

Youth Regional Conference

« Local Engagement : YOUTHink about it ! »

27-28 November 2018 - Tunis, Tunisia



In cooperation with the Presidency of the Government and the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sport, the OCDE organised a [Regional Conference on 27-28 Novembre 2018](#) in Tunis on the topic of youth participation in public life at the local level. This event took place in the framework of the project « Youth in public life: Towards open and inclusive youth engagement » in Tunisia, Morocco and Jordan, funded by the MENA Transition Fund of the G7 Deauville Partnership.



This conference gathered more than 200 young women and men from the MENA region, senior officials from ministries of youth and other ministries having a direct or indirect stake on youth, as well as elected local representatives and local officials, youth associations and other non-governmental organisations representing young people from the region and OECD member countries. It provided the opportunity to exchange good practices and experiences that work to encourage MENA youth to play a more important part in the development and implementation of public policies, in particular

at the local level. It was also the occasion to underline the role that Open Government tools can play in encouraging youth participation in policy-making.

The conference was opened by Ms. Sonia Ben Cheikh, Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports in Tunisia, Mr. Abdelkaddous Saadaoui, Secretary of State for Youth in Tunisia, Mr. Chokri Terzi, Advisor to the Head of the Government in charge of Youth , Mr. Thabet Al-Nabulsi, General Secretary of the Ministry of Youth in Jordan, Ms. Carole McQueen, Ambassador of Canada in Tunisia and Ms. Irène Hors, Deputy Director of the OECD Public Governance Directorate.

Innovative and open formats were adopted through three initiatives : two youth circles gathering public officials from the central and local administration, representatives of civil society, peers from France, Norway, Portugal and the United-Kingdom ; an open discussion session with the Secretary of State for Youth in Tunisia, a member of the parliament commission in charge of youth, culture, education and higher education , and a newly elected young mayor, each taking turns in three youth circle ; and finally, a session inspired by TED Talks where young innovators from Lebanon, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia shared their youth initiatives.

« Our region has the highest rate of youth population. For this to be beneficial to our development, we must collaborate and work together. »

- Mr. Nidal Benali Cherkaoui, President of the Local Youth Councils Network in Morocco

This format allowed participants to learn more about the mechanisms and tools to reinforce youth participation at the local level. The OECD team presented the key findings from the [MENA Youth Governance Survey](#) (which covers Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestinian authority, Qatar and Tunisia). It also allowed the OECD team to present the 5 governance pillars, as analysed in the [OECD Youth Stocktaking report 2018](#) to improve youth governance and build inclusive institutions and mechanisms for your people at the central and local level.

In line with the theme of the conference « **Local Engagement: YOUTHink about it!** », discussions focusing on active youth participation at the local level shed light on the importance of youth participation in the decision making at the local level to ensure that public services reflect the true needs of young people and citizens in general.

Next Steps

Based on data collected through the MENA Youth governance survey and fact-finding missions carried out in Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia, Country Youth Governance Reviews will be prepared. These Reviews will be presented at the occasion of the next youth regional conference in Jordan in the summer 2019.

