

Youth and COVID-19

Response
Resilience
Recovery



Webinar summary notes



The webinar took place
on **7 May 2020**
10:45-12:30, Paris time

Context

The COVID-19 crisis poses considerable risks for young people in the field of education and employment, mental health, disposable income and others. The crisis recovery measures will also have long-term economic, social and environmental consequences that young people and future generations will have to face. 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, a large number of youth in the region work in the informal sector, 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 formal and non-formal education 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, organised by the MENA-OECD Governance Programme, was an opportunity for policy makers, youth NGOs, young people and international partners to

exchange on good practices and experiences from MENA countries in designing a response and recovery plans that leave no one behind. Participants also discussed 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.

The webinar brought together more than 100 policy makers, young people and international partners from 14 MENA and OECD countries (Chile, Egypt, Germany, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Lithuania, Morocco, the Netherlands, Palestinian Authority, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the European Union). Participants discussed the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth in the MENA region, on how the current crisis has shaped their trust in government, and on how intergenerational solidarity help mitigate the immediate impact of the crisis. Participants exchanged their views about how young men and women can participate in national recovery plans and build more resilient societies and economies in the long-run. The webinar was opened by H.E. Ambassador Antonio BERNARDINI, Permanent Representative of Italy to the OECD and co-chair of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme and closed by Ms. Inès KHARRAT, representative of the Presidency of Government in Tunisia and of the co-chair of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme.



Participants highlighted the following points:

- Beyond the **closing of schools and universities**, as an immediate effect of the crisis, and the **rising exposure** of youth to **domestic violence**, the OECD survey results indicate **rising concerns** among youth about their **mental health, employment** and **disposable income**.
- Governments need to ensure **intergenerational justice** in designing and implementing response and recovery plans.
- Efforts are also needed to **ensure more inclusive and effective public administrations**, capable of ensuring a whole-of-government coordination and public services tailored to the needs and aspirations of youth, including the most vulnerable (e.g. young people with disabilities and refugees).
- To counter the growing surge of disinformation during the crisis and better target and reach youth, governments need to (e.g. sign language interpretation for deaf persons to ensure an equal accessibility to audio-visual material).
- Given the crucial role of young people and youth-led organisations in crisis response during the pandemic, governments and civil society need to continue to **encourage youth to volunteer** and **participate actively in public life** during and post the COVID-19 crisis.

Next steps

The findings from the OECD survey contributed to a policy paper '[Youth and COVID-19: Response, Recovery and Resilience](#)' that helps governments better consider the perspective of young people and intergenerational justice in the implementation of response and recovery measures and building resilience.

The paper complements evidence collected across the house on the [OECD online policy hub on COVID-19 crisis](#) and informs the discussion on the renewal of the mandate of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme.

For more information

- [MENA Youth Project](#)
- [OECD Youth Website](#)
- [Citizens' Voice Project](#)
- [Youth and COVID-19: Response, Recovery and Resilience'](#)

