people and youth stakeholders in public and political life. The report provides findings and policy guidance for policy makers and youth stakeholders to empower young people.

The report presents findings from responses to the *OECD Youth Governance Survey* of the public administrations of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates. The survey answers are complemented by desk-based research and fact-finding meetings conducted by the OECD with policy makers in public entities in charge of youth affairs of Egypt, the Palestinian Authority and the United Arab Emirates in 2021. The report also draws insights from the OECD reports *Empowering youth and building trust in Jordan, Renforcer l'autonomie et la confiance des jeunes au Maroc* (*Empowering youth and building trust in Morocco*), and *Renforcer l'autonomie et la confiance des jeunes en Tunisie* (*Empowering youth and building trust in Tunisia*), published in 2021. Finally, the report benefits from insights from youth policy makers and non-institutional youth stakeholders from the MENA region and OECD countries gathered during the MENA-OECD Youth Conferences hosted by the Government of Morocco (2017), Tunisia (2018) and Jordan (2021), as well as during the Rome MED Dialogues in 2020 and 2021.

The report is part of the Programme of Work 2021-2022 of the OECD and of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme in support of public sector efficiency in the MENA region. In line with the strategic priorities of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme and the OECD Public Governance Committee, it helps identify key issues and lessons learnt to strengthen governance arrangements to create better opportunities for young people in the MENA region. It draws on the evidence and good practices gathered by the OECD Public Governance Committee, the Regulatory Policy Committee, the Committee of Senior Budget Officials and their sub-bodies as well on OECD Recommendations in the area of public governance. The report is informed by the *OECD Recommendation of the Council on Creating Better Opportunities for Young People* (2022). It integrates insights and good practices from the OECD report (2020) *Governance for Youth, Trust and Intergenerational Justice: Fit for all generations?* and from the OECD Policy Paper (2020) *COVID-19 and Youth: Response, recovery and resilience* and (2022) *Delivering for youth: How governments can put*

young people at the centre of the recovery. The findings and lessons learnt drawn from this report will in turn inform discussions and promote peer learning on public governance reform in the MENA region.

The report is delivered in the context of the regional project *COVID-19 Response and Recovery in the MENA region*, implemented by the OECD Development Centre, the MENA-OECD Governance Programme in the OECD Public Governance Directorate, and the OECD Centre for Tax Policy and Administration. The project supports MENA governments in their efforts to respond and recover from the COVID-19 crisis and to enhance their resilience to future shocks, with a focus on young people and women. The project is financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in Italy.

Acknowledgements

The report was prepared by the OECD Public Governance Directorate (GOV) under the leadership of Elsa Pilichowski, Director for Public Governance. It was developed under the strategic direction of Martin Forst, Head of the Governance Reviews and Partnerships Division in GOV, and of Miriam Allam, Head of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme. Moritz Ader, who co-ordinates the work on youth empowerment and intergenerational justice, provided guidance in the preparation of the report, with the support of Pietro Gagliardi.

Chapter 1 of the report was co-authored by Alexandra Robinson and Hanadi Al-Saidi; Chapter 2 by Alexandra Robinson and Pietro Gagliardi; Chapter 3 by Alexandra Robinson and Mai Hosny; Chapter 4 by Nada Berrada, Manon Epherre-Iriart, Stephanie Attil and Cynthia Saghir. Pietro Gagliardi and Alexandra Robinson were responsible for the final data collection and analysis, with support provided by Mai Hosny, Rimaz Abu-Zeyad, Stephanie Attil, Lamia Benhoummane, Caroline Mina, and Aichetou Taffa. Valuable feedback was received by Amr Soliman, Manon Epherre-Iriart, Guillaume Biganzoli, Rémy Roisnel and Yusuf Ashmawi in the OECD Governance Reviews and Partnerships Division. Ciara Muller with the support of Francesca Romani prepared the manuscript for publication and controlled the quality.

The report benefitted from the comments of colleagues from the OECD Public Governance Directorate, including Claire Mc Evoy, Emma Cantera, David Goessmann and Mauricio Mejia Galvan (Open and Innovative Government Division), Tatyana Teplova and Martyna Wanat (Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development Goals Division) and Laura Völker and Andrea Uhrhammer (Director's Office). The authors are grateful to all colleagues for their inputs, as well as to Maurizio Mensi, Executive Director of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme Training Centre, and to Ji-Yeun Rim (OECD Development Centre) for the valuable feedback received.

The authors express their gratitude to all public officials who contributed to the report, notably from the public administrations of Egypt (Ministry of Ministry of Planning and Economic Development and National Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development), Jordan (Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs, and Ministry of Public Sector Development), Lebanon (Ministry of Youth and Sports), Mauritania (Ministry of Culture, Youth, Sports and Relations with Parliament), Morocco (Ministry of Ministry of Youth, Culture and Communication), the Palestinian Authority (High Council of Youth and Sports), Qatar (Ministry of Sports and Youth), Saudi Arabia (Ministry of Communications and Information Technology and Ministry of Economy and Planning), Tunisia (Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment) and the United Arab Emirates (Ministry of Culture and Youth). They are also grateful to the public officials of MENA governments and OECD countries who actively contributed to the MENA-OECD Youth Conferences hosted by Morocco (2017), Tunisia (2018) and Jordan (2021), organised with the financial support of the G7 countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom and United States of America) through the MENA Transition Fund of the G7 Deauville Partnership. The conferences provided valuable inputs for the report.

The authors would like to thank Tunisia and Italy for their leadership as Co-Chairs of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy for the

financial support provided through the regional project *COVID-19 Response and Recovery in the MENA region*. In particular, they are grateful to Ambassador Antonio Bernardini, Co-Chair of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme and Permanent Representative of Italy to the OECD, and Alessandra Pastorelli, First Counsellor at the Permanent Delegation of Italy to the OECD.

Table of contents

Foreword 3

Acknowledgements 5

Abbreviations and acronyms 10

Executive Summary 14

1 Young people in MENA: Coming of age in a context of structural challenges and global trends 17

From climate change to urbanisation: The impact of global and regional trends and challenges on young people's livelihoods 19
Raising the stakes: The situation of young people in key areas of public service delivery and participation 24
References 29
Notes 34

2 Uniting government stakeholders behind a joint strategy for young people 37

A glance at constitutional reform in MENA 38
Youth laws can support policy coherence and coordination 39
More countries elaborate national youth strategies but results often remain behind expectations 40
Benchmarking national youth strategies against the OECD Assessment Framework for National Youth Strategies 45
Policy recommendations 60
References 61
Notes 67

3 Ensuring public administrations deliver targeted policies and services for young people 69

The organisation of youth affairs in government 70
Human and financial resources dedicated to youth affairs 72
Ensuring coordinated approaches across stakeholders 77
Public management tools to mainstream the perspectives of young people in policy making and service delivery 81
Policy recommendations 85
References 86
Notes 90

4 Participation and representation of young people and youth stakeholders in public and political life 93
International legal frameworks to promote the participation of young people in public and political life and their endorsement in MENA 95
Creating an enabling environment and protecting civic space 96
Removing barriers to encourage the participation of young people in political life 101
The participation of young people and their organisations in the public policy and service cycle and allocation of public resources 106
Youth volunteering and youth work as drivers of resilience 117
Policy recommendations 121
References 122
Notes 127

Tables

Table 2.1. OECD Assessment Framework of National Youth Strategies 47
Table 3.1. Bodies with formal responsibility for youth affairs 71
Table 3.2. Share of public budget allocated to youth affairs across MENA, 2018-2021 77
Table 3.3. Approaches to inter-ministerial co-ordination across MENA administrations 79
Table 4.1. Access to information laws in the Arab States and RTI rating 98

Figures

Figure 1.1. Share of young people as part of the total population, 2022 and 2050 projections 18
Figure 1.2. Percentage of population in urban areas, 1950-2050 22
Figure 1.3. Corruption Perceptions Index 2021 23
Figure 1.4. Youth unemployment rates by region and OECD average, 2007-2019 25
Figure 1.5. NEET rates among people aged 15-24 years by sex, 2020 26
Figure 2.1. Public administrations in the MENA region with a National Youth Strategy or elaborating one 42
Figure 2.2. Sources of evidence used by selected MENA administrations in the elaboration of their NYS 50
Figure 2.3. When youth were involved in strategy design, they were more satisfied with results 53
Figure 2.4. Monitoring and evaluation of national youth strategies, OECD countries 57
Figure 2.5. Thematic areas addressed in national youth strategies 59
Figure 3.1. Functions of public entities in charge of youth affairs 72
Figure 3.2. Share of young people (aged 18-34) working in the entity in charge of youth affairs in selected MENA administrations and OECD average, 2021 or latest available 74
Figure 4.1. Perception of freedom to express opinion and participate in peaceful protests among young people in MENA, 2021 96
Figure 4.2. Political participation in the MENA region by age group, 2016 101
Figure 4.3. Interest in politics in the MENA region by age group, 2018-2019 102
Figure 4.4. Minimum age requirements in public and political life across the MENA region 104
Figure 4.5. Percentage of parliamentarians under 40 years old 106
Figure 4.6. Online expression of political opinions by age group in the MENA region 108
Figure 4.7. Communication channels used by selected MENA entities in charge of youth affairs 109
Figure 4.8. Types of support provided by ministries to youth organisations 112
Figure 4.9. National youth councils in the MENA region 114
Figure 4.10. Share of young people volunteering across the MENA region 118

Boxes

Box 2.1. National youth laws in selected OECD countries 39
Box 2.2. Examples of integrated national youth strategies 41
Box 2.3. OECD Recommendation on Creating Better Opportunities for Young People 46
Box 2.4. Age-disaggregated evidence in OECD countries 51
Box 2.5. Participatory approaches in youth policymaking in selected OECD countries 53

Box 2.6. Involving stakeholders in monitoring and evaluating youth policy and programmes in OECD countries 58
Box 3.1. Empowering young people in the public administration 75
Box 3.2. Examples of horizontal co-ordination mechanisms for youth policy 78
Box 3.3. Inter-ministerial co-ordination in France 80
Box 3.4. Youth checks in OECD countries 82
Box 3.5. How to involve young people in public budgeting? 84
Box 4.1. Open data in Slovenia: “STOP the Bureaucracy” 99
Box 4.2. Learning and practicing civic and citizenship education 100
Box 4.3. Participation of youth organisations in planning COVID-19 recovery measures 111
Box 4.4. European Union (EU): Youth dialogue 113
Box 4.5. Youth Councils in the United Arab Emirates 114
Box 4.6. Youth parliaments in OECD countries 116
Box 4.7. Spain: Youth forum 117
Box 4.8. National volunteering programs in OECD countries 120

Follow OECD Publications on:

http://twitter.com/OECD_Pubs

http://www.facebook.com/OECDPublications

http://www.linkedin.com/groups/OECD-Publications-4645871

http://www.youtube.com/oecdilibrary

http://www.oecd.org/oecddirect/

Abbreviations and acronyms

AED	United Arab Emirates Dirham
ANAPEC	Agence Nationale de Promotion de l'Emploi et des Compétences (National Agency for Promotion of Employment and Skills, in Morocco)
APS	Australian Public Service
ATI	Access to information
CAD	Canadian Dollar
CCJAA	Conseil Consultatif de la Jeunesse et de l'Action Associative (Consultative Council for Youth and Associative Action, in Morocco)
CE-BSG	Centre d'Excellence pour la Budgétisation Sensible au Genre (Centre of Excellence for Gender Responsive Budgeting, in Morocco)
CESE	Conseil Économique Social et Environnemental (Economic, Social and Environmental Council, in France and in Morocco)
CGJL – de Jugendrot	Conférence Générale de la Jeunesse du Luxembourg (National Youth Council of Luxembourg)
CoG	Centre of government
CRC	(United Nations) Convention on the Rights of a Child
CRÉDOC	Centre de Recherche pour l'Étude et l'Observation des Conditions de Vie (Research Centre for the Study and Observation of Living Conditions, in France)
CSO	Civil society organisation
CSSS	Cultural Enrichment and Sports Excellence Strategy (in Qatar)
DJEPVA	Direction de la Jeunesse, de l'Éducation Populaire et de la Vie Associative (Youth, Non-Formal Education and Voluntary Organisation Directorate, in France)
EU	European Union

EUR	Euro
EYC	Emirates Youth Council (in the United Arab Emirates)
FAMSI	Fondo Andaluz de Municipios para la Solidaridad Internacional (Andalusian Fund of Municipalities for International Solidarity)
FAO	(United Nations) Food and Agriculture Organization
GBO	Gestion du Budget par Objectifs (Budget Management by Objectives, in Tunisia)
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross domestic product
GRB	Gender-responsive budgeting
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Corporation for International Cooperation)
GYC	Global Youth Council (in the United Arab Emirates)
HR	Human resources
ICCPR	(United Nations) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ILO	(United Nations) International Labour Organisation
IMJUVE	Instituto Mexicano de la Juventud (Mexican Institute of Youth)
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
JOD	Jordanian Dinar
KPI	Key performance indicator
MAD	Moroccan Dirham
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MENA FN	Middle East North Africa Financial Network
MoU	Memorandum of understanding
MP	Member of parliament
MTEF	Medium-term expenditure framework
MUCF	Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor (Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society)

NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDI	National Democratic Institute (in the United States of America)
NEET	Not in employment, education or training
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NYC	National Youth Council
NYS	National Youth Strategy
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OGP	Open Government Partnership
OHCRH	(United Nations) Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
ONJ	Observatoire Nationale de la Jeunesse (National Observatory for Youth, in Tunisia)
PNIJ	Politique Nationale Intégrée de la Jeunesse (National Integrated Policy on Youth, in Morocco)
RIA	Regulatory impact assessment
RMM	Mediterranean Network of Medinas (in Morocco)
RTI	Right to information
SDG	(United Nations) Sustainable Development Goal
SER	Sociaal-Economische Raad (Social and Economic Council, in the Netherlands)
SIGMA	Support for Improvement in Governance and Management
SNIJ	Stratégie Nationale Intégrée de la Jeunesse (National Integrated Strategy on Youth, in Morocco)
SWOT	(Analysis of) Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TND	Tunisian Dinar
UDHR	(United Nations) Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UN ESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
UNCRC	United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child

UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
URSM	Urad Republike Slovenije za mladino (Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth)
USD	United States Dollar
WPAY	(United Nations) World Programme of Action for Youth
YO	Youth organisation

Codes for OECD countries			
AUS Australia	ESP Spain	JPN Japan	PRT Portugal
AUT Austria	EST Estonia	KOR Korea	SVK Slovak Republic
BEL Belgium	FIN Finland	LTU Lithuania	SVN Slovenia
CAN Canada	FRA France	LUX Luxembourg	SWE Sweden
CHE Switzerland	GBR United Kingdom	LVA Latvia	TUR Turkey
CHL Chile	GRC Greece	MEX Mexico	USA United States
CZE Czech Republic	HUN Hungary	NLD Netherlands	
COL Colombia	IRL Ireland	NOR Norway	
CRI Costa Rica	ISL Iceland	NZL New Zealand	
DEU Germany	ISR Israel	OECD OECD average	
DNK Denmark	ITA Italy	POL Poland	

Codes for MENA economies			
ALG Algeria	KWT Kuwait	OMN Oman	UAE United Arab Emirates
BHR Bahrain	LBN Lebanon	PA Palestinian Authority	YEM Yemen
DJI Djibouti	LBY Libya	QAT Qatar	
EGY Egypt	MRT Mauritania	KSA Saudi Arabia	
IRQ Iraq	MENA MENA average	SYR Syria	
JOR Jordan	MOR Morocco	TUN Tunisia	

Executive Summary

The COVID-19 crisis has laid bare the structural challenges young people across the MENA region face in their transition to an autonomous life. Youth employment declined by 7.5% in 2020, access to education was disrupted for 110 million pupils and students, and – as in other regions – spaces for young people to form social connections and skills were no longer accessible due to lockdown and confinement measures. In a context of already low levels of trust in government among young people, the implications of the crisis may undermine not only young people's future aspirations and opportunities, but also societal and economic progress across the region more broadly.

This report analyses the current governance arrangements and practices across 10 public administrations in the MENA region to deliver more integrated, participatory and inclusive policies and services to young people and build their trust in public institutions. The report covers three areas:

- uniting all institutional stakeholders behind a joint youth strategy to implement policies and deliver services for young people;
- building administrative and institutional capacities to mainstream the perspectives of young people from different backgrounds in policymaking;
- encouraging the participation and representation of young people and youth stakeholders in public and political life.

A joint vision for policies and services for young people of all backgrounds

At least seven administrations in the MENA region have adopted national youth strategies to promote a cross-sectoral approach in support of young people. While national youth strategies have become more common, implementation challenges risk limiting their impact. There remains a need for more participatory approaches in policy design and implementation, strengthening administrative capacities in the lead government entity and providing sufficient funding to support their implementation at central and subnational levels.

To support the design and implementation of an integrated and cross-sectoral approach to youth policy, administrations could consider:

- **clearly defining the responsibilities and mandates** of state and non-state stakeholders working with and for young people;
- **developing youth policy** that is evidence-based, transparent, participatory, inclusive and cross-sectoral, supported by political commitment, adequate resources, and effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms;
- **consider designing youth strategies** at the appropriate level(s) of administration that take a comprehensive and integrated approach to improving young people's social and economic outcomes, as well as their civic and public participation;

- **creating mechanisms for young people and youth-led organisations** to support the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of youth policy; and
- **systematically gathering data and indicators disaggregated by age, gender and all other relevant characteristics across all policy and service areas** to provide services and support to young people living in vulnerable and marginalised circumstances.

Ensuring public administrations deliver for young people from different backgrounds

Although most public administrations in the MENA region have created a ministry of youth (often combined with the sports portfolio), limited institutional and administrative capacities in public entities in charge of youth affairs at national and sub-national levels are a key challenge the report identifies to implement more integrated and inclusive measures. Moreover, co-ordination across different institutional and non-institutional stakeholders is often weak. There is also potential to apply public management tools to mainstream the perspectives of young people across all policy areas, based on age-disaggregated evidence, such as in rulemaking and the allocation of public resources.

To mainstream the perspectives of young people from different backgrounds in policy making, administrations could consider:

- **providing adequate human and financial resources to institutional stakeholders** at all levels to design and deliver youth policies, services and programmes;
- **establishing institutional mechanisms** and incentives for horizontal and vertical co-ordination to ensure the coherent delivery of youth policies, services and programmes;
- **mainstreaming the perspectives of young people and monitoring and evaluating policy outcomes on young people more systematically** by collecting and using age-disaggregated data and consider applying public management tools, including regulatory impact assessments and public budgeting tools; and
- **promoting the representation of young people in the public sector workforce**, as well as inter-generational learning, by systematically monitoring age diversity and inclusion in the public sector workforce; adopting measures to proactively attract, develop and retain young talent including through effective on-boarding opportunities and dedicated graduate programmes; and implementing strategies to harness the benefits of a multigenerational workforce.

Regaining and retaining young people's trust through more inclusive participation and representation

Across the MENA region, young people's trust in public institutions is low. The participation of young people in public policy and their representation in state institutions remain limited: people aged under 40 represent only 16% of members of parliament in the MENA region on average compared to 22% across OECD countries, most of which have a significantly older population. At the same time, young people in MENA participate in the public debate through non-institutionalised channels and contribute to community life, via civil society and volunteering activities, both online and offline.

To promote the participation and representation of young people and youth stakeholders in public life, in particular of young people from disadvantaged and underrepresented groups, administrations could consider:

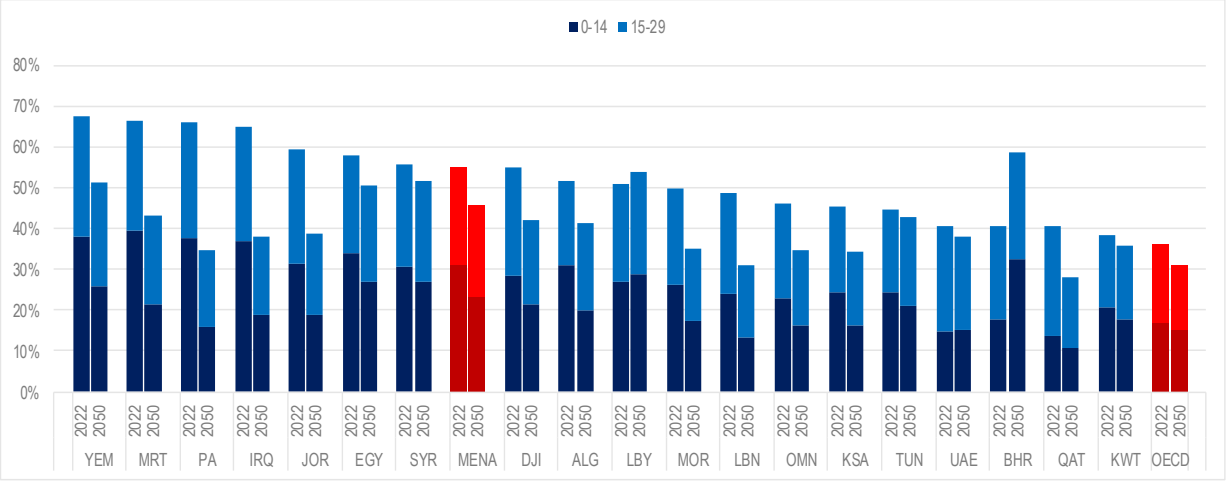
- **recognising and safeguarding youth rights and ensuring that young people are aware of them and exercise them**, among others by building legal literacy, promoting civic and citizenship literacy and protecting civic space for young people;
- **delivering relevant, clear and accessible public communications** targeted to young people, based on active listening and understanding of their concerns and interests, including through digital channels;
- **reviewing, where appropriate, voter registration rules** and minimum age requirements for the participation in public and political life;
- **increasing age diversity in legislative and executive bodies**, through regulatory or voluntary measures, such as youth quotas in legislative and/or executive bodies and through voluntary targets in political party lists as appropriate;
- **addressing ageism and stereotypes** against young people in public and political life by running or supporting awareness-raising programmes;
- **engaging youth stakeholders in all stages of the policy-making cycle** on all policy areas that are relevant for young people (including global challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss and digital technology policy) both in-person and digitally, by creating or strengthening institutions such as youth advisory bodies, sharing information, conducting consultations and engaging youth councils at national and sub-national levels with methods tailored to their availability, needs and interests; and
- **encouraging civic engagement and participation among young people**, including by promoting meaningful volunteer service and youth work through laws, strategies and programmes, at the appropriate level(s) of administration and adequate resources.

1 Young people in MENA: Coming of age in a context of structural challenges and global trends

Young people (aged under 30) constitute more than half (55%) of the population across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), compared with 36% of the population across OECD countries. Their successful participation in economic, social and public life will improve personal well-being, inclusive growth and social cohesion. However, the COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated existing challenges for young people across the region and global and regional trends such as climate change, digitalisation and migratory pressures raise new questions about the opportunities available for young people and future generations.

Across most of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region,[1] people from 15-29 years of age constitute nearly one-quarter (24%) of the population, compared with 19% of the population across OECD countries (Figure 1.1).[2] However, the magnitude of this current *youth bulge*[3] and future demographic projections vary significantly within the region, with the current population under 29 years old ranging from 38% in Kuwait to 67% in Yemen. By 2050, the population under 29 years old is projected to range from 28% in Qatar to 59% in Mauritania. As the region's significant youth cohort grows older, the demographic transition presents both an opportunity and the need for renewed efforts and investments into their transition to an autonomous life and participation in economic, social and public life. However, the demographic reality in the region is often not portrayed as an opportunity but as a cause of concern given the challenges young people are facing.

Figure 1.1. Share of young people as part of the total population, 2022 and 2050 projections



Source: OECD calculations based on United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Population Prospects 2019, custom data acquired via website.

Spanning from Morocco and Mauritania in the West to Gulf countries in the East, and from countries in North Africa in the North to Yemen in South, young people across the region are growing up in very different circumstances. Also within each country, the opportunities available to young people differ significantly depending on factors such as educational attainment, gender, family background, (dis)ability status, ethnicity, migration status and others. While challenges vary depending on national and personal circumstances, the region faces one of the highest youth unemployment and informality rates worldwide and is home to 15 million displaced people, many of which are young people (UNHCR, 2019[1]). After eight years of decline from 2003-2011, the population living in poverty (under 5.50 USD per day) has increased in the MENA region, from 141,690,000 in 2013 to 170,450,000 in 2018.[4] Overall trust among citizens in government and public institutions remains low: 31% of people across the MENA economies[5] surveyed by the Arab Barometer in 2021 reported they trusted their public institutions, and the rate decreases to only 28% among young people from 18-29 years of age (Arab Barometer, 2021[2]). Moreover, less than 1 in 2 young people from 18-24 years of age surveyed across 17 MENA economies[6] in 2021 by the annual ASDA'A BCW Arab Youth Survey think their public administration has in place the right policies to address the issues most important to young people. Many of the structural challenges young people are confronted with lead to longer dependence on state or family support, which delays their path to an autonomous life and deprives societies and economies of the positive effects of a young demographic.

The COVID-19 crisis has further exacerbated pre-existing inequalities across the region and among young people of different backgrounds. Although physical health risks have been lower for young people than the elderly, youth have been significantly impacted by the socio-economic effects of the pandemic (OECD, 2020[3]). As in countries around the world, access to formal and non-formal learning has been disrupted with the closures of schools, youth centres and youth clubs due to confinement measures and curfews. Starting from already high levels, the pandemic resulted in an increase in the share of unemployed young people (15-24 years) by 2.7 percentage points from 2019 to 2020.[7] As a result, simulations estimate that under a pessimistic scenario, approximately 800 billion USD of aggregated lifetime earnings could be lost for the current cohort of learners in the region (UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank, 2021[4]). In response to Russia's large-scale aggression against Ukraine in 2022, new concerns about the food security for the MENA population emerged as the MENA region is especially dependent on Russia and Ukraine for their wheat needs: for instance, more than 80% of Egypt's wheat imports in 2020 came from Russia and Ukraine and more than 70% for Lebanon.[8] With a view to major risks for the well-being of today's and future generations, the implications of climate change are already felt by young people today in the form of water shortages, food insecurity and an increase in heat-related health problems and deaths and are expected to weight on unborn generations even more.

This chapter presents an overview of the situation for young people in the MENA region. It discusses global and regional trends with an impact on young people's opportunities today and in the future and discusses differences across economies and context factors where relevant. The chapter also assesses the situation of young people in terms of their employment, educational, health and other important outcomes. It sets the scene for the analysis of the governance arrangements and practices in play to support young people based on uniting different institutional stakeholders behind a joint vision for young people (Chapter 2), the capacity of public administrations to mainstream the considerations of young people in policymaking (Chapter 3), and the opportunities for young people to shape their futures based on available opportunities to participate in public and political life and their representation in public institutions (Chapter 4).

From climate change to urbanisation: The impact of global and regional trends and challenges on young people's livelihoods

The MENA region has experienced a number of significant developments in the last decade. From the Arab Spring uprisings in 2010-2011 to the decline in oil prices in 2014-2016, from the exposure to geopolitical instability, conflict, increased displacement and migration, and the resurgence of protests in some societies, to the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis: young people have grown up in a context of high uncertainty and instability (Muasher and Yahya, 2020[5]). In light of global trends such as climate change and digitalisation, uncertainty about the opportunities available to today's generation of young people and those left to future generations is likely to rise.

Climate change: 10 of the 18 world's most water-stressed economies are in MENA

Climate change is a global phenomenon that has significant ripple effects on today's young people and on future generations. The World Health Organisations estimates that children and young people will suffer more than 80% of the illnesses, injuries, and deaths attributable to climate change (World Health Organisation, 2004[6]). The MENA region, home to 10 of the 18 most water-stressed economies in the world,[9] is already experiencing the consequences of climate change, which will magnify as the climate warms further (Hofste, Reig and Schleifer, 2019[7]). Already over the past decade, disasters have triggered more than 1.5 million new internal displacements in the region, more than half of them the result of floods (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2020[8]).[10] From 2019 to 2020, the number of undernourished individuals in the MENA region increased by nearly 5 million, reaching 69 million, bringing the prevalence

of undernourishment nearly to the previous peak during the 2010-2011 Arab uprisings (FAO, 2021[9]). Besides water shortages, failed crops and an increase in heat-related health problems and deaths, climate change will have a significant social and economic fallout across the region. About 50% of the population across the MENA region may be exposed to potentially life-threatening "super-extreme" and "ultra-extreme" heatwaves by 2100 (Zittis et al., 2021[10]). Water scarcity will cost MENA governments 6-14% of their gross domestic product by 2050, more than any other region globally. In 2021, 9 out of 10 children in the region lived in areas of high or extremely high water stress, with subsequent effects on health, nutrition, and future mental and physical development (UNICEF, 2021[11]). Facing pressing risks, a number of MENA governments have made commitments to transition to renewable energy and green technologies in an effort to mitigate global warming (Wehrey and Fawal, 2022[12]).

Digitalisation: Unequal access risks exacerbating inequalities

In the context of rapid globalisation and digitalisation, young people are required to acquire vastly different skills and competences than their parents. For example, routine jobs and middle-skilled jobs, once defined as occupations in the middle of the occupation-wage distribution, are the most likely to being automated, whereas occupations that require high-level skills held by senior managers, technicians and professionals are likely to remain in demand (OECD, 2020[13]). As a consequence, the International Labour Organization (ILO) projects that young graduates may be exposed to low and unstable earnings, lower social protection when hired as "independent" contractors, and lack of bargaining power (ILO, 2020[14]; OECD, 2020[15]). With the world's highest youth unemployment rate, increased digitalisation presents an opportunity for the MENA region with the creation of new jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities. However, existing regulations do not create an enabling environment for entrepreneurship. Only "34% of young people in MENA had an account at a financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider in 2017", ranging from 12% in the Palestinian Authority to 70% in Kuwait,[11] and education systems have not adapted to equip students with skills needed for the future of work (Kabbani, 2021[16]). As digitalisation continues, these limitations risk exacerbating inequalities for young people.

Displacement and migration: 44% of young people have considered emigration

In parts of the MENA region, the presence of war and conflicts has led to mass population displacement. As of 2019, MENA economies hosted roughly 15 million displaced persons (UNHCR, 2019[1]), many of which are young people. After a decade of conflict in Syria, 6.7 million remain internally displaced and 5.6 million are hosted as refugees in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey (UNHCR, 2021[17]). A generation of young men and women are growing up in an environment of armed conflict, where they face a higher risk of exclusion and dependence on state support to access basic services (UNHCR, 2016[18]). At the same time, governments hosting millions of displaced people and refugees, such as Jordan and Lebanon, have struggled with providing access to basic public services in the context of limited administrative capacities and resources.

According to the 2020 Revision of the United Nations Trends in International Migrant Stock dataset, the number of international migrants in MENA increased from approximately 20 million in 2000 to 50 million in 2020.[12] The MENA region is marked by outward migration as well as by inward migration, especially towards Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries (i.e. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman). Diasporas around the world are an important cultural and economic factor for many MENA societies. On the other hand, dissatisfaction with available economic opportunities and perception of corruption are important drivers of migratory ambitions among young people. According to Arab Barometer survey results, in 2021, 44% of people aged 0-29 years in MENA report that they have considered emigrating, compared to 36% of 30-49 years old and 20.5% of respondents aged 50 or above (Arab Barometer, 2021[2]).[13]

Violence and conflict: 19% of internally displaced people are young people

In the last decade only, the MENA region suffered the "highest number of terrorism casualties, experienced the outbreak of three wars that interrupted the education of 13 million children and riots and repression that are expected to have led to economic losses of $600 billion" (Gaub, 2021[19]). One in five people in MENA live in close proximity to conflict (Corral et al., 2020[20]) and 19% (2.4 million) of the internally displaced people in the region were between 15-24 years old in 2019 (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2020[8]). While the MENA region was home to 5.9% of the world's population in 2019, it accounted for 30% of the world's internally displaced people in the same year (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2020[8]).

Unremitting violence can impact both physical and psychological well-being and have severe implications for the social and economic prospects and aspirations of young people. Young people in vulnerable and marginalised circumstances a have a higher likelihood of recruitment into armed forces, thus further threatening their future prospects (UNDP, 2016[21]). According to a study conducted by UNHCR in 2016, the MENA region has experienced the worst deterioration of social cohesion due to increased warfare of any other region in the world (UNHCR, 2016[18]). Conflict and war has precipitated the deterioration of institutional capacity and the support structures for young people to transition to autonomy. Furthermore, conflicts can create significant spill-over effects also for young people in non-conflict areas.

In many MENA economies, young people are also exposed to volatile political environments and potential conflict. Of the 24,422 "grave violations" against young people that the United Nations documented worldwide in 2019, almost half (46%) took place in five economies in the MENA region (United Nations General Assembly, 2020[22]). Conflict and violence have direct consequences for young people as well as indirect impacts. For instance, a 2015 UNICEF report highlighted that more than 13 million children across nine conflict-affected areas in the region were not in school due to conflict (UNICEF, 2015[23]).

Gender-Based Violence: Eradicating a global phenomenon

In 2018, young women aged 15-19 and 20-24 globally were the age cohorts with highest prevalence of intimate partner violence, reporting 16% within the past 12 months (World Health Organization, 2021[24]). The OECD report "Eliminating Gender-based Violence: Governance and Survivor/Victim-centred Approaches" (OECD, 2021[25]) presents a three-pillar approach to creating an effective, whole-of-state framework for addressing the complex phenomenon of gender-based violence, including systems, culture and access to justice and accountability.

Poor competitive environments, corruption, high rates of vulnerable or informal employment, as well as discriminatory legal frameworks and social norms lead to disproportionate consequences for women in terms of job and income loss, mounting care burdens and escalating gender-based violence (OECD, 2020[3]). Around the world, and including in the MENA region, the COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated women's exposure to gender-based violence. Across the MENA region, NGOs and governments noted an increase in both calls made to hotlines for reporting gender-based violence and in the number of cases reported (OECD, 2020[3]).

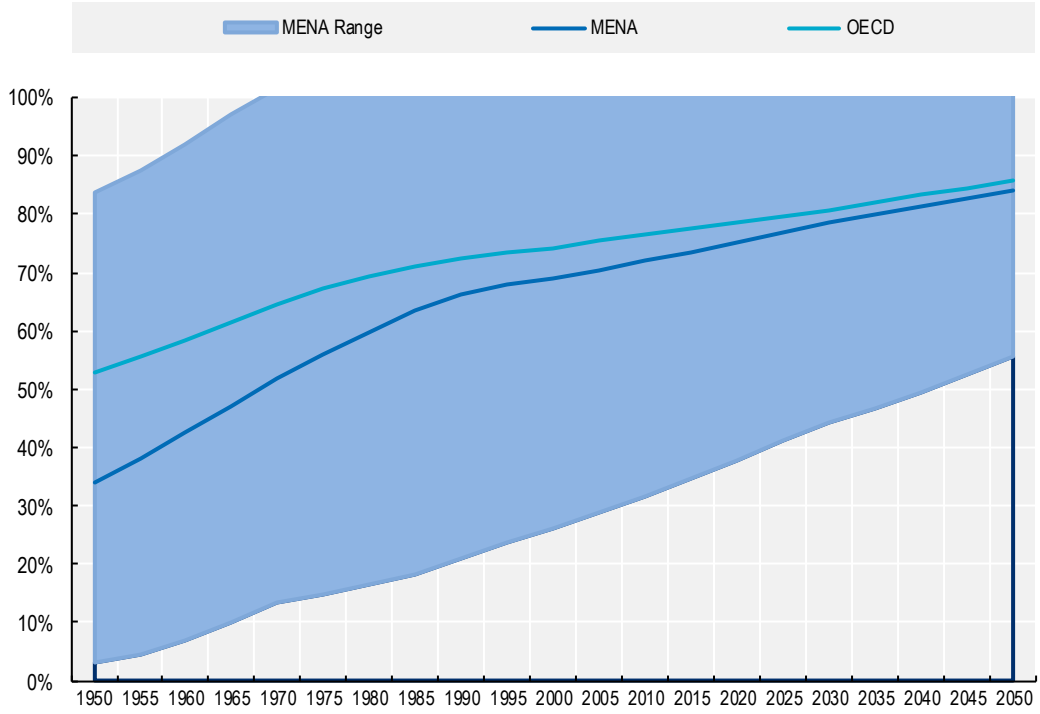
In addition to harming women and their families, gender-based violence comes at a high economic cost for the MENA region. For example, OECD estimates from 2019 suggest that gender-based discrimination in laws and social norms costs 54 billion USD for North Africa[14] in income annually (OECD, 2019[26]).

Urbanisation: New pressures on urban and rural public resources and capacities

Most MENA economies have experienced a period of rapid urbanisation over the past decades (Figure 1.2). According to the 2018 Revision of the United Nations World Urbanisation Prospects Report, approximately 70% of the MENA population lives in large urban centres (UNDESA, 2019[27]). In Kuwait and

Qatar, nearly 100% of the population lives in urban centres, followed by Jordan, Oman, Lebanon, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates, all projected to be over 90% urbanised by 2050 (UNICEF, 2019[28]). Conversely, Yemen and Egypt are projected to remain 43% and 44% rural respectively until 2050 (UNICEF, 2019[28]). As a result, the total number of urban dwellers in the MENA region grew from 188 million in 2000 to 281 million in 2015 and is projected to reach 527 million in 2050 (UNDESA, 2019[27]).

Figure 1.2. Percentage of population in urban areas, 1950-2050



Note: MENA average includes Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestinian Authority, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. The grey range represents the least and most urbanised society across the MENA economies considered above.
Source: OECD calculations based on United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2018). World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision, custom data acquired via website.

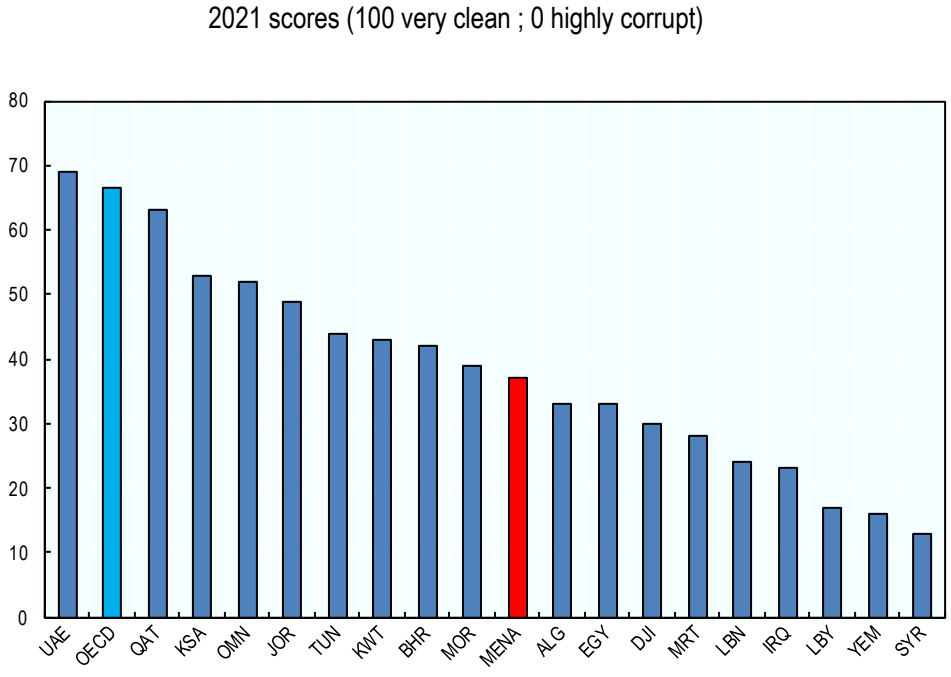
Young people are especially vulnerable to certain consequences of rapid urbanisation, including "burgeoning youth populations, limited job prospects, overstressed infrastructure, and scarcity of resources, especially water" (NATO Strategic Direction South Hub, 2019[29]). Overcrowding in urban centres can lead to difficulties such as limited water supply, land degradation and air pollution (UNICEF, 2019[28]). Conversely, urbanisation can also lead to positive growth, as cities support the delivery of social services at much lower cost than would be required to reach the same number of people in rural areas (UNICEF, 2019[28]). Where increased mobility to urban centres is accompanied by increased employment opportunities, educated young people can also have access to better and more inclusive employment.

In turn, regional disparities can create a heightened risk of exclusion for young people in rural communities. The exclusion of certain regions from national progress and development is a fundamental driver of social, economic, cultural, and political exclusion of young people in those regions, who tend to move to larger cities, further depriving rural areas of human capital and exacerbating issues linked to urbanisation (World Bank, 2014[30]).

Corruption: Young people at a high risk of paying the price

Young people across much of the MENA region express significant concerns about the prevalence of corruption. According to the Corruption Perceptions Index by Transparency International, the MENA region scored, on average, 37 points in 2021, on a scale from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean), compared to an average of 67 points in OECD countries. Among the MENA economics covered in this report, rankings range from 24th out of 180 in the United Arab Emirates to 178th out of 180 in Syria (Transparency International, 2021[31]).

Figure 1.3. Corruption Perceptions Index 2021



Note: MENA average includes the results of the Corruption Perceptions Index 2021 for Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. The OECD average includes the results for the 38 OECD Members. The score indicates the perceived level of public sector corruption on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).
Source: OECD calculations based on Transparency International (2021). Corruption Perceptions Index 2021, custom data acquired via https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2021.

Young people in the MENA region are affected by corruption in various ways. First, they encounter corruption in public institutions and among public officials, which undermines the quality of services and reducing the creation of jobs. As the primary users of secondary and tertiary education and among the main users of health services, job placement and employment bureaus, the OECD Integrity Review of Tunisia underlines that the risk of corruption is particularly high in the delivery of social services on which many young men and women rely (OECD, 2016[32]). Second, petty corruption is endemic in MENA economies. For example, in a study conducted by the Tunisian Association of Public Controllers, a civil society organisation, 75% of interviewees aged 18-25 agree that petty corruption facilitates daily interactions (OECD, 2016[32]). Finally, young people suffer from political corruption that diverts public money and influence away from the centre of society and cuts funding to improve education and health services, job opportunities and other critical services for young people (OECD, 2016[32]).

Raising the stakes: The situation of young people in key areas of public service delivery and participation

The previous section analysed some key global and regional trends and challenges that affect young people's livelihoods and future prospects. This section, in turn, analyses the situation for young people across the region in key areas of public service delivery and participation, notably education, employment, health and civic and political participation, and the impact of the COVID-19 crisis across each. While the list of key areas is not exhaustive – young people also express specific perspectives, needs and ambitions in field such as sports, culture and leisure, housing, transportation, mobility and justice, among others – the topics covered already point to the importance of an integrated and coordinated approach to supporting young people from a public governance perspective (Chapter 2).

Education: Despite improvements in access, nearly 9 in 10 are concerned with the quality of education

In the decades prior to COVID-19, governments across the MENA region have made progress in providing access to education. For instance, literacy rates among people (15-24) reached 90% in 2020 (92% for young men and 88% for young women) compared to 86% in 2000 (90% for young men and 81% for young women).[15] Despite the progress achieved, an estimated 15 million children in the region between the ages of 5-14 were out of school and nearly two-thirds of children in the region were unable to read with proficiency by the age of 10 before the onset of the COVID-19 crisis (UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank, 2021[4]). As of 2018, 94% of young people (95% of young men and 92% of young women) were enrolled in primary education, up from 84% in 2000,[16] compared to 96% across OECD countries.[17] Moreover, 75% of young men and 71% of young women were enrolled in secondary education in MENA[18] as of 2018, up from 64% of young men and 58% of young women in 2000, compared to an OECD average of 89%.[19] Although these statistics point to significant achievements in increasing the access to education, according to the 2021 Arab Youth Survey, nearly 87% young people surveyed expressed concerns about the quality of the education they receive (ASDA'A BCW, 2021[33]).[20]

Tertiary education enrolment rates vary widely across the MENA region, with the gross enrolment ratio[21] ranging from 5% in Djibouti to 71% in Saudi Arabia. While overall more female students (35.8%) are enrolled in higher education than male students (31.9%), the gender balance varies within the region, with more female students enrolled in Algeria, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Palestinian Authority, and Qatar and more male students enrolled in Iraq, Yemen, Mauritania and Djibouti (UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank, 2021[4]).

The COVID-19 pandemic and associated disruptions to teaching and learning have posed a serious threat for access to education for approximately 110 million students from pre-primary to higher education in the MENA region. An entire generation of children, adolescents and young adults is affected by this unprecedented disruption, with potential long-term impacts, including on their mental health, well-being, socialisation, and employment prospects (UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank, 2021[4]).

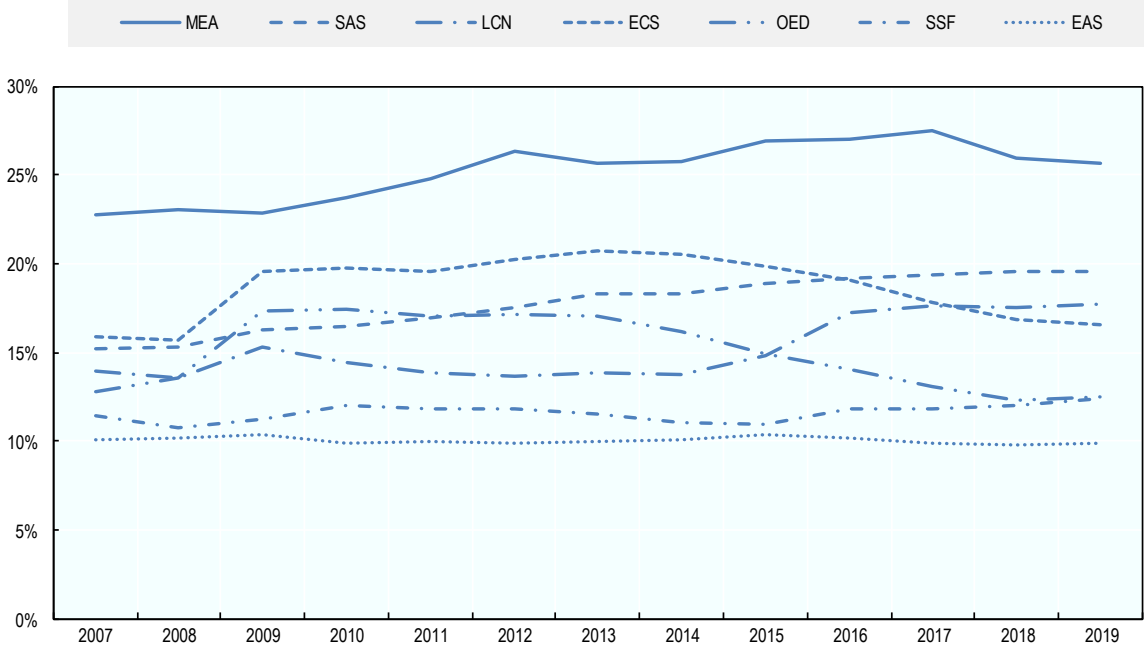
Employment: More than one in four young people is unemployed

The MENA region is marked by one of the highest rates of youth unemployment (15-24) in the world, exceeding 28% on average in 2020.[22] However, youth unemployment rates vary significantly across the region, from Qatar (less than 1%), Bahrain (8%) and the United Arab Emirates (9%) all below the OECD average (16%) to Djibouti (81%) in 2020.[23] Young people across the region are also three times more likely to be unemployed than their adult (25+ years) counterparts, whose average unemployment rate lies at 9.4%.[24] Figure 1.4 illustrates that youth unemployment rates have been consistently high in the MENA

region, with no significant progress made in the past decade due to structural barriers preventing a successful transition from education to work (ILO, 2020[14]). In line with these findings, Arab Barometer data shows that young people perceived the economic situation as the biggest challenge in their society in 2021 (41% of respondents), followed by the spread of COVID-19 (28%) and corruption (14%) (Arab Barometer, 2021[2]). Over the past decade, satisfaction with the economic situation among young people in the MENA region has further declined from 35% in 2011 to 26% in 2021 (Arab Barometer, 2021[2]; Arab Barometer, 2011[34]).[25] At the same time, nearly one in two (46%) was optimistic that the economic situation would improve in the near future (Arab Barometer, 2021[2]).

In marked contrast to global patterns, more than 30% of unemployed people in the MENA region have a university degree (Kabbani, 2019[35]). Public sector employment has long represented a favoured choice for young graduates with higher education entering the labour force in many economies in the region. For instance, among people aged 18-24 surveyed in 2021 across 17 MENA economies[26] by the annual ASDA'A BCW Arab Youth Survey, 42% of them highlighted they prefer a job in the public sector, although this preference has attenuated compared to 2019 (ASDA'A BCW, 2021[33]). However, due to bloated public sectors and high competition for available jobs, opportunities may have reached a limit.

Figure 1.4. Youth unemployment rates by region and OECD average, 2007-2019



Note: Youth unemployment refers to the share of the labour force ages 15-24 without work but available for and seeking employment. The abbreviations represent different regions: East Asia and Pacific (EAS), Europe and Central Asia (ECS), Latin America and Caribbean (LCN), Middle East and North Africa (MEA), OECD (OED), South Asia (SAS), and Sub-Saharan Africa (SSF).
Source: World Bank, "World Development Indicators," custom data acquired via https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS?locations=ZQ-ZG-8S-ZJ-Z7-Z4 (accessed December 2021).

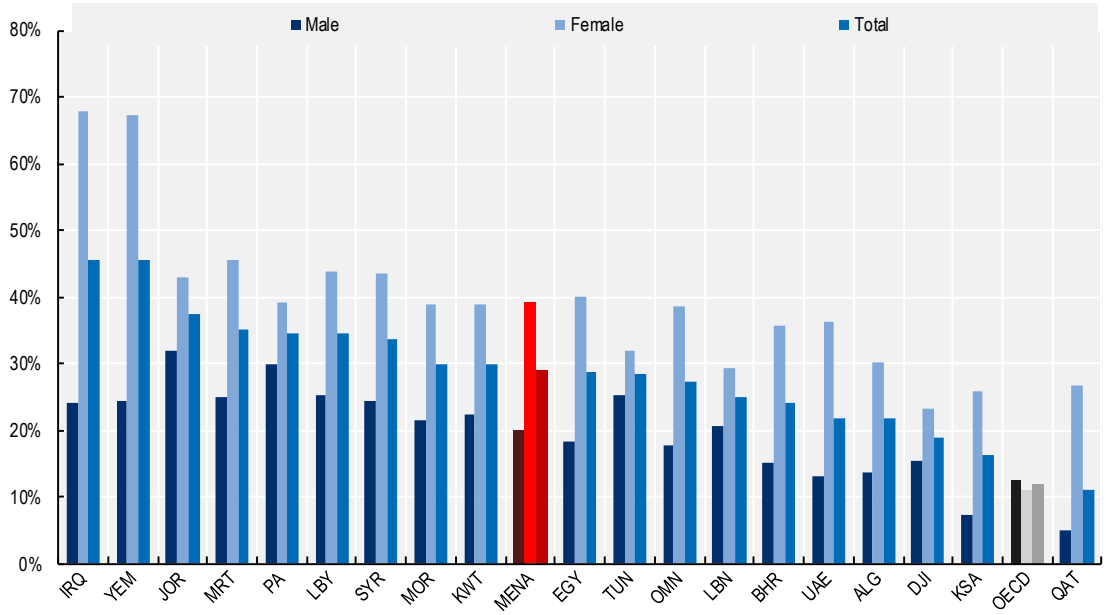
Limited opportunities for young people in formal employment have led to the expansion of informal jobs, which generally offer fewer benefits or protections. According to estimates from the ILO based on available data from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, the Palestinian Authority and Tunisia from 2012-2015, 75% of young people in the MENA region work in the informal sector (Dimova, Elder and Stephan, 2016[36]). Limited

access to credit also presents a frequent challenge for young entrepreneurs, curtailing the potential of self-employment (Anyanwu, 2013[37]).

Youth employment in the MENA region has a gendered dimension. In 2021, the regional average female labour force participation rate (19%) was well below the global average for women (46%), ranging from 6% in Yemen to 57% in Qatar.[27] On average, women participated in the labour force significantly less than the average labour force participation rate of men in the region (70%), ranging from 44% in Djibouti to 95% in Qatar.[28] High unemployment rates among young women point to structural barriers, including in terms of legal frameworks and traditional views on women's roles in society, such as the allocation of family responsibilities. Women are not only more likely to do unpaid work within the household, almost 62% with a job are employed informally with less employment security (OECD, 2020[38]).[29]

The MENA region is also characterised by a high share of young people (15-24) who are not in employment, education, or training (NEET), with an average of 29% across the MENA region, ranging from 11% in Qatar to 45% in Iraq in 2020, compared with an average of 12% across OECD countries (Figure 1.5). This phenomenon is even more pronounced among young women, ranging from 23% in Djibouti to 68% in Iraq in 2020, all higher than the average of 11% of young women across OECD countries. The higher NEET rate among young women is partly explained by the fact that they are more likely to be inactive[30] non-students, while young men are more evenly distributed between unemployed non-students and inactive non-students (Dimova, Elder and Stephan, 2016[36]).

Figure 1.5. NEET rates among people aged 15-24 years by sex, 2020



Source: ILO (2021). ILOSTAT, custom data acquired via website.

The economic slowdown resulting from the COVID-19 crisis has further exacerbated youth unemployment (OECD, 2020[3]). In 2020, youth employment in the MENA region declined by 7.5% compared to the previous year compared to a decline by 1.4% for people aged 25 and above.[31] Furthermore, young people have been hit particularly hard by the crisis as they tend to be over-represented in the informal sector and in sectors severely impacted by the COVID-19 crisis such as tourism, with limited opportunity for remote work (OECD, 2020[3]).

Furthermore, Russia's large-scale aggression against Ukraine in 2022 is exacerbating concerns for divergent economic recovery across the MENA region. For example, while oil and gas exporting economies in the region stand to benefit from increasing energy prices, oil importing economies in the region are being hit by higher commodity prices. In the MENA region, real GDP growth is forecasted at 5% in 2022 (down from 5.8% in 2021), but there are marked differences between forecasts for oil and gas exporting economies (+5.4%), which includes the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries as well as Algeria, Iran, Iraq and Libya, and the economies classified as "Emerging Market and Middle Income" by the International Monetary Fund (+4.4%), which includes Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria and Tunisia (International Monetary Fund, 2022[39]).

Policy makers will also need to factor in the impact of climate change and environmental pressures as they tackle youth unemployment, as the green transition will likely change the skills demanded: a well-functioning labour market together with an effective safety net and quality vocational education and training system will be essential in this regard (OECD, 2015[40]).

Inequalities: One in four children in MENA lives in poverty

Poverty affects one in four children (29.3 million) in the MENA region (Machado et al., 2018[41]). Young people not in education, employment or training are particularly vulnerable to falling below the poverty line. Research points to imbalances in the education system, high costs of marriage and family formation and the lack of affordable housing as key drivers of such inequality (UNDP, 2016[21]).

Young people in rural areas are at a disproportional risk of growing up in poverty and facing social exclusion due to difficult labour market conditions, including due to low rates of land ownership, limited access to credit, and lower levels of education. However, the specific needs of young people in rural contexts are not always reflected in current youth policies in MENA (Kabbani, 2019[42]).[32] The lack of quality services available to young people outside the capital has a detrimental impact on their opportunities (Kabbani, 2019[42]). However, a steadily growing urban population across the region, which reached 66% in 2020,[33] exposes young people living in cities to other risks, including informal housing, increased exposure to pollution and higher rates of unemployment (Elgendy and Abaza, 2020[43]). As of 2018, youth unemployment rates were higher in urban areas than in rural areas in all MENA economies for which data was available (Kabbani, 2019[35]).

Addressing inequalities is important not only per se, but also to avoid ripple behavioural effects. Indeed, research finds that lack of economic, education, and leadership opportunities can lead to a sense of hopelessness and frustration, giving way to "aspiration failure" and pessimism (Fehling et al., 2015[44]). Addressing poverty among young people is crucial as it impedes them from making longer-term investments in their future, giving origin to a vicious circle. Studies demonstrate that young people living in poverty are less likely to see themselves as intelligent and subsequently invest less in their education (Fehling et al., 2015[44]). Moreover, mothers' aspirations for their children can impact educational attainment and future earnings. This effect varies depending on income levels of the mother: aspirations are higher for mothers from wealthier households and for mothers with higher education, which translates to additional years of schooling for their children (Serneels and Dercon, 2020[45]).

Health: Less than two in five young people are satisfied with the healthcare system

Despite significant improvements in health services over the past few decades, young people in MENA continue to experience challenges in the access of quality health services in some societies. For instance, as of 2021, only 38% of young people aged 18-29 years in the MENA region were satisfied with the healthcare system in their respective societies (Arab Barometer, 2021[2]).[34]

In 2020, prior to the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, nearly two in five (38%) young people aged 18-24 years in the MENA region reported they knew someone with mental health issues, compared to 31% in 2019 (ASDA'A BCW, 2020[46]). In the same survey, more than half (56%) also reported it was difficult to access quality medical care for mental health issues in their society (ASDA'A BCW, 2020[46]). Furthermore, nearly half (48%) reported seeking medical care for mental health issues was viewed negatively by most people in their society (ASDA'A BCW, 2020[46]). The COVID-19 crisis has brought concerns on young people's mental health to the forefront of the policy debate (OECD, 2022[47]). A number of studies confirm that young people experienced higher levels of loneliness and distress compared to other age groups (Etheridge and Spantig, 2020[48]; McGinty et al., 2020[49]).

In addition, a study on young people in vulnerable circumstances across the MENA region has indicated that exposure to traumatic events at an early age can cause mental and behavioural issues. Although young men are equally (or often more) likely to be exposed to violence, young women have a higher prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, separation anxiety, and psychological symptoms than young men in the MENA region. In contrast, young men in the MENA region have a higher incidence of behavioural problems and are more likely to exhibit aggression and hyperactivity (Fehling et al., 2015[44]). These issues are further compounded by the lack of space for young people to talk about these issues, and the tendency to punish mental health issues (e.g. drug addiction) than treat them.

Gender disparities also present themselves in health provision, as young women living in rural areas are more vulnerable to reproductive health issues. Despite an overall trend toward delayed marriage across the MENA region over the past 25 years, progress has stalled in the last decade and early marriage and childbearing remains a challenge in some contexts (UNICEF, 2019[50]). According to available data, 4% of young women in the MENA region marry by the age of 15, and 20% marry by the age of 18 (UNICEF, 2019[50]). The rates of early marriage across the region vary significantly, from 0.02% in Tunisia to 33% in Yemen (UNICEF, 2019[50]). Early marriage can often lead to early childbearing, which can contribute to poor infant health as adolescents are likely to have less knowledge about family planning and sexual and reproductive health than their older counterparts (UNDP, 2016[51]).

Participation in public and political life: Bridging the disconnect between young people and government

Young people across the MENA region express low levels of trust in government and public institutions, such as parliaments and political parties. According to Arab Barometer results for 2021, only 28% of 18-29 year-olds in the surveyed MENA economies[35] trust their public institutions. Furthermore, trust in government among young people (18-29 years-old) varies significantly, from 47% in Libya, to 45% in Jordan, to 44% in Morocco, 23% in Iraq, to 19% in Algeria, to 11% in Tunisia and 3% in Lebanon (Arab Barometer, 2021[2])Among people aged 18-24 surveyed in 2021 across 17 MENA economies[36] by the annual ASDA'A BCW Arab Youth Survey, 49% think their public administrations has in place the right policies to address the issues most important to young people. As with trust in government, this varies significantly across the region.

The disconnect between young people and public institutions is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4. It finds that besides legal barriers and the lack of dedicated institutions to represent the voices of young people, such as youth councils, the perception that policy decisions are dominated by an older generation of elites who are out of touch with the aspirations and needs of today's young people is widespread across many societies in the region (Spencer and Aldouri, 2016[52]). In light of the barriers young people are facing to engage through institutionalised channels, such as political parties or voting, they tend to engage via civil society organisations, community-based projects and through informal associations as students, in their neighbourhoods, and communes (Zerhouni and Akesbi, 2016[53]). Yet, only 20% of young people aged 18-29 across the MENA region reported volunteering with a local group or organisation in 2018 (Arab

Barometer, 2018[54]).However, these findings are consistent with results in OECD countries, where 22% of people aged 15-29 reported having done so across 24 OECD countries in 2019 (OECD, 2021[55]).

The demographic dividend discussed above, as well as the challenges and trends the region is facing require new efforts to overcome persisting barriers to youth participation in economic, social and public life. To improve policy outcomes across and beyond the key thematic areas discussed in this Chapter, governments across the region need to embed young people's voices and perspectives in a systematic way across all policy areas. To support this process, this report analyses current governance arrangements and practices across 10 public administrations in the MENA region in three areas: 1) uniting all institutional stakeholders to implement a shared, integrated youth policy and deliver services to young people; 2) building administrative and institutional capacities to mainstream youth perspectives in policy making; and 3) encouraging the participation and representation of young people and youth stakeholders in public and political life.

References

Anyanwu, J. (2013), "Characteristics and Macroeconomic Determinants of Youth Employment in Africa", *African Development Review*, Vol. 25/2, pp. 107-129, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8268.2013.12019.x. [37]

Arab Barometer (2021), *Arab Barometer Wave VI – Part 3*, https://www.arabbarometer.org/survey-data/data-analysis-tool/ (accessed on 3 March 2022). [2]

Arab Barometer (2018), *Arab Barometer Wave V*, https://www.arabbarometer.org/surveys/arab-barometer-wave-v/ (accessed on 3 March 2022). [54]

Arab Barometer (2011), *Arab Barometer Wave II*, https://www.arabbarometer.org/survey-data/data-analysis-tool/ (accessed on 6 May 2022). [34]

ASDA'A BCW (2021), *Arab Youth Survey 2021: Hope for the Future*, ASDA'A BCW, https://arabyouthsurvey.com/wp-content/uploads/whitepaper/AYS-2021-WP_English-14-Oct-21-ABS-FINAL.pdf (accessed on 3 February 2022). [33]

ASDA'A BCW (2020), *Young Arabs say getting quality mental healthcare is difficult*, ASDA'A BCW, https://arabyouthsurvey.com/en/young-arabs-say-getting-quality-mental-healthcare-is-difficult/ (accessed on 18 May 2022). [46]

Corral, P. et al. (2020), *Fragility and Conflict: On the Front Lines of the Fight against Poverty*, World Bank, Washington DC, https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-1540-9. [20]

Dimova, R., S. Elder and K. Stephan (2016), *Labour market transitions of young women and men in the Middle East and North Africa*, International Labour Office, Geneva, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_536067.pdf (accessed on 7 March 2022). [36]

Elgendy, K. and N. Abaza (2020), *Urbanization in the MENA region: A Benefit or a Curse?*, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Berlin, https://mena.fes.de/press/e/urbanization-in-the-mena-region-a-benefit-or-a-curse (accessed on 10 May 2022). [43]

Etheridge, B. and L. Spantig (2020), "The Gender Gap in Mental Well-Being During the Covid-19 Outbreak: Evidence from the UK", *ISER Working Paper Series*, No. 2020-08, Institute for Social and Economic Research, Essex, https://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/research/publications/working-papers/iser/2020-08.pdf (accessed on 3 March 2022). [48]

Ezzati, M. et al. (eds.) (2004), *Global climate change*, World Health Organisation, Geneva, https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/42792/9241580348_eng_Volume1.pdf;jsessionid=4ABCAFBA2663434475952B04689006A1?sequence=1 (accessed on 11 May 2022). [6]

FAO (2021), *Near East and North Africa – Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2021*, FAO, Cairo, https://www.fao.org/3/cb7495en/cb7495en.pdf (accessed on 7 March 2022). [9]

Fehling, M. et al. (2015), *Youth in crisis in the Middle East and North Africa: a systematic literature review and focused landscape analysis*, Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal, https://doi.org/10.26719/2015.21.12.916. [44]

Gaub, F. (2021), *Arab Youth Futures: No Lost Generation*, EU Institute for Security Studies, https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Brief_20_2021_web.pdf (accessed on 3 March 2022). [19]

Hofste, R., P. Reig and L. Schleifer (2019), *17 Countries, Home to One-Quarter of the World's Population, Face Extremely High Water Stress*, World Resources Institute, Washington DC, https://www.wri.org/insights/17-countries-home-one-quarter-worlds-population-face-extremely-high-water-stress (accessed on 8 February 2022). [7]

ILO (2020), *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2020: Technology and the future of jobs*, International Labour Office, Geneva, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_737648.pdf (accessed on 9 February 2022). [14]

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2020), *A decade of displacement in the Middle East and North Africa*, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Geneva, https://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/IDMC_MenaReport_final.pdf (accessed on 11 May 2022). [8]

International Monetary Fund (2022), *April 2022 Regional Economic Outlook, Middle East and Central Asia: Divergent Recoveries in Turbulent Times*, International Monetary Fund, https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/REO/MECA/Issues/2022/04/25/regional-economic-outlook-april-2022-middle-east-central-asia (accessed on 18 May 2022). [39]

Kabbani, N. (2021), *How will digitalization affect youth employment in MENA?*, Brookings Institution, https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/how-will-digitalization-affect-youth-employment-in-mena/ (accessed on 11 May 2022). [16]

Kabbani, N. (2019), *Investing in Rural Youth in the Near East, North Africa, Europe and Central Asia Region*, IFAD, Rome, https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/41187395/20_Kabbani_2019+RDR+BACKGROUND+PAPER.pdf/7121a8bb-a2ef-7202-978a-da84c7eb3fe8 (accessed on 20 December 2021). [42]

Kabbani, N. (2019), *Youth Employment in the Middle East and North Africa: Revisiting and Reframing the Challenge*, Brookings Doha Centre, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Youth_Unemployment_MENA_English_Web.pdf (accessed on 17 December 2021). [35]

Machado, A. et al. (2018), *Overview of Non-contributory Social Protection Programmes in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region Through a Child and Equity Lens*, Brasília and Amman: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth and UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office, https://ipcig.org/pub/eng/JP18_Overview_of_Non_contributory_Social_Protection_Programmers_in_MENA.pdf (accessed on 20 December 2021). [41]

McGinty, E. et al. (2020), "Psychological Distress and Loneliness Reported by US Adults in 2018 and April 2020", *JAMA*, Vol. 324/1, pp. 93-94, https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2020.9740. [49]

Muasher, M. and M. Yahya (2020), *A Coming Decade of Arab Decisions*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/09/09/coming-decade-of-arab-decisions-pub-82506 (accessed on 8 February 2022). [5]

NATO Strategic Direction South Hub (2019), *The Pressures of Growth: Rapid Urbanization in African and the Middle East*, https://thesouthernhub.org/resources/site1/General/NSD-S%20Hub%20Publications/Urbanization__in_Africa_and_Middle_East.pdf (accessed on 11 May 2022). [29]

OECD (2022), *Delivering for youth: How governments can put young people at the centre of the recovery*, OECD Policy Responses to Coronavirus (COVID-19), OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/92c9d060-en. [47]

OECD (2021), *Eliminating Gender-based Violence: Governance and Survivor/Victim-centred Approaches*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/42121347-en. [25]

OECD (2021), *Empowering Youth and Building Trust in Jordan*, OECD Publishing. [55]

OECD (2020), *COVID-19 crisis in the MENA region: impact on gender equality and policy responses*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=134_134470-w95kmv8khl&title=COVID-19-crisis-in-the-MENA-region-impact-on-gender-equality-and-policy-responses (accessed on 10 January 2022). [38]

OECD (2020), *COVID-19 crisis response in MENA countries*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=129_129919-4li7bq8asv&title=COVID-19-Crisis-Response-in-MENA-Countries (accessed on 8 February 2022). [3]

OECD (2020), *Governance for Youth, Trust and Intergenerational Justice: Fit for All Generations?*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/c3e5cb8a-en. [15]

OECD (2020), *OECD Economic Outlook, Volume 2020 Issue 1*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/0d1d1e2e-en. [13]

OECD (2019), *SIGI 2019 Global Report: Transforming Challenges into Opportunities*, Social Institutions and Gender Index, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/bc56d212-en. [26]

OECD (2016), *Youth in the MENA Region: How to Bring Them In*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264265721-en. [32]

OECD (2015), *Investing in Youth: Tunisia: Strengthening the Employability of Youth during the Transition to a Green Economy*, OECD Publishing, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264226470-en. [40]

Serneels, P. and S. Dercon (2020), *Aspirations, Poverty and Education: Evidence from India*, IZA – Institute of Labor Economics, https://ftp.iza.org/dp13697.pdf (accessed on 20 December 2021). [45]

Spencer, C. and S. Aldouri (2016), *Young Arab Voices: Moving Youth Policy from Debate into Action*, Chatham House, https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/research/2016-05-13-young-arab-voices-spencer-aldouri.pdf (accessed on 20 December 2021). [52]

Transparency International (2021), *Corruption Perceptions Index 2021*, https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2021 (accessed on 15 April 2022). [31]

UNDESA (2019), *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision*, United Nations, New York, https://population.un.org/wup/Publications/Files/WUP2018-Report.pdf (accessed on 7 January 2022). [27]

UNDP (2016), *Arab Human Development Report 2016: Youth and the Prospects for Human Development in a Changing Reality*, United Nations Development Programme Regional Bureau for Arab States, New York, http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/2699/ahdr2016en.pdf (accessed on 17 December 2021). [51]

UNDP (2016), *Human Development Report 2016: Human Development for Everyone*, United Nations Development Programme, New York, http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-report-2016 (accessed on 17 December 2021). [21]

UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank (2021), *COVID-19 learning losses: rebuilding quality learning for all in the Middle East and North Africa*, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000380118?locale=en (accessed on 5 January 2022). [4]

UNHCR (2021), *Update on UNHCR's operations in the Middle East and North Africa*, UNHCR, https://www.unhcr.org/605c3be34.pdf (accessed on 17 December 2021). [17]

UNHCR (2019), *UNHCR Global Report 2018 - Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regional summary*, UNHCR, https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/publications/fundraising/5e4ffaec7/unhcr-global-report-2018-middle-east-north-africa-mena-regional-summary.html (accessed on 18 January 2022). [1]

UNHCR (2016), *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2015*, UNHCR, https://www.unhcr.org/576408cd7.pdf (accessed on 17 December 2021). [18]

UNICEF (2021), *Running Dry: The impact of water scarcity on children in the Middle East and North Africa*, UNICEF Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa, Amman, https://www.unicef.org/mena/media/12871/file/RunningDry-WASH-FullReport.pdf%20.pdf (accessed on 11 May 2022). [11]

UNICEF (2019), *A Profile of Child Marriage in the Middle East and North Africa*, https://data.unicef.org/resources/child-marriage-in-mena/ (accessed on 10 May 2022). [50]

UNICEF (2019), *MENA Generation 2030: Investing in Children and Youth Today to Secure a Prosperous Region Tomorrow*, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Division of Data, Research and Policy, https://www.unicef.org/mena/reports/mena-generation-2030 (accessed on 10 February 2022). [28]

UNICEF (2015), *Education Under Fire: How conflict in the Middle East is depriving children of their schooling*, UNICEF Regional Office for the Middle East & North Africa, Amman, https://www.unicef.org/mena/sites/unicef.org.mena/files/press-releases/mena-media-Education_Under_Fire.pdf (accessed on 11 May 2022). [23]

United Nations General Assembly (2020), *Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General*, https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_2020_525_E.pdf (accessed on 8 June 2022). [22]

Wehrey, F. and N. Fawal (2022), *Cascading Climate Effects in the Middle East and North Africa: Adapting Through Inclusive Governance*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington DC, https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/02/24/cascading-climate-effects-in-middle-east-and-north-africa-adapting-through-inclusive-governance-pub-86510?mkt_tok=MDk1LVBQVi04MTMAAAGC6qgJ62nb_MqXSALX_YBnUujrn1-mFcnvJccrzsdBzyk0zrxYHl7hs6Z4WsFlFed86rl_-YarxCHqv8tD (accessed on 3 March 2022). [12]

World Bank (2014), *Tunisia - Breaking the barriers to youth inclusion*, World Bank Group, Washington, DC, http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/753151468312307987/Tunisia-Breaking-the-barriers-to-youth-inclusion (accessed on 17 December 2021). [30]

World Health Organization (2021), *Violence Against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018*, World Health Organization, Geneva, https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240022256 (accessed on 11 May 2022). [24]

Zerhouni, S. and A. Akesbi (2016), *Youth Activism in Morocco: Exclusion, Agency and the Search for Inclusion*, Working Paper No. 15, Power2Youth, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/p2y_15.pdf (accessed on 20 December 2021). [53]

Zittis, G. et al. (2021), "Business-as-usual will lead to super and ultra-extreme heatwaves in the Middle East and North Africa", *npj Climate and Atmospheric Science*, Vol. 4/20, https://doi.org/10.1038/s41612-021-00178-7. [10]

Notes

[1] For the purposes of this report, the MENA region will refer to the governments of the MENA-OECD Initiative on Governance and Competitiveness for Development. The MENA-OECD Initiative covers Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestinian Authority, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

[2] OECD calculations based on United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Population Prospects 2019, custom data acquired via website.

[3] The "youth bulge" is a common phenomenon in many developing countries where a country reduces infant mortality, but mothers still have a high fertility rate. The result is that a large share of the population is comprised of children and young people.

[4] Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24) (modeled ILO estimate) - Middle East & North Africa. Reproduce query at https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS?locations=ZQ (accessed 9 May 2022).

[5] Survey responses were collected across Algeria, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.

[6] Survey responses were collected across Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, the Palestinian Authority, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

[7] Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24) (modeled ILO estimate) - Middle East & North Africa. Reproduce query at https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS?locations=ZQ (accessed on 10 May 2022).

[8] OECD calculations, UN Comtrade database. OECD (forthcoming), Navigating beyond COVID-19, recovery in the MENA region.

[9] In National Water Stress Rankings order: Qatar, Lebanon, Palestinian Authority, Jordan, Libya, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Oman.

[10] As the MENA region is mostly arid, poor soil absorption capacity and the lack of adequate drainage systems often cause riverine, flash and urban floods (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2020[8]).

[11] World Bank, "Global Findex Database 2017," custom data acquired via https://databank.worldbank.org/reports.aspx?source=1228# (accessed 24 May 2022).

[12] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2020).

[13] Survey response to "have you ever thought about emigrating from your country?" from survey respondents from Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.

[14] The report includes Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia as North Africa.

[15] Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15-24) - Middle East & North Africa. Reproduce query at https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.1524.LT.ZS?locations=ZQ&view=chart (accessed 11 February 2022).

[16] School enrolment, primary (% net) - Middle East & North Africa. Reproduce query at https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.PRM.NENR?locations=ZQ (accessed on 11 February 2022).

[17] School enrolment, primary (% net) - OECD members. Reproduce query at https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.PRM.NENR?locations=OE (accessed on 11 February 2022).

[18] School enrolment, secondary (% net) - Middle East & North Africa. Reproduce query at https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.SEC.NENR?locations=ZQ (accessed on 11 February 2022).

[19] School enrolment, secondary (% net) - OECD members. Reproduce query at https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.SEC.NENR?locations=OE (accessed on 11 February 2022).

[20] Showing % of 'Very concerned' and 'Somewhat concerned.'

[21] The Gross Enrolment Ratio represents the number of students enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education (UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank, 2021[4]).

[22] When comparing Middle East and North Africa (MEA), Sub-Saharan Africa (SSF), South Asia (SAS), Latin America and Caribbean (LCN), Europe and Central Asia (ECS) and East Asia and Pacific (EAS).

[23] World Bank, "World Development Indicators," custom data acquired via https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS?locations=ZQ-ZG-8S-ZJ-Z7-Z4 (accessed December 2021).

[24] Unemployment rate by sex and age -- ILO modelled estimates, Nov. 2021 (%) -- Annual. Reproduce query at https://www.ilo.org/shinyapps/bulkexplorer41/?lang=en&segment=indicator&id=UNE_2EAP_SEX_AGE_RT_A&ref_area=DZA+BHR+DJI+EGY+IRQ+JOR+KWT+LBN+LBY+MRT+MAR+PSE+OMN+QAT+SAU+SYR+TUN+ARE+YEM&sex=SEX_T&classif1=AGE_YTHADULT_Y15-24+AGE_YTHADULT_YGE25&timefrom=2020&timeto=2020 (accessed on 9 February 2022).

[25] Showing % of 'very good and 'good' in response to "How would you evaluate the current economic situation in your country?".

[26] Survey responses were collected across Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, the Palestinian Authority, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

[27] World Bank, "World Development Indicators," custom data acquired via https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FE.ZS?locations=ZQ&most_recent_value_desc=true (accessed 8 March 2022).

[28] World Bank, "World Development Indicators," custom data acquired via https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.MA.ZS?locations=ZQ&most_recent_value_desc=true (accessed 8 March 2022).

[29] The public sector tends to have more accommodating and flexible hours for women.

[30] "Inactive youth" includes both "inactive students" (currently inactive and in school) and "inactive non-students" (inactive and not in school).

[31] Employment by age and sex — ILO modelled estimates, Nov. 2021 (thousands) - Annual. Reproduce query at https://www.ilo.org/shinyapps/bulkexplorer17/?lang=en&segment=indicator&id=EMP_2EMP_SEX_AGE_NB_A&ref_area=DZA+BHR+DJI+EGY+IRQ+JOR+KWT+LBN+LBY+MRT+MAR+PSE+OMN+QAT+SAU+SYR+TUN+ARE+YEM&sex=SEX_T+SEX_M+SEX_F&classif1=AGE_YTHADULT_YGE15+AGE_YTHADULT_Y15-24+AGE_YTHADULT_YGE25&timefrom=2019&timeto=2022 (accessed on 9 February 2022).

[32] In the cited publication, the MENA region is represented by: Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen.

[33] Urban population (% of total population) - Middle East & North Africa. Reproduce query at https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS?locations=ZQ (accessed on 10 May 2022).

[34] Showing % of 'completely satisfied and 'satisfied in response to "How satisfied are you with the healthcare system in your country?".

[35] Survey responses were collected across Algeria, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.

[36] Survey responses were collected across Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, the Palestinian Authority, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

2 Uniting government stakeholders behind a joint strategy for young people

At least seven public administrations in the MENA region have adopted national youth strategies to promote a joint vision, coordinated approach and policy coherence in support of young people. This chapter benchmarks the arrangements in place against the eight principles of good governance set out in the OECD Assessment Framework of National Youth Strategies. It finds that, while national youth strategies are more widespread than in the past, their impact has often been limited due to challenges in involving young people in their design and implementation, as well as a lack of administrative capacities, resources, and monitoring and evaluation systems.

Young people have specific needs and interests across all policy and service areas including in employment, education, health, justice, housing, transportation, sports, gender equality and environment, among others (OECD, 2020[1]). Adopting a whole-of-government approach in youth policy can ease the transition of young people to an autonomous life by ensuring that government action is well coordinated across different departments and agencies. A joint vision can also mobilise subnational government stakeholders as well as non-governmental stakeholders and coordinate their respective interventions. Instead, weak coordination between departments that operate within their own organisational structures risk to result in a fragmented delivery of the public services young people require to manage the various transitions that are characteristic of this period in life.

The COVID-19 crisis has further underscored the need for integrated approaches to the delivery of public programmes and services to young people. Like elsewhere, young people in MENA have faced unprecedented challenges as a result of the crisis (see Chapter 1), notably in the fields of education, employment, mental health and disposable income (OECD, 2020[2]). For instance, OECD estimates show that a lost school year can be considered equivalent to a loss of between 7% and 10% of lifetime income (OECD, 2020[3]). As discussed in Chapter 1, under a pessimistic scenario, approximately 800 billion USD of aggregated lifetime earnings could be lost for the current cohort of learners in MENA (UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank, 2021[4]).[1] Furthermore, youth aged 15-24 were most affected by the rise in unemployment at the onset of the COVID-19 crisis between February and August 2020 (OECD, 2020[5]), adding to already very high levels of youth unemployment in the region (ILO, 2019[6]).

Governments must seek to create an environment in which young people of all backgrounds and circumstances have access to quality public services in order to avoid that inequalities at a young age will compound over the life cycle (OECD, 2020[1]). Disruptions in this period of life create significant long-term costs for societies and economies, undermining social cohesion, productivity levels and inclusive growth (OECD, 2020[1]). Findings from the OECD report “Governance for Youth, Trust and Intergenerational Justice: Fit for All Generations?” demonstrate that adopting an integrated approach to youth policy and service delivery can help address these challenges (OECD, 2020[1]).

This chapter will review the efforts undertaken to design and implement national integrated youth strategies.

It is organised in three sections:

- It will discuss the benefits of investing in the quality of national integrated youth strategies and introduce the OECD Assessment Framework of National Youth Strategies;
- It will benchmark practices against the eight principles of good governance of the OECD Assessment Framework for National Youth Strategies and provide comparative evidence and practices from across MENA and OECD administrations; and
- Based on the assessment, it will present policy recommendations to support the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national integrated youth strategies.

A glance at constitutional reform in MENA

Young people in the MENA region are key actors for alleviating development challenges and promoting positive change (UNDP, 2017[7]). Following the uprisings in 2011, constitutional reform processes have been launched in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, and Yemen, which have led to the adoption of new constitutions in Egypt (2012 and 2013) and Tunisia (2014), and constitutional reforms in Algeria (2016), Jordan (2011 and 2022), and Morocco (2011) (Boubakri, 2018[8]). In some countries, these reforms have resulted in more explicit references to young people in the Constitution. Across OECD countries, 7 constitutions list direct references to equality regardless of age as of 2022 and 8 constitutions

list direct references to future generations as of 2020 within their constitutions (Constitute Project, 2022[9]; OECD, 2020[1]).

In the MENA region, for instance, Article 8 of Tunisia's Constitution of 2014 refers to young people as "an active force in nation-building" (République Tunisienne, 2015[10]). It requires the state to provide young people with the necessary conditions to reach their full potential and ensure their participation in the country's social, economic, cultural, and political development. The constitution also stipulates that the electoral law shall guarantee the representation of young people in local councils (Article 133). In Morocco's Constitution, Article 33 refers to the needs of young people and recognises for the first time the importance of their participation in civil society. Article 170 stipulates that a Consultative Council of Youth and of Associative Actions shall be formed to develop a national strategy and coordinate policy efforts for youth inclusion in national life and citizenship.

Youth laws can support policy coherence and coordination

National youth laws are legislative frameworks that identify the main stakeholders, fields of action and responsibilities among state institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working with and for young people (OECD, 2020[1]). They often define age brackets for what are considered "young people" and youth institutions, indicate the role of the executive branch in terms of delivering policies, programmes and services to young people and to whom they are targeted, as well as financial and budgetary considerations (OECD, 2020[1]). OECD research shows that youth laws can encourage policy coherence and inter-ministerial coordination: OECD countries that adopted a youth law are less likely to report as challenge the lack of clear mandates or lack of incentives among governmental stakeholders to coordinate with each other on youth policy (OECD, 2020[1]).

As of 2020, 14 OECD countries adopted a national youth law (OECD, 2020[1]). In some OECD countries, youth laws also regulate the support provided by the government to non-governmental stakeholders in the youth field. For instance, in Finland, Luxembourg and Slovenia, youth laws clarify the status and functions of the national youth council and outline the conditions that must be met for becoming a member in the council (OECD, 2020[1]). Box 2.1 presents the examples of national youth laws in Colombia and Finland.

Box 2.1. National youth laws in selected OECD countries

Colombia

Colombia adopted a Statutory Law on Youth Citizenship (*Ley Estatutaria de Ciudadanía Juvenil*) in 2013 to establish the institutional framework of youth policy and youth work and to define young people's rights. It creates a National Youth System (*Sistema Nacional de la Juventudes*), which allows for young people's active participation in the design, implementation, and evaluation of youth policy. The Law also stipulates that the Presidential Council for Youth (*Consejeria Presidential para la Juventud*) manages the system and promotes the implementation of the national youth policy. Furthermore, it lays out roles and missions of local governments and territorial bodies in implementing youth policies and measures to ensure effective coordination with the Presidential Council.

Finland

In 2016, Finland renewed its Youth Act dating back to 1972. The legislation targets all persons below the age of 29 and covers all aspects of youth work and activities and youth policy across all levels of government. It identifies the Ministry of Education and Culture as the primary state authority responsible

for the administration, coordination, and development of the national youth policy, in cooperation with other ministries and central government agencies as well as local authorities, youth associations and other relevant organisations. For each stakeholder, the Youth Act specifies key roles and responsibilities in the youth field. It also clarifies the conditions national youth work organisations must meet to benefit from the transfer of state subsidies.

Source: (European Commission, 2017[11]; OECD, 2020[1]).

As of 2022, none of the public administrations in the MENA region covered in this report had adopted a comprehensive national youth law. However, some governments have passed laws to define the responsibilities of the lead ministry in charge of youth affairs or put in place legislation in different sectors to better define responsibilities. In Jordan, for instance, Regulation No. (78) of 2016 on "the administrative organisation of the Ministry of Youth" spells out its organisational structure after the transition from the Higher Council for Youth to the creation of a dedicated ministry (OECD, 2021[12]).

While Tunisia has not adopted a national youth law, various sectoral laws and youth-specific commitments address youth policy (OECD, 2021[13]). The government has adopted three major texts that shape young people's representation in public and political life, their participation in policymaking and their involvement in society: the 2014 Constitution (République Tunisienne, 2015[10]), the 2014 and 2017 electoral laws (République Tunisienne, 2017[14]), and the 2018 Local Authorities Code (République Tunisienne, 2018[15]).

The absence of a comprehensive national youth law does not necessarily indicate that governments give less importance to the concerns and perspectives of young people in policymaking and public service delivery. Youth policy can be defined further in sectoral laws instead as is the case in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, for instance. Morocco has passed several laws in order to strengthen the representation of young people in politics, encourage their participation in the policy cycle and to involve young people in society. However, as evidence from across the OECD countries presented above demonstrates, national youth laws can help encourage multi-level and multi-stakeholder coordination.

More countries elaborate national youth strategies but results often remain behind expectations

National Youth Strategies (NYS) have emerged as guiding frameworks to shape a vision for young people and deliver programmes and services in a coherent manner across administrative and ministerial portfolios. They can also mobilise public (and private) resources for youth programming and set and communicate the rationale, objectives and expected outcomes of government action targeting youth. Investments in the quality of NYS pay off with a return. In OECD countries that rank high in the OECD Assessment Framework for National Youth Strategies, which will be introduced below, young people are more likely to express greater interest in politics (OECD, 2020[1]).

As of 2020, 25 out of 33 OECD countries that responded to the OECD Youth Governance Survey had an operational national or federal youth strategy in place (OECD, 2020[1]). The three top motivations highlighted in relation to the adoption of a NYS are to support young people in their transition to an autonomous life (100%), to engage them in the decision-making process (88%) and to integrate their concerns across all relevant policy and service areas (84%) (OECD, 2020[1]). They encompass government commitments across various policy and public service areas, covering measures to encourage young people's participation in public and political life (100%); and improve opportunities and outcomes in the field of employment and economy (96%); education and training (96%); health (92%); and sports, culture and leisure (84%) (OECD, 2020[1]). Youth strategies also exist at subnational level across OECD

countries. For example, in 2017, the municipality of Gaia in Portugal adopted a five-year municipal youth plan to foster equal opportunities and social cohesion (Municipal Council of Gaia, 2017[16]).

Box 2.2. Examples of integrated national youth strategies

New Zealand

The Government of New Zealand released its *Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy* in August 2019 to improve the well-being of young people under the age of 25. The development of the strategy was jointly led by the Minister for Child Poverty Reduction (a portfolio held by the Prime Minister) and the Minister for Children, demonstrating strong political support from the top. The strategy includes six outcome indicators, reported to Parliament annually. For each outcome, data will be disaggregated when possible by household income or socio-economic status and ethnicity to take into account the impact of intersecting identities. The Child Wellbeing Unit within the Department of the Prime Minister acts as the lead institution to monitor implementation. 20 more government agencies have some responsibility for its implementation. Overall, the chief executives of these agencies, and by extension their respective line Ministers, are accountable for more than 110 individual actions.

Austria

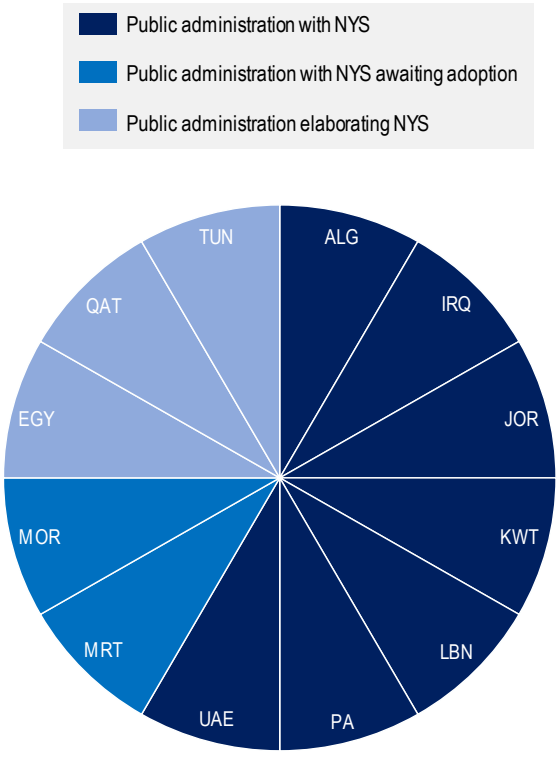
In Austria, each federal ministry is required to develop at least one national "youth objective" related to its own sphere of competence to encourage a cross-sectoral approach in the implementation of the *Austrian Youth Strategy*. Each objective should contribute to improving the conditions of young people. An external agency assisted each federal ministry in defining and formulating their objectives and a cross-sectoral working group was created to foster dialogue. Focus groups with young people called "Reality Check" were organised to receive young people's feedback and integrate their views.

Source: (OECD, 2020[1]).

Based on the survey replies of public administrations in the MENA region to the OECD Youth Governance Survey and further desk-based research, as of 2022, at least seven have adopted a national youth strategy: Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Palestinian Authority and United Arab Emirates. In Mauritania and Morocco, a national youth strategy has been elaborated but has not been adopted yet. Bahrain, Egypt, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia are reportedly in the process of elaborating a strategy (Figure 2.1).

Some are also sustaining efforts to renew their national youth strategies: for instance, the United Arab Emirates has a National Youth Agenda 2016-2021 in place and is currently elaborating a new one; similarly the Palestinian Authority had a NYS "Youth are our Future" 2017-2022 in place and invested efforts in reviewing, updating and extending it to 2023 in response to the COVID-19 crisis. While more MENA administrations have adopted or are in the process of elaborating integrated youth strategies at the national level, implementation challenges risk limiting their impact.

Figure 2.1. Public administrations in the MENA region with a National Youth Strategy or elaborating one



Source: OECD Youth Governance Survey, interviews and desk research (updated as of January 2022).

Algeria

In Algeria, a National Youth Plan 2020-2024 (*Plan National Jeunesse 2020-2024*) was elaborated by an inter-ministerial commission established in 2020 (Algérie Presse Service, 2020[17]). A government-wide action plan to support its implementation was adopted in September 2021 (Government of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, 2021[18]).

Bahrain

Previously, Bahrain developed and adopted a National Youth Strategy (2005-2009) with the support of the UNDP (Al-Wasat, 2009[19]). Currently there is no evidence available about the elaboration of a new strategy. However, one of the objectives of Bahrain's Government Plan 2019-2022 is to "highlight the role of woman, youth and sports in all government programs and initiatives" (Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain, 2022[20]).

Egypt

In 2021, the Ministry of Youth and Sports in Egypt, in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, held consultations with young people across all governorates to inform the development of a National Youth Strategy for 2021-

2026 (UNFPA, 2021[21]). A technical workshop with representatives of ministries, government and public agencies was held to contribute to its elaboration (State Information Service of Egypt, 2021[22]).[2] The eight axes discussed for the elaboration of a NYS include technology, culture and leisure; health, economy and entrepreneurship; community development and environmental preservation; basic requirements for living; participation in public and political life (citizenship, political participation); and youth sector governance.[3] At the time of writing, the NYS is still under elaboration.

Iraq

In Iraq, the National Adolescent and Youth Survey was organised in 2019 with technical support provided by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNICEF to inform the elaboration of a national youth strategy (UNFPA, 2020[23]). In 2021, following the participation of 33,000 Iraqis between the ages of 10 to 30 from all provinces of Iraq, the Ministry of Youth and Sports launched the cross-sectoral 2030 National Youth Vision (UNFPA, 2020[23]; UNICEF, 2021[24]). It covers 14 thematic areas, including health, culture and employment, among others (UNICEF, 2021[24]).

Jordan

In 2004, Jordan was the first country in the region to adopt a multi-year strategy focused on young people (2005-09). Due to the absence of an effective monitoring and evaluation system, the strategy was put on hold. More recently, in 2019, the Cabinet adopted the National Youth Strategy 2019-2025 (Ministry of Youth in Jordan, 2019[25]), which was launched in the presence of the Prime Minister and Minister of Youth (OECD, 2021[12]). The strategy was informed by a review of royal directives and national strategies, an evaluation of the 2004-09 strategy, international good practices, a SWOT analysis and results of a survey of Jordanian youth, conducted by the General Statistics Department in 2014 (OECD, 2021[12]). The strategy identifies seven themes, which are further expanded in the form of nine strategic objectives, each of which is linked to one of the Sustainable Development Goals (i.e. poverty reduction; good health and prosperity; good education; industry, innovation and infrastructure; reducing inequalities; peace, justice and strong institutions; entering into partnerships to achieve objectives) (OECD, 2021[12]).

Kuwait

In Kuwait, the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs prepared the first “National Framework for Youth Engagement and Empowerment” in 2012 with technical support provided by UNDP (State of Kuwait, 2013[26]). The framework was endorsed by the Council of Ministers in 2013 and adopted by the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs as a 3-year national youth strategy for 2013-16 (UNDP, 2017[27]). Since 2016, a new national youth policy had been elaborated, which was presented in early 2019 by the Minister of State for Youth Affairs to the Cabinet of Ministers (Kuwait News Agency, 2019[28]) and which, according to available information, was still operational in 2021 (The Times Kuwait Report, 2021[29]).

Lebanon

In Lebanon, the Council of Ministers endorsed the National Youth Policy in 2012, accompanied by an action plan for the Ministry of Youth and Sports (Ministry of Youth and Sports in Lebanon, 2012[30]). The document was developed by the Youth Forum for Youth Policy[4], which was one of the stakeholders in the government’s “National Advice over the Youth Policy” initiative (Youth Advocacy Process; Youth Forum for Youth Policies, 2012[31]). The National Youth Policy features policy recommendation to promote active citizenship amongst young people, enhance their sense of solidarity and encourage the participation of youth organisations at the regional level. Currently the implementation status of the strategy is unclear.

Mauritania

In 2015, the Council of Ministers in Mauritania adopted the National Strategy on Youth, Sports and Leisure 2015-2020 (*Strategie Nationale de la Jeunesse, Sports et Loisirs 2015-2020*). Since then, a new NYS for the period 2020-2024 (*Strategie Nationale de la Jeunesse 2020-2024*) has been drafted, which is embedded in the more long-term NYS 2020-2030. The NYS 2020-2024 aims to empower young people to accelerate sustainable development through education and training, entrepreneurship and decent employment, increase young people's access to public services, strengthen their representation in decision-making, promote citizenship, democracy and peace and construct youth-responsive infrastructure (social, cultural and sports facilities). At the time of writing, the strategy is being updated in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and is projected to be submitted for adoption in early 2022.

Morocco

In Morocco, following a process of national consultations led by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the government drafted the National Integrated Strategy on Youth 2015-2030 (*Stratégie Nationale Intégrée de la Jeunesse 2015-2030, SNIJ*) with the ambition to provide a reference framework for the co-ordination of public policies affecting young people (Ministry of Youth and Sports in Morocco, 2014[32]). While never formally adopted and now obsolete,[5] it has informed subsequent work on the National Integrated Policy on Youth since 2018 (*Politique Nationale Intégrée de la Jeunesse, PNIJ*) (OECD, 2021[33]). It is composed of four axes: listening to and communicating with young people, the personal development of young people, their integration into society and strengthening young people's access to basic services (education, training, professional integration, health, housing, mobility and entertainment) (Agence Marocaine De Presse, 2019[34]). The National Integrated Policy on Youth (*Politique Nationale Intégrée de la Jeunesse, PNIJ*) was approved by the Government Council in 2019 and is since awaiting adoption.

Palestinian Authority

The NYS "Youth are our Future", developed by the Palestinian Authority for the 2017-2022 period, addresses the fields of training and education, social and political participation, employment and economic empowerment, health, sports and culture, and media and information technology. It builds on previous strategies that were elaborated with the support of GTZ (German Technical Cooperation) in 2006, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 2010 (Government of the Palestinian Authority, 2011[35]). Following a mid-term review of the current National Youth Strategy in 2019-20, and in light of the impact of the COVID-19 crisis, it was updated and extended to remain in force until 2023 (Prime Minister's Office in the Palestinian Authority, 2021[36]).

Qatar

In 2018, the Cultural Enrichment and Sports Excellence Strategy 2018-22 (CSSS) was launched in Qatar as part of its National Development Strategy 2018-22 (Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics in Qatar, 2018[37]). While it does not represent a national integrated youth strategy in the narrow sense, the Cultural Enrichment and Sports Excellence Strategy sets an outcome for "empowered and qualified youth for an active role in society" and it includes targets on the development of young people's skills, the promotion of youth-responsive programmes and the creation of effective communication channels between young people and decision-makers at all levels (Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics in Qatar, 2018[37]). Notably, the strategy makes a reference to future generations in its strategic objectives. In 2021, the Ministry of Culture and Sports in Qatar started work on a National Youth Document (Ministry of Culture and Sports in Qatar, 2021[38]).

Saudi Arabia

In 2010, the Ministry of Economy and Planning in Saudi Arabia, with the support of the UNDP, elaborated the Saudi National Youth Strategy (UNDP, 2013[39]). The strategy included eight axes: education, training, employment, health, culture, media, communications and information technology (Asharq Al-Awsat, 2014[40]). The Shura Council adopted the strategy in 2014. Currently there is no evidence available about the implementation of the strategy.

Tunisia

In Tunisia, the government has been working on the elaboration of a NYS since 2013. In 2016, the ministry in charge of youth affairs organised a societal dialogue throughout the country, under the auspices of the Presidency of the Republic.[6] While the idea of adopting a NYS did not materialise, the outputs of the 2016 national dialogue were instead used by the Ministry of Youth and Sports for the elaboration of the Sectoral Vision on Youth 2018-2020 (*Vision Sectorielle de la Jeunesse 2018-2020*) (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in Tunisia, 2018[41]). With the launch of a new national dialogue in January 2019, organised by the National Observatory for Youth (*Observatoire Nationale de la Jeunesse, ONJ*), the prospect to work towards a national youth strategy gained new momentum. The national dialogue surveyed 10,000 young people from different backgrounds on matters related to employment, societal education, peace and security, new technologies, information and communication, risky behaviour, and immigration, the results of which were published in a report per theme (OECD, 2021[13]). However, at the time of writing, a NYS has not yet been drafted. Instead, since 2021, the Ministry of Youth and Sports has worked on an annual national youth action plan that would build on the Sectoral Vision on Youth 2018-2020 in support of implementing Tunisia's National Development Plan 2021-2025 (*Plan de Développement National 2021-2025)*.

United Arab Emirates

In 2016, the United Arab Emirates launched its first NYS, the National Youth Agenda 2016-2021. The National Youth Agenda 2016-2021 was elaborated with evidence gathered from multiple sources, including leadership meetings, feedback provided by young people via local youth councils, youth circles, a youth survey, social media, and an in-person youth retreat, a baseline review of existing youth statistics and national strategies that concern young people, as well as international good practices. In the process of determining the strategic priorities for the youth sector, the key transitions that young people in the United Arab Emirates go through in their transition to an autonomous life were examined. Five pivotal phases were identified and, reflecting these transitions, the final National Youth Agenda 2016-2021 defines five corresponding objectives for youth, ranging from engaging in policy-making and exercising citizenship to education and continuous learning, employment and entrepreneurship, health and safety, growing a family, and planning for the future (Government of the United Arab Emirates, 2016[42]). A second iteration of the National Youth Agenda is being elaborated with the launch expected to take place in 2022.

Benchmarking national youth strategies against the OECD Assessment Framework for National Youth Strategies

Adopting a national youth strategy alone is not sufficient. Creating a vision for young people over a multi-year horizon, a strategy is expected to improve policy coherence and facilitate inter-ministerial and multi-stakeholder co-ordination based on clearly assigned mandates. By integrating young people in all stages of the strategy (from formulation to implementation and monitoring), governments can promote their ownership in the definition of priorities and ensure that subsequent programmes and services are more responsive to their demands. Moreover, robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks are critical to keep

track of the implementation and to assess regularly whether the strategy delivers the intended results or whether adjustments might be necessary. The availability of age-disaggregated data across the thematic areas covered by the strategy is another key determinant of its success.

A number of international and regional frameworks exist to guide policy makers in preparing national youth strategies, such as the African Youth Charter, elaborated by the African Union Commission (2006[43]).[7] However, these frameworks lack measurable standards and indicators.[8] The OECD Assessment Framework for National Youth Strategies, illustrated in Table 2.1, addresses this gap by identifying eight measurable principles of good governance to guide the elaboration of national youth strategies: they shall be 1) supported by high-level political commitment, 2) evidence-based, 3) participatory, 4) resourced, 5) transparent and accessible, 6) monitored, evaluated and accountable, 7) cross-sectoral and 8) gender-responsive (see Table 2.1).

The framework draws on existing guidelines and OECD standards, including the OECD Recommendations on Open Government (OECD, 2017[44]), Gender Equality in Public Life (OECD, 2016[45]), Budgetary Governance (OECD, 2015[46]), Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (OECD, 2019[47]), the OECD Policy Framework on Sound Public Governance (OECD, 2020[48]) as well as the OECD Recommendation on Creating Better Opportunities for Young People (Box 2.3).

Box 2.3. OECD Recommendation on Creating Better Opportunities for Young People

Adopted by its 38 Members in June 2022 at the Ministerial Council Meeting, the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Creating Better Opportunities for Young People promotes government-wide strategies and sets out a range of policy principles to improve youth measures and outcomes in all relevant policy areas.

The Recommendation is structured around five building blocks, recommending that Adherents should:

- Ensure that young people of all backgrounds and in all circumstances acquire relevant knowledge and develop appropriate skills and competencies;
- Support young people in their transition into and within the labour market, and strive to improve labour market outcomes for young people, and especially those in vulnerable and/or disadvantaged circumstances;
- Promote social inclusion and youth well-being beyond economic outcomes, with measures targeted at young people in vulnerable and/or disadvantaged circumstances;
- Establish the legal, institutional and administrative settings to strengthen the trust of young people of all backgrounds in government, and their relationships with public institutions; and
- Reinforce administrative and technical capacities to deliver youth-responsive services and address age-based inequalities through close collaboration across all levels of government.

The Recommendation provides an international standard against which OECD Members and non-member governments can benchmark current practices to identify priority areas for reform and access international good practices.

Source: (OECD, 2022[49])

The principles are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Evidence from a correlation analysis of the results of the OECD Youth Governance Surveys in 2020 confirms that positive outcomes in one quality standard are associated with positive outcomes in others (OECD, 2020[1]). For instance, the more a strategy is transparent about the evidence it builds on and the responsibilities of different stakeholders, the more accountable it will be. OECD evidence gathered during the first and second year of the COVID-19

crisis among youth-led organisations also demonstrates that effective, inclusive and transparent governance is a key driver of trust in government among young people (OECD, 2020[2]; OECD, 2022[50]).

Table 2.1. OECD Assessment Framework of National Youth Strategies

Principle	Definitions and Explanations
Supported by political commitment	**Definition**: The government's leadership has committed to address young people's needs. **Explanation**: (i) High-level statements outlining that the needs and perspectives of young people are a government priority; and (ii) youth-specific commitments covered in strategic government documents (e.g. national development strategy).
Evidence-based	**Definition**: all stages of youth policy development and implementation are based on reliable, relevant, independent and up-to-date data and research, in order for youth policy to reflect the needs and realities of young people from different backgrounds and circumstances. **Explanation**: (i) regularly-conducted research on the situation of young people; (ii) age-disaggregated data is collected by the ministry/ministries in charge of youth affairs, line ministries and independent statistics authority; and (iii) system to facilitate data/information exchange between entity in charge of youth affairs and all other stakeholders involved.
Participatory	**Definition**: A participatory national youth strategy engages all relevant stakeholders, at all stages of the policy cycle, from the elaboration and implementation to monitoring and evaluation. Stakeholders are youth organisations, young people, and all other organisations as well as individuals who are influencing and/or are being influenced by the policy. Particular attention is to be paid to the participation of young people in vulnerable circumstances. **Explanation**: (i) meaningful participation of youth organisations, youth workers and non-organised young people throughout the policy cycle; (ii) variety of tools and channels to ensure meaningful participation, such as face-to-face meetings, surveys, seminars and conferences, online consultations, and virtual meetings (webinars); and (iii) focused activities to engage young people in vulnerable circumstances.
Resourced / budgeted	**Definition**: Sufficient resources, both in terms of funding and human resources are available for youth organisations, structures for youth work as well as public authorities to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate the national youth strategy. Supportive measures, from training schemes to funding programmes, are made available to ensure the capacity building of various actors and structures involved in youth policy. **Explanation**: (i) the ministry/ministries co-ordinating the youth portfolio has/have a dedicated budget; (ii) the ministry/ministries co-ordinating the youth portfolio has/have sufficient human resources; (iii) a dedicated budget and dedicated staff is assigned to the national youth strategy; and (iv) grants and other support structures are made available by the government to youth organisations and structures for youth work.
Transparent and accessible	**Definition**: The national youth strategy should clearly state which government authority/authorities has/have the overall co-ordinating responsibility for its implementation. It should also be clear which ministries are responsible for the different areas that are addressed in the policy. A transparent policy should be laid out in publicly accessible documents. **Explanation**: (i) national youth strategy available online in an easily accessible format; (ii) the national youth strategy clearly defines responsibilities for implementation, monitoring and evaluation; (iii) clear description of roles and responsibilities within the entity/entities co-ordinating the strategy are available and easily accessible to other stakeholders (e.g. organisational chart and contact details); and (iv) results of surveys, consultations and reports are publicly available.
Monitored and evaluated / accountable	**Definition**: Data is collected in a continual and systematic way. The strategy is systematically and objectively assessed looking at its design, implementation and results with the aim of determining the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling policy makers to incorporate lessons learned into the decision–making process. Finally, the various stakeholders in the policy-making process take responsibility for their actions and can be held accountable for them. **Explanation**: (i) measurable objectives and targets are set; (ii) key performance indicators linked to the objectives and targets are defined; (iii) a data-collection system for key performance indicators is established; (iv) specific mechanisms exist to ensure the quality of the data collected; (v) progress reports are prepared on a regular basis; (vi) evidence produced in monitoring is used to inform decision-making; and (vii) evaluations are prepared regularly and made available publicly.
Cross-sectoral / transversal	**Definition**: Cross-sectoral youth strategy implies that all relevant policy areas are covered and that a co-ordination mechanism exists among different ministries, levels of government and public bodies responsible for and working on issues affecting young people. **Explanation**: (i) all relevant policy areas are addressed and put in relation with one another in the national youth strategy; (ii) line ministries are involved throughout the policy cycle; (iii) intra-ministerial co-ordination mechanisms are established; and (iv) mechanisms to involve local and potentially other subnational levels of government throughout the policy cycle of the strategy exist.
Gender responsive	**Definition**: The national youth strategy should be assessed against the specific needs of women and men from diverse backgrounds to ensure inclusive policy outcomes. **Explanation**: (i) explicit reference to gender equality in the strategy; (ii) availability of gender-disaggregated data; and (iii) availability of gender-specific objectives within the strategy.

Source: OECD.

The degree to which NYS deliver on these principles varies significantly across OECD countries. In fact, as of 2020, only 20% of national youth strategies in place across OECD countries are fully participatory, budgeted, monitored and evaluated (OECD, 2020[1]). In turn, when national youth strategies are formulated without the meaningful engagement of youth stakeholders from diverse backgrounds, when they are not supported by adequate resources and when their implementation is not monitored and evaluated regularly, there is an increased risk that their implementation will fail (OECD, 2020[1]).

Based on the information provided by ministries in charge of youth affairs to the OECD Youth Governance Surveys, interviews with ministerial representatives and accompanying desk research, the following sections will benchmark the efforts of selected public administrations in the MENA region with a NYS (or in the process of elaborating/adopting one) against this assessment framework. Based on an overview of good practices across the region and OECD countries (see Box 2.2), it identifies priorities for reform.

Political commitment: a first and important condition

High-level political commitment is a first and important condition to mobilise various governmental and non-governmental stakeholders behind a joint vision for young people. Such support can help to initiate work on a cross-sectoral youth strategy, mobilise stakeholders in its implementation and raise awareness among the broader public, including civil society and media, about government action targeting young people.

High-level political commitment can be demonstrated in the form of political declarations or pledges prior to elections. To demonstrate that a NYS is aligned with the broader government agenda, explicit references to the synergies between both and to the way in which youth-specific commitments deliver on government-wide national priorities are characteristic of some strategies. In Canada, for instance, since 2015 each cabinet minister, including the minister in charge of steering youth policy, receives a mandate letter from the Prime Minister, which includes the policy objectives to be met. The mandate letters are publicly available (Prime Minister of Canada, 2021[51]). In some countries, notably Austria, Colombia, Japan and Italy, youth policy is steered by Centre of Government (CoG) institutions[9] (OECD, 2020[1]) to encourage inter-ministerial coordination based on a cross-sectoral approach and to ensure high visibility. Findings from 2020 indicate that OECD countries in which the youth portfolio is managed and coordinated by Centre of Government institutions neither observe a lack of political will nor an absence of political leadership as a challenge for co-ordination on the design and delivery of youth policy and services (OECD, 2020[1]). Most frequently, formal responsibility for youth affairs in OECD countries is organised in a unit or department inside a ministry with broader responsibilities, such as education or social development (OECD, 2018[52]). In the MENA administrations covered in this report, the youth portfolio is most commonly assigned to a ministry of youth with combined portfolios (see Chapter 3).

Political commitment to improve young people's situation based on an integrated strategy across the MENA region has varied across countries and time. In Jordan, for instance, the King referred to the young generation as the "greatest asset and hope for the future" in 2000, underlining the need to "tap into our young people's intellectual, creative, and reproductive potential in order for Jordan to keep up with new developments in global scientific, economic and social factors" (UNDP, 2000[53]). The call to empower young people by developing the state administration and enhancing the rule of law was reiterated in discussion papers issued by the King. In 2016, the Higher Council for Youth was transformed into the Ministry of Youth, which marked an important development to reflect this commitment in the institutional architecture of the government (OECD, 2021[12]). In the Palestinian Authority, a presidential order enabled the transition of the Ministry of Youth and Sports into the Higher Council of Youth and Sports to expand services to young people living in the diaspora (Higher Council for Youth and Sports in the Palestinian Authority, 2017[54]).

In the United Arab Emirates, in 2016, the creation of the position of Minister of State for Youth Affairs and the appointment of one of the world's youngest ministers to the position at age 22 reflected the commitment

by the political leadership to renew its focus on improving the opportunities for young people (Government of the United Arab Emirates, 2021[55]). In the same year, the United Arab Emirates published its first national youth strategy, the National Youth Agenda 2016-2021. In the elaboration of the strategy, several consultations with young people were launched by the Vice President and the Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai (Government of the United Arab Emirates, 2016[42]). In Egypt, 2016 was declared the "Year of Youth" by the President (State Information Service of Egypt, 2020[56]). Since 2016, National Youth Conferences have been organised and in 2021, the Ministry of Youth and Sports started work on the National Youth Strategy 2021-2026.

Political commitment is an important building block for the successful design and implementation of a NYS. However, it can vary due to emerging challenges that are perceived to be more imminent and a subsequent change in political priorities or different perspectives and interests on the approach to follow. For instance, in Morocco, despite the support by the King for "the elaboration of a new integrated policy dedicated to young people" (Government of the Kingdom of Morocco, 2017[57]) in 2017, the National Integrated Policy on Youth (*Politique Nationale Intégrée de la Jeunesse, PNIJ*) has not been adopted. Similarly, despite strong political commitment after the 2011 revolution, the 2016 Carthage Agreement (*Accord de Carthage*) and its commitments focused on engaging young people in policymaking as well as the attention to the needs of young people in the Development Plan 2016-2020 (*Plan de Développement 2016-2020*), Tunisia is yet to adopt a NYS.

Evidence-based approaches: Age-disaggregated data in key sectors is lacking

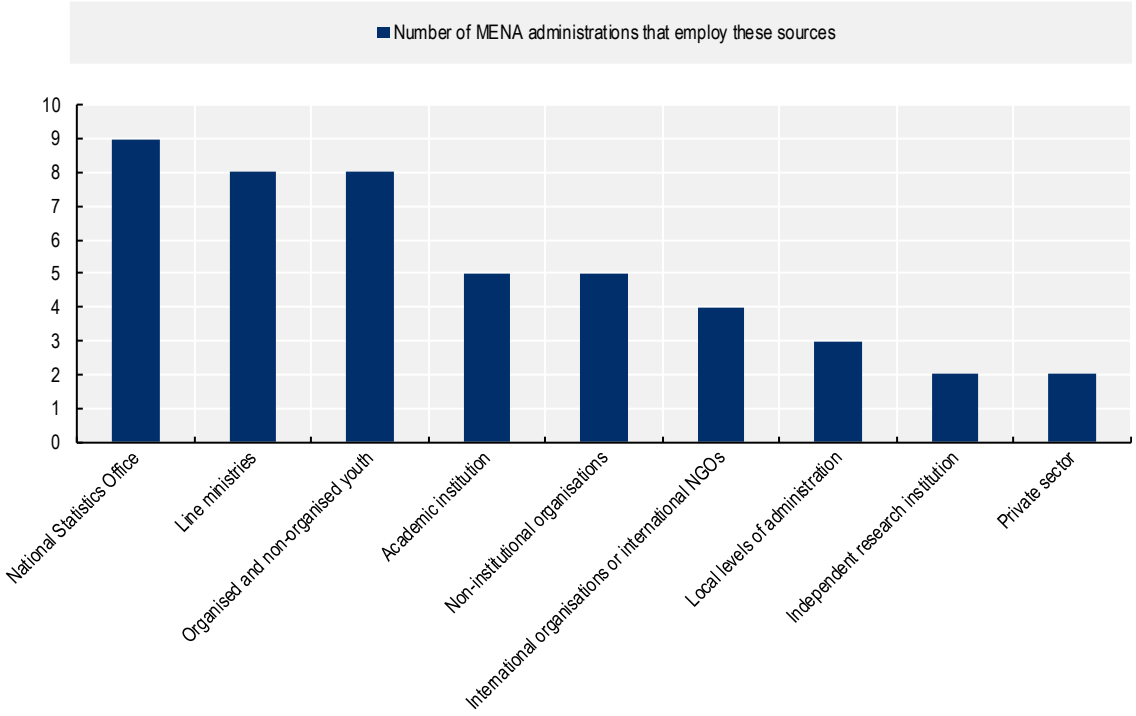
The use of evidence in policymaking can improve the design, implementation and evaluation of public policies (OECD, 2020[48]). An evidence-based youth strategy uses reliable, relevant, independent and up-to-date information and data throughout this cycle. It identifies young people's needs and perspectives, presents age-disaggregated information in terms of young people's access to and quality of public services (e.g. education, employment, health, housing, etc.) and thus helps to ensure that public programmes and resources will be allocated to effective use. To overcome silo-based approaches, a system to facilitate data and information exchange between different stakeholders, both at the central and subnational levels as well as between them, is crucial for more integrated and coordinated approaches.

Young people are a heterogeneous group who live in highly different circumstances, depending on their socio-economic status and geographic area, age, gender, race and ethnicity, indigeneity, migrant status, (dis)ability status and others young people associate with, and their intersections. Inequalities that correlate with certain circumstances and backgrounds tend to accumulate over the life cycle (OECD, 2017[58]). Therefore, beyond being disaggregated by age, the evidence to inform national youth strategies should be, whenever possible, disaggregated by other characteristics too (OECD, 2021[12]). Careful consideration should also be given to the collection and use of such data in areas beyond education and employment with an impact on the well-being and opportunities of young people. For instance, income and wealth, work and job quality, housing, health, knowledge and skills, environmental quality, subjective well-being, safety, work-life-balance, social connections and civil engagement are just some of the policy areas the OECD Well-being Framework identifies as critical in this regard.[10]

Among the MENA administrations that have designed or adopted a national youth strategy (Figure 2.2), nearly all report to have used evidence from the National Statistics Department (or equivalent) during the elaboration of their strategy, with the exception of Morocco. All, with the exception of Jordan and the Palestinian Authority, report to have used evidence gathered by line ministries, and, other than Morocco and Saudi Arabia, all administrations report to have used evidence gathered from organised and non-organised young people. Some have further collected evidence from academic institutions (Lebanon, Mauritania, Palestinian Authority, Qatar and Tunisia), non-governmental organisations (Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Qatar and Tunisia) and inter-governmental organisations or international NGOs (Egypt, Mauritania, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates). Notably, only Mauritania, Tunisia and the

United Arab Emirates report to have used data from subnational levels of government and only Lebanon and Tunisia report to have used evidence from independent research institutes. Lebanon and Qatar also stress they have compiled evidence from the private sector.

Figure 2.2. Sources of evidence used by selected MENA administrations in the elaboration of their NYS



Note: The chart builds on data from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and United Arab Emirates.
Source: OECD Youth Governance Survey and desk research (updated in January 2022).

The non-participation of the subnational level in the collection and use of evidence in many public administrations covered in this report is striking. It points to a disconnect between public authorities working on either side, the lack of effective channels of information and communication and limited capacities in many subnational contexts to collect such data. This results in a significant risk that young people's unequal access to public services and broader opportunities in different regions are not addressed.

A closer analysis of the situation in Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia reveals a number of common challenges for evidence-based youth policy making. In Jordan, for instance, the National Youth Strategy 2019-2025 presents data on the demographic situation, youth unemployment levels as well as the physical infrastructure of youth spaces managed by the Ministry of Youth (e.g. youth centres, youth clubs). In turn, there is a significant lack of evidence to underpin the measures listed under the seven thematic and nine strategic objectives. The lack of disaggregated evidence across key sectors is indeed acknowledged in a SWOT analysis that is integrated into the strategy (Ministry of Youth in Jordan, 2019[25]; OECD, 2021[12]). In Morocco, following the adoption of the 2011 Constitution, national consultations were held in 2012 with the participation of more than 27,000 young people and were leveraged in the elaboration of the National Integrated Strategy on Youth 2015-2030 (*Stratégie Nationale Intégrée de la Jeunesse 2015-2030, SNIJ*), which is now obsolete, and informed the later elaboration of the National Integrated Policy on Youth

(*Politique Nationale Intégrée de la Jeunesse, PNIJ*) in 2018, which is awaiting adoption (OECD, 2021[33]). For example, the region of Marrakech-Safi is planning to create a local observatory for the evaluation of the policy areas under its competency, as well as its own regional monitoring and performance indicators (OECD, 2021[33]). Similarly, in Tunisia, according to the government, 40,000 people participated in the national dialogue on youth rolled out in 2016 (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in Tunisia, 2018[41]), which fed into the creation of a database on employment, health and other areas benefiting from 35,000 contributions. A first diagnostic of the existing situation for young people was also informed by a survey among 1,200 households including parents and young people aged 18-30 and a survey among 10,000 young people, conducted by the National Observatory for Youth (*Observatoire Nationale de la Jeunesse, ONJ*) (OECD, 2021[13]). However, as an NYS is being elaborated in Morocco and awaiting adoption in Tunisia, updating the data collected in 2012 and 2016 respectively will be crucial to ensure up-to-date evidence so that the NYS can reflect the current needs and priorities of Moroccan and Tunisian youth.

The challenges that MENA administrations are facing are in fact similar to those many OECD countries report. In a 2020 survey across ministries in charge of youth affairs in OECD countries, 88% reported that the design of their national youth strategy was informed by evidence (OECD, 2020[1]). However, only half of these ministries reported that they gathered age-disaggregated data and information and, among this group, more than two-thirds reported that they found it difficult to collect such data in specific areas (OECD, 2020[1]). Box 2.4 presents the examples from France, Sweden and Canada to invest in measures and institutions for evidence-based approaches to youth policy design and implementation.

Box 2.4. Age-disaggregated evidence in OECD countries

France

In France, the Research Centre for the Study and Observation of Living Conditions (*Centre de Recherche pour l'Étude et l'Observation des Conditions de Vie, CRÉDOC*) compiles and makes age-disaggregated data available to policymakers. The CRÉDOC has published surveys on the living conditions and aspirations of French people since 1978. In early 2018, it published the third edition of the DJEPVA Barometer, a national survey of 4,500 young people aged 18-30.

Sweden

The Swedish Parliament adopted its current youth policy bill *With youth in focus: a policy for good living conditions, power and influence* in 2014. The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF) is responsible for ensuring that the objectives of the youth policy are achieved. As part of its ongoing effort to monitor the implementation of the youth policy, the MUCF continuously compiles and publishes available age-disaggregated data per indicator on the *Ung Idag* website (http://www.ungidag.se/). It covers six key sectors of interest for youth: work and housing; economic and social vulnerability; physical and mental health; influence and representation; culture and leisure; and training.

Canada

Recognising the varied impacts of COVID-19 pandemic challenges across demographic groups, the Canadian government will allocate $172 million CAD over five years to Statistics Canada. This funding will support the implementation of a new Disaggregated Data Action Plan to support evidence-based decision-making across priority areas including health, quality of life, the environment, justice, business and the economy by taking into account intergenerational justice considerations and the needs of diverse populations.

Source: (Brice-Mansenca et al., 2018[59]; OECD, 2020[1]; OECD, 2022[50]).

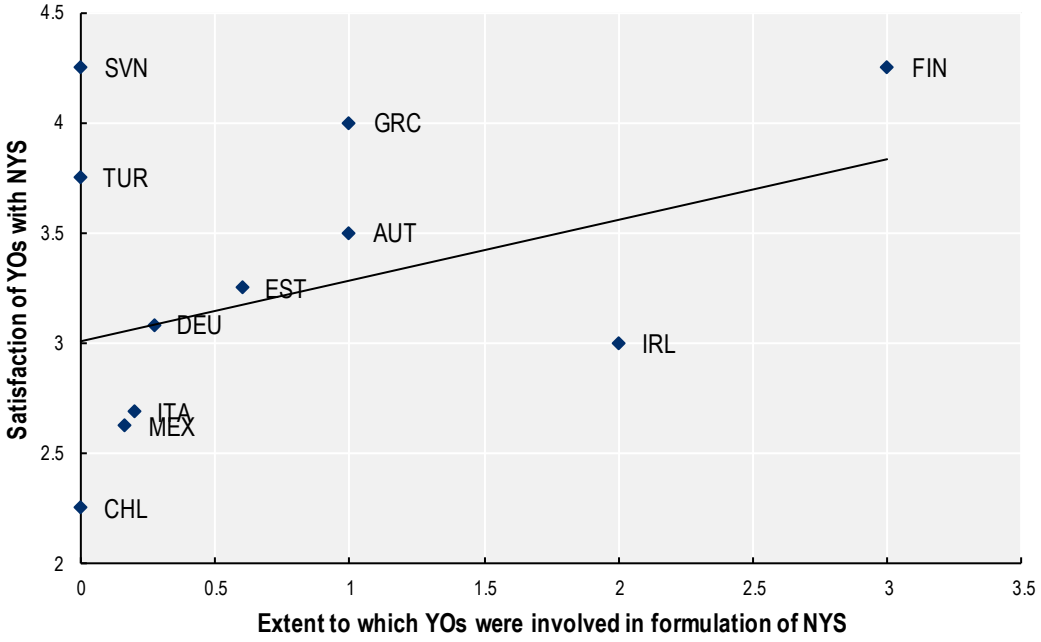
Beyond the usual suspects: Involving young people and youth organisations in strategy design

A participatory national youth strategy involves all relevant youth stakeholders, at all stages of the policy cycle, from creation and implementation to monitoring and evaluation. Stakeholders can include youth organisations, young people, and all other organisations as well as individuals who are influencing and/or are being influenced by the strategy. As further explored in Chapter 4, involving young people and youth organisations requires more broadly an enabling environment where civic space is protected and promoted.

Meaningful engagement of a diverse group of stakeholders enables policymakers to identify their needs and deliver more responsive policies and services. The OECD Recommendation on Open Government emphasises that stakeholder participation increases government inclusiveness and accountability, and calls on governments to "grant all stakeholders equal and fair opportunities to be informed and consulted and actively engage them in all phases of the policy-cycle and service design and delivery" taking specific efforts to reach to the most vulnerable, underrepresented or marginalised groups in society (OECD, 2017[44]). OECD findings indeed indicate that investments into meaningful youth participation in the policy cycle pay off (OECD, 2020[1]). Figure 2.3 illustrates that youth organisations in OECD countries expressed higher satisfaction with the final national youth strategy in their country when they were involved throughout the definition, drafting and review of the thematic areas of the draft strategy (OECD, 2020[1]). To promote meaningful youth participation in public decision-making and spaces for intergenerational dialogue at all levels, with targeted measures to engage disadvantaged and under-represented groups for more responsive, inclusive and accountable policy outcomes, the OECD Recommendation on Creating Better Opportunities for Young People recommends exploring innovative methods to communicate and engage with diverse organised and non-organised groups of young people, such as through representative deliberative processes and digital government tools (OECD, 2022[49]).

The COVID-19 crisis has brought the challenge of engaging young people from different backgrounds to the forefront. Only 15% of OECD-based youth organisations felt that their government considered the views of young people when they adopted lockdown and confinement measures (OECD, 2022[50]). Box 2.5 outlines examples of government efforts to involve young people in policymaking in the design of national youth strategies and the adoption of measures to respond to and recover from COVID-19.

Figure 2.3. When youth were involved in strategy design, they were more satisfied with results



Note: Correlation coefficient: 0.33; p-value: 0.29. The independent variable is the share of youth organisations (YOs) in each country that indicated to have been consulted to define, draft and review the thematic areas of the National Youth Strategy. The dependent variable is the mean of means of satisfaction expressed by youth organisations with the areas and objectives of the National Youth Strategy.
Source: (OECD, 2020[1])

To ensure greater diversity of views and perspectives, beyond those by youth organisations that may often attract young people from similar backgrounds, involving non-organised groups of young people is crucial. Yet, 4 in 10 ministries in charge of youth affairs in OECD countries did not consult non-organised groups of young people in the preparation of their NYS (OECD, 2020[1]).

Box 2.5. Participatory approaches in youth policymaking in selected OECD countries

The Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy in New Zealand

The Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy in New Zealand benefited from the contributions of 10,000 New Zealanders, including 6,000 children and young people. The Government used a wide range of mechanisms, including face-to-face interviews, focus groups, workshops, academic forums, surveys and a "send a post card to the Prime Minister" initiative. The inclusion of children and young people from vulnerable groups, especially young Māori and other pacific young people as well as disabled youth, young women, refugees or children in care of the state, was a priority. The government also consulted a reference group, made up of child and youth representatives, including non-governmental organisations and academics, and published reports online to report back on the feedback received.

Special Youth Rapporteurs in Japan

The Japanese Cabinet Office appoints students as "Special Youth Rapporteurs" to inform government planning, legislation and regulations related to childhood and youth. The Special Youth Rapporteurs

are asked to give their opinion on government thematic priorities, which are selected by the Cabinet Office. Their inputs are then shared across relevant ministries and government agencies and are published online on the website of the Cabinet Office.

Participation of non-organised young people in Mexico

In the context of the COVID-19 crisis, in Mexico, the Institute of Youth (IMJUVE), the Ministry of Health and the Population Council surveyed more than 50,000 young people in the areas of education, employment, health, violence and resilience. The evidence gathered was used to create the VoCEs-19 report, which has informed the design, implementation, and analysis of public policies at a sectoral level that are responsive to social sensitivity and the needs of young people. A second survey was planned between November 2021 and February 2022 to identify new trends and needs.

Source: (OECD, 2020[1]; OECD, 2022[50])

Across the MENA region, according to the OECD survey results, Egypt, Lebanon, Mauritania, the Palestinian Authority, Qatar, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates involved youth organisations and non-organised young people when elaborating their national youth strategies. All except Lebanon indicate that youth workers were also consulted. However, as Chapter 4 will discuss further, the concept of youth work across the MENA region is subject to competing definitions and youth work practice often suffers from limited financial resources and well-skilled trainers.

In turn, across many public administrations in the region, work on the youth strategy was initiated or accompanied by active youth associations. In Lebanon, for instance, the preparatory work for the national youth strategy was initiated in 2000 by a group of youth associations in collaboration with the Lebanese Ministry of Youth and Sports and a United National Youth Task Force. In thematic working groups, these stakeholders prepared a list of recommendations that was submitted to the Ministry of Youth and Sports and fed into the National Youth Policy, which was approved by the Lebanese Council of Ministers in 2012 (Ministry of Youth and Sports in Lebanon, 2012[30]).

In the Palestinian Authority, workshops were run to involve young people (as well as other stakeholders) in preparation for the National Youth Strategy 2017-2022. These workshops were conducted in different areas and in different formats involving young people in the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank as well as targeting young Palestinian refugees. Young people were also consulted as part of the mid-term review of the strategy and their inputs were used to revise it.

In the United Arab Emirates, young people were involved in the elaboration of the National Youth Agenda 2016-2021 through various channels, including through local youth councils, youth circles and a youth retreat. Youth circles were organised across the United Arab Emirates to bring together young people from various backgrounds and each youth circle sought to answer one central question through discussion and recommendations. The two-day youth retreat brought together young people alongside several Ministers. From August to September 2016, an online survey collected responses from Emirati youth and a federal-wide online campaign (*#TheNationalDialogueOnYouth*) collected input from young people through social media (Government of the United Arab Emirates, 2016[42]).

In Egypt, the elaboration process of the National Youth Strategy 2021-2026 is currently underway. Youth consultations have been reportedly held across all governorates. In addition to hosting youth consultations, the government sought the opinions of young people through discussions in youth centres and through an online survey (Mahmoud, 2021[60]).

In elaborating a NYS, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in Tunisia organised a national dialogue and surveyed households between October and December 2016. The national dialogue process culminated in a National Youth Conference (*Conférence Nationale de la Jeunesse*), organised with participants from

associations, NGOs, political parties, young members of parliament, and international partners and organisations (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in Tunisia, 2018[41]). Another national dialogue was organised in January 2019 by the National Observatory for Youth (*Observatoire Nationale de la Jeunesse, ONJ*) (OECD, 2021[13]).

Following the adoption of its 2011 Constitution, the Moroccan government organised national consultations in 2012 with young people in the formulation of the National Integrated Strategy on Youth (*Stratégie Nationale Intégrée de la Jeunesse, SNIJ*). Although the National Integrated Strategy on Youth and its action plan are today suspended, the national consultations laid the foundation for and informed the work on the National Integrated Policy on Youth (*Politique Nationale Intégrée de la Jeunesse, PNIJ*) (OECD, 2021[33]).

In Jordan, young people were involved in the elaboration of the National Youth Strategy 2019-2025 through "tick-the-box" opinion polls and focus groups meetings in 2017 on the main thematic pillars of the strategy. (OECD, 2021[12]).

In Qatar, youth stakeholders were reportedly involved in the formulation of the Cultural Enrichment and Sports Excellence Strategy 2018-2022 through workshops, focus groups and coordination meetings. In 2021, the Ministry of Culture and Sports started to work on a Qatar National Youth Document and an online youth survey was conducted involving young people on the topic of health, education, work, social media, full and active participation, and environment (Ministry of Culture and Sports in Qatar, 2021[38]).

In Mauritania, national and regional consultation days were organised to consult youth organisations and non-organised young people for the elaboration of the National Strategy on Youth, Sports and Leisure 2015-2020 (*Strategie Nationale de la Jeunesse, Sports et Loisirs 2015-2020*).

Targeted efforts to involve young people in vulnerable circumstances

Young people in vulnerable circumstances, such as those living in poor households, remote conditions and other circumstances that put them at higher risk of exclusion, should receive particular attention to avoid that inequalities at young age compound over their life cycle (OECD, 2021[12]). For example, following consultations with young people with disabilities, Greece set specific objectives and monitoring indicators for this group within its Youth '17-'27: Strategic Framework for the Empowerment of Youth (Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs in Greece, 2018[61]). However, findings from across OECD countries indicate that a systematic approach to involving young people at risk of social and economic exclusion is often lacking. While 84% of NYS across OECD countries address the social inclusion of vulnerable groups as a topic, only one-third of countries conducted separate consultations with groups considered vulnerable and marginalised groups (OECD, 2020[1]).

Across the MENA administrations covered in this report, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, the Palestinian Authority, Qatar, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates report to have included young people from vulnerable circumstances in the formulation of their national youth strategy such as young women, young people from rural areas, youth lacking basic education, and young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). Tunisia set an interesting example by involving young prisoners. Following the inclusion of young people in vulnerable circumstances in the formulation of a national youth strategy, governments should ensure a systematic approach is in place to further involve young people.

The channels used to involve young people in vulnerable circumstances varies widely. Qatar reports to have organised specific focus groups and workshops in youth centres, as well as online surveys. In the United Arab Emirates, some of the Youth Circles to inform the National Youth Agenda 2016-21 were targeted at including young women, young people from rural backgrounds, youth from religious or ethnic minorities and young people with disabilities. The Palestinian Authority reports to have run workshops with young refugees in Lebanon as well as workshops targeted to young people from "Kaabneh", a Bedouin

tribe. In Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania and Tunisia marginalised groups responded to surveys and participated discussion fora conducted for consulting youth more broadly.

Limited resources put implementation at risk

The effective implementation of a NYS relies on adequate financial and human resources. Given the cross-sectoral nature of youth policy and that resources will need to be mobilised within and across different ministries, a coordinated approach is critical. Yet, across OECD countries with a strategy in place, only 17 of 25 are underpinned by dedicated funding (OECD, 2020[1]).

In the MENA region, available evidence from the OECD Youth Governance Survey suggest that the lack or absence of sufficient funding to implement the NYS is a common challenge across almost all public administrations. For instance, Lebanon has not allocated dedicated resources for the implementation of the national youth strategy. In Mauritania, the implementation of the youth strategy will be financed primarily by the government entity in charge of youth affairs, however, the strategy itself does not clarify the resources that will be allocated for this purpose. Where a dedicated budget has been allocated, such as in the Palestinian Authority (30,000 USD), limited funding poses a challenge. In Qatar, government authorities expected that 1,200,000 Qatari Riyal (around 329,580 USD as of May 2022) would be dedicated to the implementation of the Cultural Enrichment and Sports Excellence Strategy 2018-2022.

In Jordan, 500,000 Jordanian Dinar (around 705,228 USD as of May 2022) were allocated as part of the budget of the Ministry of Youth for strategy implementation. The ministry self-identified the lack of adequate financial resources as a key challenge in a SWOT analysis that accompanies its strategy. At least eight line ministries in Jordan are mentioned as implementation partners or leads within the national youth strategy however, it is unclear if they have mobilised their own financial resources to implement these commitments (Ministry of Youth in Jordan, 2019[25]).

In Jordan and many governments across the region, sustainable funding for the implementation of the NYS is a key concern, even more so in the absence of support provided by national and international partners to cover funding gaps (Ministry of Youth in Jordan, 2019[25]). Moreover, information about the public resources allocated to the implementation of youth strategies and youth policy more generally is not easily accessible. This is a common challenge across the OECD, with such information not being available in 11 out of 17 countries responding to the OECD survey.

Transparency and accessibility of national youth strategies remain limited

Strategies need to be transparent and easily accessible to governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to facilitate coordination, allow for the exercise of public scrutiny and hence strengthen accountability. Transparency and accessibility are also important principles to guide public communication efforts by governments about implementation progress and opportunities for young people and their organisations to contribute to it.

All OECD countries that have a NYS in place make it available online (OECD, 2020[1]). This is the case for most MENA administrations too. For instance, the strategies of Jordan[11], Lebanon,[12] the Palestinian Authority[13] and the United Arab Emirates are available online.[14] At the same time, , in some cases, information about the roles and responsibilities within the entity in charge of youth affairs as well as other stakeholders in implementing them is less readily available online or not frequently updated.

Overall, information related to implementation progress and monitoring results is scarce. Among OECD countries with a NYS, 88% publish monitoring and evaluation reports and results online (OECD, 2020[1]), in particular via the ministry/government website (60%). However, only 6% of the ministries in OECD countries report using social media to disseminate such information, which appears to be a missed opportunity given that young people are very active on these platforms (OECD, 2020[1]).

Across the MENA region, only few administrations intend to publish the results of their monitoring and evaluation activities according to the survey results. This does not only present a risk to the transparency and accountability of youth strategies, it also risks undermining efforts to rebuild and retain a stronger relationship between public institutions and young people (OECD, 2020[1]).

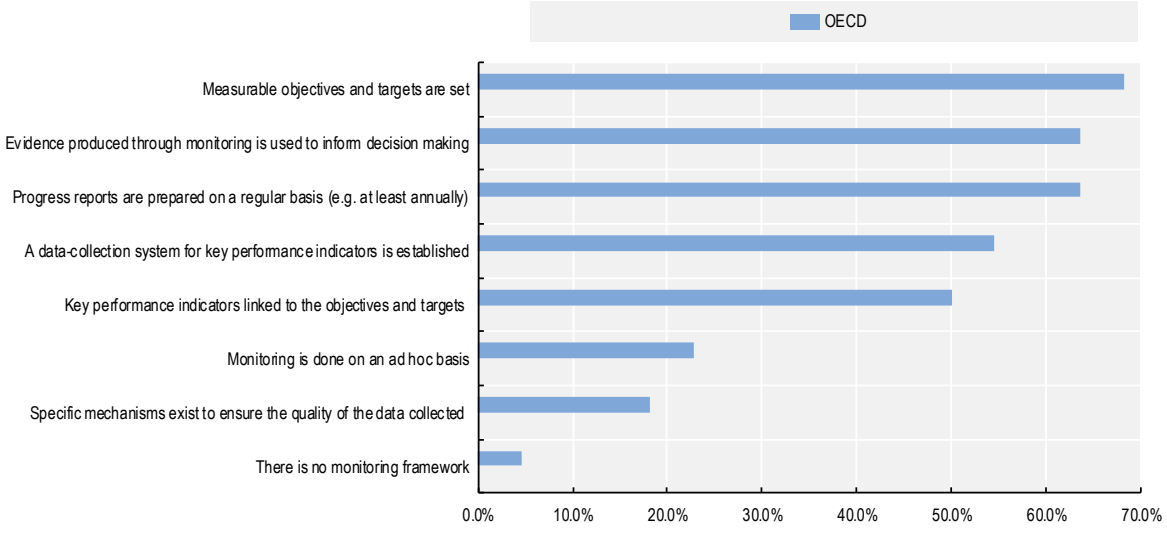
Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are oftentimes lacking

The systematic monitoring of the implementation of NYS and the evaluation of their outputs, outcomes and impact contributes to ensuring that they are responsive to young people's needs and changing circumstances, and ultimately deliver value for money. For instance, in the event of an external shock, such as the COVID-19 crisis, an evaluation of the impact so far and new measures to be taken in light of the next context, can be instrumental to increase the responsiveness of programmes and the legitimacy for the use of public resources.

To put in place an effective monitoring and evaluation framework, policy makers should set measurable targets and objectives, identify key performance indicators (KPIs) linked to targets and objectives, and establish a system to collect and share data among all relevant stakeholders involved. The system should be underpinned by adequate financial capacities and run by officials with the right skills set and competencies.

Figure 2.4 illustrates various mechanisms put in place by OECD countries to monitor and evaluate their national youth strategies. In OECD countries, around two-thirds of national youth strategies set measurable objectives and targets, as well as mandate the preparation of periodic progress reports (e.g. at least annually) to feed information from the monitoring and evaluation exercise into the policymaking cycle. One in two national youth strategies identifies KPIs linked to objectives and targets and is embedded into a data-collection system to track progress. On the other hand, one in four national youth strategies is monitored and evaluated on an ad hoc basis and only 8% have specific mechanisms in place to ensure the quality of evidence (OECD, 2020[1]).

Figure 2.4. Monitoring and evaluation of national youth strategies, OECD countries



Note: OECD refers to 22 OECD member countries.
Source: (OECD, 2020[1])

Only a few administrations in the MENA region report to monitor and evaluate their youth strategies.

In Jordan, each project within the National Youth Strategy 2019-25 is linked to a strategic, sectorial and national objective and theme. It is also linked to key performance indicators, mostly at the level of outputs (e.g. number of trainings), and a corresponding implementation period. According to the Ministry of Youth, while a detailed implementation report was expected to be prepared for 2020, none of the implementing partners had submitted their reports as of May 2021 due to the COVID-19 crisis (OECD, 2021[12]).

As of 2022, only Mauritania, the Palestinian Authority and the United Arab Emirates appear to have evaluated the implementation of their national youth strategies. In Mauritania, the implementation of the National Strategy on Youth, Sports and Leisure (*Strategie Nationale de la Jeunesse, Sports et Loisirs*) was evaluated against indicators listed in the Operational Action Plan, which are linked to the strategy's objectives. This evaluation also informed and fed into Mauritania's forthcoming new strategy, which has adapted the monitoring and evaluation plan. In the Palestinian Authority, the mid-term review of the NYS informed the decision to extend the NYS to 2023 and programmatic changes in response to the COVID-19 crisis. In the United Arab Emirates, an internal evaluation of the latest National Youth Agenda is reported to inform the elaboration of the new NYS.

In Qatar, a higher committee on supervision and follow-up was assigned the responsibility of monitoring and evaluating the activities under the Cultural Enrichment and Sports Excellence Strategy 2018-2022 (CSSS), including through intermediary and final evaluations.

Monitoring and evaluation activities can benefit from the inputs of a number of stakeholders, including other line ministries, sub-national authorities, independent state institutions (e.g. independent commissions, Supreme Audit Institutions, Ombudsperson), the legislature and young people. Enabling stakeholders to monitor and evaluate the NYS increases its transparency and accountability and can be an important driver of young people's satisfaction with public policy and service delivery (OECD, 2020[1]). Box 2.6 illustrates approaches adopted by selected OECD countries to involve independent institutions, parliament and young people in monitoring and evaluation efforts.

Box 2.6. Involving stakeholders in monitoring and evaluating youth policy and programmes in OECD countries

Slovak Republic

In the Slovak Republic, consultations at the national and the regional level with the participation of young people, public officials and non-governmental organisations form the backbone of monitoring and evaluation activities, leading to the elaboration of mid-term and final "youth reports" on the progress and impact of the national youth strategy. M&E activities benefitted from the inputs of a variety of ministries, notably through the inter-ministerial working group on youth policy and the Committee for Children and Youth.

Finland

In Finland, the National Audit Office examined the results and effectiveness of youth workshops in 2013-2016, and the allocation of the resources and cost efficiency of youth work in 2014-2017.

Costa Rica

In Costa Rica, the results of the evaluation exercise are presented to the National Youth Assembly, which is tasked with approving the National Youth Strategy. The Assembly is composed of representatives of different civil society organisations, universities, political parties and ethnic groups and meets on a regular basis.

Source: (OECD, 2020[1]; Government of Finland, 2020[62]).

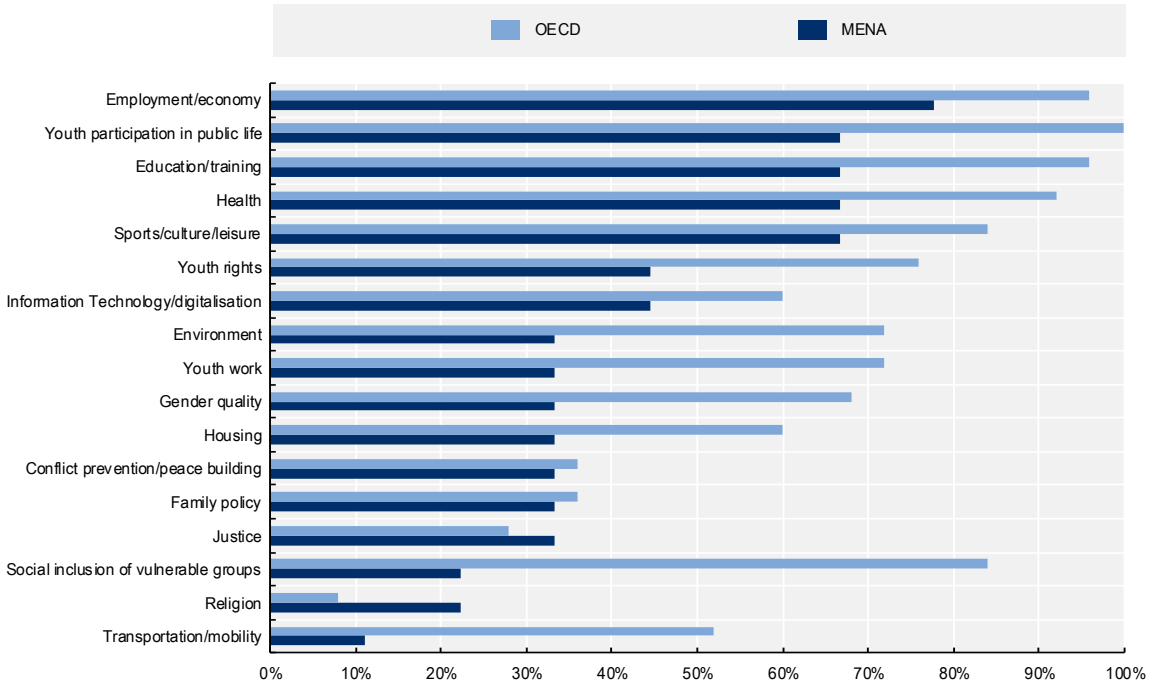
NYS are cross-sectoral and hence require strong coordination

Youth as a policy area cuts across numerous ministerial portfolios from education and sports to employment, health, housing, transportation, civic and political participation and many others. At the same time, outcomes in one area can be closely linked and influence the outcomes for young people in other areas. . For example, the level and quality of education is correlated with the job and future career and income prospects, and it can affect young people's awareness of health-related issues. Similarly, access to sport, leisure and public spaces dedicated to young people are important to form social connections as well as for their physical and mental health.

Although the thematic areas vary across governments, existing NYS in the MENA region cover similar topics as NYS adopted by OECD countries (see Figure 2.5). All OECD countries with a NYS in place cover "youth participation in public life", 96% feature commitments in the area of "employment/economy" and "education/training", 92% for "health" and 84% for the "social inclusion of vulnerable groups", and "sports/culture/leisure". In the MENA region, 78% feature specific measures and programmes in the area of "employment/economy" and 67% for "youth participation in public life", "education/training", "health" and "sports/culture/leisure". Compared to the strategies in OECD governments, those across MENA administrations are less vocal about the social inclusion of vulnerable groups, youth rights, transportation and mental health.

Interestingly, beyond an outline of thematic priorities and measures to address them, the strategies of Jordan, Mauritania and Qatar also point to the need to strengthen the governance arrangements for their successful implementation. For instance, the youth strategy in Jordan highlights the importance of cross-sector collaboration and the strategies of Qatar and Mauritania include objectives on strengthening institutional capacities for planning, monitoring and evaluation (Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5. Thematic areas addressed in national youth strategies



Note: OECD refers to 25 countries. MENA refers to Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Palestinian Authority, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and United Arab Emirates.
Source: OECD Youth Governance Survey.

The gender dimension remains largely unexplored

Gender gaps in education, employment and public services are still considerable in MENA economies, also among young people, as explored in Chapter 1. The 2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life (2016[45]) highlights that the impacts of government action should be assessed against the specific challenges faced by women and men from diverse backgrounds to ensure inclusive policy outcomes. NYS should hence be formulated, implemented, monitored and evaluated with such considerations in mind. To this end, national youth strategies can include explicit references to the objective of contributing to gender equality, gender-specific objectives and use gender-disaggregated data, among others (OECD, 2019[63]).

According to available information, 17 out of 25 OECD countries with a national youth strategy include gender equality as a thematic area. For instance, in Slovenia, the National Youth Programme (2013-2022) includes indicators to measure how many times the principle of non-discrimination on grounds of sex, maternity or parenthood was violated, such as the availability of equal opportunities for women in the labour market (Government of Slovenia, 2013[64]; OECD, 2018[52]). At the same time, around 30% of ministries in charge of youth across the OECD identify challenges in the collection of age-disaggregated data on gender equality (OECD, 2020[1]).

In youth policy, the National Youth Agenda of the United Arab Emirates prioritises action around tackling female unemployment and domestic violence (Government of the United Arab Emirates, 2016[42]). In the other national youth strategies, however, the gender dimension remains still largely unexplored. In Jordan, the National Youth Strategy 2019-25 acknowledges that young people are not a homogeneous group and calls for targeted programmes to meet their priorities and concerns but there are no specific objectives for young women (OECD, 2021[12]; Ministry of Youth in Jordan, 2019[25]). Similarly, while Lebanon, Mauritania, the Palestinian Authority, Qatar and Tunisia indicated that they held separate consultations with young women during the design stage, their national youth strategies do not include gender-specific measures, objectives, or performance indicators. There remains thus a largely untapped potential to leverage national youth strategies to reduce the gender gap amongst young people across the MENA region.

Policy recommendations

This chapter discussed the importance of applying a whole-of-government approach in regards to youth policy in order to facilitate young people's transition to an autonomous life. National youth strategies can be a useful tool to ensure such an approach is adopted: this chapter has benchmarked national youth strategies of MENA administrations against the eight principles of the OECD Assessment Framework of National Youth Strategies.

At least seven public administrations in the MENA region have adopted national youth strategies to promote a cross-sectoral approach in support of young people. While national youth strategies have become more common, implementation challenges risk limiting their impact. There remains a need for more participatory approaches in policy design and implementation, strengthening administrative capacities in the lead public entity and providing sufficient funding to support their implementation at central and subnational levels.

To support the design and implementation of an integrated and cross-sectoral approach to youth policy, public administrations could consider:

- **clearly defining the responsibilities and mandates** of state and non-state stakeholders working with and for young people;

- **developing youth policy** that is evidence-based, transparent, participatory, inclusive and cross-sectoral, supported by political commitment, adequate resources, and effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms;
- **consider designing youth strategies** at the appropriate level(s) of administration that take a comprehensive and integrated approach to improving young people's social and economic outcomes, as well as their civic and public participation;
- **creating mechanisms for young people and youth-led organisations** to support the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of youth policy; and
- **systematically gathering data and indicators disaggregated by age, gender and all other relevant characteristics across all policy and service areas** to provide services and support to young people living in vulnerable and marginalised circumstances.

References

African Union (2006), *African Youth Charter*, https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/7789-treaty-0033_-_african_youth_charter_e.pdf (accessed on 6 October 2021). [43]

African Union Commission (2019), *List of countries which have signed, ratified/acceded to the African Youth Charter*, https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/7789-sl-AFRICAN%20YOUTH%20CHARTER.pdf (accessed on 2 December 2021). [71]

Agence Marocaine De Presse (2019), "Mr Talbi El Alami:La politique nationale intégrée de la jeunesse veut améliorer l'intégration sociétale des jeunes", https://www.maroc.ma/fr/actualites/mr-talbi-el-alamila-politique-nationale-integree-de-la-jeunesse-veut-ameliorer (accessed on 16 February 2022). [34]

Algérie Presse Service (2020), "Plan national de la jeunesse 2020-2024: installation de la commission interministérielle", *Algérie Presse Service*, https://www.aps.dz/sport/109744-plan-national-de-la-jeunesse-2020-2024-installation-de-la-commission-interministerielle-a-alger (accessed on 16 February 2022). [17]

Al-Wasat (2009), *An agreement to develop a "youth strategy" for the next 5 years*, http://www.alwasatnews.com/news/310986.html (accessed on 9 May 2022). [19]

Asharq Al-Awsat (2014), *A Supreme Council for the Implementation of the National Youth Strategy in Saudi Arabia*, https://aawsat.com/home/article/15889 (accessed on 9 May 2022). [40]

Boubakri, A. (2018), "Constitutional Reforms in MENA Countries in the Aftermath of the Arab Spring", *Taiwan Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 14, pp. 173-182, http://www.taiwandemocracy.org.tw/export/sites/tfd/files/publication/journal/173-182-Constitutional-Reforms-in-MENA-Countries.pdf. [8]

Brice-Mansenca, L. et al. (eds.) (2018), *DJEPVA Youth Barometer 2018*, INJEP Notes & reports/Study report, https://injep.fr/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/rapport-2018-15-Barometre-DJEPVA-2018.pdf (accessed on 16 December 2021). [59]

CESE (2018), *A new integrated national initiative for Moroccan youth*, http://www.cese.ma/media/2020/10/Initiative-nationale-pour-la-jeunesse.pdf (accessed on 12 November 2021). [72]

Constitute Project (2022), *Constitute*, https://www.constituteproject.org/ (accessed on 18 May 2022). [9]

Council of Europe (2018), *Self-assessment tool for youth policy*, Council of Europe, https://rm.coe.int/self-assessment-tool-for-youth-policy-english/16808d76c5 (accessed on 5 November 2021). [73]

Denstad, F. (2009), *Youth Policy manual - How to develop a national youth strategy*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47261809/YP_Manual_pub.pdf/7b17e1e6-e8b6-4041-902e-3b3ad0973c45 (accessed on 5 November 2021). [74]

European Commission (2017), *Youth Policy in Finland*, https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/finland/overview (accessed on 7 March 2022). [11]

European Youth Forum (2017), *A Toolkit on Quality Standards for Youth Policy*, European Youth Forum, Brussels, https://www.youthforum.org/sites/default/files/publication-pdfs/Toolkit_Quality_Standards.pdf (accessed on 5 November 2021). [75]

Government of Finland (2020), *Effectiveness of youth workshops, and resources and efficiency of outreach youth work*, https://www.vtv.fi/en/publications/effectiveness-of-youth-workshops-and-resources-and-efficiency-of-outreach-youth-work/ (accessed on 2 December 2021). [62]

Government of Slovenia (2013), *National Youth Programme (2013-2022)*, http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Slovenia_Youth_Programme_2013_2022.pdf (accessed on 24 November 2021). [64]

Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain (2022), *Government Plan and Government Forum*, https://www.bahrain.bh/wps/portal/!ut/p/a1/rZJfT8IwFMW_ynjY4-jdyv7g2ySIEkADomwvpNvaMrO1YxTQb28HicFEBBP71t7fac-5tyhGCxQLsss5UbkUpGj2sbe8fwTPdgJnGOA5hvDR6027fbAH4GogOgUA434D-E_-S9fxArhOD864Zz90tH48BgiD2-no-a4HMMCX9K8oRnEqVKVWKKJc7ipZK1IsqTChICLLBTcqwunGBF2k (accessed on 9 May 2022). [20]

Government of the Kingdom of Morocco (2017), *HM the King delivers a speech at the opening of the first session of the 2nd legislative year of the 10th legislature*, https://www.maroc.ma/fr/discours-royaux/sm-le-roi-prononce-un-discours-louverture-de-la-premiere-session-de-la-2-eme-annee (accessed on 7 December 2021). [57]

Government of the Palestinian Authority (2011), *Palestinian National Plan 2011-13*, https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Palestine_2011_Youth_Strategy.pdf (accessed on 8 December 2021). [35]

Government of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria (2021), *Government Action Plan for the Implementation of the Program from the President of the Republic*, http://www.apn.dz/fr/images/actualits_specials_3/plan-d-action-du-gouvernement-2021-fr.pdf (accessed on 13 January 2022). [18]

Government of the United Arab Emirates (2021), *National Youth Agenda and Strategy*, https://u.ae/en/about-the-uae/strategies-initiatives-and-awards/federal-governments-strategies-and-plans/uae-national-youth-agenda-and-strategy (accessed on 13 January 2022). [69]

Government of the United Arab Emirates (2021), *Youth*, https://u.ae/en/about-the-uae/the-uae-government/government-of-future/youth (accessed on 8 December 2021). [55]

Government of the United Arab Emirates (2016), *National Youth Agenda*, https://u.ae/en/about-the-uae/strategies-initiatives-and-awards/federal-governments-strategies-and-plans/uae-national-youth-agenda-and-strategy (accessed on 8 December 2021). [42]

Higher Council for Youth and Sports in the Palestinian Authority (2017), *National Youth Strategy 2017-2022*, http://hcys.ps/en/page/strategic-plan-17-22 (accessed on 14 January 2022). [54]

ILO (2019), *ILOSTAT Database*, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS?locations=ZQ-ZG-8S-ZJ-Z7-Z4 (accessed on 15 June 2021). [6]

Kuwait News Agency (2019), *Kuwait gov't dicuss Nat'l Youth Policy*, https://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2769929&language=en (accessed on 7 December 2021). [28]

Mahmoud, M. (2021), *The Arab Academy hosts the activities of the National Strategy Workshop for Youth and Youth*, Al Mal Newspaper, https://almalnews.com/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%B6%D9%8A%D9%81-%D9%81%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%88%D8%B1/ (accessed on 14 January 2022). [60]

Ministry of Culture and Sports in Qatar (2021), *The Ministry of Culture and Sports is working on drafting the Qatar National Youth Document*, https://www.moc.gov.qa/en/the-ministry-of-culture-and-sports-is-working-on-drafting-the-qatar-national-youth-document/ (accessed on 13 January 2022). [38]

Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics in Qatar (2018), *Qatar Second National Development Strategy 2018-2022*, Gulf Publishing and Printing Company, Doha, http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/qat181692E.pdf (accessed on 7 December 2021). [37]

Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs in Greece (2018), *Youth '17-'27: Strategic Framework for the Empowerment of Youth*, https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/50359073/Neolaia_Entipo_ENG_dig.pdf/6ee8b162-57df-a302-e394-9f58850f9fbf (accessed on 5 November 2021). [61]

Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in Tunisia (2018), *Sectoral Vision on Youth 2018-2020*, http://www.jeunesse.tn/livre1/mobile/index.html#p=1 (accessed on 7 December 2021). [41]

Ministry of Youth and Sports in Lebanon (2012), *Youth Policy in Lebanon*, http://www.minijes.gov.lb/getattachment/Ministry/YouthPolicy/Youth-Politics-in-Lebanon/Youth-Policy-in-Lebanon(English).pdf (accessed on 12 November 2021). [30]

Ministry of Youth and Sports in Lebanon (2012), *Youth Policy in Lebanon*, http://www.minijes.gov.lb/getattachment/Ministry/YouthPolicy/Youth-Politics-in-Lebanon/Youth-Policy-in-Lebanon(English).pdf (accessed on 7 December 2021). [68]

Ministry of Youth and Sports in Morocco (2014), *National Integrated Strategy on Youth*, http://www.mjs.gov.ma/sites/default/files/strategie-morocco.pdf (accessed on 16 December 2021). [32]

Ministry of Youth in Jordan (2019), *National Youth Strategy 2019-2025*, http://moy.gov.jo/sites/default/files/jordan_national_youth_strategy_2019-2025_english_compressed_1.pdf (accessed on 5 November 2021). [25]

Municipal Council of Gaia (2017), *Plano Municipal da(s) Juventude(s) de Gaia*, http://www.cm-gaia.pt/pt/cidade/juventude/plano-municipal-da-s-juventude-s-de-gaia/ (accessed on 2 November 2021). [16]

OECD (2022), *Delivering for youth: How governments can put young people at the centre of the recovery*, OECD Policy Responses to Coronavirus (COVID-19), OECD Publishing, Paris, https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/delivering-for-youth-how-governments-can-put-young-people-at-the-centre-of-the-recovery-92c9d060/ (accessed on 18 March 2022). [50]

OECD (2022), *Recommendation of the Council on Creating Better Opportunities for Young People*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0474 (accessed on 15 June 2022). [49]

OECD (2021), *Empowering Youth and Building Trust in Jordan*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/8b14d38f-en. [12]

OECD (2021), *Renforcer l'autonomie et la confiance des jeunes au Maroc*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/588c5c07-fr. [33]

OECD (2021), *Renforcer l'autonomie et la confiance des jeunes en Tunisie*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/122f7b9e-fr. [13]

OECD (2020), *Governance for Youth, Trust and Intergenerational Justice: Fit for All Generations?*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/c3e5cb8a-en. [1]

OECD (2020), *Policy Framework on Sound Public Governance: Baseline Features of Governments that Work Well*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/c03e01b3-en. [48]

OECD (2020), *Schooling disrupted, schooling re-thought: How the Covid-19 pandemic is changing education*, https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=133_133390-1rtuknc0hi&title=Schooling-disrupt-ed-schooling-rethought-How-the-Covid-19-pandem-ic-is-changing-e (accessed on 10 November 2021). [3]

OECD (2020), *Unemployment Rates, OECD - Updated: May 2020*, http://www.oecd.org/sdd/labour-stats/unemployment-rates-oecd-up-date-may-2020.htm (accessed on 10 November 2021). [5]

OECD (2020), *Youth and COVID-19: Response, recovery and resilience*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=134_134356-ud5kox3g26&title=Youth-and-COVID-19-Response-Recovery-and-Resilience. [2]

OECD (2019), *Fast Forward to Gender Equality: Mainstreaming, Implementation and Leadership*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/g2g9faa5-en. (accessed on 24 November 2021). [63]

OECD (2019), *Recommendation of the Council on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://www.oecd.org/gov/pcsd/recommendation-on-policy-coherence-for-sustainable-development-eng.pdf (accessed on 2 December 2021). [47]

OECD (2018), *Youth Stocktaking Report*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://www.oecd.org/gov/youth-stocktaking-report.pdf (accessed on 5 November 2021). [52]

OECD (2017), *Bridging the Gap: Inclusive Growth 2017 Update Report*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://www.oecd.org/inclusive-growth/Bridging_the_Gap.pdf (accessed on 15 February 2022). [58]

OECD (2017), *Recommendation of the Council on Open Government*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0438 (accessed on 2 December 2021). [44]

OECD (2016), *2015 OECD Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Public Life*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264252820-en. [45]

OECD (2015), *Recommendation of the Council on Budgetary Governance*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://www.oecd.org/gov/budgeting/Recommendation-of-the-Council-on-Budgetary-Governance.pdf (accessed on 2 December 2021). [46]

OECD (2014), *Centre Stage: Driving Better Policies from the Centre of Government*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://www.oecd.org/gov/Centre-Stage-Report.pdf (accessed on 12 November 2021). [70]

Prime Minister of Canada (2021), *Mandate Letters*, https://pm.gc.ca/en/mandate-letters (accessed on 4 January 2022). [51]

Prime Minister's Office in the Palestinian Authority (2021), *Sectoral Strategy for Youth 2021-2023*, http://www.palgov.ps/files/server/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%A8.pdf (accessed on 13 January 2022). [36]

République Tunisienne (2018), "Loi organique n° 2018-29 du 9 mai 2018, relative au Code des collectivités locales", *Journal Officiel de la République Tunisienne*, Vol. 39/15 May, http://www.collectiviteslocales.gov.tn/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Code_CL_Loi2018_29.pdf (accessed on 10 December 2021). [15]

République Tunisienne (2017), "Loi organique n°2017-7 modifiant et complétant la loi organique n°2014-16 relative aux élections et référendums", *Journal Officiel de la République Tunisienne*, Vol. 14, http://www.legislation.tn/sites/default/files/. [14]

République Tunisienne (2015), "Constitution de la République Tunisienne", *Journal Officiel de la République Tunisienne*, Vol. Numéro spécial, http://www.legislation.tn/sites/default/files/news/constitution-b-a-t.pdf. [10]

State Information Service of Egypt (2021), *Representatives Of Ministries And Agencies Participate In The Development Of The National Strategy For Youth And Youth*. [22]

State Information Service of Egypt (2020), *Six Years of Achievements..Youth Empowerment*, https://www.sis.gov.eg/Story/147741/Six-Years-of-Achievements..Youth-Empowerment?lang=en-us (accessed on 15 February 2022). [56]

State of Kuwait (2013), *National Framework for Youth Empowerment and Mainstreaming*, https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/KWT/National_Framework_for_Youth_Empowerment_and_Mainstreaming%20FINAL%20DRAFT.pdf (accessed on 7 December 2021). [26]

The Times Kuwait Report (2021), *Youth in Kuwait, hope of future*, https://www.timeskuwait.com/news/youth-in-kuwait-hope-of-future/ (accessed on 13 January 2022). [29]

UNDP (2017), *Arab Human Development Report 2016: Youth and Prospects for Human Development in a Changing Reality*, United Nations Publications, https://www.undp.org/content/dam/rbas/report/AHDR%20Reports/AHDR%202016/AHDR%20Final%202016/AHDR2016En.pdf. [7]

UNDP (2017), *Youth Empowerment in Kuwait*, https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/KWT/Youth%20Empowerment%20in%20Kuwait%20_%20PRODOC.pdf (accessed on 7 December 2021). [27]

UNDP (2013), *Supporting the development of a national youth strategy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, https://www.sa.undp.org/content/saudi_arabia/ar/home/operations/projects/human_development/71544.html (accessed on 9 May 2022). [39]

UNDP (2000), *Jordan Human Development Report 2000*, http://www.jo.undp.org/content/jordan/en/home/library/Human_Development/NHDR/2000.html (accessed on 5 November 2021). [53]

UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank (2021), *COVID-19 learning losses: rebuilding quality learning for all in the Middle East and North Africa*, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000380118?locale=en (accessed on 5 January 2022). [4]

UNFPA (2021), *Young people take part in developing the National Youth Strategy*, https://egypt.unfpa.org/en/news/young-people-take-part-developing-national-youth-strategy (accessed on 13 January 2022). [21]

UNFPA (2020), *Launch of the Iraq's National Adolescent and Youth Survey 2019's Results*, https://iraq.unfpa.org/en/video/launch-iraqs-national-adolescent-and-youth-survey-2019s-results (accessed on 5 November 2021). [23]

UNICEF (2021), *Joint Statement - UNICEF and UNFPA Launch of National Youth Vision*, https://www.unicef.org/iraq/press-releases/joint-statement-unicef-and-unfpa-launch-national-youth-vision (accessed on 5 November 2021). [24]

United Nations (2019), *Lisboa+21 Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes*, https://www.portugal.gov.pt/download-ficheiros/ficheiro.aspx?v=%3D%3DBAAAAB%2BLCAAAAAAABACzMDQ3BQDi5Mb3BAAAAA%3D%3D (accessed on 6 October 2021). [67]

United Nations (2014), *Baku Commitment to Youth Policies*, https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Baku-commitment.pdf (accessed on 6 October 2021). [65]

United Nations (1998), *Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes*, https://www.youthpolicy.org/library/wp-content/uploads/library/1998_Lisbon_Declaration_Eng.pdf (accessed on 6 October 2021). [66]

Youth Advocacy Process; Youth Forum for Youth Policies (2012), *The Youth Policy in Lebanon: Case Study*, https://www.youthpolicy.org/library/wp-content/uploads/library/2012_Case_Study_Youth_Policy_Lebanon_Eng.pdf (accessed on 12 November 2021). [31]

Notes

[1] The cited publication covers the following governments: Algeria, Djibouti, Tunisia, Morocco, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Palestinian Authority, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Yemen and Iran.

[2] Hyperlink of cited work: https://www.sis.gov.eg/Story/219532/%D9%85%D9%85%D8%AB%D9%84%D9%88-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%87%D9%8A%D8%A6%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%8A%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%83%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%AA%D8%B7%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%8A%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%A1?lang=ar

[3] Ditto.

[4] The Youth Forum for Youth Policy is comprised of youth organizations and youth wings in political parties. It was recognized by the Lebanese government in the Council of Ministers' decree 80/2007. The Youth Forum for Youth Policy operates in partnership with the Ministry of Youth & Sports (Youth Advocacy Process; Youth Forum for Youth Policies, 2012[31]).

[5] In Morocco, according to the Economic, Social and Environmental Council (CESE), the National Integrated Strategy on Youth (*Stratégie Nationale Intégrée de la Jeunesse*, SNIJ) was adopted by the Council of Government but was not adopted by the Council of Ministers, as provided for in article 9 of the Constitution, thus making it obsolete (CESE, 2018[72]).

[6] The "societal dialogue on youth affairs" brought together in 2016 more than 40,000 participants to discuss the main cross-cutting issues challenges facing Tunisian youth (OECD, 2021[13]). This dialogue brought together young people, but also families, teachers and representatives of youth-related professions, and was organized around two pillars: i) a dialogue, with the organization of forums to exchange on youth issues, ii) an opinion poll of 1,200 households on different themes related to youth (OECD, 2021[13]).

[7] Algeria has signed the African Youth Charter while Egypt, Libya, Mauritania and Tunisia have signed and ratified the African Youth Charter (African Union Commission, 2019[71]).

[8] These include the 1998 Lisbon Declaration (United Nations[66]), the 2014 Baku Commitment to Youth Policies (United Nations[65]), the 2019 Lisboa+21 Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes (United Nations[67]), and guidelines as well as practical tools developed by the Council of Europe (Denstad, 2009[74]; Council of Europe, 2018[73]), the European Youth Forum (2017[75]) and advocacy organisations, among others.

[9] The CoG is “the body of group of bodies that provide direct support and advice to Heads of Government and the Council of Minister, or Cabinet”. The CoG is mandated to ensure the consistency and prudency of government decisions and “to promote evidence-based, strategic and consistent policies” (OECD, 2014[70]).

[10] The policy areas represent the dimensions of the OECD well-being framework (current well-being). See https://www.oecd.org/statistics/measuring-well-being-and-progress.htm for additional information.

[11] In Jordan, the National Youth Strategy 2019-2025 is available on the website of the Ministry of Youth in Arabic and English and can be downloaded (Ministry of Youth in Jordan, 2019[25]).

[12] In Lebanon, the National Youth Policy is available on the website of the Ministry of Youth and Sports in Arabic and English and can be downloaded (Ministry of Youth and Sports in Lebanon, 2012[68]).

[13] The National Youth Strategy 2017-2022 of the Palestinian Authority is available on the website of the Higher Council for Youth and Sports in Arabic and English (Higher Council for Youth and Sports in the Palestinian Authority, 2017[54]) and the Sectoral Strategy for Youth 2021-2023 is available on the website of the Prime Minister’s Office in Arabic and can be downloaded (Prime Minister's Office in the Palestinian Authority, 2021[36]).

[14] In the United Arab Emirates, the National Youth Agenda is available on the United Arab Emirates’ Government Portal website in English and can be downloaded (Government of the United Arab Emirates, 2021[69]).

3 Ensuring public administrations deliver targeted policies and services for young people

This chapter analyses the formal organisation of youth affairs across public administrations in the Middle East and North Africa with a focus on the administrative and technical capacities within the ministries responsible for youth affairs. It finds that limited institutional and administrative capacities of these entities present a key challenge for more integrated and inclusive measures targeting young people. It also points to co-ordination challenges between different ministries and with non-institutional stakeholders. To support efforts to mainstream young people's perspectives and needs across all policy areas, the chapter presents practices from selected OECD and MENA administrations in the collection and use of age-disaggregated data and the application of public management tools in rulemaking and public budgeting.

Chapter 2 discussed the efforts by public administrations across the MENA region to deliver more integrated youth policies and services by adopting national youth strategies. This chapter will analyse the administrative and technical capacities as well as co-ordination measures needed to implement these strategies.

It will analyse the formal organisation of youth affairs across public administrations in the MENA region, the resources dedicated to the lead ministry in charge of youth affairs to deliver on its mandate and the co-ordination mechanisms established between all relevant stakeholders. It also highlights innovative public management tools that MENA administrations could adopt to mainstream the perspectives of young people more systematically in policy making.

The organisation of youth affairs in government

Institutional arrangements to assign formal authority for youth affairs vary widely across both OECD governments and MENA administrations.

Across OECD countries, the youth portfolio is most commonly located within the Ministry of Education (8 of 32 countries), followed by a dedicated Ministry of Youth with combined portfolios (i.e. education, sports, family affairs, senior citizens, women and children) (7 of 32 countries) (OECD, 2020[1]). The Centre of Government (CoG)[1] leads the youth portfolio in Austria, Colombia, Japan and Italy. In Denmark, there is no single national authority responsible for youth affairs.

Combining the youth portfolio with other ones is the most common arrangement of youth affairs across MENA administrations as well (see Table 3.1), most commonly combining the “youth” and “sports” portfolios. This is the case in Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Qatar and Tunisia. Historically, the focus on “sport” has been dominant in many of these entities but with the renewed efforts to elaborate national youth strategies, new ministries, departments and units for youth policy and programming were created. For instance, in the United Arab Emirates, the youth portfolio was located within the Ministry of Community Development until the 1990s. In the early 2000s, the General Authority of Youth and Sports was established to be in charge of youth and sports affairs. In 2016, with increased high-level political commitment to the youth portfolio and the development of a national youth strategy, the first Minister of State for Youth Affairs was appointed, along with the establishment of a separate Ministry of Youth Affairs and its executive arm, the Federal Youth Authority. Since 2021, the youth portfolio was joined in the Ministry of Culture and Youth, maintaining a separate Minister of State for Youth Affairs who represents the portfolio in the Cabinet.

Moreover, a number of ministries other than those officially in charge of youth affairs might have important stakes and programmes in the field of youth policy. For instance, in Egypt, while the Ministry of Youth and Sports is responsible for elaborating and implementing the National Youth Strategy and for adopting youth policies and managing youth centres, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development has important advisory responsibilities and allocates financial resources to the other ministries based on the government's priorities. Furthermore, the Ministry benefits from the work of the National Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development, its training arm, which designs and delivers programmes and capacity-building for young people.

Table 3.1. Bodies with formal responsibility for youth affairs

Economy	Ministry	Entity within the Ministry
Algeria	**Ministry of Youth and Sports**	General Directorate for Youth Affairs
Bahrain	**Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs**	Youth Empowerment Directorate
Egypt	**Ministry of Youth and Sports**	Youth Directorate
Iraq	**Ministry of Youth and Sports**	Youth, Culture and Art Department
Jordan	**Ministry of Youth**	General Directorate for Youth Affairs
Kuwait	**Ministry of Youth Affairs Office**	N/A
Lebanon	**Ministry of Youth and Sports**	Youth Department
Mauritania	**Ministry of Culture, Youth, Sports and Relations with Parliament**	General Directorate for Youth Affairs
Morocco	**Ministry of Youth, Culture and Communication**	Directorate of Youth and Children and Women Affairs
Oman	**Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth**	General Directorate of Youth
Palestinian Authority	**Higher Council for Youth and Sports**	General Directorate for Youth Affairs
Qatar	**Ministry of Sports and Youth**	Directorate for Youth Affairs
Saudi Arabia	**Ministry of Communications and Information Technology**	N/A
Tunisia	**Ministry of Youth and Sports**	General Directorate for Youth
United Arab Emirates	**Ministry of Culture and Youth**	Federal Youth Authority; National Youth Agenda Department

Note: The principal entity responsible for youth policy and programme co-ordination in each economy is shown in **bold**.
Source: OECD elaboration based available information from survey replies, meetings with public officials and desk-based research; http://www.mjs.gov.dz/index.php/ar/ministere-ar/organisation-ar (Arabic), https://www.mys.gov.bh/ar/about/Pages/Organizational-Structure.aspx (Arabic), http://moy.gov.jo/?q=ar/node/23 (Arabic), http://www.minijes.gov.lb/Ministry/Hierarchy (Arabic), https://mjla.gov.om/legislation/decrees/details.aspx?Id=1237&type=L (Arabic), https://www.msy.gov.qa/index-en.php, http://www.jeunesse.tn/index.php/ar/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B8%D9%8A%D9%85.html (Arabic).

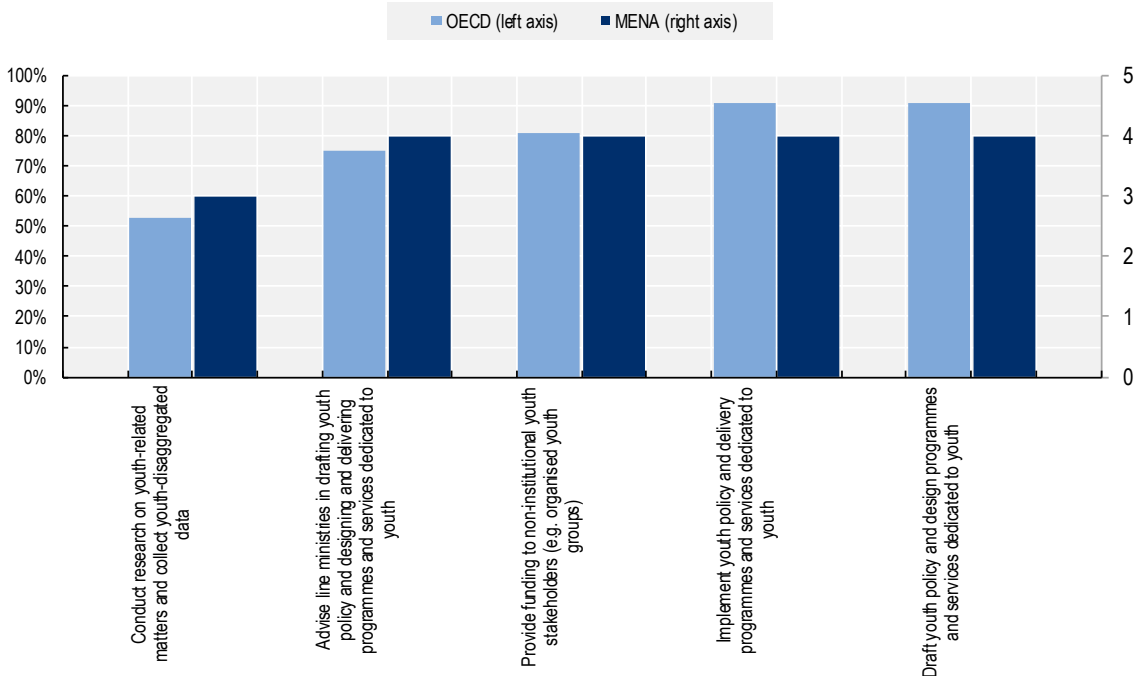
In most MENA administrations, there is a clear organisational and institutional distinction between portfolios in the cases in which the youth portfolio is combined with others in one ministry. For instance, in Algeria and Jordan, there are separate directorates dedicated to sports and youth affairs respectively. In Morocco, the Directorate of Youth, Childhood and Women's Affairs is in charge of youth affairs, while the Directorate of Sport is in charge of sports.

In terms of strategic planning, in Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia, the minister in charge of youth affairs is assisted and advised in their functions by a dedicated committee created within the ministry. In Jordan, the Committee for Planning, Co-ordination and Follow-up,[2] presided by the minister of youth, prepares and submits recommendations to the Minister on the plans, programmes and activities of the ministry, including in relation to draft laws and regulations and spending decisions, as well as in the preparation of the annual budget and job descriptions (OECD, 2021[2]). In Morocco, the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Communication is assisted and advised by a cabinet (OCDE, 2021[3]). In Tunisia, a cabinet of personal advisors (*collaborateurs personnels*) chosen by the minister of youth and sports assist the minister in the realisation of their mandate, and is responsible for internal (i.e. between specific services) and external co-ordination (i.e. with other ministries) (République Tunisienne, 2007[4]; OCDE, 2021[5]). In the United Arab Emirates, the Minister of State for Youth Affairs is supported by the Youth Agenda Department and the Federal Youth Authority. The Youth Agenda Department is responsible for co-ordination and mainstreaming of youth affairs and represents the Minister of Youth Affairs on all federal councils and strategic committees. The Federal Youth Authority is the executive arm for youth affairs, working directly on youth programmes and policies.

Despite differences in institutional set-up, government entities in charge of youth affairs often assume similar responsibilities across OECD governments and MENA administrations (see Figure 3.1). Evidence finds that nearly all entities in OECD governments (91%) and MENA administrations (4 out of 5 responding

entities) implement youth policy and deliver programmes and services dedicated to young people. They also draft youth policy and design programmes and services dedicated to youth (4 out of 5 MENA administrations and 91% of OECD governments) and they advise line ministries in drafting youth policy and designing and delivering programmes and services dedicated to youth (4/5 out of MENA administrations and 75% of OECD governments). These entities also often provide funding to non-institutional youth stakeholders (as happens in 4 out of 5 responding MENA administrations and in 81% of OECD governments). Only around half of all entities in OECD governments (53%) and MENA administrations (3 out of 5) conduct research on youth-related matters and collect youth-disaggregated data (OECD, 2020[1]).

Figure 3.1. Functions of public entities in charge of youth affairs



Note: Data on MENA represents information provided by Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia. Data on OECD represents information from 35 OECD countries.
Source: OECD Youth Governance Survey.

Human and financial resources dedicated to youth affairs

Public authorities need sufficient human and financial resources to develop, implement and monitor youth-responsive policies, programmes and services and to coordinate youth affairs more generally (OECD, 2018[6]). However, evidence collected across more than 40 countries demonstrates that financial and human resources at the government entity steering youth policy and programming are often weak (OECD, 2020[1]). Furthermore, in many countries around the world, up-to-date information about the resources allocated to youth programming is often scarce, making cross-country comparisons difficult and limiting government's accountability.

Investing in human resources is critical for youth-responsive policies

The development of civil servants is essential to develop better policies, co-create service delivery with citizens, commission service delivery with contracted suppliers, and collaborate with stakeholders in networked settings (OECD, 2017[7]). Ensuring that the civil service is fit-for-purpose, with the right skills and capabilities to work for and with young people in an increasingly complex world is thus crucial to deliver youth-responsive policy making and programming.

The lack of financial and qualified human resources is one of the main challenges identified in the OECD Youth Governance Survey by ministries of youth in Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, and Morocco. For instance, a SWOT Analysis conducted by the Ministry of Youth of Jordan as part of the Strategic and Institutional Development Strategy (2021-24) acknowledges the lack of qualified human resources as a weakness (OECD, 2021[2]). Another challenge underlined by the ministries is the absence of good practices in human resource (HR) management (e.g. recruitment and compensation practices, performance management and workforce planning). For instance, well-defined job descriptions and a performance system based on merits and adequate incentives can be instrumental to strengthen HR management.

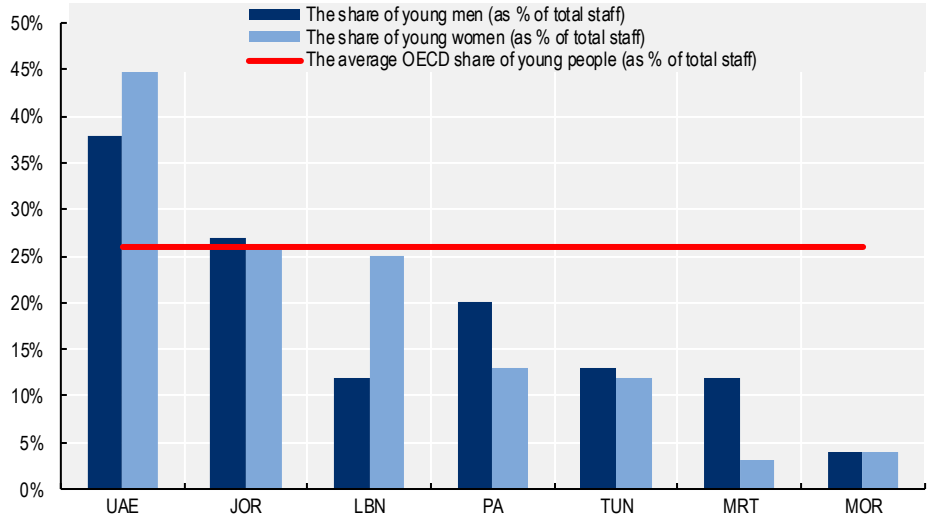
An effective and trusted public sector requires adequate capacities and capabilities. The OECD Recommendation on Public Service Leadership and Capability encourages countries to "develop the necessary skills and competencies by creating a learning culture and environment in the public service" including by setting incentives and establishing programmes that support staff's professional development (OECD, 2019[8]). In Jordan, for instance, the Youth Leadership Centre is in charge of running trainings for new staff in the Youth Directorates and youth centres. Available information suggests that the Centre has organised around five courses annually in recent years, which focus on life skills, internal regulations and the objectives of the National Youth Strategy 2019-25 (OECD, 2021[2]). Training programmes could also support the staff of entities in charge of youth affairs to develop skills in the field of policy and programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Similarly, in Egypt, the National Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development and the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development have been delivering the annual National Young Leaders Programme since 2015, training 1,500 young government employees for leadership positions within ministries.

The public sector has traditionally been one of the largest employers across the MENA region, with public sector employees representing 25% of total employment and public sector salaries representing 32% of total government spending across the region, which is higher than any other region in the world (Akram Malik and Kromann Kristensen, 2022[9]). By comparison, the public sector represented 18% of total employment across OECD countries in 2019 (OECD, 2021[10]). Relatively higher wages, social protection entitlements and lack of opportunities in the private sector have for long made the public sector a favoured choice for young people entering the labour market in MENA. For instance, among people aged 18-24 surveyed in 2021 across 17 MENA economies[3] by the annual ASDA'A BCW Arab Youth Survey, 42% of them highlighted they prefer a job in the public sector, although this preference has attenuated compared to 2019 (ASDA'A BCW, 2021[11]).

An inclusive public service workforce that represents the diversity of the society it serves, including young people, can benefit from new and diverse skill-sets, innovative ideas, and ultimately contribute to better policy outcomes and stronger citizens' trust in public institutions. The share of young people in ministries in charge of youth affairs varies considerably, from more than 80% in the United Arab Emirates to less than 10% in Morocco. In Jordan, while only 18% of the Ministry of Youth's workforce at central level were between the age of 18 and 34, the share rises to 43% in the youth centres at subnational level. In Lebanon, young people account for 37% of the total staff in the Ministry of Youth and Sports. In Morocco, only around 1 in 13 officials in the Ministry of Youth and Sports are 34 years old or younger (see Figure 3.2). Comparatively, as of 2019, 26% of employees across entities in charge of youth affairs in OECD countries were between the age of 18 and 34, on average (OECD, 2020[1]). A considerable gender gap in this age

group can be observed in Lebanon (in favour of women) and Mauritania (in favour of men). Chapter 4 further explores the participation and representation of young people in public and political life.

Figure 3.2. Share of young people (aged 18-34) working in the entity in charge of youth affairs in selected MENA administrations and OECD average, 2021 or latest available



Note: The table shows the share of young people aged between 18 and 34, working in the ministry in charge of youth affairs as a percentage of total staff, disaggregated by sex.
Source: (OECD, 2020[1]) and OECD calculations based on the replies received from ministries in charge of youth affairs in Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Tunisia and United Arab Emirates.

To promote the diversity of public sector workforce, governments can leverage transparent, open and merit-based processes for recruitment, selection and promotion of candidates (OECD, 2019[8]). The OECD report "Skills for a High Performing Civil Service" highlights development programmes introduced by various OECD member countries to attract and retain public sector talent. For example, in Australia, France and the United Kingdom, among others, partnerships between the civil service and universities offer skills development for talented university graduates to begin careers in the civil service and for high-potential civil servants to progress into leadership positions (OECD, 2017[12]).

Ministries of youth in the MENA region apply different approaches in the recruitment of new talent into the workforce. According to OECD survey results, Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority and the United Arab Emirates have put in place internship and training programmes for young people to join and develop their skills in the public sector. In Egypt, a 2017 presidential decree recommended that each Minister appoints up to four Associate Ministers under the age of 40, whose appointment can be renewed on a yearly basis following a review process: in 2020, a cabinet resolution increased the number of young Associate Ministers for each Minister/Prime Minister to 10. In the United Arab Emirates, a 2019 Cabinet decision made it mandatory for federal government entities to include young Emiratis under the age of 30 in the Boards of Directors of their respective entities for 2-3 year terms.

Governments can also proactively develop their workforce through longer-term, structured graduate programmes aimed at attracting, developing and retaining highly-qualified young talent through training, mentoring, job rotation and accelerated promotion tracks (OECD, 2020[1]). As of 2022, programmes for graduates to join the public sector exist in 42% of government entities in charge of youth affairs across

OECD countries (OECD, 2020[1]). Box 3.1 presents innovative efforts of OECD governments and MENA administrations to empower young people in the public administration, including in the context of the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.

Box 3.1. Empowering young people in the public administration

Australia: APS Graduate Programs

The APS Graduate Programs allow new graduates in Australia an entry-level pathway into the public sector. The graduate programs generally take 10 to 18 months to complete, with two to three rotations through different work areas, to give participants a range of skills, knowledge and experience at the start of their career. Participants normally follow face-to-face workshops, trainings and simulation activities. Successful completion of the programs can give participants further opportunities of career development within the public sector as well as study assistance for further training.

Portugal: Extraordinary Internship Program in Public Administration

The national COVID-19 response and recovery plan of Portugal includes an EUR 88 million (USD 92 million as of May 2022) provision to increase capacities within the public administration to address modern challenges and build a more resilient, green and digital future. As part of these efforts, the Extraordinary Internship Program in Public Administration offers 500 vacancies to engage young people in public service for up to 9 months. These vacancies are being made available across multiple government sectors, prioritising those with a majority of senior staff to ensure intergenerational knowledge is transferred and service models are rejuvenated.

United Arab Emirates: Youth Empowerment Model

In the United Arab Emirates, the government has elaborated tools to monitor the extent to which the management practices of federal entities are conducive to an environment in which young employees can thrive. In 2021, the Federal Youth Authority launched a Youth Empowerment Model to enable federal entities to assess and improve the way they engage with and empower young employees. The Model has five components: a framework, an assessment, an index, a maturity classification, and best-practice initiatives and innovative practices. The Youth Empowerment Framework defines six pillars of youth empowerment: voice, recognition, purpose, guidance, development and opportunity. It is complemented by a Youth Empowerment Assessment, in which 62 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) with supporting evidence are submitted by each federal entity, while 59 youth KPIs are collected via surveys shared with youth working in each federal entity. The Youth Empowerment Index and the Maturity Classification score federal entities, quantify their achieved level of youth empowerment, and benchmark their year-on-year progress in empowering youth. Finally, the Model recommends different best-practices initiatives that entities can implement to empower young people. Recently, the United Arab Emirates launched the Youth Empowerment Policy, which mandates federal entities to measure and report on youth empowerment annually.

Source: (OECD, 2020[1]; OECD, 2017[7]; OECD, 2022[13]; Federal Youth Authority in the United Arab Emirates, 2021[14])

Financial resources and their transparency remain low, but encouraging trends emerge

In terms of the budget allocated to the ministries in charge of youth affairs, survey results suggest that these resources constitute a small portion of the overall public budget (see Table 3.2), remaining at or significantly below 1% in most administrations with the exception of Tunisia (1.9% in 2020) (Government of Tunisia, 2019[15]), Morocco (2% in 2020) (OCDE, 2021[3]) and Jordan (2.7% in 2020) (General Budget

Department in Jordan, 2020[16]). For Bahrain and Lebanon, available information suggests that the resources dedicated to their respective Ministry of Youth and Sports were significantly below 0.1% of the total public budget in 2018 (Institut des Finances Basil Fuleihan - Lebanese Ministry of Finance, 2018[17]; Ministry of Finance and National Economy in Bahrain, 2018[18]). Similarly, across OECD countries for which information is available, the share allocated to the entity in charge of youth affairs makes up less than 1% of total public budget in most countries (OECD, 2020[1]). It must be noted that this comparison leaves aside the more significant budgets in ministries of (higher) education, training, employment, social affairs as well as health and others that deliver important programmes and services to young people.

In terms of budgetary allocations to youth ministries over time, available information suggests an increase in recent years in some MENA administrations. In Jordan, the budget allocated to the Ministry of Youth has increased by 43% over three years to reach JOD 33 million (around USD 46.5 million as of May 2022) in 2020, up from JOD 23 million (around USD 32.4 million as of May 2022) in 2017, which is equivalent to an increase in the share of the central government budget from 1.4% to 2.7% in the same period (General Budget Department in Jordan, 2020[16]). In Tunisia, the budget allocated to the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Professional Integration has increased by 16.5% over two years to reach TND 755 million (around USD 247.2 million as of May 2022) in 2020, up from TND 665 million (around USD 217.7 million as of May 2022) in 2018 or an increase in the share of the central government budget from 1.84% in 2018 to 1.93% in 2020 (Government of Tunisia, 2019[15]; OCDE, 2021[5]). In Morocco, reflecting its ambitions for reform and institutional capacity building, the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Communication's total expenditures have increased by nearly 60%, from less than MAD 2 billion (around USD 199.5 million as of May 2022) in 2016 to more than MAD 3 billion (around USD 299.2 million as of May 2022) in 2018. This increase appears to be largely explained by a substantial increase in capital expenditures and by the political reshuffle of 2019 that resulted in the integration of culture as a new portfolio of the Ministry. Furthermore, this increase corresponds to a significant increase in relation to overall government spending, from 0.78% in 2016 to almost 2% in 2020 (OCDE, 2021[3]). These rates are significantly higher than the respective allocations in Bahrain, Lebanon and the Palestinian Authority (see Table 3.2).

However, it is important to note that, as most entities in charge of youth affairs also host a second portfolio, only a share of these entities' budget is allocated specifically to youth policies and programming. For instance, in Tunisia, less than a quarter of the budget allocated to the Ministry of Youth and Sports was dedicated to its youth division in 2020 (equivalent to 0.4% of the total government budget) (Government of Tunisia, 2019[15]).[4] In Morocco, 56% of the budget allocated to the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Communication was dedicated to youth and sports together in 2020 (OCDE, 2021[3]).[5] In Jordan, 41% of the budget allocated to the Ministry of Youth was dedicated to its youth development programme in 2020 (General Budget Department in Jordan, 2020[16]).[6] Although only 16% of the 41% of the budget allocated to the Ministry of Youth was dedicated to non-infrastructure costs, the vast majority of it covering maintenance of the physical infrastructure owned by the ministry (OECD, 2021[2]). The availability of this information sets Jordan apart from most OECD governments and MENA administrations, as such comparative data is rarely publicly available (OECD, 2021[2]). In the United Arab Emirates, 17% of the budget of the Ministry of Culture and Youth is allocated to the youth portfolio.

Furthermore, proportional cross-government comparisons must be interpreted with caution as total government expenditures vary across governments. For instance, in the United Arab Emirates, the budget allocated to the Ministry of Culture and Youth may appear modest at 0.67% of the total government budget, but the absolute budget is significant at AED 389,743,000 (around 106,110,259 USD as of May 2022).

Transparent and updated information on ministries' budgets can promote accountability and, in turn, trust in government. For instance, as part of Jordan's progress in public finance management and fiscal transparency, the General Budget Department, within the Ministry of Finance, set up an online platform to exchange fiscal data across ministries and departments. It makes available online for the public the financial allocations and expenditures by the Ministry of Youth as per each governorate, portfolio and year (General Budget Department in Jordan, 2020[19]). The Ministry of Finance in Tunisia publishes an annual

report on the financial allocations and expenditures of the Ministry of Youth and Sports on its website (Ministry of Finance in Tunisia, 2020[20]).

Table 3.2. Share of public budget allocated to youth affairs across MENA, 2018-2021

Economy	Budget allocated to entity in charge of youth affairs (as % of total government budget)	Budget allocated to youth portfolio (as % of total budget of the entity in charge of youth affairs)
Bahrain (2018)	0.015%	N/A
Jordan (2020)	2.7%	41%
Lebanon (2018)	0.06%	N/A
Morocco (2020)	2%	16.8%
Palestinian Authority (2020)	0.19%	68.8%
Tunisia (2020)	1.9%	22%
United Arab Emirates (2021)	0.67%	17%

Note: The table shows the share of budget allocated to the public entities in charge of youth affairs as a percentage of the total public budget and the share of the budget allocated to young people in percentage of the entity's budget. In Morocco, the budget allocated to young people is for "youth, children and women."
Source: OECD calculations based on the replies received from the entities in charge of youth affairs of Jordan, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Tunisia and United Arab Emirates; and on available information on youth budget of the General Budget Department in Jordan (http://www.gbd.gov.jo/GBD/en/Budget/Ministries/general-budget-law-2018); the Ministry of Finance in Tunisia (http://www.finances.gov.tn/fr); Ministry of Youth and Sports in Tunisia (http://www.gbo.tn/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&Itemid=0&gid=109&orderby=dmdate_published&ascdesc=DESC&lang=fr) ;Jordan(https://jordan.gov.jo/wps/portal/Home/GovernmentEntities/Ministries/Ministry/Ministry%20of%20Youth?nameEntity=Ministry%20of%20Youth&entityType=ministry), Morocco (http://www.mjs.gov.ma/fr), Lebanon (http://www.databank.com.lb/docs/Citizens%20Budget%202018-MoF.pdf), Bahrain (https://www.mofne.gov.bh/Files/L1/Content/CI938-budget%20tables.pdf)

Ensuring coordinated approaches across stakeholders

Youth policy and services are designed and delivered by a variety of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, at the central and at the subnational level. Avoiding fragmentation and duplication, and promoting synergies, requires strong co-ordination mechanisms across different ministries and agencies (inter-ministerial or horizontal co-ordination) and across authorities at the central and sub-national levels of government (vertical co-ordination) as well as with non-governmental stakeholders.

Inter-ministerial co-ordination on youth affairs

Around half of all OECD countries created an institutionalised mechanism for inter-ministerial co-ordination of youth affairs. Box 3.2 illustrates practices from OECD countries, including inter-ministerial or inter-departmental co-ordination bodies, working groups and focal points (OECD, 2018[6]).

Box 3.2. Examples of horizontal co-ordination mechanisms for youth policy

Inter-ministerial or inter-departmental co-ordination bodies are composed of ministries with a responsibility to implement specific commitments of the national youth policy. The ministry with formal responsibility to coordinate youth affairs is always part of these structures and usually coordinates and prepares its meetings. For instance, Luxembourg set up an inter-department committee for this purpose. It is composed of representatives of the ministers of children and youth, children, children's rights, foreign affairs, local affairs, culture, cooperation and development, education, equal opportunities, family, justice, housing, police, employment, health and sports.

Working groups are often established on an ad hoc basis and assume responsibility for specific topics. In principle, only ministries with corresponding portfolios are involved in the respective thematic working group. Inter-ministerial co-ordination bodies may be complemented by working groups in which line ministries may take the lead in coordinating its activities. In the United States, an Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs supports coordinated federal activities in the field of youth.

Focal points may be appointed to oversee the work on youth affairs within line ministries and coordinate youth-related programming with the entity in charge of youth affairs. In Slovenia, each Ministry has a dedicated youth focal point to facilitate co-ordination with the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth (URSM) and other ministries. In Flanders, Belgium, a contact point for youth exists in all agencies and departments.

Source: (OECD, 2020[1])

In the MENA region, effective inter-ministerial co-ordination is one of the key challenges reported by ministries in charge of youth affairs. More specifically, the lack of institutional mechanisms and high turnover of leadership positions are seen as the most important barriers. Frequent leadership changes in the ministries of youth can make it more difficult to create trust and a culture of cooperation between different ministries over the long term.

Public administrations in the MENA region adopt different mechanisms for inter-ministerial co-ordination (see Table 3.3). Mauritania, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority and Tunisia have put in place an institutional coordinating body or committee. For instance, in Mauritania, the draft National Youth Strategy for 2020-2024 includes the structure of an Inter-ministerial Youth Committee. In Morocco, the Consultative Council for Youth and Associative Action (CCJAA) was created in 2017, serving as advisory body on youth issues, and tasked to ensure strong links between ministries, the community, civil society and the highest level of government.[7] It prepares quarterly updates and annual reports on the progress made to the inter-ministerial committee and provides youth-led advices and recommendations to the King and the government (OCDE, 2021[3]). Following the creation of an inter-ministerial co-ordination body, it is important to ensure its effectiveness through an inclusive membership, clear distribution of responsibilities and regular meetings.

In Jordan, no such co-ordination body exists yet. Instead, similar to practices that exist in Morocco and Tunisia, Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) are used to facilitate co-ordination with other ministries. In Tunisia, the Ministry of Youth and Sports has signed 10 memoranda of understanding, currently in force, among others with the Ministry of Justice.

Table 3.3. Approaches to inter-ministerial co-ordination across MENA administrations

Economy	Institution responsible for horizontal co-ordination	Main type of co-ordination mechanisms used
Jordan	Ministry of Youth	Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)
Lebanon	Ministry of Youth and Sports	No specific mechanism; Informal and ad hoc meetings
Mauritania	Ministry of Culture, Youth, Sports and Relations with Parliament	Institutional co-ordination bodies and committees
Morocco	Ministry of Youth, Culture and Communication	Memorandum of Understanding (MoU); Institutional co-ordination bodies and committees; Formal meetings
Tunisia	Ministry of Youth and Sports	Memorandum of Understanding (MoU); Institutional co-ordination bodies and committees; Formal meetings
United Arab Emirates	Ministry of Culture and Youth	Institutional coordinating bodies and committees; formal meetings

Note: The table shows the entities responsible for the horizontal co-ordination of youth affairs and the main co-ordination mechanisms used in selected MENA economies. Approaches for Mauritania refer to the steering committee elaborating the National Youth Strategy 2020-2024.
Source: OECD work based on the replies received from ministries in charge of youth affairs of Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia and United Arab Emirates.

In the United Arab Emirates, a consultative youth council was created to allow young people to make their voice heard by the government in 2017. The Emirates Youth Council (EYC) serves as an advisory body for the government and the Minister of State for Youth on national issues and engagement with governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. The EYC model has been adopted and replicated in thirteen ministries, where young employees of the respective ministry coordinate with other ministries and different stakeholders on topics related to young people and supervise the organisation of relevant activities and programmes (Federal Youth Authority in the United Arab Emirates, 2020[21]).

Practices from across OECD countries demonstrate that strong institutionalised links between the entity with formal responsibility for youth affairs and Centre of Government (CoG) institutions[8] can mobilise political buy-in to place young people's considerations at the centre of government action. In Canada, for instance, until 2019, the Prime Minister was also the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Youth. This appointment made youth affairs a part of the Prime Minister's portfolio and hence one of the priorities of the Centre of Government (OECD, 2021[2]). In Austria (Federal Chancellery), Colombia (Presidency of the Republic), Italy (Presidency of the Council of Ministers) and Japan (Cabinet Office), youth affairs continue to being coordinated by CoG institutions (OECD, 2020[1]). To facilitate inter-ministerial co-ordination, in France, the Director in the department in charge of youth affairs is also the Inter-Ministerial Delegate for Youth (see Box 3.3).

The location of the youth portfolio can also have an impact on its specific functions (e.g. monitoring and co-ordination roles), resources (e.g. budgets and human resources) and scope of influence (e.g. convening power) (OECD, 2020[1]). Indeed, across OECD countries, none of the respective units at the CoG in charge of youth affairs report that line ministries and subnational authorities do not show sufficient interest in co-coordinating with them. In contrast, 20% of the entities that are organised as ministries or departments perceive this as a challenge (OECD, 2020[1]).

Box 3.3. Inter-ministerial co-ordination in France

In France, the Director of the Youth, Non-formal Education and Voluntary Organisation Directorate (DJEPVA), located inside the Ministry of Education, is also the Inter-Ministerial Delegate for Youth. The Director chairs the meetings of the inter-ministerial committee for youth which is responsible for coordinating and building partnerships with other ministries, coordinating the implementation of youth-led projects, and facilitating young people's access to information and their rights.

Source: OECD work based on the official website of the Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports in France (Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports in France, 2021[22]).

Co-ordination between central and sub-national authorities

Effective co-ordination across different levels of government is needed to translate and the commitments in national youth strategies into programmes and services on the ground that help improve the situation of young people in their respective local contexts. The first interaction between young people and the public administration often takes place at the municipal level where important services and programmes are delivered in most countries.

Historically, most MENA economies are highly centralised, with local administration expenditure representing about 5% of GDP on average across the MENA region (Kherigi, 2019[23]), compared to about 16% of GDP on average across OECD countries (OECD, 2020[24]). However, in recent years, some MENA governments have engaged in a process of decentralisation (e.g. Jordan and Tunisia) or regionalisation (Morocco) with a view to reinforcing local institutional capacities and creating new elected bodies at the subnational level. These changes were, in part, prompted by the need to bring policies and services closer to people and to address regional disparities and lack of state services outside large cities (OECD, 2016[25]).

In Jordan, the 2015 Jordanian Decentralisation Law and the Municipality Law led to the establishment of elected councils in municipalities and governorates (OECD, 2017[26]). Furthermore, in 2017, the Ministry of Youth of Jordan started to give youth directors at the governorate level greater administrative and financial autonomy in an effort to facilitate procedures and approval processes (OECD, 2021[2]). In Morocco, the 2011 constitution introduced the "advanced regionalisation" reform process ("*régionalisation avancée*"), which aims to strengthen and ensure the autonomy of local authorities, particularly the regions and municipalities. This was followed by a new set up of the national institutional and administrative organisation by the 2015 organic laws,[9] which encourage the involvement of the 12 regions in the design and monitoring of the Regional Development Programme through participatory mechanisms. The laws also envisages the creation of an advisory body responsible for studying youth-related issues (OCDE, 2021[3]). In Tunisia, the 2014 Constitution states that the local level is principally responsible for local development, further specified with the adoption of Law No. 2018-29 in 2018 (République Tunisienne, 2018[27]), and that local authorities should adopt mechanisms of participatory democracy and adopt principles of open governance. Furthermore, in Tunisia, youth commissariats represent the Ministry of Youth and Sports in each of the 24 governorates and have administrative, financial, technical and educational responsibilities on local issues related to youth (OCDE, 2021[5]).

The transfer of competencies to subnational governments can encourage youth participation in decision-making and has already resulted in the creation of local youth councils in Morocco and Tunisia (OECD, 2019[28]). However, the reforms initiated by Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia still need to prove their positive impact for young people as considerable regional disparities persist. Moreover, decision making processes in public administrations across the MENA region continue to remain highly centralised while administrative

and technical capacities at the subnational level are generally weak. Qatar identifies the lack of interest among subnational stakeholders as the most important challenge, while Jordan, Mauritania, and Tunisia point to the challenge of insufficient capacities at subnational level. Moreover, in most public administrations across the region, there is no institutional mechanisms (e.g. joint committees) to facilitate co-ordination across the different levels of administration on youth affairs.

National ministries and local authorities also need to coordinate with a large number of institutions, often with varying statuses, working on youth-related aspects. In Tunisia, for instance, the National Youth Observatory (*Observatoire National de la Jeunesse*, ONJ) is national-level youth institution attached to the Ministry of Youth and Sports that contributes to the preparation and monitoring of youth policies through research and analysis (OCDE, 2021[5]). In the United Arab Emirates, the Cabinet established the Federal Youth Authority, which is headed by the Minister of State for Youth Affairs. The Authority is responsible for coordinating the activities and strategies of seven local youth councils to ensure their alignment with the National Youth Agenda and the United Arab Emirates' Centennial 2071 (Cabinet of the United Arab Emirates, 2018[29]; Federal Youth Authority in the United Arab Emirates, 2022[30]). Furthermore, youth councils and youth houses are important players at the local level: these are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

Public management tools to mainstream the perspectives of young people in policy making and service delivery

The previous sections underlined why it is important that youth policy and services are integrated and well-coordinated. In addition to national integrated strategies and institutionalised co-ordination measures, public management tools can help in embedding the perspectives of young people beyond narrowly defined policy portfolios such as education and employment. In the rule making process, through the allocation of public resources and via public procurement practices, governments can use public management tools to achieve broader societal outcomes, notably to improve the situation and opportunities of young people.

The role of disaggregated data for public management tools

As discussed in Chapter 2, the use of evidence in policymaking can improve the design, implementation and evaluation of policy making and service delivery (OECD, 2020[31]). In order to mainstream the needs of young people in policymaking, governments hence need to ensure that the evidence used to inform policymaking is disaggregated by age. At the same time, young people are a heterogeneous group who live in highly different circumstances, for instance depending on their socio-economic status, gender and geographic area among others. As inequalities tend to accumulate over the life cycle (OECD, 2017[32]), governments can make efforts to go beyond age-disaggregation of data and evidence and ensure that evidence is disaggregated by other characteristics as well (OECD, 2021[2]). Collecting and using quality disaggregated data requires human capacities and co-ordination with a number of stakeholders across policy areas: Chapter 2 discussed the efforts and challenges in the collection and use of disaggregated evidence to inform national youth strategies. Beyond NYS, collecting and using age-disaggregated data is necessary to ensure an effective use of the public management tools discussed below.

Anticipating the impact of new legislation on young people and age groups

The OECD Recommendation on Regulatory Policy and Governance (OECD, 2012[33]) recognises regulatory impact assessments (RIAs) as a key tool for evidence-based policymaking and the OECD Best Practice Principles on Regulatory Impact Assessment present guidance on the elements necessary to develop and sustain a well-functioning RIA system (OECD, 2020[34]). While 31 OECD countries used RIAs

to anticipate the impact of new legislation on specific social groups as of 2020, evidence shows that the use of impact assessments to anticipate outcomes for young people specifically remains limited. In 2020, 32% of OECD countries reported using general RIAs and providing specific information on the expected impact on young people. In turn, Austria, France, Germany and New Zealand apply ex ante "youth checks" or a similar tool to consider the impact of new laws and policies on young people more systematically (see Box 3.4).

Box 3.4. Youth checks in OECD countries

Established in 2013, **Austria** was the first country to apply a "youth check" at the national level. The youth check provides for an outcome oriented impact assessment on the effects of policy measures on young people aged 0-30. Along five steps (i.e. problem analysis, defining aims, defining measures, impact assessment and internal evaluation), it obliges all ministries to assess the expected effects of each legislative initiative including laws, ordinances, other legal frameworks and major projects, on children and youth.

In **Germany**, the youth check (*Jugendcheck*) acknowledges that the life situation and participation of present and coming youth generations should be considered in all political, legislative and administrative actions of the Federal Ministries. It is considered to be an instrument to support the implementation of the National Youth Strategy and a lens through which other relevant strategies (e.g. on demography and sustainability) should be regarded. Along 10-15 questions (e.g. Does the action increase or alter the participation of young people to social benefits?) and three central test criteria (e.g. access to resources and possibilities for youth to participate), it anticipates the expected impact of new legislation on young people aged 0-27.

Source: (Jugend für Europa, 2013[35]; OECD, 2020[1])

Some OECD countries analyse the impact of new laws and policies not only on young people but across different age groups. For example, upon the recommendation of the Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER), the Cabinet of the Netherlands has worked towards a "Generation Test" in order to generate evidence on the expected impact of policy and regulatory proposals across age groups and to consider the interests of young people more systematically in policy design. In the elaboration process, the Cabinet has collaborated with different youth groups, such as the SER Youth Platform (*Jongerenplatform*) and the Dutch National Youth Council, as well as planning agencies, the Council of State and the SER (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment in the Netherlands, 2020[36]; OECD, 2020[1]).

In 2020, a RIA policy guide was launched in Jordan, in cooperation with the SIGMA Programme,[10] who worked closely with government stakeholders in Jordan on the guide and offered technical assistance in its formulation. Based on an overview of good practices, the policy guide aims to build and strengthen the capacities of government institutions and decision-makers on the use and implementation of impact assessment instruments more generally (MENA FN, 2020[37]; OECD, 2021[2]).

Public budgeting for youth-responsive policy outcomes

The OECD Recommendation on Budgetary Governance characterises the public budget as the "central policy document of government, showing how annual and multi-annual objectives will be prioritised and achieved" (OECD, 2015[38]). Over the past years, many OECD countries have turned to public budgeting to achieve cross-cutting high-level priorities with the introduction of ''gender budgeting'' "green budgeting", "well-being budgeting" and "SDG budgeting", among others (Downes and Nicol, 2020[39]). In the MENA

region, mainstreaming high-level priorities in public budgeting can build on existing OECD guidance, such as OECD Gender Budgeting Framework (Downes and Nicol, 2020[39]).

The OECD Youth Stocktaking Report describes youth-sensitive budgeting as a way to ”integrate a clear youth perspective within the overall context of the budget process, through the use of special processes and analytical tools, with a view to promoting youth-responsive policies” (OECD, 2018[6]). For instance, among OECD countries, Canada considers youth-specific objectives in the framework of gender budgeting, including in its COVID-19 Economic Response Plan. In Spain, ministries are required to send a report to the State Secretariat for Budget Expenditures to analyse the childhood, youth and family impact of spending programmes in preparation of the General Budget. The Slovak Council for Budget Responsibility considers intergenerational fairness in connection with the long-term sustainability of public finances (OECD, 2020[1]).

In Jordan, efforts have been made towards integrating considerations of specific age cohorts in budgeting. With the support of the National Council for Family Affairs and UNICEF, the Government of Jordan implemented a child-friendly budgeting initiative to support the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Jordan. Beginning in 2009, a child-sensitive budget analysis was conducted for eight ministries and in the first phase of the project the Ministries of Health, Labour, Social Development, and Education were selected to pilot the study, introduce child budgeting into their budgets and develop Child Budget Engagement Strategies. The initiative also worked on projections of the medium-term expenditure frameworks to monitor future allocations to child and social protection programmes (OECD, 2021[2]).

In Morocco, the experience with gender-responsive budgeting provides important lessons for the use of public budgeting to generate positive outcomes for other social groups, including young people. In 2013, the Centre of Excellence for Gender Responsive Budgeting (CE-BSG) was created to mainstream Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) through training, coaching and the production of tools. In 2015, laws were passed making GRB mandatory for all ministries and making gender-responsive planning mandatory at the local level (OECD, 2019[40]; OCDE, 2021[3]).[11]

When public expenditure decisions are communicated in a transparent way, they can also be a powerful tool to restore citizens' trust in government (OECD, 2021[41]). A number of public administrations across the MENA region have adopted citizens budgets[12] annually, such as in Egypt[13] (since 2014), Jordan[14] (since 2011), Morocco[15] (since 2012), Tunisia[16] (since 2014), and the Palestinian Authority[17] (published in 2016). Furthermore, in Tunisia, performance-based budgeting (*Gestion du Budget par Objectifs, GBO*) was adopted across 18 ministries (85% of the budget) by 2016 with the objective of increasing transparency and improve government performance (OECD, 2017[42]). Several ministries also began developing a medium-term expenditures framework (MTEF), a key pillar of Tunisia's public financial management reform to increase accountability (OCDE, 2021[5]). In Jordan, as discussed above, the General Budget Department within the Ministry of Finance publishes on the website of the Ministry the general budget law approved by the parliament, detailed budget reports for all government units, and the Citizen Guide to the Budget issued annually since 2011 (OECD, 2021[2]). Morocco adopted a new Organic Finance Law (*Loi Organique relative à la loi de finances, LOLF*) in 2015, designing budgets around programmes for pilot ministries, and introduced a multi-annual financial programming (OCDE, 2021[3]).

Public administrations in the MENA region can take additional steps to improve budget transparency by taking proactive steps in making budget information more accessible to young people. For instance, some OECD countries have started to publish their national budgets in more user-friendly ways, for instance by using graphics in Slovenia or using interactive approaches in Australia and Ireland (OCDE, 2021[3]).

Civil-society organisations can also play an important role in promoting budget transparency. Initiatives have been undertaken by civil-society organisations in Lebanon and Tunisia to involve young people in monitoring public expenditures and government performance. In Lebanon, the Gherbal Initiative was founded in 2017 on the idea that sharing accessible data can reduce corruption. The website collects and

visualises budget data from state institutions in Lebanon to promote transparency and accountability and to encourage public discourse and political action (Gherbal Initiative, 2022[43]). In Tunisia, the youth-led civil society organisation Al Bawsala initiated the project "Marsad Budget" (Al Bawsala, 2016[44]), a website that aims at simplifying budget data and information to make it understandable for ordinary citizens and to involve them in public debates about it. The website offers easy access to budget and human resources data for the Presidency, the Parliament and the different ministries. It shows the public expenditures for each entity since 2012 and the allocation of resources for the entities in which performance-based budgeting has been introduced (OCDE, 2021[5]).

Engaging young people in deciding how public resources are allocated can increase their ownership in an exercise that is otherwise perceived as technical and disconnected from their lives. Participatory budgeting programmes allow citizens to make a choice about how budgets shall be allocated across specific projects or priority areas. However, across OECD countries, participatory budgeting has had little application at the national level, and mixed results at municipal levels (OECD, 2019[45]). Furthermore, there is a risk that sometimes organised groups may capture the process to serve their own interests (OECD, 2019[45]). As of 2019, OECD countries rely mainly on traditional participatory mechanisms, such as 25 countries that report using public hearings of a permanent committee, with digital tools still being under-utilised (OECD, 2019[45]).

The Netherlands gave an example of an innovative practice introduced in 2017, the "V-100". Organised by the Dutch Parliament, the "V-100" brings together 100 participants from society who scrutinise the annual budget reports and make suggestions to committees on potential questions for the responsible minister (OECD, 2019[45]). Such programmes can be particularly useful when young people from diverse backgrounds are involved throughout the design, selection and implementation of specific projects (see Box 3.5).

Box 3.5. How to involve young people in public budgeting?

In **Costa Rica**, a youth committee in each of the 82 cantons receives annual funding from the National Council of Young Persons to develop and implement activities and projects formulated by each committee on the basis of the priorities and objectives set by its young members.

In **Portugal**, a participatory budgeting initiative was undertaken at the national level in 2017. Young people aged 14-30 were invited to elaborate proposals in fields such as sport, social innovation, science education and environmental sustainability for a total amount of EUR 300,000. Furthermore, at the sub-national level, the Portuguese Municipality of Gaia began implementing in 2019 a three-year participatory budgeting initiative dedicated to young people aged 13-30 with a total budget of EUR 360,000 in 2021.[18]

Source: (OECD, 2020[1]; Municipal Council of Gaia, 2021[46])

Early experiences with youth participatory budgeting and budget monitoring and control have emerged in the MENA region, notably in Morocco and Tunisia (OCDE, 2021[3]). For instance, although still limited in number, participatory budgeting initiatives have been set up in recent years across municipalities of Morocco, including Chefchaouen, Larache, Tetouan and Tiznit.[19] Several activities, such as training cycles, participatory workshops to propose projects and a day of voting by citizens to prioritise them were organised. At the end of the projects, a public accountability hearing was organised in each of the municipalities to inform citizens of the results, and a charter of principles on participatory budgeting was voted by each municipal council (OCDE, 2021[3]; Open Edition Journals, 2021[47]).

In 2014 in Tunisia, citizens and especially young people in La Marsa, Menzel Bourguiba, Tozeur and Gabes were invited to participate in the allocation of 2% of the municipal budget (OECD, 2019[48]). La Marsa, a community of 110,000 residents, was the first municipality in Tunisia to institute a participatory budgeting programme, with a focus on public lighting. A series of public meetings were held in each of the five districts of the municipality to explain participatory budgeting, provide an overview of the city budget, and present technical information on lighting services delivery. In small groups, participants then discussed, presented and voted on possible projects and priorities to their peers. The projects and priorities were then presented and voted by districts' delegates in municipal assemblies. As a result, lighting was increased in high crime areas and near schools, as well as in places frequented by women and children. The district delegates were also involved during the implementation stage and maintained communication with their local communities on progress (OECD, 2020[49]; OECD, 2021[2]).

Leveraging public procurement for youth-sensitive outcomes

Accounting for 12% of GDP in OECD countries, public procurement is an important tool to support wider cultural, social, economic and environmental outcomes beyond the immediate purchase of goods and services (OECD, 2020[1]; OECD, n.d.[50]). The OECD Recommendation on Public Procurement also underlines the importance of pursuing complementary secondary policy objectives through public procurement in a balanced manner against the primary procurement objective (OECD, 2015[51]).

Although some MENA administrations have conduced reforms of their public procurement systems, such as in Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia (OECD, 2013[52]), there remains wide scope for MENA administrations to leverage public procurement to promote youth-sensitive outcomes.

In the context of youth policy, public procurement could be leveraged to support the participation of young entrepreneurs or youth-owned businesses in procurement processes and to assess the differentiated impacts of procurement projects on across age groups (OECD, 2020[1]). For example, the Ministry of Children of New Zealand has designed an innovative procurement process to create opportunities for young Māori providers to deliver a more effective community-based youth remand service (Government of New Zealand, 2020[53]). In Wales in the United Kingdom, the adoption of the Well-Being of Future Generations Act in 2015 enshrined in law the pursuit of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being as the central organising principle of the public service (OECD, 2020[1]). Beginning in 2019, the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner undertook an assessment of procurement practices and their impact on future generations, which culminated in the 2021 report "Procuring well-being in Wales" with recommendations for both the Welsh government and public bodies (Office of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, 2021[54]).

Policy recommendations

Limited institutional and administrative capacities in public entities in charge of youth affairs at national and sub-national levels make it difficult to implement more integrated and inclusive measures targeting young people. Moreover, co-ordination across different institutional and non- institutional stakeholders is a challenge. Finally, public management tools to mainstream the perspectives of young people across all policy areas, based on age-disaggregated evidence, are often absent or not fully integrated when strategic priorities are defined.

To mainstream the perspectives of young people from different backgrounds in policy making, public administrations could consider:

- **providing adequate human and financial resources to institutional stakeholders** at all levels to design and deliver youth policies, services and programmes;

- **establishing institutional mechanisms** and incentives for horizontal and vertical co-ordination to ensure the coherent delivery of youth policies, services and programmes;
- **mainstreaming the perspectives of young people and monitoring and evaluating policy outcomes on young people more systematically** by collecting and using age-disaggregated data and consider applying public management tools, including regulatory impact assessments and public budgeting tools; and
- **promoting the representation of young people in the public sector workforce**, as well as inter-generational learning, by systematically monitoring age diversity and inclusion in the public sector workforce; adopting measures to proactively attract, develop and retain young talent including through effective on-boarding opportunities and dedicated graduate programmes; and implementing strategies to harness the benefits of a multigenerational workforce.

References

Akram Malik, I. and J. Kromann Kristensen (2022), *In MENA, civil service performance matters more than ever*, Arab Voices, World Bank, Washington DC, https://blogs.worldbank.org/arabvoices/mena-civil-service-performance-matters-more-ever (accessed on 3 February 2022). [9]

Al Bawsala (2016), *Marsad Budget*, http://budget.marsad.tn/ar/ (accessed on 5 November 2021). [44]

ASDA'A BCW (2021), *Arab Youth Survey 2021: Hope for the Future*, ASDA'A BCW, https://arabyouthsurvey.com/wp-content/uploads/whitepaper/AYS-2021-WP_English-14-Oct-21-ABS-FINAL.pdf (accessed on 3 February 2022). [11]

Cabinet of the United Arab Emirates (2018), *UAE Cabinet approves Federal Youth Authority Board*, https://www.uaecabinet.ae/en/details/news/uae-cabinet-approves-federal-youth-authority-board (accessed on 13 December 2021). [29]

Downes, R. and S. Nicol (2020), "Designing and implementing gender budgeting – a path to action", *OECD Journal on Budgeting*, https://doi.org/10.1787/689198fa-en. [39]

Federal Youth Authority in the United Arab Emirates (2022), *About Federal Youth Authority*, Federal Youth Authority, https://youth.gov.ae/en/about (accessed on 8 February 2022). [30]

Federal Youth Authority in the United Arab Emirates (2021), *Youth Empowerment Model*, https://youth.gov.ae/en/youth-empowerment-model (accessed on 13 December 2021). [14]

Federal Youth Authority in the United Arab Emirates (2020), *Youth Councils*, https://councils.youth.gov.ae/en (accessed on 13 December 2021). [21]

General Budget Department in Jordan (2020), *3050- Ministry of Youth*, http://www.gbd.gov.jo/uploads/files/gbd/draft-min/2020/en/3050.pdf (accessed on 10 December 2021). [19]

General Budget Department in Jordan (2020), *Budget of Ministry of Youth*, http://www.gbd.gov.jo/uploads/files/gbd/draft-min/2020/en/3050.pdf (accessed on 9 December 2021). [16]

General Budget Department in Jordan (2020), *Citizen Guide to the Budget*, http://www.gbd.gov.jo/en/citizen-guid (accessed on 8 December 2021). [55]

Gherbal Initiative (2022), *Gherbal Initiative*, https://elgherbal.org/ (accessed on 3 February 2022). [43]

Government of New Zealand (2020), *Designing a procurement process to create opportunities for Māori providers and identify a partner*, https://www.procurement.govt.nz/broader-outcomes/creating-opportunities-case-study/ (accessed on 3 February 2022). [53]

Government of Tunisia (2019), *Loi n° 2019-78 du 23 décembre 2019, portant loi de finances pour l'année 2020*, Journal Officiel de la République Tunisienne, http://www.finances.gov.tn/sites/default/files/2020-02/Loi_finances_2020_fr.pdf (accessed on 10 December 2021). [15]

Institut des Finances Basil Fuleihan - Lebanese Ministry of Finance (2018), *Citizen Budget 2018*, http://www.databank.com.lb/docs/Citizens%20Budget%202018-MoF.pdf (accessed on 5 November 2021). [17]

Jugend für Europa (2013), *Models and instruments of Cross-sectorial Youth Policy: A comparative survey of 9 countries*, European Peer Learning on Youth Policy, https://www.jugendfuereuropa.de/downloads/4-20-3463/130930_JfE__MKP_Ergebnisse.pdf. [35]

Kherigi, I. (2019), *The Role of Decentralization in Tunisia's Transition to Democracy*, The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs, http://www.fletcherforum.org/home/2018/10/14/the-role-of-decentralization-in-tunisias-transition-to-democracy. [23]

MENA FN (2020), *Jordan- Gov't keen to upgrade public services — PM*, https://menafn.com/1100828067/Jordan-Govt-keen-to-upgrade-public-services-PM (accessed on 8 December 2021). [37]

MIFTAH (2021), *Fiscal Justice*, http://www.miftah.org/Publications2020.cfm?ThemeID=6 (accessed on 9 December 2021). [58]

Ministry of Economy and Finance in Morocco (2021), *Citizen's Budget*, https://www.finances.gov.ma/fr/Nos-metiers/Pages/Budget-citoyen.aspx (accessed on 9 December 2021). [59]

Ministry of Finance and National Economy in Bahrain (2018), *Recurrent Expenditure by Ministries & Government Agencies for The Fiscal Years 2017 & 2018*, https://www.mofne.gov.bh/Files/L1/Content/CI938-budget%20tables.pdf (accessed on 5 November 2021). [18]

Ministry of Finance in Egypt (2021), *Citizen's Budget*, https://www.mof.gov.eg/ar/archive/stateGeneralBudget/5fd9d770f0a7ba0007ee0ce9/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%AA%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A9 (accessed on 9 December 2021). [56]

Ministry of Finance in Tunisia (2021), *Ministry of Finance*, http://www.finances.gov.tn/fr (accessed on 9 December 2021). [57]

Ministry of Finance in Tunisia (2020), *State Budget for the Year 2021 - Ministry of Youth, Sports and Professional Integration*, http://www.finances.gov.tn/ (accessed on 5 November 2021). [20]

Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports in France (2021), *La direction de la jeunesse, de l'éducation populaire et de la vie associative (DJEPVA)*, https://www.jeunes.gouv.fr/La-direction-de-la-jeunesse-de-l (accessed on 13 December 2021). [22]

Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment in the Netherlands (2020), *Government response to SER Outlook 'High Expectations*, https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/detail?id=2020Z03085&did=2020D06517 (accessed on 4 February 2022). [36]

Municipal Council of Gaia (2021), *GOP+Jovem 2021*, https://www.cm-gaia.pt/pt/cidade/juventude/gop-jovem-2021/ (accessed on 21 December 2021). [46]

OCDE (2021), *Renforcer l'autonomie et la confiance des jeunes au Maroc*, Examens de l'OCDE sur la gouvernance publique, Éditions OCDE, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/588c5c07-fr. [3]

OCDE (2021), *Renforcer l'autonomie et la confiance des jeunes en Tunisie*, Examens de l'OCDE sur la gouvernance publique, Éditions OCDE, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/122f7b9e-fr. [5]

OECD (2022), *Delivering for youth: How governments can put young people at the centre of the recovery*, OECD Publishing, Paris. [13]

OECD (2021), *Empowering Youth and Building Trust in Jordan*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/8b14d38f-en. [2]

OECD (2021), *Government at a Glance 2021*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/1c258f55-en. [10]

OECD (2021), *Trust in Government*, https://www.oecd.org/gov/trust-in-government.htm (accessed on 8 December 2021). [41]

OECD (2020), *Governance for Youth, Trust and Intergenerational Justice: Fit for All Generations?*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/c3e5cb8a-en. [1]

OECD (2020), *OECD Regions and Cities at a Glance 2020*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/959d5ba0-en. [24]

OECD (2020), *Policy Framework on Sound Public Governance: Baseline Features of Governments that Work Well*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/c03e01b3-en. [31]

OECD (2020), *Regulatory Impact Assessment*, OECD Best Practice Principles for Regulatory Policy, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/7a9638cb-en. [34]

OECD (2020), *Supporting Open Government at the Local Level in Jordan*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://www.oecd.org/gov/open-government/supporting-open-government-at-the-local-level-in-jordan.pdf (accessed on 21 February 2022). [49]

OECD (2019), *Achievements, Impacts and Challenges of Implementing Gender Responsive Budgeting in Morocco*, Presentaton on July 18, 2019, Caserta, Italy. [40]

OECD (2019), *Budgeting and Public Expenditures in OECD Countries 2019*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264307957-en. [45]

OECD (2019), *Engaging and Empowering Youth in OECD Countries: A youthful summary of the 2018 Stocktaking Report*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://www.oecd.org/gov/engaging-and-empowering-youth-across-the-oecd.pdf (accessed on 21 February 2022). [48]

OECD (2019), *Recommendation of the Council on Public Service Leadership and Capability*, https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0445 (accessed on 13 December 2021). [8]

OECD (2019), *Youth Participation in Public Life: Local Youth Councils*, 7th Mediterranean university on youth and global citizenship, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://www.oecd.org/mena/governance/Summary-MEDUNI-2019.pdf (accessed on 20 December 2021). [28]

OECD (2018), *Youth Stocktaking Report*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://www.oecd.org/gov/youth-stocktaking-report.pdf (accessed on 5 November 2021). [6]

OECD (2017), *Bridging the Gap: Inclusive Growth 2017 Update Report*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://www.oecd.org/inclusive-growth/Bridging_the_Gap.pdf (accessed on 15 February 2022). [32]

OECD (2017), *Skills for a High Performing Civil Service*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264280724-en. [12]

OECD (2017), *Skills for a High Performing Civil Service*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264280724-en. [7]

OECD (2017), *Stocktaking Report: Tunisia*, https://www.oecd.org/mena/competitiveness/Stocktaking-Report-Tunisia-Compact-EN.pdf (accessed on 13 December 2021). [42]

OECD (2017), *Towards a New Partnership with Citizens: Jordan's Decentralisation Reform*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264275461-en. [26]

OECD (2016), *Youth in the MENA Region: How to Bring Them In*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264265721-en. [25]

OECD (2015), *Recommendation of the Council on Budgetary Governance*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://www.oecd.org/gov/budgeting/Recommendation-of-the-Council-on-Budgetary-Governance.pdf (accessed on 5 November 2021). [38]

OECD (2015), *Recommendation of the Council on Public Procurement*, https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0411 (accessed on 3 February 2022). [51]

OECD (2014), *Centre Stage: Driving Better Policies from the Centre of Government*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://www.oecd.org/gov/Centre-Stage-Report.pdf (accessed on 12 November 2021). [60]

OECD (2013), *Regulatory Reform in the Middle East and North Africa: Implementing Regulatory Policy Principles to Foster Inclusive Growth*, OECD Reviews of Regulatory Reform, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264204553-en. [52]

OECD (2012), *Recommendation of the Council on Regulatory Policy and Governance*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://www.oecd.org/gov/regulatory-policy/49990817.pdf. [33]

OECD (n.d.), *Public procurement*, https://www.oecd.org/gov/public-procurement/ (accessed on 8 February 2022). [50]

Office of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales (2021), *Procuring well-being in Wales*, https://www.futuregenerations.wales/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/ENG-Section-20-Procurement-Review.pdf (accessed on 7 May 2022). [54]

Open Edition Journals (2021), *Special file: The Year of the Maghreb: 60 years of struggle*, 24, https://doi.org/10.4000/anneemaghreb.7285. [47]

Petrie, M. and J. Shields (2010), "Producing a Citizens' Guide to the Budget: Why, What and How?", *OECD Journal on Budgeting*, https://doi.org/10.1787/budget-10-5km7gkwg2pjh. [61]

République Tunisienne (2018), *Loi organique n° 2018-29 du 9 mai 2018, relative au code des collectivités locales*, Journal Officiel de la République Tunisienne, http://www.collectiviteslocales.gov.tn/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Code_CL_Loi2018_29.pdf (accessed on 10 December 2021). [27]

République Tunisienne (2007), *Decree n° 2007-1124 of May 7, 2007, on the organization of the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Physical Education*, Journal Officiel de la République Tunisienne, http://www.iort.gov.tn/WD120AWP/WD120Awp.exe/CTX_6672-14-bwXCZpstjJ/AfficheTexteJuridiqueIntegral/SYNC_-716614264 (accessed on 10 December 2021). [4]

Notes

[1] The CoG is "the body of group of bodies that provide direct support and advice to Heads of Government and the Council of Minister, or Cabinet". The CoG is mandated to ensure the consistency and prudency of government decisions and "to promote evidence-based, strategic and consistent policies" (OECD, 2014[60]).

[2] Regulation No. (78) of 2016 on "the administrative organisation of the Ministry of Youth" defines its organisational structure. The Regulation also stipulates the creation of the Committee for Planning, Co-ordination and Follow-up, which assists and advises the Minister in his functions (OECD, 2021[2]).

[3] Survey responses were collected across Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, the Palestinian Authority, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

[4] In Tunisia, the Ministry of Youth and Sports' 2020 budget was divided into four themes: youth, sport, physical education, and steering and support.

[5] In Morocco, the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Communication's 2020 budget was divided, for the first time, into three performance projects concerning: communication, culture and youth and sports.

[6] In Jordan, the Ministry of Youth's 2020 budget was divided into three programmes: administration and supportive services, youth development and sport development.

[7] Bill No. 89-15 establishing the CCJAA was adopted by the House of Representatives in Morocco in 2017 and enacted in January 2018.

[8] The CoG is "the body of group of bodies that provide direct support and advice to Heads of Government and the Council of Minister, or Cabinet". The CoG is mandated to ensure the consistency and prudency of government decisions and "to promote evidence-based, strategic and consistent policies".

[9] Article 83 of Organic Law no. 111-14 on the Regions, Article 80 of Organic Law no. 112-14 on the Prefectures and Provinces, and Article 78 of Organic Law no. 113-14 on the Municipalities.

[10] SIGMA (Support for Improvement in Governance and Management) is a joint initiative of the OECD and the European Union.

[11] Organic Law No. 130-13 made Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) mandatory for all ministries and Organic Laws No. 111-12, No. 111-13 and No. 111-14 made gender-responsive planning mandatory at the local level.

[12] A citizens' budget is an online document prepared by the government designed to reach and be understood by a large a segment of the population in order to provide citizens with a simplified summary of the budget and enhance their participation, discussion and budget consultations (Petrie and Shields, 2010[61]).

[13] In Egypt, the Citizen's Budget "Your Right to Know Your Country's Budget" is available in Arabic on the Ministry of Finance website for every fiscal year from 2014/2015 (Ministry of Finance in Egypt, 2021[56]). At the time of writing, the most recent Citizen's Budget was for the 2021/2022 fiscal year.

[14] In Jordan, the Citizen Guide to the Budget has been published in Arabic by the General Budget Department annually since 2011. Since 2016, it has been incorporated with the Budget In-Brief document (General Budget Department in Jordan, 2020[55]). At the time of writing, the most recent Citizen Guide to the Budget was for the 2022 year.

[15] In Morocco, a Citizen's Budget has been published in Arabic and French by the Ministry of Economy and Finance annually since 2012 (Ministry of Economy and Finance in Morocco, 2021[59]). At the time of writing, the most recent Citizen's Budget was for the 2022 year.

[16] In Tunisia, the Citizen's Budget has been published annually since 2014 by the Ministry of Finance in French (Ministry of Finance in Tunisia, 2021[57]). At the time of writing, the most recent Citizen's Budget was for the 2022 year.

[17] In the Palestinian Authority, the Citizen's Budget is published in Arabic by The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy (MIFTAH). Starting in 2016, the Citizen's Budget was published annually for the Ministry of Social Development, followed by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in 2017 and the Ministry of Health in 2018. No Citizen's Budgets were published in 2019 and 2020. In 2021, the first Citizen's Budget for the General Budget was published and at the time of writing was the most recent Citizen's Budget for the General Budget (MIFTAH, 2021[58])

[18] The initiative falls under the framework of the GOP+Youth 2021 (*GOP+Jovem 2021, Gaia Orçamento Participativo)* project which focuses on three main areas: i) creativity, culture and sport; ii) environment and sustainability; iii) technology and entrepreneurship.

[19] These initiatives were implemented within the framework of a project on the "Promotion of the culture of accountability in the municipalities of the Tangier-Tetouan region" financed by the European Union, the Andalusian Fund of Municipalities for International Solidarity (FAMSI) and the Mediterranean Network of Medinas (RMM).

4 Participation and representation of young people and youth stakeholders in public and political life

Across the MENA region, young people's trust in government and public institutions is low. This chapter finds that the participation of young people in the policy cycle and their representation in state institutions are limited, with people under 40 years of age representing only 16% of members of parliament on average. At the same time, young people demonstrate agency by participating in the public debate through non-institutionalised channels and contributing to community life, via civil society organisations and through volunteering activities, both online and offline. This chapter provides an assessment of the legal, institutional and other governance barriers for young people to participate and access positions of public and political influence across the MENA region.

Across the MENA economies[1] surveyed in 2021 by the Arab Barometer, only 28% of young people aged 18-29 expressed trust in their government and public institutions on average, ranging from 47% in Libya, 45% in Jordan and 44% in Morocco, to 23% in Iraq, 19% in Algeria, 11% in Tunisia and 3% in Lebanon (Arab Barometer, 2021[1]). This compares to 47% of people aged 15-29 in OECD countries in 2021 (Gallup, 2021[2]). Among people aged 18-24 surveyed in 2021 across 17 MENA economies[2] by the annual ASDA'A BCW Arab Youth Survey, 49% think their public institutions have in place the right policies to address the issues most important to young people (ASDA'A BCW, 2021[3]). This varies significantly across the region. The COVID-19 crisis has further exacerbated this trend. Following an initial increase in trust levels in the early phase of the pandemic, most OECD countries have seen a decline over its course (Brezzi et al., 2021[4]). Similarly, more than one in three OECD-based youth organisations (38%) surveyed by the OECD in 2021 say their members' trust in government decreased since the start of the COVID-19 crisis, whereas only 16% report an increase (OECD, 2022[5]).

The ability and perception of having a say in politics (openness dimension) is one of eight dimensions the OECD Trust Framework has identified as shaping trust in government (Brezzi et al., 2021[4]). As recognised in the OECD Recommendation on Open Government, governments should make specific efforts "to reaching out to the most relevant, vulnerable, underrepresented, or marginalised groups in society" (OECD, 2017[6]). However, this chapter finds that young people across the MENA region experience barriers that hinder their participation in public and political life and their representation in public institutions (OECD, 2020[7]). For instance, people under 40 years of age represent only 16.4% of members of parliament on average in the MENA region (IPU, 2021[8]), compared with 22% in OECD countries (OECD, 2020[7]). At the same time, young people demonstrate agency in the public sphere by participating in the public debate through non-institutionalised channels and contributing to community life, via civil society and through volunteering activities and online. Ensuring that young people's views and priorities are taken into account is even more urgent as governments have been mobilising significant public resources in the recovery from COVID-19.

Expressing one's political voice is also essential to individual well-being (OECD, 2011[9]) and can help young people build skills, agency, and a sense of active citizenship. Furthermore, when citizens trust state institutions, they tend to comply voluntarily with rules to a greater extent and they are more likely to accept short-term costs in exchange of long-term, less tangible benefits (Murphy, 2004[10]). Moreover, by encouraging the participation of young people in political life, public decisions will be informed by the perspectives and views of those who will live with today's decisions for the longest time, which can contribute to policy outcomes that are more sustainable and responsive over the long term (OECD, 2020[7]). Promoting trust and strengthening the relationship between young people and public institutions is also crucial to ensure the readiness and resilience of societies to future shocks.

Young people have differing outlooks on the future. While some young people across the MENA region express their disappointment with the pace of change, others display optimism for the future. For instance, 60% of young people aged 18-24 from 17 MENA economies[3] surveyed in 2021 by the annual ASDA'A BCW Arab Youth Survey believe their best days lie ahead of them, although results vary significantly across the region (ASDA'A BCW, 2021[3]). At the same time, in some cases the public discourse about young people's participation to public and political life has been dominated by conceptions that they constitute a potential risk to stability rather than acknowledging that their ideas and perspectives can lead to positive change (Milton-Edwards, 2018[11]). This discourse can fail to acknowledge young people's positive contributions to their communities and stake in decisions that affect their present and future.

To support public administrations across the MENA region to bridge the gap between young people and their public institutions, this Chapter:

- analyses data and trends in youth participation and representation the decision-making process including an overview of youth-specific commitments in national open government actions plans;

- discusses governance challenges creating barriers for a more trustful relationship between young people and public institutions and ways to address them; and
- highlights the role and examples of youth work and youth volunteering in promoting resilient societies.

International legal frameworks to promote the participation of young people in public and political life and their endorsement in MENA

Laws and regulations shape young people's ability to participate in public and political life, most notably in the form of minimum age requirements to vote or run as a candidate in elections (OECD, 2020[7]). To balance between the objective to protect young people, on the one hand, and to empower them, on the other, careful consideration must be given to defining such thresholds. Otherwise, they may act as legal barriers for young people to participate.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) provides an international legal framework to guide the right for all to participate in public affairs (United Nations, 1966[12]). Nearly all (16 out of 19) MENA economies have ratified the ICCPR.[4] The right to participate in public and political life is also enshrined in several other treaties, such as in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) in Article 21, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in Article 5(c), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in Articles 7 and 8 and in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Article 29 (UNGA, 1948[13]; UNGA, 1965[14]; UNGA, 1979[15]; UNGA, 2007[16]).

The conventions mentioned above stipulate the right (1) to take part in public affairs; (2) to vote and be elected in general elections; and (3) to have access to public positions. They also oblige governments to uphold these rights without discrimination based on race, descent, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, birth, disability, nationality or status. The right of participation is also inextricably connected to an environment enabling citizen participation, such as the right to peaceful assembly and association, freedom of expression and opinion, and the right to education and information (OHCRH, 1996-2019[17]).

While age is not a category of potential discrimination in these treaties, Article 15 of the Convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC) affirms the right of participation in public and political life for every human being below the age of 18. All MENA economies have ratified the CRC (UNGA, 1989[18]).

The World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) (UNGA, 1996[19]), which was ratified by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in 1996, has served as basis for more recent initiatives to promote the rights and participation of young people, such as the 1998 Lisbon Declaration of Youth Policies and Programmes and the 2014 Baku Commitments to Youth Policies (World Conference of Ministers, 1998[20]; Office of the Secretary-General Envoy on Youth et al., 2014[21]). To acknowledge the role young people can play in building more resilient and peaceful societies, the UN Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security was adopted in 2016 (UNSC, 2016[22]). Besides sectoral approaches, the OECD Recommendation on Creating Better Opportunities for Young People provides adherents with policy guidance on whole-of-government strategies across five thematic pillars, including ways to strengthen young people's trust in government and their relationship with public institutions (OECD, 2022[23]).

At the regional level, the African Youth Charter recognises the right of every young person to participate in the public sphere (Article 11) and requires adherents, which include Egypt, Libya, Mauritania and Tunisia, to take active measures and implement strategies to empower young people and foster their participation in the public sphere (African Union, 2006[24]).

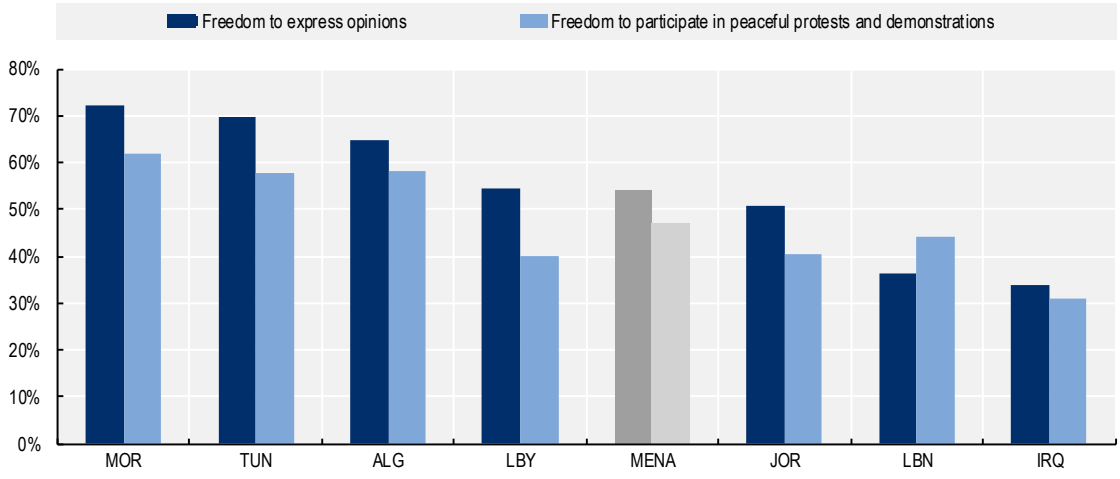
Creating an enabling environment and protecting civic space

The participation of young people in public and political life must be underpinned by an enabling environment and the protection of civic space, which is shaped by the legal, policy, institutional settings in place, and actual practices, and requires governments to take proactive action to countering negative trends, in addition to monitoring standards. This includes the ability for young people and youth organisations to access relevant and reliable information, express themselves freely and without fear of repercussions, and form associations as well as to engage in meaningful ways in open and frank debates about government policies, practices and spending. Research confirms that promoting civic freedoms can lead to better societal outcomes, for instance in terms of economic growth and human development (Hogg, 2018[25])

Snapshot on freedoms and liberties

In some parts of the MENA region, the environment for young people to participate in public and political life remains challenging. In seven MENA economies surveyed by Arab Barometer in 2021, young people aged 18-29 years-old report varied confidence in the protection of their civil liberties (Figure 4.1). The percentage of young citizens who say that their freedom to express opinions is guaranteed to a medium or great extent is 54%, an increase from 46% in 2018 but a decrease from 60% in 2016 (Arab Barometer, 2021[1]). Similarly, the percentage of young citizens who say that their freedom to participate in peaceful protests and demonstrations opinions is guaranteed to a medium or great extent is 47%, an increase from 39% in 2018 but a decrease from 49% in 2016 (Arab Barometer, 2021[1]).

Figure 4.1. Perception of freedom to express opinion and participate in peaceful protests among young people in MENA, 2021



Note: Showing % of "guaranteed to a great extent" and "guaranteed to a medium extent" in response to the survey questions "To what extent do you think that freedom to express opinions is guaranteed in your country?" and "To what extent do you think that freedom to participate in peaceful protests and demonstrations is guaranteed in your country?" from survey respondents aged up to 29 years from Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.
Source: Arab Barometer (2021). Arab Barometer Wave VI – Part 3, custom data acquired via https://www.arabbarometer.org/survey-data/data-analysis-tool/.

Media and digital rights and freedoms are increasingly recognised as important determinants for an enabling environment and civic space as digital tools have grown to become primary ways for young people

to inform and express themselves, communicate, and associate. Across the MENA economies[5] surveyed by the Arab Barometer in 2018, 60% of young people aged 18-29 year-old spent two or more hours per day on social media, compared to 37% among those aged 30-49 years-old and 25% among those aged 50+ years-old (Arab Barometer, 2018[26]). Social media is the primary source of news for 61% of young people across 17 MENA economies[6] surveyed by the annual ASDA'A BCW Arab Youth Survey in 2021, compared to television (43%), internet (34%) and newspapers (9%), which increases their likelihood of being exposed to misinformation (ASDA'A BCW, 2021[3]).

Fewer than one in ten (8.6%) young people ages 18-29 years reported they did not use the Internet daily across the MENA economies surveyed by the Arab Barometer in 2018, including from Kuwait (0%), to Lebanon (0.7%), to Jordan (3.6%), to the Palestinian Authority (5%), to Algeria (6.5%), to Morocco (7.2%), to Tunisia (9%), to Egypt (9.6%), to Iraq (10.6%), to Libya (11.8%) and to Yemen (23%) (Arab Barometer, 2018[26]). Indeed, the COVID-19 crisis has revealed significant digital divides among young people, which can be exacerbated by intersecting identities such as gender, education attainment, income level and rural/urban location, among others. Measures to ensure more inclusive access to electronic devices, digital skills, and connectivity and to safeguard online spaces for young people to express themselves are needed to address such divides (OECD, 2021[27]). As recognised in the OECD Recommendation on Open Government, participation should be inclusive, thus the need for governments to take the digital divide into consideration when creating an enabling environment for young people to participate in public and political life (OECD, 2017[6]).

Beyond the protection and promotion of basic rights, governments can actively shape an enabling environment by providing access to quality information and open government data.

Snapshot on transparency

Access to Information (ATI) legislation should facilitate public access to and encourage re-use of government-held data to increase transparency and accountability in policymaking and create opportunities for media, civil society and citizens to act as watchdogs of government action (OECD, 2016[28]). As of 2022, 37 out of 38 OECD countries have adopted an access to information law (OECD/UN ESCWA, 2021[29]). Driven by the demand of young people and in the context of their open government agendas, some MENA administrations have engaged in legal and institutional reforms to strengthen access to information systems (Table 4.1). So far, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen have enacted Access to Information legislation (OECD/UN ESCWA, 2021[29]) and Morocco and Tunisia introduced the right to access information in their new constitutions (OECD/UN ESCWA, 2021[29]). In Tunisia, the constitution "guarantees the right to information and the right of access to information and communication networks" in its Article 32 (OECD, 2021[30]). Tunisia's access to information law is ranked among the world's best, according to the Centre of Law and Democracy, among others due to the special institution, with a judiciary status, that has been created to enforce this right (OECD/UN ESCWA, 2021[29]).

Adopting ATI laws alone is not sufficient. Their effective implementation is needed to translate them into impactful change. The Center for Law and Democracy[7] has elaborated a worldwide Right To Information (RTI) rating[8] for ATI laws according to seven categories of indicators, on a scale of 0-150, namely: right of access, scope, requesting procedures, exceptions and refusals, appeals, sanctions and protections, and promotional measures (OECD/UN ESCWA, 2021[29]). However, the RTI ranking only evaluates the content of ATI laws, not their implementation or enforcement in practice. For instance, the ATI law in Yemen is ranked high, but it lacks implementation tools given the ongoing conflict. Tunisia's ATI law is the highest ranked in the MENA region. In Morocco, the ATI law is supported by a Right to Information (RTI) commission, which is linked to the Prime Minister's office and includes representatives from several CSOs. The COVID-19 crisis has encouraged governments to make fast progress in the area of e-government, open government data and digital services and thus constitutes an opportunity for governments to engage

in more innovative approaches with citizens, including in the context of implementing ATI laws (OECD/UN ESCWA, 2021[29]).

Table 4.1. Access to information laws in the Arab States and RTI rating

Country	Enshrined in Constitution	Enshrined in Law	Year of Law	Score by RTI Ranking
Jordan	Yes	Yes	2007	56
Lebanon	No	Yes	2017	70
Morocco	Yes	Yes	2018	73
Sudan	No	Yes	2015	64
Tunisia	Yes	Yes	2016	120
Yemen	No	Yes	2012	103

Note: RTI ranking is scored on a scale of 0-150.
Source: (OECD/UN ESCWA, 2021[29])

Snapshot on open data

Access to and use of open data can encourage young people to participate in public and political life and hold government accountable, as recognised by the OECD Recommendation on Open Government and the OECD Recommendation on Digital Government Strategies (OECD, 2014[31]; OECD, 2017[6]). Open data can increase transparency, help tackle corruption, ameliorate the allocation of public resources and generate economic returns (Box 4.1). Studies suggest that the added GDP value associated with open data fluctuates between roughly 0.4% and 1.6%, which can further increase by 0.5% when adopting a free access model (OECD, 2021[30]). Many MENA administrations have launched open data strategies to promote transparency and accountability of the public administration and sector, including the development of specific open data portals in Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, the Palestinian Authority, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates (OECD/UN ESCWA, 2021[29]).

The OECD Recommendation on Enhancing Access to and Sharing of Data outlines that open data arrangements refers to “non-discriminatory data access and sharing arrangements, where data is machine readable and can be accessed and shared, free of charge, and used by anyone for any purpose subject, at most, to requirements that preserve integrity, provenance, attribution, and openness” (OECD, 2021[32]). At the same time, data protection and privacy regulations should be upheld and complemented by an ethical handling of data. The OECD Digital Government Policy Framework, which builds on the provisions of the OECD Recommendation on Digital Government Strategies and the OECD Good Practice Principles for Data Ethics in the Public Sector, can support public officials in MENA administrations in the implementation of data ethics in digital government such that public integrity and trust are upheld (OECD, 2021[30]).

Box 4.1. Open data in Slovenia: "STOP the Bureaucracy"

The "STOP the Bureaucracy" online platform of the Slovenian Ministry of Public Administration provides users with an on-line one-stop-shop solution, where they receive information about ongoing government activities to streamline public services and procedures as well as create better legislation. The portal allows for systematic collection of proposals by citizens on how to reduce red tape and a monitoring function for the implementation of such proposals. This initiative is a response to the request by citizens to reduce the burden of administrative barriers arising from laws and their enforcement. Thanks to the portal, the ministry estimated that EUR 365 million (around USD 383 million as of May 2022) were saved between 2009 and 2015, following changes in regulations and simplification of procedures, counting for more than 30% of the perceived and measured administrative burden.

Source: (OECD, 2021[30]).

Snapshot on civic and citizenship education

Civic and citizenship education in schools and through extra-curricular activities is important for young people to understand their rights and duties, to learn how the political system works and to identify opportunities and acquire skills to engage in public and political life from an early age (OECD, 2011[9]).[9] The 2017 OECD Recommendation on Public Integrity acknowledges the importance of "carrying out, where appropriate, campaigns to promote civic education on public integrity, among individuals and particularly in schools" (OECD, 2017[33]). This resonates with findings from the OECD report *Education for Integrity: Teaching on anticorruption, values and the rule of law* (OECD, 2018[34]) that educating children and young people in the field of integrity and anti-corruption will likely have a positive influence on future civic behaviour.

According to UNICEF (UNICEF, 2017[35]), an increasing number of civic and citizenship education programmes have been implemented in the MENA region in the last years. These programmes cover topics such as civic society and systems, civic principles (equality, social cohesion and human rights), civic identities (national, regional and religious identities) and civic participation (decision-making, influencing policy and community participation). However, the organisation of civic and citizenship education in formal educational settings remains limited. Policy makers and practitioners find it challenging to integrate citizenship education into education systems due to the lack of conceptual frameworks that define concepts, offer a holistic vision for citizenship education – and more generally life skills - and lay out the type of values to be taught (UNICEF, 2017[35]). Moreover, most of the programmes on civic and citizenship education are run by NGOs (77%), while only 18% are implemented by insstitutional organisations and only 5% address active engagement as a specific skill (UNICEF, 2017[35]).

Results from the OECD Youth Governance Survey suggest that four of the ministries in charge of youth affairs covered in this report run activities to strengthen active citizenship among young people. For instance, the Palestinian Authority holds each year summer camps attended by young leaders in all areas including refugee camps to strengthen the values of citizenship. In Jordan, civic education is taught once a week as part of the educational curriculum to grades 5-10 students, aiming to develop good citizenship and to strengthen the sense of loyalty and belonging to their country and to the Arabic and Islamic nation (OECD, 2021[27]; UNESCO, 2017[36]). The effectiveness of such curricula is however also dependent on the levels of training of teachers in this field, the framing of "good citizenship" and the extent to which textbook-based civic education is linked with more practical and skills-focused aspects (OECD, 2021[27]). In Tunisia, civic education is taught as a subject in its own right during the primary, preparatory and secondary cycles (from 6 to 18 years of age) (OECD, 2021[37]). Topics covered in civic education include

human rights, national and international mechanisms for protecting human rights, the rights, duties and responsibilities of citizens, and more broadly human values (tolerance, cooperation, and solidarity), political systems and the role of the citizen in a democratic system. The teaching of this subject is based on a pedagogical method that favours active participation of students in various stages of learning, notably through the establishment of group work and the use of case studies (OECD, 2021[37]).

Civic and citizenship education should not be merely a theoretical exercise and limited to discussions in classrooms. The participation of students in school governance, such as student councils, community service, volunteering activities and other extra-curricular activities provide a space to apply theoretical knowledge in practice (Box 4.2). For instance, the Finnish National Youth Council Alliance conducts mock elections simultaneously with national and EU elections to introduce to voting those who are too young to take part in the elections.[10] In parallel to the 2019 Finnish parliamentary elections, more than 600 schools and 60,000 students took part in such mock elections. Similar initiatives also take place in Jordan with the support of international organisations and donors; furthermore, Jordan's National Youth Strategy for 2019-25 aims to deliver 36 workshops per year on democracy and citizenship by 2025, primarily delivered through its youth centres.

Box 4.2. Learning and practicing civic and citizenship education

Jordan: "Ana Usharek" ("I Participate")

Since 2013, the Programme organised by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) supports young people apply democratic methods and engage in community action. It targets university students in dialogue and debates to learn among young people as well as with politicians about democratic practices and principles, political and electoral systems, local and national governance, human rights, positive communication, citizenship, and gender. Participants of the programme also competed in national debates about current political events in Jordan some of which were broadcasted on national television. As of May 2021, the programme cooperates with 23 universities. In the face of the COVID-19 crisis, the programme conducted a social media campaign to encourage students to continue to attend. In less than a week, 1,362 students had joined online sessions across 17 universities. In 2015, in collaboration with Queen Rania Foundation schools initiative and the Ministry of Education, the Ana Usharek Schools programme was initiated to incorporate the themes addressed in the programme into a civic education programme for middle and high school students, with curricula and manuals to help teachers design and deliver classes. As of June 2021, over 10,500 students from 350 schools have participated in these classes.

Norway: Democracy and Human Rights

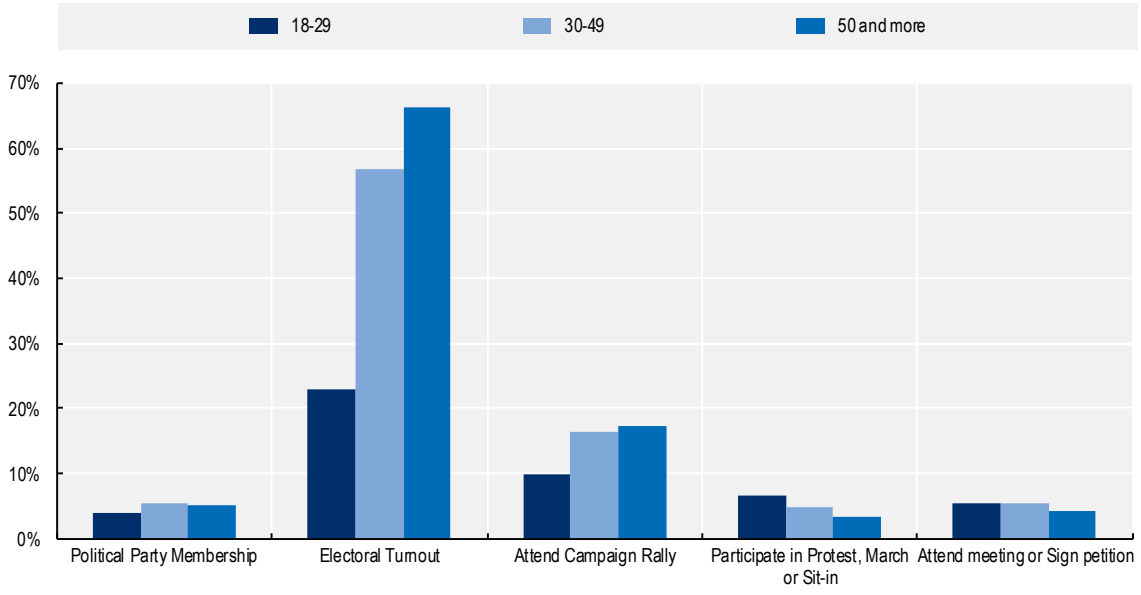
Within their national youth strategy, the Ministry of Education in Norway has implemented commitments on educating young people to democracy and human rights, as part of the new school curricula of primary and secondary schools. This approach aims to build a sense of awareness of global issues already at a young age, for young people to develop during their secondary and post-secondary education and experiences.

Source: (NDI, 2016[38]; OECD, 2020[7])

Removing barriers to encourage the participation of young people in political life

Young people's participation in voting remains low in OECD and MENA societies. In OECD countries for which data exists from 2012-2018, electoral turnout for young people aged 15-24 years old stands at 68% on average, compared to 85% of older adults aged 54+ years old (OECD, 2020[7]; OECD, 2020[39]). As shown in Figure 4.2, Arab Barometer data from 2016 indicates that young people in the MENA region vote less and are less likely to be a member of a political party or attend campaign rallies than older people (Arab Barometer, 2016[40]). However, young people are more likely to participate in political events than older people. There is no significant difference between younger and older people in terms of attending meetings and signing petitions.

Figure 4.2. Political participation in the MENA region by age group, 2016



Note: Data from Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syrian refugees in Jordan and Tunisia.
Source: Arab Barometer (2016). Arab Barometer Wave IV, custom data acquired via https://www.arabbarometer.org/survey-data/data-analysis-tool/.

Engaging young people in political decision-making in OECD governments and MENA administrations is crucial as the costs of emerging and long-standing challenges, including climate change and the COVID-19 crisis, among others, will fall for a large part on the shoulders of the current younger generations.

Interest in politics

The participation of young people in elections is affected by a variety of factors, including their interest in politics. Interest in politics is also an important factor for social cohesion and for young people to become engaged politically beyond elections.

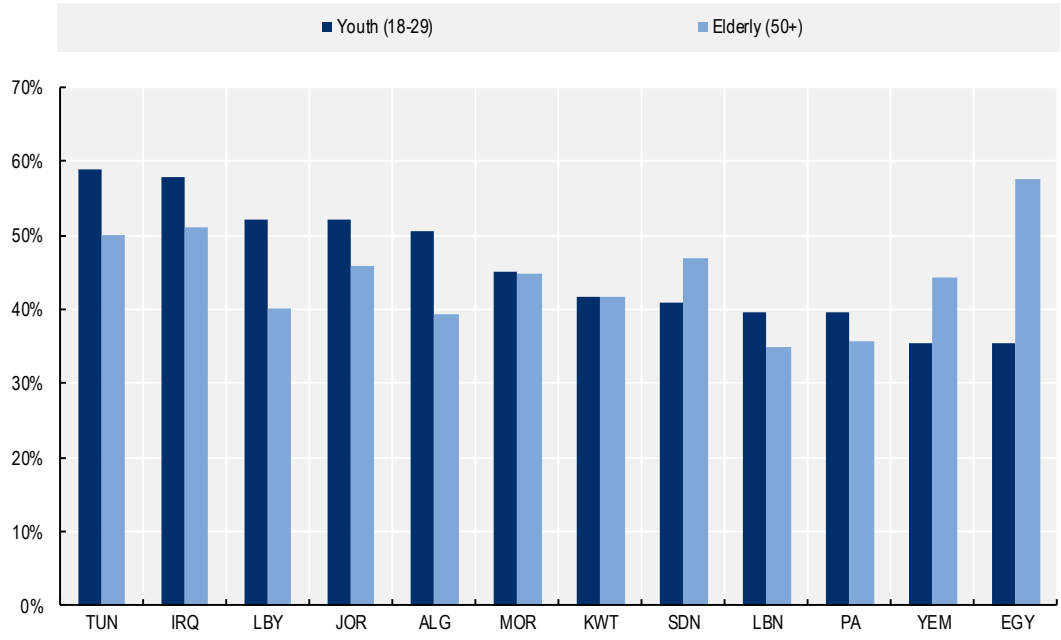
In the MENA economies surveyed by Arab Barometer in 2018, between 35% (Egypt) and 59% (Tunisia) of young people aged 18-29 years reported they are not interested in politics at all, compared to an average 24% of young people across OECD countries in 2019 (Arab Barometer, 2018[26]; OECD, 2019[41]). Furthermore, in all surveyed MENA economies except Egypt, Sudan and Yemen, young people tend to show less interest in politics than older people aged 50+ years (Figure 4.3). Participation in elections can

also be hampered by a lack of confidence that voting will change the country's direction. In the interviews conducted by OECD, some young people also expressed concerns that becoming politically engaged would result in negative consequences for their present and future opportunities. Additionally, the lack of youth-specific civic education or awareness programmes, the age gap between young people and many politicians, and the negative view that a significant share of young people have of elected officials play a role in explaining low electoral engagement. Electoral disengagement can also constitute a form of protest in itself.

From a governance perspective, voter registration rules, voting age requirements and the access to and quality of civic education can encourage or discourage young people to vote. Finally, there is a need to create more opportunities for young people, and citizens in general, to participate in public decision making beyond elections as a way to increase public interest in elections.

Figure 4.3. Interest in politics in the MENA region by age group, 2018-2019

Percentage of respondents reporting they are not interested at all in politics, by age, 2018-2019.



Note: "SDN" refers to Sudan.
Source: (Arab Barometer, 2018[26]) and (OECD, 2019[41])

Voter registration rules

Voter registration requirements can represent a considerable challenge especially for first-time voters who may move out from their parental home and change residency. To facilitate registration, governments can adopt automatic registration. For instance, in Jordan, through the 2010 electoral law, fees for registering to vote were waived. The 2012 electoral law stipulated that citizens needed to present their national identity card and a voter card to vote at the polling station, which made it necessary for people to register in person to receive the voter card (OECD, 2021[27]). Since 2016, the Independent Election Commission became responsible for managing the voter registration, automatically drawing from the civil registry, which is updated by the Civil Status and Passports Department under the Ministry of Interior. Furthermore, the

national identification card became the unique document for voting: these changes led to the inclusion of 82% more voters compared to the 2013 election (OECD, 2021[27]).

Many OECD countries have adopted a variety of measures to facilitate the registration of young people to vote. In the United States, for example, several states allow for the registration of minors under the age of 18 so that they are eligible to vote immediately upon reaching voting age. This decision has had a direct positive impact on youth voter turnout (OECD, 2021[37]; Holbein and Hillygus, 2016[42]). Similar in Jordan, the minimum age required to vote is 18 years, but citizens can be added to the voter list already at 17 years 90 days (OECD, 2021[27]). In the United Kingdom, voter registration is now possible online in an effort to make the process easier and faster. In France, student organisations and youth movements have proposed to make the rules for registering to vote more flexible and allow citizens to register up to 10 days before elections and thus facilitate their access to voting (OECD, 2021[37]).

Governments also need to ensure that young citizens have accessible information at hand on how to register and vote, for instance through information and registration campaigns in schools, universities, and other places where young people socialise. Social media can also be leveraged too, for example by prominently displaying reliable information and links to governmental websites to all users of voting age.

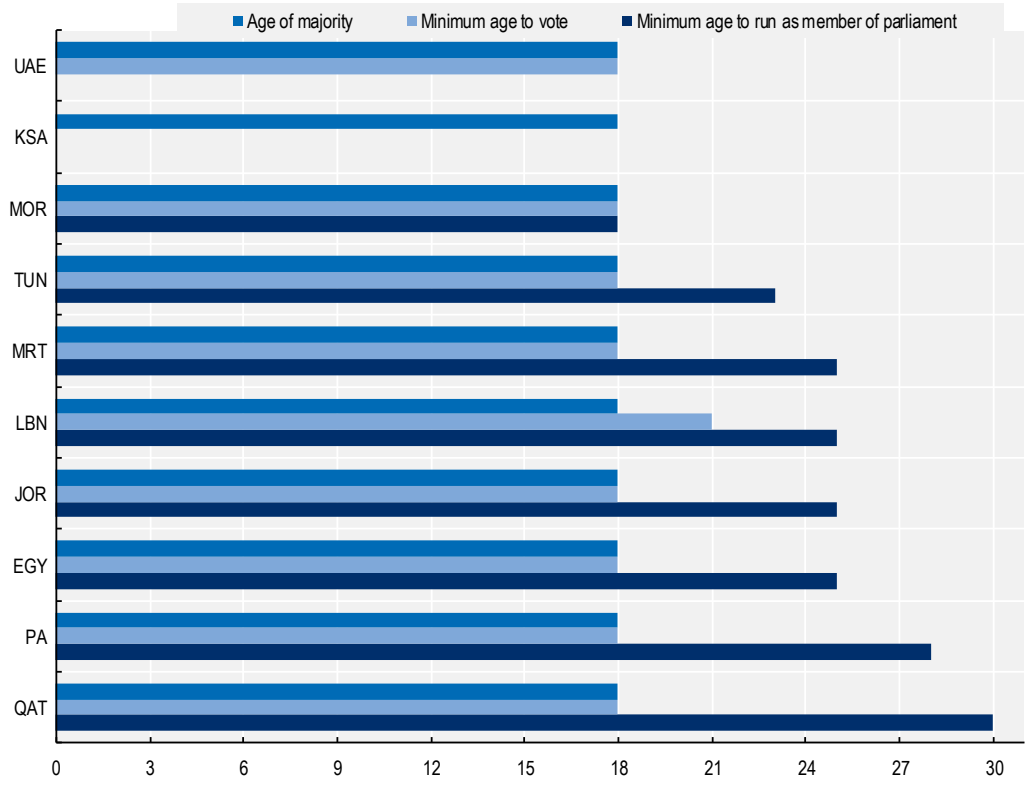
High minimum age requirements exclude young people from running for elected office

The use of minimum-age requirements to determine access to services is common across policy fields such as compulsory education, admission to employment, marriageable age, criminal responsibility, access to specific justice or health services and recruitment into the armed forces. Moreover, minimum ages also play an important role in determining young people's access to voting and positions of political influence. All MENA administrations covered in this report maintain the age of majority at 18 years. However there is significant variance across the region in the minimum age required to vote and run as candidates in elections (Figure 4.4).

In the sphere of political participation, all OECD countries set the voting age for national elections at 18, apart from Greece (17) and Austria (16) (OECD, 2020[7]). Furthermore, some OECD countries have set the voting age for subnational elections below 18 (OECD, 2020[7]). Similar, most of the surveyed MENA administrations set the minimum voting age at 18 years. The minimum age required to vote in Lebanon is 21 years, with a pending, proposed amendment to the 2017 electoral law that would lower the voting age to 18 years.

The minimum age needed to run for public office varies more significantly. Across the OECD, an average of 19.8 years is required to run for a seat in the national parliament (OECD, 2020[7]). In turn, it is 30 years in Qatar,[11] 28 years in the Palestinian Authority, 25 years in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Mauritania, 23 years in Tunisia and 18 years in Morocco. In Jordan, the minimum age to run for parliament was reduced from 30 to 25 years as part of a broader constitutional reform in 2022 (Reuters, 2022[43]). At the subnational level, the threshold for candidates to run for elected office is 25 years in Jordan, Lebanon and Mauritania and 22 years in the Palestinian Authority. Sundström and Stockemer (2018[44]) find that for every year candidate age requirements are lowered, the share of young deputies aged 40 and lower increases by more than 1 percentage point (OECD, 2021[27]).

Figure 4.4. Minimum age requirements in public and political life across the MENA region



Note: In Qatar, the legislative body (The Consultative Assembly) is comprised of both elected and appointed members. Following the 2021 Qatari general election, it has 30 elected members and 15 appointed members.
Source: (IPU, 2022[45]) and OECD Youth Governance Survey.

Young women can face additional legal barriers compared to their male counterparts when it comes to their participation in public and political life. For instance, in Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Syria, women are prevented from passing on their nationality to their children and spouses. This has increased the risk of statelessness faced by children and young people, which creates an additional barrier to participation in public and political life (UNHCR, & OHCRH, 2010[46]). On the other hand, in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, laws have been passed in the past decade to grant each woman the right to pass on their nationality (Albarazi, 2017[47]; UNHCR, & OHCRH, 2010[46]). In the United Arab Emirates, a presidential decree in 2019 announced that Emirati women with foreign spouses may apply for citizenship on behalf of their children when they reach six years of age (Gulf Business, 2019[48]).

The legal barriers that young people encounter in public and political life can fuel feelings of exclusion and, in turn, distrust in government, parliaments, and the electoral system. According to data from the Arab Barometer, citizens' interest in politics decreased by 11% between the 2006-2013 and 2016-2018 surveys (Wee, 2019[49]). Moreover, low trust among young people in state institutions may partially explain the emergence of alternative forms of participation, including protests and online mobilisation, among others.

Representation of young people in public institutions remains limited in MENA

Representative democracy does not require its institutions to mirror the composition of the population one-to-one and demographics alone do not determine the access of younger people to decision-making bodies.

However, large representation gaps are a warning sign about norms, rules and regulations that hamper young people's access to these bodies and that may fuel disenchantment and disinterest in politics among them (OECD, 2020[7]).

In addition to constitutional reform, discussed in Chapter 2, youth quotes are an available mechanism to increase the representation of younger people in public institutions. Youth quotas have been endorsed by the Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly and have been adopted by some governments (OECD, 2020[7]). For instance, Sweden has adopted a 25% quote for candidates under the age of 35 within party lists and, as of 2018, 12.3% of parliamentarians were under 30 years-old and 34.1% were under 40 years-old (OECD, 2020[7]). OECD quantitative analysis shows that there is a mild tendency between having a higher share of young parliamentarians and young people expressing more interest in politics (OECD, 2020[7]).

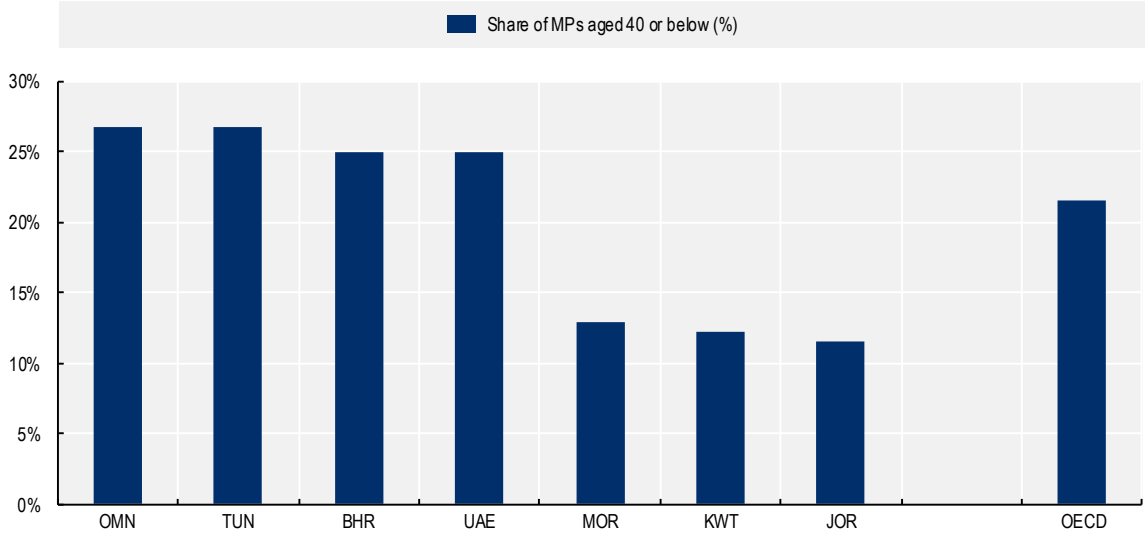
In the MENA region, Morocco and Tunisia have adopted new electoral laws to encourage the representation of young people and women in positions of political influence (Belschner, 2018[50]). Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan have introduced youth quotas in their constitutions (Congressional Research Service, 2021[51]). For example, according to Morocco's 2011 electoral law, 30 seats shall be reserved for candidates under the age of 40 and 60 seats shall be reserved for women in the national parliament (OCDE, 2021[52]). In Tunisia, the youth quota applies to the municipal level (Yerkes, 2019[53]). The share of young candidates in local elections increased following the adoption of a revised electoral law (*Loi organique n° 2017-7*) stating that one-third of the candidates should be below the age of 35 (Official Gazette of The Republic of Tunisia, 2017[54]). In Jordan, no seats are reserved on the basis of age whereas gender and minority quotas exist (OECD, 2021[27]).

Despite the introduction of youth quotas in the electoral laws and constitutions in some countries, overall, the representation of young people in public institutions remains very low compared to their demographic weight. Young men and women in the MENA region remain largely underrepresented in public institutions and are often excluded from the political arena due to their age, limited opportunities, and presumed lack of experience. Traditional stereotypes continue to shape the perception of many young candidates and even office holders to be "too young to run and govern." For instance, although the situation varies across the MENA region (Figure 4.5), young people under 40 years of age represent only 16.4% of members of Parliament on average in the MENA region (IPU, 2021[8]). In comparison, across OECD countries, 22% of member of parliaments are under 40 years of age (OECD, 2020[7]).

Women are also disproportionately underrepresented in governing bodies, with slow improvements in some governments. In turn, a number of administrations in the region have introduced gender quotas for national and subnational elected bodies, including in Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Saudi Arabia,[12] Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates.[13] While the introduction of gender quotas has not always resulted in a tangible improvement of women's representation, among others due to occasions of political corruption and nepotism in assigning these seats (Congressional Research Service, 2021[51]), the lessons learned from this experience could inform efforts to increase the representation of young people in public institutions.

Figure 4.5. Percentage of parliamentarians under 40 years old

Share of members of parliaments (MPs) in lower chambers and unicameral parliaments aged 40 or below, 2021



Note: In Oman, the legislative body (The Council of Oman) has two chambers, the upper chamber (The Council of State) is appointed and the lower chamber (The Consultative Assembly) is elected. In Bahrain, the legislative body (The National Assembly) has two chambers, the upper chamber (The Consultative Council) is appointed and the lower chamber (The Council of Representatives) is elected. In the United Arab Emirates, the legislative body (The Federal National Council) has 40 seats, 20 of which are appointed and 20 of which are elected. "OECD" refers to the average across 33 OECD countries for which data was available as of 2020.
Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Parline database on national parliaments* (https://data.ipu.org) and (OECD, 2020[7])

Age-representation gaps are often more pronounced in countries' leaderships. For instance, as of 2018, across OECD countries, the average age of cabinet members varied between 45 and 62 years, with an average of 53 years (OECD, 2018[55]). Similarly in the MENA region, there is a low share of young people in cabinets. According to data from the Hayat Centre, the average age of Jordan's cabinet members was 59 years as of September 2020 (OECD, 2021[27]). As for the Moroccan government, while the average age of the cabinet remains high, several ministers under the age of 45 have joined the most recent government (OECD, 2021[56]). In the United Arab Emirates, 5 out of 32 (16%) of ministers are under the age of 35 in the cabinet at the time of writing. Lowering the age required for candidacy alone is unlikely to result in a substantial increase in the number of young people running for public office. Young people face other challenges, such as the financial burden of campaigning that is aggravated in some MENA economies by factors such as social dynamics, norms, and perceptions that young people lack the experience and knowledge to engage politically (OECD, 2018[55]). The dominance of personal connections, "wasta", further limits the opportunities of young people to rise to higher ranks as their social networks are typically smaller than those of longer-serving politicians and public authorities.

The participation of young people and their organisations in the public policy and service cycle and allocation of public resources

Stakeholder participation is defined as "all the ways in which stakeholders can be involved in the policy cycle and in service design and delivery, including information […], consultation […] and engagement" (OECD, 2017[6]). The OECD Recommendation on Open Government underlines that stakeholder participation can increase government inclusiveness and accountability and calls on governments to "grant

all stakeholders equal and fair opportunities to be informed and consulted and actively engage them in all phases of the policy-cycle and service design and delivery" (OECD, 2017[6]).

OECD analysis shows that youth organisations that were involved in the policy cycle to a greater extent also reported higher satisfaction with government's performance across public service areas such as transportation, health, housing and employment (OECD, 2020[7]). At the same time, according to the OECD Youth Governance Surveys, only 26% of youth organisations reported to be satisfied with governments' performance on the participation of young people in public and political life. Governments need to grant stakeholders equal and fair opportunities to be informed and consulted and actively engage them in all phases of the policy-cycle and service design and delivery, from the identification of needs and policy priorities, to implementation and monitoring and evaluating its impact.

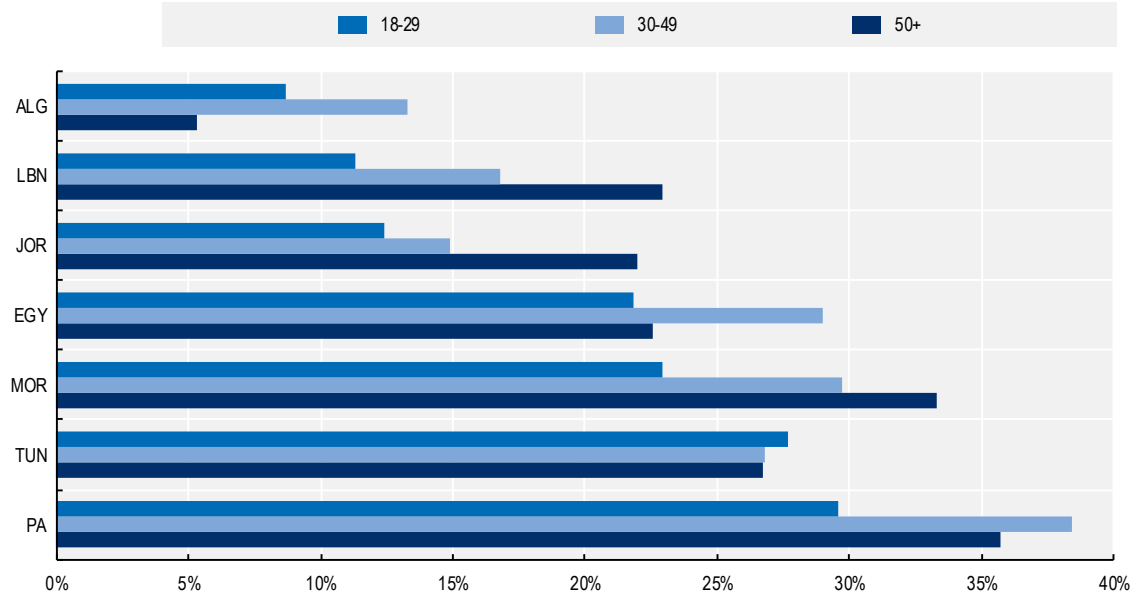
Digital technologies and public communication to inform and engage young people

The preference of young people for non-institutionalised channels over institutionalised channels has been recognised as a trend across OECD countries (OECD, 2020[7]). Young people are increasingly exploring new and informal ways to make their voices heard. Digital technologies and more especially social media have become essential tools in this regard.

In the MENA region, 81% of young people ages 18-29 report using the internet daily and 97% of them report using social media daily as of 2018 (Arab Barometer, 2018[26]). Social media has evolved as young people's primary news source in MENA over the past decade, aided by expanding telecom networks, increased data provisions and greater smart-phone penetration (ASDA'A BCW, 2021[3]). Nearly two-thirds (61%) of respondents to the 2021 Arab Youth survey said they got their news from social media, followed by TV (43%) and online news portals (34%) (ASDA'A BCW, 2021[3]). Printed newspapers were the choice of only 9% of surveyed young people, down from 27% two years earlier (ASDA'A BCW, 2021[3]).

Increasing social media penetration also poses mental health and lifestyle challenges, with more than two-thirds (67%) of young people saying they struggle to disconnect from social media (ASDA'A BCW, 2021[3]). The most used social media platform in the region is Facebook and Egypt, Morocco, and Algeria are ranked in the top 10 places for the fastest growing number of Facebook users (Radcliffe, 2021[57]). At the same time, studies suggest that uptake of social media among young people does not automatically translates into higher political engagement (Wee, 2019[49]). For instance, Arab Barometer data shows that people ages 30-49 years old are more likely to engage politically online and express their opinion than younger generations despite being less active on social media, except in Tunisia (Figure 4.6). In comparison, in 2018, 23% of people aged 15-29 surveyed across 22 OECD countries in the European Social Survey reported that they had shared or posted online about politics in the previous 12 months, compared to 15% of respondents aged 30+ (OECD, 2018[58]).

Figure 4.6. Online expression of political opinions by age group in the MENA region

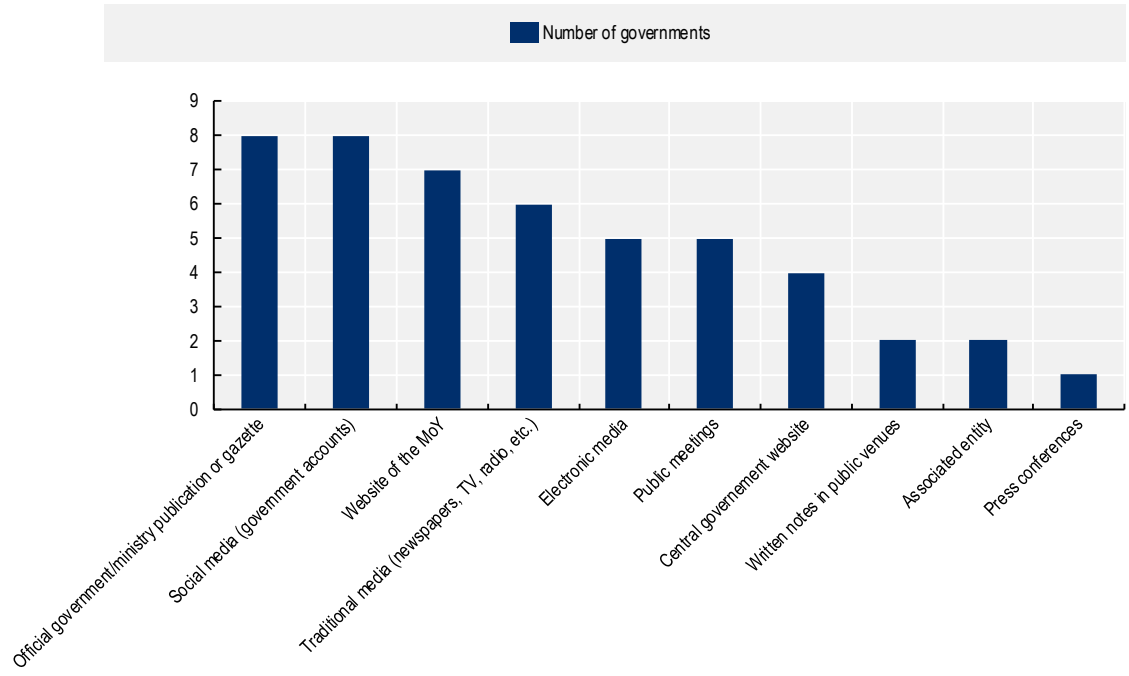


Note: Showing % of "yes" in response to the survey question "Do you use the internet in order to express your opinion about political issues?". Data for Mauritania, Qatar and Saudi Arabia are not available.
Source: Arab Barometer (2016). Arab Barometer Wave IV, custom data acquired via https://www.arabbarometer.org/survey-data/data-analysis-tool/.

Young people have catalysed social media and other online channels to raise their voices on issues around inequality and discrimination, climate change, the freedom of speech on the internet, and ethnic violence, with significant ripple effects on public debates as well as national and international policy agendas (OECD, 2020[7]). At the same time, non-institutionalised channels show limitations with concerns around issues of transparency, accountability, and unequal access across society, such as by education level, gender, and socio-economic background (OECD, 2020[7]).

An enabling environment for young people to participate in the policy cycle can also be strengthened through effective and youth-targeted public communication. Results from the OECD Youth Governance Survey indicate that all responding MENA administrations use specific channels to inform young people about relevant programmes, policies, and services (Figure 4.7). For instance, Jordan's National Youth Strategy 2019-25 highlights communication with young people as one of the most important priorities in building and developing the strategy. The main communication channels used are official websites, traditional and social media and public meetings. Other communication means mentioned include written notices displayed in public venues (ministries, municipalities, agencies, deconcentrated administrations, etc.) and press conferences. In the case of Tunisia and Morocco, an associated entity (i.e. National Youth Observatory in Tunisia: Youth Democratic Institute in Morocco) facilitates communication with young people. These entities involve young people occasionally in consultations and in the design of policies and programmes dedicated to them.

Figure 4.7. Communication channels used by selected MENA entities in charge of youth affairs



Note: Data from Egypt, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and United Arab Emirates.
Source: OECD Youth Governance Survey.

In the United Arab Emirates, the Federal Youth Authority shares a newsletter on a weekly basis with over 50,000 subscribers and has active social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and Twitter. In Jordan, Tunisia and Morocco, an increasing number of ministries and politicians communicate to citizens and young people through social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. For instance, the Ministry of Youth in Jordan has undertaken efforts to open new information and communication channels through its Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram profiles since 2016 as well as through weekly newsletters and a YouTube channel (OECD, 2021[27]). In Tunisia, the ministry in charge of youth affairs has a website and a Facebook page posting regular updates. The Tunisian National Youth Observatory is present on social networks and on an application available on Playstore, in addition to its website. In Morocco, the Ministry of Youth has a Facebook page (OECD, 2021[56]). The National Agency for Promotion of Employment and Skills (ANAPEC) in Morocco offers a platform for young people to share their questions and comments with public authorities (OECD, 2021[56]).

The creation of such accounts should be accompanied by a digital strategy that defines the modalities of online presence, and establishes procedures for validating information and for a two-way dialogue. Intermediaries, such as national youth councils and other youth-led and youth-focused advocacy organisations can support governments in reaching out to a wider public of young people and tailor such formats to their user behaviour. Public efforts to communicate with young people should further reflect that a share of young people (8.6%) across the MENA region is offline (Arab Barometer, 2018[26]).

The wide use of social media by young people, however, also increases their risk of being exposed to mis- and dis-information. The OECD report “Public Communication: The Global Context and the Way Forward” explores the role public communication can play in responding to the challenges posed by the spread of mis- and disinformation and in building more resilient media and information ecosystems (OECD, 2021[59]).

In 2018, the Government of Jordan launched the electronic platform "Haggak Tiraf" (“You have the right to know”) to combat misinformation. The platform, managed by a team in the Ministry of State for Media Affairs under the Prime Minister Office, monitors and verifies information to provide transparent, accurate and quick information (OECD, 2021[27]). In Morocco, the local organisation Tahaqaq and UNDP launched an Accelerator Lab to mobilise the collective intelligence of internet users and technology to fight fake news online. This pilot project uses an extension on web browsers that allows people to report web pages containing lies, manipulation, harassment, or hate speech and hence leverages crowdsourcing and the collective intelligence of citizens (UNDP Morocco, 2021[60]). Reported content is then assessed by a small group of journalists and media professionals. The initiative also includes training on fake news and fact-checking techniques for university students. At the same time, measures to counter misinformation, hate speech and libel online must be defined in a clear and transparent manner to avoid any form of abuse.

Building on these steps, future efforts could focus on consulting and engaging young people from different backgrounds more regularly with the support of digital tools. A range of traditional and digital forms of communication such as online platforms and social media can be leveraged depending on the objective of public communication. Such efforts require policy makers to tailor their messages and delivery modes to the target audience, on the basis of research into the motivations, fears and barriers faced by young people. The OECD Communication Guide on Engaging Young People in Open Government also highlights that public communication targeting young people should take place as early as possible, present clear and detailed reasons, the scope of interaction and its expected outcomes (OECD, 2018[61]).

Existing practices and gaps in consulting and engaging young people

Findings from the OECD Youth Governance Surveys for MENA administrations suggest that all responding ministries in charge of youth affairs have invited young people to the identification of policy and service needs. Most responding MENA administrations reported that, besides individuals, consultations include education institutions (e.g. schools and universities, training institutes), non-organised young people and youth workers. Some responding MENA administrations also reported taking specific steps to engage young people in vulnerable circumstances, including young people not in education, employment or training and youth with disabilities. The public entities in charge of youth affairs in Qatar and the Palestinian Authority reported to involve young people from minorities, orphans, young people below the poverty line and young refugees. However, further research would be needed to capture how systematic, inclusive and participatory consultation and engagement practices targeting young people are across the lead entities as well as other line ministries and sub-national authorities.

Evidence from across OECD governments and MENA administrations demonstrates that obstacles limit the participation of young people in the policy cycle. Among OECD countries, while 93% of entities in charge of youth affairs informed and consulted young people in 2019-20, only 50% engaged them throughout the policy cycle according to their own reports (OECD, 2020[7]). The main challenges identified by responding MENA ministries in charge of youth affairs vary considerably. For instance, while the lack of financial and human resources appears to be the main challenge in Jordan, Lebanon and Mauritania, Tunisia and Qatar refer to the lack of capacities of youth stakeholders to participate and the lack of requirements for public officials to involve young people in these processes. A common challenge identified by the survey respondents is the absence of specific requirements for public officials as well as the lack of interest among youth stakeholders and awareness of the value added among public officials.

Similar to challenges faced across OECD countries, in most of the MENA region, young people are also not systematically informed about the outcome of their participation, with very few mechanisms to “close the feedback loop”. Special attention should also be paid to engaging marginalised young people, for instance by organising consultations in different geographical areas and by ensuring that young people can joint these events (e.g. by reimbursing travel expenses).

Consulting and engaging young people in decision-making is particularly important when governments take decisions that affect the long-term social and economic development of countries, such as in mitigating the COVID-19 crisis. In this context, a number of OECD countries has conducted public consultations with young people and youth organisations to inform their response and recovery efforts (see Box 4.3).

Box 4.3. Participation of youth organisations in planning COVID-19 recovery measures

In Australia, Austria, Estonia, Lithuania and the Slovak Republic, public consultations included youth organisations as key stakeholders. In Austria, each measure proposed by civil society organisations, including youth organisations, was displayed in a table which included a pillar on young people and future generations. In Australia, a list of youth organisations that provided feedback on the 2021-2022 Budget priorities is publically available, and non-confidential submissions, including those of youth organisations, were transparent and accessible online. Estonia included its National Youth Council as a key partner in the consultation that led up to the creation of its response and recovery plan.

Source: (OECD, 2022[5])

Involving young people in participatory budgeting initiatives

Public authorities can take proactive steps to ensure the participation of young people in different citizen participation formats such as public hearings, public consultations, surveys, or town hall meetings. As discussed in Chapter 3, participatory budgeting is one example through which young people can be involved in policy making and service delivery, by allocating public resources to (youth-led) projects and initiatives, thereby increasing their civic engagement and ownership and the transparency and accountability of a process that may otherwise be perceived as technical exercise (OECD, 2020[7]).

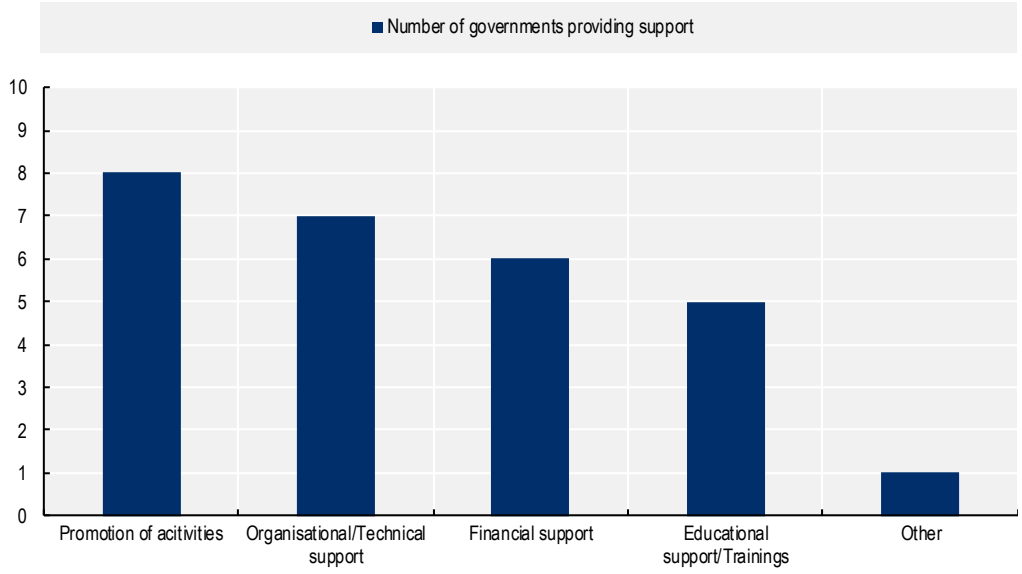
For instance, Article 137 of the Tunisian constitution stipulates that local communities, within the framework of the approved budget, have the freedom of allocating their resources according to the rules of good governance. La Marsa, a community of 110,000 residents, was the first municipality in Tunisia to institute a participatory budgeting programme, with a focus on public lighting (OECD, 2020[62]). In Jordan, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs has implemented participatory budgeting programmes in a pilot with three municipalities, with reportedly satisfying results (OECD, 2021[27]). Moreover, a number of municipalities organise meetings open to the public on their annual budget, in order to explain the main items and choices made, and to collect ideas on projects that shall be funded (OECD, 2021[37]). According to data from 2016, more than 5,900 citizens took part in the participatory budget forums and 270 ideas for citizen projects resulting from these forums were put to the vote, for TND 9 million (around USD 2.9 million as of May 2022) (OECD, 2021[37]). However, efforts to ensure the participation of young people in such processes remain limited and are rarely institutionalised.

Elevating the role of youth organisations and youth councils

Youth organisations can also play a central role in strengthening the participation of young people in decision making. However, to fulfil this role, youth organisations need to be equipped with the necessary resources. For instance, 81% of entities in charge of youth affairs in 33 OECD countries provide funding to youth organisations directly, through local authorities or through national youth councils and 48% of them provide educational and technical assistance to build up youth organisations' administrative capacities (OECD, 2020[7]).

Similarly, OECD survey results demonstrate that all responding ministries in charge of youth affairs in the MENA region (10/10) provide some form of support to youth organisations (see Figure 4.8). The majority of the surveyed MENA administrations report providing promotion of activities (8/10) and organisational or technical support (7/10) to youth organisations. More than half of the surveyed MENA administrations (6/10) report providing financial support to youth organisations. For instance, in Morocco, around 15% of the general budget of the Ministry of Youth was dedicated to the support of youth organisations in 2018 (OECD, 2021[56]). In Tunisia, the legal status of civil society associations in general was modified in 2011. The new law on associations highlights that "the State must ensure the necessary allocation of budget for the support of the activities of associations" (Article 36). The procedures for associations to obtain public funding were determined in a separate decree in 2013 (OECD, 2021[37]). Half of the surveyed MENA administrations (5/10) report providing educational support or trainings to youth organisations.

Figure 4.8. Types of support provided by ministries to youth organisations



Note: Data from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates.
Source: OECD Youth Governance Surveys.

In partnership with governments, well-funded youth organisations that are independent from political considerations and enjoy adequate capacities and access to decision-making can bring the perspectives of young people living in different circumstances into the decision-making process. The EU Youth Dialogue is one of the main instruments across countries of the European Union to engage young people and youth organisations in matters affecting their lives (see Box 4.4).

Box 4.4. European Union (EU): Youth dialogue

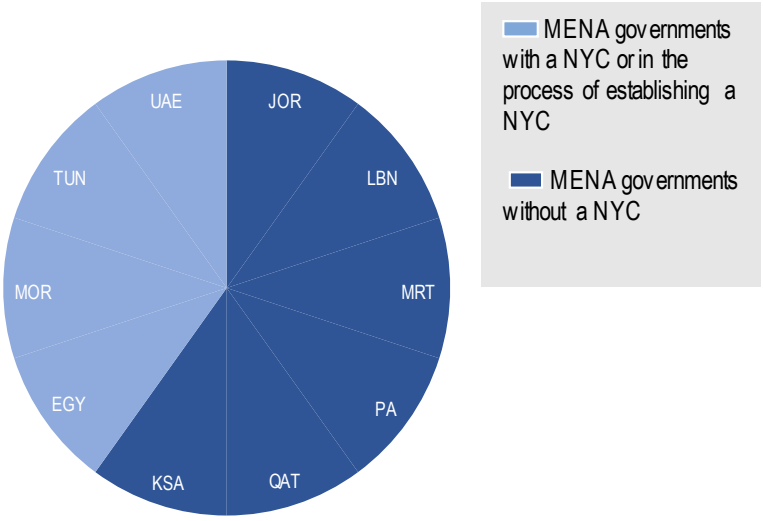
One of the main instruments of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 for youth participation is the EU Youth Dialogue. Drawing on the former Structured Dialogue, this programme consists of a dialogue with young people and youth organisations involving policy and decision makers, as well as experts, researchers and other relevant civil society actors. The EU Youth Dialogue is steered by a group composed of young people and youth organisation at the European, national and local levels. The programme has resulted in the strengthening of National Youth Councils as representative bodies that allow youth to voice their opinions through decision-making, and developing young people's skills for active citizenship.

Source: (OECD, 2020[7])

Governments can also engage young people through youth councils at the national level (as in 78% of OECD countries) and subnational level (as in 88% of OECD countries) (OECD, 2020[7]). National youth councils (NYCs) can bring in diverse perspectives of young people from different backgrounds through their networks of youth member organisations. NYCs can help unite local and regional youth organisations in advocating for youth-related issues and can provide opportunities for capacity building for their member youth organisations. A majority of councils also act as bridge between local and regional youth organisations from their countries and those from abroad, consequently providing support in developing international cooperation.

As of March 2022, available evidence from the surveyed MENA administrations suggest that Egypt and the United Arab Emirates have an operational national youth council in place. Morocco and Tunisia are in the process of establishing a youth council at national level (Figure 4.9). For instance, in Morocco, although not operational yet, the Advisory Council for Youth and Community Action (*Conseil consulatif de la jeunesse et de l'action associative, CCJAA*) is expected to be consulted on draft legislation regarding any economic, social and cultural subject of direct interest to young people. Its mission will also include "the generalisation of the participation of young people in Morocco's social, economic, cultural and political development, as well as support to help young people to integrate into community life" (Kingdom of Morocco, 2018[63]). With the support of the OECD, the Tunisian Ministry in charge of youth affairs is currently working with 24 young representatives from local civil society to create a youth advisory mechanism in order to better engage young people to its policy-making process and promote a more youth-responsive implementation of its programmes on sports, physical education, youth, digitalisation and communication. In Mauritania, although there is not a national youth council in place, there are reported ongoing government efforts to create a youth advisory council attached to the presidency to propose solutions to the issues facing young people.

Figure 4.9. National youth councils in the MENA region



Source: OECD Youth Governance Survey.

When set up based on an inclusive approach, youth councils can help address the lack of coordination among non-governmental youth stakeholders and help mainstream young people's voices in policy making. For instance, in the Netherlands, the government recognises the Dutch Youth Council as the main national partner on youth affairs in the country, involving it through thematic working groups. In Estonia, the National Youth Council participated in the elaboration of the country's long-term development strategy, Estonia 2035 (OECD, 2020[7]). In some OECD countries, such as Finland, Luxembourg and Slovenia, youth laws also feature provisions on the status and functions of the National Youth Council, including membership conditions, responsibilities, among others (OECD, 2020[7]).

The United Arab Emirates has established youth councils at different levels, including the Emirates Youth Council, local youth councils, ministerial youth councils, corporate youth councils, and the global youth councils (Box 4.5).

Box 4.5. Youth Councils in the United Arab Emirates

Youth Councils at the federal and sub-federal level

The Emirates Youth Council (EYC), established in 2016, advises the government and the Minister of State for Youth in setting national policies and strategies as well as launching and supporting youth empowerment initiatives. It consists of seven members representing each emirate and it is headed by the president of the Federal Youth Authority. Members are selected regularly (often on 2 years mandate) and approved by government decree. After the establishment of the Emirates Youth Council (EYC), seven youth councils were established, one in each emirate. They assist local youth councils in attaining their goals and implementing their projects to ensure that young people in remote areas are not left out. Each of these sub-federal youth councils include seven members.

Youth Councils affiliated to ministries

Every ministry in the United Arab Emirates has a ministerial youth council, reporting directly to the leadership of the ministry, and supported financially by each ministry. These councils are composed of young employees of each ministry and they include at least three members. These councils have responsibilities in discussing challenges and outlining solutions to empower young employees and they can reach out to the EYC and the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs for joint initiatives and efforts. For instance, according to available information, the youth council of the Ministry of Interior supported the preparation of the anti-cyber-bullying legislation submitted to the federal government.

Youth Councils in corporations

The Corporate Youth Councils bring together young employees in the United Arab Emirates private and public sector enterprises to contribute to the vision of their companies and work environments. They can also promote and implement initiatives. For instance, according to available information, the Youth council of the Water Agency runs several activities related to climate change.

Youth Councils at the global level

The Global Youth Councils (GYC) bring together Emirati students from across the world to promote cross-cultural understanding, boost leadership skills, and prepare students to make a positive impact in their universities and communities. The GYCs foster global relationships among Emirati students and empower them to become ambassadors for Emirati values worldwide. Most importantly, the GYCs function as a knowledge-transfer mechanism to implement learnings and best practices from student experiences abroad in the United Arab Emirates.

Source: https://councils.youth.gov.ae/en#councils and interviews with public officials from the United Arab Emirates.

Youth councils at the local level can also play a major role in enabling young people to shape the decisions that affect them. Available evidence from the surveyed MENA administrations suggest that youth councils at the subnational level exist in Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, the Palestinian Authority and the United Arab Emirates. The nature and responsibilities of these local youth councils varies: some were established by local authorities, others by NGOs or by international organisations in collaboration with the public administration.

The Palestinian Authority has established local youth councils, which gather young people aged 15-22, who are elected by peers. These councils mirror the positions and structure of local municipal councils, and have benefited from over 300 hours of training in different areas (McNulty Foundation, n.d.[64]). They are explicitly non-partisan and are formed to consult and represent the interests of young people in their communities (McNulty Foundation, n.d.[64]). They fall under the responsibility of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, from which they receive financial support. In Tunisia, local youth councils organised in youth houses have been piloted in five governorates. Although not linked to municipal councils, the pilot local youth councils provide an opportunity for a representative community of young people to play an important role in shaping the decisions that affect them. In Jordan, the Ministry of Youth has made efforts to establish a “Youth Shadow Government” and a “Youth Shadow Parliament”, however, an operational national youth council does not exist (OECD, 2021[27]).

In a number of OECD countries, besides youth councils and youth advisory councils, youth parliaments have been created at the national and subnational level to engage young people (see Box 4.6).

Box 4.6. Youth parliaments in OECD countries

Portugal

In February 2019, 200 young representatives from 66 schools in the Porto District convened in Gaia to debate on climate change and elect the representatives for the national session of the Youth Parliament (*Parlamento dos Jovens*).

The municipality of Gaia also has a Youth Municipal Council (*Conselho Municipal de Juventude*), a Youth Cabinet (*Gabinete de Juventude*) in charge of implementing the Municipal Youth Plan (*Plano Municipal da(s) Juventude(s) de Gaia*) and is currently creating a Youth Card (*Cartão Jovem Municipal Gaia*) for youth 12-29 years old. The Youth Europe Store (*Loja Europa Jovem*), inaugurated in the city of Gaia in 2018, is an information and orientation one-stop shop for young people to learn about European citizenship and Erasmus programme's opportunities.

Luxembourg

The Parliament for Youth is an assembly composed by youth and working for youth. Every person aged 14-24 living in Luxembourg can be a member. A parliamentary session lasts from October to the following October. The Parliament for Youth is composed of commissions and an executive board. Since its creation, it has published resolutions on a variety of policy areas including waste management, European affairs and the quality of life. It also holds regular meetings with government officials. The Youth Parliament's main partners are the National Youth Council of Luxembourg (CGJL – de Jugendrot), the Ministry of National Education, Children and Youth as well as the Chamber of Deputies.

Source: (Vila Nova de Gaia, 2019[65]; Vila Nova de Gaia, 2022[66]; Vila Nova de Gaia, 2018[67]; OECD, 2020[7])

Still under the radar: Youth-specific commitments in open government actions plans

As of March 2022, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia were members of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) (OGP, 2022[68]) and regularly elaborate national action plans as part of their membership. Since its founding in 2011, the OGP has grown to 78 countries, including 30 OECD countries, and 76 local jurisdictions that work alongside civil society to promote more open, transparent and accountable policymaking. An increasing number of countries use their OGP National Action Plans as a platform to elevate youth-specific commitments to government-wide and international attention. For instance, Spain's 2017-2019 Open Government Action Plan included a commitment for the Spanish Youth Institute INJUVE to promote the participation of young people in democratic life and in the elaboration of youth policies.

National action plans to advance the open government agenda remain a largely untapped opportunity to engage young people in policy making across the MENA region. In 2012, Jordan was the first Arab country to join the OGP and, by 2021, it adopted its fifth National Action Plan for 2021-25, which acknowledges that youth institutions shall be included in the national dialogue and includes measures related to Jordan's national youth strategy. Tunisia joined the OGP in 2014 and its third Action Plan for 2018-20 included a commitment to encourage the participation of young people in public policy discussion and development. It built on the second action plan, which aimed to establish local youth councils in partnership with civil society organisations and set up an online platform for young people to have their say and to report potential problems in the delivery of public services (OECD, 2021[56]). Thus, with the support of the World Bank, the Ministry in charge of youth affairs and the Ministry of Public Service supervised the creation of five pilot local youth councils in the municipalities of Kasserine, Ben Guerdane, Le Kef, Testour and Ibn Khaldoun. As the pilot phase was positively received, a next phase is planned under the new action plan for the OGP (OECD, 2021[37]).

Some governments have also used the elaboration of these plans to consult and engage civil society. For instance, Morocco initiated a co-creation process for the period 2021-2023, which presents an opportunity for young people and youth associations to make their voices heard through thematic workshops and a co-creation platform that is open to the public (OECD, 2021[56]).

Deliberative processes to engage young people in public life

In the last decade, governments have also adopted innovative citizen participation processes, such as representative deliberative processes. Representative deliberative process are processes in which a broadly representative body of people weighs evidence, deliberates to find common ground, and develops detailed recommendations on policy issues for public authorities (OECD, 2021[69]). Common examples of one-off processes are citizens' assemblies, juries, and panels. To do so, a representative group of individuals are brought more directly in the resolution of local, national and global issues. For instance, in the Jordanian municipality of Deir Alla, the decision of where to build a school was prepared in collaboration with a voluntary committee, which featured representatives from the local community (OECD, 2017[70]).

Box 4.7. Spain: Youth forum

The Barcelona Youth Forum (Fòrum Jove BCN 2021) was a representative deliberative process that convened 99 randomly selected people living in Barcelona, Spain aged 16-29 to deliberate about the needs of young people in Barcelona and what the city council could do to help them in their development. They deliberated for five months and issued 22 recommendations in December 2021. In February 2022, representatives from the youth forum and city officials met at the Barcelona town hall for a public event in which the mayor explained the next steps regarding their proposals. The city hall also published a response for each recommendation in March 2022, accepting 18, confirming 2 were already in progress and rejecting 2 with rationale provided. Additionally, a commission with representatives from the forum was established to follow-up and evaluate the uptake of the recommendations.

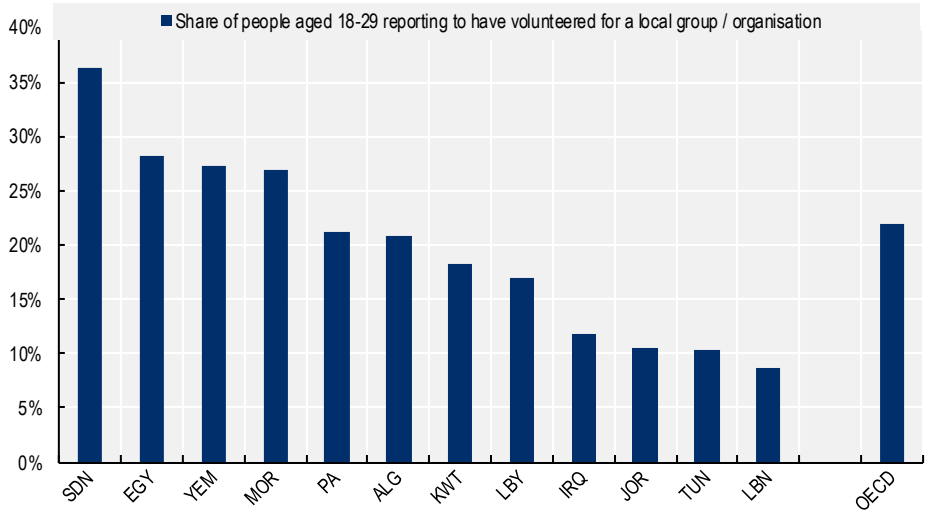
Source: (Decidim Barcelona, 2022[71])

Youth volunteering and youth work as drivers of resilience

Volunteering is a powerful tool for combatting social exclusion, promoting the development of young people, consolidating their trust and co-operation, cultivating their civic sense and building societal resilience (OECD, 2020[7]). In the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, youth organisations, youth workers and young volunteers have stepped in, supporting the most vulnerable people and promoting societal resilience (OECD, 2020[72]). Today, about one million adolescents and young people in the MENA region are involved in volunteering programmes. Yet, only 20% of young people aged 18-29 across the MENA region reported volunteering with a local group or organisation in 2018 (Figure 4.10) (Arab Barometer, 2018[26]). These findings are consistent with results in OECD countries, where 22% of people aged 15-29 reporting having done so across 24 OECD countries in 2019 (OECD, 2021[27]).

Figure 4.10. Share of young people volunteering across the MENA region

Share of young people aged 18-29 reporting to have volunteering for a local group / organisation, 2018



Note: "OECD" refers to the average across 24 OECD countries for which data was available in 2019. "SDN" refers to Sudan.
Source: (Arab Barometer, 2018[26]) and (OECD, 2020[7])

Acknowledging that youth volunteering can address the root causes of marginalisation and foster social cohesion, 64% of OECD countries for which data is available deliver or finance specific national programs to promote youth volunteering (OECD, 2020[7]). Similarly, all MENA administrations that participated in the OECD Youth Governance Survey reported running programmes or activities for young people to volunteer or engage in civic life.

For instance, some administrations set up youth camps, such as the Camps for Youth in Lebanon and Al Hussein Youth Camps in Jordan, which include training activities and volunteer work. The Palestinian Authority developed a volunteering program for olive picking, where young participants carry out volunteer work with the aim of assisting farmers. In Morocco, the former Ministry of Youth and Sport developed in 2013 the national programme "Volunteering and civic education among young people", which aims to provide a social framework that promotes the values of volunteering among young people and their engagement in local life. In Mauritania, the "Watanouna" project, a voluntary civil service for young people, launched in 2020 to stimulate youth civic engagement. An expansion of the "Watanouna" project is planned in the draft National Youth Strategy 2020-2024 (*Stratégie Nationale de la Jeunesse 2020-2024*). In this context, and in partnership with UNICEF, the World Health Organisation, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Employment, Youth and Sports, 1,000 volunteers from the "Watanouna" project were trained and contributed to community awareness campaigns at the onset of the COVID-19 crisis (Ministry of Employement and Vocational Training of Mauritania, 2020[73]).

Youth volunteering can be hampered by a number of factors including lack of opportunities, resources and awareness and limited co-ordination across stakeholders. Difficulties related to logistics or personal costs can also represent a barrier for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. These challenges remain common also among OECD countries (OECD, 2020[7]). Governments have attempted to regulate the status of volunteers and enable youth organisations to receive grants from the government to support voluntary programs and activities. For example, Estonia and Australia, among others, developed a national strategy on youth volunteering to support, encourage and officially recognise volunteering in society. In

other cases, governments include strategic objectives on youth volunteering within their National Youth Strategy. In Jordan, one of the guiding elements of the National Youth Strategy 2019-2025 is the encouragement and promotion of voluntary work, among others by running 24 volunteer initiatives per year for local community service and the school environment and by establishing a Bank of Volunteers in Jordan (OECD, 2021[27]). In the United Arab Emirates, the government of Abu Dhabi has a volunteering strategy in place to create an efficient and effective environment for volunteering (Department of Community Development, 2020[74]). The policy encourages professional and consistent standards for volunteering and aims to support and recognise the efforts of volunteers and their organisations. The United Arab Emirates has also established a dedicated website[14] to share volunteering opportunities for young people online.

Effective co-ordination across stakeholders of the volunteering sector is essential for the implementation of national youth volunteering programmes and initiatives. In Jordan, a Higher Committee for Volunteer Work, established in 2021, aims to institutionalise, organise, and frame voluntary work in Jordan, ensuring a safe enabling environment in partnership between public and private stakeholders and promoting volunteering especially among young people (OECD, 2021[27]). The Tunisian government's support to youth organisations to promote associative action remains limited. Data collected during the preparation of this report show that the ministry in charge of youth affairs provides financial, technical, organisational, and training support to youth associations and organisations, in addition to promoting their activities. However, for the year 2019, the Tunisian Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports allocated only 0.7% of its total budget to volunteering (OECD, 2021[37]). Increasing the share for promoting volunteerism in the budget of the ministry in charge of youth affairs would help youth organisations to fully assume their role as a forum for youth learning and engagement (OECD, 2021[37]).

While ensuring adequate, larger resources for youth volunteering remains crucial, there is a risk that this might come at the expenses of other programmes or priorities within the entities in charge of youth affairs. At the same time, OECD analysis finds a positive and precise relationship between having a national programme for youth volunteering and young people volunteering more compared to the total population (OECD, 2020[7]). Box 4.8 presents innovative cases of national programs to promote youth volunteering in the context of the COVID-19 recovery in France and Italy.

Box 4.8. National volunteering programs in OECD countries

Youth volunteering in France: National Universal Service

France's newly created National Universal Service (*Service National Universel*) engages young people between the ages of 15 and 25 in various volunteering activities to build social and territorial cohesion. The first phase of this programme engages young people between the ages of 15 and 17 in a volunteering activity related to either of the seven thematic areas: physical activities and sports; autonomy, knowledge of public service provision, access to rights and promotion of healthcare; citizenship and national and European institutions; culture and patrimony; discovering engagement; defence and national security; and sustainable development and ecological transition. The second phase, for ages 16 to 25, includes a voluntary engagement of at least three months in either defence or security, supporting vulnerable populations, patrimony or environmental conservation, or tutoring.

Youth volunteering in Italy: National Civil Service

Italy has included a provision to increase funding for youth volunteering activities through the National Civic Service (*Servizio Civile Nazionale*) as part of its national response and recovery plan. Funding will be allocated towards each of the 15 areas of actions identified in the three-year plan. Besides, the Minister for Youth Policies, with delegation to the civic service, and the Minister of Ecological Transition have launched an "Environmental Civic Service". This volunteering programme is expected to raise awareness among young people on environmental issues and support their involvement in tackling climate change. The programme will also support "capacity-building" efforts by young people in alignment with the National Civic Service and orient young people toward 'green jobs", especially in reference to young women's employment.

Source: (OECD, 2022[5])

Youth houses or youth centres (*maisons de jeunes*) provide yet another institutional framework for young people to develop active citizenship and participate in public and political life.

In Morocco, a network of around 510 youth houses exists to support the capacities of registered youth organisations and encourage the social inclusion and participation of young people in local sport, cultural and leisure activities (OECD, 2021[56]). In Jordan, the Ministry of Youth oversees the infrastructure and work of 190 youth centres (106 for young men and 84 for young women) and 355 youth clubs (OECD, 2021[27]). However, OECD interviews also suggest that youth in remote rural areas often have more difficulty accessing youth centres. For example, in Jordan a quarter of spending on "youth centres and youth houses" was invested in Amman, while significantly less than 1% was allocated to the governorates of Al-Balqa (home to 5% of the total population) and Tafileh (home to 1% of the total population) (OECD, 2021[27]). Following the revolution in 2011, the Tunisian government passed Decree 119 of 2011 that decentralised control of youth houses, and provided for more democratic management systems and more financial autonomy, which paved the way for more effectiveness in catering to local community needs and preferences (OECD, 2021[37]; République Tunisienne, 2011[75]). There are currently over 350 youth houses in Tunisia, managed by the Ministry of Youth and Sports and municipalities. In the United Arab Emirates, the government has supported the reconversion of older youth centres into Youth Hubs, multi-function centres for young entrepreneurs and artists to connect, exchange and work together. Starting with a pilot centre in Dubai, youth hubs were created in each emirate in collaboration with the local youth councils, which were consulted on the needs and expectations of local young people for these hubs. The Youth Hubs are financed by the ministry in charge of youth affairs, as well as by local authorities.

Overall, across the MENA region, youth centres need to be equipped with adequate human and financial capacities to provide services and activities in line with young people's expectations and efforts should be made to address unequal distribution on the territory. Furthermore, public administrations can take proactive steps in involving young people in the co-design of the activities and programmes ran by the youth centres, to ensure they meet young people's needs and expectations.

Policy recommendations

This chapter discussed the different opportunities young people have to engage in public and political life in the MENA region and the challenges they face in practice. Young people increasingly participate in public and political life through digital technologies and volunteering programs. However, their engagement is limited through institutionalised channels they have low trust in.

In this context, promoting an enabling environment, integrating the perspectives of young people in open government efforts, and creating formal institutions and mechanisms at all levels to involve young people in the policy and service cycle can help address some of the barriers identified.

To promote the participation and representation of young people and youth stakeholders in public life, in particular of young people from disadvantaged and underrepresented groups, public administrations could consider:

- **recognising and safeguarding youth rights and ensuring that young people are aware of them and exercise them**, among others by building legal literacy, promoting civic and citizenship literacy and protecting civic space for young people;
- **delivering relevant, clear and accessible public communications** targeted to young people, based on active listening and understanding of their concerns and interests, including through digital channels;
- **reviewing, where appropriate, voter registration rules** and minimum age requirements for the participation in public and political life;
- **increasing age diversity in legislative and executive bodies**, through regulatory or voluntary measures, such as youth quotas in legislative and/or executive bodies and through voluntary targets in political party lists as appropriate;
- **addressing ageism and stereotypes** against young people in public and political life by running or supporting awareness-raising programmes;
- **engaging youth stakeholders in all stages of the policy-making cycle** on all policy areas that are relevant for young people (including global challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss and digital technology policy) both in-person and digitally, by creating or strengthening institutions such as youth advisory bodies, sharing information, conducting consultations and engaging youth councils at national and sub-national levels with methods tailored to their availability, needs and interests; and
- **encouraging civic engagement and participation among young people**, including by promoting meaningful volunteer service and youth work through laws, strategies and programmes, at the appropriate level(s) of administration and adequate resources.

References

African Union (2006), *African Youth Charter*, https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/7789-treaty-0033_-_african_youth_charter_e.pdf (accessed on 6 October 2021). [24]

Albarazi, Z. (2017), *Regional Report on Citizenship: the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)*, https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/50046/RSCAS_GLOBALCIT_Comp_2017_03.pdf. /. [47]

Arab Barometer (2021), *Arab Barometer Wave VI – Part 3*, https://www.arabbarometer.org/survey-data/data-analysis-tool/ (accessed on 3 March 2022). [1]

Arab Barometer (2018), *Arab Barometer Wave V*, https://www.arabbarometer.org/surveys/arab-barometer-wave-v/. [26]

Arab Barometer (2016), *Arab Barometer Wave IV*, Arab Barometer, https://www.arabbarometer.org/survey-data/data-analysis-tool/ (accessed on 23 May 2022). [40]

ASDA'A BCW (2021), *Arab Youth Survey 2021: Hope for the Future*, ASDA'A BCW, https://arabyouthsurvey.com/wp-content/uploads/whitepaper/AYS-2021-WP_English-14-Oct-21-ABS-FINAL.pdf (accessed on 3 February 2022). [3]

Belschner, J. (2018), *The adoption of youth quotas after the Arab uprisings, Politics, Groups and Identities*, https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2018.1528163. [50]

Brezzi, M. et al. (2021), "An updated OECD framework on drivers of trust in public institutions to meet current and future challenges", *OECD Working Papers on Public Governance*, No. 48, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/b6c5478c-en. [4]

Congressional Research Service (2021), *Women in the Middle East and North Africa: Issues for Congress*, https://sgp.fas.org/crs/mideast/R46423.pdf. [51]

Decidim Barcelona (2022), *Foro Joven BCN*, https://www.decidim.barcelona/processes/forumjoveBCN?locale=es. [71]

Department of Community Development (2020), *Volunteering Policy in Abu Dhabi*, https://volunteers.ae/DCD_Volunteering_Policy_June2020_ENG.pdf (accessed on 23 May 2022). [74]

Gallup (2021), *Gallup World Poll*. [2]

Gulf Business (2019), *Thousands of children granted UAE citizenship*, Gulf Business, https://gulfbusiness.com/thousands-children-granted-uae-citizenship/ (accessed on 9 June 2022). [48]

Hogg, A. (2018), *The Business Case for Protecting Civic Rights, The B Team*. [25]

Holbein, J. and D. Hillygus (2016), "Making Young Voters: The Impact of Preregistration on Youth Turnout", *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 60/2, pp. 364-382, https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12177. [42]

IPU (2022), *Parline database on national parliaments: Minimum age of eligibility*, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Geneva, https://data.ipu.org/compare?field=chamber%3A%3Afield_min_age_member_parl&structure=any__lower_chamber#map (accessed on 8 April 2022). [45]

IPU (2021), *Youth participation in national parliaments*, https://www.ipu.org/youth2021. [8]

Kingdom of Morocco (2018), *loi n° 89-15 relative au Conseil consultatif de la jeunesse et de l'action associative, art. 2*. [63]

McNulty Foundation (n.d.), *Youth Local Councils: Training young Palestinians to practice democracy and good governance*, https://mcnultyfound.org/impact/stories/youth-local-councils. [64]

Milton-Edwards (2018), *Marginalized youth: Toward an inclusive Jordan*, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/June-2018_Beverly-Jordan_English-Web.pdf. [11]

Ministry of Employement and Vocational Training of Mauritania (2020), *Demarage de formation sur le Covid-19 de 100 volontaires du programme #Watanouna*, https://mefp.mr/demarage-de-formation-sur-le-covid-19-de-100-volontaires-du-programme-watanouna/ (accessed on 24 March 2022). [73]

Murphy (2004), "The role of trust in nurturing compliance: A study of accused tax avoiders", *Springer* http://dx.doi.org/10.1023/B:LAHU.0000022322.94776.ca. [10]

NDI (2016), *Youth Political Participation in Jordan: A Middle East Success Story*, National Democratic Institute, Washington DC, https://www.ndi.org/Youth_Political_Participation_Jordan (accessed on 8 March 2022). [38]

OCDE (2021), *Renforcer l'autonomie et la confiance des jeunes en Tunisie*, Examens de l'OCDE sur la gouvernance publique, Éditions OCDE, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/122f7b9e-fr. [52]

OECD (2022), *Delivering for youth: How governments can put young people at the centre of the recovery*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=1131_1131487-xd5bm4h5h8&title=Delivering-for-Youth-how-governments-can-put-young-people-at-the-centre-of-the-recovery (accessed on 24 March 2022). [5]

OECD (2022), *Recommendation of the Council on Creating Better Opportunities for Young People*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0474 (accessed on 15 June 2022). [23]

OECD (2021), "Eight ways to institutionalise deliberative democracy", *OECD Public Governance Policy Papers*, No. 12, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/4fcf1da5-en. [69]

OECD (2021), *Empowering Youth and Building Trust in Jordan*, OECD Publishing. [27]

OECD (2021), *Good Practice Principles for Data Ethics in the Public Sector*, https://www.oecd.org/gov/digital-government/good-practice-principles-for-data-ethics-in-the-public-sector.pdf. [30]

OECD (2021), *OECD Report on Public Communication: The Global Context and the Way Forward*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/22f8031c-en. [59]

OECD (2021), *Recommendation of the Council on Enhancing Access to and Sharing of Data*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0463 (accessed on 20 May 2022). [32]

OECD (2021), *Renforcer l'autonomie et la confiance des jeunes au Maroc*, OECD Publishing. [56]

OECD (2021), *Renforcer l'autonomie et la confiance des jeunes en Tunisie*, OECD Publishing. [37]

OECD (2020), *Governance for Youth, Trust and Intergenerational Justice: Fit For All Generations?*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/c3e5cb8a-en. [7]

OECD (2020), *How's Life? 2020: Measuring Well-being*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9870c393-en. [39]

OECD (2020), *Supporting Open Government at the Local Level in Jordan*, https://www.oecd.org/gov/open-government/supporting-open-government-at-the-local-level-in-jordan.pdf. [62]

OECD (2020), *Youth and COVID-19: Response, Recovery and Resilience*, https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=134_134356-ud5kox3g26&title=Youth-and-COVID-19-Response-Recovery-and-Resilience. [72]

OECD (2019), *Society at a Glance 2019: OECD Social Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/soc_glance-2019-en. [41]

OECD (2018), *Calculations based on European Social Survey 2018*, OECD. [58]

OECD (2018), *Education for Integrity: Teaching on anticorruption, values and the rule of law*, https://www.oecd.org/governance/ethics/education-for-integrity-web.pdf. [34]

OECD (2018), *Engaging Young People in Open Government: A communication guide*, OECD Publishing, https://www.oecd.org/mena/governance/Young-people-in-OG.pdf. [61]

OECD (2018), *Youth Stocktaking Report*, https://www.oecd.org/gov/youth-stocktaking-report.pdf. [55]

OECD (2017), *OECD Recommendation of the Council on Public Integrity*, http://www.oecd.org/gov/ethics/OECD-Recommendation-Public-Integrity.pdf. [33]

OECD (2017), *Recommendation of the Council on Open Government*, https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0438. [6]

OECD (2017), *Towards a New Partnership with Citizens: Jordan's Decentralisation Reform*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264275461-en. [70]

OECD (2016), *Open Government: The Global Context and the Way Forward*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264268104-en. [28]

OECD (2014), *Recommendation of the Council on Digital Government Strategies*, http://OECD/LEGAL/0406. [31]

OECD (2011), *How's Life?: Measuring Well-being*, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264121164-en. [9]

OECD/UN ESCWA (2021), *The Economic and Social Impact of Open Government: Policy Recommendations for the Arab Countries*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/6b3e2469-en. [29]

Office of the Secretary-General Envoy on Youth et al. (2014), *Baku Commitment to Youth Policies,*, 1st Global Forum on Youth Policies, https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Baku-commitment.pdf. [21]

Official Gazette of The Republic of Tunisia (2017), *"Organic law n° 2017-7 dated 14 February 2017, amending and completing organic law n° 2014-16 dated 26 May 2014 relating to the elections and referendums"*, http://www.legislation.tn/sites/default/files/journal-officiel/2017/2017G/Jg0142017.pdf. [54]

OGP (2022), *Members*, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/our-members/#national (accessed on 2022). [68]

OHCRH (1996-2019), *Equal participation in political and public affairs*, https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Pages/EqualParticipation.aspx. [17]

Radcliffe, D. (2021), *How the Middle East used Social Media in 2020*, https://ssrn.com/abstract=3826011. [57]

République Tunisienne (2011), "Décret-loi n° 2011-119 du 5 novembre 2011, relatif aux structures publiques de la jeunesse", *Journal Officiel de la République Tunisienne*, Vol. 85, http://www.legislation.tn/fr/detailtexte/D%C3%A9cret-loi-num-2011-119-du-05-11-2011-jort-2011-085__2011085001192. [75]

Reuters (2022), *Jordan MPs back constitutional reforms to revitalise politics*, https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/jordan-mps-back-constitutional-reforms-revitalise-politics-2022-01-06/. [43]

Sundström, A. and D. Stockemer (2018), "Youth representation in the European Parliament: The limited effect of political party characteristics", *Intergenerational Justice Review*, Vol. 4/2, https://doi.org/10.24357/igjr.4.2.696. [44]

UNDP Morocco (2021), *La technologie au service de la lutte contre les fake news en ligne au Maroc*, https://www.ma.undp.org/content/morocco/fr/home/presscenter/articles/2021/la-technologie-au-service-de-la-lutte-contre-les-fake-news-en-li.html. [60]

UNESCO (2017), *Assessing the broader youth environment in Jordan*, UNESCO Amman Office, https://usjkamp.s3.amazonaws.com/prod_uploads/system/resources/attachments/000/004/277/original/Assessing_broader_youth_environment_JOR.pdf?X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIAJNKAKIDZBGBBOKQA%2F20220404%2Fus-east-1%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X (accessed on 4 April 2022). [36]

UNGA (2007), *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly*, United Nations General Assembly, https://www.refworld.org/docid/45f973632.html. [16]

UNGA (1996), *World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond : resolution / adopted by the General Assembly*, United Nations General Assembly, https://www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f4c34.html. [19]

UNGA (1989), *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, United Nations General Assembly, p. 3, https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b38f0.html. [18]

UNGA (1979), *Convention the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*, United Nations General Assembly, p. 13, https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3970.html. [15]

UNGA (1965), *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*, United Nations General Assembly, p. 195, https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3940.html;. [14]

UNGA (1948), *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, United Nations General Assembly, https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3712c.html. [13]

UNHCR, & OHCRH (2010), *Regional Expert Meeting on Human Rights of Stateless Person in the Middle East and North Africa.*, United Nations Publishing, https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4cea29762.pdf. [46]

UNICEF (2017), *Analytical Mapping of the Life Skills and Citizenship Education in MENA, Life Skills and Citizenship Education Initiative Middle East and North Africa.*, https://www.unicef.org/mena/media/6201/file/Analytical%20Mapping%20of%20the%20LSCE%20in%20MENA_EN.pdf%20.pdf. [35]

United Nations (1966), *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, UN General Assembly, p. 171, https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3aa0.html. [12]

UNSC (2016), *Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) [on youth, peace and security]*, United Nations Security Council, https://www.refworld.org/docid/56ebfd654.html. [22]

Vila Nova de Gaia (2022), *Juventude*, https://www.cm-gaia.pt/pt/cidade/juventude/ (accessed on 8 April 2022). [66]

Vila Nova de Gaia (2019), *Parlamento dos Jovens 2019 – Alterações Climáticas*, https://www.vn-gaia.com/parlamento-dos-jovens-2019-alteracoes-climaticas/ (accessed on 8 April 2022). [65]

Vila Nova de Gaia (2018), *Acordo De Parceria Entre Município De Vila Nova De Gaia e Fundação Bracara Augusta Instalação Da Loja Europa Jovem – Youth Europe Store*, https://www.cm-gaia.pt/fotos/galeria_documentos/ac_f._bracara_augusta_loja_jovem_abril_2018_18627250675af3f70c0bc26.pdf (accessed on 8 April 2022). [67]

Wee, J. (2019), *Politics and Social Media in the Middle East and North Africa: Trends and Trust in Online Information*, Arab Barometer Publishing, https://www.arabbarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/AB_Media_Report_Final_Public-Opinion-2019-5.pdf. [49]

World Conference of Ministers (1998), *Lisbon Declaration of Youth Policies and Programmes*, UNESCO publishing, https://www.youthpolicy.org/library/wp-content/uploads/library/1998_Lisbon_Declaration_Eng.pdf. [20]

Yerkes, S. (2019), *Tunisia's Political System: From Stagnation to Competition, ,*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/03/28/tunisia-s-political-system-from-stagnation-to-competition-pub-78717. [53]

Notes

[1] Survey responses were collected across Algeria, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.

[2] Survey responses were collected across Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, the Palestinian Authority, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

[3] Survey responses were collected across Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, the Palestinian Authority, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

[4] Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Qatar, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen have ratified the ICCPR.

[5] Survey responses were collected across Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen.

[6] Survey responses were collected across Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, the Palestinian Authority, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

[7] The Centre for Law and Democracy is a non-profit corporation that undertakes research, outreach activities and technical assistance to governments to advance civil society and human rights.

[8] https://www.rti-rating.org/

[9] According to the 2011 OECD report “How's Life? Measuring Well-Being”, “civic education focuses on people’s knowledge and understanding of formal institutions and the processes of civic life (such as voting in elections), while citizenship education focuses on knowledge and understanding of opportunities for participation and engagement in both civics and civil society (e.g. ethical consumption), which are important for democracies.”

[10] http://www.nuorisovaalit.fi/

[11] Following the 2021 general election in Qatar, the legislative body (The Consultative Assembly) has 45 seats, 15 of which are appointed and 30 of which are elected.

[12] In Saudi Arabia, the legislative body (The Consultative Assembly) has 150 seats, all of which are appointed.

[13] In the United Arab Emirates, the legislative body (The Federal National Council) has 40 seats, 20 of which are appointed and 20 of which are elected.

[14] https://volunteers.ae/

OECD Public Governance Reviews

Youth at the Centre of Government Action

A REVIEW OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Young people have demonstrated resilience to shocks and led positive change in their communities across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Young people (aged under 30) constitute more than half (55%) of the population across MENA, compared with 36% of the population across OECD countries. While challenges vary significantly across the region, youth unemployment rates are among the highest in the world, young people tend to express low trust in public institutions, and nearly four in ten live in fragile and conflicted-affected areas. The COVID-19 crisis has underscored the need to place the needs of young people at the centre of an inclusive and resilient recovery. To support this process, this report analyses current governance arrangements and practices across 10 MENA governments in three areas: 1) uniting all government stakeholders to implement a shared, integrated youth policy and deliver services to young people; 2) building administrative and institutional capacities to mainstream the perspectives of young people in policy making; and 3) encouraging the participation and representation of young people and youth stakeholders in public and political life.

PRINT ISBN 978-92-64-41881-3
PDF ISBN 978-92-64-48809-0