

PUBLIC GOVERNANCE DIRECTORATE

MENA-OECD Governance Webinar on Youth and COVID-19: Response, Recovery and Resilience

7 May 2020
Via Zoom

The world is tackling the COVID-19 global health emergency and its economic and social impact that disrupted nearly all aspects of life in an unprecedented manner for everyone in society. However, the current crisis as well as the measures implemented by governments affect different groups in society in distinct ways. For young people, and especially vulnerable youth, the COVID-19 crisis poses considerable risks in the field of education and employment, mental health and disposable income, and others. The recovery measures will also have long-term economic, social and environmental consequences that young people and future generations will have to live with.

The MENA region is particularly exposed to these risks since it has the highest rate of youth unemployment in the world (exceeding 27% on average) and youth are five times more likely to be unemployed than their adult counterparts. Moreover, it is estimated that 80 % of youth in the region work in the informal sector of national economies, which generally offer fewer benefits or protections. In regards to education, more than 110 million school-aged students from the region already have a limited access to education (formal and non-formal) due to closure of school and university facilities, youth centres and other public spaces. Finally, the MENA region hosts about 14 million displaced persons, many of which are young people and are more prone to suffer disproportionately both from the crisis and its aftermath, for reasons such as restricted movement, lack of employment opportunities or higher risk of exclusion in the society.

In this context, the webinar will discuss the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth in the MENA region, how the current crisis has shaped their trust in government, how initiatives of youth-led organisations and intergenerational solidarity help mitigate the immediate impact of the crisis and how youth can participate in national recovery plans and build more resilient societies and economies in the long-run. This webinar, organised by the MENA-OECD Governance Programme will discuss the key findings from the OECD survey on the response of youth organisations to the pandemic, building on the replies of 90+ youth organisations from 40+ countries worldwide. It will invite policy makers, young people and international partners to exchange good practices and experiences from their countries in creating a more youth-responsive public governance for a fair and inclusive recovery that leaves no one behind.

AGENDA

Moderator: **Mr. Shah Muhmud**, Youth Engagement Consultant, United Kingdom

10:45 - 11:00 Registration

11:00 - 11:05 Welcome Remarks

- **H.E. Ambassador Antonio BERNARDINI**, Permanent Representative of Italy to the OECD and co-chair of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme

11:05 - 11:35 Presentation of the OECD survey's findings: How has COVID-19 impacted on youth?

While young people are less severely affected by the pandemic than older age cohorts in terms of the direct health impact, they will shoulder a significant share of the economic and social repercussions. Beyond the immediate effects of closed schools and universities, and rising concerns about young people's mental health and exposure to domestic violence, future economic prospects are not optimistic.

This session will introduce the main findings of the OECD survey on the youth response to the COVID-19 pandemic with a particular focus on responses from MENA countries.

- ▶ **Mr. Moritz ADER**, Policy Analyst, MENA-OECD Governance Programme, OECD

DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS

Participants will be invited to provide brief feedback (2 min) on the findings of the survey.

- General question: What are the main effects of the COVID-19 crisis on youth in your country?

11:35 – 12:20 Building an inclusive recovery through a more youth-sensitive governance

The COVID-19 crisis is demonstrating the crucial role of young people and youth-led organisations in crisis response, recovery and building resilience. Youth associations and governments have created some innovative initiatives to adopt a more youth-sensitive approach in their response with the potential to bridge gaps in trust and to mainstream young people's needs and concerns more systematically into decision-making post COVID-19. This session will reflect on the specific context of MENA region with its high youth cohort; including opportunities and challenges for youth resilience.

TOUR DE TABLE - DISCUSSION

This session will be organised in an open discussion format (tour de table) to allow participants to present their initiatives and measures and discuss lessons learned. Participants are also welcome to discuss how the survey findings can inspire youth-responsive emergency measures as well as more medium to long-term policies.

Tour de table based on the following items for discussion:

- **Item 1: Drawing lessons from volunteering activities** by young people amidst the crisis
- **Item 2: Expanding and disseminating public information** related to the crisis to better target youth
- **Item 3: Ensuring inclusiveness and sustainability** in countries' crisis response and recovery phase for long-term **youth-responsiveness**
- **Item 4: Leveraging** support from young people to the elderly and vice-versa during the crisis to encourage **intergenerational solidarity**
- **Item 5: Identifying areas and type of potential OECD support** that countries could benefit from in this effort

12:20 – 12:30 Wrap up and conclusion

- **Ms. Inès KHARRAT**, Presidency of the Government, Tunisia and representative of the co-chair of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme
- **Mr. Janos BERTOK**, Acting Director for Public Governance, OECD